ROMANIA

by

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INTRODUCTION

There are three sources of Islamic manuscripts in Romania: collections of bibliophiles or orientalists donated to or bought by large libraries; occasional acquisitions of large or small libraries, whose origins vary widely and are generally impossible to trace back; and the holdings of Muslim institutions in the country's present territory. The first are relatively unitary in structure and their records are credible, if brief. Those in the second class are very heterogeneous and have generally not been seen by experts. Those in the third class are virtually unknown. There is evidence that the institutions of Romania's Muslim communities that functioned until 1950–60 did have Islamic manuscript holdings: the Turkish mosque and primary school at Constanța, the normal (educational) school at Medgidia, the mosque and primary school at Băbădăg. Dissolved or abandoned, these institutions probably put their holdings in the hands of private persons and no information on their number or content is now available. A few data about the old Muslim institutions in Romania can be found in:


Pictorial essay, with text in Romanian, English & Arabic.

There is also a small number of leaves with miniatures taken from Islamic manuscripts that are the property of private collectors or are to be found in the art departments of large libraries. Descriptions of the Persian ones are included in Alexandra Beldescu’s 1987 Union Catalogue (see below).

UNION CATALOGUES & SURVEYS

Published:
Incl. literary codices in Arabic, Persian & Turkish.


Romania, pp. 530–532. Lists a number of Turkish MSS in Bucharest and Cluj which the author personally examined, and corrects some of the identifications in the catalogues.


Incl. English summary.

Unpublished:
Available in the Biblioteca Academiei, Bucharest (see below), from the MSS room custodian. The first part is a detailed catalogue of the 70 MSS in the Academy Library written in Persian or in several languages including Persian, and of another 31 Persian MSS in other Romanian libraries. The catalogue supplies information about the

Title of each work and name of author, name of scribe, date and place of copying, incipit and explicit, size and number of pages, paper, handwriting, binding, condition of the MS, notes and miniatures (if any).

With the exception of several multilingual MSS where just a few notes or excerpts of little importance were in Persian, this part corresponds to the Persian version published in 1983 (see above).
The second part gives a list of other “Oriental” MSS in the Academy Library (see below). There is no index.

For observations on the content and accuracy of this catalogue, see the 1983 survey by Birnbaum (details above), p. 531.

**INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIONS**

**ALBA-IULIA**

**Bathyanaeum Library**

Str. Bibliotecii no. 1
*Date of establishment*: late 18th century

*Status*: Old private collection taken over by the state; managed by the Central State Library in Bucharest.

*Total number of Islamic MSS*: 5 (1 Arabic; 2 Turkish; 2 Arabic/ Turkish).

*Description of collection*: The MSS are kept under normal conservation conditions in an old building with modern facilities.

The Turkish manuscripts are a 16th-century defter of Pecs and an 18th-century copy of the Muḥammadīye epos, as well as an unidentified epic poem whose beginning and end are missing. The Arabic manuscripts comprise a treatise on theology (fasâ′îd) and excerpts from the Qurʾān (both dated to the 18th century), as well as Christian prayers from the early 19th century.

The manuscripts were not in Bishop Bathyany’s collection, which was initiated earlier.

Published catalogues:

1958. *Catalogus concinnus librorum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bathy-
Items 49, 313, 348, 408 & 459 are Turkish MSS: texts not identified.

In Romanian, with German summary. Includes titles, authors’ names, languages, places, dates, scribes’ names, pagination, notes, bindings and detailed descriptions of the contents.

BUCHAREST

Arhivele Statului București (State Archives of Bucharest)

Bd. Kogălniceanu 29

Date of establishment: 1831

Status: Public archives with limited access (researchers, academics, etc.).

Total number of Islamic MSS: 4 (1 Arabic; 1 Persian; 2 Turkish).

Description of collection: The MSS are in good condition. They comprise two registers of copies in Turkish of acts and the Romanian rulers’ correspondence with the Porte (first half of 19th century), an anonymous Arabic MS. listed as “The Treasure of Interpretations: Law and Property” and a Persian MS. of the Khamsh of Nizam, richly illustrated with coloured miniatures (18th century).

Published catalogues:


1987. See Union Catalogue by BELDESCU, which includes 4 plates (XXXIV – XXXVII) of miniatures from the Nizami.

Unpublished catalogue:

Brief descriptions of the Islamic MSS are included in the general register of MSS.

