Nomination form
International Memory of the World Register

Coins’ collection of the National Library & Archives of Egypt

2014-99

1.0 Summary (max 200 words)

Give a brief description of the documentary heritage being nominated and the reasons for proposing it.

This is the “shop window” of your nomination and is best written last! It should contain all the essential points you want to make, so that anyone reading it can understand your case even if they do not read the rest of your nomination.

The National Library & Archives of Egypt owns a huge and unique collections of numismatic and treasures.

This collection and how we present it to the world are extremely important for many reasons. First, it is the oldest numismatic collection of coins and related numismatic material in the Arab world. Second, it is one of the largest numismatic collections in the Arab world and, we believe, the largest owned by a state institution rather than private collectors. Third, it is the most diverse numismatic collection in the Middle East as it includes coins, jetons (glass weights & glass seals) dies for striking coins, medals, tokens, and even examples of special paper money and while particularly strong on Egypt includes specimens from Spain to India. The total of the Coins’ collection is about 6500 pieces; coins [5,279 pieces], jetons [885], dies [165], and other numismatic items [163]. Fourth, it includes the largest collection of dies in the world for striking Egyptian coins. Fifth, coins are not tangible (monumental building), and not intangible (folklore) as well. They are written documents but in different form and in metal form, instead of paper form. Finally, this collection of coins meets all the criteria of Memory of the World, from the point of view of authenticity, world significance, time, place, people, form, style, rarity and integrity.
2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

- The National Library & Archives of Egypt (NLAE)

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

- The National Library & Archives of Egypt is the official owner & responsible for every kind of documentary materials related to the national heritage & history of Egypt, including the mentioned nominated collection.

2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

Dr. Howayda Kamel, Director of International Relations at the National Library & Archives of Egypt.

2.4 Contact details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Howayda Kamel</td>
<td>The National Library &amp; Archives of Egypt, Cornish El Nile- Ramlet Boulac, Cairo-Egypt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Facsimile</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>202-27735645</td>
<td>202-25765185</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hkmel100@hotmail.com">hkmel100@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

If inscribed, the exact title and institution(s) to appear on the certificate should be given

In this part of the form you must describe the document or collection in sufficient detail to make clear precisely what you are nominating. Any collection must be finite (with beginning and end dates) and closed.

Name:

Coins’ collection of the National Library & Archives of Egypt.

Identification details:

- Coins’ collection is one of most important, unique and rare collections of the National Library & Archives of Egypt, which refers to different historical eras and periods of time that represent a panoramic preview, starting in the early Islamic dynasty and the era of King Fu’ad, passing by the Umayyad caliphate, the Abbasid caliphate,
the Fatimid caliphate, the Ayyubid caliphate, the Mamluk caliphate, the French
expedition and the English colonization.

1- Arab-Sasanian Coins
The earliest coins minted by Muslims beginning in 20 A.H./ 643 A.C. were
imitations of the silver drachma coins of the Persian Sasanian dynasty which ruled
the lands of modern Iraq, Iran and parts of Central Asia before the Muslim conquests.
Following the model of Sasanian silver drachma, this collection had the image of the
ruling shah on the obverse and a Zoroastrian fire temple with two attendants on the
reverse. The inclusion of the phrase in Arabic “In the name of God” in the second
quadrant (3 p.m. – 6 p.m. on a clock) of the obverse is proof that this coin was struck
by a Muslim ruler. This example was chosen because the name of the city in which it
was struck, Basra, which is written on the reverse in middle Persian in a script called
Pahlavi, was founded by Muslims and therefore this is additional evidence that this coin
must have been struck after the rise of Islam.

2- The Gold Coins
The Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (65 – 86/685 – 705) revolutionized Islamic
coinage beginning with a dinar dated 77 Hijra. The most remarkable aspect of this
collection is that they are the first Muslim coins to include Qu’ranic verses. Most of
Surat al-Ikhlas (112) is inscribed in the center of the reverse. Verses from Surat al-
Bara’at (9:33) are inscribed around the obverse margin following the phrase
“Muhammad rasul Allah.” These are also the first Muslim coins without any images.
They weighed slightly less than circulating Byzantine gold coins and quickly came to
dominate the market. This new all-epigraphic style coinage set the model for almost all
Muslim coins until the 20th century.

