

Research without Archives?

The Making and Remaking of Area Studies Knowledge of the Middle East in a Time of Chronic War¹

LAILA HUSSEIN MOUSTAFA

ABSTRACT The Middle East is home to ancient historical documents of great value to archivists and historians. Systemic violence, warfare, and political instability in the region since the invasion of Iraq in 2003 have taken a terrible toll on documents and archives as well as human life. The destruction of libraries that house primary source materials affects the creation of knowledge in Middle Eastern studies in important ways that remain to be understood. In this article, I review the extent of the damage to libraries and archives in the region since the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and then ask: What happens to Middle Eastern studies when archives are destroyed and researchers must change their topics and methods of research? Can we create knowledge about a region when its archival resources and human informants are so endangered? If access to archival materials is essential to the very essence of Middle Eastern studies, then what is happening to that field and why should that matter to archivists? I recount anecdotal evidence of researchers changing the topics and themes of their research in response to a situation of limited access to archives and to the region, and then present outcomes of a survey I designed to understand more systematically how these problems are affecting the shape of research and knowledge about the Middle East. Finally, I present an aspirational call to the cultural heritage preservation community – researchers, archivists, and librarians – to digitize archival resources in the Middle East.

¹ The author would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive and helpful comments.

RÉSUMÉ Le Moyen-Orient abrite d'anciens documents historiques de grande valeur pour les archivistes et les historiens. La violence, les guerres et l'instabilité politique systémiques dans la région depuis l'invasion de l'Iraq en 2003 ont eu de lourdes conséquences sur les documents et les archives, aussi bien que sur les vies humaines. La destruction de bibliothèques qui hébergent des sources primaires a une incidence importante dont on ne saisit pas encore l'ampleur sur la création du savoir dans les études du Moyen-Orient. Dans cet article, je fais un survol de l'étendue des dommages causés aux bibliothèques et aux archives de la région depuis l'invasion américaine de l'Iraq en 2003 pour ensuite demander : qu'arrive-t-il aux études du Moyen-Orient quand les archives sont détruites et que les chercheurs doivent changer leurs sujets et méthodes de recherche? Peut-on créer le savoir au sujet d'une région quand ses ressources archivistiques et ses informateurs humains sont si menacés? Si l'accès aux matériaux archivistiques est essentiel à l'essence même des études du Moyen-Orient, qu'advient-il de ce domaine et pourquoi les archivistes devraient-ils s'en préoccuper? Je fournis des preuves empiriques de chercheurs qui changent leurs sujets et thèmes de recherche en réaction à l'accès limité aux archives et à la région, et je présente ensuite les résultats d'un sondage que j'ai conçu pour comprendre plus systématiquement comment ces problèmes affectent l'orientation de la recherche et du savoir au sujet du Moyen-Orient. Enfin, je lance un appel ambitieux à la communauté de la préservation du patrimoine culturel – chercheurs, archivistes et bibliothécaires – à numériser les ressources archivistiques dans le Moyen-Orient.

Introduction

In his 1974 presidential address to the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), Leonard Binder said, “Area Studies . . . holds that true knowledge is only possible of things that exist.” The concept of area studies came into being in the wake of the Second World War, and since then the field has gone through many changes. Likewise, there has been considerable debate about what constitutes “true knowledge.” In 1974, Binder could not have known how direct would be the very question of existence in now devastated regions of the Middle East.² Common sense indicates that the destruction of libraries, archives, and cultural resources affects research about the region. But how? What happens when access to a region and its archival, cultural, and human resources are so drastically curtailed? We do not yet know how the destruction of libraries and archives in time of war, along with limitations on access to countries considered unstable, affects the production of knowledge about the Middle East. What does it mean for archival research – and for area studies knowledge – when, as occurred during the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, 40 percent of the Iraqi National Library’s 5,147 manuscripts were burned or looted?³ Such a loss has cascading affects that archivists have barely begun to consider.

In this paper, I explore some of these cascading affects. First, I review the extent of the damage to libraries and archives in the region since the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. Second, I briefly review the history of area studies of the Middle East in order to pose a question: What happens to Middle Eastern studies when archives are destroyed and researchers must change their topics and methods of research? Here, I ask: Can we create knowledge about a region when its archival resources and human informants are so endangered? If access to archival materials is essential to the very essence of Middle Eastern studies, then what is happening to that field? Third, I recount anecdotal evidence of researchers changing the topics and themes of their research in response to a situation of

- 2 For the purposes of this article, I will draw on the statement of Richard Cox that archives are “repositories of interesting stuff, documents and artifacts, all of human history, all of human memory and knowledge, and simply as one more source of entertainment.” Richard J. Cox, *Vandals in the Stacks? A Response to Nicholson Baker’s Assault on Libraries* (London: Greenwood Press, 2002), 20.
- 3 UNESCO, Memory of the World, “Programme Objectives,” accessed 1 March 2016, unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-world/about-the-programme/objectives.

limited access to archives and to the region. Fourth, I present outcomes of a survey I designed to understand more systematically how these problems are changing the shape of research and knowledge about the Middle East. Finally, I present an aspirational call to the cultural heritage preservation community – researchers, archivists, and librarians – to digitize archival resources in the Middle East. What can we as archivists and librarians do to improve, even if marginally, the state of knowledge about “things that exist” in the Middle East.

Assessing the Damage

It is hard to assess the full scale of the destruction of libraries and archives in the Middle East since the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 (putting aside for the purposes of this paper the scale of the loss of human life). Soon after the invasion, all of the following were looted and burned: the Iraq National Library and Archive, the Awqaf Library, the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, the University of Baghdad Library in Baghdad, and other libraries and cultural sites. According to Koichiro Matsuura, Director General of UNESCO, before the invasion in 2003, collections housed in these libraries and archives contained nearly 20 centuries of human written history. Since ancient cuneiform writing was on tablets and other material artifacts, the destruction of written heritage and archives went beyond the loss of paper.

Before the invasion, Matsuura had called for endangered collections to be protected from looting and destruction. Unfortunately, his call went unheeded. In Baghdad, the National Museum of Iraq alone lost more than 15,000 items because of looting and destruction.⁴ Looters took thousands of ancient stamps and cylinder seals, including 120,000 out of 170,000 artifacts, and completely destroyed archives of newspapers and other documents.⁵ The Mosul National Library and Archive and the museum in Nimrud were looted as well during the war in 2003, and then again in 2015 and 2016 by the Islamic State of Iraq and

4 Ian M. Johnson, “The Impact on Libraries and Archives in Iraq of War and Looting in 2003: A Preliminary Assessment of the Damage and Subsequent Reconstruction Efforts,” *International Information and Library Review* 37 (2005): 209–71.