Biblioteca Academiei Române (Romanian Academy Library)

Calea Victoriei 194

Date of establishment: 1867
Published catalogues:

A brief list of the 216 oriental MSS then in the Academy Library, stating the author, the title in the original and its Romanian translation, name of scribe and date of copying, number and size of pages, origin. There are many mistakes and inaccuracies in the description of Arabic and Persian MSS because the author did not have a good command of these two languages. According to Bernbaum 1983 (see Union Catalogues above), the entries for Turkish MSS are also inadequate and inaccurate, with many wrongly identified.


Descriptions of eight Arabic MSS.


Unpublished catalogues:
1976. The Union Catalogue by Sowti [Şawtî] includes detailed descriptions of 70 Persian MSS in the Academy Library; and (in Part II) brief information about the remaining 360 Oriental MSS there, especially Arabic and Turkish: author and title, language(s), handwriting, scribe, date and place of copying, number and size of pages; no attempt is made to identify anonymous MSS or those whose beginning is missing, etc.

There is also a summary catalogue of Oriental MSS on the basis of cards in the general catalogue of MSS in the reading room.

Uncatalogued collections:
MSS acquisitions after Şawtî’s catalogue was edited include one Arabic (a Qur’ân), one Persian and two Turkish.

Biblioteca Centrală de Stat (Central State Library)
Str. Ion Ghica no. 4; Manuscript Dept.: str. Biserica Amzei, no. 5–7
Date of establishment: 1956
Status: National library
Total number of Islamic MSS: ca. 40 (31 Arabic; 2 Persian; 4 Turkish; others mixed).
Description of collection: The condition of the MSS is generally good; but decay has affected some which come from private collections.

No specialist has organised or even seen the collection, with the exception of the two Persian MSS described by Şawtî.

The Arabic MSS generally comprise religious works (Qur’ân, books of prayers), language handbooks, philological or rhetorical treatises or commentaries (Ali Juma, Ibn Malik, etc.), dictionaries, poetry, handbooks on jurisprudence (a Hanafi text dated to 986 AH), amulets (MS. 4940 comprises a zodiac written on hexagonal pages in multi-colour inks, kept in a round leather box), etc.

Turkish MSS comprise acts, stylistic models, verse (a collection of verses by Divri Efeendi, 1174 AH, found at Balchik, Bulgaria).

The manuscripts were generally acquired by isolated purchases; some of them were bought from the Muslim population of Balchik. At least one MS. was bought in 1931 from the Muslim population on the island of Ada-Kaleh, submerged by the Danube when the Iron Gate power station was built. Others come from private collections, e.g. Brătianu or Karadjà.

Published catalogues:

Unpublished catalogues:
The collection of Oriental MSS has an incomplete card catalogue. In some cases, the cards give such indications as title, author, number of pages, etc.; in others, only the MS. inventory number and the language in which it is written.

1976. See Union Catalogue by Sowti [Şawtî].
CLUJ

Biblioteca Academiei Române, Filiala Cluj (Romanian Academy Library, Cluj Branch)

Str. Republicii no. 9
Date of establishment: 1948
Status: Academic library
Total number of Islamic MSS: 163 (135 Arabic; 16 Persian; 10 Turkish; 2 mixed)
Description of collection: The physical condition of the MSS varies since they were brought to the library at different times and in different condition. The conditions in which they are now kept are good.

The Islamic manuscripts were part of the collection owned by Timotei Cipariu (1805–1887), Orientalist and bibliophile, teacher at the Blaj seminary and member of the Romanian Academy. They were the property of the Blaj seminary where they were kept in unsuitable conditions and were transferred to Cluj in 1948. Thirty-seven MSS are 19th-century copies made by Cipariu himself, or by scribes paid by him, of manuscripts kept in well-known European libraries (Vatican, Gotha, Vienna etc.) or in private collections like those of William Morley or Bavarhard Said. In addition, there are a few hundred leaves either from scattered manuscripts or from Cipariu’s texts: notes, glosses of celebrated works, indexes of verses quoted in the Arabian Nights (identifying the authors), correspondence with foreign Orientalists, etc.

Among the 135 Arabic MSS there are various literary texts, such as different versions of the Mu‘allaqat, of the Maqamāt of Harīrī, popular books like Alī Layla wa-Layla and the romance of Antar, collections of proverbs by Ibn Khalliqān, Zamakhsharī, Maṣūmī, books of astrology (Kitāb al-jadīd al-kabīr, Muḫṭār al-jadīd fī ṭalāyatīm), sciences, law, rhetoric, grammars, an Arabic translation from Plato and several probably less known books: a grammar by Gabriel Sionita, written in Alexandria in 1245 AH, a selection of verse by one Sulaymān dated 1519, a collection of muwahḥidī, the text of one Muhammad al-Samargandi, etc.

Persian MSS comprise classical texts from Ḥāftī, Sa‘ūdī, a grammar, a version of Anvār-i Suhaylī, etc. Among them is a copy of Firdawsī’s Shāh-nāma from the late 16th century, richly illustrated.

The Turkish MSS comprise 17th–19th-century historical, rhetorical, literary texts and acts.

For a brief description of the collection, see:

Published catalogues:

1987. See Union Catalogue by Beldescu, which includes 10 plates (XII–XXI) of miniatures from the Shāh-nāma.

Unpublished catalogues:
There is a card catalogue that records in most cases the authors, titles and brief information on MSS: number of pages, language, source, and in some cases the name of the scribe and the date when the copy was made.

Biblioteca Centrală Universitară Cluj (Central University Library of Cluj)

Str. Cliniciilor no. 2
Date of establishment: 1887
Total number of Islamic MSS: 15 (7 Arabic; 2 Persian; 6 Turkish).
Description of collection: The MSS are in good condition, being kept in appropriate library conditions (with acclimatization, etc.).

The Arabic MSS include a prayer book, an incomplete Qur‘ān, a ribbon-shaped amulet on which prayers, the 99 names of the Prophet, etc. are written with coloured decorations and arabesques (about two m. long and dated prior to the 19th century). Among the Turkish MSS is a selection of proverbs and poetry by Şehidi.

Unpublished catalogues:
There is a general card file of MSS. However, Islamic texts are not identified, the cards recording only the language (e.g. “Arabic MS.”) and the number under which it is listed.
CRAIOVA
Archivele Statului Craiova (State Archives of Craiova)

Date of establishment: 1952
Status: Public archives, giving limited access
Total number of Islamic MSS: 38 (37 Arabic; 1 Turkish).
Description of collection: The physical condition of the MSS is good. They are now kept in normal storage conditions.

The 38 Islamic MSS in the State Archives at Craiova were the property of the mosque on the Danube island of Ada-Kale, which was submerged when the Iron Gate hydroelectric station was built in 1962. They are religious texts (Qur'ān and commentaries), grammars, Arabic dictionaries, a cosmography and a geometry. The only Turkish MS. comprises verses by an unknown poet. Two Arabic MSS date from the early 15th century (811 and 817 AH), the rest being from the 16th–19th centuries. See:

Published catalogues:

Brief descriptions of contents, with codicological details, incipits, explicitis and annotations.

Summary of part of preceding item.

GALÁTÍ
Biblioteca “V.A. Urechea”

Str. Păcurari no. 4
Date of establishment: 1889 (through private donation)
Status: Public library
Total number of Islamic MSS: 8 (2 Arabic; 6 Turkish).
Description of collection: The MSS are kept in normal storage (non-acclimatized). The texts are religious commentaries, grammars and poetry, dating from the 18th–19th centuries.

Published catalogues:

Items 2, 3, 76, 126, 185, 194, 288, 336. Descriptions by a non-professional from information supplied by a Turkish speaker. Titles, authors, numbers of pages, sources, dates.

IĂȘI
Archivele Statului Iași (State Archives of Iași)

Date of establishment: 1832
Status: Public archives, giving limited access
Total number of Islamic MSS: 2 (Turkish).
Description of collection: The physical condition of the MSS is good; they are kept in a suitable place.

The two Turkish MSS are a register book of Prince M. Sturdza’s secret correspondence with the Porte (1834–1849) and a French-Turkish dictionary of set phrases.

Unpublished catalogues:
Islamic MSS are recorded only in the register of the MSS holdings. There is no card or other kind of catalogue.

Biblioteca Centrală Universitară “M. Eminescu” (M. Eminescu Central University Library)

Str. Păcurari no. 4
Date of establishment: 1640
Status: University library
Total number of Islamic MSS: 5 (4 Arabic; 1 Turkish).
Description of collection: The MSS are in good condition and are kept in appropriate buildings.

The 4 Arabic MSS are two Qur’āns (one richly ornamented, from the 16th century and another dating from the 18th or 19th century), a prayer book and a miscellaneous MS. comprising a treatise on adab and a grammar (both probably dating from the 18th century). The Turkish MS. is a 17th-century Kanunname from the earlier holding of the Academia Mihăileană (early 19th century).
Unpublished catalogues: There is a card catalogue of MSS. The cards for Islamic MSS give only brief information: contents, catalogue number, language and approximate date.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX


Rūmāniyā, Mulbaq pp. 129–130, no. 216.


Rumanie, p. 65.


Rumanya, p. 216, nos. 198–199.


