MELA 2022 Business Meeting

NOVEMBER 30, 2022
3:00PM MDT
ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE BUILDING
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Members in attendance: Hiba Abid, Imad Abuelgasim, Nora Avetyan, Sohaib Baig, Guy Burak, Iman Dagher, Arthur Decker, Sarah DeMott, Roberta Dougherty, Ayah Elkossei, David Faust, George Fawzy, Gayle Fischer, Magda Gad, Mohamed Hamed, Michael Hopper, Heather Hughes, Carol Jarvis, William Kopycki, Evyn Kropf, Eve Laurie, Peter Magierski, Amal Morsy, AJ Robinson, Jonathan Rodgers, Mary St. Germain, Anaïs Salamon, Deborah Schlein, Rachel Simon, Farshad Sonboldel, Denise Soufi, Amanda Steinberg, Sean Swanick, Walid Sellal, Rustin Zarkar, Ryan Zohar

President Anaïs called the meeting to order at approximately 3.00pm.

Approval of 2021 Business Meeting minutes: Secretary-Treasurer William Kopycki apologized that, due to time constraints, the minutes of the 2021 Business Meeting were only circulated yesterday. Therefore, to allow time for everyone to review and provide feedback, he suggested a deadline of December 12th to receive any corrections or updates, and if there are none, the minutes will be considered "approved." A motion was made, seconded, and all present/online approved this course of action.

Awards Committee Announcements

David H. Partington Award (Chair: Roberta L. Dougherty, Yale University).

The Partington Award committee for 2022 consisted of the following members: Roberta L. Dougherty (MELA Past President, Chair), Dr. Virginia Danielson (MESA), David G. Hirsch (MELA), Dr. András Riedlmayer (MELA). Robin presented her report as follows:

"The committee's deliberations were held entirely by e-mail this year. After due consideration, the committee unanimously agreed to give this year's award to Dr. Rachel Simon, Princeton University Library, in recognition of her sterling record of research and publications and her contributions to the field of Middle East studies in general and Middle East librarianship in particular. The award is also made in recognition of her 24 years of service as the book-review editor of MELA Notes.

"The committee received the following letters of support from Rachel's current and former colleagues:

James Weinberger (Curator of Near East Collections, Retired, Princeton University Library):

"*Although Rachel and I were colleagues at Princeton for almost thirty years, we met considerably before either of us came to Princeton University Library. We first encountered one another at the American Research Institute in Turkey in Istanbul when I was there to do research at the Sulaymaniyah Library. It was my first trip to Istanbul, and Rachel went out of her way to orient me to the city which she knew quite well. Over a decade later, Princeton had the good fortune to hire her away from the University of Washington where she had been laboring for Fawzi Khouri, the Near East Librarian there. Fawzi's loss was definitely Princeton's gain, for she brought with her a command of Turkish, Arabic, and Hebrew as well as considerable experience cataloguing in these languages. But Rachel's luster is far greater than her command of languages. She was and is a widely recognized scholar of Near Eastern studies and does research on Jews in the modern Middle East and North Africa, with special reference to Libya, the Ottoman Empire, women, and education. Of her many publications, one may mention especially* Libya Between Ottomanism and Nationalism: The Ottoman Involvement in Libya During the War with Italy (1911-1919) *(1987) and* Change within Tradition among Jewish Women in Libya *(1992). But more than all this, Rachel is a*

good friend and colleague and could always be counted on to give good, sage advice and counsel. I can think of no one more deserving of the Partington Award."

Joyce Bell (Cataloger, Princeton University Library):

Rachel Simon embodies the ideal of the "scholar-librarian." Beyond her impressive list of publications, Rachel is a highly productive cataloger producing quality data and an effective leader of the Middle Eastern Approvals Section. While her contributions as book-review editor are well-known to MELA members, they might not be aware of the extent of her involvement with the Association of Jewish Libraries where she has served on various committees over many years.

Marlis Saleh (Bibliographer for Middle Eastern Studies, U. of Chicago Library):

Rachel Simon had already been serving as the book-review editor for MELA Notes for a good many years before I even started my (long) tenure as MELA Notes editor in 2008. In all the years we worked together on the journal, Rachel managed the flow of books from publisher/books to reviewers/reviews back to her/reviews on to me smoothly and seemingly effortlessly. We all remember her stern admonishment to would-be reviewers not to accept a book for review that you can't turn around in six months, or publishers would not send us books anymore. And she even found time to contribute book reviews and an article herself! I am glad to hear that Rachel has been awarded this well-deserved honor.

Jonathan Rodgers (Head of the Near East Division, retired, Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library, University of Michigan):

Rachel Simon, Hebraica Cataloguer at Princeton University Library since 1990 and the book-review editor of MELA Notes, the official journal of the Middle East Librarians' Association, for twenty-five years, is the obvious choice to be honored by receiving the 2022 David H. Partington Award for recognition of service to Middle East librarianship and research and scholarly accomplishments in Middle East Studies. Throughout her long and distinguished career in librarianship and Middle East and Jewish Studies, Rachel Simon has

been a true scholar-librarian, a frequently cited ideal aspect of librarianship.

As editor of MELA Notes, I had the pleasure of working with Rachel. Her work as book-review editor was indispensable and accomplished with efficiency and persistence. Having been on the receiving end of her reminders to submit reviews on time, I might note that she was friendly and effective. She always managed to assemble a good collection of reviews for the journal.

(Robin continued):

"Besides her work as Judaica cataloguer at Princeton, Rachel realized an impressive scholarly output of books, journal articles, and contributions to encyclopedias and reference works in Jewish Studies and, more specifically, Sephardic Studies. Additionally, she served as editor of Mideast File (1982-1986), co-editor of National Union Catalog of Middle East Microfilms (1990), network editor on Judaism in the modern Middle East and North Africa for the Religious Studies Review, and chaired the Association of Jewish Libraries' Research, Academic, and Special Libraries' Cataloging Committee (1995-1999). Among her numerous publications in English and Hebrew are: *Libya Between Ottomanism and Nationalism: The Ottoman Involvement in Libya During the War with Italy (1911-1919)* (1987), *Change Within Tradition Among Jewish Women in Libya* (1992), "Reference Sources for Sephardic Studies" (in Judaica Librarianship, 9/1-2, Spring 1994-Winter 1995: pp. 144-151) and "The Impact of the Alliance Israélite Universelle on Jewish Education in the Mediterranean: Libya as a Case Study" in *Jewish Education in Southeastern Europe (Mid 19th–Mid 20th Century)* (2021).

"Her training and qualifications are notable: she received her M.L.S. from the University of Washington, Seattle, and both M.A. and Ph.D. (in the History of Muslim Countries) from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. She is one of a cohort of librarians who are trained professionally as librarians and who also earned scholarly credentials with doctoral training. Her career has been accordingly distinguished and productive.

"The David H. Partington Award Committee, on behalf of the Executive Board of the Middle East Librarians Association and its members, hereby commend you, Dr. Rachel Simon, and bestow upon you an honor you well deserve, the 2022 Partington Award. Congratulations!"

George N. Atiyeh Prize (Chair: Leili Seifi, Associate Professor, University of Birjand, Iran).

In addition to Leili as chair, the 2022 Atiyeh Prize committee comprised the following members: Aicha Azzaoui, Northwestern University; Guy Burak, New York University; and Maurice Hines, American University of Cairo, Egypt.

Leili read her report as follows:

"The George N. Atiyeh Award is an annual affair in hopes of recognizing aspiring Middle East subject specialist librarians. This year's committee also extended the call for applicants to other institutions in the region. So the committee promoted the call through all international network such as MELA website, MELA Social Media, IFLA-L, Iranian LIS forums, The Special Interest Group for International Information Issues (SIG-III), Middle East Chapter (ASIS&T), ALA accredited institutions, LinkedIn Page, and other institutions in the region. After two reminding received 28 applications from Iran, Pakistan, Canada, and USA. Out of the total received applicants, the committee awarded Ayah Elkossei, MLIS, a Specialization of Archives Management at Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis.
Also because of the strong resume of Trevor Brabyn MLIS student at the San José State University recognized as the honor applicant.

"This year the president of MELA issued a certificate for the winner. After Committee's suggestion for attending all the applications virtually and for free, the Board of MELA approved free attendance of all the applicants at the 50th anniversary of the MELA annual conference.

"Ayah Elkossei currently getting her dual masters in both Library & Information Sciences--with a specialization in Archives Management, and in History.

"In February 2022, she started two archives internship positions, at the Lithuanian Archives Project (LAP) and the Lemont Public Library (LPL). She was responsible for organizing, processing, scanning, arranging, and describing Lithuanian-American archival materials for different collections. Using the organization's database, ArchivERA, she made the information visible to patrons and helped create a historical narrative for Lithuanian-American history in Chicago. She is designing two physical exhibits and two virtual exhibits on the library's interesting history from its own archival collection. After her internship, she was accepted to be a part of the Chicago Area Archivists (CAA) Steering Committee, where she now serves as the communications manager. She works at the Chicago History Museum's Abakanowicz Research Center as a photocopy and scan assistant where she photocopies and scans archive collections that researchers request. She has a strong background in Middle Eastern history and intends to establish a Middle Eastern American Archives Project in Chicago, IL.