5 Robert M. Poole, “Looting Iraq,” *Smithsonian Magazine* (February 2008), accessed 9 November 2016, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/looting-iraq-16813540>.

Syria (ISIS).⁶ During the US invasion of 2003, libraries and archives in Iraq lost historical books, documents, maps, and other irreplaceable materials, many of which are still unaccounted for. It remains difficult to know exactly what was lost from the Iraq National Library and Archive, the Awqaf Library, the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs and other libraries in Iraq.

Despite the difficulty of collecting such information in a war zone, some fact-finding missions investigated losses from the 2003 invasion. For example, according to a UNESCO report, 40 percent of the 7,000 ancient manuscripts housed in the Library of Religious Endowments and 90 percent of its printed books have been lost as a result of fire and looters.⁷ But all that can be definitively concluded is that Iraq lost irreplaceable rare books, manuscripts, and other materials to looting and fires. Following the invasion, the US Army and the coalition forces took surviving Iraqi archives and moved them to the United States. The destruction of libraries and archives in Iraq did not end with the US invasion and occupation. In 2015, ISIS occupied the city of Mosul and damaged the ancient items in the National Museum of Iraq, the Central Library in the University of Mosul, and other libraries in the city.⁸

Libraries and archives in other countries have been destroyed in recent years as well. During the Arab Spring, which began in 2011, libraries in Egypt were attacked, damaged, and sometimes burned. The Museum of Egyptian Antiquities (known as the Egyptian Museum) was sacked in 2011 and lost some of its collections. The Egyptian Scientific Institute, which houses printed scientific manuscripts and books written in the 19th century, was attacked and burned that same year. Of the 200,000 items, people in the street rescued 30,000; the rest burned.⁹ In 2014, the Al Sa'elh Library in Lebanon burned down, and almost half of its 80,000 books and manuscripts were lost in the fire. "Religious

6 Clemens D. Reichel, "Lost Treasures from Iraq," *Oriental Institute of Chicago* (Iraq Museum Database Project/Iraqcrisis)," accessed 21 May 2017, oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/04-05_Iraq_Museum.pdf.

7 Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime: Soldiering, Martyrdom, and Remembrance* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

8 Laila Hussein Moustafa, "Culture Heritage and Preservation: Lessons from World War II and the Contemporary Conflict in the Middle East," *American Archivist* 79, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2016): 320–38.

9 Associated Press in Cairo, "Cairo Institute Burned During Clashes: Egyptian Academics and Volunteers Scramble to Save Thousands of Rare Manuscripts that Chart History of the Nation," *The Guardian*, 19 December 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/dec/19/cairo-institute-burned-during-clashes>.

extremists” were reportedly behind the attack.¹⁰ Destruction continued in the aftermath of the Arab Spring in Libya as well. Both public and private libraries were lost to looting and burning in the aftermath of the 2011 invasion, especially in Benghazi.¹¹ Mali suffered horrific losses as well. In 2013, the oldest priceless collection of African written history in Arabic, housed in the library of Timbuktu, was attacked; many of the manuscripts in the library were burned.¹² Taken altogether, these facts present the greatest loss of records of human history in the ancient civilization of the Middle East.

By 2013, the situation had worsened owing to the outbreak of the conflict in Syria. Countless cultural sites, including libraries and archives, were looted or ruined.¹³ Already by 2014, satellite images showed that almost all of Syria’s cultural heritage sites had been damaged.¹⁴ According to the US Bureau of International Information Progress (IIP), 90 percent of Syrian cultural sites were inside areas of conflict and displacement. It is still impossible to move inside Syria and have access to libraries or archives. Many Western scholars have had to leave Syria before finishing their research because of the security situation.¹⁵

Some archives did survive the invasion of Iraq. Here, I refer to two Iraqi archival collections that the American army seized and moved to the United States in 2003. The first is the Saddam Hussein Regime Collection, now housed

- 10 Rebecca Knuth, “Torched Library an Irreparable Blow to Lebanese Culture,” *The Conversation*, 10 January 2014, <http://theconversation.com/torched-library-an-irreparable-blow-to-lebanese-culture-21894>.
- 11 Interviews with librarians and archivists from Libya at international conference in Lyon-Paris, 2015. See also Tom Heneghan, “Freed From Gaddafi, Libyan Sufis Face Violent Islamist,” Reuters, 1 February 2012, <http://in.reuters.com/article/libya-sufis/freed-from-gaddafi-libyan-sufis-face-violent-islamists-idINDEE8100I820120201>.
- 12 Luke Harding, “Timbuktu Mayor: Mali Rebels Torched Library of Historic Manuscripts,” *The Guardian*, 28 January 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/28/mali-timbuktu-library-ancient-manuscripts>.
- 13 Hannah Ghorashi, “This Is a Genocide”: Art Historian Zainab Bahrani on ISIS’s Destruction of Cultural Heritage,” *ArtNews*, 11 November 2015, <http://www.artnews.com/2015/11/11/this-is-a-genocide-art-historian-zainab-bahrani-on-isiss-destruction-of-cultural-heritage/>.
- 14 Deborah Amos, “Via Satellite, Tracking the Plunder of Middle East Cultural History,” NPR Parallels, 10 March 2015, npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/03/10/392077801/via-satellite-tracking-the-plunder-of-middle-east-cultural-history.
- 15 Middle East Studies Association (MESA), “Middle East Primary Resources in Times of Conflict: The Future of Collections and Fieldwork,” a roundtable dissection 24 November 2015 during the annual meeting, accessed 12 January 2016, https://mesana.org/mymesa/meeting_program_session.php?sid=5afc0fc219bd64796b76a6a14501bc9f.

in the National Defense University's Conflict Records Research Center (CRRC) in Washington, D.C. These archives contain recorded audiotapes of Hussein's cabinet meetings and more than 30,000 pages of military and intelligence documents.¹⁶ The second collection includes the Ba'ath Party Records, housed at the Hoover Institution Library & Archives at Stanford University, California. This archival collection, which was brought to the institute in 2003, includes more than 100 million Ba'ath Party documents.¹⁷ This type of solution to the destruction of archives has its own problems: archivists and researchers have debated the ethical, legal, and political repercussions of seizing Iraqi archives during wartime and moving them to the country of the invading party.