3- Abbasid dinars from reign of Harun al-Rashid
The conservative nature of Islamic coinage, if not all coinage, is reflected in the few
changes between Umayyad and early Abbasid dinars. The most important change was
dropping from the center of the reverse parts of Surat al-Ikhlas (112) on the Umayyad
dinars and dirhams and replacing it with the three lines of Muhammad rasul Allah. One
reason for this change is that the Abbasids wished to emphasize their genealogical tie to
the Prophet and thus the legitimacy of their claim to the caliphate. A second possible
reason is that Byzantium, and even Christianity, was no longer seen as the challenge it
had been to Islam when Abd al-Malik first introduced Surat al-Ikhlas to his coinage 80
years earlier. (See Treasures 3 and 4). Even during the reign of Harun al-Rashid (170-
93/786-809), the most famous of the early Abbasid caliphs, he did not put his name on
his coinage. Eventually, there would appear a whole series of names – caliphs,
successors, governors, officials, etc. – on the gold, silver and copper coins of the first
period of ‘Abbasid coinage, which ended during the reign of al-Ma’mun (189-218/813-
33). (See Treasure 7).

4- Fatimid “bullseye” style gold coins
Beginning with the reign of the Shi’ite imam-caliph al-Mu’izz li-Din Allah (341–65/953–75) the Fatimids issued most of their coinage with the inscriptions in a series of concentric circles which scholars call the “bullseye” pattern. While Shi’ite religious formula had appeared on earlier coinage, this new style was easily recognized as very different from the style of coins struck by the Abbasids and earlier Umayyads. Because the Fatimids had access to gold resources in West Africa, most of their gold coins were of very high quality. Even if one could not read the inscription, the design signaled that this was a Fatimid gold coin and probably had a very high percentage of gold in it. Therefore, Fatimid gold coins which anyone with a minimum knowledge could identify were very popular in medieval markets.

5- Saladin’s Fatimid style Sunni gold coins
Salah al-Din (Saladin) (56–89/1169–93) brought the Fatimid Shi’ite rule over Egypt to an end in 567/1171 and had prayers said in the name of the Sunni Abbasid caliph in Baghdad. He also dropped all Shi’ite terminology from his coinage and had the name of the Abbasid caliph inscribed in place of the former Fatimid ruler. He even put his own name “Yusuf bin Ayyub” in the center of the obverse. He also used Cairo [al-Qahirah] as the name of his mint rather than Misr as the Fatimids had done. What he didn’t do was to change the style of the gold coinage so that those who used the coinage in the market would have assumed it was still Fatimid and that it maintained the same high degree of purity that Fatimid coins had. Only after the death of Saladin’s grandson al-Mansur in 596/1200 did Ayyubid rulers strike a new style Abbasid gold coin Egypt.

6- Mamluk dinars with lion
The reign of the Mamluk sultan Baybars (658–76/1260–77) ushered in a series of monetary changes. The new style dinars were significantly larger than those minted in Egypt earlier and because their weights varied so greatly, they had to be traded by weight, not number. The sultan engraved more elaborate titles on his coinage than earlier rulers had done paralleling the expansion of titles on architecture. Finally, Baybars added a lion as a symbol of his rule which he also placed on bridges and fortifications. Since his son and successor Baraka Khan (676–78/1277–79) also placed a lion on his coinage, it is very possible they used the lion as a family symbol. None of the succeeding Mamluk sultans put a lion or any other “family” symbol on their coinage although the style of dinar introduced by Baybars was struck in Egypt and Syria into the 9th/15th century.

