

Into the Digital Islamic Future

An Experts Workshop



September 29 - 30, 2022

The University of Maryland, College Park

Conveners:



Generous funding provided by:



Welcome Workshop Participants!

The entire Open Islamicate Texts Initiative Arabic OCR Catalyst Project (OpenITI AOCF) and SHARIAsource teams would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this experts workshop and share your expertise and experience with all in attendance.

Before we delve into more specifics on the workshop itself, let's go over the logistical details. John Mullan—the incredible digital specialist of OpenITI AOCF—has already sent you your flight and accommodation information in separate emails (if for some reason you did not receive this email please let us know as soon as possible). Some of this information is repeated below. But be sure to review everything below in detail because there is additional information provided here that is not included in those emails.

Transportation

Please use taxis, rideshare (Uber, Lyft, etc.), or light rail to travel between the airport and the hotel. You can submit these receipts to John for reimbursement. An original receipt is required. If for any reason obtaining a taxi or rideshare is difficult for you, please let us know as soon as possible and we will schedule transportation for you. DC traffic can be quite bad, depending on the time your flight arrives. *If you are departing Dulles International Airport (IAD) for The Hotel via taxi or rideshare, especially near rush hour time (6:30am-9:30am and 4:00-6:30pm), please prepare for a lengthy car ride (sometimes as long as two hours) by using the restroom and grabbing something to eat in the airport before departing.*

Guests arriving at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) or Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD) have the option of using the D.C. metro, which can be faster than hiring a car at rush hour. *For guests arriving at DCA*, follow signs to the airport metro station, then take the yellow or green line towards Greenbelt. Exit the metro at College Park - U of MD station. *For guests arriving at IAD*, take the [Silver Line Express bus](#) from Arrivals Door 4 to Wiehle-Reston East station. From Wiehle-Reston East, take the silver line towards Largo and exit at L'Enfant Plaza station. From L'Enfant Plaza, take the green or yellow line towards Greenbelt station and exit at College Park - U of MD station. The Hotel at the University of Maryland is a short ride away on rideshare or bus from the College Park station, or a fifteen minute walk.

Accommodations

You will all be staying at [The Hotel](#) at University of Maryland (UMD). The Hotel is Located across from the university's entrance at 7777 Baltimore Ave, College Park, MD 2074.

Workshop Background

This workshop is a part of the *Open Islamicate Texts Initiative Arabic OCR Catalyst Project (OpenITI AOC)*—a two-year project generously funded by [The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#) (full details on this project can be found [here](#)).

OpenITI AOC is led by [Matthew Thomas Miller](#) (Roshan Institute for Persian Studies at UMD), [Maxim Romanov](#) (Universität Hamburg), [Sarah Bowen Savant](#) (Aga Khan University), [David Smith](#) (Northeastern University), and [Raffaele Vigiante](#) (Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities at UMD). [SHARIASource](#), a project of the [Program in Islamic Law \(PIL\) at Harvard Law School](#) (both led by [Intisar Rabb](#)), provided the financial support for the initial technical infrastructure (i.e., [CorpusBuilder 1.0](#)) upon which this project will build in the development of eScriptorium and they also play a leading role in the technical development portion of OpenITI AOC. We are proud to be co-convening this workshop with them.

This workshop will bring together leading scholars of Arabic, Persian, and Islamic Studies to learn about the latest advancements in Islamicate digital humanities and to begin to plan for the next phases of its development. We will learn from each other's projects as we discuss key overlapping areas of interest for the construction of digital infrastructure for the study of the premodern Islamicate cultures.

We will also be soliciting your expertise to help us plan for our move into digital scholarly publications and the improvement of the OpenITI digital corpus, which we plan to massively expand in the coming years with our soon-to-be-released (publicly) digital text production pipeline, [eScriptorium](#) (co-produced by the large international team highlighted on the site's landing page). These goals will be made possible by two grants that we are pleased to announce we were awarded over the summer: a \$1.75 million grant from The Mellon Foundation and a \$600,000 grant from the National Science Foundation.

Preparation for the Workshop

We will not be asking you to prepare anything specific for the workshop. We only request that you upload a digital scan of an Arabic or Persian book that you would like to have OCR'd [to this Google Drive folder](#). Please upload your file **by September 27**. We will work with these scans in one component of the workshop as a demonstration of our new tools.

Workshop Location

The workshop will take place in the McKeldin Special Events Room (Room #6137 @7649 S Library Ln, College Park, MD 20742). Jonathan Allen will meet you in The Hotel lobby each morning at 8:40 to walk with you from The Hotel to the workshop

venue, but in case you need to navigate the campus on your own, [here is a link](#) to a campus map. We can also arrange transportation for any participants who would prefer not to walk for any reason.

