

MELCOM (U.K.)

Minutes: 92nd meeting

The 92nd meeting of MELCOM (Middle East Libraries Committee) UK was hosted at Al-Furqān headquarters in London, on Wednesday 21st January 2015.

The meeting was divided into two sessions:

The morning session started with the greetings and introduction from Karima Benaicha, the Head of the Library and Online Database Department at Al-Furqān, followed by the projection of a short video about the activity of the Foundation and its three centres.

Present:

Colin Baker, British Library
Karima Benaicha, al-Furqan Foundation, London
Heather Bleaney, Index Islamicus
Yasmin Faghihi, Cambridge University Library
Waseem Farooq, IISM, London
Celeste Gianni, al-Furqan Foundation, London
Dr Bink Hallum, British Library
MariaLuisa Langella, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies
Daniel Lowe, British Library
Asma Rezaei, Cambridge University Library
Suhanna Shafiq, British Library
Keith Small, Bodleian Library
Muhammad Isa Waley, British Library
Alasdair Watson, Bodleian Library
Armin Yavari, Islamic Manuscript Association, Cambridge
Ursula Sims-Williams, British Library

1. Apologies for absence:

Peter Colvin, SOAS/RAS
Afzal Hasan, University of Exeter
Paul Tate, University of Manchester
Dominique Akhoun-Schwarb, SOAS, London
Shenxiao Tong, Edinburgh University
Andrew Marsham, Edinburgh University
Geoffrey Roper, London
Dinah Manisty, Bodleian Oriental Institute Library, Oxford
Catherine Ansorge, Cambridge University Library
Carimo Mohamed
Ed Weech, Royal Asiatic Society
Maureen Pinder, University of Leeds
Mamty Sounoudula, Durham University

2. Minutes of previous meeting

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

3. Accounts

Business Reserve Account £2,011.14

Current Account £ 320.23

MELCOM still receives the £150 yearly contribution from the Pearson family. Seven members contributed a total of £125 towards the BRISMES fees incurred during the 91st MELCom UK meeting, hosted in parallel to the BRISMES annual Conference at the University of Sussex in Brighton on 16 June 2014.

4. MELCOM (UK) Website

Nothing to report

5. MELCOM (UK) officers

Nothing to report.

6. Developments in member institutions

Al-Furqan:

- The Centre for the Study of Islamic Manuscript's activities:
 - The First Training Course on Codicology, under the title "Arabic Codicology: The Islamic Manuscript Heritage in the El Escorial Collection"; from 14th until 18th of July, at San Lorenzo de El Escorial, in Madrid – Spain
- The Centre for the Study of the Philosophy of Islamic Law's activities:
 - Symposia under the title "Towards a Unified Islamic Perspective on Issues Related to Women and Population", organised by the Centre for the Study of the Philosophy of Islamic Law at Al-Furqan, in collaboration with Al-Muntadā al-‘Ālamī li-l-Wasaṭīyah and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), on the 16th and 17th September 2014 at the Regency Palace Hotel in Amman, Jordan.
- The Centre for Compiling the Encyclopaedia of Makkah and Madinah's activities:
 - Lecture: The Discovery of the House of Khadeejah (may God be pleased with her) in Makkah al-Mukarramah, by Dr Abbas Saleh Tashkandy

Al-Furqan Publications 2014-2015:

The Fihrist of al-Nadīm (Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq) - Second edition, A critical edition by Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid

Treatise on the Angle (Risalah fī al-Zāwiyah) by Kamāl al-Dīn al-Fārisī , Edited by Moustafa Mawaldi

Catalogue of the Private Collections of Manuscripts in the Egyptian National Library (Dār al-Kutub al- Misriyyah), Edited by Ahmed Abdulbaset

The House of Khadeejah Bint Khuwaylid (may Allah be pleased with her) in Makkah al-Mukarramah: A Historical Study of its Location, Building, and Architecture - English version, By Ahmed Zaki Yamani

Late Arabic Scientific Commentaries: their Role and their Originality, by George Saliba

Editing Manuscripts in the Field of Ḥadīth and Its Sciences and Biographies (Research articles)

Water and its sources in the Holy city of Jerusalem and the Ottoman state's efforts to provide it: a documented study using the civil record and critical edition of the monograph "Risalah fi Ta'mir 'Ayn Bayt al-Maqdis" by Shaykh Muhammad al-Khalili on rehabilitating the sources on the city of Jerusalem, By Muhammad Adnan al-Bakhit and Noufan Raja al-Sawariyyah

Beauty: An Approach Based on the Philosophy of Islamic Law, by Esam Ahmed El-Bashir

Encyclopaedia of Makkah Al-Mukarramah and Al-Madīnah Al-Munawwarah (vol. VII)

Al-Furqan Library's activities:

- The library department started the inventory of al-Furqan physical library
- The library department was implementing the Digital Portal facilities
- The library department produced a new publication catalogue and library brochures

Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies Library

The main news is that the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies Library has been moved to the new Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies premises in Marston in Oxford. The move took place at the end of August 2014 and the library was closed for two weeks to allow for the move to take place. It reopened on 1st September 2014. The library was the first unit to be moved to the new building. However, the relocation of the whole Centre should take place over the coming summer and should be completed by 2016. After the move we were able to shelve all the books in the main library (on 2 floors, but there is also a basement floor where a rare book reading room and storage room are built. We are currently using it to store non-catalogued material). The new library will also have more sitting space, about 40. We are currently thinking about a proper acquisition policy for the library and possibly to extend our opening hours (currently 9 to 5 Mon to Fri), but this will depend on funds and staff availability. The Centre will be like a college, there will be catering and student/scholars accommodation.

With the opening of the new library, there has been a recruitment of new personnel, two part-time library assistants, one working in the morning and the other in the afternoon. This means more help in cataloguing and overall more chances to carry out projects and initiatives, so I hope this will develop.

I also received a donation from Dr Kevin Fogg, OCIS Fellow in Islam in South East Asia of about 40 books in Burmese on Islam in Burma. I received the precious help of a Burmese Oxford researcher who helped me identify the metadata for the books and I am now hoping to start cataloguing these books. I still haven't figured out how it works on SOLO as all the Burmese books I saw on the catalogue are in transliteration.

Otherwise, we have started making more progress on the backlog cataloguing front, as now there is more space in the library and we can catalogue more without having the constraint of space.

On to the recent activities at the Centre: there were two series of seminars held in Michaelmas Term 2014, one on Islamic Finance and the other on Islamic cities.

This term, there is a series of seminars on Muslim thinkers (starting 21st January). These afternoon seminars are open to the public and they are usually quite popular.

NE/ME Dep. Cambridge University Library

Report for MELCOM UK meeting held at Al-Furqan in January 2015

The Library's affiliation programme is on-going and in this last phase the Library of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies has been affiliated with the University Library.

The al-Turath E-collection has been purchased from Eastview on the basis of a consortium agreement.

Conference paper "*Fragments of history in transition - The Michaelides Collection in Cambridge Digital Library*", and participation at MELCOM International annual conference, Constantine, Algeria

Meeting with team of John Rylands Research Centre, Manchester on collaborations for projects using TEI. Creation of a bibliographical data in TEI for Persian Manuscripts to be harvested from FIHRIST. Workshop on TEI with Manchester Hebrew Manuscript Project Team, Manchester- by invitation

Collaboration with TIMA

A grant has been received to add the Arabic papyri of the Michaelides Collection to the Cambridge Digital Library.

Participation at the annual conference of The Islamic Manuscript Association (TIMA) conference in Cambridge

Islamic codicology workshop held at CUL in September (tutored by Prof. Deroche, Ecole Pratique, Paris)

A workshop and symposium on Early Qur`anic palaeography (tutored by Prof. Deroche, Ecole Pratique, Paris)

Filming of a selection of manuscripts relating to Oman by Al-Akkasa- broadcasted 7 July 2015

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ryvo_iuu2tc&feature=youtu.be

FIHRIST

The Joint Library IIS-ISMC

The library is working with one budget for the two unified libraries. Work is still going on with the merging of the two collections and de-duplicating. We had advertised for temporary cataloguers, and have recruited two on a short term basis. They will work on the Backlog cataloguing. We are exploring our options and looking for an open-source library management system. Construction work is underway for a new building near Kings Cross and St. Pancras. We hope that by 2018 re-housing should be completed.

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7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on 10th November 2015 in the new building of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies in Marston, Oxford.