7- A Napoleonic medal from Egypt
Creating medals to commemorate some event has a long tradition, particularly in Western Europe, although a few medals are known from the medieval Islamic world. Napoleon, wishing to celebrate the conquest of Upper Egypt in 1799 or year VII of the
French Republican calendar, had one such medal stuck as he had done for the conquest of Lower Egypt. The obverse displays an idealized pharaoh with strong western features while the reverse can be identified with the Nile through the appearance of a crocodile chained to a palm tree. Even if one could not read the inscription, it is obvious that these medals were struck for European, particularly French audiences, and not ordinary Egyptians of the late 18th century.

8- An English medal for Muhammad Ali Pasha

While rulers were the primary source for authorizing medals, sometimes organizations and outside groups would issue them. In this case it was a group of British merchants who wished to thank Muhammad [Mehmet] Ali, ruler of Egypt, (1220–64/1805–48) for his protection of the overland route from Europe to India. They also wanted to curry additional favor with Egypt’s ruler. This medal also reflects the centrality of Egypt for British-India trade long before the Suez Canal was built.

9- A medal by King Fu’ad for his trip to Italy

Both the Egyptian monarchy and the Egyptian Republic continued the tradition of issuing medals in honor of various events and organizations. King Fu’ad I (1335–55/1917–37) commemorated many of his overseas travels with appropriate medals. In honor of his trip to Italy he had this medal struck with his name and title on the obverse in Arabic and information in Latin on the reverse margin. Obviously King Fu’ad did not have this medal struck for the mass of Egyptians who could not read it and would have been offended by the female images on it. The king not only included images of widely known monuments from both countries – the Sphinx and the Roman coliseum – but he identified the two women pouring water into a single stream as the Nile and the Tiber dressed as 19th century Europeans idealized ancient Greek goddesses.

3.4 History/provenance

Describe what you know of the history of the collection or document. Your knowledge may not be complete, but give the best description you can.

The National Library of Egypt collection began as a bequest from the estate of the resident Englishman Edward Thomas Rogers in 1884 and grew at a modest rate when Stanley Lane-Poole (1854 – 1931) catalogued the holdings as Catalogue of the collection of the Arabic coins preserved in the Khedivial Library at Cairo (London: Bernard Quartich, 1897; reprinted Cairo: Arab Bookshop, 1984). The volume he produced on the Khedivial collection had the advantage of extensive descriptions in Arabic of many of the coins but in light of the technology and costs at the time lacked any images. Lane-Poole was the most important British numismatist and Orientalist of his generation and his extensive bibliography included histories of Muslim lands from Spain to India. His monumental 10 volume Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum (London: British Museum, 1875; reprinted Bologna: Forni, 1967) is still a standard reference.

Eight decades later Dr. Norman “Doug” Nicol and Dr. Raafat al-Nabarawy
under the general supervision of Dr. Jere L. Bacharach had the opportunity to study the non-hoard part of the National Library of Egypt’s holdings or approximately 6,500 of the total 13,000 items. The team of Nicol and al-Nabarawy were able to work for many months four hours a day, three days a week with two Library staff members present until they finished examining, weighing, and measuring each piece while writing the data for each item on a separate card. The resulting publication, Norman D. Nicol, Raafat el-Nabarawy, and Jere L. Bacharach. Catalog of the Islamic Coins, Glass Weights, Dies and Medals in the National Library of Egypt, Cairo (Malibu, CA.: Udena Publications, 1982), was typed by hand by Nicol and included basic data such as weight and diameter on each item and references to numismatic literature where similar items could be found. The Nicol-al-Nabarawy work was superior to the old Lane-Poole volume in many ways as significantly more coins were listed and data on glass weights, dies and medals were included. However, costs and even technology impacted the final product and relatively few Arabic inscriptions were pasted into the text, all done by hand by Nicol, while the number of images, which had to be printed on higher quality paper, was limited to approximately 5% of the collection with none in color.

Both Nicol and al-Nabarawy continued to advance the field of Islamic numismatics after their work at the National Library of Egypt. Nicol’s monumental study A Corpus of Fatimid Coins (Trieste: G. Bernardi, 2006) is likely to have a longer shelve life than even Lane-Poole’s 1897 British Museum catalogue. He has also written five volumes of the Syllloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean Museum (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum) and has compiled A Standard Catalog of German Coins: 1601 – Present (Iola, WI: Krause, 1994 and later editions).

Dr. al-Nabarawy has also had a stellar career as a faculty member in the Department of Archaeology, Cairo University rising to the rank of Dean of his college. He has trained more Ph.D. and M.A. students in Islamic numismatics than any other scholar in the world. As an active scholar al-Nabarawy has produced many books and articles including al-Sikkah Al-Islāmīyah Fī Miṣr: ’aṣr Dawlat Al-Mamālīk Al-Jarākisah (al-Qāhirah : Markaz al-Ḥaḍārah al-‘Arabīyah, 1993) and al-Nuqūd al-Ṣalībīyah fī al-Shām wa-Miṣr (al-Qāhirah : Maktabat al-Qāhirah lil-Kitāb, 2004).

Almost three decades after the publication of The Catalog of the Islamic Coins, Dr, Sherif Anwar and I were granted permission only to photograph all the pieces published in the 1982 volume and in a different museum environment reflecting major changes in technology and in the museum world. Public museums and libraries as holders of cultural heritage have become increasing concerned with the preservation and security of their collections. The rules under which coin collections may be examined in many public institutions including the British Museum, the American Numismatic Society in New York, and elsewhere have changed. For example, specific personnel must be present when coins are examined and the places where this can take place have a significantly higher degree of security than earlier settings. While slightly inconvenient these changes ensure a higher degree of protection for any museum collection. On the other hand since we were not permitted to weigh and measure each
piece, we had to use the data from the 1982 catalog. Also, the numismatic library acquired in the late 1970s has disappeared and, again, we had to use the 1982 work for references.

4.0 Legal information

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Helmy El Namnam, Chairman</td>
<td>The National Library &amp; Archives of Egypt, Cornish El Nile-Ramlet Boulac, Cairo-Egypt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Facsimile</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>202-27735645</td>
<td>202-25765185</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hkame1100@hotmail.com">hkame1100@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Facsimile</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.3 Legal status

Provide details of legal and administrative responsibility for the preservation of the documentary heritage

- The National Library & Archives of Egypt, as the owner and the custodian of Coins’ collection, undertakes the legal and administrative responsibility for preserving the collection- as one of the most unique and rare collections of human cultural heritage in the world- in a healthy scientific environment and restoring it on regular basis, as well as making the collection accessible to the researchers from all over the world, in digital format and on the Internet, using the most recent methods of technology, with the cooperation of International organizations, concerned of world’s culture and documentary heritage, such as UNESCO, and its major cultural projects like Memory of the World.

4.4 Accessibility

Describe how the item(s) / collection may be accessed

The collection may be accessed through out the project of the digital database and catalogue of coins’ collection at the NLAE.
All access restrictions should be explicitly stated below:

- No restrictions for the accessing the coins’ collection.
- We will establish a website for the digital database and the search engine for the coins’ collection, to serve all the interested researchers.
- The digital database will be online soon, as a link of the website of the NLAЕ, http://www.darelkotob.gov.eg

Encouraging accessibility is a basic objective of MoW. Accordingly, digitization for access purposes is encouraged and you should comment on whether this has been done or is planned. You should also note if there are legal or cultural factors that restrict access.

Coins’ collection of the National Library & Archives of Egypt.

The National Library and Archives of Egypt [Dar al-Kutub] is proud to submit this proposal announcing a bi-lingual, searchable, digital catalogue of almost 6,500 numismatic items housed in our facilities. We believe that this project and the objects themselves more than meets the mission of the Memory of the World Programme since it facilitates preservation, by the most appropriate techniques, of this extremely important documentary heritage; it assists universal access to this documentary heritage by the inclusion of images of every piece, descriptions of every piece and data given in both Arabic and English; and it increases awareness worldwide of the existence and significance of this documentary heritage by making it available free on the world wide web.

Unfortunately there is, nowadays, many cultural factors that … access, due to the destruction of the show cases at the National Library of Egypt at Bab El Khalq, after the explosion of 24th of January 2014.

We hope to find the necessary funding to be able to purchase new showcases, in addition to launch online the website for the digital database and the search engine for the coins’ collection and link it to the website of the NLAЕ.

4.5 Copyright status

Describe the copyright status of the item(s) / collection

Where copyright status is known, it should be stated. However, the copyright status of a document or collection has no bearing on its significance and is not taken into account in determining whether it meets the criteria for inscription.

- All copyrights of coins’ collections are reserved to the National Library & Archives of Egypt.

5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria
5.1 Authenticity.

*Is the documentary heritage what it appears to be? Have identity and provenance been reliably established?*

We present the following history of the collection to demonstrate both the identity and provenance of the collection. Edward Thomas Rogers (1831 – 1884), the creator of the original Egyptian National Library collection, was employed by the British Government in various consular positions in Egypt and Greater Syria before entering the service of Khedive Ismail [1863 - 79] working in the Ministry of Public Instruction and the Ministry of the Interior. During these years of service he began collecting Islamic coins and glass weights and was one of the first scholars to write on the latter. When he died in 1884 the executors of his estate donated his collection to the Khedival Library where the few thousand pieces, one of the largest collections outside Europe, became the core of the current holdings of the Egyptian National Library and the first formal collection of Islamic coins in the Arab world.

Under the leadership of Khedivial Library Director Berhhardt Moritz [Director, 1896 - 1911], the noted British scholar Stanley Lane-Poole was invited to Cairo to prepare a catalog. Lane-Poole’s work which included 1,721 items was published as *Catalogue of the collection of the Arabic coins preserved in the Khedivial Library at Cairo* [London: Bernard Quartich, 1897; reprinted Cairo: Arab Bookshop, 1984]. It quickly became the standard reference for all scholars and had the advantage of including descriptions of many of the coins, but the disadvantage of no images. The coins were housed in a magnificent metal cabinet with 152 draws which is still in use today.

Moritz published in 1904 a short piece on additions to the Khedival collection in which he made reference to a number of hoards that had been acquired by the library but gave very few details. He did emphasize how the Khedival Library’s holdings in a number of areas related to Egyptian history were superior to those in Paris and London.

The collection continued to grow into the 1920s when a hand list with registration numbers and descriptions of the coins was completed. It is probable that most archeological finds, hoards, and confiscations after this date were being turned over to the Museum of Arab Art, the forerunner of the Museum of Islamic Art. The last major recorded gift was in 1930 and it consisted of 147 coins, mostly modern, from the estate of Ahmad Taymur Pasha [1871 – 1930].

Whenever scholars wished to see the collection, library employees had to be reassigned to the visitor as there were neither specialists on Islamic numismatics on staff nor space allocated for the study and even exhibition of the collection. Ironically, these restrictions resulted in a better record of protection of the collection than many other institutions around the world. Finally in the late 1970s permission was granted for a team of scholars lead by Normand D. Nicol and Raafat al-Nabarawy, overseen by Jere L. Bacharach, to study all the items not retained as hoards. The result of their work was the
publication Norman D. Nicol, Raafat el-Nabarawy, and Jere L. Bacharach. *Catalog of the Islamic Coins, Glass Weights, Dies and Medals in the Egyptian National Library, Cairo* [Malibu, CA.: Udena Publications, 1982] in which the almost 6,500 numismatic items were identified along with critical data such as dynasty, ruler, mint, date, weight, diameter, registration number and references. The technologies of the time and the cost of publication placed severe restrictions on the size of the book eliminating the possibility of Arabic inscriptions except for a few pieces and on the number of images which could be produced, the latter amounting to only 5% of the collection. All of the camera ready pages were prepared on a typewriter by Dr. Nicol.

Between 1973 and 1977 millions of books, tens of thousands of manuscripts, thousands of papyri and all the other items housed in the Bab al-Khalq facilities including the numismatic items were moved to the Egyptian National Library’s new facilities on the Corniche el-Nil in Ramlet Boulak. None of the numismatic material was lost in the move. In the late 2000s permission was given to Prof. Dr. Jere L. Bacharach and Dr. Sherif Sayyed Anwar to photograph all the items in the 1982 publication cited above. Then, under the direction of Dr. Sherif, all the inscriptions in Arabic were reread based upon these photographs. The data for individual weights, diameters, registration numbers and references was copied from the 1982 book. Thus, the new electronic database combines the two projects.

Finally, this project is an excellent example of international scholarly cooperation. The Egyptian National Library and Archives worked closely with the American Research Center in Egypt, which is located in Cairo, and the American Numismatic Society of New York to produce the final project. Many Egyptians and a few Americans participated in all aspects of the project all with the common aim of making available to the world this exceptional collection through the web while protecting the integrity of the Egyptian National Library’s holdings by limiting access to the actual objects themselves.

5.2 World significance

*Is the heritage unique and irreplaceable? Would its disappearance constitute and harmful impoverishment of the heritage of humanity? Has it created great impact over time and/or within a particular cultural area of the world? Has it had great influence (positive or negative) on the course of history?*

In reconstructing and understanding the past numismatic evidence is a very important but often, underutilized historic document. Numismatic evidence reflects the specific political, religious, social and economic conditions when each item was issued. For example a new coin design or inscription first struck in 2013 reflected the outlook of the ruling authority at that time and in that place. If the same coin appears in 2014 with only the date, it reflects the conservative nature of numismatic evidence, but at some point in the future a new design or image, religious formula, political title or any other change is introduced which reflects the reality of that new time and place. For Islamic history coins and other numismatic objects are the best contemporary evidence we have
for that past. The inscriptions on Islamic coins are longer and more complex than for any other society. Just as each country which strikes a Euro has its own special symbols on these modern coins, so did Muslim rulers from Spain to India include unique information to where they lived. One of the great strengthens of the Egyptian National Library is the breadth of its holdings in addition to its amazing depth for coins struck in Egypt and Greater Syria.

There are a number of reasons that Islamic numismatic evidence has been underutilized by scholars compared to other historical sources. Collections of coins and other numismatic objects are housed in museums around the world so visiting collections can be very expensive, if not a difficult undertaking. In addition, more and more museums and libraries limit access to their collections for obvious security reasons. Printed catalogues are almost always inadequate. Today no one library has printed a book with every Islamic numismatic item in its collection illustrated and with a full inscription. The project revolutionizes access so that the entire world can have access to our collection.

5.3 Comparative criteria:

**Does the heritage meet any of the following tests? (It must meet at least one of them.)**

1 **Time**

*Is the document evocative of its time (which may have been a time of crisis, or significant social or cultural change? Does it represent a new discovery? Or is it the “first of its kind”?*

- Coins’ collection reflects various historical eras and periods of time that represent a panoramic preview, starting in the early Islamic dynasty and the era of King Fu’ad, passing by the Umayyad caliphate, the Abbasid caliphate, the Fatimid caliphate, the Ayyubid caliphate, the Mamluk caliphate, the French expedition and the English colonization.

2 **Place**

*Does the document contain crucial information about a locality important in world history and culture? For example, was the location itself an important influence on the events or phenomena represented by the document? Does it describe physical environments, cities or institutions that have since vanished?*

- Coins and other numismatic evidence, like first struck, are a reflection of place; they are one of many sources which enable us to understand the social, religious and political values of ruling elites class in the past, but this can only be understood by having this numismatic data available and studied. For serious scholars the larger the data base one has to work with, the more confidence one has in the interpretations offered for our understanding of that past and therefore having a database of this size and searchable significantly increases the number of historical examples available to scholars.

3 **People**
Does the cultural context of the document’s creation reflect significant aspects of human behaviour, or of social, industrial, artistic or political development? Or does it capture the essence of great movements, transitions, advances or regression? Does it illustrate the lives of prominent individuals in the above fields?

- In every society in which coins were struck or paper money issued what is on these objects in terms of inscriptions, images, designs, etc. is very important but we rarely take note of what is on them as our primary purpose is to use them for monetary exchanges. For example, the Egyptian National Library collection includes gold coins struck by the famous Sunni Muslim ruler Saladin who overthrew the Shi’ite Fatimid dynasty. We know from the narrative sources that Saladin had prayers said in Cairo in the name of the Sunni caliph in Baghdad and we know that the inscriptions on his coins had all the proper Sunni references without a reference to the Shi’ites. But when we look at the coins themselves, they look exactly like those minted by the Shi’ite Fatimids. In fact, very few people now or then could tell them apart although one has Shi’ite religious formulae and the other Sunni references. Because the Fatimid gold coins had such a good reputation in the market and Saladin wanted his coins to be accepted, he made them look like the Shi’ite issues. Here cumulative numismatic evidence tells us something about that time and place which cannot be found in any narrative source.

4 Subject and theme

Does the subject matter of the document represent particular historical or intellectual developments in the natural, social and human sciences? Or in politics, ideology, sport or the arts?

- The primary role of coins is to aid economic activities but what is struck on each coin tells a unique story. The challenge for scholars is to take these data and put them into a context, to see the inscriptions, designs and even in some cases the images as a series of lenses that enable us to understand specific historical, intellectual, political and even artistic developments. The collection is not from a particular historical period but is breadth enables us to see the vast range of Muslim responses to changing economic, political and religious conditions. The collection does not interpret the evidence; it makes it available in a form and scale never before and will be a model for other museums and libraries with numismatic material to follow.

5 Form and style

Does the document have outstanding aesthetic, stylistic or linguistic value? Or is it a typical exemplar of a type of presentation, custom or medium? Is it an example of a disappeared or disappearing carrier or format?

- Since the collection covers material minted from Spain to India and from the 7th century to the mid-20th century, the aesthetic, stylistic and even linguistic values varies greatly. For example, the collection includes a coin struck by a Muslim ruler in Afghanistan entirely in Sanskrit with a Hindu god which was issued because the needs of the local market where similar coins struck by Hindu rulers circulated were stronger than the religious injunctions that a Muslim coin be in Arabic script and have no images. On the other hand, a medal in the collection issued in the name of King Faruk of Egypt after his visit to Italy includes two nude women labeled as the Nile and Tiber rivers pouring water
into a common stream and offers insights into the values of an early 20th century Egypt ruling elite.

6 Social/ spiritual/ community significance:
Application of this criterion must reflect living significance – does documentary heritage have an emotional hold on people who are alive today? Is it venerated as holy or for its mystical qualities, or revered for its association with significant people and events?
(Once those who have revered the documentary heritage for its social/ spiritual/ community significance no longer do so, or are no longer living, it loses this specific significance and may eventually acquire historical significance.)

- It is revered for its association with significant people and events and for having a great value and historical significance.

6.0 Contextual information

6.1 Rarity

Some of the specimens in the collection are very rare, if not unique, Such as; Arab-Sasanian Coins, The Gold Coins, Abbasid dinars from reign of Harun al-Rashid, Fatimid “bullseye” style gold coins, Saladin’s Fatimid style Sunni gold coins, Mamluk dinars with lion, a Napoleonic medal from Egypt, An English medal for Muhammad Ali Pasha, a medal by King Fu’ad for his trip to Italy.

The real rarity is the availability on the web of such a large, detailed, searchable database for Islamic numismatics.

6.2 Integrity

Thanks to the care of the National Library and Archives of Egypt the integrity of the collection has been maintained, through the continuous effort of the three restoration labs that undertake the responsibility of restore the coins to its original form, on regular basis, and using the most updated technologies and tools in this field.

The National Library and Archives of Egypt, provided restoration staff with advanced training courses and workshops in Spain, Malaysia and Italy, which make their technical level, the best in the middle East.

Fire and alarm system, which costed millions of Egyptian pounds, as equipments, software and training of security staff.

Unfortunately, both restoration lab at the National Library of Egypt at Bab El Khaleq, and fire and alarm system were stopped due to the explosion’s negative impact and they both need now a financial aid and technical support for fixing them in the near future.