Information Seeking and Information Needs

Ahmad Bakeri Abu Bakar



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Editor

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2. ISLAMIC MANUSCRIPTS IN POLISH, CZECH AND SLOVAKIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Ataullah Bogdan Kopanski

Department of History and Civilization, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia

ABSTRACT

There are hundreds rare manuscripts written in Arabic, Turkic, Farsi, Polish, Russian and Belorussian languages preserved in 21 public and private collections located in Poland. The largest collections of these mostly Muslim manuscripts are in the Wroclaw University Library (the former German Breslau University in Lower Silesia), in the National Museum (Czartoryski Department) at Cracow and in the National Library at Warsaw. Many Polish public and academic institutions purchased those rare documents of Islamic literature from mostly private booksellers, collectors and relatives of authors in both the East and the West. The fine tradition of gathering of Islamic art and books in Poland had been initiated by the Orientophiles of the 18thand the 19th century CE. The desire to know more about Islamic civilization was Romantic explorers of "Orient" as famous Polish inspired by such aristocrats as Czartoryski, Zamoyski, Działynski, Radziwill, Potocki, or Rzewuski. Definitely, the most 'exotic' manuscripts from the Polish collections are works (kitaby, hamaily, tafsiry) written by Polish or Lithunian Muslims of Tatar origin.