

FOREIGN RESEARCH REPORT: RESEARCH FACILITIES IN LEBANON

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FOREIGN RESEARCH REPORT

This is the sixth in a series of reports on research climate and facilities in MESA countries. The first report on "Research Facilities in Iran" by Rouhollah K. Ramazani appeared in Vol. 3, No. 3 of the Bulletin. A report on "Research Facilities in Algeria" by I. William Zartman appeared in Vol. 4, No. 1. "Research Facilities in the U.A.R." by John A. Williams was published in Vol. 4, No. 2. "Research Facilities in Morocco" by Kenneth Brown, Wilfrid J. Rollman and John Waterbury appeared in Vol. 4, No. 3. Finally, "Research Facilities in Tunisia" by Michelle Raccagni was published in Vol. 6, No. 1. The Association is grateful to research scholars for their time and effort in gathering and preparing these reports.

RESEARCH FACILITIES IN LEBANON

by

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Research facilities in Lebanon are excellent and the research climate, as of June 1972, was fairly good. Lebanon continues to fulfill its historic function as a meeting place for Western and Arab culture. But the same political factors that are alienating the Arab world as a whole from the Anglo-Saxon community, notably the Arab-Israeli conflict, inevitably threaten this liberal research climate. There are vocal and influential elements of Lebanese opinion which feel that American imperialism harnesses even the scholarly community for its exploitative ends. Lebanon has had no Camelot scandal so far, but the American University of Beirut was once forced to cancel a project supported by the U.S. Department of Defense. Under these circumstances it is always possible that an innocent researcher could accidentally create a crisis that would jeopardize research conditions. Thus, it may not be out of place to suggest that visiting scholars should make special efforts to be prudent, candid, courteous and patient in their research work. It is desirable to have at least one reputable Lebanese friend who will be willing to advise and if necessary endorse the research project. It is not necessary that a local institution formally sponsor a project, but some kind of local association can be useful both in assisting the research itself and in avoiding troubles. Graduate students doing field research should definitely have some local advisor or patron.

In spite of these political clouds the present research atmosphere is still relaxed. The Lebanese government does not impose general controls on foreign research as do most other

Middle Eastern governments. In accordance with Lebanon's liberal political tradition people can think and write much as they please as long as they do not break the law or infringe on local sensibilities, particularly those pertaining to religion. Indeed, Lebanon's relative tolerance has made it a center of political and intellectual activity for the whole area or as one intellectual puts it, "the coffeehouse of the Arab world."

Living conditions in Beirut are so easy that little need be said about them here; for most practical matters one can consult a good travel guidebook such as Hachette's Guide Bleu du Liban. Multiple-entry visas good for three or six months, and renewable in Beirut, can be obtained through the Lebanese Consulate-General, 9 East 76th Street, New York. Inexpensive summer charter flights are usually available through Lebanese associations. Information about such flights as well as an entrée to Lebanon itself can often be secured through the numerous Lebanese émigré communities in the U.S. and Canada. As of June 1972 the daily rate for a single room in a modest but clean residential hotel in Ras-Beirut was 14 Lebanese pounds (about U.S. \$4.65); a double was L.£ 22; and reductions of around 10 per cent were possible for a prolonged stay. Cheaper accommodations, for example at the YMCA or YWCA, are also available. The tourist boom in the last couple of years has made Beirut a more expensive place to visit than it used to be. Ras-Beirut and Raouche, the most modern and cosmopolitan districts, are more expensive than other parts of town. And the U.S. dollar is only worth around 3.04 Lebanese pounds compared to the 3.25 of a year or so ago. However, the only comfort of home that a visiting academic may miss is the Xerox machine.

Probably the major concentrations of research facilities are to be found in Beirut's two most prestigious universities, l'Université Saint-Joseph and the American University of Beirut. But there are several other universities and colleges that may also be helpful to the foreign scholar. The Lebanese government itself is not as rich a source of material, for it has never been strong in planning, statistics, and record-keeping, but one will find civil servants willing to go out of their way to help a visiting scholar, especially in the Ministries of Planning and Labor and Social Affairs. There are also a number of specialized institutes, mostly foreign-administered, which have rich library resources and highly qualified scholarly personnel. Finally, it should be mentioned that the numerous intellectual journals, such as Dirasat 'Arabiyyah, Hiwar, Mawaqaf, and others, are a rich source on contemporary society. Beirut is a major book publishing center for the area, and the numerous local bookshops, such as the Lebanon Library (Maktabat Lubnan), Antoine's, Librairie Orientale (in Parliament Square), and Khayat's, have a rich selection of local and foreign works.

L'Université Saint-Joseph (Rue de l'Université Saint-Joseph) was founded by the Jesuit Order in 1881 and has some 2,000 students. It is distinguished not only as the center of French higher education in the Middle East but also for its impressive work in Middle Eastern studies. The USJ's Institut de Lettres

Orientales, established originally as the Faculté Orientale in 1902, has a teaching faculty of around 16 professors and offers work in Arabic literature, Near Eastern sociology, Arabic philosophy, Arab history and Civilization, Syriac and Phoenician history, Armenian, and Islamic Institutions. It sponsored the Arabic periodical al-Mashriq, which began publication in 1898 and ended in 1971. It also publishes the Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph (history and archeology) and a monograph series under the rubric Recherches Publiées sous la direction de l'Institut de Lettres Orientales, and, since 1961 a journal of essays and commentary called Travaux et Jours. The director of the Institut is the R.P. Michel Aillard, S.J. Associated with the Institut is the Centre Religieux d'Etudes Arabes at Bikfaya, which was founded in 1945 by the Jesuits primarily for the training of foreign students in the Arabic language and literature.

The Institut also includes the Bibliothèque Orientale, which is a most impressive, well-organized library of some 150,000 volumes. Its director, the Rev. John J. Williams, S.J., goes out of his way to help the scholars who come from all parts of the world. The present library was assembled in 1937 from numerous scattered and private collections but in reality it is as old as the university itself. The library has somewhere between 600 and 800 periodicals, past and current, and a collection of 2,800 manuscripts. The library is strong in Islamic religion and institutions and in Biblical theology, among other things. There is a good Arabic newspaper collection but it is not as extensive as that in the AUB Library. As might be expected, it is much stronger in the French literature on the Middle East than that in other languages. It has some 15,000 volumes in Arabic and has made a good start on an Armenian collection. The library is open to all established scholars. There is a limited amount of working space; books cannot be checked out. Graduate students, here as elsewhere in Lebanon, should have a letter of introduction from their institution and faculty advisor.

USJ also has an active Faculté de Droit et des Sciences Economiques, sponsored jointly with the Lebanese University. This faculty includes a Institut des Sciences Politiques and an Institut des Recherches d'Economie Appliquée, among other things, and maintains its own library. It is planning a group project on the study of municipalities and has recently opened a center for economic documentation in the Middle East.

One of the few team research projects now under way in Lebanon is the USJ's Center for the Study of the Modern Arab World, directed by Professor John Donohue (See VI MESA Bulletin, 2:82 [May 1972]). Established in October 1971 its research focus is on acculturation in the Arab world, particularly the confrontation between modernization and traditional Islam. In progress is a bibliography of English, French and German works on change in the Arab world and a content analysis project on Arabic writings (such as the Egyptian magazine al-Hilal), and other activities are being planned. The Center coordinates its work with other relevant units with the USJ, including the Institut de Lettres Orientales and the Faculté de Droit et des

Sciences Economiques, and there is interaction with members of the AUB faculty.

Visiting scholars will find the American University of Beirut (founded in 1866) a friendly and helpful institution. The AUB Library, biggest in Lebanon, has some 320,000 volumes with an annual acquisition rate of 10,000. There are some 4,400 periodicals and a good map collection. The Arabic collection comprises some 33,000 volumes of which around 75 per cent are on the Middle East. About 30 per cent of the Western language (mostly English) collection is on the Middle East, making a total Middle Eastern collection of close to 110,000 volumes. The AUB Middle East manuscript collection consists of around 1,250 Arabic manuscripts dealing mainly with religion, history, and the sciences, especially medicine; 300 of them are originals. The Library probably has the best collection of newspapers from the Arab world, including Lisan al-Hal from 1877, al-Muqattam (1889-1952), and al-Ahram from 1875. It keeps a small but interesting collection of Lebanese political pamphlets and declarations. The Library has taken over publication of the Arab Documentary Project, which since 1963 has put out the annual collection of Arab Political Documents, a volume that now runs to 800 pages. The reference department also has compiled bibliographies of works on the Middle East in English (1905-1970) and in Arabic (1870-1970). Unfortunately, draconian budget cutbacks are making it very difficult for the Library, as for the university as a whole, to maintain or upgrade research facilities. Nevertheless, Mr. Youssef F. Khoury, the chief reference librarian, is very generous with information and assistance to the visiting researcher. The AUB Library is heavily used by students and faculty and so space for visitors is not always available. Because of examinations it is virtually closed to outsiders from January 15-February 15 and through most of June. Visiting scholars should have some letter of identification from their institutions, and graduate students should obtain prior permission to use the Library and present letters of recommendation from their faculty advisors.

Institutionalized research at AUB appears to be strongest in medicine, agriculture, and engineering--fields outside the interest of most MESA members. Within the social sciences and humanities there is quite a lot of individual research going on but relatively little large-scale or group research activity. The Center for Middle East Studies, an amalgamation of the Middle East Area Program and the History Department's Arab Studies Program, directed by Professor Mahmoud Ghoul, is an umbrella structure that helps make university facilities available to local and visiting scholars. Visiting scholars can apply for research associate status by writing to Professor Ghoul, but the Center has no money available for fellowships or stipends. The Center is custodian for the materials of the oral history project, consisting of recorded interviews with contemporary Arab political leaders (mainly Yemeni, Iraqi and Lebanese), an extensive catalogued collection of political newspaper clippings (1955-1962), and a small library on Middle Eastern subjects. One of its current projects is a study of Yemeni political and religious documents. In the past the Center has conducted occasional seminars in which

current research is discussed.

The AUB Economic Research Institute, established by Professor A.Y. Badre in 1953, is currently in a state of transition and its future is uncertain. For some years it published a bibliography on Middle Eastern economic studies; it still puts out its annual volume of Middle East Economic Papers. It maintains a small library with holdings cross-listed in the main library, and it has some unpublished data, mainly on national income. Interested scholars can write to the Chairman of the Economics Department, AUB.

The AUB Computer Center is equipped with IBM 1401 and 1620 machines and related facilities. For an outside scholar to use it, it is best to work through a university department; normally he will be charged for its use.

AUB publishes the scholarly journals al-Abhath (with articles in Arabic and English) and Berytus, a journal of archaeology and history. The AUB Alumni Association publishes a quarterly journal of articles and essays on the area, Middle East Forum.

The Lebanese University (al-Jami'ah al-lubnaniyyah) is financed by the Lebanese government but is administratively independent of it. Founded in 1953 and reorganized in 1959, it now comprises among its faculties the following that may be of interest to MESA members: Law, Political Science, and Administration; Fine Arts; Commerce and Business Administration; and Information (Journalism). The Lebanese University also operates an Institute of Social Sciences (Ma'had al-'Ulum al-Ijtima'iyah) devoted both to teaching and research. The Institute was established in 1961 and its current director is Dr. Cesar Nasr. The teaching section is the more developed of the two, but the research center does support an active program of individual research and publication. A monograph series begun in 1969 has thus far produced eight works on subjects such as the Lebanese labor movement, the ethnography of Deir al-Qamar, and juvenile delinquency; and more are in preparation. Although its financial situation is limited it does have funds from the Lebanese government and the Ford Foundation to support research. Foreign scholars are welcome to visit the Institute and use its good 5,000 volume library (mainly French books and periodicals), but a letter in advance would be appreciated.

There are several other universities and colleges in Beirut which although they are teaching institutions primarily might nonetheless prove helpful to the visiting researcher. Haigazian College (P.O.B. 1748, Rue du Mexique) was founded by the Armenian Evangelical Communities in the United States and the Near East in 1955 as an intellectual and culture center for Lebanon's large Armenian community. Haigazian, with an undergraduate student body of around 550 and a faculty of 70, has an Armenian studies department which offers six courses in Armenian language (classical and modern), nine in Armenian literature, eight in Armenian history, and nine in Armenian culture. Its Armenian library is used by the whole Armenian community. The Near East School of

Theology (P.O.B. 235) has just opened its new building off Jeanne d'Arc Street near AUB and has a good library (25,000 books and pamphlets, 100 periodicals) in general theology, Islam, classical Arabic, and Near East Mission History. The School, founded by several American Protestant organizations, has a faculty of fourteen. The Beirut Arab University (Jami'ah Bayrut al-'Arabiyyah) is an Egyptian-sponsored university founded in 1960. It operates faculties of Law (offering courses in Shari'ah, non-Muslims personal status law, civil law, and international law, among others), Commerce, and Literature (offering courses in Arabic, Geography, History, Philosophy and Sociology, etc.); the faculty is mainly drawn from Egyptian universities. The Ecole Supérieure de Lettres, located near the French Faculty of Medicine on the Rue de Damas, is a part of the Université de Lyon. Some of the faculty comes from the USJ. There is a smallish library, not specialized in the Middle East, with around 65 current periodicals. Attached to the School is the Institut de Géographie du Proche et du Moyen-Orient. The Université Saint-Esprit at Kaslik (Jounieh) is run by the Lebanese Maronite order. Founded in 1951 primarily for convent education it now has Schools of Theology, Philosophy, Letters, Law, and Commercial Sciences, and it maintains Higher Institutes of Liturgy, Theology, Theological Studies, Musicology, and History. It has published a journal, Parole de l'Orient, since 1965. The Beirut College for Women (P.O.B. 4080) is of Presbyterian origin; it draws some of its faculty from AUB and maintains a library of 30,000 volumes and 140 periodicals. The Seventh Day Adventist Church administers Middle East College, founded in 1939, at Baucheriyyah near Jdeidet al-Metr.

In addition to its universities and colleges Lebanon has a number of small scholarly institutes and libraries. One of the most impressive is the German Orient-Institut. The German Association of Orientalists (Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft) supports the Institute and the German Ministry of Education supports the Association. Located in a charming refurbished Beirut mansion on Rue Hussein Beyhum in the Zokak al-Blat district (P.O.B. 2988), the Institute is directed by Dr. Stefan Wild. It has an excellent library of 40,000 volumes and 250 periodicals. Over half the books are in Middle Eastern languages, almost entirely Arabic. The library contains material on all aspects of contemporary and past Middle Eastern society, including contemporary politics, poetry, medicine, history of art, and music. The library's holdings in fiqh are good, and it receives at least one cultural review or periodical from each Arab country. The library is not public and its space is limited (books cannot be taken out), but foreign scholars are welcomed. Students must have a letter of authorization from their professor. The Institute publishes the Bibliotheca Islamica, a series of classical, previously unpublished texts, and the Beiruter Texte und Studien monograph series. The Institute invites three or four young post-doctoral scholars from Germany to study and travel in the area for one or two years to better prepare them for teaching about the Middle East in German universities.

One of the best collections on Middle Eastern archaeology, along with that at USJ, is located at the Institut Français d'Archéologie de Beyrouth (Rue Georges Picot, P.O.B. 1424). This institute too is located in a lovely mansion built in 1850 by

the Beyhum family and it contains boarding facilities for its staff and fellows along with study rooms and the library. The library of course is primarily for archaeologists but it is also strong in history and religion; there are some 24,000 works of which 42 per cent are in French and the remainder in English, German, Russian, Polish and Arabic. It receives 325 current periodicals and has 50 which are no longer published. There are 200 maps and 17,000 negatives and photos. Originally established in 1920 as the Service des Antiquités du Haut-Commissariat de France en Syrie et au Liban, the Institute took on its present form in 1946; it is financed by the French Foreign Ministry, aided by the French Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, and is linked to the Université de Paris. The director is Dr. Daniel Schlumberger. The Institute publishes Syria: revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie (47 volumes have appeared) and a monograph series, Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique, in which 92 works had appeared by the end of 1970.

Scholars working on the history and society of Mount Lebanon will be interested in the Archives of the Maronite Patriarchate located at Bkerke. At present the Archives are not generally open to scholars because of reorganization; inquiries should be made through local scholars who are known to the Patriarchate or directly to the keeper of the manuscripts, Bishop Ignatius Khalife. Adjacent to the Beirut Museum (Rue de Damas) is the National Archive, established by Emir Maurice Chéhab, Director-General of Antiquities and a leading force in the cultural life of modern Lebanon. The archives, which fill several large filing cabinets, consist mainly of the documents of prominent Maronite families of the Mountain, notably the Khazens, the Chéhabs, and the Karams, over the period 1800-1925. Included are marriage documents, records of loans and debts, and letters relating to family organization and relationships. There are also some documents from a few of the leading Beirut Muslim families such as Beyhum and 'Itani. Dr. Selim Hische has catalogued many of the documents and will be happy to assist visiting scholars. The Archives are open only on a limited basis during the summer. Another source of documentation on 19th century Lebanon are the archives of the French Consulate-General in Beirut. The Lebanese National Library (al-Maktabat al-Watani) is located at the back of the Parliament Building, and according to the director, Mr. Hussein Suleiman Haidar, contains some 100,000 books, magazines, and journals and a collection of 2,000 manuscripts. It occasionally issues a bibliographical bulletin. It would seem that the Library is mainly used by high school and university students and that it suffers from a severe lack of financial and administrative support.

Beirut does not appear to be a center of indigenous Muslim-supported scholarship. The Maqasid Society operates a school system and serves as a structure for popular Sunni culture, but there is nothing on the order of an Azhar. A number of prominent Beirut families have recently decided to develop an Islamic Culture Center (Markaz al-thaqafah al-islamiyyah) to remedy what they consider the insufficient opportunities for Lebanese Muslims to pursue higher Muslim studies. The Center, located in the Jurdak Building on Sadat Street, is in the process of building

a library and hopes eventually to support seminars, lectures (by local and visiting specialists), and scholarly studies. The director is Mr. 'Issam Haidar.

The Institute for Palestine Studies, which is funded in part from Kuwait, has quite an active program of research and publication. In 1971 it initiated the Journal of Palestine Studies, a quarterly devoted to Palestinian affairs and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Institute is undertaking a manpower study of Palestinians and it publishes an Arabic digest and analysis of the Israeli press. The 6,000-book library, according to its director, Dr. Walid Khadduri, is open to all. There is a good general collection on the Palestine problem and a diverse collection of documents and current periodicals. Recently it acquired the microfilm set of British Public Record Office documents on Palestine. The Institute is located off Clemenceau Street and its address is P.O.B. 7164; the address of the U.S. distributor of its publications is P.O.B. 329-A, R.D. 1, Oxford, Pa., 19363. The Research Center of the Palestine Liberation Organization (Colombani Street, P.O.B. 1691) also has a good small library with an extensive clipping collection; it publishes the quarterly Shu'un Filastiniyyah (Palestinian Affairs). Dr. Anis Sayegh is the director.

The U.S. Information Service operates the John F. Kennedy Cultural Center on Abdel-Aziz Street in Ras-Beirut, and the British Council, located on Sidani Street, has in its library some 1300 general volumes on the Middle East.

A library of special interest to social scientists is to be found in the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut (UNESOB). The UNESOB library is designed primarily to serve the UN development and advisory missions for the Middle East. It opened in 1965 and is located in the UN Building at Bir Hassan south of Beirut (P.O.B. 4556). The librarians, Mrs. Nasser and Miss Burtqash, will be happy to assist visiting scholars, but UN and official users have first priority. In addition to a collection of UN economic and social documents, the library has sets of official statistical and economic documents from all the governments in its area (Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Yemen Arab Republic, and the Gulf states) and less complete sets from adjacent areas such as Egypt, North Africa, Turkey and Iran. The governmental documentation is fairly complete from 1960 to the present. There is also a collection of general works in economics and social sciences and a file of 40 current scholarly journals. The library holds perhaps 5,000 items excluding U.N. documents and periodicals, and it receives 700-750 new acquisitions annually. Since 1967 UNESOB has published an annual collection, Studies in Selected Development Problems in Various Countries of the Middle East; it also publishes the Population Bulletin of UNESOB semi-annually. UNESOB maintains a separate Population Unit library in Ramlet al-Baida, but its holdings are listed in the main library at Bir Hassan.

Finally, there are a number of private collections of rare and specialized books and papers, but these are not accessible to

foreign scholars without personal introductions.

Political problems notwithstanding, Lebanon is a fascinating country with rich research facilities. Anybody who can contrive to go there for scholarly work should consider himself lucky.

RESEARCH FACILITIES IN IRAN - ADDENDUM

The Iranian Documentation Center (IRANDOC) is now in full operation, and maintains a good library. The Center's function, which they fulfill admirably, is to be of help to scholars, visiting or not. Their employees will work with you on your project developing bibliography, making appointments at ministries, searching newspaper archives, providing introductions to libraries, and so on. It is an excellent first stop in Tehran. Contact Mr. Daneshi, the head of the Documentation Division. IRANDOC will appreciate it if visiting scholars bring or send copies of their articles on Iranian topics, to add to IRANDOC's collection.

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