In a series of articles about the Iraqi Ba'ath Party's archives, Bruce P. Montgomery has traced the course of debate about the removal of millions of documents, audio- and videotapes, hard drives, and digital devices from Iraqi ministries to the US. In *Archive of Atrocity 2014*, Montgomery raises the possibility of using these archives to support an international war crimes tribunal to prosecute Hussein for crimes committed under his leadership. Montgomery recounts how, in 2006, Congressional Republicans and the White House pushed the US intelligence community to make available on the Internet scanned documents from 48,000 boxes captured in 2003. The Pentagon and other American security units allowed researchers access to declassified digital copies of scanned portions of captured materials.¹⁸ The Iraqi archival materials included invaluable publications on the Ba'ath Party, networks and relationships inside the party and with the outside world, and information on tools used by the regime to control the population during the years of Ba'ath Party rule.¹⁹ Those who objected to the removal of state archives under conditions of invasion and occupation did not address other complex issues: Would the Iraqi archives have even survived under the Shiite government? Would they not have been enlisted into sectarian conflict and become a target for former Ba'athists to destroy potential evidence against them? Had documents been repatriated by Americans to Iraq while Iraq

16 Lawrence Rubin, "Research Note: Documenting Saddam Hussein's Iraq," *Contemporary Security Policy* 32, no. 2 (2011): 458–66.

17 Bruce P. Montgomery, "Immortality in the Secret Police Files: The Iraq Memory Foundation and the Ba'ath Party Archive," *International Journal of Cultural Property* 18, no. 3 (2011): 309–36.

18 Bruce P. Montgomery, "US Seizure, Exploitation, and Restitution of Saddam Hussein's Archive of Atrocity," *Journal of American Studies* 48, no. 2 (2014): 559–93.

19 Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime*.

was “still more at war than at peace with itself,” might not the archives have been destroyed then as well?²⁰ Libraries and archives remain the target of terrorist groups such as ISIS, who attacked cultural sites in Mosul, the University of Mosul library, and the Iraqi National Library and Archive in Baghdad.

Impact of the Damage on Middle Eastern Studies

The loss of all these documents is bound to reshape Middle Eastern studies (hereafter referred to as MES) in ways we do not yet understand. The implications of this loss are the topic of the next section of this article. To begin, I review the making and remaking of MES as a field of area studies. How have scholars created “true knowledge” about the region?

Even the category of the “Middle East,” it turns out, is far from simple. The “Middle East” was first used to denote the region in 1901 but became common only at the end of the Second World War.²¹ The Middle East is a historical region as opposed to a geographically defined one (such as Africa or Latin America).²² Written history of the region goes back several thousand years and includes many civilizations, ethnicities, and religions.²³ Its rich heritage and the parallel geographic spread around the world of Islamic civilizations, mainly associated with the Middle East, create both depth and complexity for archival research on the region. That complexity extends to the most basic of issues.

Remarkably, there is no consensus about what countries are included in the Middle East. One definition includes the eastern Mediterranean and land to the east as far as Afghanistan and Pakistan.²⁴ The website of the professional organization MESA adds Spain, India, and Central Asia since Islamic civilization

20 Montgomery, “Immortality in the Secret Police Files.”

21 Philip Mattar, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa*, 2nd ed. (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 1523.

22 The phrase “Middle East” in 1901 was used by Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, United States naval officer and historian; see Osamah F. Khalil, “The Crossroads of the World: U.S. and British Foreign Policy Doctrines and the Construction of the Middle East 1902–2007,” *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 2 (April 2014): 299–344.

23 The region’s ethnic groups included the Arabs, Persians, Turks, sub-Saharan African migrants, Kurds, and people of different religious faiths, such as Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and more.

24 Charles Kurzman, “Cross-regional Approaches to Middle East Studies: Construction and Deconstruction of a Region,” *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 41, no. 1 (June 2007): 24–29, accessed 17 March 2017, http://kurzman.unc.edu/files/2011/06/Kurzman_Cross-Regional_Approaches.pdf.

was long dominant in those areas. There is also disagreement about the region's name. For example, the Near East is an alternative designation for the region, more associated with French colonialism and French scholarship. The Near East typically includes the former French colonies of North Africa. MENA is another related term; it stands for the Middle East and North Africa. For the remainder of this article, I refer to the Middle East since that is the term used by the largest and most important professional organization, MESA.²⁵

The history of area studies in the Middle East is intimately tied to archival research. For this reason, the fate of MES is of direct relevance to archivists as well. Support for archival research in the region has largely been channelled through funding for area studies. The field of area studies, in the sense noted by Binder in his address, is marked by a commitment to intensive language study, in-depth field research in the local language, close attention to local histories, materials and interpretations, and multi-disciplinary conversations across the boundaries of the social sciences and humanities.²⁶ Researchers in MES come from disciplines as diverse as history, religion, political science, and anthropology. Area studies were institutionalized in US universities in a variety of forms: area studies departments, area studies centres, and area studies programs. MES is a branch of area studies housed in departments and centres across the United States, with a full range of academic degrees, from bachelor to doctoral.²⁷

MES started to receive financial support from the Department of Education through the Title VI program during the era following the Second World War. MES also received funding from private foundations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Endowment, and the Ford Foundation.²⁸ The Ford

25 Middle East Studies Association (MESA) is a professional organization in North America. See its website at <http://mesana.org>.

26 David L. Szanton, "The Origin, Nature, and Challenges of Area Studies in the United States," in *The Politic Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*, ed. David L. Szanton (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 3.

27 Robert B. Hall, *Area Studies: With Special Reference to Their Implications for Research in the Social Science* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1947), 86.

28 The American government created Title VI programs after the Second World War to support different area studies programs. Domestic grants are offered every four years to American universities to develop and maintain capacity and performance in area studies such as Middle Eastern studies, African studies, Slavic studies, and global and international studies, as well as world languages such as Arabic. In the last round in 2014, Title VI awarded 269 grants, totalling \$63,354,605, to institutions of higher education in the United States. See U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, "International Education Programs Service," <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/iegps/history.html>.

Foundation started to fund area studies centres to increase US government knowledge about faraway countries during the Cold War era.²⁹ During the 1960s, area studies were partially funded under Title VI to support the need for professionals with sufficient language capabilities. Funds from this program supported language and area studies centres, the Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship programs, the Fulbright fellowship and others, as well as research in language learning methodology and specialized teaching materials.

Access to fieldwork has been part of MES since the period after the Second World War. In the 1950s, George Cameron, head of the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan, was very active in developing the notion of MES field research. Cameron asked his university to support his idea of the “Field Project,” which took him and his team to research sites in northern Iraq and part of Iran. While in the field with his team from February to August 1951, he was able to copy the inscriptions he needed, a colleague was able to finish his dissertation research on Kurdish grammar, and another scholar accompanying them was able to conduct research as well.

