

MELCOM (U.K.)

Minutes: 80th Meeting.

The meeting took place in conjunction with the Annual BRISMES Conference at Devonshire Hall in Leeds on Friday 4th July 2008 from 2.15-4.30.

It was preceded by the 9th Pearson Memorial Lecture which was delivered by Sara Yontan-Musnik of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the Secretary of MELCOM International. It was entitled *Collecting Library material from Turkey*.

Present

Paul Auchterlonie	Exeter
Mastan Ebtehaj	Oxford
Afifi al-Akiti	Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies
Heather Bleaney	Index Islamicus
Humeyra Ceylan	Markfield
Peter Colvin	SOAS
Waseem Farooq	Institute for Study of Muslim Civilisations
Derek Hopwood	Oxford
Maureen Pinder	Leeds
Geoffrey Roper	Institute for Study of Muslim Civilisations
Stefan Seeger	Institute for Study of Muslim Civilisations
Sara Yontan-Musnik	Bibliothèque Nationale de France

1 Apologies for absence

Muhammad Isa Waley, Debbie Cox, Waleed el-Shobaki, Catherine Ansorge, Dominique Akhoun-Schwarb, Colin Baker, Mamtimyn Sunuodula, Ahmed Abu Zayed,

2 Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Correction to Item 3 the Report of Accounts:

the correct figure should have been:

Reserve account: £2932.46

Current account: £1138.24

The Chairman reported in Relation to Item 5, (Muhammad Isa Waley's suggestion that someone should be found to conduct a workshop on a practical issue in Middle Eastern Librarianship), that he had sent an e-mail to David Hirsch of UCLA Library asking if he would be willing to do so. However he had received no reply, and the fact that MELCOM UK could only pay his expenses for travel within the UK may have made the suggestion impractical.

Discussion of Muhammad Isa's other suggestion that a new paragraph be added to the aims of the Committee was postponed till later in the meeting under item 8, as the web-site is the place where information on MELCOM UK is published.

3 Accounts

Reserve Account as at 4/7/2008: £2952.61

Current Account as at 4/7/2008: £652.74

4 Election of officers

Due to developments in their respective libraries and their likely impact on their jobs, both the Chairman and the Secretary felt that it was time to relinquish these positions which they had occupied for some considerable time.

It was agreed that they would continue in post until the winter meeting, at the end of which there would be an election. The summer meeting would be conducted by the new Chairman and Secretary with Stefan Seeger continuing as Treasurer.

5 DigIslam project at Exeter

In December 2007 JISC had invited bids for a review of user requirements for digitised resources in Islamic Studies. The bid that was accepted was by a small team at Exeter University that included Paul Auchterlonie and Ahmed Abu-Zayed. They conducted their research between March and May of this year, using questionnaires, focus groups, workshops, interviews and analyses of reading lists and ascertained what online resources UK Higher Education staff are currently using in Islamic Studies and what they wanted to see digitised both for teaching and research. The team came up with five proposals. The full report which has been submitted to the JISC can be seen at the following web address; <http://projects.exeter.ac.uk/digislam/index.html>

The JISC will pass on the proposals that it likes to HEFCE.

6. Other developments in Digitising.

Stefan Seeger mentioned two projects in Germany:

"Cataloging project of the Landau-Collection at Halle University Library [has been] completed: 3200 items of Turkish studies library of Prof. Jakob M. Landau [are now] catalogued" [and available under: <http://opac.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/DB=1/LNG=EN/CMD?ACT=SRCHA&IKT=54&SRT=YOP&RM=Bibliothek+Jakob+M.+Landau>] [MENALIB newsletter: 30.06.2008].

"The Universitaets - und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt in Halle (ULB Halle) has submitted a proposal for a digitization project of 3.500 titles from its Middle East collection to the German Research Foundation (DFG) in December 2007. A preliminary list of titles includes original source materials in the various Middle Eastern scripts and languages, rare or outstanding scholarly texts from the 19th and early 20th centuries and - with the permission of publishers and scientific societies - a significant number of studies published later in 20th century, until now predominantly from the Series "Islamkundliche Untersuchungen" published by Klaus Schwarz Verlag, Berlin. A decision on the proposal is expected by October 2008. ULB Halle asks potential users of the planned digital collection to submit titles which they would consider to be valuable part of the collection. Please send your suggestions using the respective electronic form or directly to the subject librarians of the Middle East collection. Many thanks for your support." [from MENALIB web-pages]

A project with Yale University to digitise a run of the Palestine Gazette that may use some issues from SOAS Library and may be scanned in Exeter.

The Diwan bid to JISC led by the University of Edinburgh to digitise 2006 Islamic manuscripts failed on the second round, probably because it was too big, but it may well be revived in the new climate of interest in Islamic topics.

7 Lesley Wilkins Fund

Lesley Wilkins who died recently from cancer was an ex president of MELA who had attended several MELCOM International conferences and who had worked very hard to arrange a joint MELA - MELCOM International Conference. A fund has been set up in her honour with the aim of raising \$10,000 to provide money for awards to help young librarians in obtaining training and expertise for a career as Middle Eastern specialists.

The Chairman suggested that MELCOM UK make a donation of the equivalent of \$250 to the fund, and this was agreed by the meeting.

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

At the MELCOM International Conference in Oxford it had been agreed that lis-middle-east would be its official circulation list.

