

104th MELCOM UK MEETING

MINUTES

Date: Thursday, October 26th, 2023, from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm.

Hybrid: Online, via MS Teams. In person: **al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation**, 22A Old Court Place, London, W8 4PL

1. Introductions and Welcome [14:00-14:05]

Present in person:

Lydia Wright (Chair)	Bodleian Library, Oxford
Carlos Roca (Secretary)	SOAS, London
Wafa Fatima Isfahani (Host)	al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation
Yasmin Faghihi	Cambridge University Library, Cambridge
Niko Kontovas	Bodleian Library, Oxford
Anne Watson	British Museum, London
Mirina Paananen	Cambridge Muslim College

Present online:

Mohammad Emami	Ferdowsi Library, Oxford
Dalia Abdelwahed	Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies
Wassilena Sekulova	Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies

2. Minutes from previous meeting [14:05-14:10]

Approved.

3. Matters arising [14:10-14:20]

- a. **Exchange programme.** WI to take this forward and create a duplicates exchange spreadsheet that can be shared amongst MELCOM UK members.

4. Institutional reports and updates [14:20-15:00]. See appendix.

5. Break and short tour of al-Furqan library [15:00-15:20]

6. **Consortium Matters & Vendor Presentations** – al-Mandumah, Noorsoft and Muteferriqa [15:20-16:20]

The Committtee heard presentations from al-Mandumah, Noorsoft and Muteferriqa and had the chance to ask questions and discuss the resources and initial pricing. The vendors will send across MELCOM UK Consortium proposals to LW in writing so she can share this with the group.

7. **Break** [16:20-16:30]

8. **Next Board Elections** [16:30-16:40]

To be held as soon as possible. Nominations for candidates and self-nominations welcome. We will send a reminder in advance so people have time to send in nominations.

9. **Winter Meeting Online & Summer Meeting Exeter** [16:40-16:50]

The Committee agreed with the suggestion of alternating between having an online winter meeting and an in-person summer meeting with at least one in-person meeting a year. It was proposed that the next meeting could take place in summer in Exeter, to coincide with BRISMES. LW will follow-up with members nearer the date to check availability.

10. **AOB** [16:50-17:00]

Appendix:

Treasurer's Report

MELCOM (UK)

Financial Report - October 2023

Current account

	Previous total	£2,451.52
02.08.23	Website, Gandi via Lydia	-£50.40
31.05.23	PICRIGHTS UK LIMIT	-£150.00
	Present total	£2,251.12

Reserve account

	Previous total	£2,941.26
26.10.23	Total Interest	£15.86
	Present total	£2,957.12



MELCOM UK 104th Meeting

October 26th, 2023

Held at al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, London

Report Prepared by: Wafa Fatima Isfahani (*Library and Special Collections*)

al-Furqan Library Activities and Events:

The library department has undertaken to update its LMS and MARC 21 output by way of contributing authority data, sharing library holdings, and AIHF publications on COPAC and OCLC. We have also resumed the development of our Catalogue Collection reflecting the "World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts".

Our collections have grown significantly through exchange programs with libraries and publications houses in the Middle East and South Asia including IRCICA (Research Centre For Islamic History, Art and Culture , ISAM (İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi), KBOPL (Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library), and the Iran Parliament Library.

al-Furqan Events 2023:

The Centre for the Study of Islamic Manuscripts:

1. Qur'ān manuscripts, past and present: Cataloguing and digital tools.
Berlin, Germany
18-23rd September 2023
[Event link](#)

Other Events and Lectures:

2. "The Abbasid House of Wisdom: Between Myth & Reality"
Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation headquarters in London
Monday, 20 March 2023
[Event link](#)
3. How Islamic Architecture Shaped Europe
Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation headquarters in London.
Wednesday, 3 May 2023

Al-Furqān is an Islamic Heritage Foundation, registered in the UK (Registration Nr. 2329628), and consists of three centres:

1. The Islamic Manuscripts Centre deals with surveying, imaging, cataloguing, editing and publishing Islamic Manuscripts.
2. The Maqasid Centre focuses on the study of the philosophy of Islamic Law.
3. The Encyclopaedia of Makkah and Madinah Centre compiles the encyclopaedia of the two holy cities, acknowledging their scientific and cultural role throughout history.

الفرقان هي مؤسسة تراثية إسلامية مسجلة في بريطانيا (رقم التسجيل 2329628)، وتتكون من ثلاثة مراكز:

1. مركز المخطوطات الإسلامية الذي يقوم بالمحافظة على التراث الإسلامي المخطوط وتوثيقه، وله نشاط مستمر في مجال الفهرسة والتصنيف والتدريب والنشر.
2. مركز دراسات مقاصد الشريعة الإسلامية، وتتلخص مهمته في إجراء هذه المقاصد، وتوسيع نطاق الإسلام العلمي والفكري بمقاصد الشريعة الإسلامية، إضافة إلى العلوم الشرعية والاجتماعية والإنسانية الأخرى.
3. مركز موسوعة مكة المكرمة والمدينة المنورة الذي يهدف إلى توثيق دور المدينتين الشريفتين في الحياة الدينية والثقافية والسياسية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية على مر العصور.



[Event link](#)

Upcoming Events 2023

1. "Islamic Creed: Maqāṣid Perspectives" (2)
In collaboration with the Faculty of Letters & Humanities in Mohammedia, the Research and Studies Laboratory in Islamic Sciences of the same Faculty, and the Maqāṣid Research & Studies Centre (Rabat) on 1st and 2nd November 2023, at the Faculty of Letters & Humanities in Mohammedia, Morocco.
2. "Lecture on Maqasid"
To be delivered by Prof. Essam al-bashir in Morocco on 3rd November 2023
3. "The Translation Movement Between East and West"
A one day symposium on bridging cultures (especially East and West) in honour of our late Chairman's HE Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani. The event will be held at Al-Furqan Headquarters Office in London on 29th November 2023.

Al-Furqan Publications 2023

1. al-Istidhkār li madhāhib 'ulamā' al-amṣār fī mā taḍamanahu al-Muwaṭṭa' min ma'ānī al-ismā'ikar: لمذاهب علماء الأمصار فيما تضمنته الموطأ من معاني الرأي والآثار

Imām Ibn 'Abd al-Barr القرطبي
Critical Edition By Bashar Awad Ma'rouf & Others
2023
Pages 10042
9781788146012

2. Islamic Creed: Maqāṣid Perspectives (1) 1 العقيدة الإسلامية: نظرات مقاصدية

By various contributors
Edited by Abdul Majid al-Najjar
2023

Al-Furqan is an Islamic Heritage Foundation, registered in the UK (Registration No. 2329628), and consists of three centres:

1. The Islamic Manuscripts Centre deals with surveying, imaging, cataloguing, editing and publishing Islamic Manuscripts.
2. The Maqasid Centre focuses on the study of the philosophy of Islamic Law.
3. The Encyclopedia of Makkah and Madinah Centre compiles the encyclopedia of the two holy cities, acknowledging their scientific and cultural role throughout history.

الفرقان هي مؤسسة تراثية إسلامية مسجلة في بريطانيا (رقم التسجيل 2329628)، وتتكون من ثلاثة مراكز:

1. مركز المخطوطات الإسلامية الذي يقوم بالمعالجة على التراث الإسلامي المخطوط وتوثيقه، وله نشاط بحثي في مجال المخطوطات الإسلامية والتراث الإسلامي.
2. مركز مقاصد مقاصد الشريعة الإسلامية، والذي يهتم بمقاصد الشريعة الإسلامية، وتوسيع نطاق الإلمام بالنسب والفكر في مقاصد الشريعة، إضافة إلى العلوم الشرعية والاجتماعية والإنسانية الأخرى.
3. مركز موسوعة مكة المكرمة والمدينة المنورة الذي يهدف إلى توثيق دور المدينتين الشريفتين في الحياة الدينية والثقافية والفكرية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية على مر العصور.



Pages 592
9781788146203

3. The Noble Qur'ān from Revelation to Compilation (3) / القرآن الكريم من التنزيل إلى التكوين 3

Edited by Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation

2023

Pages 256

9781788146197

4. The Objectives of Endowments of Manuscripts and Libraries in Islamic Civilisation : FROM JURISPRUDENCE TO CONTEMPORARY INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAWS / مقاصد أوقاف المخطوطات والمكتبات في الحضارة الإسلامية

By Ibrahim El-Bayomi Ghanem

2023

Pages 200

9781788146005

5. The Ottoman Scientific Heritage / التراث العلمي العثماني

By Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu

Translated into English by Maryam Patton

2023

Pages 1962, 2 vols.

9781788146210

If you would like to purchase any of our new publications you could place your orders and pre-orders [on our website](http://our-website). If you are interested in collaborative projects with the foundation, please feel free to email us at projects@al-furqan.com.

Al-Furqān is an Islamic Heritage Foundation, registered in the UK (Registration No: 2329628), and consists of three centres:

1. The Islamic Manuscripts Centre deals with surveying, imaging, cataloguing, editing and publishing Islamic Manuscripts.
2. The Maqasid Centre focuses on the study of the philosophy of Islamic Law.
3. The Encyclopaedia of Makkah and Madinah Centre compiles the encyclopaedia of the two holy cities, acknowledging their scientific and cultural role throughout history.

الفرقان هي مؤسسة تراثية إسلامية مسجلة في بريطانيا (إرقام التسجيل 2329628) وتتكون من ثلاثة مراكز:

1. مركز المخطوطات الإسلامية الذي يقوم بالمصاطفة على التراث الإسلامي المخطوط وتوثيقه، وله نشاطات في مجال التوعية والتدريب والتأهيل.
2. مركز دراسات مقاصد الشريعة الإسلامية، وتكمن مهمته في إعطاء هذه المقاصد، وتوسيع نطاق الاهتمام العلمي والفكري بمقاصد الشريعة، إضافة إلى العلوم الشرعية والاجتماعية والإنسانية الأخرى.
3. مركز موسوعة مكة المكرمة والمدينة المنورة الذي يهدف إلى توثيق دور المدينتين الشريفتين في الحياة الدينية والثقافية والعلمية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية على مر العصور.

Archives

Since our last report, we have had some small additions to a number of our Middle East archives, including photographs and original documents for the Al-Azmah archive (EUL MS 215), a new tranche of material from the Whittall family on Turkish history (EUL MS 259), and some maps to accompany the Harding King archive (EUL MS 11). We have also taken possession of the Chris Kutschera archive, comprising some 150,000 photographs (prints, negatives and transparencies) as well as printed papers and 150 diaries. These are being digitised over the next two and a half years. I have also accessioned some older, uncatalogued collections that have been in storage into Special Collections, including records of the MacBride Commission examining Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and records of the Iraqi Petroleum Company. Negotiations continue regarding some other large donations, but our storage capacity is now full with almost every inch of shelf-space either occupied or committed. The inadequacies of our current building remain a continual source of concern.

DAME

The Digital Archive of the Middle East (DAME) project is nearing the end of its second year, and I recently took on two digitisation assistants to help with the work. The website is still under construction but should soon be operational, although it will continue to grow and be corrected, improved and augmented over the months (and hopefully years) ahead. It can be found at <https://dame.exeter.ac.uk> although please bear in mind that this has not yet been launched publicly and remains a work in progress. Metadata will be in English and Arabic (and Kurdish where relevant), and there are currently over 880 records.

In June I was in Iraqi Kurdistan, presenting a paper on our Kurdish archives (including the Kurdish Digital Archive, a component of DAME) and visiting a number of archives, museums and libraries in Sulaimani, including Zheen and the Kurdish Heritage Institute, with whom we have signed a MoU. We are working together to improve the preservation, cataloguing and promotion of Kurdish archive material, both physical and digital.

AWDU

The Arab World Documentation Unit (AWDU) was returned to the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies last September, after a ten-year hiatus in the Old Library, to much rejoicing. Unfortunately, the grand opening event was held while I was travelling between Algeria and Egypt, but the video that was made shows off some of AWDU's riches: [AWDU + Arabic subs 3.mp4](#) I now have a Librarian's Desk in AWDU and divide my time between here and the Old Library (looking after the archives and DAME work) – having a visible presence in AWDU seems to be appreciated by both staff and students, as there are many enquiries, requests for research help and so on. External interest in AWDU is growing, and we have already welcomed several international researchers who have travelled here specifically to use the material here. The Street Gallery, just outside AWDU, has been the location for two exhibitions that I co-curated, *Seven Voyages of Sindbād the Sailor in The One Thousand and One Nights* (March – September 2023) and *Challenging Legacies: The Kingdom of Iraq and Gertrude Bell* (October

2023 – March 2024), both of which draw on material from both AWDU and the archives. Acquisitions policy for AWDU focuses on rare and historic printed material, especially ephemera and 'grey literature', rather than academic works or secondary literature. I continue to catalogue material for AWDU, both new acquisitions and stock from our backlog, but am still learning how to do this on our new LMS, having switched from Millenium to ALMA over the summer.

James Downs

Cambridge Muslim College

I currently oversee administration for the library of Cambridge Muslim College. We have recently completed the purchase and refurbishment of a new building on our site which will house our new and improved library, which is an exciting time for the college. We are at the stage of moving to a new library management system and overhauling our entire catalogue which is huge task! I look forward to meeting colleagues at the MELCom meeting so I can learn from you all and take your advice back to my work at the college.

Mirina Paananen

Bodleian Libraries Report for 104th MELCOM UK 26th Oct 2023

General

- The Bodleian Libraries transitioned to using a new integrated library management system 'ALMA' over the summer 2023.
- The Bodleian Libraries is running a Mellon Foundation-funded project (2022-2024) called 'We Are Our History' (WAOH). This project helps the Libraries take a close look at its collections, its work with audiences and its staffing through the lens of race and the legacies of the British Empire. As part of this project we are looking into questions of provenance, identifying where the gaps are in our collections, examining how we can provide better access to global and diverse collections and reviewing how we describe our collections: <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/about/libraries/our-work/we-are-our-history>

Middle Eastern & Islamic Collections

- Small but steady number of print acquisitions for Turkish, Persian and Arabic material acquired this year (roughly 350 titles). Over 100 Arabic titles purchased from London

bookshop al-Saqi's closing down sale last autumn. Often encounter difficulties in sourcing material from Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria and have actively been looking for new vendors and would welcome recommendations.

Caucasian and Central Asian Collection

- Librarian and curator, Niko Kontovas, has begun taking stock of cataloguing, promoting, and – in the case of our modern collections – expanding the Bodleian's holdings for the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Ottoman Turkish. Cataloguing efforts have focused on existing manuscripts and rare books in Chaghatay, for which the Bodleian has never had a dedicated cataloguer, as well as donations and new book acquisitions in other less well-studied Turkic minority languages, such as Gagauz and Crimean Tatar. We are also excited to have set up Teklimakan Uyghur Neshriyati as a new vendor based in Istanbul, through whom we have acquired around a hundred titles in Uyghur which were otherwise impossible to acquire from our PRC-based vendors.

e-Resources purchases:

- 5 Archives Unbound titles:
 - Aden: Records of the U.S. Department of State, 1880-1906
 - Egypt: Records of the U.S. Department of State, 1853-1959
 - Iraq: Records of the U.S. Department of State, 1888-1944
 - Libya: Records of the U.S. Department of State, 1796-1885
 - The Persian Gulf and Yemen: American Ascendancy and the Cold War, 1950-1959
- Adam Matthews: Central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan 1834-1922: From Silk Road to Soviet rule
- LexiQamus

Special Collections

- The Bodleian is lending several items for the current exhibition at the MK Gallery, Milton Keynes titled 'Beyond the Page: South Asian Miniature Painting and Britain, 1600 to Now.' Items include the 'Abd al-Rahim Ragamala (Laud Ragamala) and the Shah Shuja' Album (Douce Album) which the latter has recently undergone a major restoration project to stabilise flaking paint and restore sewing and binding.
<https://mkgallery.org/event/beyond-the-page/>
- Recent Bodleian Asian and Middle Eastern acquisitions include a late-Ottoman manuscript containing two treatises on Music in Persian which belonged to Turkish musician and theorist Rauf Yekta Bey
https://www.fihrist.org.uk/catalog/manuscript_33209, and a fine artist's book by artist Tania Baban which reproduces a page from the Blue Qur'an:
<https://www.taniababan.com/scribe>

- A rolling Bahari-funded digitisation project is under way and 4 copies of Firdawsi's Shahnamah have recently gone live on Digital.Bodleian to add to the already digitised Shahnamah of Ibrahim Sultan: <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/search/?q=shahnamah>
- On 26th October, a new, single search tool across manuscript and archival catalogues for Oxford collections will be launched. Funded by The Mellon Foundation, this new service – Manuscripts and Archives at Oxford University – aims to create a connected and adaptable digital environment for the University of Oxford's manuscripts and archives. You can now search over 200,000 items from 11 online catalogues, including archives, early modern and medieval manuscripts, Hebrew manuscripts, and manuscripts from Western, Central and Southern Asia, from 400 BC to the present day, in one place.

SOAS Library

Dr Rookaya Bawa has started in her role as the new Chief Librarian.

The library has initiated a project to refurbish the library premises to modernise the studying spaces, create new comms, and define the regional nature of the library more clearly for easing use.

The Phillips Building where the library is currently hosted has turned 50 this year. An exhibition has been prepared to celebrate the landmark. It is open until December 2023.

The library is recruiting a Collections and E-resources Team Leader (new post) to lead the digital shift of the library.

The library is recruiting a China Librarian and a Japan & Korea Librarian to cover vacancies after staff moves.

The Brunei Gallery is hosting a display to celebrate the second centenary of the Royal Asiatic Society: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/about/event/extraordinary-endeavours>