

## **MELCOM (U.K.)**

### **Minutes: 85th meeting**

The 85th meeting of MELCOM (UK) took place in the Conference Centre at the British Library, 96 Euston Road London, NW1, on Monday 10th January 2011 at 2.30 pm.

The business meeting was preceded at 1 pm by three brief presentations on current projects:-

Annabel Gallop (BL): "Lasting impressions" on a photographic exhibition on Islamic seals.

Peter Colvin (SOAS): The Yale/SOAS Digitization project.

Yasmin Faghihi and Alasdair Watson: The Oxford/Cambridge Islamic Manuscripts Project (OCIMCO).

#### **Present:-**

Catherine Ansoerge	Cambridge
Paul Auchterlonie	Exeter
Colin Baker	BL
Heather Bleaney	Index Islamicus
Karima Boudjillouli	al-Furqan Institute
Peter Colvin	SOAS
Mastan Ebtehaj	St. Antony's, Oxford
Gillian Evison	Bodleian
Yasmin Faghihi	Cambridge
Kathy Lazenbatt	Royal Asiatic Society
Dinah Manisty	Bodleian
Maureen Pinder	Leeds
Geoffrey Roper	London
Ursula Sims-Williams	BL
Joseph Smith	SOAS
Dawn Vaux	Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford
Muhammad Isa Waley	BL
Alastair Watson	OCIMCO Project

#### **1. Apologies for absence:-**

Affi al-Akiti	Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies
Debbie Cox	BL
Mamtimyn Sunuodula	Durham
Paul Tate	Manchester
Colin Wakefield	Bodleian

## **2. Minutes of previous meeting:-**

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a correct record of the proceedings.

## **3. Accounts**

The Chairperson reported that further progress has been made in resolving the problems which had arisen with access to the NatWest account and it is hoped that access to the funding will be available again in the near future.

## **4. Melcom (UK) Website**

The Secretary reported that a new website had been set up by Mamtimyn Sunuodula which is hosted on the server at Durham University. The domain name is now [www.melcom.org.uk](http://www.melcom.org.uk). The existing files had been copied from the Exeter website, some old news items had been removed and other files updated. The membership thanked Mamtimyn warmly for his efforts and for organising the changeover to the new site. The costs involved have been borne by Durham University Library.

## **5. Melcom International Conference**

The Chairperson reported on the 33rd forthcoming conference will be held in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, 23-25th May 2011. It was hoped that many MELCOM (UK) members would be able to attend; a call for papers had already gone out.

## **6. Developments in member libraries and progress on digitisation projects**

### **British Library**

Colin Baker reported on a scoping exercise taking place on the Gulf histories collection with the intention of developing this into a digitisation project. There is also under discussion a four-year project to digitise the Arabic scientific manuscripts. There had been some re-structuring of posts resulting in a job-sharing arrangement for Ursula Sims-Williams and Mohammed Isa Waley. Some posts have also been down-graded to a lower grade. Some book collections from the store in Woolwich will be moved back to the main site by the end of February 2011.

### **Royal Asiatic Society**

The Library will be closed to visitors for around three months from January to March 2011 while essential building work takes place. Library collections will be put into store during this time and be unavailable. The Library received a grant from The Islamic Manuscripts Association (TIMA) to catalogue the Arabic and Ottoman manuscripts collections on-line.

## **Leeds**

It was reported that cuts in funding for staff posts had resulted in the loss of 40 and there had been cuts to reader service provision. There had also been staff changes; a new librarian had been appointed, also a new Head of Department. A restructuring of posts had also been carried out which had resulted in a feeling of uncertainty about future prospects for staff and for the Library.

## **Exeter**

Paul Auchterlonie reported that his retirement from his position at Exeter is scheduled for July this year. Whether his position will be replaced has not yet been decided. A donation of 150 books in Turkish has been received from Professor C.H. Dodd. After Paul's retirement a replacement will need to be found to take over the management of the LIS-MIDDLE-EAST mailing list.

## **Al-Furqan Foundation**

Further progress was reported on the project to create an on-line catalogue of the Foundation's manuscript collection; a catalogue of 15,000 records is planned. Work on this project had been started in November 2010 and on-line access is expected to be available in July 2011. A new director has been appointed to the Foundation. More work has been carried out to improve the website.

## **Index Islamicus**

Heather Bleaney reported that a new production system for the 'Index Islamicus' was planned but in other respects the editorial work remained unchanged. The database could be accessed from more than one access point and at varying costs.

## **SOAS**

Phase 1 of the Library refurbishment plan was reported to be now in the final stages. Access to the main Library and to the special collections has now been restored. It is hoped that publications which have been stored off-site during the building work will be returned to the Library by Easter.

## **Oxford**

The program of refurbishment and the associated book moves at the Bodleian continues. The closure of the New Bodleian building is scheduled for July so that changes can be made to the reading rooms and other facilities. The printed book collections concerning the Middle East have been removed and stored off-site in Swindon during the refurbishment period. Staff members have also moved to different offices. The Oriental Faculty Library has also undergone some refurbishment and during the period of the main Bodleian refurbishment, when some of its collections are available there, longer opening hours are planned.

## **Cambridge**

The modern printed collections have been re-shelved in a newly refurbished open stack area on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Library providing more shelf space and lighter working area with wi-fi provision. The Library has received substantial funding from a private donor to undertake a major digitisation project focussing on the manuscript collections on religious faiths and science.

The JISC-funded OCIMCO Project in partnership with the Bodleian continues to make good progress. Most of the manuscript catalogue records have now been added into the TEI template and work is progressing on the design of the web interface. User testing is scheduled in the near future. There have been complex problems to resolve concerning the correct description for manuscripts with complex physical or bibliographical structures.

## **St. Antony's College, Oxford, MEC Library**

The Middle East Centre library has just received a generous grant to acquire books and periodicals relating to contemporary Persian studies.

## **Durham**

The cataloguing of the Ann Lambton this bequest is still continuing; duplicate copies from the collection have now been sent to St Andrew's University Library. The Ann Lambton Memorial lecture will be delivered by Prof Ali Madanipour from the University of Newcastle. The founding of a School of Government and International Affairs at Durham has increased the number of academic staff with a Middle East research focus to more than 10.

### **7. Pearson lecture**

Professor Paul Starkey (University of Durham) has agreed to deliver this year's Pearson lecture which will take place during the BRISMES Conference in Exeter in June 2011. The title has not yet been announced.

### **8. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 29th June 2011 in Exeter.