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Applying of Object ID Stander on the Carpets Collection at the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo

<https://doi.org/10.34739/his.2024.13.18>

Abstract: *This research is the first archaeological study that applies standard of Object ID as a principle of museum collection management, that will be on Islamic carpets collection at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo as a case study. This paper is a practical field study, which includes in its aspects field training, workshops, lectures, and automatic and manual examination of carpets as a case study, according to the organizational work and the principles available and followed by the museum.*

Key words: Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, Museum's Carpet Collections, Registration, Object ID Stander

Introduction

The Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo is the largest museum of Islamic antiquities and arts in the world. It holds over one hundred thousand archaeological artifacts¹ covering different Islamic eras in the east and west of the Islamic world.² The idea of establishing a museum of Islamic arts and antiquities came up during the rule of Khedive Ismail, specifically in 1869, when the French engineer Auguste Salzmann suggested Khedive Ismail establish such a museum. The Khedive instructed the director of the technical department in the Ministry of Endowments, Frantz Pasha, to collect artifacts from Islamic architecture in a government building, which was com-

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¹ The researcher made an inventory of the total number of artifacts in the museum based on the original paper public records of the registration and documentation of antiquities in the museum, numbering 103,000 artifacts; 3,886 museum objects on display and 99,114 at storage. The inventory was completed on 1/3/2023. It is subject to relative change due to temporary loan movements and complete dismissal, as well as in and out movement of artifacts to support other regional museums periodically and continuously. (*The Museum of Islamic Art*, 2023c).

² Selim, 2011: 5.

pleted during the rule of Khedive Tawfiq in 1880.³ Frantz Pasha collected antiquities and artifacts of the Islamic period in the eastern wing of al-Hakem Bi Amr Allah's Mosque.⁴

Interest in collecting antiquities increased when the Committee for the Preservation of Arab Antiquities was established in 1881, taking Al-Hakim Mosque as its headquarter. A small building was built in the Mosque's courtyard, called the Arab Museum, managed by Frantz Pasha, who retired in 1892. In April 1892, the Committee for the Preservation of Arab Antiquities selected its chief engineer, Herz Bey, to supervise the Arab Museum. He developed a guide of its contents in 1895. When Herz Bey noticed the small area of the Mosque's courtyard, it was decided to establish the current building on Port Said Street in Bab Elkhaliq Square, called the House of Arab Antiquities, whose construction was from 1899 to 1902. Then, the antiquities were transferred to the House that Khedive Abbas Hilmi II inaugurated on 27 December 1903.⁵

In 1951, the number of recorded antiquities was about forty-five thousand. By the end of the same year, Dr. Zaki Muhammad Hassan changed the name of the House of Arab Antiquities to the Museum of Islamic Art because the museum held antiquities from most of the Arab and non-Arab regions of the Islamic world created under the patronage of caliphs and rulers throughout the Islamic era. The displayed antiques were distributed to twenty-three halls divided according to eras and artistic materials.⁶

The Museum of Islamic Art is divided administratively and archaeologically according to the raw materials. It includes 13 specific departments according to the displayed and stored raw materials: Carpet department, textile department, metals department, wood department, ivory department, coins department, glass and rock crystal department, ceramics and pottery department, stones department, manuscripts department, jewelry department, weapons department, and archaeological seizure department.⁷

The carpets department is one of the most important departments in the Museum, the largest for Islamic antique carpets in Egypt, and one of the most diverse and valuable departments of antique carpets worldwide. Most of these carpets were bought from the heirs of the late Ali Pasha Ibrahim in the late first half of the 20th century, which enriched the museum's collections artistically and archaeologically. According

³ Al-Rafi'i, 1987: 26.

⁴ Al -Hakem Bi Amr Allah's Mosque is located on Al-Muizz Street in Cairo. It is one of the most well-known mosques in Fatimid Cairo. It was built by Al -Hakem Bi Amr Allah (996-1021); see Abouseif-Behrens, 1998: 63

⁵ The researcher's review of an archival document of the commemorative speech of Khedive Abbas Hilmi II on the inauguration of the Khedivial Kutub Khana and the House of Arab Antiquities (*The Museum of Islamic Art*, 2023a).

⁶ Askar, 2010: 64.

⁷ Al-Shawki *et al.*, 2016: 8.

to the current acquisition policy, the number of carpets that the department holds is 197, to which the Object ID standard was applied in the field study, with 180 carpets and parts of carpets stored and 17 on display. This rare art collection covers most of the patterns of Islamic carpets in various carpet manufacturing and decoration centers in the Islamic era.⁸

The carpets' record of the Museum holds 238 antique carpets, 28 of which were provided as a permanent loan to national and regional museums, and 13 are not carpets and are not included in the appropriate museum documentation for the custody of antique carpets in the museum: 12 pieces of horse saddles and 1 small camel wooden figurine. Thus, the present research paper covers 191 antique numbers, each with its own form, and 197 antique carpets because some numbers have carpets divided into pieces and parts counted in the number field in the record according to their parts.⁹

History of the Management of the Museum's Carpet Collections according to Archival Documents

Museum collections management is the comprehensive process of controlling, understanding, and managing museum collections. It covers a set of executive procedures entrusted with complete control and efficient management of the collection. In museology, museum collections management is the term given to all the legal, ethical, technical, and practical processes to collect, organize, research, discuss, preserve, and display collections through display or providing information in possible ways.¹⁰

Accordingly, the management stages of carpet collections throughout the history of the Museum of Islamic Art were distinctive. The formation of the collection began with the first carpet possession in the Museum, number 3606, on 1/6/1910. It was purchased for 200 Egyptian pounds only as the actual value and 30 pounds were added in the price field (estimated value: 230 Egyptian pounds). It was purchased from Monsieur Aseanian,¹¹ who was the first antique dealer to sell carpets to the Museum of Islamic Art. He also sold five other carpets to the Museum. The total number of carpets in the Museum in the second half of 1910 amounted to 16 carpets to be the cornerstone of the antique carpets department in the museum.¹² They were followed by other collections. The 28th of February 1949 was a turning point in increasing the number of

⁸ A review and analysis of the fields of the date and place of receiving of the pieces (*The Museum of Islamic Art*, 2023a).

⁹ A review and analysis of the fields of public records and the carpets' record in the museum (*The Museum of Islamic Art*, 2023c).

¹⁰ Khalil, 2020: 355.

¹¹ A merchant of French origin who lived in Egypt from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. The records mentioned that these carpets were bought in 1910 only. The researcher's reading and analysis of the fields of the history and source of carpets (*The Museum of Islamic Art*, 2023a).

¹² A review and analysis of the recording and descriptions of carpets by the researcher (*The Museum of Islamic Art*, 2023b).

carpets preserved in the museum, as the museum owned a wonderful collection purchased from the heirs of Dr. Ali Pasha Ibrahim,¹³ numbered **127** carpets with registration numbers from 15725 to 15851.¹⁴ In this year, the most expensive carpet in terms of purchasing value in the history of the museum was also recorded from the collection of Ali Pasha Ibrahim for 8,400 Egyptian pounds in 1949. It is also the largest carpet preserved in the museum: 10 meters and 150 cm long and 4 meters and 270 cm wide. Its registration number is 15725.¹⁵

The disbursement form for buying this rare collection of carpets and ceramics was approved on 21/ 2/ 1949, and it was bought and registered in the museum’s records on 28/2/ 1949.¹⁶ The carpets were bought for 89.170 Egyptian pounds only, out of the total purchasing list of the carpets of 109.476 pounds and 200 millimeters throughout the history of the museum, reported in the museum records until 12/12/1983. N.B. Eight carpets were held in the museum’s collections after 1983, with no purchase values in the museum records. The number of ceramic antiques purchased with them amounted to 419, with a purchase value of 26.224 Egyptian pounds. A total of 651 antiques¹⁷ joined the museum this year, as shown in the table:

Year/ Rec. No.	Carpet	Ceramic	Stone	Metal	Pottery	Glass	Textile	Coins	Wood	Precious stones
1949/ Public record 7	127	419	2	43	40	4	2	5	7	2

Fig. 1. Statistics of the total number of antiquities received into the museum in 1949 (by Author)

¹³ Ali Ibrahim Atta was born in Alexandria on 10 October 1880. He was one of the first Egyptian surgeons, the first Egyptian dean of the Kasr Al-Aini Faculty of Medicine, and the first to allow girls to join the Faculty of Medicine. He was the Minister of Health from 28 June 1940 to 30 July 1941 (Translation and Publishing Committee, 1946: 42). He was a member of the Arabic Language Academy and established the Egyptian Medical Syndicate (*Dar Al-Hekma*) in 1940. He was the first chief of Egyptian Medical Syndicate. Additionally, he founded the Egyptian Medical Association and the Egyptian Medical Journal. He died on 28 January 1947 (Al-Jawadi, 1986: 19).

¹⁴ A review and analysis of the recording and descriptions of carpets by the researcher.

¹⁵ A review and analysis of the recording and descriptions of carpets by the researcher.

¹⁶ The public auction for selling the remaining collection of Ali Pasha Ibrahim was on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, corresponding to the first three days of April 1949, a full month after the purchasing of the museum’s needs from the collection. The two experts of Islamic collectibles in the auction were Dr. Gaston Veit – director of the House of Arab Antiquities (currently the Museum) and Dr. Zaki Muhammad Hassan – dean of the Faculty of Arts and professor of Islamic Arts at Fouad I University (currently Cairo University) and the next director of the Museum. This demonstrates the effective power of the Museum of Islamic Art in the market of Islamic art objects at the time (Group of Experts, 1949).

¹⁷ A review and analysis of the records and descriptions of the antiquities by the researcher (*The Museum of Islamic Art*, 2023a: Record No.7).

Then, the collection increased from various sources, including purchases, gifts, and antiquities seized. The last carpet was transferred to the Museum of Islamic Art from the Reserves Department in Terminal 3, Cairo International Airport, and was registered as an antique seizure on 17/4/2013, numbered 39400.¹⁸

Due to the evolution of museum display methods, the display styles of carpets have varied. Museum collection management, including archival documents, has played a major role in preserving and documenting the nature and development of museum displays of carpets at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo.¹⁹ The first story shows a real museum display method in the exhibition halls in 1904 after its inauguration in its current location. It involved handing the carpets on the wall in a multi-level vertical position to cover the walls, but without glass protectors or linen backgrounds to maintain their back textile composition. At that time, the display adhered to available capabilities and included a large number of carpets, more than the current display due to the full use of the exhibition hall's walls.²⁰

The same pattern of displaying carpets continued until the first development of the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo in 1983. At this stage, an upper hall on the second floor was allocated to display textiles and carpets, and the style of museum display of carpets varied to include carpets hung on the wall and others on the floor with protective barriers. The display of carpets developed due to the evolving methods and mechanisms of museum display. It included various collections of artifacts.²¹



Fig. 2. An archival photo of the carpet exhibition rooms at the Museum of Islamic Art, first half of the 20th century. From: Archives of the Museum of Islamic Art, Cliché No. 5130 (by Author)



Fig. 3. A photo of Room No. 20 of the current carpet display rooms (by Author)

¹⁸ A review and analysis of the records and descriptions of carpets, the record of carpet.

¹⁹ Photographs of Archival Documents at the Museum (*The Museum of Islamic Art*, 2023a).

²⁰ *The Museum of Islamic Art*, 2023a.

²¹ Askar, 2010: 54.

Two development stages happened in the museum later. The first was a comprehensive development plan (2003-2010). Carpets and textiles were displayed in two exhibition rooms (21 and 20) as a specific artistic display²² of textiles and carpets in two successive rooms in the course of the visit. The number of carpets displayed was 16.²³ The second was carried out after the destruction of the museum on 24 January 2014. The museum was developed and reopened on 18 January 2017. The display resembled the previous stage, but there was a development in the means of supporting the museum display and writing valuable scientific materials to describe and explain the collections. Additionally, one carpet was added in room 16, numbered 39400, known as the portrait carpet, showing a group of half portraits of the rulers/Shahs of Iran dated to the Qajar Era (19th century).²⁴ Thus, the number of displayed carpets was 17 in 3 rooms: 21, 20, and 16. The two stages also included back linings on stands/chassis made of light metal or wood to protect and mount the carpets on the wall. The display style varied and included a free display in the room, especially for large carpets, display in showcases, and display in complete or partial glass protection from the effects of heat, humidity, and harmful rays resulting from natural and artificial light.²⁵ Additionally, different methods made of plexiglass²⁶ were used to reinforce and support²⁷ carpets in display showcases and behind wall protections.

The files and documents of the carpet collections management in the Carpet Department of the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo highlighted the displayed and stored carpets to provide the main information on the documentation and acquisition of the carpets. Furthermore, the archival photos showed the development of the display of carpets in the museum exhibition rooms.

Object ID and its indicators

It is standard for documenting and recording museum collections. It contains a recording form including all the major and minor relevant information, proving

²² Askar, 2010: 55.

²³ *Information Center at the Museum of Islamic Art*, 2023.

²⁴ Al-Shawki, 2016: 57-81.

²⁵ The lighting cause damage to exhibits, especially those made of organic materials, such as carpets. Two types of harmful rays are emitted: Short-wave ultraviolet rays with spectro-chemical effects and long-wave infrared rays, increasing temperature (Adams & Hassan, 1993: 164-165).

²⁶ It is a transparent acrylic, known as Poly (methyl methacrylate) (*PMMA*). It is a highly transparent thermoplastic polymer. So, it is also called acrylic glass or plexiglass. Plexiglass was the first trade name in the market in 1933. It also has several trade names (Ahmed, 2022: 45).

²⁷ These factors that help museum display are called object mounting methods. They are divided into two types: ready-made stands and supports and others tailored according to the need of the museum collection to be displayed (Luoni, 2017: 4).

the nature and identity of the collection. It also illustrates all information related to museum collections management.²⁸

In 1993, the *Getty Institute* initiated a project to develop an international documentation standard of cultural property in cooperation with the police, customs, museums, art trade, appraisers, and insurance companies worldwide. The contents of the standard were determined based on field research, interviews, and +1000 questionnaires and surveys from organizations in 84 countries, including Egypt.²⁹ All involved parties agreed to apply the standard on a set of key data that must be available when documenting museum and cultural collections, resulting in having the *Object ID* as an information checklist and an agreed-upon standard.³⁰

In 1997, the Object ID standard was used and promoted by international official law enforcement bodies, such as the FBI and Interpol, as well as the World Customs Organization, UNESCO, International Council of Museums, cultural heritage preservation organizations, and some art trade galleries, auctions, art evaluation, and insurance companies. A descriptive standard was developed to help combat the illegal seizure of cultural objects by facilitating the documentation of museum and cultural collections.³¹

Between 1999 and 2004, the Object ID project was approved by the Council for the Prevention of Art Theft (COPAT) in the United Kingdom, the American Alliance of Museums (AAM),³² and the Collections Management Standard in the United Kingdom SPECTRUM. In October 2004, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) signed an agreement with *J. Paul Getty Trust* for ICOM's extensive use of the Getty's Object ID standard. The ICOM has had licensing rights to encourage the use of this standard among museum professionals. Accordingly, it disseminates the culture and work of the standard among museums worldwide and organizes workshops on its implementation in cooperation with UNESCO, the World Customs Organization, and Interpol.³³

The museum recording fields in the Object ID form are 23. Some of them include other minor and detailed fields, but all of them are documentary and recording indicators, which undoubtedly ensure the ideal recording of the relevant information, achieve optimal collection management and control the museum governance of information related to the received and dispatched collections.³⁴

Object ID helps decrease the illegal trade of cultural and museum objects. It provides a comprehensive definition of museum collections. The unified museum documen-

²⁸ Object ID-International Council of Museums, ICOM, 2023.

²⁹ Thornes, Dorrell & Lie, 1999: 3-4.

³⁰ Thornes & Bold, 1998: 14.

³¹ ICOM, 2023.

³² American Alliance of Museums, 2012: 6.

³³ Yasaitis, 2005: 29-30.

³⁴ Thornes, Dorrell & Lie, 1999: 11-12.

tation is used to circulate bulletins in all land, sea, and air outlets to achieve more effective safety rates for work and museum collections. Proper conservation of collections begins with careful documentation.³⁵

Law enforcement agencies have recognized the importance of good documentation in combating thieves of museum and cultural collections. Police and customs officers could hardly return museum and cultural objects that are not appropriately photographed and described. Although security bodies have detected many illegal smuggling operations of cultural collections, they could not return them easily to their legal owners because of the lack of helping documents.³⁶ Hence, Object ID is important because it is an international document of museum and cultural collections.³⁷ The following section explains and analyzes the fields and indicators of Object ID.

Object ID (Record Sheet)

1. **Object number:** The museum object number is defined, but it should not be replaced, changed, or dispensed with except in special cases and fixed terms. It is a unique number. A collection cannot have more than one number to avoid disruption in the collection management.³⁸
2. **Materials and methods:** This field mentions the raw materials in detail,³⁹ their proportions, and an analysis⁴⁰ of the manufacturing and decoration methods.
3. **Measurements:** This field includes all relevant measurements of the object, such as height or length, width, depth, diameter for round parts, and weight, which are important for lending the object to other exhibitions. Such information helps in the optimal selection of containers transporting the collections to achieve the highest levels of safety and security. The measurements also include the unit of measurement (meter/ centimeter/ millimeter) and the units of weight (kilogram/gram)⁴¹ that must be standardized for all objects. The field is then completed with additional notes or metrics, if any.⁴²

³⁵ ICOM, 2023.

³⁶ Yasaitis, 2005: 32.

³⁷ There is increasing and widespread support for Object ID worldwide. It is used by most customs agencies in the EU countries, and it was translated into 17 languages. The international institutions that strongly adopt Object ID to document cultural property include Art and Antiques Unit, Metropolitan Police, London-Carabinieri Command for Cultural Heritage Protection (TPC), Italy-European Commission-Interpol J. Paul Getty Trust, Los Angeles-National Museum of World Cultures Foundation (NMVW), the Netherlands-UNESCO-World Customs Organization-ICOM.

³⁸ *The Supreme Committee for Writing Museum Records*, 2023: 3.

³⁹ Mentioning the raw material specifically and clearly for each object is essential for museum collection management. Some international museums, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, record the numbers of objects according to each department and its raw materials. Such object numbers start with a Latin letter short for the raw material. For example, W.25-1977 is the number of a wooden box from the *Furniture and Woodwork Collection*, taking the letter *W* for Wood, acquisition in 1977, and order in the collection 25 (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2023).

⁴⁰ Thomes, Dorrell & Lie, 1999: 13.

⁴¹ From the real participation in museum committees affiliated with the museum sector to make inventory and examine antiquities in various archaeological and historical museums in Egypt, the researcher

4. **Inscriptions and marks:** This field includes a statement of the inscriptions and marks on the object, which distinguish the object. It is important to provide a field to explain and read the inscription and determine its meaning.⁴³
5. **Features:** This field includes the general features of the object in terms of its general appearance and lists specific distinctive points for the object.
6. **Name and type of object:** This field includes the name, type, nature, and material of the object.⁴⁴
7. **Subject:** This field contains the subject of the object, relevant explanations, the main subject, and the purpose of the decoration. In this context, it is preferable to point out the relationship of the subject to the story and the functional purpose of the object.
8. **Date or era:** This field includes the era and specifications, if any. In the case of a specific year, it mentions the year of manufacture and all hints of the artistic period.
9. **Maker:** This field mentions the maker, artist, photographer, writer, chief designer, or owner of the artistic workshop or public or private artistic style to whom the object under registration is attributed. If any of the previous information is unavailable, the country or place of making is mentioned.
10. **A short description (Additional papers, if necessary):** This field includes the distinctive description of the object. It is created by the data entry officials, and managers of museum collection management, but fixed descriptive terms must be agreed upon, and precise descriptive elements are applied to all objects under registration.⁴⁵
11. **Attached items (specify the number of each item):** The attached items vary according to availability, including photos, shapes, illustrations/ sketches, and graphical statistics/ information tables/ analyses of colors and dyes- if any. It is important to specify each item in the data entry and explain its importance in completing the museum information of the collection.⁴⁶

Supplementary useful information (optional) (Recommended by the J. Paul Getty Foundation, UNESCO, and ICOM)⁴⁷

recommends generalizing the use of the meter unit for measurement and the gram for weight, except for some rare and specific cases that can be easily distinguished in the museum's database.

⁴² Thomes, Dorrell & Lie, 1999: 14-15.

⁴³ Thomes, Dorrell & Lie, 1999: 17.

⁴⁴ UNESCO, 2006: 30.

⁴⁵ UNESCO, 2006: 31.

⁴⁶ Yasaitis, 2005: 28.

⁴⁷ J. Paul Getty is an American institution located in Los Angeles affiliated with the American businessman J. Paul Getty, who died in 1982. It is concerned with financing and preserving art history and museums and provides grants art developers of institutions and individuals worldwide (Getty, 2023).

