Collection Development Policy for Middle Eastern Studies

1. Overview

1.1. General coverage of the subject in the Bodleian Libraries

Geographical and subject coverage
The Bodleian Libraries acquire resources relating to Middle Eastern Studies as extensively as funds permit, both in the general humanities and social sciences, regardless of the language or place of publication. The geographical coverage of the field spans West Asia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, North Africa and the historical territories of the Islamic Empire. The Bodleian collects materials relating to the languages, literatures, religions, cultures and politics of these regions from pre-history to the present day.

Islamic and Eastern Christian Studies relating to the above geographical areas from roughly the period of the Muslim conquests onwards are covered by this policy. There is a separate collection development policy for general Hebraica, Judaica, and Semitics but note that Modern Israel and Palestine Studies are covered by this policy. Ancient Near Eastern Studies and Studies in the Byzantine (= Coptic) Period in Egypt are covered elsewhere.

Libraries
The main collections are housed by the Bodleian Oriental Institute Library (OIL), the Bodleian’s off-site Storage Facility (BSF) and the Middle East Centre Library (MEC). A number of other Bodleian libraries serve in support notably: the Leopold Muller Memorial Library (LMML), the Sackler Library (SAC), the Bodleian History Faculty Library (HFL), the Bodleian Social Science Library (SSL), the Philosophy and Theology Faculties Library (PTFL), the Taylor Institute Library (TAY), the Bodleian Law Library (LAW) and the Weston Library (WES).

Resource Discovery Tools
SOLO (http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk) is the online catalogue for the University of Oxford which lists most books, journals and electronic resources in the Bodleian Libraries’ teaching, learning and research collections. Records for significant parts of the 19th and 20th century printed collections (particularly in vernacular languages) have yet to be added to SOLO. However, the card catalogue for these sections is still available for consultation and is located at OIL. Retrospective cataloguing continues as a high priority, and new records are being regularly added to SOLO. An online guide to the Middle Eastern and Islamic collections is available at http://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/MiddleEast. There are separate resource discovery tools for manuscripts and special collections which are listed on the special collections Middle East LibGuide page https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/c.php?g=422971&p=2888527.

1.2. Legal deposit
The Bodleian Libraries acquire via legal deposit the great majority of works relating to Middle Eastern Studies published within the British Isles and some material from the United States. Some of these publications do not arrive automatically and still need to be claimed by subject librarians. Selections from the Bodleian Libraries’ legal deposit intake on the countries of the Middle East are made by all relevant Bodleian Libraries (note that this excludes the Middle East Centre Library). Any legal deposit titles not selected for the open shelves are kept offsite at the Book Storage Facility (BSF) from where they can be requested to most of the Bodleian Libraries Reading Rooms.

From 2013 onwards UK publishers have been switching to depositing their publications in electronic format, meaning that the Bodleian Libraries are now receiving electronic legal deposit versions of many of the main books, articles, web pages and other electronic documents published in the UK.

1.3. Electronic resources

SOLO lists all electronic resources purchased or subscribed to by the Bodleian Libraries, such as bibliographic databases, full text sources, e-journals and e-books. It also includes selected open-access resources. The Bodleian Libraries purchase a number of electronic resources covering Middle Eastern, Islamic Studies and Eastern Christian Studies, a list of which can be accessed via the Bodleian’s A-Z Database platform by selecting Middle Eastern Studies.

1.4. Notes about particular formats or collections

Film
Film Studies is a growing academic discipline in Oxford, with collections dispersed across a number of Bodleian Libraries. The Film Studies Subject Consultant has overall responsibility for these collections, and a separate collection policy is available. Middle Eastern films on DVD are purchased by the Taylor Institute Library for its European and World Cinema collection. In general, monographs relating to Middle Eastern film are purchased by the MEC Librarian or the Bodleian Librarian for Middle Eastern and Islamic Collections dependant on the subject covered.

Grey literature
The Bodleian Libraries, specifically the OIL, BSF and MEC, have considerable collections of pamphlets and other grey literature relating to Middle Eastern Studies. MEC also makes available its Mphil Theses for consultation. Grey literature isn’t collected systematically but items are added to the collection via donations or purchased if they are deemed important.

Newspapers
The Bodleian Libraries have a small collection of Middle Eastern newspapers, mostly housed offsite at the BSF, this includes a small but important collection of donated Armenian language newspapers. The MEC has a number of newspapers available on microfilm. A list of Arabic periodicals including newspapers held at Oxford with information about date ranges and formats, can be found on the Middle East LibGuide: http://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/MiddleEast. Newspaper acquisitions are considered on a case by case basis upon request.
1.5. Languages

The Bodleian Libraries’ Middle Eastern collections cover publications relating to Middle Eastern studies regardless of the language. The Bodleian Libraries’ Middle Eastern collections have a particular focus on languages of the region that relate to current and historic research and teaching interests of the University’s Faculty of Oriental Studies. These include Arabic, Modern Hebrew, Persian, Turkish, Ottoman Turkish, Central Asian Languages, Armenian, Georgian and Azeri. The Bodleian (BSF), OIL and MEC have strong collections of material in all these languages, including a lending collection of modern literature for Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages belonging to the OIL. The Sackler Library collects mainly European language material, although will collect items in Middle Eastern languages upon request. The HFL, SSL, PTFL and Law library collect mainly English language and some European language material.

2. Teaching collections

The OIL and the MEC provide the main lending and teaching collections for this subject area. The LMML, HFL, SSL and PTFL also provide lending collections for their departments with some coverage of Middle Eastern, Islamic and Eastern Christian Studies.

The OIL is the lending and teaching library for Middle Eastern languages and literature (classical and modern) and for pre-modern Middle Eastern history, culture, religion, theology and philosophy in support of the Oriental Faculty’s teaching syllabus.

The MEC Library, while strictly an area studies centre of St Antony’s College, is resourced by the Bodleian Libraries’ Social Science and Humanities Division, and is the lending and teaching library for history, politics and social sciences of the modern Middle East including Modern Israel and Palestine Studies (note that modern (creative) literature is collected for the OIL instead). The MEC is a Graduate library and supports the MPhil, MSt and MSc taught courses in Modern Middle Eastern Studies; it also lends to undergraduates reading Oriental subjects during term time only.

The LMML holds the teaching collections for Modern Hebrew literature as well as housing some Israel Studies material, particularly those books published in Hebrew.

The HFL holds lending and teaching collections in English relating to the history of the Middle East in support of the History Faculty’s teaching syllabus. The emphasis is on the history of European involvement with the Middle East.

The SSL collects material in English and European languages relating to the Middle East within the context of its support for the research and teaching activities of the Department of International Development and the School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies. Global political and western foreign policy works are also collected in support of the Department of Politics and International Relations.

The PTFL holds collections in English relating to Islamic Studies in support of the Theology and Oriental Faculties teaching programmes.
The SAC provides the teaching collection for Islamic Art and Archaeology but does not lend this collection.

2.1. Textbooks

The OIL’s and MEC’s lending and teaching collections relating to the Middle East are selected in accordance with Faculty reading lists (where these exist) and otherwise on the recommendation of Faculty lecturers.

2.2. Journal articles

The majority of journals are available online. Any journal articles required for teaching that are unavailable in Oxford (online or print) will be obtained through inter-library loan. Providing the terms of the University’s licence agreement with the Copyright Licensing Agency are adhered to, academics may scan journal articles (and book chapters) for use via WebLearn to students registered on the course or make the relevant number of multiple copies.

2.3. Levels of provision

Reference copies are available in the several Bodleian Libraries including the OIL, MEC, Upper Camera and SSL. Much of the recently acquired material for the Bodleian Libraries is stored at the BSF from where it can be requested to numerous reading rooms.

If OIL, MEC, HFL, or PTFL select a textbook from a reading list for purchase, then normally one lending copy will be bought in the first instance. This copy may be print or electronic depending on the specific needs of the course. If the title is for a highly subscribed course or should evidence from enquiries, circulation and reservation activities indicate high use, then additional copies or an e-copy may be bought, sometimes over time, to support the higher demand.

SSL aims to provide a minimum of two print copies (one reference and one lending), or one online copy of every core text. Additional copies are purchased in the light of user needs, requests and usage patterns.

Other
Primary source materials

The study of primary sources is a vital part of many Oxford Humanities courses which place much emphasis on teaching students how to interpret and understand these. In addition to the vast Bodleian collections stored at the BSF and the HFL, OIL attempts to buy for the lending collection as many relevant modern and affordably priced editions of source material as possible.

Courses

Note that it is the responsibility of lecturers to keep the Library informed of teaching requirements. For major course revisions or new courses, the Humanities Division requires a supporting letter from the Bodleian Librarian for Middle East and Islamic Studies and the Department may be required to pay start-up costs.
3. Research collections

3.1. Research monographs

The majority of the research collections for Middle Eastern Studies will be acquired for the MEC or for the Bodleian Libraries and stored offsite. There are currently comprehensive research collections of printed material on the languages, history, culture, politics, economic and social development of all of the countries of the Middle East. SAC holds comprehensive research collections on Middle East, Islamic and secular architecture, painting, sculpture, crafts and textiles. The Bodleian Libraries welcome all suggestions for monograph purchases from members of the Department.

3.2. Monographic series/standing orders

The Bodleian Libraries Middle East collections include substantial numbers of standing orders for major monographic series in Middle Eastern studies. Purchases of books within interdisciplinary monographic series will often be individually selected by subject librarians for their respective fields.

