DLME Collection Development Strategy[1]
for The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded project, Developing the Technical
Platform for the Digital Library of the Middle East (2018-2020), grant #1710-04978

OVERVIEW

The Digital Library of the Middle East (DLME) endeavors to provide access to resources that libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural heritage institutions consider appropriate for representation in the DLME based on their respective digital strategies. Although the DLME is not in a position to define the Middle East nor cultural heritage, it focuses on content that covers the Middle East and North Africa from centuries long past to modern times.

The main aim of the DLME project 2018-2020 is to aggregate digital records from Middle Eastern and North African institutions. However, content stewarded by non-Middle Eastern/North African institutions may be pursued in cases where it would strengthen the collection. Considerations will include diversity of content, regional representation, intellectual property rights, user experience, metadata quality, and technical feasibility. Metadata records in the DLME must point to freely accessible digital objects or collections.

SCOPE

During the 2018-2020 grant period, with the guidance of its curatorial advisors, the DLME will prioritize:[2]
- Digital objects covering Middle Eastern and North African cultural heritage, with no restrictions on chronological coverage
- Digital objects stewarded by institutions and/or individuals based in the Middle East and North Africa
- Digital objects that are open access i.e., no login or special permission is required
- Digital objects of heritage identified as particularly at risk
- Digital objects with unique and durable URLs

---

[1] The following owes much to Henning Scholz et al, *Europeana Content Strategy* (March 2017) pp. 6-7 https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/Publications/Europeana%20Content%20Strategy.pdf

[2] Additional considerations for inclusion in the DLME are records that are part of digital collections that offer: interoperability (e.g., via IIIF), a means of community participation (e.g., the option to add tags, comments, ratings, additional metadata, and/or send feedback to the stewarding institution), a search function, and a stated preservation strategy or commitment to maintain the digital records for at least five years.

- Digital objects with one or more publicly accessible thumbnails or previews (the DLME prefers, but does not require, IIIF-based delivery)
- Digital objects with harvestable metadata in one or more language(s), with a preference for bilingual metadata

Records for each item or collection will ideally include:
- Name/title/descriptor (required)
- Accession number or other unique ID (required)
- Provenance (place of origin and ownership history)[3] (required)
- Subject headings/controlled vocabulary (required)
- Images or other media (digital photographs, maps, 3D images, video, audio, etc.) (required)
- Temporal date or range according to one or more standard chronologies/calendars (strongly preferred)
- Clear rights statements (see e.g., rightsstatements.org) communicating the intellectual property, copyright, and/or re-use status of the digital objects (strongly preferred)

Would you like to recommend a digital collection for inclusion in the DLME? Let us know!

---

[3] The DLME expects all partners to perform due diligence on issues of provenance and to steward objects in a culturally sensitive manner per the guidelines outlined in ICOM's code of ethics https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/MUSEUM_CODE_OF_ETHICS-_Arabic.pdf and https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf.