

MELCOM UK

The 94th meeting of MELCom UK was held in the Bahari Room, Weston Library (Bodleian), Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3BG, on Tuesday 13th December 2016 at 11am (tea/coffee from 10.30).

Morning Session

11.00 Business meeting:

Present

Dominique Akhoun Schwarb, SOAS, London

Paul Auchterlonie

Mastan Ebtehaj

Mohammad Emami, Fardowsi Library, Wadham College, Oxford

Michael Erdman, British Library, London

Yasmin Faghihi, Cambridge University Library

Derek Hopwood

MariaLuisa Langella, Middle East Centre Library, Oxford

Daniel Lowe, British Library, London

Alasdair Watson, Bodleian Library, Oxford

Lydia Wright, Bodleian Library, Oxford

Waseem Farouq, ISMC-IIS Joint Library, London

Meeting only

Julia Wagner, OCIS, Oxford

Lunch only

Wassilena Sekulova, Bodleian Library, Oxford

Apologies

Heather Bleaney, Index Islamicus

Mamtimyn Sunuodula, Durham University

Paul Tate, Manchester University library

Celeste Gianni, al-Furqan Foundation, London

Karima Benaicha, al-Furqan Foundation, London

1. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising.

2. Treasurer's report.

MELCOM (UK)

Financial Report - December 2016

Current account

Previous total		£463.23
07.07.16	Pearson Fund	£150.00
27.10.16	melcom.org.uk - 9 year renewal	-£54.00
Present total		£559.23

Reserve account

Previous total		£2,912.82
30.11.16	Total Interest	£1.51
Present total		£2,914.33

3. Website update.

MELCOM Website report - December 2016

The University of Oxford has hosted Melcom website for a number of years but is now keen to move away from hosting sites belonging to independent organizations on their own servers.

We have already successfully changed the registrar for the Melcom UK website, and the domain is now managed by Gandi.net. We have secured the domain name melcom.org.uk and renewed the domain for a total of 9 years which cost us £54 with VAT. The website seems to be working fine there, to date.

This puts us in a position of stability in which the domain is provided by Gandi but the site remains hosted on the Bodleian Libraries CMS. However we still need to choose the platform to host it on in the long term, this could also be Gandi.net, Wordpress or any other hosting domain. Wix.net and Vidahost have also been suggested as potential options. We would welcome any other suggestions or views on the matter, but with a preference to hosting it independently from any university server. We will need to ensure that the Melcom site is moved over to a new domain by next summer at the latest, although an earlier date is strongly encouraged.

4. MELCOM (UK) officers. LIS-MIDDLE-EAST

Paul Auchterlonie raised the discussion on the mailing list "Lis-Middle-East". He is currently the sole registered list-owner. He asked if someone could volunteer to take the responsibility of managing this list from now on. Michael Erdman from the British Library accepted to volunteer.

5. Developments and project updates in member libraries.

6. Pearson Memorial lecture.

7. Any other business.

8. Date and place of next meeting.

Afternoon session

1.00pm Lunch at *The Turl Street Kitchen*, 16-17 Turl Street, Oxford OX1 3DH

2.30pm Guided tour of the exhibition "Power and Protection", Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Reports from institutions

Manchester University library

- *Nashriyah: digital Iranian history* was launched in February 2016 and has been the most successful digi project (in terms of website visits and coverage) the Library has launched. The webpage has attracted over 30,000 hits and is still attracting an average of 60 new users per week, mostly from Iran, UK, the US and Germany. More titles have been digitised and will be released incrementally from early 2017. They will be advertised on social media, the homepage and mailing lists, etc.
- The Library redevelopment is 'on hold' due to University 'financial constraints' and will be reviewed every six months.
- The Library is still purchasing new non-Roman script material, mainly in Persian.

Report on the activities of al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation & its Library for the period November 2015-December 2016 for the 94th meeting of MELCOM (UK), Oxford, Tuesday 13th December 2016

Since the last MELCOM UK meeting hosted at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (OCIS) on 10th November 2015, al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation has been involved in the following activities:

Al-Furqan Library's activities & events:

- The library department hosted the visit of the attendees to the training programme "Ottoman and Archival Studies in the United Kingdom", organised by the London Centre for Social Studies (LCSS), on 25 May 2016 [Portal Demo].
- The library department hosted the visit of European Institute for Human Sciences at Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, on 19 April 2016 [Portal Demo].
- The library department is currently undertaking the inventory of the collection of catalogues of Islamic manuscripts held at the Foundation's library.
- The library department is currently expanding the number of records held in its digital platform: http://www.al-furqan.com/world_library

- **The Centre for the Study of Islamic Manuscript organised:**
 - The 10th Training Course on Critical Edition, titled "Editing Manuscripts of Qur'ānic sciences: Fundamentals, Basics and Problems", 29 February - 5 March 2016, Dar al-Hadith al-Hassania Institute in Rabat (Morocco).
 - The 3rd Training Course on Codicology, under the title "Arabic Codicology: The Islamic Manuscript Heritage in the El Escorial Collection"; from 18th until 22nd of July 2016, at San Lorenzo de El Escorial, in Madrid (Spain)
 - The lecture: "Introduction to manuscript editing", by Prof. Bashar Awwad Marouf, 2nd March 2016, Rabat (Morocco).
 - The 7th Conference on Editing Islamic Manuscripts under the title "Editing Manuscript on Literature and Language", 25-26 November 2016, London (UK).
 - The lecture "Qur'an Palaeography and the Fragments of the University of Birmingham" by Professor Qasim al-Samarrai, 23rd November 2015, London (UK).

- **The Centre for the Study of the Philosophy of Islamic Law organised:**
 - The 12th training course on the philosophy of Islamic law addressing the "Objectives of the Noble Qur'ān" (Part 2), Mohammedia (Morocco).
 - Symposium under the title "The Arts in Light of the Objectives of Islamic Law (Maqasid)", 5-6 November 2016, Istanbul (Turkey).

- The lecture: "The means (al-dharā'ī) and their role in creative juristic effort (ijtihād)", by Professor Mohamed Salim El-Awa, 2 May 2016, Mohammedia (Morocco).
- **Other event organised by the Foundation:**
 - The lecture: "Medieval Muslims and Egyptian Hieroglyphs", by Professor Okasha El-Daly, 11 May 2016, London (UK).

Al-Furqan Publications 2016:

Catalogue of Manuscripts of the Great 'Umarī Mosque Library, Gaza - Palestine, Prepared by Abdallatif Zaky Abu Hashem (Arabic)

Catalogue of Arabic, Turkish and Persian Manuscripts in the Cantonal Archives, Travnik, Prepared by Mustafa Jahić (Arabic, Bosnian)

Bidāyat al-Mubtadī (A Classical Manual on the Hanafi Juridical School) by 'Alī b. Abī Bakr al-Marghinānī, Edited by Saed Bakdash (Arabic)

Editing Manuscripts on Literature & Language (Conference proceedings, Arabic)

Editing Manuscripts of Qur'ānic Sciences: Fundamentals, Rules and Problems (Course proceedings, Arabic)

Human Organ Transplantation Treatment: Balancing Interests & Harm, By Abdelghani Yahyaoui (Arabic)

Stem cell treatment: An Approach Based on the Philosophy of Islamic Law, By Abdelghani Yahyaoui (Arabic)

The Methodological Introduction to the Map of the Universal Objectives of Islamic Law in the Noble Qur'ān, By Tayeb Berghout (Arabic)

The Objective of Justice in the Noble Qur'ān, By Mohamed Selim El-Awa (Arabic)

The Objective of Reforming the Human Thinking from the Qur'anic Perspective, By Mohamed Awwam (Arabic)

Applying the Sharī'ah Objectives in the Da'wah Sphere: Research Articles, Edited by Esam Ahmed El-Bashir (Arabic)

Objectives of the Noble Qur'ān: Research Articles, Edited by Mohamed Salim Elawa (Arabic)

Durham University

Mamtimyn Sonuodula

1. We have a new Sudan Archivist, Frances Gotto, since early in this year, after Jane Hogan's retirement.

2. The School of Government and International Affairs, which also houses the Institute for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (IMEIS), is going to be one of the four departments to be expanded in

the next 10 years, to grow to double of its current size. As usual, we don't know if the Library budget is going to match that growth.

Report from Cambridge University Library 2016

Yasmin Faghihi

The University Librarian Anne Jarvis resigned in September 2016 to take up a new post as the director of Princeton University Library in October 2016. The Deputy Librarian Sue Mehrer resigned in October 2016 to take up a new post Dean of Libraries at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire in December 2016.

Chris Young Professor of Modern and Medieval German Studies and Deputy Head of the School of Arts and Humanities is currently acting as the University Librarian supported by the three directors of Digital Initiatives, Research Collections and Academic Services acting as deputy Librarians. A new University Librarian and director of Library Services is expected to be appointed in early 2017.

The Library is in the process of changing to a new Library management system. The current system Voyager has been in place since 2002 and will be replaced with Alma (ExLibris) in summer 2017. The resource discovery System Aqua browser has been replaced with iDiscover (Primo/ExLibris), which was launched in September 2016.

The University Library's in house bindery was closed at the end of 2015 and a new preservation and conservation policy implemented. Books are no longer bound for access on the open shelf or for loan.

In 2016 the UL is celebrating 600 Years with a series of events and exhibition. The exhibition Lines of Thought: Discoveries that Changed the World ended in October 2016. A virtual exhibition including a selection of exhibits can be viewed on the Cambridge Digital Library. The current exhibition "Curious Objects" is one of the more unusual and unexpected objects in the Library's history. [...]All have a part to play in telling the story of the University Library in its 600th anniversary year [...] A virtual exhibition is available on the CUDL.

Near and Middle Eastern Department

Special Collections & Digital Humanities

The digital edition of the Qur'anic under-writing of the Lewis-Mingana palimpsest was completed by Alba Fedeli and the results published on CUDL.

The Curator for Egyptian Written Culture at the British Museum Ilona Regulski has successfully organised a conference for curators and conservators in which the Cambridge Michaelides Collection of Arabic papyri was introduced. The next conference will be at Cambridge in summer 2017.

Successful collaborations with Manchester University on the use of TEI for manuscript descriptions resulted in sharing expertise and experiences between institutions and inspired a conference "Going Digital with Humanities Research - Two days of inspirational talks, round-table discussion and a practical TEI XML workshop".

Printed Collections

The book budget for printed collections has remained stable. Due to the seizure of in-house binding, the department is currently outsourcing this process to be organised by vendors in the Middle East.

This departmental policy has an impact on the purchase value of the budget and will have to be revisited after a testing period of two years.

The Arabic/Persian assistant to the Department Asma Rezaei relocated to China and a new assistant Rosemary Maxton will be starting in January 2017.

Next year's MELCOM UK summer meeting will be held in Cambridge in conjunction with MELCOM International celebrating 50 years of MELCOM at its birth place.

Middle East Centre Library, St Antony's College, Oxford

MariaLuisa Langella

Ms Mastan Ebtehaj retired in June 2016 after 19 years as Librarian at the Middle East Centre and MariaLuisa Langella replaced her in this position, starting on 3rd October 2016. There has been a period of handover of two weeks during which Ms Ebtehaj provided guidance and shared her knowledge of the library and its collections. This has made the transition smoother for the new librarian.

Michaelmas Term has been very busy for the new librarian with trainings and familiarising herself with the library and its collection, classification, circulation system, but also understanding the general context of the MEC library within the MEC, the College, and the Bodleian library.

The library has been well attended by students. Several hundreds of them registered to use the library during Michaelmas term only.

In line with its longstanding tradition, the Middle East Centre organised a seminar on Arab films in Michaelmas Term which was well attended.

The Investcorp Building, opened in 2015, house of the Middle East Centre's Archive and Library and of a 117-seat lecture theatre has won regional and national prizes of the Royal Institute of British Architects and named the best academic building by the World Festival of Architecture.

In Hilary Term the MEC will organise a series of seminars on the current political situation in the Arab world. Details will be posted on the Centre's website at the beginning of 2017.

<https://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/research-centres/middle-east-centre>

Ferdowsi Library

Mohammed Emami

The Ferdowsi library holds a specialized Persian collection at Wadham College in Oxford. In the last two years, the Persian section has acquired just below 700 books from Iran, of which a great deal are modern and technical Persian dictionaries and encyclopaedias. In the same period, about 150 old books were catalogued and added to SOLO retrospectively. The library is very well used by UG and PG students working in the fields of Persian, Iranian and Islamic studies, and a comprehensive lighting project was carried out in summer 2016 as a response to their needs and feedback. The long-awaited catalogue of the Persian and Arabic manuscripts held in the Library was finally published in Iran early in 2016 in Persian. The catalogue's book, representing 959 manuscript titles in various fields, was introduced to the Oxford University scholarship in a book launch event on 30th

November 2016, along with three brief lectures and an exhibition of some unique or noble manuscripts.

Bodleian and Oriental Institute Library, Oxford

Lydia Wright

- We are reviewing the collection development policy for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies to establish what material the Bodleian and the Oriental Institute Library should be acquiring going forward with an emphasis on collaborating more closely with the various other Middle East/Islamic Libraries in Oxford.
- We have set up a meeting of all Oxford Middle Eastern Librarians (referred to as MELIBOX) to meet once a term to increase cooperation, share ideas and discuss shared challenges.
- We have gained a new member of our acquisitions team, Wassilena Sekulova, who has Arabic and Persian language skills and will be helping with our Middle Eastern acquisitions.
- We are reviewing our current suppliers and are trialling alternative ones.
- We have set up a trial of EBSCO e-resources including their e-book collections in Arabic and Turkish (eBook Arabic Subscription Collection and Hiperkitap) as well as the databases Arab World Research Source and ATLA Historical Monographs Collection: Islam in the Modern World (1804-1918), and we would be keen to hear from any other library trialling these (their regional representative has specified that consortia purchasing of e-resources for the Melcom group is an option they can consider).
- The Bodleian is continuing its project of ICP records retro-conversion and cataloguing the backlog of Arabic, Persian and Turkish books which is progressing at a slow but steady pace.
- We still aim to undertake a survey of our Arabic and Persian journals to identify least used resources – this is increasingly necessary given the increase in prices of journals without the increase in budget.
- The budget for Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies for next financial will not decrease, as feared, but will not increase either.
- We are currently disposing of duplicates which we are donating to BetterWorldBooks, but we are happy also to send lists of duplicates round to other specialist libraries to choose from.

Photos from Business Meeting:

