

**International Training Programme
Conference support grant 2023**

Final Report

The 19th International Seminar on the Care and Conservation of Manuscripts University of Copenhagen



Dr Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Mohamed Abd el-Salam

- Assistant Professor of Archaeology & Museum Studies, at Archaeology Faculty, Ain Shams University.
- Postdoctoral Associate Researcher at the French Institute of Oriental Archaeology "IFAO".
- Former Deputy Director of the Museum of Islamic Art.
- **ITP Year: 2013**
- **Dates of conference: 19-21 April 2023**

Supported by the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust

Introduction

First, I would like to thank dear Claire Messenger – Manager of the International Training Programme (ITP) at the British Museum - who supported me immediately when I applied for International Training Programme Conference Grant 2023, which is supported by the **Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust**. My many thanks go to all of those who made my attendance possible.

By the same token, it's great for me to give all my thanks to my dear Professor Dr M J Driscoll, Professor of Old Norse Philology, University of Copenhagen, Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics Arnamagnæan Institute. He is the head of the organisational committee of 'The 19th International Seminar on the Care and Conservation of Manuscripts' at the University of Copenhagen.



My photo with professor Dr M J Driscoll, the head of the conference.

As usual I say that the ITP changed my life. It was the first school for me in museum studies in 2013 and now, after 10 years, I am teaching with these ITP materials in several aspects of museology to my students in Archaeology & Museum Studies, at the Archaeology Faculty, Ain Shams University, Cairo.

Two years ago, I was working as the Head of Collection Management at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) where I had been for over eleven years, and I remember that I understood collection management at museums during the International Training Programme for the first time. It was the first lecture in the ITP lecture room at the British Museum (BM) and it gave a very clear message '*if you have collection management you have a museum*'.

I was also former deputy director of the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, and the ITP helped me so much in this career, as I was able to learn at the British Museum how to manage and how to make international cooperations at the Museum.

I have built on my ITP experiences in my work field and this conference focused on one of the very important aspects, which is collection management in museums, and I presented, in a very practical form, my knowledge from both the ITP and the MIA. I believed this conference would help me to open a new network with many specialists in museology and I hoped that I could also introduce the ITP School in this event.



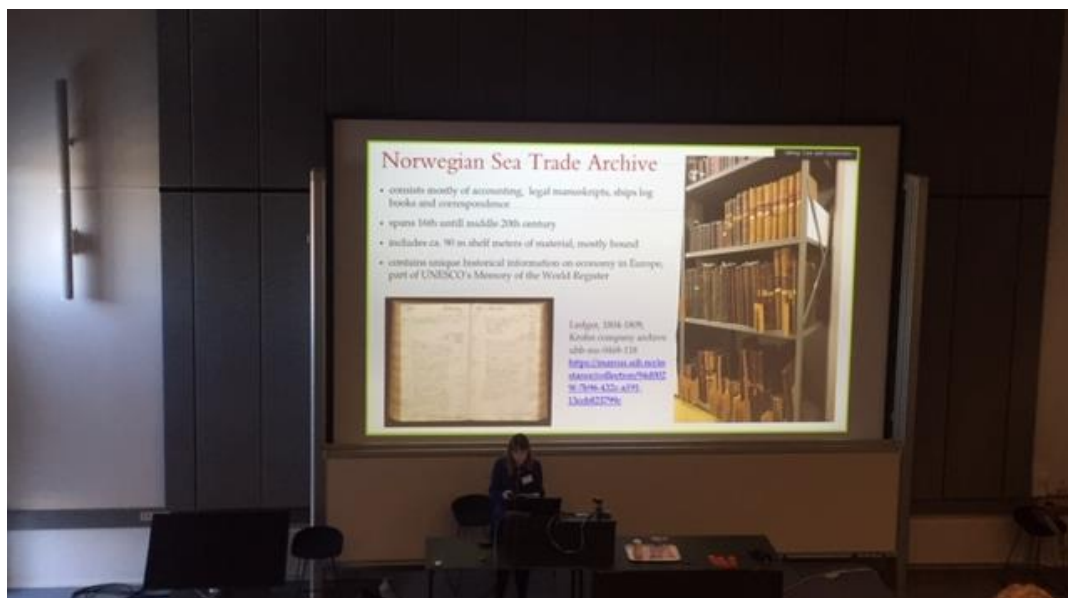
The conference registration.

The conference included many sorts of knowledge from different museums around the world, which helped me to contact and exchange our experiences together.