3.3. Journals

The Bodleian Libraries hold substantial collections of journals, both current and historic, received by legal deposit, subscription and donation. Core journals are held at the various site libraries as well as BSF. The OIL and MEC Library also hold a large number of Middle Eastern language journals. Many journals are now available online, searchable via SOLO.

Where possible and desirable, new subscriptions will be made available online in preference to print. The Library welcomes requests for titles not currently subscribed to and is committed to expanding coverage of Middle East and Islamic Studies’ journals as funds permit.

4. Special collections

The Weston Library is house to the Bodleian's Middle Eastern and Islamic special collections which can be consulted alongside open shelf reference material in the Charles Wendell David Reading Room.

The Bodleian Libraries’ Islamic manuscript collections is one of the most important in Europe with strong collections of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish material. The Bodleian Libraries’ holdings of Arabic manuscripts stand at some 2,350 whilst the Persian manuscripts number 2,530 and the Turkish 480. There are particular strengths in fields such as Arabic science, mathematics and medicine. The Persian illuminated and illustrated manuscripts are a highlight of the collection. The holdings are strongest in the areas of classical and pre-modern Islam with the manuscripts exemplifying most of the branches of learning cultivated in traditional Islamic society in the Middle East and North Africa.

The Bodleian Libraries also holds a number of important early Arabic books dating from the 15th century onwards, including a copy of the first book printed with Arabic
moveable type (1514), 15th century Arabic works from the Italian Medici Press, and 18th century Ibrahim Müteferrika works. The Bodleian Libraries’ collection of classical Persian literature printed lithographically in Bombay and Calcutta in the 19th century and the small collection of Karamanlidika (Turkish language books printed in Greek characters) is also of some interest.

The Bodleian Libraries are currently the major European repository of Georgian material outside Russia. The nucleus of the Library’s Georgian holdings is the Wardrop Collection which includes all of Marjory Wardrop’s papers, as well as books and manuscripts. Most date from the eighteenth century or later, and in addition to the important literary, ecclesiastical, historical and legal texts, this collection holds the extensive personal papers, correspondence and photographs of the Wardrops. A more modest collection of Armenian material at the Bodleian Libraries comprises 142 manuscripts mainly consisting of the collections of Archbishop Laud, Thomas Marshall, Edward Pococke and Narcissus Marsh donated in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Bodleian Libraries also holds a number of important early printed Georgian and Armenian books.

The Bodleian Libraries have modest funds to acquire new Middle Eastern and North African manuscripts and rare books as deemed appropriate by the Bahari Curator of Persian Collections Middle Eastern & Islamic Manuscripts. The Bodleian Libraries only seeks to acquire new Middle Eastern and North African manuscripts, whether by purchase or donation, where the provenance is proven. Reference works to support the study of our manuscripts and rare book collections will be acquired for the Weston Library’s open shelves by the Bodleian Librarian for Middle Eastern and Islamic Collections.

5. Names of subject consultant(s) responsible for collections

Principal subject consultants for the field:

Lydia Wright (Subject Librarian Middle Eastern and Islamic Collections, Bodleian and Oriental Institute Library, lydia.wright@bodleian.ox.ac.uk)

MariaLuisa Langella (Middle East Centre Librarian, Middle East Centre Library, marialuisa.langella@sant.ox.ac.uk)

Alasdair Watson (Bahari Curator of Persian Collections Middle Eastern & Islamic Manuscripts, Weston Library, alasdair.watson@bodleian.ox.ac.uk)

Nizami Ganjavi Subject Librarian (Caucasian and Central Asian Collections) [Vacant]

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Principal subject consultants in related fields:

Cesar Merchan-Hamann (Hebraica and Judaica Curator, LMML, cesar.merchan-hamann@bodleian.ox.ac.uk)

Susanne Woodhouse (Egyptology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies Librarian (Griffith Librarian), Sackler Library, susanne.woodhouse@bodleian.ox.ac.uk)
Other relevant subject consultants:

Clare Hills-Nova (Art & Architecture Librarian, Sackler Library, clare.hills-nova@bodleian.ox.ac.uk)

Helen Worrell (Archaeology Librarian, Sackler Library, helen.worrell@bodleian.ox.ac.uk)

Jo Gardner (Bodleian Social Science Librarian and Subject Consultant for Politics & International Relations, SSL, jo.gardner@bodleian.ox.ac.uk)

Isabel Holowaty (Bodleian History Librarian, Upper Reading Room, central Bodleian, isabel.holowaty@bodleian.ox.ac.uk)

Sarah Rhodes (Subject Consultant for International Development, Forced Migration, African and Commonwealth Studies, SSL, sarah.rhodes@bodleian.ox.ac.uk)

Helen Scott (English and Film Studies Librarian, EFL/Taylorian, helen.scott@bodleian.ox.ac.uk)

Hilla Wait (Subject Consultant for Philosophy and Theology, PTFL, hilla.wait@bodleian.ox.ac.uk)

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