

**STUDY VISIT REPORT**  
**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS & SHERIDAN LIBRARIES, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY**

**12 - 29 April 2007**



**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**



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**and**

## Introduction

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On April 12<sup>th</sup> the year 2007, MRS. Amira Hegazy (senior Specialist Instructional Services Unit) and MS. Rania Hosny (Head of Research Services Unit) participated in a 16 days study visit a Library of Congress & Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University. This study visit was basically organized for two librarians from the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA) by the Baltimore Friends of the BA of the Baltimore/Luxor/Alexandria Sister City Committee (BLASCC).

The tour program started with a general briefing about the history of the library followed by an introduction for each department activity focusing on MARC 21 and digital projects.

The report shall cover most of the details of our scheduled visits in order of each visit.

We are very grateful to the Baltimore Friends of BA for sponsoring our visit, and many thanks to the host librarians for their deep concern and interesting illustrating different views and activities in their scope of work which turned to be very helpful to us. It was really a valuable and rewarding experience.

## Library of Congress

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### Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2007

The visit was for 5 working days, we were hosted by the African and Middle Eastern division who scheduled our visit in a very well organized way that covered many areas of our interest. The 1<sup>st</sup> day started at 9:30 by meeting Mary-Jane Deeb the chief of the division, Chris Murphy and Fawzi Tadros who welcomed us and discussed the week's program. We were introduced to the staff and we had an overview for the division's scope of work.

We had a tour at the Library of Congress, it's occupies three buildings on Capitol Hill. The Thomas Jefferson Building (1897) The John Adams Building (1938) and the James Madison (1981) to know more about the history of the library, then we started our schedule with orientation to the science, technology and business division, we admire very much their work and creative ideas.

### Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2007

We began by visiting the conservation office, they work on all types of materials, and we were impressed by their laboratory and the most up to date equipments they have, which help them to accomplish their work very rapidly and with high quality. The print and photograph division holds about 40 million objects and 20000 digitized photographs of the middle east, we viewed very interesting photographs for Egyptian cities and people.

The cataloguing development and support office oriented us on MARC21 standards and the rules for updating the different fields. We have learned from the cataloguing

team in Middle East and North Africa that they have two databases, one for the special characters titles and the other for the Latin letters, and we learned their data entry procedures.

### **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2007**

We had the opportunity to be greeted and welcomed by Deana Marcum the associate librarian of library services. We were oriented to the Federal research division. It is very interesting what they do in this division, the mission of the Federal Library and Information Center (FLICC) is to foster excellence in federal library and information services through interagency cooperation and to provide guidance and direction for the Federal Library and Information Network.

The Library of Congress and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina are cooperating in developing the world digital library, and we had the opportunity to view a demonstration by John Van Oudenaren for this project which will help users in knowing the heritage and history of the involved countries from around the world. The World Digital Library will make available on the Internet, free of charge and in multilingual format, significant primary materials from cultures around the world, including manuscripts, maps, rare books, musical scores, recordings, films, prints, photographs, architectural drawings, and other significant cultural materials. The objectives of the World Digital Library are to promote international and inter-cultural understanding and awareness, provide resources to educators, expand non-English and non-Western content on the Internet, and to contribute to scholarly research.

### **Thursday 19th, Friday 20th April 2007**

The last 2 days were dedicated to MARC21, we asked and learned more about the different fields, and during this we had the opportunity to attend a lecture on a new Library issue, "[www.Librarything.com](http://www.Librarything.com)" which is an online service to help people catalog their books easily.

Our visit to the library of Congress was beyond expectations, we enjoyed it very much, and the people were very helpful and willing to answer our questions with delight. It was a very profitable and successful visit.



**Amira, Abdelwahab, Chris, Mary-Jane and Rania at LC**

## SHERIDAN LIBRARIES: JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

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**Monday 23rd April** was our first day at Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University. According to the scheduled appointments our first encounter was with MRS. Pamela Higgins (Special Assistant to the Dean external relations) and Timothy Stinson they gave us a detailed tour through the reading hall, and a complete overview of the Services the Library is offering for its users.

The mission of the Sheridan Libraries is to advance research and teaching at The Johns Hopkins University by providing information resources, instruction, and services.

During the day, we met with Lynda Aldana, responsible for Cataloging projects coordinator. She showed us the cataloging system they are using in the library to catalog their material.

We met afterwards Thomas Izbicki, responsible for Madison Digital Image System (MDIS) which allows instructors to search, retrieve, organize and teach with digital images and image data, Then we end the day by knowing more about students activities in organize exhibitions.

### **Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2007**

On Tuesday morning we began our day with a tour at the Campus with a brief about the history and development of the Johns Hopkins University.

Afterwards Timothy Stinson explained his project about '**Roman de la Rose**'; Six complete *Roman de la Rose* manuscripts from the Walters Art Museum, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the Bodleian Library of Oxford University and the J. Paul Getty Museum that may now be viewed and compared with appropriate permissions. Three of the manuscripts have been transcribed and can be searched.



### **Then we visited the Walters Art museum.**

The library of the Walters Art Museum is an important source for research in art history, serving the museum's staff, visiting scholars, students, and the interested public. The library contains a collection of more than 120,000 books, periodicals, and auction catalogues encompassing the history and theory of art and architecture. The library's collection is very rich in research materials related to the museum's collections, which ranges from ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian art to 19th-century European and American paintings and sculptures. We had a tour in the main library, Manuscripts and Rare books (With more than 900 illuminated manuscripts for the period of 300 BC to the 19th century), then we had an orientation for the content of the TMS database.