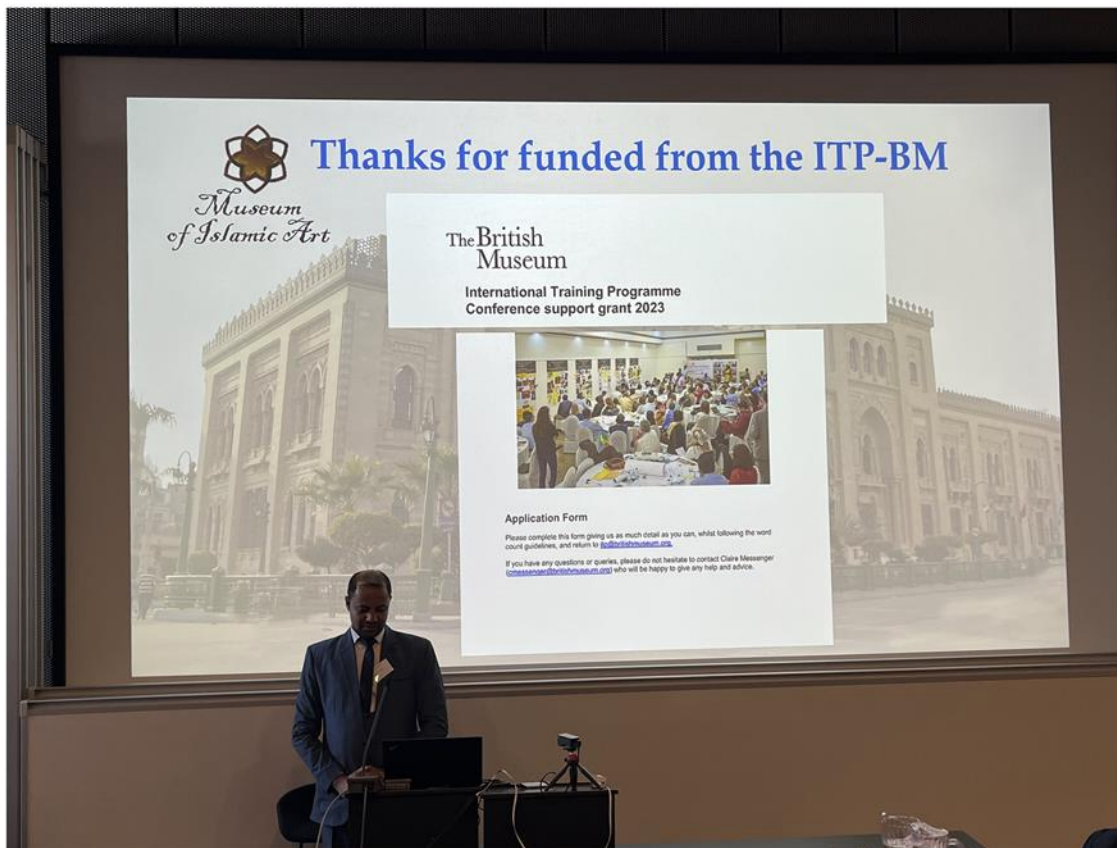


The opening of conference.

The main goal for this research project is to put in place a general policy for the conservation, cataloguing, and digitisation for the manuscripts at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo. By following the same principles of manuscript policies for care and conservation of international libraries & museums, this will help MIA, Cairo with the digitisation of its manuscripts online collections.



I completely trust in the ITP for their support all the time, and I was sure the ITP would support me to attend the conference of 'The 19th seminar on the Care and Conservation of Manuscripts' to be held at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, 19-21 April 2023, to present my proposed paper, '***Collection management of Islamic manuscripts at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo: Study for conservation and digitization***'. This was an international publication for me, and one of the steps to push me for the great and higher degrees for my academic and professional career.



I mentioned and appreciated the ITP support in my talk front of all who participated in the conference.

Conference experience

I think, all of the sessions, workshops, lectures, brain-storming and discussions were very useful for me as they followed the focus of my academic research and my major studies for museum collection management. Below I wanted to share the titles and speakers on the first day of the conference timetable.