Access to the field continued to be central to MES; when blocked, researchers looked for other solutions. For example, during the 1970s, when the Middle East became less hospitable to Americans because of ongoing tension and war between Israel and the Arab states, Princeton University received grants from the Ford Foundation to host scholars from the Middle East on a regular basis. The goal was to strengthen Princeton’s relationship with MES scholars and to help American scholars gain better access to the region. Access to the field is especially important for anthropology. In 1972, Richard Antoun conducted a survey with a sample of 300 anthropologists specializing in the Middle East, inquiring into their field research in the region: 72 had conducted fieldwork once, 19 twice, and 14 three times, with a total of 227 field trips to the region among the respondents.³⁰ Much of their research and language studies received funds from one program as part of Title VI.³¹

29 Zachary Lockman, *Field Notes: The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016), 148.

30 Richard T. Antoun, “Anthropology,” in *Rural Politics and Social Change in the Middle East*, ed. Illiya F. Harik and Richard T. Antoun (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1972).

31 Lockman, *Field Notes*, 148.

How does this relate to our concern about archives and primary documents housed in the region? At its core, as Paul W. Drake and Lisa Hibink explain, area studies is an intellectual and institutional construct that supports access to knowledge gained onsite – in the field.³² Unlike knowledge typically produced in, say, economics or political science, area studies knowledge is gained by going to a location, gathering information and data – be it through ethnography, interviews, or archival research. From the 1950s to 2001, there was an intuitive fit between the funding of research in and about the region based on local languages and standard views of the US government's strategic interests.³³ This gave a clear rationale for the funding of area studies.

Archival research was folded into this strategic imperative but was not specifically addressed until recently. The need to draw on more archival resources was incorporated as an imperative of area studies knowledge in a sweeping review of MES published in 2016, in which it was argued that additional archival research was needed to overcome the remaining misunderstandings of complex and changing political and strategic factors in the Middle East.³⁴ These complexities include rising tensions among international organizations, the United States, and Middle East nations in the post-2003 era, which dramatically slowed the flow of information and access to still existing regional resources.

An important study carried out by Laura Bier³⁵ on the changing direction of PhD dissertations shows some of the impacts that the current state of affairs is having on the shape of research on the Middle East and on the field of MES as the whole.³⁶ Bier analyzed 1,864 dissertations completed between 2000 and 2010 in disciplines affiliated with MES, including history, anthropology,

32 Ibid., 25.

33 Gabriel A. Almond, "The Political Culture of Foreign Area Research: Methodological Reflections," in *The Political Culture of Foreign Area and International Studies*, ed. Richard J. Samuels and Myron Weiner (New York: Brassey's, 1992), 200.

34 Seteney Shami and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, eds., *Middle East Studies for the New Millennium: Infrastructures of Knowledge* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 4.

35 Laura Bier, "Trends in the Production of Knowledge about the Middle East within and across Disciplines: A Survey of PhD Dissertations, 2000–2010," in *Middle East Studies for the New Millennium: Infrastructures of Knowledge*, ed. Seteney Shami and Cynthia Miller-Idriss (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 274.

36 These implications also relate to the effects of the sanctions on Iraq in the years leading up to the invasion in 2003, but that is outside of the scope of this article and so I refer interested readers to Thomas G. Weiss, *Political Gain and Civilian Pain: Humanitarian Impacts of Economic Sanctions* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997).

sociology, and political science.³⁷ Her study uncovered shifts in location and focus of study in various fields (possibly influenced by practical difficulties to research) as well as geographic gaps and understudied countries and societies. For example, Bier found that of her sample only two dissertations were written on Iraq because of the “extremely limited access that foreign researchers have had to historical archives in Iraq since the 1980s.” Of these two (and for other dissertations that at least touched on Iraq), damage to archives led researchers to seek out documents preserved outside Iraq.³⁸ In another study, Ariel Ahram found irregular research on Iraq owing to the lack of security and stability. More research was being carried out on the Kurdistan Regional Government since the security situation there was much better.³⁹ This finding reminds us that access to information requires not only funding but also stability, which is sorely lacking in countries like Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

The Changing Face of Research in and about the Middle East

In 2013, MESA hosted a roundtable called “Perspectives on Researching Iraq Today”⁴⁰ to address questions familiar to scholars working with archives everywhere: What archives can I access? How available are they? What are their quality? The dilemmas faced by those researching Iraq were quite severe. Almost every speaker – and many members of the audience as well – had a story outlining struggles and frustration with gaining access to research materials or funding for research in Iraq.⁴¹

Already at this meeting, it was clear that the challenges were not limited to access to information in Iraq: the problem was more widespread. I met researchers who had to change their doctoral topic or even their fieldwork country because of difficulties accessing archival materials. By the following

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 257.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 258.

³⁹ Ariel I. Ahram, “Iraq in the Social Sciences: Testing the Limits of Research,” *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 4 (2013): 251–66.

⁴⁰ Mona Damluji, Arbella Bet-Shlimon, Alda Benjamen, Salem Al-Bahloly, Haytham Bahoora, Caecilia Pieri, Bridget L. Guarasci, Zainab Saleh, and Peter Sluglett, “Roundtable: Perspectives on Researching Iraq Today,” *Arab Studies Journal* 23, no. 1 (2015): 236–65.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 236.

year's conference, the stories were not just about Iraq, but also about Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Tunisia, Mali, Iran, and Turkey. In 2015, I observed that more graduate students had to change their doctoral topic or fieldwork country due to difficulties accessing archival materials and gaining access to archives in countries that the US Department of State considered unstable. Some students had to change their fieldwork sites because scholarships they wanted to apply for would not allow them to conduct research in the specified country. I heard these stories as a librarian who advocates the preservation of archival materials as part of cultural heritage and also as a specialist in area studies. What were the larger implications of this situation? How many scholars were facing such challenges? How were they responding? Were these but individual short-term frustrations or were they indicative of a larger, long-term problem? I could find no answers.

To learn more and to address what I had begun to see as a systemic issue of significance, I designed and conducted a survey during the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017 to better understand the challenges faced by MES researchers when they try to access archives and other information in field research associated with area studies. My sample included scholars across the range of academic disciplines in MES: political science, sociology, anthropology, history, archeology, and economics.⁴² Respondents gave basic information about their academic training and department or centre affiliation. They answered questions about previous travel to the ME, future travel plans, and reasons for travel to the region. I then asked if unrest or funding limitations on travel had negatively affected their research plans, including both fieldwork and use of archives. I also asked for short narrative accounts of archival visits, which archives had been used in the past, and whether research necessitated travel to the region for access to archives. At this point, I asked respondents to outline possible alternatives for research if travel to the region or use of archives was impossible. Later, I modified the pilot survey for clarity based on a trial run with a smaller sample. My final survey had 21 questions (see appendix).

I sent the survey by email to 3,724 participants associated with MES (2,854 faculty and 870 students) at 197 universities in the United States and other Western countries. I selected a mix of private and public universities with both older established centres and others with newer, small centres. I selected indi-

42 Middle Eastern studies is an interdisciplinary field that includes anthropology, economics, history, sociology, and other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.

vidual students and faculty members from Near Eastern studies and Islamic studies departments and centres based on their research focus on Middle Eastern countries, regardless of discipline. The academic fields represented by the respondents included history, political science, anthropology, sociology, and architecture. I designed the survey to take only six to 10 minutes to complete. (For more details about the questionnaire and outcomes, see the appendix).⁴³

I distributed the survey in two phases. First, it was sent to researchers in 10 institutions in the United States during April and May 2016. Later, I sent the same survey to scholars in another 187 institutions in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia in February and March 2017.⁴⁴ A total of 421 were dropped from the sample when emails were returned either because of invalid addresses or auto-reply messages indicated that the recipient was travelling outside of the country or was on sabbatical. A further 25 potential participants informed me that they were not qualified to take the survey for various reasons, including the fact that their research did not require them to use archives or even travel to the region. Another 11 persons expressed interest in taking the survey, but only after the closing day. In the end, a total of 221 researchers responded to the survey. In the next section, I present the survey outcomes, both in graphic form and with an explanation of the main findings.

Of the respondents, 54 percent were faculty members, 34 percent students, 7 percent post-doctorates, and 4 percent “others.” Scholars and students in departments of Middle Eastern/Near Eastern studies made up the majority of the respondents, at 29 percent; historians were the second largest, at 21 percent; and anthropologists were the third largest, at 11 percent.

43 The survey was a pilot and was tested with five individuals affiliated with different universities to refine questions and determine how much time it would take to complete the survey. In response to the suggestions of pilot test participants, I deliberately placed questions related to the respondent’s personal identifying information (e.g., student or faculty status, terminal degree, departmental affiliation) at the end of the survey to maintain the proper focus on the survey topic upfront. I also included at the end a question about participant willingness to meet for an interview. Those who completed the survey were invited to leave their name and email to participate in follow-up interviews. It was encouraging to find that 40 respondents volunteered to participate in future interviews. Only the findings from the survey are reported in this article. The interviews will be conducted in the future, when I secure funding to support the research.

44 I wish to thank two students who were affiliated with the Center of South Asia and Middle East Studies at the University of Illinois, Lauren Fritzsche and Matthew (Matt) Hendricks, for volunteering to help me collect the names of the researchers from different websites and lists. Their support was very essential.

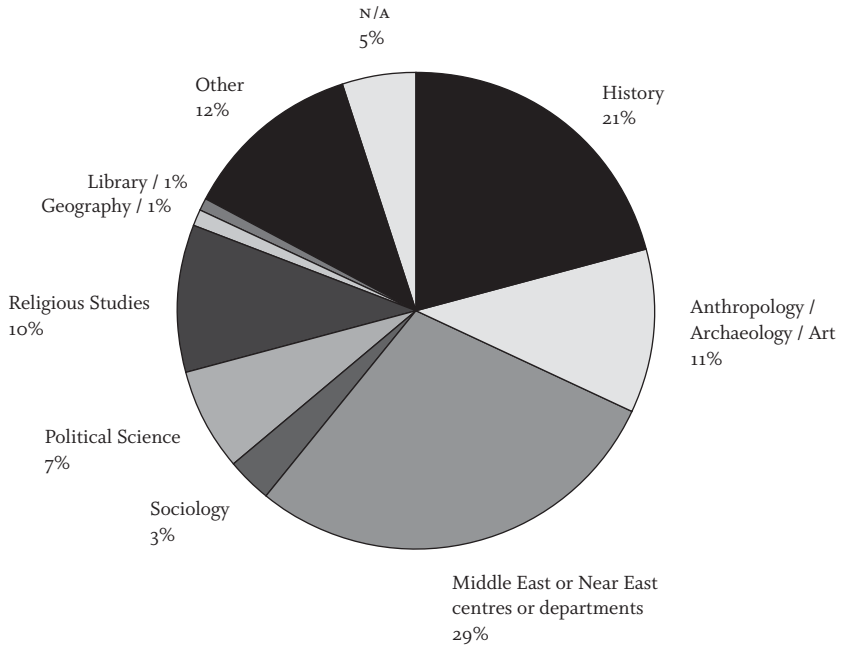


FIGURE 1. *Distribution of departmental affiliation.*

Ninety-three percent of respondents went to the Middle East to conduct research; 48 percent to study language; 15 percent for a job; and 4 percent for internship opportunities (see figure 2). Sixty-four percent indicated that travelling was required, while 35 percent indicated that it was not. Of those who responded to the questions “How many times did you travel to the ME?” and “What countries in the Middle East are most relevant to your research?” most indicated that they had been to the region between five and 10 times. One respondent wrote that he/she “travelled to Iran almost for ten years to study the language and conduct research.” Another person said he/she went to Yemen “for twelve months, Egypt for four months, Morocco for eight months.” Yet another replied, “I went to Syria in 2010 for 2 months, Jordan for 6 months, Israel for some days, and Egypt for 3 years,” indicating that travel to the region was a routine that could extend over years, including visits to different countries in the region.

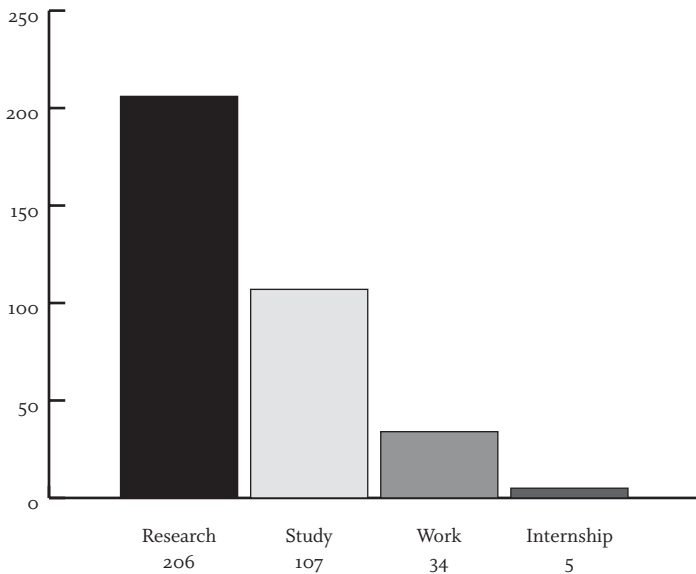


FIGURE 2. Reason for travelling to the Middle East in the past.

Respondents were still planning to travel to the region; 69 percent planned to do so in the future to conduct interviews, use archives, or study. Thirty-nine percent planned to travel for research and 40 percent to use archives; 17 percent planned to study a language; 2 percent had plans for an internship; and 3 percent planned to work as a volunteer. It is striking to realize that about the same number planned to use archives as planned to conduct fieldwork or carry out interviews. At the same time, many of those who planned to conduct fieldwork or interviews were also travelling to use archives.⁴⁵ Once again, the use of archives is of increasing importance to researchers in the field of MES in different disciplines.⁴⁶ The survey results show a striking drop in the number of researchers

⁴⁵ Respondents were able to select more than one response to this question on the survey. Archives in the Middle East usually carry Ottoman records, materials from the French mandate period, British colonial power records, and monarchy documents. Usually contemporary social and political issues are difficult to access, especially for foreign researchers, in almost every country in the Middle East.

⁴⁶ Researchers were also asked about the name of the archives they consulted; see appendix for details.

who plan to go to the Middle East in the near future. While 93 percent had gone there in the past, only 69 percent plan to in the future.

In the narrative section of the survey, respondents wrote about which archives and/or libraries they planned to use. Individual responses were then categorized into types of institutions. Government archives (such as the National Archives in Turkey) were the most frequent; private archives and higher education archives were widely used. The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's Office (Basbakanlık Osmanlı Arsivi) were most often mentioned; next often were the National Archives of Egypt, Israel, and private archives in Palestine. On average, respondents consulted two or three archives while in the field. Some expanded on their reasons for using archives. For example, one researcher stated, "Having access to libraries in the Middle East and Central Asia is key to my research even though many manuscripts are now online." Another participant wrote, "Some materials are not found here in the US." Another added, "I also browse archives in Middle Eastern countries about language and cultural contact." One respondent wrote, "Most of the archives I work with are non-digitized and therefore only available in person.... I really want to add to the field by using original sources/manuscripts."

Travel to the region was required for research or language study for 65 percent of respondents; 53 percent indicated that such travel was not required. In the past, 107 participants had gone to Egypt, 115 to Turkey, and 76 to Lebanon. However, in the future only 62 respondents planned to go to Egypt, 63 to Turkey, and 48 to Lebanon. Some shifted plans to travel to Morocco or Jordan instead, because they were able to receive funding to travel to these countries. Others changed their research topics to avoid travel to Egypt, Iraq, or Syria because of political unrest.⁴⁷

Iraq remained the most dangerous place in the world in which to conduct research after 2003 because of violence not only against foreign researchers, but also against Iraqi students and faculty in Iraqi universities, especially in Baghdad and Basra.⁴⁸ However, according to the survey results, the number of the researchers planning to go to Iraq in the future is larger than in the recent

47 Researchers who said they were planning to conduct research in Syria, Iraq, or Egypt commented that they have relatives in these countries and visit them too.

48 Ariel I. Ahram, "Iraq in the Social Sciences: Testing the Limits of Research," *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 4, no. 251 (2013): 251-66.

past. One explanation I can give, based on results in the narrative section of the survey, is that these researchers plan to do research in Kurdistan, which is currently far safer than the rest of Iraq.⁴⁹ All in all, the survey results indicate a significant change in destination countries for research and language study. This fact alone indicates that the field of MES is facing challenges that need more study.

The final section of the survey focused on archives. I wanted to determine whether or not researchers had alternatives to archives on-site if none were accessible or had been destroyed. The results were that 44 percent of respondents had no idea what they would do; 3 percent said that they already faced such a situation and had to change their topic and archives location; 7 percent said that they would change their topic; and 37 percent responded that they would use alternative digitized materials. Some participants expanded upon their answers. "That is a real problem," one commented. Another said, "Skype/phone if unable to interview in person." One faculty member pointed out the need for fieldwork research and the need to use archives, saying, "Access to archival materials is essential to the very essence of Middle East studies; limitations to access constitute an existential threat that must be addressed." Suggestions included "finding dislocated persons living in Western countries" and to "train local research assistants to conduct interviews, which I am planning to do anyway; I have already done this." Another wrote, "There are no real alternatives." Other responses included: "Email contact is something possible but usually unhelpful"; "Not sure. I have not thought about it"; "Change research country"; and "My subjects are all long dead."

Another striking finding is that most respondents used archives every time they travelled to conduct research: 71 percent said they used archives and libraries in the Middle East; only 29 percent did not need to use them (most of that 29 percent were in the fields of political science, religious studies, and nursing).

In response to the question about the effects of unrest or conflict in the region on researchers' ability to travel to conduct their research, 76 percent agreed that unrest made it difficult for them to travel and access to their field site, including archives. In response to a question about funding restrictions and travel, 73 percent said that funding conditions had limited their ability to

49 For example, Fulbright scholarships were not given to any researcher going to Iraq from 2001 until 2010. In 2011, one scholar received a Fulbright fellowship. In 2013, six researchers received a Fulbright scholarship. In 2014, no awards were given to support scholars researching Iraq.

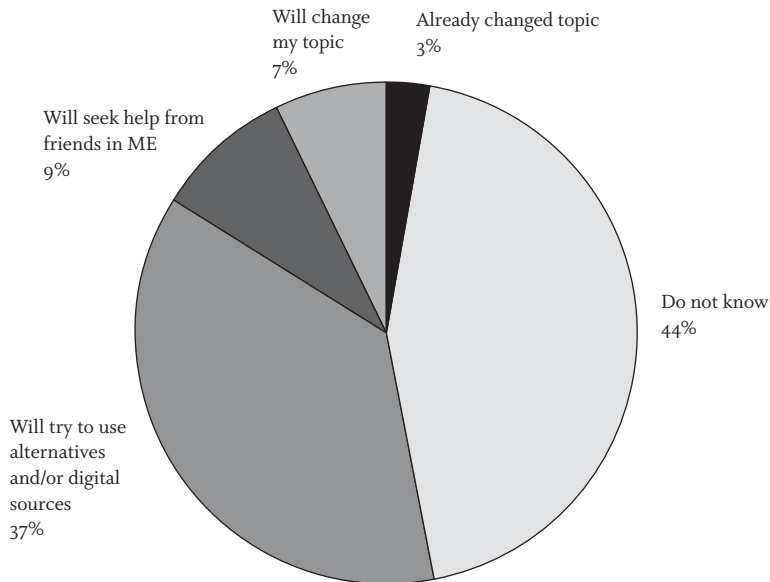


FIGURE 3. Alternatives in case of no access to fieldwork or archives.

travel to certain countries. Only 27 percent said that new funding constraints were not influencing their travel plans. One respondent wrote, “I obtained a Fulbright-Hays for research in Egypt and Turkey in 2013, but Egypt is no longer an option with Fulbright.” Another respondent indicated, “Sort of. I have some funding now, but if I needed substantial funding it would be difficult.”

In sum, survey results underscore the importance of travel to the region for research, including archival research, for researchers in different disciplines in the field of MES. The substantial drop in the number of participants planning to go to Egypt, Turkey, or Lebanon in the near future should be alarming, given the impact it could have on production of knowledge in MES. Another important finding is most relevant to librarians and archivists: survey responses clearly indicate a growing need for alternative resources and digitized archives created in partnership with Middle Eastern libraries and archives.⁵⁰

50 This study features a small non-random sample of students and faculty in Middle Eastern studies. While the data and conclusions will likely resonate with doctoral students at a variety of institutions, the situation of every institution will vary. The study focuses on survey data.

Thoughts About a Conclusion and Action Program

To close this article, I would like to end where I started, with Leonard Binder's 1974 presidential address to the MESA and his comment that "Area Studies ... holds that true knowledge is only possible of things that exist." Area studies depend on fieldwork, archives, and interviews. It depends on scholars who have a deep knowledge of language. My study confirms a point made by Binder in his address: "Access to archival materials is essential to the very essence of Middle East studies; limitations to access constitute an existential threat that must be addressed."⁵¹ Archives are at least as central to the future of area studies of the Middle East as fieldwork and interviews. Scholars across the humanities and social sciences have a growing interest in archives. But in the Middle East at least, archives are at risk of disappearing.

If libraries, archives, and cultural heritage are being wantonly destroyed across the Middle East, and if scholars and future scholars are unable to access the primary sources that have survived, what will happen to area studies of the Middle East? Our skills as archivists and librarians will be crucial. Even if we cannot carry out what we would ideally like to do, it is still incumbent upon us to raise this issue more broadly. Survey respondents clearly indicated that if they cannot travel to the region, they want to access digital archives. But the dilemma, at least a dilemma that we as archivists and librarians can address, is this: far too few records and books held in the region's archives and libraries have been digitized. Here, I cannot help but return to Iraq, where the dilemmas I outlined in this article are most stark and where the responsibility of the United States is most clear. As Douglas Fox put it in his important article "National Archives and International Conflicts: The Society of American Archivists and War,"

we all share Iraq's culture and history ... the loss of this heritage would not only hurt the Iraqi people: it would also make it harder for Americans to understand our [own] culture.... Without records, the Iraqi people as

51 Timothy Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science," in *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*, ed. David L. Szanton (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

well as the citizens of the world lose an important part of our shared cultural heritage.⁵²

This statement makes clear our shared role and duties as librarians, archivists, and researchers in relation to the documents and cultural resources of the Middle East. In an ideal world, Middle Eastern governments would act soon and take steps to preserve their heritage. But we cannot wait for that time. As more researchers are unable to travel to their target research country or are ineligible for funding because of travel bans, senior researchers will have to find a solution. The need could not be more urgent.

In 2015, a survey was published about library and archives preservation and disaster management plans in the Middle East.⁵³ The survey covered 86 national libraries and archives and academic institutions in 19 countries.⁵⁴ Almost all of the respondent institutions were unprepared to preserve their materials in the event of man-made disasters such as internal or external conflict. Most of the institutions housing the oldest historical materials in the region had no basic disaster management plan in place at all.⁵⁵ Thirteen respondents had some sort of disaster management plan; only five respondents were in the process of preparing such plans. Of the 13 positive responses, only seven had a disaster management plan in case of war (the disaster management plans of the other six respondents were only in the case of natural disasters). This survey confirmed the lack of disaster management planning in most of the Middle Eastern national libraries and archives. It revealed that in times of conflict most, if not all, national libraries and archives will probably lose a significant part, or all, of their collections and holdings.

52 Douglas Fox, "National Archives and International Conflicts: The Society of American Archivists and War," *American Archivist* 74, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2011): 452.

53 Laila Hussein Moustafa, "Endangered Culture Heritage: A Survey of Disaster Management Planning in Middle East Libraries and Archives," *Library Management* 36, no. 6-7 (2015): 476-94.

54 The countries are Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine, Jordan, Qatar, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Yemen, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

55 According to the *Dictionary for Library and Information Science*, a disaster management plan is a "set of written procedures prepared by the library staff in advance to deal with an unexpected occurrence that has the potential to cause injury to personnel or damage to equipment or to collections and/or to facilities sufficient to warrant temporary suspension of services." Joan M. Reitz, *Dictionary for Library and Information Science* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2004), 221.

This situation is an international emergency. We risk losing world heritage documents because of conflict existing almost in every country in the region. Libraries and archives are unprepared and have no plan to save their heritage. They are highly vulnerable. Documents need to be preserved and digitized to protect knowledge and to create access to that knowledge. Librarians and scholars in the West and in Middle Eastern countries need to work together to form a shared strategy to save heritage documents and other items for future generations. Collaboration is needed among researchers and librarians, archivists and scholars to bring this about. Senior researchers can encourage researchers and students to work with librarians in their institutes to suggest collections that need to be preserved. They can help build relationships between their institute's libraries and archives and libraries and archives and private libraries in the Middle East.

Here, we can take heart from past efforts to collaborate and preserve at-risk materials. African studies scholar Charles Stewart, for example, helped rescue Mauritanian Arabic manuscripts and helped the Mauritians microfilm a unique collection of 19th-century manuscripts. David Hollenberg has worked with Yemenis since 1994 to help them catalogue, digitize, and preserve very old collections of the Zaidi manuscripts in Yemen.⁵⁶ Hollenberg collaborated with the Imam Zaid ben Ali Cultural Foundation (IZBACF), a non-governmental organization in Yemen that was established in order to collect materials housed as private collections. The NGO has been in charge of ensuring ownership, cataloguing the private collections since 1994, and digitizing manuscripts since 1999.⁵⁷ Digitized materials are freely accessible online through the Princeton University Digital Library website.⁵⁸ The project has helped preserve heritage

56 Under the directorship of Anne Regourd, the Zabid Programme sponsored by the French Centre for Archeology and Social Sciences in Sanaa, successfully catalogued, digitized, and physically restored manuscripts from the private libraries of religious scholars in Zabid. See Anne Regourd, ed., *Catalogue cumulé des manuscrits de bibliothèques privées de Zabid : La bibliothèque de 'Abd al-Rahman al-Hadhrami*, fasc. 1, Fonds social de développement (Sanaa, Yemen: Centre français d'archéologie et de sciences sociales, 2006). Based on YMDI's (Yemeni Manuscript Digitization Initiative) model, Sabine Schmidtke led the digitization project; see Jan Thiele and Sabine Schmidtke, *Preserving Yemen's Cultural Heritage: The Yemen Manuscript Digitization Project* (Sanaa, Yemen: Botschaft der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 2011).

