

Conservation in the Holy Land: Book and Paper Conservation Activities at the Bahá'i World Centre

ABSTRACT

The book and paper conservation activities at the Bahá'i World Centre in Haifa, Israel, are focused on collections that are a combination of Western- and Eastern-styled materials in varying conditions. The Eastern-styled materials are comprised of illuminated manuscripts, archival documents, books, and calligraphy from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, which come from Iran, Turkey, Egypt, and other Middle Eastern countries. The presentation will highlight the problems and solutions associated with the conservation of these materials. Research performed on gum arabic, a main component of the inks on these types of materials, will be presented as well.

The Bahá'i World Centre, which was permanently established in the Holy Land in 1868, is both the administrative and spiritual center for the Bahá'i Faith and its world community. Bahá'u'lláh, the founder, stated that the Bahá'i "writings should be preserved"; therefore, the preservation and conservation of the archival and historical collections is of paramount importance. The Bahá'i Faith is an independent monotheistic religion that began in Persia in 1844.

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