The web-master, Ahmed Abu-Zayed was not present at the meeting to report on developments.

A discussion of Muhammad Isa Waley's proposal that an item on technical issues should be added to the aims that MELCOM UK, came up with the following wording:

"To develop and share expertise on the technical aspects of Middle Eastern librarianship". This would be added as item 4.

Other amendments agreed were that in the new paragraph 5 the name of the NCOLR should be replaced with its new name, NACIRA (National Committee for Information Resources on Asia), and a new paragraph should be included stating that the conduct of the Annual Pearson Lectures is among the aims of the Committee.

9 Pearson Memorial Lecture

The meeting thanked Sara Yontan-Musnik for her fascinating talk that showed how much could be achieved by a specialist librarian with the requisite knowledge and support from employers in the field of Turkish studies.

It was suggested that she publish her paper in the BRISMES Bulletin and perhaps in another form on the Melcom UK Website.

Two suggestions were made for speakers for the tenth Pearson Lecture and the Chairman will approach them as necessary.

10 MELCOM International Conference (Mastan Ebtehaj)

Melcom International - 30th annual conference report:

In June 2008, nearly 70 librarians, academics and publishers from across the world came to Oxford to celebrate the 30th annual conference of Melcom International. The participants attended a series of events. A guided tour of the Bodleian and another one of Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies was organised for the conference. Colleagues from the Bodleian library and St John's College organised an excellent exhibition of their manuscript holdings for the delegates. The scientific programme included 19 papers covering various issues such as: digitising projects, user education, manuscript collections in different libraries, electronic cataloguing, etc.

Melcom International business meeting took place on Wednesday 25th June, the last day of

the conference. In that meeting, Helga Rebhan was elected to succeed Arnold Vrolijk as president; Sara Yontan-Musnik and Mastan Ebtehaj were re-elected as Secretary and treasurer, respectively.

The forthcoming conference will be held in Kazan (Tatarstan) to be followed by the 32nd annual conference to be held in Cordoba in May 2009. Please see below for further details: <http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/ext/melcomintl/index.shtml>

Derek Hopwood wanted it to be put on the record that he hadn't been the founding president of the first International Conference, but that it had been the late Derek Latham.

11 BRISMES / NACIRA

As mentioned above, the body formerly known as NCOLR had been renamed as NACIRA (National Committee for Information Resources on Asia)

They had circulated a questionnaire on the sizes of un-catalogued backlogs in non-Latin scripts.

12 Developments in member libraries and reports on periodicals

Exeter

Al-Quds al-'arabi went to US - 20 years of microfilms. Disposing of hard copies of newspapers, but keeping Arab News and al-Hayah.

The Centre for Kurdish Studies will be opened in 2011 in its own building.

Leeds

After the move by Professors Netton and Agius to Exeter and their replacement by Dr. Hendrik Kraetzschmar and Dr Emad Bazzi, a change in acquisitions from medieval to modern had taken place. The new cataloguer is Hala Saleh.

London

British Library

The post of Arabic cataloguer had reportedly been filled.

Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations

The library is growing at the rate of three thousand titles per year. There are still problems with the catalogue, but it was hoped that developments in the Aga Khan University in Karachi might solve these. The Institute was seeking British accreditation as an Institute of Higher Education.

Geoffrey Roper reported that his consultancy with ISIMC is coming to an end. Bibliographical abstracts would be published in September.

SOAS

Following the retirement of Anne Poulson at the end of 2007, the School had quickly appointed David Perrow (who worked previously at Oxford) as Interim Librarian with the brief of coming up with an action plan to fulfil the conditions imposed on the School by HEFCE following the report by Sir Ivor Crewe on the six libraries in receipt of special funding for access. Among the conditions for SOAS to retain its annual million pounds were that the balance between spending on staff (exceptionally high in SOAS) and the book budget should be brought nearer the HEFCE norm, and that the need for retro conversion of the catalogue should be addressed, and that SOAS statistics should be much increased and improved.

The Interim Librarian has immediately embarked on a wide ranging and thorough reorganisation of the Library, which among other things has addressed the acute space problem, redirected the Library towards a much greater reliance on electronic resources, reorganised the staffing structure and put in train an upgrading and renewal of the fabric of

the Library.

Index Islamicus

Heather Bleaney said that her team was hoping that there will be a space for the Index Islamicus team in the rearranged SOAS library.

Markfield

Exhibitions and workshops, including a calligraphy workshop. Humayra is developing a project to increase the use of the collection. She has also become the Islamic editor of the Abtaph Bulletin, an online journal concerned with philosophy and theology.

Oxford

1- there is a further delay in implementing VTLS;

2- after 37 years of service Martyn Minty, Oriental Institute Librarian, retired in June– the position has been advertised with slight modifications.

3- Lesley Forbes, keeper of Oriental collections will be retiring in September.

4- the planning application for the MEC new building, designed by Zaha Hadid, has been submitted and the decision will be announced in August.

13 Any other business

It was agreed that the committee would pay for an Iraqi librarian living in Oxford to attend London meeting

It was proposed that the Middle East would be an appropriate place to publicise advertisements for new posts.

14 Date and place of next meeting

It had been hoped that the winter meeting would be held in the new building of al-Furqan in Kensington and hosted by Karima Boudjillouli on Tuesday 13th January 2009. However this has proved impossible and the meeting will be held in SOAS on the same date.