



MELCom International 34th annual conference

Minutes of the Business meeting held on Wednesday, 6th June 2012, at the BULAC in Paris

Agenda/ Ordre du jour:

1. Assessment of the conference (Helga Rebhan, President & D. Akhoun-Schwarb, Secretary)
2. Financial report (Farzaneh Zareie, Treasurer)
3. Future conferences (Helga Rebhan)
4. MELCom International's website (Sara Yontan, MI Webmaster)
5. Any Other Business

1. Brief assessment of the conference (Helga Rebhan, President & Dominique Akhoun-Schwarb, Secretary)

President Helga Rebhan thanked all the speakers for their interesting, thought-provoking and stimulating contributions during the three days of the conference, and thanked the BULAC for hosting the MI conference in their brand-new building.

President Rebhan commended the commitment and endeavour as well as the great professional knowledge of Farzaneh Zareie and her colleagues for the excellent organisation of this conference, both the scientific part and the side programme, which Farzaneh has managed while successfully holding her new positions as MELCom International treasurer and head of the Research and Teaching Services at BULAC.

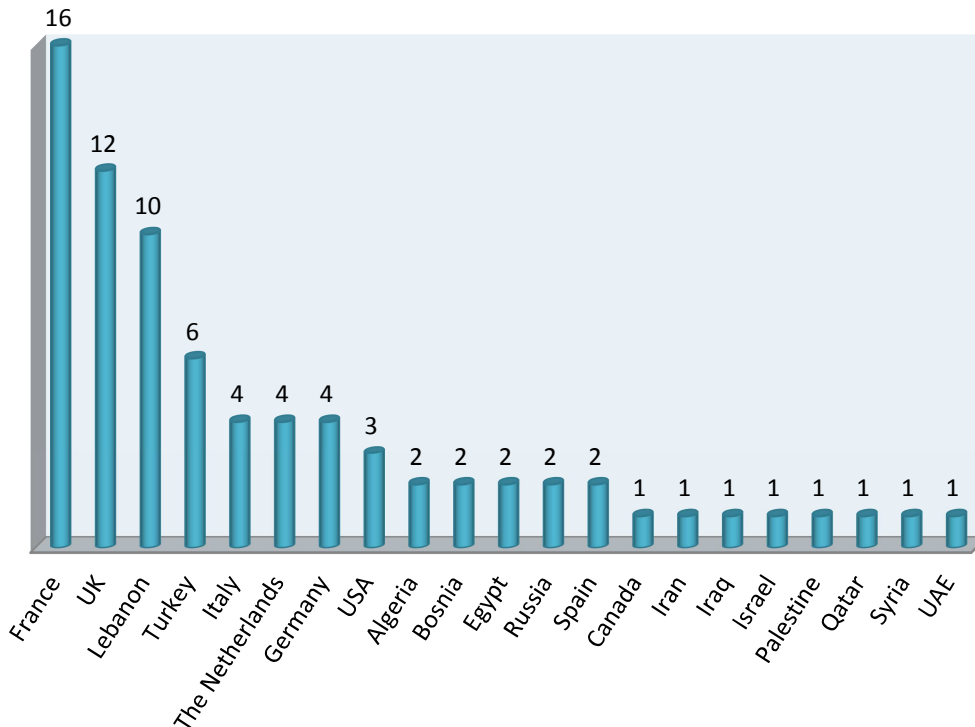
Dominique Akhoun-Schwarb commented on how a pleasant and enriching event this conference has turned out to be and commended the expertise and good will of all the participants and speakers. She gave then a brief report on the conference, which saw 77 attendees coming from 21 countries of work (see graph below for details of those countries), and 24 papers presented on the following themes:

- Institutions & Collections history and management
- Manuscripts collections: cataloguing, edition and digitization projects
- Digital resources and projects
- Networks building and interlibrary projects
- Cataloguing issues

Finally, she asked the speakers to send in their papers to melcom.international@gmail.com in order to have them posted on the website and gave September as a reasonable « deadline ». Dominique A-S. also asked attendees who wished to share their pictures of the conference on the website to send them to her or directly to the MI webmasters.

She also urged everyone to subscribe to the group list “lis-middle-east” (and advertise it to colleagues) in order to be informed of the annual conferences, among other information on MI, as well as referring to the MI website, which will host all information regarding the association’s activities.

77 attendees from 21 countries of work



2. Financial report

Farzaneh Zareie, Treasurer of MI, gave some figures concerning the financial report.

The MI bank account was transferred from the UK to France in September 2011. As a European association, it was found much easier to handle our monetary affairs in the Euro currency.

The balance brought forward on the Melcom International account on 1st January 2012 was 6549 EUR. / Au 1er janvier 2012 le solde du compte Melcom International était créditeur de 6549,00 Euros.

The following is a short account of the conference collected fees, expenses that MI had to bear, and the amount to carry forward.

1 - Income = 2805 €

- A. *Conference*: The current conference received 77 participants, out of which 7 were from the publishing sector, and eight were registered as students or guests (free). The collected conference fee amounted to 2805 € in total.

Frais d’inscription / registration fees : 2205 euros

Inscriptions commerciales / Commercial registration fees: 600 euros

- B. *Other Activities*: There were 62 members at the conference traditional dinner and 32 members participated to the excursion to Giverny on Thursday.
- C. *Subventions* : 3400 euros worth of subventions (venue hire, coffee breaks, cocktail, stationery, etc.) were received in kind by *BULAC*, *CNRS-Mondes Iranien et Indien*, and *Société consulting MA\$HM*.

2 - Expenses = 2628 €

The conference had to bear the following expenses:

- a) four grants;
- b) miscellaneous expenses (account maintenance; website hosting costs; guests at the conference dinner; extra expenses related to the excursion; stationery, etc.).

The amount of 177 € is carried over, after deducting the above incurred expenses. This is additional to the balance amount brought forward (which was 6549 EUR). Thus the total fund available to the forthcoming conference in Moscow would be 6726 EUR.

3. Future conferences

2013 : For its 35th Annual Conference, Ilya Zaytsev invited the MI on behalf of his institution, the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Academy of Sciences in Moscow. (<http://www.ivran.ru/>).

2014 : Zeren Tanındı together with Ayşe Kilercik Aldemir, both representing the Sakip Sabancı Museum, Istanbul, expressed their wish to host MI for its 36th annual conference. (<http://muze.sabanciuniv.edu/>).

2015: Philippe Chevrant extended an invitation to host the 37th MI annual conference at the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale in Cairo (<http://www.ifao.egnet.net/>).

Helga Rebhan thanked all three institutions and their representatives for the invitations. She reminded the future hosts that official letters of intention are to be addressed from institution officials to the MI presidency, confirming these invitations.

4. Website of MI

Sara Yontan, with the help of David Musnik who has conceived it technically, have substantially developed the new MI website and integrated the suggestions given at the last conference in Berlin. She presented it briefly to the attendees. She also reminded everyone to keep an eye on the MI website where announcements concerning MELCom International are to be posted: www.melcominternational.org

The new URL is independent of any institution and costs a subscription fee of around 100-150€ per year (depending on the load) to be met by the MI's treasury.

The attendees were then asked to make remarks and suggestions concerning the website. Some of the suggestions were as follows:

Yasmin Faghihi commented favourably on the improvements brought to the website since its conception last year. She mentioned that François Déroche at a previous workshop at al-Furqan Foundation commended the MI website for being a valuable source of information on Middle East resources.

Poupak Rafii Nejad said that images on the homepage were confusing as they were not serving an obvious function (no content behind) and also that a multilingual version would be appreciated, though she knew that it involves a lot of work. (Sara Yontan agreed and said they were working at it).

Azzeddine Bouderbane asked for the contributions to be mounted on the website (D. A-S.: we would like it to be systematic, but this is subject to contributors submitting their papers to the Secretary or Webmaster for electronic publication on the MI website.)

Sara Yontan and Philippe Chevrant agreed earlier during the conference that the links repertoried in the List Auteurs Arabes could be added to the MI's website as a way to diffuse this useful source of information beyond the audience of the subscribers to the list.

Fadia Khairallah suggested that the link to the AFLI's website should be inserted among the other librarians organisations mentioned there. AFLI stands for the Arab Federation for Libraries and Information, see: <http://www.afli.info/detail.asp?InServiceID=4&intemplatekey=mainpage>

5. Any other business

Yasmin Faghihi asked to have the papers abstracts both in English and French in the future as this proves to be useful.

Paul Tate & Yasmin Faghihi: As librarians may not be able to travel to the countries of publication, it would be useful to give a platform (in the form of an open panel maybe?) to vendors/publishers to allow them to show their products and promote more cooperation between them and libraries. **Georges Fawzi** mentioned that we could for example emulate the MELA meeting, where a very informative opportunity was offered during their business meeting for an open discussion between booksellers and customers.

Mary-Elizabeth Gaudette asked whether the MI should take a more proactive role to preserve threatened collections over the world, and how such collections could be given a safe harbour for the duration of the conflict/endangerment period in their country of origin. Paul Tate said that there could be more lobbying on politicians to protect such collections. Yasmin Faghihi said that Arab foundations would potentially be keener (and have more means) to enterprise such projects, especially regarding Arabic or Islamic collections. Dominique A-S. mentioned that the MI was already helping improving the visibility of such issues by providing a platform (the Lis-Middle-East principally) for sharing news about such collections. Helga Rebhan said that providing such help

would be commendable but well out of the MI's remit or power, and would have serious international legal ramifications.

Arnouj Vrolijk recalled that the MI business meeting used to integrate a table round of news from the different institutions represented at the conference, and as such, he gave some news from the Leiden University Libraries. Those were the collaboration between publisher Brill and the Leiden University Libraries that led to the recent electronic publication of 110,000 pages of Arabic manuscripts under the title *Pioneer Orientalists: The Manuscript Collections of Scaliger, Raphelengius and Golius* from Leiden University Libraries, and the organisation of an exhibition of the core collections of manuscripts of Leiden University in The Hague.

Peter Colvin presented apologies on behalf of Paul Auchterlonie who could not attend for compelling personal reasons, and then he brought to the audience's attention the recent publication of the latest book by Paul Auchterlonie entitled "*Encountering Islam: Joseph Pitts: An English Slave in 17th-Century Algiers & Mecca*" (ISBN: 978-0955889493), that would be of interest for many of our libraries' users.

The Business meeting was then concluded with reiterated thanks from the board of the MI to all attendees for their participation in this 34th conference, and their expressed wishes to see them all again in Moscow next year.