"I would like to give my sincere thanks to the committee members that made this committee to run successful this year."

MELA Book Award (Chair: Rustin Zarkar, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill): The Committee received eighteen nominations of books published in North America, Europe, and the Middle East.

The MELA Book Award Committee decided to award the first MELA Book Award to two publications:

Zeina Maasri's *Cosmopolitan Radicalism: The Visual Politics of Beirut's Global Sixties* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020) tells the transnational history of Arab modernism through an exploration of Beirut's vibrant print culture. In this study, Maasri examines a diverse array of materials, including tourism advertising campaigns, art books, literary journals, revolutionary art, and children's books. Maasri's book compellingly argues that any history of the Cold War in the Arab world and of the period's radical politics calls, not only for close readings and discursive analysis, but also for a renewed focus on how texts' aesthetics and materiality animated this period.

Samar ʻAlī Ṣāliḥ al-ʻArāsī's *Tajlīd al-kitāb al-makhṭūṭ fī al-Yaman fī al-fatrah min al-qarn al-ḥādī ʻashar ilá al-qarn al-thālith ʻashar al-Hijrī : dirāsah fannīyah atharīyah fī ḍawʼ majmūʻat Dār al-Makhṭūṭāt bi-Ṣanʻāʼ* (Dimashq: Nūr Ḥūrān lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Turāth, 2020) examines the technical and decorative elements of Islamic bookbinding, using manuscripts from the Sana'a House of Manuscripts in Yemen. The book highlights specimens from the 11th to the 12th centuries AH, and covers topics such as materials used, binding techniques, as well as different kinds of geometric, botanical, and calligraphic motifs.

In addition to the winners, the Committee decided to make three honorary mentions:

Iran and the Deccan: Persianate Art, Culture, and Talent in Circulation, 1400–1700, ed. Keelan Overton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020)

İsmail E. Erünsal's *A History of Ottoman Libraries* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2022)

Olly Akkerman's *A Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books: Arabic Manuscripts among the Alawi Bohras of South Asia* (Edinburgh University Press, 2022)

Rustin encouraged all to nominate other titles for next year.

Committee Chair Reports

Nominating Committee (Chair: Susan Lane, Penn State University). Susan gave the report as follows:

Members of this year's committee also included: Imad Abuelgasim, Nora Avetyan, and Akram Habibulla. This year, there were five open positions on the Executive Board: Vice President-Program Chair, Secretary-Treasurer, MELA Notes Editor, MELA Listserv Manager, and Member-at-Large. A call for nominations was sent on September 2, 2022. Three members responded for Vice President-Program Chair, two for MELA Notes Editor and Member-at-Large, and one for Secretary-Treasurer and MELA Listserv Manager. Qualtrics software

was used for the ballot. Ballots were emailed to members in good standing on October 21, 2022. Approximately 49 members voted. The results of the election are as follows:

- Vice President-Program Chair: Heather Hughes
- Secretary-Treasurer: William Kopycki
- MELA Notes Editor: Farshad Sonboldel
- MELA Listserv Manager: Evyn Kropf
- Member-at-Large: Leili Seifi

Endangered Libraries and Archives Committee (Chair: Guy Burak, New York University). Guy gave a brief report. Since Sharon Smith left MELA, the committee was put on hold for the rest of the year. Additional members of the committee include Matt Saba (MIT), Sean Swanick (Duke University), Rustin Zarkar (UNC Chapel Hill), Deborah Schlein (Princeton), and Iman Dagher (UCLA). While Sharon was still a part of the committee, we started compiling a list of available grants/funding agencies and resources for MELA members interested in digitization/preservation.

MELA Metrics Working Group (Chair: Guy Burak)**.** Guy gave a brief update, noting that other members of this working group include Michael Hopper (Harvard University), Neda Zeraatkar (Emory), Sean Swanick (Duke), and Denise Soufi (North Carolina). He thanked Hisham Makki (Florida) for his work on the database serving as a repository for cross-institutional statistics related to Middle East collections; the database was formally launched over the previous year. He encouraged MELA members to start loading their data; so far very few institutions have done so. Guy indicated that the group is creating a tutorial on exporting CSV files from Alma library systems; this should be released over the next year. Those wanting accounts to access the MELA Database should contact Justin Parrot with their request.

Digital Scholarship Interest Group Steering Committee (Chair: Dale J. Correa, University of Texas at Austin). The committee is currently comprised of Nora Avetyan, Dale J. Correa, Gayle Fischer, Wafa Isfahani, AJ Robinson, David Wrisley, Michael Toler, and Rustin Zarkar. Current terms for three members will end shortly and the committee invites interest from potential new members.

Dale reported that the committee achieved the following this past year:

- Held four virtual meetings to discuss and carry forward the committee's work.
- Maintained the MELA DSIG listserv / discussion list (all members of the Interest Group) intended especially for circulating opportunities for training and community building (such as conferences and workshops), news of projects and initiatives, features of tools and approaches, requests for advice, and other relevant topics.
- Planned and hosted a workshop, "Introduction to Arabic OCR with eScriptorium" for MELA 2022, on 30 November 2022. Dale especially thanked Steering Committee members and the project leads of eScriptorium for putting the workshop together.
- Representatives of DSIG also continue to liaise between MELA and the OpenITI Arabic-script OCR Project (OpenITI AOCP) and related initiatives, like eScriptorium.

Dale invited all to join the broader Interest Group, while those interested in joining the steering committee can see the call that went out on the MELANET listserv.

Education Committee & Mentorship Program (Chair: Sarah DeMott, Harvard University). Over the past year, the committee held five meetings via Zoom. For the mentorship program, the committee received 2 new applications for mentees both from librarians working in the field and looking for advancement. One applicant was a returning mentee who noted in their application: Mentee Application: "I would like assistance with developing my career in the Middle East Librarianship profession. A few years ago, I had the privilege to be matched with Sharon C. Smith. Her guidance was crucial in developing my CV and Cover letter."

The Education Committee also held a Career Workshop, which included and is planned as follows: One: Career Workshop: Perspectives from Middle East Librarians (held December 2021); Two: Career Workshop: Building a Portfolio & Career Materials

(TBD: Spring Semester 2023); Three: Career Workshop: Global Positions in Middle East Librarianship (TBD: Fall Semester 2023).

The committee also discussed plans for the "MELA Affinity Group": Jordan Evans-Boyajian (Mentee in the Education Committee) approached the committee regarding starting a meet-up for MELA Affinity Group for SWANA / MENA folks working in libraries. The committee is in conversation with Jordan and have yet to make action plans.

The Education Committee is comprised of: Sarah DeMott, Harvard University (head of Education Committee, head of Mentorship Program); Amanda Steinberg Hanoosh, Harvard University; Salma Abumeeiz, UCLA; Balsam Haddad, American Islamic College; Pauline Lewis, Stanford University (stepped down in October 2022); Neda Zeraatkar, Emory University (new November 2022) and Deborah Schlein, Princeton University (new November 2022).

Social Justice Committee (Co-Chairs: Amanda Hanoosh-Steinberg, Harvard University & Denise Soufi, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill). Amanda gave the report: For the second season of the series, the committee chose "؟Neutral / بی طرف / حیاد/ tarafsız?: Heritage, Colonialism and Diversity in Middle East Libraries and Archives" as its theme.

From December 2021 to June 2022, the committee hosted ten lecturers from around the world who handle materials from the nebulous region we call the Middle East, to discuss issues of neutrality, colonialism, and diversity within their institutions and experiences. To express gratitude for the lecturers' time and effort, the committee offered a $250 honorarium to each lecturer, which was accepted by nine of the lecturers. These honorariums were paid for by a successful GoFundMe campaign, of which the remainder of $767 carried forward into the third season.

The lecture series received a great deal of attention over the last year from both MELA members and outside participants. The SJC aimed this year to attract more participation from the Middle East, and we were happy to see that our audience was not only from the US, but also from around the world. We had attendees from 38 different

countries, such as Armenia, Belgium, Botswana, Chile, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Sudan, Taiwan, and many others. The average attendance was 42 participants per lecture, with our highest attendance being 74 for our February event featuring speakers from the American University of Beirut (AUB).

In September of 2022, the SJC co-hosted a roundtable discussion with the Committee on Cataloging entitled "Social Justice in Cataloging." This was our most popular event yet–254 participants signed on to listen to four experienced catalogers, three from the U.S. and one from Lebanon, whose work attempts to address shortcomings in traditional cataloging vocabularies and practices. The panelists each had the opportunity to provide a brief overview of their work, then moderator Amanda Hannoosh Steinberg led the discussion with questions about what it means to include social justice principles in the work of metadata specialists and about the application of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access to metadata creation.

