



[Rare and Special collections](#)

The IIS-ISMC Joint Library holds more than 560 titles in its rare book collection, stored under secure conditions. These items include out-of-print and pre-1928 publications and have been acquired either through donations or purchases. At the heart of the rare book section is a collection of Ottoman books from the late 18th to the early 20th century, as well as items from the personal collection of the late scholar of Persian, Peter Avery, and some items on Islamic law from the Middle Temple Library.

In order to ensure that rare items, materials in need of preservation and titles of value to the Institutes are being preserved, our librarians are currently re-assessing all collections to identify additional items to be moved from other locations to our rare book collection. The Library has benefitted greatly from donations of personal collections and papers of prestigious scholars in the field of Islamic studies. Some of these special collections, such as **Professor Annemarie Schimmel Reference Collection**, are housed in separate locations, while others have been integrated with the library's general collections.

The Library is grateful to those who support its mission of building a significant collection of rare and early printed books, private papers, records and documents, as well as other printed items with an emphasis on Islamic studies.

Annemarie Schimmel Reference Collection

[annemarie_schimmel.jpg](#)



Many rare and out-of-print titles feature in this collection comprising up to 1,200 volumes. A diversity of Eastern and Western languages are prevalent including Persian, Urdu & Sindhi. Indo-Muslim communities and cultures are strongly represented, significantly enhancing the representation in this area in the Library's holdings. The greatest part of this collection was donated by Professor Ali Asani in 2005. Subsequently, over 300 volumes from the Schimmel Library at the University of Tübingen in Germany were acquired.

The majority of the collection can be searched in the online catalogue, whilst the latest acquisitions are being added. The Annemarie Schimmel Collection is located on the ground floor of the Library, marked as the Professor Annemarie Schimmel Reference Collection.

Mohammed Arkoun Collection

Professor Muhammm

[professor_m_arkoun.jpg](#)



ad Arkoun was one of the most distinguished and influential scholars in the history of Islamic studies. He passed away in 2010. In 2012, in recognition of his long association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies as both member of the Board of Governors and a Senior Research Fellow, his family graciously donated part of his personal library to the Institute's library.

The collection, mostly in Arabic and French, includes his professional correspondences, notes, offprints of his articles and over 200 titles including theses on Islamic thought, history and culture. The collection was assessed by an archivist and a subject specialist in 2013. The collection is currently housed on the lower ground floor of the library and marked as **Professor Muhammad Arkoun's Archives**. The cataloguing process is currently underway.

Muhammad Abduh Collection

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Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905) was an important figure in the intellectual history of Egypt and Muslim countries in the second half of the 19th century, who visited Europe and was known to a wide circle of social thinkers and activists. This collection of manuscripts and rare books was acquired by the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations - [Aga Khan](#) University in 2007. The collection includes four manuscripts in Arabic.

The first is an Arabic translation of the first three books of Plato's Republic and a short essay titled *al-Amthal wa ma Yagra Magraha min Lawazim al-Da'irat fi al-Isti'mal*. The second manuscript covers various subjects, including notes on identity, family, society, sexuality, humanity, history, war, traditions, industry, education, labour and trade.

The third item is a chronologically arranged manuscript table in Arabic of comparative historical events relating to Palestine and the Holy Land from 4000 BC to 780 BC. The fourth item is a studio portrait of Muhammad Abduh and the Egyptian photographer Muhammad Ali Effendi Sa'oudi.

The collection also includes many rare books written by spectacular authors such as Muhammad Rashid Rida, Ahmad Amin, and Amin Uthman. In addition, it includes the *Risalat al-Tawhid* in French written by Mustafa Abd al-Raziq and B. Michel. Another book is *al-Islam wa-al-Nasraniyah ma'a al-ilm wa-al-madaniyah* in a very rare edition with a portrait of Muhammad Abduh on the title page.

The collection is in the process of being catalogued and preserved. Direct access to the manuscripts cannot therefore be guaranteed at the current time.

Ottoman Book Collection

The Ottoman Book Collection of around 600 items was purchased by The Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations -Aga Khan University together with a collection of about 900 Turkish books from the antiquarian John Randall in 2008. It mainly includes works of literature from the Tanzimat and post-Tanzimat period, particularly novels, poetry and dramas, as well as travel literature, language materials and historical works. The majority of items in the collection are in Ottoman Turkish, although a few titles about the Ottoman language are in European languages, mainly German and English.

The collection was catalogued in 2013 and assessed by conservationists in 2014. It is currently housed on the Library's rare books shelves and can be accessed upon request.

Peter Avery Collection

[peter_avery.jpg](#)



Acquired in 2010 by the Institute of Ismaili Studies from the personal library of the late Peter Avery OBE, an eminent British scholar on Persian, this collection contains approximately 1,600 volumes. Comprised of manuscripts, lithographs and many rare and out-of-print titles, the collection greatly enriches the Library's holdings for Persian studies. The majority of titles in this collection are in Persian and English including a

few titles in Arabic and other languages.

The cataloguing of the collection is currently underway and will be completed by the end of 2014. Titles which have already been catalogued will be amalgamated with the Library's general and rare book collections.

Walid Arafat Collection

In 2008, the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations -Aga Khan University acquired the Walid Arafat Collection through a donation. Titles in this collection are predominately in Arabic, although a smaller proportion is in European languages, mainly English. Most titles in the collection are on subjects related to Islamic studies, such as law, [shari'a](#), history and doctrine, as well as Arabic language and poetry, sociology and philosophy.

The collection of around 350 items was catalogued in 2011 and subsequently amalgamated with the Library's general collection.

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