



From “Hidden” to Celebrated: Encounters with Islamic Manuscripts at the University of Michigan

Thursday, May 23rd
12 PM
365 Kaplan Hall

Please RSVP here:
<https://ucla.in/2URULHO>

A lecture by Eryn Kropf (University of Michigan)

Co-Sponsored by the Department of Near Eastern
Languages and Cultures, UCLA Library Special
Collections, and the California Rare Book School

The Islamic Manuscripts Collection at the University of Michigan Library consists of just over 1,100 volumes, chiefly in codex format. This dauntingly diverse array represents manuscript production from the 8th to the 20th century CE across the historically Islamicate cultural areas and carries more than 1,800 texts, chiefly in Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish. The collection is among the most significant of its kind in North America, but is relatively modest in size and provenance. Even so, within the last decade it has had a substantial impact, reaching hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students, community members, and specialists. This is thanks to efforts to fully catalogue and digitize the collection for open access, combined with considerable investment in curation and outreach. This talk will highlight areas of collection engagement that have proved fruitful, from a collaborative, instructive cataloguing approach to the cultivation and appointment of a specialist curator active in teaching, research guidance, and exhibition.



Eryn Kropf is Librarian for Middle East Studies and Religious Studies and Curator of the Islamic Manuscripts Collection at the University of Michigan. She obtained her bachelor’s degree in Materials Science and Engineering from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (2003) and her master’s degree in Information Science with a specialization in Library and Information Services from Michigan (2009). She has studied Arabic language, historiography, and topics further related to Islamic manuscript culture. As cataloguer for the "Collaboration in Cataloging: Islamic Manuscripts at Michigan" project (2009-2012), she led the descriptive effort which realized the detailed cataloguing of 904 codex manuscripts from the Library’s Islamic Manuscripts Collection. Her research interests include Islamic codicology and manuscript culture, reading and collecting practices, and the use of pictograms and other visual content in Sufistic cultures of knowledge transmission, as well as manuscript cataloguing and digital mediation of cultural heritage.