For 2022-2023, the SJC has started a new lecture series with the theme "Lives in the Margins: Ethnic and Religious Minorities in the Middle East," for which we are inviting scholars researching minority groups to speak about the questions they are attempting to answer and the barriers they face accessing resources, as well as information professionals to reflect on whose heritage is being preserved, and how, and why or why not. The Committee launched a new GoFundMe campaign to offer honorariums for our lecturers, but so far, we have reached only $260 of our $1000 goal.
The first lecture of this series was held in October and was given by an Amazigh scholar from Morocco that attracted 66 participants, which we see as evidence that our audience is engaged and excited for the new season. We expect the MELA community will continue to support our lectures and GoFundMe campaign this year.

Lastly, the Committee would like to extend its appreciation and thanks to everyone who has donated to our lecture series as well as to Harvard University for allowing these lectures to be hosted through their Zoom account. These lectures would not be possible without the generous financial and technical support we have received so far.

Members for 2021-2022 included: Amanda Hannoush Steinberg (co-chair, Harvard University); Denise Soufi (co-chair, UNC-Chapel

Hill); Aicha Azzaoui (Northwestern University); Laila Hussein Moustafa (University of Illinois); Asuman Tezcan Mirer (Stanford University); Neda Zeraatkar (Emory University)

Bylaws Committee (Chair: Iman Dagher, University of California, Los Angeles). Member for 2022 also included: Eiman Elnoshokaty, Simon Fraser University Library; Connie Lamb, Brigham Young University (retired); Susan Lane, Penn State University; Deborah Schlein, Princeton University Library

The committee met online and worked virtually through email and Google Docs. The committee proposed two amendments this year:

1. Changes to the duties of the Members at Large. The rationale behind this amendment is to allow all members at large to be more involved in MELA's activities and to be more capable to represent the membership in Executive Board decisions.

2. The 2nd amendment was to change the membership of the Bylaws Committee. This will offer more flexibility in recruiting members and would make it easier for the Chair to convene the committee.

Every amendment proposed was approved unanimously by the Committee members before being put out to vote.

The Committee used Qualtrics software. The ballot was sent to all members in good standing on September 1st, 2022. 42 members participated in the vote. The voting results:

Change 1: *Duties of all Members-at-Large shall expand to include ex-officio responsibilities to certain committees.* The members-at-large amendment was approved by a majority of 34 votes.

Change 2: *The Number of members on the Bylaws Committee changes to a range of 2 to 4 members*. The Bylaws Committee membership was approved by a majority of 40 votes.

Recommendation: The Bylaws Committee recommends that the Bylaws Committee for 2023 revise the timelines of the Officer's

election and Bylaws amendment to align together so we can have one ballot.
Connie Lamb kindly worked on editing the Bylaws language and style (not the content); the Executive Board approved the editing.

Committee on Cataloging (Chair: Magda Gad, Stanford University). Additional members include: Iman Dagher, UCLA (Past Chair); Cyrus ZarGanj, University of Nevada; Denise Soufi, UNC-Chapel Hill; Aicha Azzaoui, Northwestern University, Engy Elgammal, Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies.
Pavel Angelos, Princeton University (webmaster).

The Committee on Cataloging (ConC) met online via Zoom meetings (10 meetings) and organized its documentation using Google Drive.

Activities and Projects: "Cataloging Middle Eastern Non-Book Materials Using RDA and MARC21" workshop series: the committee conducted two workshops for cataloging non-book materials:

- The first workshop **"**Cataloging Middle Eastern Video Recordings Using RDA and MARC21**"** was held on Wednesday, August 3, 2022 (for 90 minutes).
- The second workshop "Cataloging Middle Eastern Streaming Media Using RDA and MARC21" was held on Wednesday, November 2, 2022 (for 90 minutes).

The workshop series is being led by Cyrus F. Zarganj, Special Formats Librarian/Associate Professor, University of Nevada and moderated by Iman Dagher, Arabic & Islamic Studies Metadata Librarian, UCLA Library Resource Acquisitions & Metadata Services. The series will continue in 2023. The recordings and slides are posted on ConC website for future consultation.

Social justice in cataloging Roundtable: In partnership between the ConC) and the Social Justice Committee (SJC), the roundtable **"Social justice in cataloging"** was held on Wednesday, September 21, 2022 (for 75 minutes). The roundtable discussed what it means to include social justice principles like diversity, equity, and inclusion in traditional cataloging vocabularies, practices, and related processes. More than 220 people attended that webinar from the US, Europe, and Middle East.

