

CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE

Second Committee Report

All of the committees were asked to:

- find ways to encourage membership;
 - create a directory of specialists, research projects and training courses;
 - compile a list of standards, including guidelines and examples for best practice;
 - determine required research and identify gaps in knowledge.
1. The committee has started to establish regular contact among its members and have each of them canvas colleagues and associates for others who might be interested in joining the Association. The committee needs to have more information on membership and the application procedure so the committee can be more active in this regard.
 2. A directory of committee members will be prepared. A directory of specialists in the conservation of Islamic manuscripts is a sensitive topic until we have identified what such specialists should know and the treatment guidelines the Association wants to be seen to endorse. We felt that this topic should be deferred for further discussion. Committee members will be solicited to find out about research projects and training courses of which they are aware. The above issued will be discussed in the next Conservation Sub-committee meeting.
 3. Similarly, it is early yet to compile a list of standards and guidelines and examples for best practice until committee members have had an opportunity to discuss conservation practices and issues more thoroughly—to consider how to sensitively bridge different approaches, educational backgrounds and philosophical points of view. The above issue will also be discussed in the next sub-committee meeting.
 4. The following projects were identified and has been started for the committee this year:
 - a. Establishment of a committee of specialists on materials and techniques used in Islamic manuscripts by Dr. Barkeshli. This is to create a network of scholars and practitioners of the field and to initiate further research works. Committee members are asked to contribute by introducing individuals scholars/practitioners from their respective countries. In this regard the project has been initiated by Dr. Barkeshli among the scholars from Tehran University Central Library and Iranian Islamic manuscript conservation practitioners. A five year team work planning is supposed to be drawn and will be submitted to the committee as soon as it is materialized.
 - b. Committee members will be asked to contribute to the bibliography on the conservation and materials of Islamic manuscripts that Paul Hepworth has assembled. So far the bibliography that has been compiled by the Iranian Parliamentary Library has been

identified by Dr. Barkeshli and will be added to this bibliography as well soon. The committee members are asked to add to this bibliography.

- c. The terminology used to describe Islamic manuscripts and their conservation treatment will be assembled in different languages, so as to facilitate the accurate description of these manuscripts and promote effective communication between conservators who are using different languages in preparing condition and treatment reports. In this regard important work has been published in Iran and few scholars from Iran are working on this line that is willing to help the sub-committee to elevate this project. In this stage the committee members need to identify works that has been done in different countries so we do not repeat the works that has already been done.
- d. Simple techniques for imaging the characteristics of Islamic paper (e.g. laid and chain lines, mould marks, etc.) will be researched. The hope is that a (one-day or half day?) workshop can be created for use in the future at association conferences to demonstrate how libraries and collections can easily and consistently generate this data, which can then be put into an accessible database. The sub-committee is proposing this workshop to be held in the next conference in Cambridge.
- e. A list of the problems and issues faced in the conservation of Islamic manuscripts has been started.
- f. A list of research priorities has been started to help to guide PhD and MA students who want to pursue this area of study. The committee members are asked to contribute to this task.
- g. Workshops on Islamic manuscript conservation have been designed by few Islamic manuscript practitioners. So far Turkey, Iran and India have been active in this project and are in the process of sending their proposal. The hope is to create an educational unit in which a particularly useful conservation skill or technique is taught that would be made available to member institutions of the association.
- h. Jawi, a less appreciated script/language of Southeast Asia is an important member of the body of the Islamic script/languages. Preservation of this important source of Islamic manuscripts is regarded as a priority in the region. A project initiated Prof. Dr. Zekrgoo (a founding member of TIMA) aims at the identification of Jawi manuscripts and the compilation of a bibliography. Committee members will be asked to contribute. In this regard a regional conference on Jawi script and its role in the preservation of cultural heritage of South East Asia will be held in March 2007 in the state of Pahang, Malaysia.

Mandana Barkeshli
1 February 2007