



QATAR DIGITAL LIBRARY'S ARCHIVES CELEBRATE LONG-STANDING ARAB EQUINE TRADITION

Qatar National Library's Digital Resources Highlight Horsemanship In The Region

Doha, Qatar, 6 March 2016: It is thought the Arabian Peninsula is the place where man first saddled a horse. Since the Pre-Islamic age, Arabs have been famed for their equine glories and extraordinary passion for horses.

Various manuscripts and books available on the Qatar Digital Library (QDL), an initiative launched in partnership between Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), the Qatar National Library (QNL) and the British Library, capture the essence of horsemanship and the long-standing equine tradition in the Arab world.

Accessible on QDL is a book titled, 'The Arabian Horse, His Country And People', authored by Major-General William Tweedie, formerly HBM's Consul-General, Baghdad, and Political Resident for the Government of India in Turkish Arabia. In his book, Tweedie conveys his deep love of Arabian horses. Published in 1894, the book includes portraits of the people of Arabia, various sketches of Arabian horses, and a descriptive glossary of Arabic names for horses.

Tweedie noted that when his service was over, he found himself an Arab in regards to his love for horses. He believed that study of Arabian horses and the study of the Islamic faith are intertwined. Horsemanship in the Arab world can be easily seen as a recurring theme in the book.

QNL's digital resources on Qatar's heritage provide us with an ideal opportunity to explore equestrianism as Qatar successfully concludes the CHI AL SHAQAB 2016 in the landmark venue built within the premises of Education City. Throughout the event, Qatar hosted top-ranking local, regional and international riders who competed in various equine disciplines.

QDL contains a wealth of historic books and manuscripts where European politicians and explorers recorded their travels across the Arabian Peninsula. Through these adventures, they gained valuable insights into the traditions and ways of life of Arab tribes.

Arabian Peninsula is famous for horses bred by Bedouin Arabs. Arabian horses today forms part of the pedigree breed of European race horses.

QDL gives Arabian horse lovers and equine enthusiasts access to three gems from the golden age of Islamic civilisation. Dating back to 9th Century, *Kitāb al-furūsīyah wa-shiyāt al-khayl* (*Book of Horsemanship and Horse Characteristics*) by Muḥammad ibn Yaquḥ Akhi Ḥizām, the horse trainer of the Abbasid Caliph, al-Mu'taḍid, is one of the earliest Arabic texts on veterinary medicine.

The second manuscript on horsemanship, which is available on QDL, is *Kitāb al-bayṭarah* (*A Treatise on Hippiatrics*) by Muḥammad ibn Yaquḥ Ibn Akhi Ḥizām, dating back to 13th Century.

Furthermore, written by Muḥammad ibn 'Isa ibn Ismail al-Ḥanafi al-Aqṣarai, the last masterpiece, *Nihāyat al-su'l wa-al-umnīyah fī ta'allum a'māl al-furūsīyah* (*The Ultimate Reference on*



Horsemanship Skills), is a very rare 14th century Mamluk manual on horsemanship, military arts and technology.

In addition to QDL, QNL supports the World Digital Library's (WDL) objectives to promote international and intercultural understanding and expand the volume and variety of cultural content on the Internet through the digitisation of thousands of items from QNL's prized Heritage Collection, making it available for free on the WDL website. WDL is an initiative founded by the Library of Congress, with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

As AL Shaqab supports QF's vision to position Qatar as a premier equestrian sporting destination, QNL contributes to achieving QF's mission to create a progressive society and unlock human potential by providing community members with access to a wealth of online learning resources.

Image Caption:

Image 1: Cover Page of "*The Arabian Horse, His Country And People*", authored by Major-General William Tweedie, which is accessible online at Qatar Digital Library (QDL).

Image 2: A popular illustration of horses taken from the book titled "*Nihāyat al-su'l wa-al-umnīyah fī ta'allum a'māl al-furūsīyah (The Ultimate Reference on Horsemanship Skills)*", a very rare 14th century Mamluk manual on horsemanship, military arts and technology. This is accessible online at Qatar Digital Library (QDL).

Image 3: Depiction of a popular Arabian horses market in Bombay, India in the 19th Century.

Image 4: A colored illustration of the strengths of Arab Horses, from the book *Kitāb al-bayṭarah (A Treatise On Hippiatrics)*, which can be accessed online at Qatar Digital Library (QDL).

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Qatar National Library – Bridging with knowledge Qatar's and the Arab and Islamic world's heritage and future

Qatar National Library (QNL) is a non-profit organisation under the umbrella of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF). QNL is supporting Qatar on its journey from a carbon-based economy to knowledge-based economy by providing resources to students, researchers, and the community in Qatar. It was announced in November 2012 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

QNL carries out its mission through three functions: National Library, University and Research Library, and a Metropolitan Public Library of the digital age. The National Library function collects and provides access to global knowledge relevant to Qatar and the region. It also collects, preserves, and provides access to heritage content and



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materials about Qatar and the region. The University and Research Library function supports education and research at all levels by providing printed and digital library materials for students and researchers. Metropolitan Public Library delivers library services and information for everyone to enjoy reading, meet people, and become information literate.

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