

**Annual Meeting 2006 Cambridge, MA**

**Middle East Librarians Association**

**Business Meeting**

**Friday November 17, 2:00–3:45 pm**

**Harvard University**

**MELA MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Midhat Abraham (Arizona), Imad Abuelgasim (UC-Berkeley), Johnny Bahbah (Princeton), Joyce Bell (Princeton), Basima Bezirgan (Chicago), Brenda Bickett (Georgetown), Joan Biella (Library of Congress), Ali Boutaqmanti (Harvard), Hiram Dinavari (Library of Congress), Christine Dykgraaf (Arizona), Robin Dougherty (UT-Austin), John Eilts (Stanford), Hikmat Faraj (Emory), Muhammad al-Faruque (UICU), George Fawzi (Leila Books), Christof Galli (Duke), Meryle Gaston (UCSB), James Gentner (Library of Congress), Abdul Ahad Hannawi (Yale), Ali Bakr Hassan (Brown), David Hirsch (UCLA), An-Chi Hoh (Library of Congress), Nada Hussein (Harvard), Michael Hopper (Harvard), Jonathan L. Hopwood (UC-Berkeley), Ali Houissa (Cornell), Mozghan Jalalzadeh (IranFarhang), Kristen Kern (Portland), Akram Khabibullaev (Chicago), Omar Khalidi (MIT), Shayee Khanaka (UC-Berkeley), William Kopycki (Pennsylvania), Madaleine Laird (UCLA), Connie Lamb (Brigham Young), Philip F. McEldowney (Virginia), Peter Magierski (NYU), Sarah Ozturk (Library of Congress), Jonathan Rodgers (Michigan), Mehdi Rahimzadeh (Ferdosi.com), Andras Riedlmayer (Harvard), Rebecca Routh (Iowa), Juliet Sabouri (Princeton), Shahira el-Sawy (AUC), Karl Schaefer (Drake), Waleed el-Shobaki (Manchester), Rachel Simon (Princeton), Arthur Smith (OCLC), Jeff Spurr (Harvard), Wassim Sulaiman (Sulaiman's Bookshop), Elizabeth Vernon (Harvard), Patrick Visel (Ohio), David Whitehair (OCLC), Lesley Wilkins (Harvard), Kristen Wilson (UCLA), Gamil Youssef (NYPL)

### Minutes

#### Introductions and opening remarks:

**P**resident Ali Houissa welcomed everyone to the meeting. Following tradition, attendees announced their names and institutional affiliations.

Ali reported on two decisions taken by the Executive Board. Officially, the MELA meetings will take place over two days. This is due to the rise in activities. The second decision is that meeting registration fees will increase to \$50.00 for the Montreal meeting only. Since there is no local host in Montreal, MELA will have to pay the full amount for facilities. This necessitates a rise in registration fees. There were no objections to these decisions.

#### Officer's Reports

##### PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Ali stated that this has been a busy year. John Eilts had agreed to serve as MELA-NET list manager, taking over for Ali who would otherwise have held two offices at the same time. John will hold this position until 2007; meanwhile MELA-Net will remain at Cornell until a more permanent solution can be found. New bylaws have been proposed to redefine the positions of list manager and webmaster.

The Board worked on several advocacy issues. The Board sent a letter to Librarian of Congress Dr. James Billington in response to a report claiming that the Middle East/North Africa Reading Room was going to be closed to make way for a permanent art exhibit. This was done in coordination with the Africana Librarians Council, the ALA Office of Government Relations and MESA.

Other areas of activity included MELA's participation in the WOCMES conference, and the endorsement of a recommendation made by the Cataloging Committee to have a new MARC cataloging code created for the Middle East Subject Funnel.

The Board also appointed committee for Reference and Research, which has been established to create new web-based research guides and update reference guides and tools developed years ago.

To facilitate smooth transition between boards, Ali had suggested that an Officer's manual be created to outline duties, practical hints and other guidelines for new officers to follow. MELA is also in dire need of a registry of membership to document membership history.

This will make it easier for other committees (such as the Partington Award Committee) to carry out their tasks. The Secretary-Treasurer will be working on this with the help of others with the aim of creating a list of all MELA members from start to the present.

Ali encouraged new members to take an active role and help the Association by volunteering and participating in its committees or run for office. It is a challenge to find people willing to serve. MELA operates with a great deal of personal commitment and effort.

In conclusion, Ali thanked members of the Association, the board and other committees for their hard work, and especially to Lesley Wilkins, program chair Michael Hopper and everyone else at Harvard for their great efforts in organizing this year's conference.

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT: [Text Below].