Covid19 Protections

To protect the health of all workshop attendees and that of persons they live with or care for back home, and to foster an equitable and inclusive workshop environment, we are requiring attendees to take two Covid19-related protective steps.

First, we have purchased enough COVID19 rapid tests for all attendees to test each day before joining the group. We are asking all attendees to take a rapid test before coming to any workshop events each day.

Second, we also will be requiring individuals to mask while indoors, in line with the prudent practice of most DC-area universities (e.g., Georgetown University, American University, George Washington University, University of Maryland, Baltimore County) due to high local levels of Covid19 transmission. We have purchased enough N95 masks for individuals to have new ones each day they are with the group, but you are also welcome to bring your own mask(s) if you have other ones you prefer (they do not necessarily need to be N95). We are aware, however, that masking is uncomfortable for many, especially for longer durations. So we have arranged all coffee/snack breaks and meals to be held outdoors so that attendees can comfortably and safely unmask frequently throughout the day.

Food

All meals during the workshop will be provided. We will also be hosting a (optional) pre-workshop dinner and drinks on Wednesday, September 28th at 8:00 at the [The Hall CP](#) (located behind The Hotel) for those who arrive early enough (and aren't too jetlagged to attend). For breakfast each morning you will receive a \$12 voucher that can be used at [Bagels N Grinds](#), which is located off of the lobby of The Hotel. We will have some pastries, fruit, and coffee in the meeting room for snacking during the morning hours of the workshop, but if you want a sizable breakfast please eat breakfast before we depart The Hotel for the workshop each morning. Lastly, if you will be missing the group dinner on the second day of the workshop due to an early flight time, please feel free to request a boxed meal to go, or you may purchase dinner at the airport and we will reimburse you for it.

Reimbursement

Please see John Mullan for reimbursement for any travel or food expenses.

Workshop Participants

Ahmed El Shamsy, Professor of Islamic Thought, University of Chicago

Ahmet T. Karamustafa, Professor of History, University of Maryland, College Park

Alexander Jabbari, Assistant Professor of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

A. Sean Pue, Associate Professor of Hindi Language & South Asian Literature and Culture, Michigan State University
Project Affiliation: Jugaad CoLab

Antoine Borrut, Associate Professor of History & Classics, University of Maryland, College Park

Arezou Azad, Senior Research Fellow, Oriental Institute, University of Oxford;
Programme Director, Invisible East
Project Affiliation: Invisible East

Austin O'Malley, Roshan Institute Assistant Professor of Persian and Iranian Studies, University of Arizona

Carl Ernst, William R. Kenan, Jr. Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Islamic Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Project Affiliation: Perso-Indica

Chander Shekhar, Professor of Persian, University of Delhi

Fatemeh Keshavarz, Roshan Chair in Persian Studies & Professor of Persian Language and Literature, Roshan Institute for Persian Studies, University of Maryland, College Park

Intisar Rabb, Professor of History & Law, Harvard Law School; Director, Program in Islamic law, Harvard University
Project Affiliation: SHARIAsource

Jonathan Parkes Allen, Mellon Humanities Postdoctoral Fellow, Roshan Institute for Persian Studies, University of Maryland, College Park
Project Affiliation: OpenITI

Lorenz Nigst, Research Associate, Corpus Management, KITAB Project, Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations

Project Affiliation: KITAB; OpenITI

Marina Rustow, Khedouri A. Zilkha Professor of Jewish Civilization in the Near East, Princeton University; Director, Princeton Geniza Lab

Project Affiliation: Princeton Geniza Project

Marjan Moosavi, Roshan Lecturer in Persian Studies, University of Maryland, College Park; Founder and Principal Investigator, Digital Guide to Theatre of the Middle East (DGToME)

Project Affiliation: DGToME

Mathew Barber, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, KITAB Project, Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations

Project Affiliation: KITAB, OpenITI

Matt Melvin-Koushki, Associate Professor & Peter and Bonnie McCausland Fellow of History, University of South Carolina

Matthew Thomas Miller, Assistant Professor of Persian Literature and Digital Humanities, Roshan Institute for Persian Studies, University of Maryland, College Park; Director, Roshan Initiative in Persian Digital Humanities

Project Affiliation: OpenITI

Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi, Professor of Historical Studies, History, and Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto; Director, Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute of Iranian Studies

Project Affiliation: Iranian Women Poets, Iranian Cinema (Encyclopaedia Iranica)

Paul Losensky, Professor of Comparative Literature & Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University Bloomington

Rachel Schine, Assistant Professor of Arabic, University of Maryland, College Park

Sabine Schmidtke, Professor of Islamic Intellectual History, Institute for Advanced Study