ConC Website: The ConC website was maintained and updated by Pavel Angelos, Princeton University (webmaster).

ConC Programs – MELA Conference 2022: The committee was able to organize a hybrid panel to discuss Linked Data and BIBFRAME and the new cataloging editors Sinopia and Marva as a part of the conference program, entitled "Linked data & BIBFRAME implementations: cataloging editors, with Arabic cataloging examples". Presenting were Paul Frank (Policy, Training, and Cooperative Programs Division) and Amal Morsy (Senior cataloger, Arabic specialist) at Library of Congress presented and demonstrated cataloging in Marva; Nancy Lorimer (Associate Director, Metadata Services) and Magda Gad (Metadata Librarian for Middle East Resources) at Stanford University presented and gave a demonstration of cataloging in Sinopia. The panel was moderated by Iman Dagher.

Arabic NACO Funnel Statistics (Iman Dagher): The Arabic NACO Funnel remains active. For the period between November 2021 and November 2022, the Funnel members created about 422 new name authority records, enhanced 500 name authority records (personal names and corporate bodies), and created 31 new series records.

Update from ALA/CC:AAM (Magda Gad): The ALA Core Committee on Cataloging: Asian and African Materials (CC:AAM) chaired by Iman Dagher, UCLA organized two events for this year: The workshop "Libraries and Internationalization" on Thursday, June 9, 2022 was presented by Andrew Cunningham. This workshop looked at how standards and internationalization facilitate or impact multilingual cataloging and how that data is exposed in discovery layers. The panel "Non-Latin Scripts in/and Library Linked Data: What to Expect?" on Thursday, June 16, 2022 was presented by a group of presenters from the Library of Congress and Stanford University.

On July 1, 2022, Boutsaba Janetvilay (Fresno State Library) began her one-year term as chair of the committee, while Robert Rendall (Columbia University Libraries) began his one-year term as vice-chair.

MELA Officer Reports

MELA Listserv Manager (Evyn Kropf, University of Michigan). Evyn gave her report as follows:

"All are reminded of the virtual community that is the MELANET-L listserv, as presently conceived 'an email list devoted to Middle East librarianship' to which any interested party may subscribe. The list is intended to facilitate and invite open, candid, and respectful discussion and announcements on topics directly relevant to MENA / SWANA librarianship but notably excludes commercial advertisements and discussion of vendors and their products. The 'list conditions' (guidelines for posting) are available online for open review, on the MELA website under the About MELA >> Communications >> MELANET-L Email List. It has been some time since these 'list conditions' were updated and it would be advisable to review them for revision. All interested colleagues are welcome to subscribe and may contact the Listserv Manager via email (listowner@mela.us), via the form on the MELA website, or via Google Groups. As of 23 November, there are 694 email addresses subscribed (some members are subscribed under multiple addresses) with 68 subscribers added since last year's MELA business meeting (29 October 2021). A few colleagues that have retired or moved on to other fields have also requested to be unsubscribed from the list. All are reminded that messages to MELANET continue to be archived within Google Groups.

"Colleagues are also reminded of the Google Group for the Middle East Book Vendors List, formerly hosted at Stanford by our now retired colleague John Eilts, but now managed by our Listserv Manager on Google Groups. There are currently 97 email addresses subscribed. This list is mentioned to new subscribers of MELANET-L and also under a note on the MELA website under About MELA >> Communications >> MELANET-L Email List. Colleagues are reminded that this list is 'for the confidential exchange of information about the vendors of library materials from the countries of the Middle East (broadly defined). Vendors are not permitted to subscribe to the list so that open discussion may take place. Members are also asked not to forward any list postings.'

"The Listserv Manager also manages the MELA Digital Scholarship Interest Group list which currently has 77 email addresses subscribed. The MELA DSIG list is open to specialists interested in the intersections of Middle Eastern & North African Studies librarianship (broadly defined) and digital scholarship. The list is intended especially for circulating opportunities for training and community building (such as conferences and workshops), news of projects and initiatives, features of tools and approaches, requests for advice, and other relevant topics.

"The Listserv Manager also manages the Google Group for the MELA Executive Board which threads and archives messages to and among the Board members."

MELA Notes Editor (Marlis Saleh, University of Chicago). Marlis reported as follows:

"Library operations continued their progress in returning to normal following the global pandemic, and the publication of *MELA Notes* is fully back on schedule.

