

July 13, 2022

Prospectus: Middle East and North African Archives Special Section for American Archivist

The *American Archivist* Editorial Board proposes coordinating a special section in an upcoming 2023 issue of the Society of American Archivists' (SAA) journal, *American Archivist* (AA). The journal features research articles, case studies, perspectives, and international scene pieces as well as reviews of the professional literature, archival technologies, and resources. The 2023 version would be a special section within the journal, rather than a full special issue devoted solely to design content archives.

Special Section Contents

The section would include an introduction (author to be determined) and up to eight articles. The proposed articles might come from, (but will not be limited to):

1. Member(s) of the Middle East Librarians Association (MELA)
2. Member(s) of the Arab Federation for Libraries and Information (AFLI)
3. Member(s) of Melcom International
4. Member(s) of the International Council on Archives
5. Member(s) of SAA's own International Archives Section

Special Section Benefits

Sumayya Ahmed and Rebecca Hankins, AA Editorial Board members, Amy Cooper, editor of AA, and Abigail Christian, SAA Director of Publications have discussed the special section and see many benefits to including a special section on archives in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in the AA. First, many SAA members are not familiar with the important archival collections in the region, or from the region that are housed in western repositories, and the projects that MENA focused archivists are undertaking. Focusing on MENA archives also allows us to examine issues of provenance, repatriation, and access within cultural constructs generally unfamiliar to SAA members and global readers of the journal. Second, work will be published in a refereed journal and information about MENA archives will be readily accessible through the journal and its readers on JSTOR and Hathi Trust. This will encourage further research on archival records, record-keeping practices, and the societal dynamics of collection and preservation in the context of the region called the Middle East and North Africa. Those working with such records, whether archives staff, archival scholars or historians are encouraged to consider publishing articles, analysis, and reviews in AA, to reach a broader audience about the work being done and the specific needs within MENA archives and record-keeping.

Special Section Coordination and Schedule

In June, Amy and Abigail spoke with Sumayya and Rebecca to set schedules and coordinate the special section. Sumayya and Rebecca will serve as guest editors for the special section. A February 2023 deadline for submissions for publication in the Fall/Winter 2023 issue was tentatively chosen. The call for papers will be distributed in late July 2023 through various networks.

CALL FOR ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS – Middle East and North African Archives

We, as members of the editorial board of the American Archivist Journal American Archivist, and the guest editors of this special section, invite you to consider writing an article or presenting a case study for a special issue of the journal focusing on Middle East and North African Archives.

The issue will focus, in whole or in part, on archival records in, from or about the MENA region, broadly-defined. Articles could cover records management, repositories, practices, the content of specific collections or larger topics which affect archival collections in the region. While articles are free to engage archival theory, in general, they should discuss actual records and collections, and not approach archives solely as metaphor. We hope that this special section will be a significant contribution to the professional literature, and highlight the innovative practices and special content/contexts of MENA archives. Articles not originally in English could be considered if an English translation could be produced in a timely manner in conformation with article submission standards.

The AA Editor and Editorial Board are considering Fall/Winter 2023 for this dedicated content.

Guidelines on article and case study submissions can be found at <https://www2.archivists.org/american-archivist/submissions>.

Thank you for considering this invitation; we look forward to your submissions!

Sumayya Ahmed and Rebecca Hankins