YALE LIBRARY NEWS RELEASE

November 11, 2003: **OACIS for the Middle East Prototype Launched**

New Haven, CT. Yale University Library announced today that it has released for public review, comment, and use a prototype version of its OACIS Middle Eas tDatabase. This unique collaboration will make scholarly literature from and about the Middle East much more widely and much more easily available to scholars around the world. Project OACIS (Online Access to Consolidated Information on Serials) will create a publicly and freely accessible, continuously updated listing of Middle East journals and serials, including those available in print, microform, and online. The listing, a prototype version of which is now available on the Web at<http://www.library.yale.edu/oacis/>, identifies libraries that own the materials as well as exact holdings for a broad range of Middle Eastern and other language titles.

Associate University Librarian Ann Okerson views the project as "exciting evidence that American and world libraries can band together to provide extraordinary expansion of access to the kind of scholarly research that brings light and understanding to a vital part of the world."

OACIS is being supported by a U. S. Department of Education Title VI grant under the "Technological Innovation and Cooperation for Foreign Information Access" program as well as significant cost share by the Yale University Library and resource investment by the OACIS partners.

Project OACIS is international in scope, engaging European, American, and Middle Eastern individuals and institutions. US partner libraries have contributed the initial titles in the prototype; however, the database will be expanding in the coming two years to include titles and holdings of targeted participating institutions in Europe and the Middle East. The project design includes interactions with teachers of foreign languages and with librarians in Middle Eastern countries who will offer input on design and functionality.

Draft guidelines for libraries interested in participating in the OACIS database union list can be found at: <http://www.library.yale.edu/oacis/project/>

Yale Library staff, along with faculty of the Middle East Studies Council of the Yale Center for International and Area Studies, have been developing Project OACIS over several years, in a commitment to provide access to the literature of this increasingly important region of the world for a wide range of educational, government, and commercial institutions. The aim is to develop a better understanding of the varied economies, politics, languages, and cultures of the Middle East.

Yale University was one of the earliest higher education institutions formally to study the Middle East, and its Library collections and other educational resources -- and faculty -- are among the strongest in the world.

The leadership of the project is shared by AUL Ann Okerson as Principal Investigator; Kimberly Parker, Head of Electronic Collections, as Co-PI and Technical Director; Simon Samoeil, Near East Curator, as project Manager and Director of Networking and Relationships; and the OACIS Technical Administrator, Elizabeth Beaudin. The US libraries partnering on the prototype include: Cornell, University of Michigan, Ohio State, University of Pennsylvania, University of Texas, and University of Washington. The principal European partner is the Universitaets-und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt. Future Middle Eastern participants have been identified in Egypt, Jordan, The Lebanon, Syria, and Tunisia.

Information about the OACIS project is available at <http://www.library.yale.edu/oacis/>

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