



New York  
Public  
**Library**



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# Middle Eastern and Islamic Manuscript Cataloger (Specialist III)

## Overview

The New York Public Library (NYPL) has been one of the world's great public research libraries for more than 130 years. The research centers offer unparalleled opportunities to engage with in-depth and unique collections, inspirational reading rooms, exhibitions, programs, and a range of research services. The Collections and Research Services division encompasses several departments focused on managing the ongoing development and processing of our exceptional research collections, advancing unified discovery and expanded access, both in-person and online, and ensuring stewardship of the collections at every stage of the collections lifecycle.

The Special Collections Processing Department (SCP) ensures long-term stewardship and access to the Library's most distinctive collections by describing rare and unique materials for inclusion in the Library's catalogs. Reporting to the Senior Manager for Rare Materials Cataloging, the Middle Eastern and Islamic Manuscript Cataloger's primary responsibility is to catalog manuscripts from NYPL's Middle Eastern and Islamic collections, adhering to national and local cataloging standards.

The collection is geographically and culturally expansive, spanning from West Africa to Indonesia—including North Africa, Turkey, Iran, China, and South Asia—and offers exceptional chronological and interdisciplinary depth. **This two-year, grant-funded position is part of a five-year Lilly Endowment project focused on the conservation, digitization, and public engagement of the Islamic manuscript collection.**

## Responsibilities

- Perform original and complex copy cataloging for rare Middle Eastern and Islamic manuscripts in OCLC and Sierra, adhering to current standards and best practices for descriptive cataloging of rare manuscripts
- Analyze and resolve complex bibliographic problems to ensure the discoverability and integrity of the Library's unique holdings
- Perform authority control by creating and maintaining name and subject authority records according to national standards
- Apply and interpret controlled vocabularies, including LCSH and RBMS, while ensuring romanization follows ALA-LC standards
- Collaborate with project staff, curatorial, public service, and collection management teams to develop project-specific workflows to ensure timely achievement of project milestones

- In collaboration with curatorial teams, identify and prioritize materials for conservation, providing detailed assessments of physical condition to the project team and conservators
- Identify and document any shift in provenance in new and existing catalog records that expand beyond existing accession records
- Liaise with colleagues in BookOps to ensure local cataloging data aligns with shared collection standards
- Maintain awareness of emerging trends and best practices in rare book librarianship, including linked data and the ethical description of diverse cultural heritage
- Perform related duties as required

**Department**

Collections

**Employment Type**

Full Time

**Location**

Library Services Center

**Workplace type**

Onsite

**Compensation**

\$80,145 / year

**Reporting To**

Ryan Mendenhall

## Required Education, Experience & Skills

### Required Education & Certifications

ALA-accredited Master's degree in Library and Information Science or advanced degree in Middle Eastern Studies, Islamic Studies, or related humanities field combined with successful completion of cataloging training

### Required Experience

- Experience performing original and complex copy cataloging of rare materials, specifically manuscripts and rare books
- Experience designing and managing project workflows, assessing outcomes, and resolving complex bibliographic problems independently
- Experience with the physical handling of fragile materials
- Experience using integrated library systems, such as Sierra, and bibliographic utilities like OCLC Connexion
- Experience creating and maintaining authority records within national programs like NACO and BIBCO

### Required Skills

- Excellent reading and writing proficiency in Arabic and proficiency or reading knowledge in Persian, Ottoman, and Urdu
- Strong original cataloging skills, especially those needed to describe rare books and manuscripts
- Demonstrated knowledge of rare book and special collections cataloging standards (e.g. DCRM, RDA, MARC21) and controlled vocabularies (e.g. RBMS, LCSH)
- Knowledge and awareness of current trends and new developments in cataloging and metadata
- Demonstrated knowledge of codicological and paleographic aspects of manuscripts

- Strong analytical, problem-solving, and time-management skills with a high level of accuracy and attention to detail with the ability to work independently and collaboratively in a team environment
- Excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication skills, including demonstrated ability to communicate with a diverse community
- Strong service orientation and knowledge of user needs

### **Managerial/Supervisory Responsibilities**

N/A

## **More...**

### **Core Values**

*All team members are expected and encouraged to embody the NYPL Core Values:*

- Be **Helpful** to patrons and colleagues
- Be **Resourceful** in solving problems
- Be **Curious** in all aspects of your work
- Be **Welcoming** and **Inclusive**

### **Work Environment**

- Office setting
- Based onsite in the Library Services Center, but also works in the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building as necessary

### **Physical Duties**

- Ability to move book trucks and handle materials that may weigh up to 40 lbs.
- Will require travel within NYC

### **Pre-Placement Physical Required?**

No

### **Union/Non Union**

Local 1930

### **FLSA Status**

Non-Exempt

### **Schedule**

35 hours/week, M-F, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., onsite

*This job description represents the types and levels of responsibilities that will be required of the position and shall not be construed as a declaration of all of the specific duties and responsibilities for the role. Job duties may change if Library priorities change. Employees may be directed to perform job-related tasks other than those specifically presented in this description as needed.*

### **The New York Public Library Salary Statement**

At the Library, we believe that pay transparency and pay equity are important to ensuring we source the best candidates and keep the best employees. When making a determination as to the appropriate

salary for a candidate, we consider a variety of factors such, including, but not limited to, the position requirements, the skills, prior experience, and educational background required or preferred for the job, the scope and impact of the role within the organization, internal peer equity, and the candidate's specific training, experience, education level, and skills. No single factor is conclusive; the Library reserves the right to consider any and all relevant factors and make a decision consistent with its policies.

Union Salaries are determined by collective bargaining agreement(s).

## About The New York Public Library

The New York Public Library is a free provider of education and information for the people of New York and beyond. With 92 locations—including research and branch libraries—throughout the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island, the Library offers free materials, computer access, classes, exhibitions, programming and more to everyone from toddlers to scholars, and has seen record numbers of attendance and circulation in recent years. The New York Public Library serves more than 18 million patrons who come through its doors annually and millions more around the globe who use its resources at [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).

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