

## MELCOM (U.K.)

Minutes: 88th meeting

The 88th meeting of MELCOM (UK) took place in the SOAS Library on Monday 10th December 2012 at 11.15 am.

The business meeting was followed at 2.15 pm by brief presentations by members: Dinah Manisty on the development of e-resource provision, Paul Tate on information dissemination in Middle Eastern studies and Yasmin Faghihi on issues relating to the problems of co-ordinating new book acquisitions.

### Present:-

Dominique Akhoun-Schwarb	SOAS
Jasmine Ansari	Markfield
Catherine Ansorge	Cambridge
Paul Auchterlonie	Exeter
Heather Bleaney	Index Islamicus
Peter Colvin	SOAS and RAS
Nidaa El Ghazal	Amnesty International
Afsal Hasan	Exeter
Yasmin Faghihi	Cambridge
Maria Luisa Langella	Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies
Dinah Manisty	Bodleian
Maureen Pinder	Leeds
Ursula Sims-Williams	BL
Paul Tate	Manchester
Dawn Vaux	Oxford Oriental Institute

### 1. Apologies for absence:-

Colin Baker	BL
Karima Benaicha	al-Furqan Institute
Debbie Cox	BL
Mastan Ebtehaj	St Antony's, Oxford
Gillian Evison	Bodleian
Geoffrey Roper	London
Ursula Sims-Williams	BL
Alasdair Watson	Bodleian
Muhammad Isa Waley	BL

### 2. Minutes of previous meeting:-

Dominique Akhoun-Schwarb corrected the previous SOAS Library report; recent acquisition policies were concentrating increasingly on e-book provision not on the digitisation of books in the existing collection.

### 3. Accounts

The Secretary presented a brief updated financial report in the absence of the Treasurer. The total in the current account is £ 578.00 and in the reserve account £ 3008.24.

### 4. MELCOM (UK) Website

No further progress with the redesign or updating of the website had been made since the last meeting though Mamtimyn Sunuodula had moved the pages to a new server in Durham during 2010. Various options were discussed, such as moving the site yet again, with the possibility of financial costs and permissions perhaps creating problems. It was suggested that a simpler solution might be put in place using 'Wordpress' and opening the site up to a modern collaborative model. Dinah Manisty and Dawn Vaux agreed to look into the possibilities and report back with suggestions.

## **5. Melcom International Conference**

Dominique Akhoun-Schwarb, Melcom International Secretary, reported on the 34th Conference held in Paris in June and hosted by BULAC. Around 80 participants attended from around 20 countries. Delegates were shown the newly refurbished Library at BULAC and the Conference had received good feed-back. The 35<sup>th</sup> Conference will take place from 27th - 29th May 2013 at the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow. There is already an interesting program in place and visits to local places in interest are planned.

## **6. MELCOM (UK) officers**

The Treasurer Karima Benaicha wished to step down from her position and the Chair asked for offers to take over this role. As none were forthcoming she offered to take on the Treasurer's role until a replacement was found. The Secretary agreed to serve for one further meeting.

## **7. Developments in member institutions**

### **Exeter University**

A recent reorganization of the Arabic collections had taken place within the Library. The book stock had been interfiled with the general collections and had therefore lost its separate subject identity. The AWDU had also moved to the Old Library now renamed the Forum Library. Paul Auchterlonie announced that he intended to step down as a regular member of MELCOM, after 40 years of attending meetings, but may still attend some meetings in the future. He agreed to continue to maintain the LIS-MIDDLE-EAST mailing list.

### **SOAS**

Due to the new ground floor refurbishment in the Library some shelving for the book stock had been lost. Some of the books which had been moved off-site at the beginning of the refurbishment process had not therefore been returned. A book ordering and retrieval system for off-site stock had been introduced which is planned to be on-line in the future. There is still a book budget for the purchase of new publications in the vernacular language but a lack of space to make them available. Emphasis is increasingly on the purchase of e-books.

### **Oriental Institute Oxford**

Book moves had taken place resulting in the removal of some stock to off-site storage in Swindon. These publications can be requested and borrowed.

### **Leeds University**

There is a review currently underway to investigate the role of subject librarians; the effect this will have on existing posts is still unclear but the restructuring will inevitably have some impact on posts and grades. Book budgets remain unchanged and the emphasis is on the purchase of e-books in which there have been noticeable increases in price. A new, fourth, library building is planned for the future but is as yet only in the planning stage.

### **Oxford: Bodleian Library**

The Arabic and Islamic subject area staff with responsibility for the historical collections are increasingly working with other specialist manuscripts and exhibitions staff. Those staff with responsibility for the provision of modern collections are working to a greater extent with the academic staff and graduate students. Purchasing of e-resources in the vernacular languages and being considered and trials of databases have been held. Student training in the use of e-resources has been introduced.

### **Index Islamicus**

A new platform update is planned with the aim of improving the facility for on-line searching of names and subjects. It is planned to include book reviews again.

## **Royal Asiatic Society**

Peter Colvin reported his on-going involvement in the cataloguing of the RAS Arabic manuscripts collection into the 'Fihrist' catalogue.

## **Manchester**

The Library had been re-named 'The University of Manchester Library' and there had been a restructuring of the subject librarians into teams. The Middle Eastern post had become part of the 'Academic Engagement' team. The budget for purchasing new publications had been opened up to everyone in the team with no sum reserved specifically for the Middle Eastern collections. New publications have been purchased in Arabic and Persian, much of it demand driven by readers. Records for the Persian newspaper collections had been updated; there are important archives of newspapers from the Shah and Khomeini eras.

## **Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies**

The OCIS Library has become affiliated to the Oxford University library network. It holds 13,000 volumes in classical and modern Islamic studies; some items are in storage. The collections have been added to by purchase and donation including, recently, volumes from Professor Patrick Harvey. There has also been expansion in the SE Asian collections and on Islamic studies in Chinese. Removal of the collections to a new library building is in the planning stage and still over a year away. The new library will be a 3 storey building and will have a security system installed. Details of the layout of the library is currently under discussion.

## **Cambridge**

Further items from the Islamic manuscripts collection have been added to the 'Cambridge Digital Library'. A funding application to TIMA to support the creation of metadata for digital images of all the early Qur`anic manuscript fragments has been successful. A set of small manuscript fragments, Manichaean texts written in Syriac script and originating from Middle Egypt around the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, have been purchased. They previously belonged to Charles Allberry, the Coptic scholar, and Fellow at Christ's College. The budget for book purchase has remained unchanged and the Department is continuing to purchase new publications in the vernacular languages.

### **8. Pearson lecture**

It was suggested that possible names for the next Pearson lecture should be either a specialist from the Chester Beatty Library or an academic staff member who will be attending the BRISMES Conference in Dublin.

### **10. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be scheduled to take place during the BRISMES Conference in Dublin, 24-26<sup>th</sup> June 2013.