We also met with Abigail Quandt, Head of Book and Paper Conservation; one of the main projects & amazing is Archimedes Palimpsest, Conservation treatment work as well as imaging and analytical studies are currently underway on the Archimedes manuscript. The work involves disbinding the manuscript and preparing it for imaging using a variety of digital and x-ray based scanning systems. Challenges to the work of recouping the manuscript include previous physical damage to the parchment, the addition of a second text (known as a palimpsest) over the original writing, and the fragile nature of the leaves.



And we ended the day by a tour in the Museum; the museum houses the highest artistic achievements from nearly every corner of the world. Among its thousands of treasures are masterpieces of Egyptian, Greek and Roman, Islamic, Medieval, Renaissance, and 18th- and 19th-century European and American art, an outstanding group of East Asian bronzes and Asian ceramics, as well as one of the world's finest manuscript and rare book collections.



### Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2007

On Wednesday morning we had an appointment at 9:00 to meet with Mrs. Sophia Jordan Director of Preservation. The Preservation Department is responsible for developing and implementing a variety of activities and programs designed to protect and to ensure continuous usability of materials in the Sheridan Libraries' collections.



We headed afterwards to the **George Peabody Library**.

The George Peabody Library is part of the Sheridan Libraries Special Collections. It is a remarkable research library housed in a remarkable building. The Peabody Stack Room contains five tiers of attractive cast-iron balconies, which rise dramatically to the skylight.



After we have finished our meeting with Mrs. Cynthia Requardt, Head of Special Collections, we had another appointment in the Sheridan Library. We met there with Dr. Sayeed Choudhury who is responsible of the Digital Knowledge Center, Associate Director for Library Digital Programs, who gave us an overview for the projects and focuses on digital collections, services, and infrastructure to support the research, learning, scholarly communication and preservation needs of the faculty, library staff, and academic departments within the University.

### Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2007

We continue discussions with LDP staff on digitization programs, which they focused on:

- **SAKAI**

Sakai Educational Partners Program (SEPP), a community of higher education institutions that will develop an open-source, open-standards collaboration and learning environment (CLE). This CLE, known as Sakai, will offer features and tools to support electronic and distance learning, and collaboration for work groups or teams. Given its flexible design and open nature, Sakai provides the capability to integrate new services and features within a course management environment, and preserve the digital content that supports learning.



- **Gamera**

It is a framework for the creation of structured document analysis applications by domain experts. Domain experts are individuals who have a strong knowledge of the documents in a collection, but may not have a formal technical background. It has been used to build systems for many different types of documents including sheet music, medieval manuscripts, 18th Century census data, dissertations in mixed scripts and lute tablature. A particular focus has been on the difficult challenges posed by cultural heritage materials. Gamera combines a programming library with graphical user interface tools for the training and interactive development of recognition systems.

- **The Lester S. Levy Collection of Sheet Music**

Contains over 29,000 pieces of music and focuses on popular American music spanning the period 1780 to 1960. All pieces of the collection are indexed on this site and a search will retrieve a catalog description of the pieces. An image of the cover and each page of music will also be retrieved if the music was published before 1923 and is in the public domain.



**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2007**

It was our last day on Sheridan Libraries and it was wrap-up discussions with LDP.



**Sayed, Rania, Timothy, Abdelwahab & Amira at JH**

## BLASCC

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- We would like herewith to thank you for giving us the opportunity to experience this great and useful and entertaining study visit to the USA.
- It has added more to our experience and gave us the chance to see old libraries with latest technologies and adaptation to modernism.
- Special thanks go to the friendly people who hosted us at their place, especially to Dr. Randi, who was a charming hostess.
- Not to forget our gratitude to both Dr. Ashraf & his wife Eng. Hasnaa for spending two fantastic days with them & their cute daughter, & Also Dr. Louis & his wife Dr. Samia for spending an amazing time with us & for showing us marvelous places.
- Thanks for Dr. Raouf & Ms. Amal for spending nice time with us in Annapolis.
- Great thank to Dr. Joyce for spending with us nice time for 2 days for more and more shopping.

At the end great thank to Dr. Abdelwahab Elabd for giving us this opportunity to visit USA & be acquainted with all these wonderful people.

## USA

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Although it was a short stay in Baltimore, it has given us an insight of the life in the USA and has left positive impressions on both of us.

- The office environment is informal, and there is no apparent hierarchy between managers and their subordinates. Employees are treated as equals, and independent views are welcomed.
- Water, tea and coffee machines are available at all offices.
- Working hours are flexible, Normal office timings go from 8 AM to 5 PM. Results matter more than anything; they must be able to deliver on demand. Library of congress allow telecommuting, where an employee can work from home, as and when required.
- Americans are very particular about time-management. They come to office early and leave on time. Rarely find them working late hours, or on weekends. They have their weekends pre-planned, and value their privacy.
- Generally, Americans are very polite, friendly and helpful.
- Exercising is important, and they usually go for aerobics or a jog a few times during the week.
- They are particular about their leisure time, health and hygiene.