"Last year's issue (number 94, 2021) was published electronically and in print and consisted of the following items: Articles, Book Reviews, Award Announcements and Essays (including an obituary), and MELA Business Meeting 2020 Minutes and Reports.

"All book reviews that will be published in the 2022 issue have been posted online in our blog, the MELA Notepad. Reviews are edited and posted on the blog shortly after they are submitted, and then subsequently published in the next issue of *MELA Notes*.

"This latest issue of *MELA Notes* (number 94, 2021) was sent to JSTOR for digitization and inclusion in their database. The full run of *MELA Notes* is available as part of the Arts & Sciences IX Collection. Revenue sharing from JSTOR brought in $4,114.11 this past year, including $90.85 for JPASS and a supplement of $2,000.00 for not imposing a moving wall.

"*MELA Notes* is also available in EBSCO Host's Library & Information Science Source Publications database, beginning with

issue 84 (2011) and going forward. It is possible that in the future a more extensive backfile will also be added. The electronic files for issue 94 (2021) have been transmitted to them. Increasing our journal's visibility, the full text is shared with non-EBSCO discovery services for indexing and searching (but not display), making the articles easier for researchers to find, regardless of what discovery service their library uses.

"As always, I continue to urge the membership to submit articles and to encourage colleagues to do so. Many articles come out of presentations given at the annual MELA meeting, but this is not mandatory and other relevant articles are always welcome.

"Again, as always, I am extremely grateful for the continued assistance of my colleagues Jonathan Rodgers, past editor of *MELA Notes*, and our secretary-treasurer, William Kopycki, and our new book review editor, Farshad Sonboldel; and once again I take this opportunity to thank our recently retired book review editor, Rachel Simon, for her many years of service.

"It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as MELA Notes editor for the past fourteen years. I look forward to providing any assistance I can to the new editor".

MELA Notes book review editor (Farshad Sonboldel, University of California, Santa Barbara). Farshad reported that he started work as MELA Notes book review editor on 1st October 2021, and with the help of Marlis Saleh and based on the guideline that Rachel Simon had provided as the first MELA Notes Review Editor, prepared a set of new guidelines for reviewers.

Farshad received sixteen books since November 2021, and ten titles were suggested by their publishers to be added to our list of available books for review. He asked publishers for three titles not among the list of available books to be sent directly to reviewers, for a total of twenty-nine books. Twenty-four titles have been sent to reviewers, seven of which have been reviewed and published on the MELA website. Eleven reviewers are Ph.D. students from across the US, five are faculty members from Europe and the US, and the rest are from the MELA community.

Farshad encouraged new members of MELA to review books; he will send our quarterly lists unless there are specific requests, in that case he will contact the publishers to request a review copy.

Finally, Farshad began a project of indexing *MELA Notes*, with hopes that this will be completed by summer 2023. The idea is to create an index of authors, titles, subjects, dates, and keywords for all the articles and book reviews published in MELA Notes from 1973 to the present. He thanked Marlis Saleh for all her help, support, and patience during the past year, and also thanked webmaster Justin Parrott for his great work.

Webmaster/Web & Social Media Committee (Justin Parrott, New York University in Abu Dhabi). Justin offered statistics and highlights of MELA's website (http://www.mela.us) activity:

Usage statistics:

- +17,000 views (slightly above pre-COVID usage)
- 8,674 unique visitors (slight decrease)
- 3,665 hits from Google (slight increase)
- 475 hits from Facebook (decrease)
- 289 hits from Twitter (decrease)
- 68% views from the United States
- 109 countries visited the site

Security updates:

- SiteLock (malware protection) and website backup/restore purchased
- MELA Secretary backup WordPress user was created

Promoting MELA activities:

- Publishing book reviews
- Promoting Social Justice Committee lecture series
- Posted Edward A. Jajko memorial

Social Media Committee (SMC):

- 3,900 followers on Facebook (increase by +400)
- 2,241 followers on Twitter (increase by +200)
- 170 YouTube subscribers (nearly doubled)
- YouTube vanity URL was acquired

MELA Metrics Working Group:

- Statistical database is fully operational
- 18 institutions have registered users
- Mohamed Hamed will present the details

Reminders to MELA members:

- Committee chairs to send updates
- Notify of inaccuracies or typos on the site
- Presenters to send slides, materials, etc.

Members to send content to SMC and MELANET-L.

Secretary-Treasurer (William Kopycki, Library of Congress). William asked that officers and committee chairs send him soft copies of their reports as this aids tremendously in the final complication of the minutes.

Concerning treasury activities, everything has been status quo over the past year in terms of accounting procedures the software systems supporting this work. He noted that as a result of the pandemic, 99% of all financial transactions were processed electronically, whether outbound or inbound payments. He reminded members who haven't already done so to renew their annual dues as soon as possible. As of November 27, 2022, MELA had ninety-three members paid up through 2022, while only 47 members are paid through 2023.

William reported that MELA's accounts/balance sheet are otherwise in steady shape; he indicated that he will be taking a more detailed look at the individual award and activity funds (i.e. Partington and Wilkins Award, and Social Justice Committee speaker series), and will reach out to committee chairs to provide a current analysis.

Vice President/Program Chair/President-Elect (Mohamed Hamed, University of California, Berkeley)

Mohamed reported that the committee worked to collect people's thoughts about the conference and the format, from which we learned that hybrid was the preferred option. The hybrid model was neither easy to manage nor fund, but it seemed most appropriate for MELA's 50th anniversary so we can all meet and celebrate together both in-

person and online. Finding a suitable venue was not easy either, but we were quite fortunate to have a very reasonable offer from University of Denver.

In this year's conference, we have 150 participants (about 100 online, and 50 in person), with 10 panels on various topics, and 26 events in total, with about 50 speakers from various parts of the world, excluding the vendor showcase.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary, the conference started with a reflection on the past from Fawzi Abdurazak, one of the founding members of MELA. In addition, the Program Committee worked on a short video showing various MELA members over the years. The committee also started work on the "MELA Family Tree" project which will continue through 2023.

Mohamed thanked the program committee members, which included William, Heather, and Leili as well as Robin, Salma, Farshad and Hisham Makki. He also thanked al-Mandumah Database for their very generous contribution to MELA which was a great help in funding the costs of the hybrid format. He also thanked the Digital Library of the Middle East for sponsoring lunch on the first day.

Presidential address. President Anaïs gave her concluding remarks as follows:

"After two online meetings, and for the first time in 50 years of existence, MELA is meeting in a hybrid format this year. It is a great pleasure to finally be able to resume in-person activities while still accommodating those who couldn't make the trip. As we keep working towards making our association as inclusive, diverse, and equitable as possible, I believe that this format brings together the best of the pre-pandemic and pandemic times. Let's hope for the continued inclusion of colleagues working and living all over the world!

"MELA is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, and it was both an honor and a pleasure to preside over our association during this important time. As we discovered through some of the presentations, MELA has gone through a lot since its foundation in 1972. Not only it managed to carry on for fifty years, and as it is a rather small

professional association there was no guarantee that it would. But more importantly, MELA managed to evolve alongside the fields of librarianship and Middle East Studies to remain current and relevant. Today, as we are already thinking of what the future holds, I would like us to take a minute to recognize that MELA could not have become the active association it is today without the contributions of generations of members. Let us thank and congratulate them all, and feel proud of what has been accomplished.

"My duties as president included meeting every two-three months with the Executive Board to prepare the conference, ensure committees subjected to timelines were on track, nominate people on committees when needed, discuss on-going and new projects, reaching out to working groups and committee chairs to offer support, communicating with the membership, liaising with MESA, etc. I have to say it was a pretty busy year… But it was deeply fulfilling and rewarding and I would not hesitate to do it all over again. My thanks go to colleagues on the Executive Board, on Committees and on Working Groups for their hard work over the past year. It has been a pleasure working with you all, and I am looking forward to continuing collaborating in the future.

"I would like to encourage members, old and new, to consider getting involved in MELA activities. Whether by serving on a Committee, becoming an officer, mentoring younger colleagues, etc. you will make a difference. MELA needs all of us to keep going for the next fifty years! Last, as I am about to pass the baton to our incoming President, Mohamed, I want to wish him, our incoming Vice-President, Heather, and new Member-at-Large, Leili, all the best in the year ahead."

Convening Bylaws Committee: Anaïs Salamon convened the committee, chaired by Aicha Azzaoui.

Convening 2023 Program Committee: Anaïs Salamon convened the committee, chaired by Heather Hughes.

MELA Network Project: Mohamed Hamed gave a demonstration of this project, also known as the "MELA Family Tree". He encouraged MELA members to contribute to this database with their names, positions, and institutions over the years. Modeling this data

geographically, one can better understand who was in MELA over time, where they worked, and the institutions which had and continue to represent MELA. The database was produced by Hisham Makki. This work will continue over the year and into the future.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4.45pm

Respectfully Submitted,

William J. Kopycki
Secretary-Treasurer