Some information is important but optional and complementary. Not all museums adhere to it as an ethical charter in documenting and recording data of their objects. However, it enriches the museum database and reflects vital and necessary information about the object, which helps the museum administration manage the museum collection properly, with great skill and ability, as follows:

- 1) **Inventory information:** This field includes all information relevant to the periodic inventory, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, annually, or more. It is important to spot the date of the inventory and any new information resulting from the inventory and follow up on the periodic update according to the periods set by the Museum Collections Department. This field includes three specific sub-entries: A. Inventory number, B. Inventory date, and c. Latest inventory update.⁴⁸
- 2) **Relevant written materials:** This field includes a documented reference to important sources, documents, maps, and references relevant to the collection under registration, especially relevant documents in the museum's records.
- 3) **Place of origin/discovery:** This field means the source of the object, official acquisition, and getting into the museum.
- 4) **References to the relevant objects:** This field is a statement of the places of previous mention, such as a published picture or research, using documents and scientific publications in the museum or scientific publications, dissertations, and books. Museum scientific publishing covers two types: Paper and electronic.
- 5) **Object condition:** This field includes a complete statement about the current status of the object on display or in storage. This statement and its notes on the condition directly help in preventive and remedial preservation procedures of the museum object.
- 6) **Permanent location of the object:** This field means specifying the place of the object, such as the name of the museum or the place in general and detail, e.g., Museum of Islamic Art - Exhibition Room 21 - Showcase No. 2 Central, taking into account the location data if the location of the museum object changes.
- 7) **Institution:** It means the museum itself and the sector and ministry it is affiliated with.
- 8) **Location in the Institution:** If the location of the object was mentioned in general, the details should be mentioned. If the location was indicated in detail previously, this field may be deleted.
- 9) **Date of Acquisition or Accession:** It is the date of acquiring the object.
- 10) **Method of Acquisition or Accession:** It mentions how the museum acquired the object by excavation, acquisition, purchase, gift, exchange, confiscation, or other legitimate methods of acquisition and museum collections management.
- 11) **Loan Date:** This field includes a review of the date of circulation of the object, the times of loan, the duration of loan, and the date of return to the museum each time. It also explains the data and identity of the party borrowing from the museum. It helps make an inventory and an analytical statement of the most loaned objects from the museum collections. It lists dates of loans and external exhibitions and a statement of objects preventing from being

⁴⁸ UNESCO, 2006: 28-29.

circulated in the red list.⁴⁹ This field includes specific sub-fields, namely A. Places/ institutions/ individuals lent (if any), b. Loan approval date, c. Loan start date, d. Loan period, and -e. Return date.

- 12) **Author and Date of the Record:** This final field of Object ID includes the data of the registration, the data entry specialist, and their authorities to carry out museum documentation and registration. The data of the entry specialist is important for documenting the work and clarifying the source for entering and writing information in case of the need to delete, modify, add, or inquire about data. The form includes the date of data entry to consider future updates and dates with a clear vision and work policy set by the museum collections management. The field includes sub-data, e.g., (prepared by, affiliation or job title, address, telephone, fax, e-mail, and date).

The information on the form answers all the frequently asked questions by museum collections management and museum documentation and registration specialists. It provides complete cataloging data, such as Entry number/ museum registration number, graphic fields describing the museum collection, general description, name of the object, materials and methods, as well as artistic subject, such as people, places, events, and addresses, classifications, dimensions, inscriptions or marks, location on the object, and language. Object ID also includes the geographical origins of the object, location, source, making, and use, as well as ethnic origins, school, or artistic style. It may calculate the estimated and insurance price of the object and determine the location of storage or display in the museum, condition, and needs for conservation or restoration.⁵⁰ It answers these questions: What is the object? How does the object relate to similar objects? What stories and values does the object tell? What is the statement of decorations? material? size? shape? color? weight? How was the object made? How was it used? and other questions and results that can be derived from the analytical study of the standard data.⁵¹

Applying Object ID in the Management of Museum Carpet Collections

The field and applied study was conducted in an Egyptian museum department to achieve Object ID according to a specific methodology with a pre-operation plan with successive stages to achieve these museum goals in the Carpet Department at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo. Accordingly, some of the desired objectives of practical application of Object ID can be formulated as follows:

⁴⁹ There are several internationally agreed upon reasons for the preparation of red lists of the objects that are not allowed to be loaned, such as the scarcity of the object, risk of transporting, poor condition, or weak raw material. The museum is free to accept or refuse travel and loan of any of objects upon convincing reasons highlighted in the museum's collection management policy. Additionally, the ICOM created a red list of the objects protected by law (UNESCO, 2006: 16).

⁵⁰ Thornes, Dorrell & Lie, 1999: 9-10.

⁵¹ Yasaitis, 2005: 28.

- Making a full classification of the museum’s Islamic carpets, according to art types and decorative elements, based on the agreed-upon fields in the Object ID form, as recommended by the aforementioned international organizations
- Completing the missing information about the museum’s carpet collections and searching for missing information about the museum’s carpet catalog, which, in turn, is an information discovery that develops the museum’s administrative and artistic work
- Correcting errors related to the description and explanations of some carpets in the explanatory cards in the museum display
- Delivering specialized lectures on Islamic textiles and carpets, explaining how to preserve them using proper scientific methods in the museum
- Entering the data of the research study into the museum database and completing all fields on Museums database
- Training inspectors of antiquities outlets on how to detect whether carpets and textiles are antique or not and clarifying the clues and evidence used in examining carpets seized at outlets
- Training students of the Department of Museum and Archaeological Sites Management and the Department of Islamic Antiquities at the Faculty of Archeology, Ain Shams University, in data entry, voluntary work at the museum, and complete cataloging of the carpets in the museum

Training volunteer students in museum work tasks to preserve arts made from organic materials using carpets as a case study and qualifying them to explain the carpet collections displayed in the museum in Arabic and English

Stages of Work in the Research Project/ Field Study “Operation Plan”

The research project took a year. It included four successive scientific and practical stages, as follows:

Duration (1/7/2022- 30/6/2023)

Stages of museum collection management and achieving Object ID in the Carpet Department