EDITOR'S REPORT: [Text Below]

Ali encouraged newer members to submit book reviews to MELA Notes. Book Review Editor Rachel Simons stated that while she has encouraged publishers to send more reference books for review, there is still a lack of reviewers who can deliver. She added that everyone who is willing to take a book should be able to complete a timely review of it.

WEBMASTER AND LISTSERV MANAGER'S REPORT:

John Eilts hoped that everyone appreciates the adoption of PayPal for payment of dues and meeting registration. He is working to consolidate the *MELA Notes* backfile, and since MELA has its own domain name [mela.us], there is now the possibility of permanent web hosting not linked to a single member's home institution. Future developments include e-voting (with appropriate changes in the bylaws).

John added that MELA's website is popular, with over 800 unique visitors per month. Usage is naturally heavier in September and October.

#### **Presentation of awards:**

ATIEYH AWARD:

Lesley Wilkins presented this year's award to Jodi Goodman, a library school student at University of Rhode Island.

PARTINGTON AWARD: Muhammad al-Faruque presented this year's award to Abazar Sepehri. Abazar worked University of Texas at Austin as Middle East Bibliographer from 1975 until his retirement in 2005. Among his achievements there was the receipt of a large US Department

of Education grant to acquire, catalog and preserve publications in Turkish and Azerbaijani. Prior to Austin, Abazar also held positions at Dropsie College (Philadelphia), Princeton and Chicago. He served as vice-president of MELA in 1984 and president in 1985, and has written three books on Iran and Azerbaijani studies in addition to several articles on the Iranian book trade.

Abazar then spoke a few words in thanks and appreciation to everyone for receiving this year's award.



### **Committee reports:**

#### **CATALOGING:**

Meryle Gaston reported that the MELA SACO Funnel has been established and is overseen by Joyce Bell. ClassWeb now has Arabic captions added to the relevant sections of the LC Classifications Schedule. Members are involved in reviewing the draft of RDA. A Persian cataloging focus group will be established to review current practices and possible future needs. Meryle also called for members to contribute their local "best practices" of cataloging Middle East materials with the aim of improving and solving different problematic issues for everyone.

## EDUCATION:

Brenda Bickett mentioned the Turkish studies collection development workshop which will take place tomorrow. This workshop was organized thanks to a grant from the Institute for Turkish Studies. The second area that the committee is working on is the WISE+ partnership to provide more training and education for prospective area studies library specialists. The committee will meet tomorrow with the Dean of the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science.

## IRAQI LIBRARIES:

Andras Riedlmayer (Chair) first introduced the committee and its aims, and then invited David Hirsch to talk about some recent training events for Iraqi librarians. David reported on a two-week training session for 32 Iraqi librarians and library science educators that took place at United Arab Emirates University in July]. This was a follow-up to training that first took place at ACOR in Amman as reported in the previous year. The training was headed by faculty and staff from UCLA, Harvard, Northeastern, and Simmons College through NEH funding. The training program included four intensive courses in cataloging, digital libraries, collection development and archives preservation. It was very successful in spite of some bureaucratic complications which were ultimately overcome. David mentioned that while some of the trainees may have opportunities for further study, perhaps in the States, NEH and other similar sources of funding have dried up.

William Kopycki, who is not a member of the committee but has been involved in Iraqi librarian training, was asked to report on his activities. In November/December 2005 he participated in two training sessions which took place in Amman, Jordan. The first was with a group of 12 librarians from the National Library, National Museum, Mosul University and Baghdad University, and emphasis was placed on cataloging. This was funded through a grant from the State Department through SUNY-Stony Brook and OCLC. The second session in December was for 9 librarians and was a follow-up on last year's similar session sponsored by DePaul University and OCLC and includes participants as previously reported. A third session took place as a pilot project with some staff members from the National Library in delivering cataloging training online using a combination of chat utilities and e-mail.

Jeff Spurr then reported that USAID and other US government funding for Iraq activities have largely dried up. One positive aspect was the development of the Iraq Virtual Science Library which is being supported by the US government for two years, but now needs outside funding. The Books for Baghdad program has been a success bringing science textbooks and other high-quality materials to Iraq. He also paid tribute to the Dr. Saad Eskandar and the staff of the National Library of Iraq for keeping operations running in the face of grave danger.

#### LEGAL AFFAIRS:

Peter Magierski introduced the committee and the topics that have covered in the past, regarding issues concerning Title VI funding, Patriot Act, Intellectual Property rights. He encouraged all membership to contribute and enhance the information posted on the MELA website so that everyone may benefit.

#### REFERENCE AND RESEARCH:

Christof Gialli reviewed the committees charge and said that this new committee will have its first meeting tomorrow.

#### BYLAWS:

Shayee Khanaka (Chair) explained the charge of the committee. The committee received good suggestions and feedback from members in its work; Shayee expects their work to be completed by next meeting. Issues being dealt with include: management and use of MELA-NET and related listservs; incorporate the addition of PayPal as means of payment; encouraging greater participation of a broad range of membership into MELA offices and committees; rules for committees; addition of information regarding Atiyeh, Partington and other awards; and electronic voting. All of this should help MELA run more efficiently.

#### NOMINATING AND ELECTIONS:

Ali encouraged members who are not otherwise inclined to run for office. He reminded everyone that membership in MELA is what you make of it, and the health of the association is measured by the people who volunteer.

Nominees for the offices included:

Vice President: Kris Kern

Member-at-Large: Karl Schaeffer, Joyce Bell, Martha Jenks

Members received their ballots and voting began. Results were to be announced at the end of the meeting.

**Other business:****MEMP:**

David Hirsch (Chair). After introducing MEMP and its goals and activities, David reported that the group has completed filming a full 20-year run of the Arab-American journal *al-Sameer*.

David also gave a short report about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the Islamic Manuscript Association (TIMA) held in Cambridge, England. At this event, the Islamic Manuscript Association was formally established, with forty-four institutions signing the original constitution. He asked that those interested in joining should contact him for further information.

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS REPORT (CATALOGING DIVISION):**

Sarah Ozturk gave a short report. In FY2006 the Regional Cooperative Cataloging Division cleared 13,000 items in the languages of the Middle East, and 4,000 items in subjects dealing with the Middle East. LC is monitoring the RLG/OCLC merge and exploring cataloging on Connection client vs. its native system (Voyager). They are exploring adding non-Roman scripts to authority records based on existing data in bibliographic records; this will take place in the forthcoming year. Persian Romanization issues are being examined. For subject headings, the Cataloging Policy Office decided to establish "God (Christianity)" as a separate heading to remove the Christian bias from LCSH. She handed out a list of new subject headings relevant to Middle East.

Sarah further mentioned that LC is undergoing a re-organization change that will combine bibliographic access with the cataloging division. This will take place over the next year.

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (AFRICA/MIDDLE EAST DIVISION):**

Hirad Dinavari read the report on behalf of Mary-Jane Deeb who was unable to be present. A number of digital projects have been completed including calligraphy sheets, a joint project with Dar al-Kutub (Egypt) for scientific manuscripts and other projects which Mary-Jane will send out during next year. A full report on LC's activities will be posted in 2008.

**MELALIB:**

Kamran Arjomand reported on the various projects currently undertaken. They have acquired a collection 3,000 monographs and 200 serial volumes on Turkish history from the collection of Jacob Landau. 300 monographs have been digitized and are expected to be available in

full text within forthcoming years. Four journals from the German Oriental Society, three which have ceased publication, are being digitized. This will result in scanning more than 150 thousand pages. Kamran expects full text searching (including roman and non-Roman scripts) to be available.

#### ELECTION RESULTS:

John Eilts announced the election results. Kris Kern will be the new vice-president and Joyce Bell will be Member-at-Large.

#### AMEEL/OACIS:

Abdel-Ahad Hannawi read a statement prepared by Simon Samoeil who sent his regrets for being unable to attend. Among the developments this past year included: an ILL pilot project between Tishreen University (Syria) and Yale. A document delivery workshop will take place in Amman, Jordan in March 2007 with participants from Arab libraries. The MENA Contents website at Halle University has been successfully linked with OACIS. Elizabeth Beaudin is working to create mirror sites for OACIS in Europe. Simon had given several presentations about OACIS in conferences in North America and abroad. Harvard is now a member of OACIS, and although OACIS has stopped in its current incarnation it will continue to be updated with member contribution of holdings.

#### MELCOM INTERNATIONAL:

Waleed el-Shobaki that the conference was held in Istanbul and had very good attendance. Next year's conference will be held in Sarajevo.

#### ALA/AAMES:

Muhammad al-Faruque encouraged MELA members to participate in AAMES (African and Middle East Section of ARCL), especially since Muhammad will be president for next year.