57 See University of Oregon, Yemeni Manuscript Digitization Initiative, <https://ymdi.uoregon.edu/projects>. See also Princeton University Digital Library, Yemeni Manuscript Digitization Initiative, <http://pudl.princeton.edu/collections/pudl0079>.

58 Ibid.

collections and give them back to the original owners (the Zaidi communities in Yemen), providing them with the tools of digitization, such as scanners, and training in preservation, scanning, and cataloguing. Such a project presents a collaboration both to preserve materials and to make them accessible. The collection is irreplaceable; it is now at risk of destruction in Yemen owing to warfare.

Many foundations are interested in digitizing materials in the Middle East; some offer funding to cover the cost of digitization, equipment, and training. Examples are the Endangered Archives Programme of the British Library; the Prince Claus Fund, which provides aid through its cultural emergency response program; the United States of America Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation; and the German Federal Foreign Office Funds. Scholars and archivists need to promote proactive disaster management planning. Efforts made by Stephen Kutay to preserve primary sources locally provide an illustrative case. Kutay conducted a faculty survey regarding primary research assets that were collected or created during archival research.⁵⁹ The survey revealed that researchers need to learn about the ability of libraries to help digitize and preserve materials. Researchers also need to learn about ownership and copyright issues and to change their attitudes about sharing data and opening up primary sources to the public.

Further research is needed to demonstrate the value of archival materials in the field of Middle Eastern studies and to illustrate the challenges faced by scholars because of war and turmoil in the region. Solutions cannot be designed in the West and imposed on the Middle East. Rather, solutions need to be designed in full cooperation with Middle Eastern stakeholders. As part of our work to save this crucial part of the world document heritage, archivists and librarians in the West need to help Middle Eastern librarians and archivists adapt to the tragic realities of ongoing warfare and unrest in the region, and to create disaster management plans and digitization projects.

Important questions need to be addressed in future research: When, if ever, should collections be evacuated? What are the preservation costs if some of the materials cannot be removed and need to be digitized? What if Middle Eastern libraries and archivists are reluctant to accept offers of help from Western organizations because of historical sensitivities in light of colonial histories in the

59 Stephen Kutay, "Advancing Digital Repository Services for Faculty Primary Research Assets: An Exploratory Study," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 40, no. 6 (2014): 642-49.

region? What if they are willing to help digitize materials but demand that those materials be put online and made accessible to all at any time? Answers to these questions can only be provided through ongoing cooperation among librarians, archivists, and area studies specialists from the region and from wealthy countries in the West. This may be an unachievable and idealistic goal. The stakes are too high for us to neglect to try.

BIOGRAPHY Laila Hussein Moustafa is Assistant Professor and Middle East and North African Studies Librarian at the University of Illinois in Urbana Champaign. Her research agenda revolves around the preservation of cultural heritage in times of war and sustained conflict in the region of the Middle East and North Africa and she has published articles in the *American Archivist* and *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage*. She is a board member of international organizations such as the Endangered Archives Programme of the British Library and the Free Education Library for Syrians, operated by the Open Learning Exchange.

Appendix: Survey of Fieldwork in the Middle East/Near East/Africa

I am conducting a survey to try to understand how war and conflict in some parts of the world, particularly in one of the Middle East countries or one of the listed countries below, affect the study of those very regions. I am also interested in learning how scholars try to find alternative ways to find the information they need if they cannot travel to the field to use the archive or interview their research target groups.

The following countries are relevant to this survey: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, South Sudan, Mali, Mauritania, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine (West Bank and Gaza), Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Bahrain, Djibouti, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman.

1. What is/was your purpose of travel to the Middle East/Near East/Africa?
Check all that apply.
 - Research
 - Study (language, study abroad, etc.)
 - Job
 - Internship

2. If you have traveled to any of the countries listed above, please document how many times, where, and for how long.

3. What countries in the Middle East/Near East/Africa have you traveled to?

4. Are you currently planning to travel to the Middle East /Near East/Africa for study or research?
 - I am planning to travel
 - I am not planning to travel

5. What is the purpose of your future travel? Please check all that apply.
 - Conduct interviews
 - Use the archives
 - Study a language
 - Internship

- Volunteer work
 - Other, write in
 - Not applicable
6. How important is traveling for your fieldwork or study?
- Very important
 - Important
 - Not important
7. Please explain how your travel to study a language or conduct your research is crucial for your study.
8. Is traveling to the Middle East/Near East/Africa required as part of your research or study?
- It is required
 - It is not required
9. If you are planning to travel, which archives and/or libraries are you planning to use while you are in the Middle East/Near East/Africa? e.g. National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco.
10. What countries in the Middle East/Near East/Africa are most relevant to your research? Please list the names of all the countries.
11. What are your alternatives if you cannot visit the library or archives you need for your research? Please write N/A if not applicable.
12. What are your alternatives if you cannot interview your target population? Please write N/A if not applicable.
13. Did you have positive experiences while using the libraries/archives in the Middle East/Near East/Africa? If yes, please list 1-2 positive experiences and in which country? Please write N/A if not applicable.

14. Did you have any negative experiences while using the libraries/archives in the Middle East/Near East/Africa? If yes, please list 1-2 negative experiences and in which country. Please write N/A if not applicable.
15. Does unrest or conflict in the Middle East/Near East/Africa limit your ability to travel to conduct research and/or study? If yes, briefly explain.
16. Does your research funding limit what country you travel to in the Middle East/Near East/Africa?
- Yes
 - No
 - Other, write in
17. Would you recommend your research host country to other researchers or students to conduct their study?
- Yes
 - No
 - Other, write in
18. Are you:
- Faculty
 - Student
 - Post-doctorate
 - Other, write in
19. If you are a student, what type of degree are you pursuing?
- Doctorate
 - Master
 - Bachelor
20. What department are you affiliated with?
21. Please provide your name below (last name, first name) and your email if you do not mind being contacted for more information.