Care and Conservation of Manuscripts 19

University of Copenhagen, Southern Campus
19-21 April 2023

Conference Programme

Channel A sessions take place in Aud. 4A.0.69, Channel B sessions in 4A.0.68

WEDNESDAY, 19 APRIL

Registration (8:30-9:15)
Opening of the conference (9:15-9:30)

Session 1A (9:30-11:00)

1. Jiří Vnouček, Matthew Teasdale & Sarah Fiddymant – Parchment of Icelandic manuscripts
2. Vasarè Rastonis – The present state of Flateyjarbók
3. Richard Hark, Raymond Clemens & Paula Zyats – The material history of Portolan maps

Coffee 11:00-11:30

Session 2A (11:30-13:00)

1. Nicole Volmering – Ruling and pricking in Irish manuscripts: An evaluation of practice in manuscripts dating pre-900
2. John Gillis – Hidden in plain sight: The binding boards of the Book of Armagh
3. Fenella France, Andrew Forsberg & Pádraig Ó Macháin – Over and under: Revealing the inner workings of the Irish manuscript tradition

Lunch 13:00-14:00

Session 3A (14:00-15:00)

- 1-2. Élodie Lévêque, Sarah Fiddymant, Antoine Brix & Alberto Campagnolo – Cambrai medieval manuscripts and bindings (60 min.)

Session 1B (9:30-11:00)

1. Camilla Roversi Monaco & Carlotta Letizia Zanasi – Restoration and digitization of a 13th-century parchment psalter housed at the Municipal Library of Imola
2. Nagah Saada – Eco-friendly nanomaterials evaluation and utilization for sustainable preservation of documentary heritage based on parchment against microbial biodeterioration
3. Roni Anaki – Gevil the Jewish parchment: Is it truly parchment?

Session 2B (11:30-13:00)

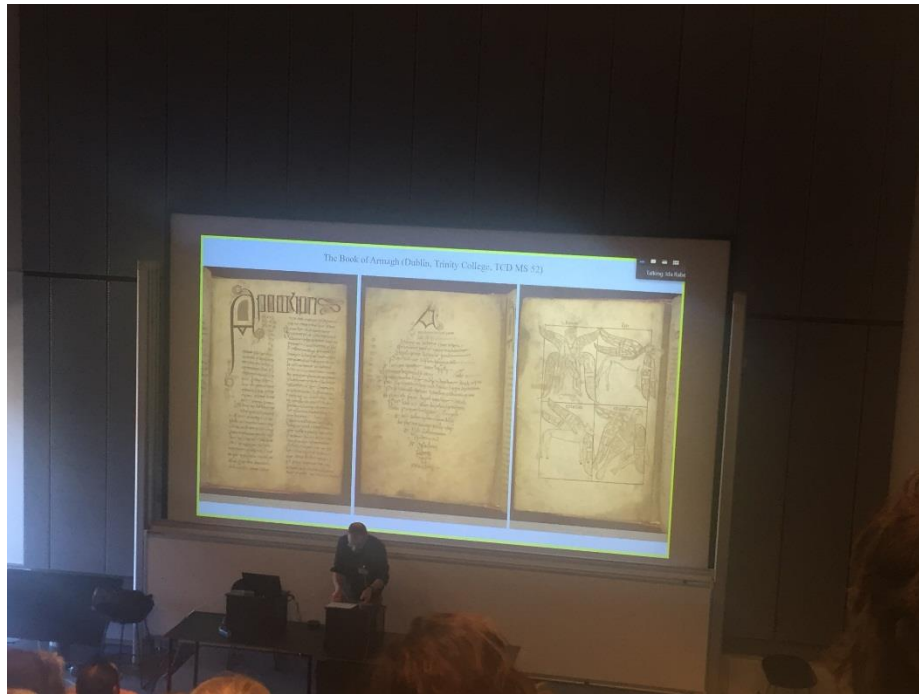
1. Holly Smith & Katerina Williams – Twists, turns and tackets: Designing and undertaking a survey to study The National Archives' (UK) early limp parchment binding collection
2. Angeliki Stassinou, Konstantinos Choulis, Ioannis Kokkonas & Georgia Alexopoulou – Parchment covers and leather tackets: Notarial bindings from the General State Archives of Greece
3. Ágnes Ádám – Conservation of a 14th-century limp binding: How much intervention is necessary?

