

## Brief Communications: MELA Awards

### First David H. Partington Award Presented to John Eilts and Geoffrey Roper

During the 2005 Annual Meeting of the Middle East Librarians Association, John Eilts and Geoffrey Roper were announced as the first recipients of the Partington Award in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the field of Middle Eastern librarianship.

The award, named for David H. Partington, one of MELA's prominent founders and leaders, and sponsored by Fawzi Abdulrazak of Dar Mahjar, was established to recognize accomplishments in and contributions to the field of Middle East librarianship, librarianship in general, and the world of scholarship.

The first of the two co-recipients, John Eilts, is a familiar figure to those working in librarianship in general and Middle East librarianship in particular. As a founding member of MELA over 30 years ago, Mr. Eilts served as the Association's president and vice-president on numerous occasions. He was instrumental in the foundation of the Middle East Microforms Project (MEMP) for the preservation of Middle East newspapers and serials at the Center for Research Libraries. His work at Research Libraries Group (RLG) broke new ground for accomplishing Arabic script cataloging in the RLIN Union Catalog. His contributions through committee work and participation within the American Library Association has helped shaped the standards and practices for handling Middle East materials in libraries the world over. Mr. Eilts continues to work as curator for the Middle East Collection, Stanford University Libraries, and is presently Webmaster for MELA.

Co-recipient Dr. Geoffrey Roper is considered by many to be the foremost bibliographer for Islam and the Middle East, and served for many years as the head of the Islamic Bibliographic Unit at Cambridge University. As the second editor of *Index Islamicus*, one of the most important reference works for scholars and researchers of Islamic and Middle Eastern studies, Dr. Roper oversaw the transition of *Index Islamicus* from a print-based resource to an electronic one, first on CD-ROM, then on the World-Wide Web. Dr. Roper was the editor of the first four volumes of the important documentary work *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts* (London, 1992). Dr. Roper was also instrumental in organizing a conference on the History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East, one that attracted

scholars and students from all over. Now retired, Dr. Roper serves as advisor and consultant to various bibliographic projects.

The Partington Award itself consists of a silver trophy on whose stand is inscribed the name of the recipients, who receive a framed certificate and citation. Selection of recipients is done by committee, comprising this past year of Edward A. Jako (retired, Hoover Institute), Jere L. Bacharach (University of Washington) and Muhammad al-Faruque (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign).

The award was presented during the November 18<sup>th</sup> 2005 Business Meeting of the Middle East Librarians Association in Washington, D.C.

#### **George Atiyeh Prize 2005 Awarded to Martha Jenks**

The George Atiyeh Prize Committee is pleased to announce the winner of the award for 2005. The Atiyeh Prize was presented to Martha Jenks at the 2005 Meeting of the Middle East Librarians Association, 18 November in Washington, D.C.

This year's recipient, Dr. Martha Jenks, is currently enrolled in the University of Texas at Austin's dual-degree program in Middle Eastern Studies and Information Science.

Dr. Jenks' background in Middle East Studies includes both language and historical studies. Her enrollment in the dual degree in Middle Eastern Studies and Information Science has allowed her to design research projects that focus on issues related to both Middle Eastern Studies and to library science. For example, for a class on digital libraries she wrote a paper on digital libraries in Egypt, examining not only the limitations placed on publishing and the news media in Egypt, but also a range of digital projects, from the Bibliotheca Alexandrina's digitization of Nasser's papers to the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology's E-Government Project. For a class in collection development, she wrote a paper that identified "core" Arabic language periodicals.

As for practical library experience, Dr. Jenks has participated in the Information and Research Help Desk School of Information Student Volunteer Program at UT Austin. The program gives students in the information science program hands-on experience at the reference desk in the Perry-Casteñeda Library, the campus' main library.

Dr. Jenks has worked as a cataloger at both the Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley and at Holt Labor Library in San Francisco. She also gained experience in collection development while an assistant professor of ancient history at Illinois Wesleyan University.

**George Atiyeh Prize 2004  
Statement of Saima Fazli**

The MELA experience has been quite rewarding and fascinating due to the fact that it was my first conference. Being in a room with people who have the same passions for books was quite delightful and intriguing. I only wish it could have been a bit longer. However, both conferences, MELA and MESA, had interesting panels, but due to hotel strikes [in San Francisco] some panelists found it unreasonable and decided to cancel. I was honestly disappointed because I am in the midst of writing a thesis and was hoping by attending these to broaden my horizons with ideas that could further my research. Also, I was informed that there would be some faculty members from my school, San Francisco State University, who would be presenting; unfortunately however, they too decided to cancel because of the strike. Though I ended up seeing them, anyway, I would have really liked to hear their presentations as well as offer my support to them. It was not a total loss however, because the best parts of the conference were the book sales and the movie marathons. In fact, because of the cancellation of the panelists, my time was almost exclusively devoted to watching these documentary films and bargaining with book dealers. I have heard that often times during these conferences some publishers and films makers premiere their upcoming works, so that was a treat. Just to name a few films: *Beyond the Borqa* directed by Roksana Bahramitash, *Harman-Yemen*, *The Hidden Half Speaks* directed by Fibi Kraus and Gudrun Torrubis, *The Ladies Room*, directed by Mahnaz Afzali, *Search for Freedom* directed/produced/written by Munizae Jahangir, *Women of Islam: Veiling and Seclusion* directed/produced by Farheen Pasha Umar were all fantastic. Overall it was a great experience and I hope that in the future I could be more actively involved.

