

Minutes of the 77th Meeting held in the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations, on Monday 8th January 2007.

The meeting was preceded by a tour of the Library.

Present

Ahmed Abu Zayed	Exeter
Jasmine Ansari	al-Furqan
Paul Auchterlonie	Exeter
Peter Colvin	SOAS
Waseem Farooq	Institute for Study of Muslim
Civilizations	
Shah Hussain	Institute of Ismaili Studies
Pat Jamal	SOAS
Shelina Karmali	Institute of Ismaili Studies
Eric Ormsby	Institute of Ismaili Studies
Maureen Pinder	Leeds
Stefan Seeger	Institute for Study of Muslim
Civilizations	
Waleed al-Shubaki	Manchester

1. Apologies for absence

Nadeem El-Issa , Mamtimyn Sunuodula, Mastan Ebtehaj, Debbie Cox, Muhammad Isa Waley, Geoffrey Roper, Dominique Akhoun-Schwarb, Heather Bleaney, Anne Poulson, Kathy Lazenbatt, Humeyra Ceylan, Martyn Minty, Colin Wakefield

2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

At the previous meeting it had been agreed that the Chairman should reply on behalf of MELCOM to the British Library's request for comments on its draft Content Strategy document, and although it was sent after the closing date, it was accepted. The final content strategy had been issued only a few days before the meeting. It stated that it had consolidated the replies received. MELCOM had expressed concern about the lack of mention of newspapers and journals in some Middle Eastern and Central Asian languages, and requested that they should be informed of any cancellations of any. It had been too soon to analyse the document, but the chairman pointed out the following four points:

that the library would favour online versions of journals over hard copy if the choice was available (p.5); that the Library will collect material even with a small demand if no one else is collecting it; that the library would consolidate its strengths in grey literature; that the Library should continue to work with regional groups.

3. Accounts and post of treasurer

The accounts were presented by e-mail as follows:

Reserve Account as at 8/12/2006: £2829.47 Current Account as at 9/11/2006: £ 988.24 It was agreed that if Nadeem el-Issa moved to live in another country it would not be possible for him to continue as treasurer, and Stefan Seeger kindly agreed to take over the role if/when Nadeem moved abroad.

4. Lis-middle-east and the MELCOM UK Website

It was agreed that this item should be a regular feature of meetings. The Chairman reported that the membership of lis-middle-east had exceeded 200 for the first time.

Ahmed Abu Zayed mentioned that not all members of MELCOM UK had supplied him with their contact details as it had been suggested they should.

A number of proposals for suitable items for the website were discussed and it was agreed that the following might be suitable:

The corrected minutes of the last two or three meetings, which would mean that they would not appear before the next meeting had discussed them;

Those Pearson lectures that the lecturers had not considered appropriate for publication in the BRISMES bulleting;

Important new acquisitions of the member libraries;

Following the example of the MELA website, mounting useful sort articles on relevant topics. The Chairman offered his "Guide to the citation of Arabic names."

#### 5. Encyclopaedia of Islam online

Those members who had experimented with the new online Encyclopaedia of Islam discussed it. There was disappointment that the transliteration of not been altered (Djahiz and not Jahiz) and it had not therefore been brought into consistency with the Encyclopaedia of the Quran. The difficulty of establishing the most important article, and obscurity of placing the cross references. More suggestions were requested to be consolidated by Paul and sent to Brill's.

#### 6. Pearson Memorial Lecture

The Eighth Pearson Lecture will be delivered by Muhammad Isa Waley in 2007, and its title is provisionally Manuscripts as the life blood of Middle Eastern studies.

#### 7. MELCOM International Conference

Sarajevo has been officially confirmed as the venue for 2007 conference, and it will occur from the 4th-6th June, 2007. The 1st circular will be out before end of January.

#### 8. BRISMES Council

There was nothing to report.

#### 9. Developments in member libraries and reports on periodical

##### Exeter

A Centre of Kurdish Studies has been established, and £500 worth of Kurdish material has been acquired. The private library of Dr Shaykh al-Islami has also been purchased. The records of the Middle Eastern materials will be added to COPAC by the end of February. The web site is now using the new Innovative interface. The new Director of the Library, Michele Shoebridge, who has come from Birmingham University Library, is restructuring the Library, and job descriptions are being scrutinised.

AWDU now has official publications from Iran and Pakistan (online catalogue) Leeds.

Like many other Libraries in MELCOM the Library is suffering from space problems, and it has been decided that since Hebrew is not longer taught, the part of the collection will be moved to store to create extra space for expansion in other parts of the collection. But before this can be done the collection needs to be retro coned.

Leeds is also part of the "Diwan project" bid for funds for digitisation. Ian Netton is moving to Exeter. The HERA process of Role Evaluation for the Library has been painful, and has resulted in three subject librarians being red circled, and the roles will be downgraded.

London

Al-Furqan

Construction work will be starting at the end of February, and there will be no lectures while it is progress. The library has acquired duplicates from Qum library. The Director is now Adil Salahi.

British Library

Arabic Section news is that everything is business as usual as far as acquisitions etc. We've been using MECAP as well as our usual dealers, with only limited success, but we will continue for a while longer, as at least this is bringing in materials from countries we otherwise find hard to cover. Our suppliers at present are Sulaiman's for the Levant and the Gulf, Leila for Egypt, al-Muthanna for Iraq, Andromeda (run by Samir al-Hajj in Ibillin, Galilee) for Israel and the West Bank, and MECAP for North Africa and extra West Bank and Gaza material. We are anticipating a slight increase in the acquisitions budget for Arabic in the coming year in the light of the Library's Content Strategy Review. Hopefully Colin has been in touch to mention next year's major exhibition "Sacred" bringing together the sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity and Islam (opens 27 April 2007). My own news is a bit different. I will be away from the Library for a year from 15 January, taking a 'career break'. (Debby Cox)

Institute for Ismaili Studies

The catalogue has been cleaned up and mounted on the website. In future it is planned to overhaul the website. The library has been acquiring Ismaili manuscripts in private hands. Latest was three hundred manuscripts from Akbar Hamdani. A project has been started to collate all the printed manuscript catalogues in one union catalogue and eventually to have full texts available. Sheila Karmali reported that a small viewing area for Audio visual material has been opened in the library, and there is a growing collection of DVDs. They are listed on the library page under foreign films. There are also 550 plus music CDs. Shah Hussein had a month long trip by surveying manuscripts held in private hands in Pakistan.

Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations.

New students are starting this year. The web pages will be revised. The collection is growing. A Bengali colleague is working part time in the Library acquiring Bengali language materials. Some fifteen periodicals were bought from Dr Freijat's books from Damascus. Waseem Farooq visited Bradford Book Centre, and also a book Fair in Istanbul where he acquired more than three hundred Turkish titles.

SOAS Library.

Patricia Jamal who is replacing Dominique during her maternity leave is present at this meeting.

The Library is facing space difficulties and seeking a place for depositing rarer used materials with the other Libraries in the Bloomsbury Consortium. Maps have been distributed to BL and Bodleian, Middle Eastern and African maps going to the former. Money obtained to extend special collections reading room and space for rare books and archives.

#### Manchester

Waleed al-Shobaki visited the MELA meeting in Boston. RLG and OCLC are to merge. A Persian group being set up. The next meeting will be in Washington. Manchester uses off site store. The Middle Eastern Collection is moving to Special Collections. DVD's in different languages, (Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Hebrew) are being collected.

#### Oxford: Bodleian

"The big news to report from Oxford is that Reg Carr (Bodley's Librarian and Director of Oxford University Library Services) took early retirement with effect from 31st December 2006, having completed ten years in the job. He will be succeeded by Dr Sarah Thomas, the Librarian of Cornell University Library, who takes up her position on 19th February. Also leaving, in mid-January, is Ronald Milne, Acting Director of Oxford University Library Services, who moves to the British Library.

#### St Antony's

MEC new building, is progressing well and everything is on schedule - we continued having 2 meetings a month with the architect to make sure that the drawings do reflect our, e.g. the library, requirements and specifications. The planning application is not submitted yet, but it will be any time soon.

#### 10. Any other business.

The Secretary mentioned that he had been able to attend only one day of the second three day annual TIMA Conference held at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, from 7th-9th August 2006, which Muhammad Isa Waley and other members of MELCOM UK had also attended. It had been a well attended and very well organised conference on Islamic manuscripts and up to the luxurious standard of the first conference. It had been hoped that Davidson Maclaren would have been present to report on it.

#### 11. Date and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 10th July in SOAS and will be preceded by the Seventh Pearson Lecture.