

Union of European Arabists and Islamicists
Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants

NEWSLETTER

Ed. Michael G. Carter

Winter 2005

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The Union is a fortunate organisation: over the years its members have always been able to hold their Congresses in the most interesting and attractive cities in Europe, as guests of the most agreeable colleagues and institutions. Sometimes your editor feels like Juan Antonio Samaranch after the Olympic Games, in having to find reasons why this Olympics was the best ever without offending the previous hosts.

This year was no exception, and we were received with extraordinary hospitality and warmth by our friends in Krakow, a highly efficient team led by the tireless Barbara Michalak-Pikulska and her patient spouse Andrzej (we hasten to add that his patience appeared in his dealings with the visitors, and we are not implying that it is needed at home).

Every individual will have his or her own recollections of the Congress, of the Jagellonian University and Krakow. For your editor the hard-earned privilege of holding our meetings in the most beautiful and ancient part of the University was the greatest of many highlights. Oxonians as we automatically that serious university teaching and research require an environment of comparable elegance and dignity, and the architectural core of the Jagellonian University is a cluster of very imposing buildings which express better than any promotional brochure or catalogue of distinguished alumni the values of higher education which the Union stands for. We were inspired by the magnificence of our conference surroundings: thank you, Barbara, for all you had to do to achieve this.

The nomadic habits of the Union constantly reinforce its Europeanness, which extends, of course, far beyond the borders of political Europe to embrace the whole of geographical Europe and beyond. It was an additional pleasure that Poland had just joined the other Union (on May 1st of all days): one appreciated the visa-free access, though it was still the zloty, not the euro, which came out of the cash machines. What we saw of Krakow, both in the excellent arranged tours and in our own time, made many of us realise how little we know about Poland. The superb castle and cathedral on Wawel Hill, the exquisite wood carvings of Veit Stoss in St. Mary's Basilica, the Jewish Jewish Quarter of Kazimierz, and the

unfortunate bugler who dies symbolically every hour (or does he?) in the Market Square, will always remain in our minds.

We also saw evidence of Poland's past conflicts with the Islamic world, in the form of Ottoman trophies and antiquities. It is easy (for non-Poles!) to forget that the two empires were once bitter enemies, at a time when Polish influence spread far wider than it does now. In the seventeenth century Polish and Turkish troops fought each other throughout southern Europe, and the author of *Khizānat al-Adab*, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī, claims that one day in 1674 he took part in a battle near Edirne against "Lehistān", from which the Ottomans returned victorious with 150,000 prisoners. What this bookish man was doing on a battlefield is anybody's guess: presumably it was a kind of VIP tourism in which the fighting was observed from a safe distance among the Sultan's family and General Staff.

Such are the musings stimulated by the best ever (Samaranch style) UEAI conference. Readers who were present will have other memories, those who were not should make an effort to attend the next UEAI Conference, which will take place in Sardinia: the details are on p. 2.

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This *Newsletter* is coming from Australia, where your editor now lives. He began writing the *Newsletter* in New York, so the only time it has been a truly "European" publication is when it was produced in half-European Norway. It's a lot warmer where he is now, summer, in fact, but the *Newsletter* retains its traditional heading "Winter 2005", and will continue to appear as long as the members are happy to accept that at least the author is European even if his address is not.

On the other hand, talk of filling the *Newsletter* with gossip and self-advertisement needs more discussion. We already have, in principle, a website which Yefim Rezvan agreed to create at the Palermo meeting (see *Newsletter* 2003), and that is surely the best place for the kind of news which goes out of date in weeks, unlike the *Newsletter*, which only needs to appear once in the years between conferences.

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We rely on readers to send in information on the death of members. Only one report of the passing of a member has come to the *Newsletter's* notice, namely Gösta Vitestam, formerly of the University of Lund, Sweden, who died earlier this year. Due respect to his memory will certainly be expressed in Scandinavian and other scholarly journals. Your editor will add his own tribute based on attendance at a number of symposia arranged by Professor Vitestam in the charming seaside village of Kivik, where he had a summer cottage. Under his benevolent patronage, academic seriousness and sheer delight in human association were combined in perfect proportions.

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Minutes of the General Meeting of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Krakow, 4 October 2004

The President, Juan Souto, opens the meeting. He asks for a *minute of silence* for the deceased members Pier Donini, Anna Pagnini and Ian Brugman. He follows this with a personal expression of gratitude to Barbara Michalak-Pikulska for her achievement in organising such an outstanding Congress.

In the name of the whole Union Urbain Vermeulen expresses his sincere thanks to Barbara, who has administered the Krakow congress with so much success and organisational talent.

Arie Schippers, the treasurer, presents the *Financial Reports* for 2002 and 2003. After examination, they are approved by the General Meeting.

The *Executive Committee* of the Union is confirmed.

Some changes have taken place among the *National Representatives*. Austria and Bulgaria have now, besides their former representatives, two new ones: Monika Fatima Mühlböck (University of Vienna) and Simeon Evstatiev (University of Sofia). For Germany, Lutz Richter-Bernburg (University of Tübingen) replaces Stefan Leder. A new national section has been created for Poland, which is now represented by Barbara Michalak-Pikulska. Spain is newly represented by Delfina Serrano (CSIC, Madrid) and Maravillas Aguiar Aguilar (La Laguna University). Addresses of the Executive Committee and of the National Representatives are listed on p. 3.

Next venue. Giuseppe Contu (University of Sassari, Sardinia, Italy) suggests that his University could welcome the 23rd Congress of the Union. The proposal is accepted by the members (see below).

As venues for 2008 Sofia, Liège and Tenerife are suggested.

Publication of the Krakow Proceedings. Urbain Vermeulen says that Peeters in Leuven is interested in continuing the publication of the *Proceedings* of the UEAI. Peeters does a very professional job and does not ask for subventions. Several editions of the *Proceedings* have been published by Peeters, and continuing with it will make it become a series. Articles submitted to Barbara Michalak-Pikulska should not exceed 45,000 characters (about 15 pages).

New members accepted in Krakow

Avino, Maria, Università di Napoli L'Orientale, Italy
Berger, Lutz, Universität Tübingen, Germany
Bieniek, Adam, University of Krakow, Poland
Bottini, Laura, Università di Catania, Italy
Branca, Paolo, Università Cattolica, Milan, Italy
Koscielniak, Krzysztof, University of Krakow, Poland
Larcher, Pierre, Université d'Aix-Marseille, France
Lewicka, Paulina, Warsaw University, Poland
Martos Quesada, Juan, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain
Melchert, Christopher, Oxford University, Great Britain
Orthmann, