

PRINTING & PUBLISHING SUB-COMMITTEE

Report of the second Printing & Publishing Sub-committee meeting
held on 13 and 14 April 2007 in Istanbul.

Members present: Dr. Alba Fedeli, Dr. Ayman Fuad Sayyid (Secretary), Dr. Ayman Shihadeh (Head).

Remit of the Sub-committee

It was felt that there is a need to focus the scope and remit of the sub-committee in various ways. First, sub-committee members agreed that 'publishing' includes 'printing', and therefore it was recommended that the latter should be removed from the name of the sub-committee.

There was also a suggestion to include 'research' in the sub-committee's remit, where 'research' here refers to studies on palaeography, codicology, specialist bibliography and the history of literature. All members agreed. Therefore, we suggest that the group be renamed the Publishing and Research Sub-committee.

The sub-committee decided that it should deal not only with the publication of facsimile editions of manuscripts, but also with the publication of edited texts.

Research Activities

1. Bibliography of Published Classical Arabic Texts and Manuscripts

The main research project that the sub-committee would like to recommend is to produce a bibliography of published classical Arabic texts and manuscripts. This will be a periodical to appear in print every five years, and will cover all new editions of classical Arabic texts and facsimile editions which appeared in print, in both books and periodicals, over the previous five years.

The project will require a team consisting of an editor and representatives of various countries who will source new publications. It will also depend on contacts with publishers, who will be encouraged to provide details of their publications. It will not be annotated.

2. The sub-committee recommends the publication of an annual periodical providing critical reviews of select published classical Arabic texts. This will complement the aforementioned bibliographic publication, which will provide comprehensive details of all publications. Reviews will indicate whether the publication is the first edition of the text and how it compares to previous editions, the quality of the edition, and whether it uses the best manuscripts, etc. Publishers will be encouraged to send review copies, which will then be sent to subject specialists.

3. The sub-committee recommends that we engage in the publication of facsimile editions of key manuscripts of unpublished texts. Manuscripts would be chosen according to their historical importance,

the importance of their texts, their legibility and rareness; and the edition would be introduced with a critical study. TIMA could cooperate with established partners to produce a series of such publications.

4. The sub-committee recommends the establishment of a prize for critical editions of classical Arabic texts, to be awarded, for instance, every two years. The prize criteria will include the importance of the text, the quality of the critical edition, and the quality of the publication, One could also include membership in TIMA as a condition for obtaining the prize.

5. A bibliographic survey of specific subjects in mediaeval Islamic literature may be undertaken. Specific areas where such a survey is required will be identified, and one of more specialists may be commissioned to undertake the work, which may be published in print or online. The bibliographic survey will cover text in both manuscript and published formats, to the exclusion of secondary studies.

6. TIMA can offer a service to assist researchers and editors in obtaining copies of manuscripts from libraries with which it has contacts. Firstly, we can set up a webpage which provides the different libraries' contact details, links, order procedures, etc. Secondly, it can offer a more interactive service to contact relatively inaccessible libraries on behalf of individual scholars. This service may be either paid or unpaid, and conditional on a certain level of membership in TIMA.

Directory

The sub-committee recommends that a directory of scholarly institutions in the Islamic world, already published by IRCICA (probably in 1988), be used as a basis for a more up-to-date directory specialised in publishers of classical Islamic texts and manuscript facsimiles.

TIMA should correspond with UNESCO's national committees in various countries to request details of relevant publishers and academic institutions. We can also ask members of TIMA to provide details of institutions in their respective countries.

Standards and Guidelines

The sub-committee would like to make the following recommendations:

- a) An annotated bibliography of sources on producing critical editions should be commissioned. In the future, workshops on the subject may be organised.
- b) Specialists of European manuscripts may be invited to a TIMA conference to talk about standards, methods and guidelines in their field. Their papers will then be followed by a discussion by members of TIMA, in which their relevance to Islamic manuscripts will be assessed. TIMA members should be asked to suggest names of specialists to invite.

Membership

It was agreed that membership in the sub-committee should be conditional on membership in TIMA, and involvement or interest in publication and/or research. Members should also agree to contribute to the activities of the sub-committee.

The sub-committee would like to suggest the following methods for encouraging membership in TIMA:

- a) A special membership category can be introduced specifically for academic publishers. Relations with publishers can be strengthened through their involvement in the two aforementioned periodicals.
- b) The sub-committee recommends that a conference on publishing classical Islamic texts be organised. Publishers, academic institutions and individual academics would be invited and encouraged to join TIMA.

Ayman Shihadeh

14 April 2007