

103 rd MELCom UK Meeting – Minutes		
Date: 31 May 2023 Place: Online via MS Teams		
Agenda	Discussion	Actions
1. Welcome and apologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In attendance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carlos Roca Lydia Wright Mohammad Emami Shah Hussain Wafa Isfahani Wassilena Sekulova Waseem Farooq Yasmin Fahghihi Apologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MariaLuisa L Technical problems happened during the first few minutes of the meeting, with some attendees struggling to connect to MS Teams, including the secretary. 	N/A
2. Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendees introduced themselves as new members were attending for the first time. 	N/A

3. Minutes of the 102nd meeting and matters arising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of 102nd MELCom UK meeting were approved. 	N/A
4. Library updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional reports submitted to the board were circulated. See Appendix. As only a few reports were submitted in advance, members briefed about their libraries updates to the meeting attendees. In addition to the reports, the following subjects were discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convenience of a higher collaboration or coordination in purchase to avoid unnecessary duplication. It was generally agreed that sharing acquisition practices among members would be beneficial. It was proposed to establish a system to exchange duplicates. 	Board – add relevant points to next meeting's agenda.
5. Consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form circulated in advance to the meeting showed that at least 5 members would be interested in participating in the electronic resource consortium. Members discussed, following up on the form, the main points of difficulty they anticipated to the consortium: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal and contractual issues Licences agreements and paperwork Affordability and funding 	Board – to invite vendors who are interested in the consortium to present in next meeting.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Would vendors accept to set a consortium even for resources already licenced in an institution? ● Members agree that the best way to proceed is to create a separate working group of members interested in participating in the electronic resource consortium. Members who are not interested or cannot participate would not need to take part. ● Participating members are expected to take active part in the group. ● Participants agree that each institution's electronic resource specialist would need to be involved potentially. ● Members generally agreed that it is better to focus in 2 to 3 resources at a time. 	
6. Update from the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board has been in office for two years now. Board is ready to call elections. ● As the Summer break is a more complex time for members to attend, it is considered to postpone for the term time, to maximise participation. 	Board – to include point in next meeting's agenda.
7. Date and location of next meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To be confirmed by the Board. Depending on possibilities of Exeter to host and members to attend. ● Exeter will host the BRISMES Conference 2023. Members discussed that a closer 	Board – to confirm

	collaboration/relationship between MELCom UK and BRISMES can be positive.	
8. AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcement: Aga Khan Library will host the MELCom International Conference 2024. 	N/A

Appendix: institutional reports

Bodleian Libraries

E-Resource Acquisitions & Trials

We are purchasing, over a period of 3 years, access to all modules of Early Arabic Printed Books from the British Library (1475-1900) as part of a Bodleian Libraries wide Gale Accelerate discounted deal.

This year we have been focusing on trialling e-resources in vernacular languages in particular journal and e-book databases:

- Previously trialled: ArabDigest
- Recently trialled: Noormags & Noorlibs - an Iranian journal and e-book database with a focus on Islamic studies, social sciences and the humanities with texts mostly in Persian but also featuring content in Arabic and English. We have had positive feedback.
- Current trials: LexiQamus and Wikilala - LexiQamus is a well-known dictionary tool to search for Ottoman Turkish words and especially useful for deciphering illegible or unclear words. Wikilala is a discovery portal for Ottoman Turkish printed documents with in built full-text searching tools which allow you to perform searches across the whole corpus.

· Future trials: This term we are hoping also to trial Ottoman related e-resource Muteferriqa as well as Arabic e-books and journal database Al-Manhal.

Donations

We were granted generous permission to select material from the personal library of Professor Wilfred Madelung, author and scholar of early Islamic history and once Laudian Professor of Arabic at Oxford. The donation consists of monographs and journals, mostly in Arabic and English, and includes works on early Islamic history and theology, especially works on Ibadi Islam and a large number of publications from the Institute for Ismaili Studies where he was senior research fellow.

We have received a number of books via Pembroke College Library from the personal library of the late Sir James Craig, British diplomat and ambassador to Syria and Saudi Arabia, who was also a visiting professor in Arabic and lecturer at Pembroke College, 1985–1991. The collection consists mostly of Arabic and English monographs with a focus on Middle Eastern modern history and politics.

We recently received as a bequest the entire personal library of the late Dr Celia Kerslake (1946-2023), lecturer at the University of Oxford and scholar in Turkish studies. Her wonderful collection of Turkish literature and Turkish literary studies will fill some important gaps in our own holdings.

All 3 donations will be catalogued over the coming months and the books added to SOLO.

Staffing

The new librarian for Caucasian and Central Asian Studies Niko Kontovas joined the Bodleian Libraries in January 2023