Session 3B (14:00-15:00)

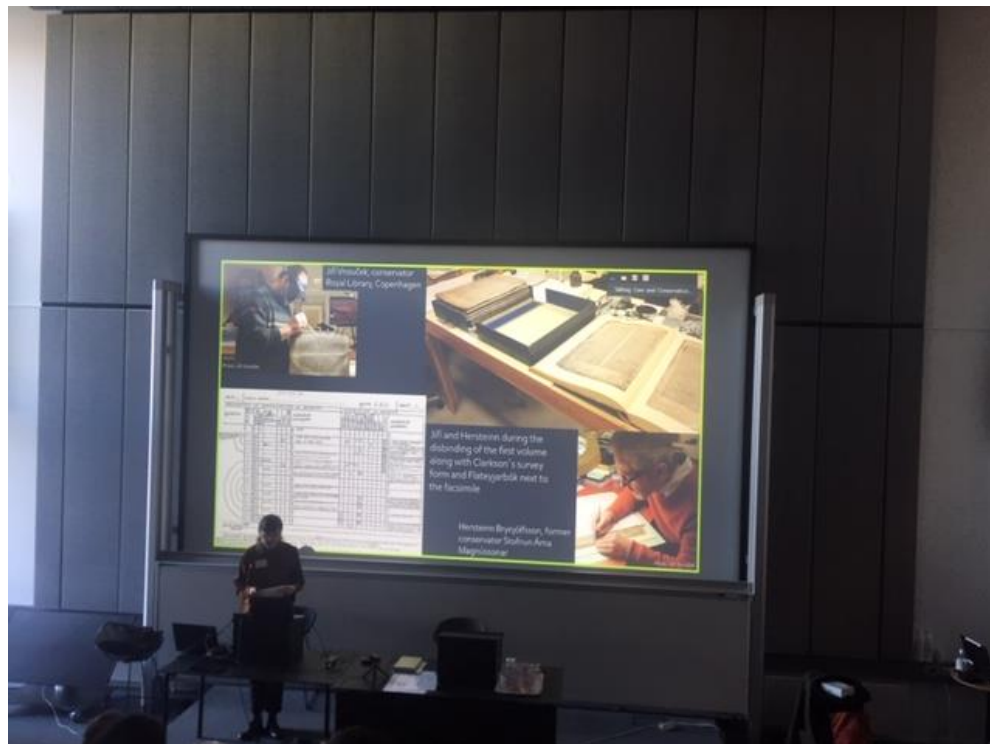
- 1-2. Lydia Aikenhead, Marie-France Lemay & Francisco H. Trujillo – Bembo's Milieu: Contextualizing the Visconti-Sforza tarocchi

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Part of main topics & participates in the conference.



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My talk was at the beginning of the second day of the conference – see the schedule below. I was talking about a very important topic, which related to MIA collection management and it was entitled ‘***Collection management of Islamic manuscripts at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo: Study for conservation and digitization***’.

THURSDAY, 20 APRIL

Session 5A (9:00-10:30)

1. Mohamed Ahmed – Collection management of Islamic manuscripts at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo: Study for conservation and digitization
2. Eliana Dal Sasso – The effect of the text-focused interest on the preservation of Coptic bookbinding
3. Saleh Al-Mahdi Ben Hammouda – The National Laboratory for Manuscript Preservation in Raqqada, Kairouan

Session 5B (9:00-10:30)

1. Nikolas Sarris – Conserving a Byzantine manuscript in an early 16th-century Cretan binding from the Michael Apostolis workshop
2. Alessandro Sidoti – The conservation of the Jewish Scroll of the National Library of Florence
3. Marie Kaladgew, Paulina Kralka & Marya Muzart – Rethinking digitisation as a preservation strategy: Lessons learnt from the Lotus Sutra project at the British Library 2017-2022

Coffee 10:30-11:00

Session 6A (11:00-13:00)

1. Mary French & Bexx Caswell-Olson – Hidden layers: Conservation of a 16-17th-century Kashmiri birch bark manuscript
2. Ekaterina Pasnak – Stationery bindings from the Norwegian Sea Archive, University Library of Bergen
3. Michela Clemente & Federica Della – Analysis and conservation treatments of a Buddhist manuscript preserved in the Tucci Tibetan collection at the “ISIAO Library”
4. Ann-Marie Miller – A stitch in time: Conserving the fabric sample books for the Liberty Archive

Session 6B (11:00-13:00)

- 1-2. Jérémy Delmullle, Hanno Wijsman, Krista Murchison, Claudia Rabel & Joanna Franska – Caring for lost manuscripts (60 min.)
3. Wan-Jen Lin & Bor-Tung Jiang – An interdisciplinary approach of preventive conservation: Automated visual recognition for deterioration on manuscripts
4. Catarina Pinheiro, Ana Teresa Caldeira, Catarina Fernandes Barreira & Maria da Conceição Casanova – Parchment biodeterioration: Recent advances and contributions

Lunch 13:00-14:00

Session 7A (14:00-15:30)

1. Salsawit Assefa Kassaye – Critical review on Ethiopic manuscripts microfilming and digitization projects: for a policy learning tool
2. Wosenseged Kidane Sahile – Care and conservation: Indigenous methods of preserving manuscripts
3. Abigail Quandt – A living tradition: An introduction to the production and use of manuscripts in Ethiopia from the sixth century to the present day

Session 7B (12:30-15:30)

1. Mandana Barkeshli – Shades of coloured papers in medieval Persian manuscripts using blue turnsole (kabudak): History, material technology and reconstruction
2. Nil Baydar – A study of paper in Mehmed II's manuscript collection
3. Katherine Beatty, Rachel Bissonnette & Kathryn Kenney – Rehousing Pothi format books from the Harvard-Yenching Library: Considering materiality and spirituality

Coffee 15:30-16:00

Session 8A (16:00-17:30)

Session 8B (16:00-17:30)

My talk was at the beginning of the second day of the conference.

I chose Islamic Manuscripts at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (MIA) for my research project, and the conference offered me deeper thinking about the manuscripts collections, which in turn helped me to focus on the ideal way for conservation, classification, and cataloguing for (MIA) manuscripts. The Islamic Manuscripts at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo includes over 2700 manuscripts, which cover the eastern and western Islamic World within all ages in Islamic history. In addition to the Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts, MIA preserves manuscripts in other oriental languages. Among these are texts in Sanskrit, Syriac, Mongolian, Samaritan, Armenian, Bengali, Hebrew and Hindi. One language is often represented by only a single volume. The collection also includes at least eight Ethiopian, ten Hebrew and thirteen Javanese manuscripts as well as eleven volumes written in Sanskrit. So it was the perfect choice as a case study for cataloguing and the basics of conservation and digitization.

Research Importance

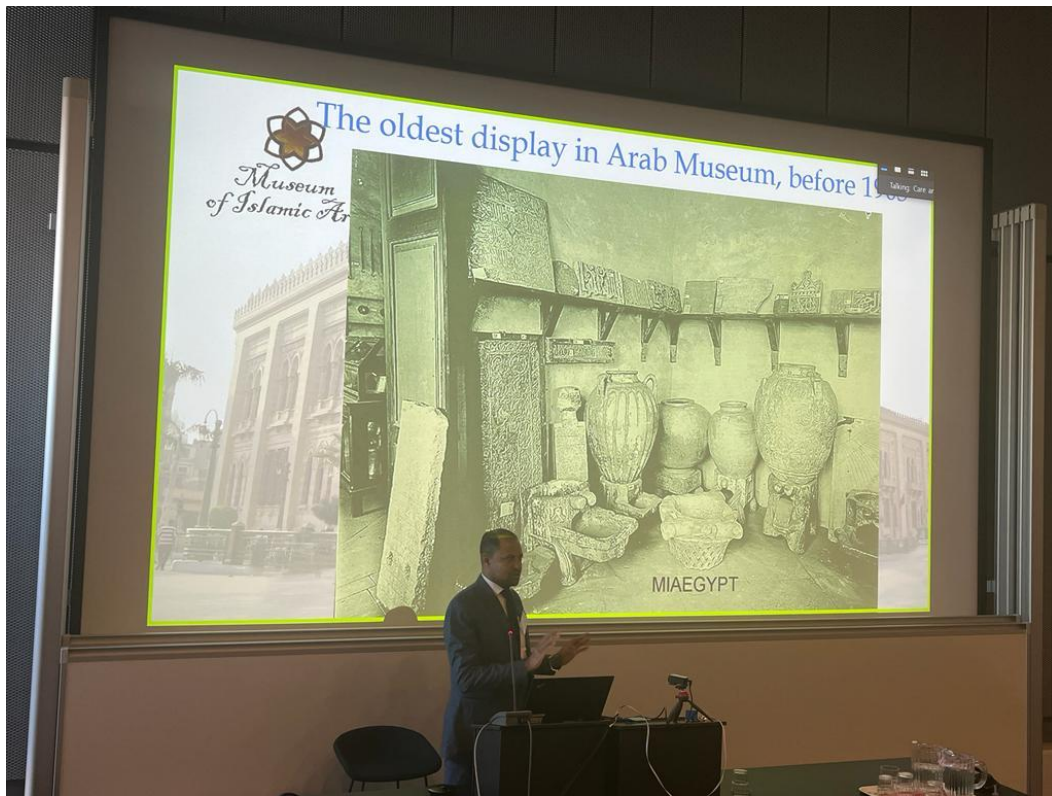
- This project will be the first project for the cataloguing for 2700 manuscripts at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, all of them currently without classification, just the general information in the original museum's registration records.
- This project will be of help to the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo for the digitization for the manuscripts online collections.

Research goals

The main goal for this research project is to put in place a general policy for the conservation, cataloguing, and digitization for the manuscripts at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo following the same principles of manuscript policies for care and conservation of international libraries & museums.

My presentation at the conference.

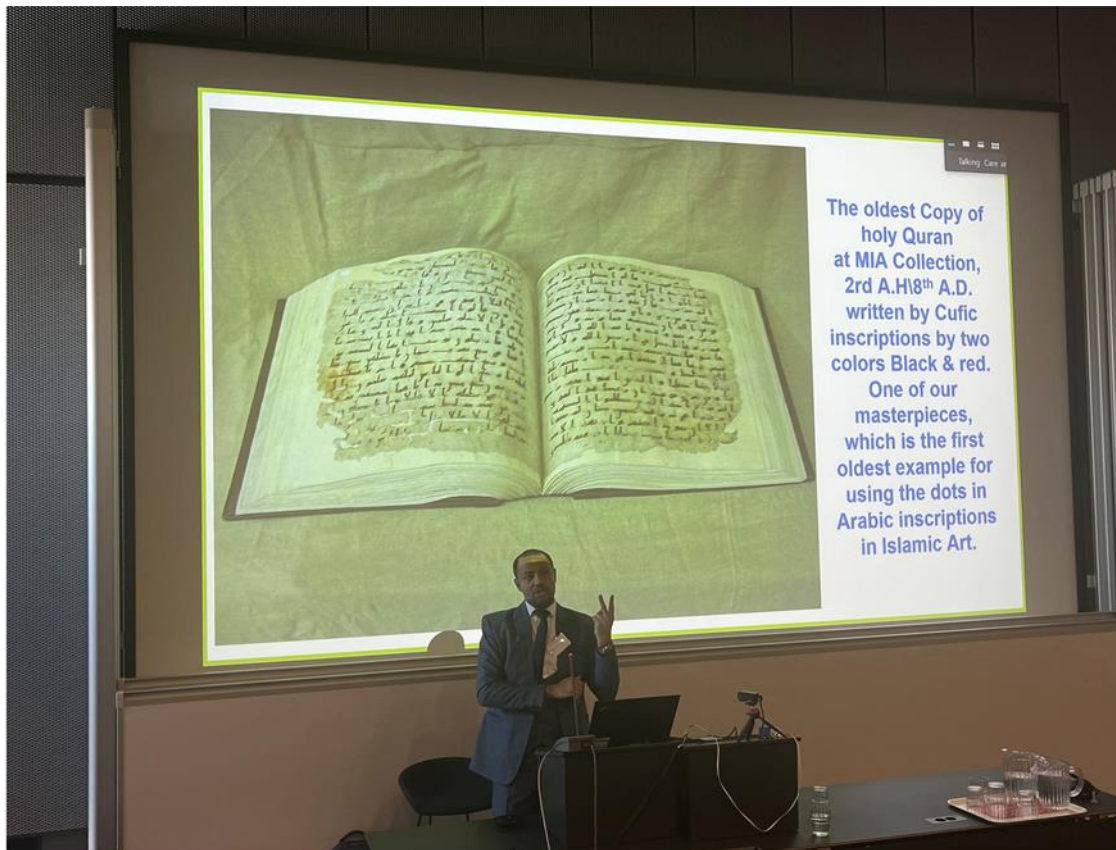




Networking & The future

The attendance of the conference was a very impressive experiment for me. I attended around 32 presentations from 65 presenters in three days, choosing from two sessions A and B.

And I met around 250 'in person' participants from many museums and universities, from over 32 countries around the world. There were also over 150 online participants. All talks will be published in one edition through this year, and the next conference will be prepared for 2024 around the same time.



My presentation at the conference.



CONFIRMATION OF ATTENDANCE

27 APRIL 2023

ARNAMAGNÆAN INSTITUTE

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To whom it may concern,

I hereby confirm that

Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed, Assistant professor of Islamic Art & Museum Studies, Ain Shams University, Cairo

attended and actively participated in the seminar

Care and conservation of manuscripts 19

which took place at the University of Copenhagen from the 19th to the 21st of April 2023.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MJD' followed by a flourish.

M. J. Driscoll
Professor of Old Norse Philology
Conference Organiser

Confirmation for my attendance & participation in the conference.