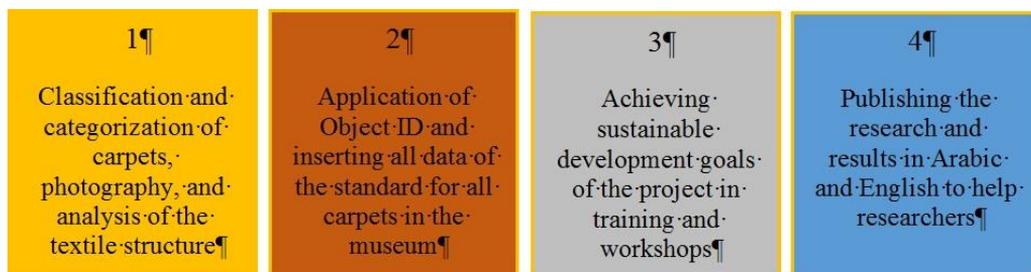


Fig. 4. Stages of the research project and application of Object ID in the Carpet Department at the Museum of Islamic Art (by Author)

Stage 1: Fieldwork and scientific classification of carpets

In this stage, the carpets preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art were examined and classified, the number of knots in each square inch of the carpets was calculated, and the methods and techniques of making and decoration were explained. The researcher made a full inventory of the types of carpets preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art. The carpets were initially classified according to the decoration methods. This stage was the starting point for confirming the accuracy of the information recorded in the museum records. Some information was corrected or completed to fill all fields of Object ID.⁵²



Fig. 5. Part of the workshops and field training on examining carpets in the restoration laboratories of the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo in the research project, 15/11/2022 (by Author)

Stage 2: Application of the Object ID and Inserting all Registration Data

In this stage, Object ID forms were written in Arabic and English, all fields were filled with accurately reviewed information, data resulting from the examination were analyzed, and new information was compared with the museum records. In this stage, some required standards were completed to provide the Collections Department at

⁵² The general form was modified in this research project, while fully preserving the data included and agreed upon internationally in the Object ID form, without changing its content. The registration fields became more flexible and appropriate to the data to be entered in the Carpet Department at the Museum of Islamic Art, which helped in the success of applying the standard easily to all the carpets under study.

the Museum of Islamic Art with a full database in Arabic and English for an entire archaeological department. A sample of applying the recorded sheet of Object ID, as follows:

Object ID

Materials\Techniques	Dimensions	Type of object	Object No.
Materials: 90% wool-10% cotton. Techniques: Persian Knot "Sena".	(1.13×2.85m)	Carpet	15735
General Decoration	Date\Period	Maker	Function
Floral & Geometric motifs	(13 AH/19 AD)	Iran-Sherwin	Floor carpet
The general form			
Rectangular carpet (surrounded by a frame consisting of two strips)			
Distinctive features			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The carpet is decorated with lozenge shapes with large petal rosettes in the middle. - The ivory colour was used on the floor and the red and yellow colours were used in the implementation of the decorations. 			
Description			
The carpet field decorated with geometric decorations, which give lozenge shapes with large petal rosettes.			
One image		Attached items	
			

Last update of Inventory	Inventory Date	Inventory No.
2023 A.D\1444 A.H	(January-February, 2023)	15735

Other data for this object

Only the object is recorded in the museum original records-register Museum book.

Origin\Provenance

The carpet has been purchased from the family of Ali Pasha Ibrahim.

References

Unpublished as regards the museum database for researchers

The current condition		
In a good condition		
Object location		
The location within the museum	Institution	Object permanent location
Carpet storage	The Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo	The Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo
Inventory information		
Acquisition method	Acquisition date	
Purchase	1949	
Loan History (If there is)		
The Carpet has never been loaned out.		
Date of Starting loan	Date of agreement for Loan	
There is no	There is no	
Date of end loan	Loan Duration	
There is no	There is no	
Data Entry Specialist		
Prepared by		
Responsible for data entry name		
Address	Job title	
Bab Al-Khalq Square, Port Said Street, Cairo, Egypt. P.Code: 11638	Responsible for data entry title	
Email	Museum Contact	
miainegypt@gmail.com	0020223901520	
Date	Fax	
1 st of February, 2023	0020223901520	

Stage 3: Achieving Sustainable Development Goals of the Project in Training and Workshops

This stage included delivering relevant educational workshops, lectures, and seminars closely and training antiquities inspectors at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and students from faculties of archeology in explaining and understanding the compositional analysis of carpets. The researcher delivered several training courses and workshops inside and outside the Museum of Islamic Art. During the year of

the project, many museum curators and antiquities inspectors affiliated with museums and Central Administrations, especially the Central Administration of Outlets and Archaeological Units in Egyptian Ports graduated and could examine and analyze Islamic carpets of all kinds. Additionally, the participating students could fully classify, index, understand, and analyze carpets in the Islamic era.⁵³



Fig. 6. Part of the workshops and field training on carpet inspection in the lecture hall and restoration laboratories at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo within the requirements of the research project, 10/3/2023 (by Author)

Stage 4: Publishing the research outcomes

This stage provided the Carpet Department with all data, keeping a paper copy in the museum archive and an electronic copy in the Information Center within, provided that such data would be owned by the administration of the Museum of Islamic Art to be utilized in museum work. The researcher published the outcomes of the research project and made the Object ID forms accessible in Arabic and English to benefit researchers worldwide, as the researcher reviewed many messages sent to the museum's official e-mail, showing that researchers greatly need a deeper understanding and a clear vision of the valuable textiles and carpets of the museum.⁵⁴

⁵³ In its theoretical and practical content, the study achieved the concept of sustainability. By applying Object ID, it preserved the rights of future generations to knowledge and culture and the material heritage. The study emphasized the goal of quality education; as one of the goals of sustainable development by promoting the efficiency and expertise of specialists in the field of the research project (SDGs, 2023).

⁵⁴ The published Object ID forms included low-quality photos and fragments of carpets to ensure the copyrights of the Museum of Islamic Art and to ensure researchers' contact and payment of fees for obtaining complete, high-quality photos for scientific publishing in accordance with the photocopying and publishing regulations for scientific research and in accordance with the general legal frameworks of the Supreme Council of Antiquities. The researcher obtained the approval of the Permanent Committee for Islamic and Coptic Antiquities for the scientific publication of the research on 15/9/2022.

Discussion

An analytical and statistical study of data resulting from the application of Object ID in this study

The research study included analysis and digital statistics relevant to carpet collections preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art, which were fully concluded after the application of Object ID to the case study. Undoubtedly, these statistics will greatly support the collection management and achieve the highest operational efficiency rates in the relevant museum's work activities.

The Object ID forms included various and comprehensive classifications of the carpets under study. The researcher can reach the qualitative classification according to country, for example, by simply quickly searching the forms and determining the number of carpets from Iran, Turkey, or Egypt in the museum collections. Additionally, Object ID includes artistic classification according to decorative themes, historical classification according to era, and other research information that was not previously explained by manual archaeological documentation of the museum's carpet records. A part of the digital statistics resulting from applying Object ID can be explained as follows:

- 1- A statement of the total number of carpets and artifacts displayed at the Museum of Islamic Art** – This digital statistic includes details of the displayed carpets, numbered 17 in rooms (16-20-21), their relationship to the displayed objects of other raw materials, and the number of pieces displayed in each room. It is an important statistic that shows the capacity of museum exhibition rooms and the distribution of exhibits in the available spaces. Note that carpets are the most difficult objects to display in museums due to their large size.
- 2- A statistical statement of the most important dates of entry of carpets to the museum** – Analyzing the documentation and registration data using Object ID helps identify and determine the most important years for the entry of carpets into the Museum of Islamic Art, relevant to two things: The date of bringing of the oldest carpets and the year of receiving the largest number of carpets. The results were as follows:

Year	Importance
1910	Receiving the oldest carpet collection at the Museum of Islamic Art The number of the first collection of carpets recorded in the Museum was 16
1933	One of the most important years because 15 carpets were gifted from the endowment of Prince Kamal al-Din Hussein
1949	The most important year in the history of carpet museum collection management due to bringing 127 carpets from the collection of Ali Pasha Ibrahim with registration numbers from 15725 to 15851 An unprecedented diversity and richness in the museum's Carpet Department began to resemble other Islamic carpet departments in international museums

Fig. 7. Table of the statistical study of the most important dates of bringing carpets to the Museum of Islamic Art (by Author)

3. **Statistical data on the most important sources and persons mentioned in the museum's carpet register** – The most important source of carpets in the Museum of Islamic Art collection was direct purchase. The following table shows a statement of the most important sources and persons in the museum's carpet collections:

Source / Person	Importance
Monsieur Aseanian	He was the first antique dealer to sell carpets to the Museum of Islamic Art in 1910. The first collection of carpets registered in the museum numbered six carpets purchased from this dealer, with another ten carpets purchased in the same year from Monsieur Magan, the French dealer. Two carpets numbered (4019-4020) were also brought from Monsieur Magan on 15/6/1913
Prince Kamal al-Din Hussein	He was one of the most important historical figures who donated carpet collections to the museum in 1933, with 15 carpets of various craftsmanship, decoration, and art styles
Ali Pasha Ibrahim	The museum bought 127 carpets from his heirs in 1949

Fig. 8. A table of a statistical study of the most important persons mentioned in the carpet registry at the Museum of Islamic Art (by Author)

It was also noted that few carpets were brought to the museum through archaeological excavations, which may be a major source of many other raw materials. Due to the nature of carpets, purchasing and gifting were the most important sources of bringing carpets to the museum. Only three carpets- small and parts- were brought by excavations, as follows:

Antique number	Description	Photo
9531 (Fustat excavations)	A small part of a carpet with red ground, surrounded by a decorative frame of arranged flowers, on which a text is written in white Kufic script	
14436 (Fustat excavations)	Two pieces of carpet fastened together by sewing; one of them is small with a red ground, and the other has a blue ground	
26388 (American Mission excavations, Season 84)	A rectangular piece of carpet decorated with geometric designs of irregular shapes	

Fig. 9. A table of a statistical study of the excavated carpets at the Museum of Islamic Art (by Author)

4. A statistical statement of the knots used in making the carpets at the museum

– The museum's carpets included the two most important types of knots used in making carpets in the Islamic world, namely the Iranian Senna knot and the Turkish Goerdes knot. By examining and analyzing the knots used in the carpets, the researcher could conclude the following statistical statement:

Type of knot	Number of carpets made
Iranian Senna knot	92 carpets
Turkish Goerdes knot	93 carpets
Andalusian/ Spanish knot	One carpet No. 15829
Kilim without knots and without lint	5 Kilims

Fig. 10. A table for a statistical study on the types of knots used in making carpets in the museum (by Author)

These statistics show that the similar number of carpets made by the Senna and Goerdes knots in the Museum of Islamic Art demonstrating important archaeological information, namely the breadth and geographical diversity of the collection. It covers many countries of the Islamic world that use the two types of knots in making carpets.

5. A statistical statement of the types and functions of museum carpets –

Applying Object ID was useful in identifying and listing the functions and uses of carpets in the Museum of Islamic Art collection. It helped obtain accurate statistical results of the function and applied purposes of carpets, as follows:

Use of carpets	Number of carpets
Floor carpets	134
Prayer carpets	44
Mounted and decorative carpets	13

Fig. 11. A table of a statistical study on using carpets at the Museum of Islamic Art (by Author)

These statistics illustrate the diversity of the functions and uses of the carpet in the museum collection. Floor carpets are the highest in the main function, followed by prayer ones and mounting and wall covering carpets.

6. **A statistical statement of loaned carpets in the history of the museum**⁵⁵ – After making an inventory of carpets, applying Object ID provided a comprehensive and accurate inventory of the carpets loaned from the Museum of Islamic Art throughout its history to national and regional museums in Egypt as follows:

No	Museum	Number of loaned carpets	Numbers of loaned carpets	Years
1	National Museum of Egyptian Textile (currently closed)	30	3623-14323-15613-15614-15733-15736-15740-15742-15745-15763-15770-15786-15771-15790-15791-15792-15795-15816-15817-15819-15827-15830-15840-15846-39217-39218-39219-39220-39221-39222	2004-2005
2	Museum of Archaeological Seizures in the Citadel (Currently Closed)	5	25767 25769 25772-25762-25764	1992
3	Al-Arish National Museum (currently closed)	3	3620-13902-25774	2007
4	National Museum of Egyptian Civilization	3	15525-15826-15789	2019
5	Port Said National Museum	2	25765-13738	1986 & 1995
6	Suez National Museum	2	25762-3608	2010
7	New Valley Museum	1	25766	1993
8	Beni Suef National Museum	1	25770	1994
9	Alexandria National Museum	1	3621	2002
10	Rashid National Museum	1	13711	2002
11	Kafr El-Sheikh National Museum	1	25771	2019

Fig. 12. A table of a statistical study of carpets loaned to Egyptian museums throughout the history of the Museum of Islamic Art (by Author)

⁵⁵ In this statement, museums are arranged according to the highest loans from the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo.

Statistical conclusions based on loaned carpets:

- The total number of Egyptian museums that loaned carpets from the Museum of Islamic Art = 11 museums
- The total number of carpets loaned throughout the history of the Museum of Islamic Art to support regional and national museums in Egypt= 50 carpets
- Some of the loaned carpets were returned to the acquisition policy of the Museum of Islamic Art from the Egyptian Textile Museum on Al-Moaz Street (21 carpets) and the Museum of Archaeological Seizures in the Citadel (2 carpets)⁵⁶. Then, one of them was reloaned to the Suez National Museum⁵⁷, making the total number= 22 carpets returned to the museum's carpet store currently. Therefore, the total number of carpets permanently loaned and have not returned to the Museum of Islamic Art to date 6/1/2023= 28 carpets.
- The Egyptian Textile Museum was the highest in borrowing carpets from the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo.
- The first loaned carpet was to the Port Said National Museum in 1986.
- The largest number of carpets loaned from the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo was in 2004.

Conclusions

- This research study is the first field museum study that applies museum collection management principles and Object ID to a type of Islamic applied art, namely Islamic carpets preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo.
- The study provided the first real, complete cataloging of the Carpet Department at the Museum of Islamic Art, which currently contains 197 antique carpets, with 191 antique numbers in accordance with the standards followed internationally in archaeological classification and cataloging in Arabic as the official language and English as an international language in the field of museum sciences.
- The study included the date of all the carpets preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art and attributed them to specific periods of Islamic history, which happens for the first time in the history of collections management in an archaeological department in the museum.
- The study included a statement and inventory by country and place of making for all the carpets preserved in the museum, which happens for the first time in the history of collections management in an archaeological department in the museum.

⁵⁶ Under the registration numbers of the Museum of Islamic Art (25762-25764).

⁵⁷ It has the registration number of the Museum of Islamic Art (25762). Then, it was transferred from the Suez National Museum, along with another carpet under registration number (3608), to the Marsa Matrouh National Museum (*The Suez National Museum*, 2022).

- The study fulfilled the needs of researchers internationally and locally by providing an accurate catalog of the types of carpets, as most researchers do not know the types of carpets preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art, particularly since the museum presents many research ideas. Researchers inquire about the origin and nature of the carpets in the Museum of Islamic Art's collection, but there are no adequate answers.
- This research study, in all stages, will be an important source for researchers dealing with the museum in guiding them on how to deal with accurate and precise cataloging and a comprehensive classification of Islamic carpets in the museum.
- The research study will be an important resource for officials of the Museum's Carpets Department, museum archives officials, and the information center in completing and clarifying much missing information, which is closely related to examining, taking notes, and interpreting strange phenomena of carpets.
- This research study is a practical field study that achieves sustainability efforts and goals. It includes field training, workshops, lectures, and automatic and manual inspection of carpets understudy according to the organizational work and principles adopted by the museum.
- The study helps complete all fields and data in the museum's database program *CMIS-Centralize Museum Information System*-, circulated by the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and approved for use in all museums.
- The study trained and gave experience certificates to +250 museum curators, antiquities inspectors, trainees, and student volunteers on examining, cataloging, and analyzing carpets from the Islamic era.

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To cite this article: Ahmed, M. (2024). Applying of Object ID Stander on the Carpets Collection at the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, Iran. *Historia i Świat*, 13, 301–324. <https://doi.org/10.34739/his.2024.13.18>



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