Project Affiliation: Zaydi Manuscript Tradition Project

Sarah Bowen Savant, Professor of History, Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations; Principal Investigator, KITAB Project
Project Affiliation: KITAB

Theodore Beers, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Seminar für Semitistik und Arabistik, Freie Universität Berlin
Project Affiliation: Kalīla and Dimna – AnonymClassic

Yusuf Celik, Postdoctoral Fellow, Program in Islamic Law, Harvard University
Project Affiliation: SHARIAsource

Schedule

Pre-workshop Event (Optional) ***Wednesday, September 28th, 2022***

7:30-10:00 pm: Welcome dinner and drinks ([The Hall CP](#) located behind The Hotel) for those who arrive early enough (and aren't too jetlagged to attend)

Workshop Day #1: The Islamicate Digital Humanities Now ***Thursday, September 29th, 2022***

7:30-8:30am: Breakfast at *Bagels N Grinds* located at The Hotel (not a group event—please just grab breakfast at your leisure)

8:40-9:00am: Walk with Jonathan Allen to McKeldin library for workshop day #1

9:00-9:15 am: Opening remarks by Dr. Fatemeh Keshavarz, Former Director of the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures and Director of Roshan Institute for Persian Studies

9:15-9:45 am: Workshop participant introductions

9:45-10:00 am: Overview of workshop goals (Matthew Miller)

10:00-11:00 am: What have we done and what are we going to do? An Overview of OpenITI AOC Phase I + Bridge + Phase II + KITAB Project (Sarah Bowen Savant & Matthew Miller)

11:00-11:20 am: Break

11:20-11:40 am: *SHARIAsource* (Intisar Rabb)

11:40-12:00 noon: *Princeton Geniza Project* (Marina Rustow)

12:00-12:20 pm: *Zaydi Manuscript Tradition Project & Correspondences Project*
(Sabine Schmidtke)

12:20-12:40 pm: *Omar ibn Said and Other Enslaved Muslim Writers* (Carl Ernst)

12:40-1:00 pm: *Invisible East* (Arezou Azad)

1:00-2:15 pm: Lunch (catered on McKeldin Portico)

2:15-3:15 pm: Let's get to work! eScriptorium OCR workshop
We will walk you through the process of uploading and OCRing your own texts as a group and then have you break into small groups to work with and export preloaded versions.

3:15-3:30 pm: Break

3:30-4:00 pm: Debrief on eScriptorium
Time for questions, feedback, troubleshooting, etc.

4:00-4:20 pm: *Iranian Women Poets, Iranian Cinema* (Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi)

4:20-4:40 pm: *Kalila and Dimna – AnonymClassic* (Theo Beers)

4:40-5:00 pm: *Jugaad CoLab* (A. Sean Pue)

5:00-6:00 pm: Break

6:00 pm: Dinner ([Busboys and Poets Hyattsville](#))

***Workshop Day #2: Towards a Digital Islamicate Future
Friday, September 30th, 2022***

7:30-8:30 am: Breakfast at *Bagels N Grinds* located at The Hotel (not a group event—please just grab breakfast at your leisure)

8:40-9:00 am: Walk with Jonathan Allen to McKeldin Library for workshop day #2

9:00-11:30 am: Debrief on eScriptorium
Time for questions, feedback, troubleshooting, etc.

11:30-11:45 am: Break

11:45-12:30 pm: Breakout session #1 (choose one)
Sessions based on case studies: DH and Teaching (Sarah Savant), research outcomes (Mathew Barber), multi-text (Jonathan Allen), sustainability/collaboration (Matthew Miller), and corpus expansion (Lorenz Nigst)

12:15-1:30 pm: Lunch (catered on McKeldin portico)

1:30am-2:30 pm: Breakout session #2 (choose a different one)
Sessions based on case studies: DH and Teaching (Sarah Savant), research outcomes (Mathew Barber), multi-text (Jonathan Allen), sustainability/collaboration (Matthew Miller), and corpus expansion (Lorenz Nigst)

2:30-3:15 pm: Breakout session leaders present synthesis
Breakout session leaders will review salient points in short 10-minute presentations and whole group have opportunity to ask questions, provide feedback, and discuss remaining issues

3:15-3:30 pm: Break

3:30-5:00 pm: Open forum for discussion
Discussion starter questions: What have you not seen or discussed in the last two days that is needed for the digital future of Islamicate Studies? Which areas discussed over the past two days are the highest priority? How can we strategically plan to build better partnerships and collaboration—how can we work together to build a better digital future for Islamicate studies?

5:00-6:00 pm: Break

6:00pm: Dinner ([Pennyroyal Station](#))