



The Zaidan Foundation  
*Enhancing Intercultural Understanding*



## PRESS RELEASE

**The Library of Congress, The Kluge Center and the Zaidan Foundation, Inc.**

Present a Symposium on

***Jurji Zaidan: His Contributions to Modern Arab Thought and Literature***

June 5th, 2012

A Symposium on *Jurji Zaidan: His Contributions to Modern Arab Thought and Literature* will be held on Tuesday, 5th at the The Library of Congress to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Jurji Zaidan and the 120th anniversary of the publishing house he founded, Dar-al-Hilal, one of the biggest publishing houses for periodicals in the Middle East.

Jurji Zaidan (1861-1914) was a prominent leader of the Arab Renaissance. The Symposium will focus on Zaidan's contributions to Arab thought that gave rise to a secular form of Arab nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is particularly relevant in the light of the recent emergence of the Arab Spring. Celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Zaidan's birth were held in Egypt. An Opera commissioned by the Ministry of Culture in Egypt as well as other artifacts and the Library of Congress's collection of Jurji Zaidan's works will be shown at the Symposium.

Jurji Zaidan, was also a prolific and hugely popular writer in the Arab world and parts of the Islamic world. He introduced the historical novel into Arabic literature and wrote 22 acclaimed novels spanning Arab history from pre-Islamic to modern times. They have often been compared to the works of Alexandre Dumas and Sir Walter Scott. They are being reprinted every few years in the Arabic-speaking world and about 100 translations were published into more than ten languages.

The Zaidan Foundation has published the first translations into English of five of these novels. The translations were done by eminent scholars from Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, UCLA, McGill and Durham, several of whom will make presentations at the Symposium. These novels are available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

The Symposium requires no registration and is open to the public. Several Arab ambassadors are scheduled to participate and attend. For more information you can visit the Zaidan Foundation website at [www.zaidanfoundation.org](http://www.zaidanfoundation.org), or email George Zaidan at [george@zaidanfoundation.org](mailto:george@zaidanfoundation.org), or call 3014698131.

Washington DC  
May 28 2012