

Annual Meeting 2002 Washington

MELA Business Meeting

Nov. 20th, 2002
Library of Congress

MELA Members in Attendance

MIDHAT ABRAHAM, MUHAMMAD AL-FARUQUE, BASIMA BEZIRGAN, BRENDA BICKETT, JOAN BIELLA, PAUL CREGO, SAAD DAGHER, SAEED DAMADI, ROBERTA DOUGHERTY, JOHN EILTS, HIKMAT FARAJ, GEORGE FAWZI, CHRISTOF GALLI, MERYLE GASTON, JAMES GENTNER, BEVERLY GRAY, JANET HEINECK, DAVID HIRSCH, MICHAEL HOPPER, ALI HOUISSA, DENNIS HYDE, ROBERT JOHNSTON, AKRAM KHABIBULLAEV, SHAYEE KHANAKA, FAWZI KHOURY, WILLIAM KOPYCKI, CONNIE LAMB, PETER MAGIERSKI, JUDY McDERMOTT, SUAD MUHAMMAD-GAMAL, LAILA MULGAOKAR, CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, PATRICIA MYERS-HAYER, WALTER OLLER, SARAH OZTURK, ANDRAS RIEDLMAYER, KAY RITCHIE, JONATHAN RODGERS, MARLIS SALEH, SIMON SAMŒIL, ANTOINETTE SATTERFIELD, RACHEL SIMON, MARY ST. GERMAIN, DONA STRALEY, FRANK UNLANDHERM, JAMES WEINBERGER, DAVID WHITEHAIR, LUTZ WIEDERHOLD, LESLEY WILKINS, GAMIL YOUSSEF.

New members who joined at the meeting:

KHALIL FOUTAH and GRETA OBER-BEAUCHESNE.

Visitor:

BRIAN EVANS

Minutes

The 2002 Annual Meeting of the Middle East Librarians Association convened at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, November 23, in a meeting room at the Library of Congress, Washington DC. President David Hirsch introduced the officers and welcomed members and visitors. He asked that people rise

and introduce themselves and give the names of their institutions. It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of and Treasurer's Report given at the 2001 Annual Meeting, circulating in draft at today's meeting and to be published in the next issue of *Mela Notes*, be approved.

David Hirsch made several announcements regarding some MELA members. Ed Jajko of the Hoover Institution and Eliezer Chamou of UCLA both retired during the past year. Mark Day's wife, Dottie, passed away. MELA sent a letter to Mark and made a donation of \$100.00 in his wife's memory to the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network.

David Hirsch asked Jonathan Rodgers to give the *Mela Notes* Editor's report. *Mela Notes* number 73-74 (Fall 2001-Spring 2002) will be another double issue. It is ready to go to press, at about eighty pages, and will soon be posted on the MELA website after some technical delays. The printed version will be ready for distribution in about three weeks. Jonathan listed the articles and the "brief communication" in the coming issue, which will include eleven book reviews and the minutes of last year's meeting. The "brief communication" will be an article from one of last year's George Atiyeh Prize winners, Christine Dykgraaf. These essays, on aspects of Middle East librarianship, are requested from the awardees, and this one should be very interesting. Regarding the posting to the website of back issues of *Mela Notes*, the digitization project has been continued, slowly and steadily, by John Eilts. Now available in electronic format are numbers 1-27 (1973-82), 44 (1988), and 50 and 51 (1990). Many of these issues are now in fully searchable pdf format and the others soon will be. A motion was passed to accept Jonathan's Editor's report as read.

Janet Heineck gave the Secretary-Treasurer's report, referring to the paper copies members received at the door. We have one hundred fifty-five personal members, an increase of about ten from last year. We have thirty-one *Mela Notes* library subscriptions and twenty-five orders handled through vendors, generally Ebsco and Blackwell. Two weeks before the meeting, Janet sent out *Mela Notes* invoices for 2003. The Executive Board agreed to contribute \$100.00 in memory of Mrs. Mark Day to the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network. Janet will act on John Eilts' suggestion to repeat the prior year's checking and savings account

balances at the top of each year's treasurer's report. She also understood John's point that it is not necessary to list "Cash for Change at Meeting" as an expenditure, since year's treasurer's report. She also understood John's point that it is not necessary to list "Cash for Change at Meeting" as an expenditure, since these are funds to be returned immediately to the account.

Midhat Abraham asked whether any more contributions to the George Atiyeh Prize fund were made this morning at the door. With respect to the contribution challenge that Midhat issued to the membership earlier this year, Janet and Midhat agreed to meet after her report for a final tally of contributors and amounts.

Janet receives occasional requests from members that certain data submitted on their membership applications and incorporated into her Access membership database not appear in the online membership directory published on the MELA website. Janet has been sending these requests on to Jonathan as they arrive, upon which Jonathan has been making these changes in the pdf, printable, and searchable formats of the directory. To spare himself these constant updates and reprints, Jonathan proposed a change to this routine. He wants, instead, to leave the membership data in the form the member originally submitted and of which he gets a fresh edition each year from Janet. He will then block access to the MELA membership list to only those MELA members with user IDs and passwords. The list will thus be safe from commercial, outside use. Jonathan will set that up. He will also accept unusual or extraordinary requests from members to delete names or other elements of their records. After discussion that clarified the difference between mailing list sales from Janet's database and the full directory information that Jonathan maintains on the website, the group agreed that Jonathan's making the website directory password-controlled was the best approach.

LC Reports

Sarah Ozturk, of the Library Congress, reported that during FY 2001, the Regional and Cooperative Cataloging Division of the Library of Congress cleared over 12,000 monographs and serials in Arabic, Armenian, Georgian, Persian, Turkish, and Western languages dealing with the Middle East. She did not have

the cataloging breakdown by language. Depending on the hiring outlook, they hope to process more Kurdish. Two staff members left the team during the year. Michael Chyet and Brenda Bickett continued to assist with minimal level cataloging of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Joan Biella has assisted with training and review. Two staff members, detailed from other LC cataloging teams, are being trained to work in RLIN. One is working with Persian law and the other with Arabic law. They hope to get more law material out in the coming year. Sarah is interviewing for an Arabic technician position. They hope to post one or more Arabic cataloger positions in the next two weeks. This was a successful year for the team despite the world political situation and their week-long anthrax shutdown. Sara had available a list of new subject headings and class numbers created during the year.

Chris Murphy, head of the Near Division, reported next. Chris began by expressing gratitude for the hard work of his colleagues in the Section and its chief, Beverly Gray. He also thanked Sarah Ozturk and her cataloging team and the Overseas Operations staff in Washington and abroad who so ably assist his staff in their acquisitions trips.

Purchases this year were a number of Afghan monographs from between 1850 and 1925 and the Kabul newspaper "Sistan" from around 1902. Arabic music and folklore audio tapes were acquired through the Voice of America. An additional Muteferrika imprint was acquired as well.

During 2003, the Near East collections will be moved from the Adams Building into the Jefferson Building and will be located next to the Near East Section's reading room, which will greatly aid reference work with readers. About 42,000 monographs with minimal level cataloging will move to Fort Mead, allowing for further growth on Capitol Hill. This number is the equivalent of about three years' growth to the whole African/Middle Eastern Division. They receive about 14,000 new volumes in the two custodial sections — Hebrew (about 5,000) and Near East (about 9,000) — each year now, indicative of the greatly increased cataloging production in Sarah's team.

Some twenty-two new Arabic titles were added to this year's continuing newspapers reformatting microfilming plan, which re-

formats at the rate of about 300,000 exposures a year. They are charged just over \$300,000 yearly (?) and hope to increase the number of exposures made at that price. A mail stoppage between October 2001 and March 2002 caused a microformatting delay, but they hope to return to their usual 6- to 9-month hard copy backlog soon.

Two large digitization projects are underway. Chris's Division hopes to find outside funding to digitize its complete Arabic manuscript collection of about 2,200 manuscripts. The other is a project to digitize "calligraphy sheets": single pages or leaves from manuscripts or albums. The Freer Gallery, New York Public Library, and the Library of Congress purchased such sheets from the same seller at the same time. A great hope is successfully to digitize LC's holdings and then through cooperative effort with these two other institutions to reassemble these manuscripts digitally if not physically.

Outside funding has enriched LC's programming concerning the Muslim world. The Office of Scholarly Programs and the John W. Kluge Center have been established in recent years at the Library of Congress, the Kluge Center being funded by a lavish endowment. [A series of five symposia on "Globalization and Muslim Societies", three of which were supported by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, took place between November 2, 2000 and November 14, 2001.] As a result of a bequest, LC now has the "Vardanants Day Armenian Lecture Series", which this year took place on April 22.

Chris made a six-week trip this year to Turkey, Egypt, and Sweden. There is a great deal of African and Middle East-related material being published in Sweden, but it needs to be sought out diligently, as he learned. This was a useful trip for strengthening LC's acquisitions.

George Atiyeh Prize Awards

David asked Dona Straley and Robin Dougherty to present this year's George Atiyeh awards, named after George Atiyeh, former director of the Near East Section at the Library of Congress. They are awarded to current enrollees or recent graduates from ALA accredited library programs who have an interest in Middle East librarianship. The amount of the award is meant to support the awardees' travel to the MELA and MESA meetings and

thus to encourage their continued interest in this career area. The award committee is composed of the two immediate past presidents of MELA. Robin introduced the first winner, Kaila Bussert, currently enrolled in the Information Resources and Library Science Program at the University of Arizona, and who plans to graduate in May 2003. Dona introduced the second winner, Julie Coons, who is currently pursuing both an MSI degree in the School of Information and an M.A. in the Center for Middle East and North African Studies at the University of Michigan. Dona also introduced the third winner, An-Chi Hoh Dianu, who is currently both an MLS candidate at the University of Maryland and a doctoral candidate in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Manchester, where she hopes to complete her Ph.D. by December 2003. Dona congratulated all the winners, gave them their award checks, welcomed them into the fold, and hoped that they would find professional positions in this area.

David congratulated the awardees and thanked the Atiyeh Prize committee for their work.

Election of New Officers

David announced this year's openings for Vice President-Program Chair and for Member at Large for 2002-2004. As announced on MELANET-L, the two nominees for Vice President-Program Chair were Lesley Wilkins and Mary St. Germain. The two nominees for Member at Large for 2002-2004 were Muhammad al-Faruque and Michael Hopper. With no further nominations from the floor, a motion passed to close nominations. Ballots were distributed to be collected after the break.

David called on MELA's webmaster, Ali Houissa. Given certain postings in the last several months that evoked considerable and strong protest both publicly on MELANET-L and privately to him, Ali reminded his colleagues that the subject of MELA's listserv is Middle Eastern librarianship specifically. He requested that subscribers keep inappropriate postings off the list. Ali recounted the Executive Board's confirmation of his sole authority to suspend and unsubscribe from MELANET-L anyone who posts, after sufficient warning, a third off-topic message to the listserv. The suspension will be indefinite until the Executive Board, of which Ali is a member, accepts the request of the suspended member for resubscription to MELANET-L. As a closed

subscription list, MELANET-L is open only to MELA members and to others who apply and who offer good justification for their subscription. This keeps commercial and irrelevant postings off the list. Ali said that changing it to a moderated list, which could be another approach, but that it would inconvenience people and be more work for him as list manager. He asked anyone who has questions about this policy to get in touch with him or with any member of the Executive Board.

Several members protested what to them sounded like an arbitrary definition, imposed by Ali alone, of what constitutes a topic on Middle East librarianship. One asked that the Executive Board produce a guideline on dealing with controversial issues, such a guideline apparently not being clearly available.

Ali responded that the current phrase on the website, “MELANET is a listserve devoted to Middle East librarianship”, is an adequate definition of its purpose: a professional list with a specific mission and focus. Ali said that the Executive Board does not have time to formulate precise definitions of the difference between opinion pieces and postings relating to librarianship or scholarship. He repeated that the preceding definition is its purpose and that the Executive Board has given him the authority to make necessary distinctions. Technically, the list is owned by him at his university. When he files the paperwork each year, that is how he describes its purpose, and that thus, as list owner of this closed subscription list, he may indeed decide what is on- or off-topic. He said that those with strong feelings on subjects are free to set up their own listserves on those issues. Ali agreed to post one or two further sentences on the purpose of MELANET-L on the website.

David announced the break, during which he and Janet would collect the ballots. He announced current several job openings: an opening at Harvard for an Arabic cataloger, and two openings at UCLA, one for an Arabic cataloger and one for a Hebrew cataloger. Postings for those positions were available at the front of the room.

Election Results

Lesley Wilkins was elected Vice-President/Program Chair, 2002–2003. Michael Hopper was elected Member at Large, 2002–2004. President David Hirsch congratulated the new officers. The Executive Board with members new and old would meet directly after this afternoon’s program.

MELA Bylaws

David asked Dona Straley to review the bylaws amendments to be voted on at this meeting.

In Article III Membership, Section 3 Privileges of Members, a line is to be added in A declaring that members will automatically subscribed to MELANET-L, reflecting current practice.

In Article III Membership, Section 4 Dues, now the dues amount will be decided by a simple majority of members present at the business meeting, as reflects current practice.

In Article IV Organization, Section 1 Officers, C. Secretary-Treasurer, references in (1) and (8) referring to submission of minutes and financial reports membership by mail are to be deleted. Current practice is to inform members in person at the annual meeting, by publication on MELANET-L, or by publication in *Mela Notes*.

In Article IV Organization, Section 3 Election of Officers, reference to “two or more” is to be deleted, reflecting the reality that frequently we do not have two or more candidates for each vacancy.

In Article IV Organization, Section 4 Terms of Office, the text is to be simplified to declare that both the Secretary-Treasurer and the Editor shall serve for terms of three years. These officers may run for re-election at the end of each term.

In Article IV Organization, Section 8 Committees, B Nominating Committee, language referring to a minimum of two candidates and to the “Association official organ” are revised. Neither a precise number of candidates is to be required nor is the means of presentation of these candidates to the membership to be specified. “Mailing” may be via USPS or by electronic mail.

In Article VII Amendments, Section 3 Adoption of Amendments, proposed changes clarify the two means by which amendments will be adopted, as follows: if by in-person vote, by simple

majority of members present at the annual business meeting; or, if by mail vote, the ballot will bear a specific return-by date decided by the Executive Board. A majority of the votes cast by ballots returned by that date will carry. “Mail” is purposely left undefined.

Motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept these amendments to the bylaws. David thanked Dona and Ed Jajko for their hard work on seeing these amendments through to final passage.

Book Review Editor’s Report

David called on Rachel Simon, *Mela Notes* book review editor, for her report. Rachel continues to receive books from publishers and announces the titles on MELANET-L seeking volunteer reviewers. Just as in the past, reviewers are few and reviews returned on time are fewer. The membership is free to decide to discontinue book reviews but must remember that the reviews constitute a large portion of any issue of *Mela Notes*, Rachel said. After discussion, decisions were that Rachel will continue to post newly received titles of all kinds, not only reference works, on MELANET-L for review, that the titles not finding reviewers Jonathan will list in *Mela Notes* as Books Received with full bibliographic citation, thus satisfying publishers’ need for publicity, and that disposition of titles received but un-reviewed will be at Rachel’s choice.

David thanked Rachel for her continued work on this sometimes thankless project.

David asked for a show of hands of those who expected they would attend next year’s meeting in Anchorage. The response indicated that we would indeed have a quorum of members in attendance.

New Business

David introduced Dan Hazen, Librarian for Latin America, Spain, and Portugal at Harvard College Library and Visiting Program Officer, Association of Research Libraries, who spoke about the ARL/Association of American Universities Global Resources Program and the possibility of our organizing a Middle Eastern project within it. He described the history of the program and three of its seven current projects: Latin America, Germany, and Japan. The goal of all their projects is to try to

develop mechanisms to improve access to research resources in North American libraries and for North American scholars.

Are MELA members interested in forming a project to cover the Middle East? MELA members are invited to frame a project proposal. ARL could provide seed support money and assistance to convene a small group to create such a proposal. MELA's work would advance those ideas into a project meaningful to the scholarly committee.

John Eilts said that dealing with aspects of serials — holdings, contents pages, access points, and indexes — could be good projects. Lutz Wiederhold reminded the group that MENALIB has already started to develop a periodical contents database dealing with exactly this project. “MENA Contents” (<http://ssgdoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/vlib/html/>) is a digital index to Latin- and Arabic-script periodicals. Our group could cooperate with them. David agreed that getting started on some kind of indexing project for Arabic and other Middle Eastern language periodicals would be a very good idea if the project were of a manageable size. John said that this may be MELA's only chance to plan a project with the GRP's assistance. David placed a sign-up sheet on the front table for those interested in meeting to discuss possible projects. David thanked Dan for coming to the meeting and John Eilts and Midhat Abraham for initiating the invitation.

David recalled Alice Deyab's description, at the meeting in Providence several years ago, of her bibliography of about a thousand Arab women's periodicals from the Middle East, the United States, and South America. She also has accumulated extensive biographical materials about the editors of these publications. David asked whether there is any interest among this group in getting her information into some kind of database or online form.

John Eilts said that if it is static, if she is no longer adding to it, it might be perfect as a MELA [print] publication. Basima Bezirgan said that if she is still adding to it, we could produce a supplement. Andras Riedlmayer said that if it is a real reference resource, publishing it on the Web would solve cost and distribution problems, although questions of who would host it and reproduction of title pages would need to be dealt with. David

said that she has already scanned color images of the editors and of the actual publications. The costs of paper printing of those images would probably be prohibitive for us.

David said that before we make any decision on its online or print publication, it is vital that a few of us look at the thousands and thousands of pages of documentation Alice has collected to get a better idea of exactly what she has available.

Lesley Wilkins gave a short report on the First World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES) held in Mainz, Germany, September 8–13, 2002 and the concurrent symposium on the history of printing and publishing in the languages and countries of the Middle East.

David announced that MELCOM will be meeting in Beirut in May [2003]. David later posted the url for the conference information website on MELANET-L.

At the conclusion of the morning business meeting, we enjoyed a fine catered Middle Eastern lunch. The afternoon of our annual meeting day was devoted to the many interesting presentations comprising the program assembled by our vice-president and program chairperson for the year, Joan Biella.

Treasurer's Report, November 20, 2002**INCOME**

Dues, subscriptions, interest	\$6,510.00
Mailing list sales & ads)	\$250.00
Atiyeh Prize Contributions	\$450.00
TOTAL	\$7,210.80

EXPENDITURES

Postage and Supplies	\$419.06
<i>Mela Notes 71-72</i> shipping	\$69.81
MELA 2001 remaining hotel expense	\$176.60
Ebsco Subscription Refund	\$2.00
MESA 2002 panel room rental	\$150.00
MESA 2002 meeting expense	\$3,760.70
Charitable donation in memory of Dorothy Lynn Day (Mrs. Mark Day)	\$100.00
Cash for change at meeting	\$450.00
TOTAL	\$5,136.60

Checking acct. beginning bal. Nov. 20, 2002	\$9,903.23
Savings acct. bal. Nov. 20, 2002	\$3,699.76

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Heineck
Secretary-Treasurer

Editor's Report
November 2002

Mela Notes, no. 73–74 (Fall 2001–Spring 2002) is ready to go to press and be posted on the MELA website after some unavoidable delays, which need not be detailed here.

This issue consists of about 80 pages — the final pagination depends on how many images accompanying one of the articles can be included at the end in relation to the page-count/signature formula that enable the printer to avoid empty pages. The web version (initially in PDF, and later in html — there are some technical complications anticipated in rendering one of the articles into html, because of the need to re-key the Arabic text it contains.) will appear shortly after my return to Ann Arbor. The printed version will be ready for distribution in about three weeks.

The contents of the issues are as follows:

1. Fawzi Abdulrazak: “Islamic Political Video Tapes”, an annotated inventory of videos with political content collected by the author.
2. Mary St. Germain: “A Report on a Trip to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan”, as the title states, a report on Mary’s trip to Central Asia on which she reported vividly at this meeting last year. This article is illustrated.
3. In brief communications: Christine Dykgraaf’s “Middle Eastern Librarianship: The State of the Art”.[†] The author is the recipient of the 2001 Middle East Librarians Association George Atiyeh Award. MELA requests that recipients of the award submit an essay on a topic inspired by their interaction and communication with librarians and scholars during the MELA and MESA meetings. This essay answers that request and offers some interesting perceptions on the challenges of Middle East collection librarianship.
4. Eleven book reviews
5. The Minutes from last year’s meeting in San Francisco.

Back issues of *Mela Notes* on the web: The following issues are now available in electronic form: 1–27 (1973–82); 44 (1988); 50–

[†] Editor’s Note: This article appears in the current issue, no. 75–76.

51 (1990). More issues are being slowly but steadily converted by John Eilts and the Editor. Many of these issues are in fully searchable PDF format, and those that are not will soon be, as the adding of the searchable text behind the image files for each issue is a more or less automatic process in Adobe Acrobat Paper Capture, Distiller, or ABBYY FineReader.

Respectfully submitted,
Jonathan Rodgers
Editor