Ali thanked outgoing executive board members Michael Hopper and Shayee Khanaka for their service, and welcomed the newly-elected members of the board. There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Middle East Librarians Association  
University of Pennsylvania Libraries  
3420 Walnut Street Philadelphia, PA 19104-6206 USA  
William J. Kopycki, Secretary-Treasurer**

**Secretary-Treasurer's Report  
As of November 6, 2007**

**INCOME**

Dues, subscriptions, meeting registration	\$5,976.59
Mailing list rental, ad in MELA Notes	\$495.80
Wilkins Fund contributions	\$1,176.45
Vendor contributions (for 06 and 07 meetings)	\$2,572.80
Bank interest	\$66.30

**TOTAL INCOME** **\$10,287.94**

**EXPENSES**

MELA 2006 Meeting Expenses (includes Turkish workshop)	\$3,505.48
MELA 2007 Meeting Expenses (to date)	\$2,968.78
<i>MELA Notes</i> #79 printing and mailing	\$ 1,065.36
Atiyeh Award	\$250.00
Partington Award prize + expenses	\$627.46
Postage and supplies	\$120.79

**TOTAL EXPENSES** **\$8,537.87**

**Checking account balance as of November 6<sup>th</sup> 2007:** **\$17,974.37**

**Savings account balance as of November 6<sup>th</sup> 2007:** **\$5,366.04**

**TOTAL:** **\$23,340.41**

As of November 6, 2007 we have 81 members paid-up through November 2007. Eighteen new members have been added since December 2006.

As of November 6, 2007, we have 31 library subscriptions to MELA Notes, with 17 subscriptions being handled through vendors.

Additional Notes from the Secretary-Treasurer

From the Secretary side of my position, there is little new to report. The pressing issue over the past year on which there has been admittedly slow progress has been the creation of what is referred to as the "MELA Registry" to record the names, positions, education, etc. held by every member who passed through MELA at one time or another.

To gather and maintain this data is a massive undertaking and it will require many hands to help go through files, input data in an electronic format, and ultimately create something that can serve multiple purposes. Though this was something promised last year, I hope we can actually do something over the course of next year.

I would also like to thank Janet Heineck for her review and helpful comments of last year's minutes.

On the Treasurer side of things:

PayPal continues to be well-used by membership. Thanks to the help of Webmaster John Eilts, vendors can now pay for mailing rental through PayPal.

Our accounts are in good shape. With the earmarking of money for the Wilkins fund, perhaps the Executive Board can consider ways to invest these funds in some sort of return account.

A couple of months ago, the Executive Board started a mini-fund raising campaign targeted at regular "MELA vendors", several of whom generously responded to the call. While we have always been fortunate to receive contributions from some of our vendors in the past, this year the Board established some small incentives that we hope will encourage more participation in this area.

In the past month, I sent a call on MELANET-L asking for contributions of photographs of MELA members and meetings/other events. I have received a small number of images so far, but would like to see more. This can serve as the basis for a visual history of our Association. Please send any photos (which will be scanned and returned) you may have of yourself or of colleagues "working in the field", or of any MELA related events/meetings of years past!

Respectfully submitted,  
William J. Kopycki  
Secretary-Treasurer

#### **Editor's Report November 2006**

During the year 2005–06, one annual issue of *MELA Notes*, number 79 (2006), will be published (in print and electronically: (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/area/Near.East/MELANotesIntro.html>) and distributed to the membership and subscribers. The issue is in press, and I expect that it will appear before the end of this year.

The current issue consists of the following articles:

- “Open Access and Middle East Studies by John Russell”, Georgia State University
- “al-Mubāḥ wa-al-lā-Mubāḥ: Fuṣūl min al-Turāth al-Islāmī (The Permitted & The Non-Permitted: Chapters in Islamic Heritage)” by Fawzi Abdulrazak, Dar Mahjar, Cambridge, Mass.
- “Allusions to the Kurdish Community in Shiite Classical Literature” by Mustafa Dehqan, Karadj, Iran
- 19 Reviews
- One brief correction
- MELA Business Meeting 2005 Minutes and Reports
- Books Received for Review 2005–06

We are extremely grateful for the hard work of Rachel Simon, Book Review Editor, who continues to solicit with success a significant number of books for review from publishers and, somewhat astonishingly, many competent and helpful reviews from time-pressed or seemingly reluctant contributors. We wish as well to thank our Secretary-Treasurer, William Kopycki, for the much appreciated services he provides, such as maintaining the member files, taking care of the distribution of the issues, and paying the bills.

The *MELA Notes* electronic version will soon move from the University of Michigan site appropriately to the MELA website. Extensive editing of links needs to be completed, however, before the move can be accomplished.

As always, the editor urges the membership to submit articles and to encourage colleagues to do so. I am seeking in particular this year articles that describe significant collections (books, manuscripts, and archives) of institutions or individuals and their histories. Additionally, submission of articles of a more practical or professional or technological nature is also encouraged.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jonathan Rodgers  
Editor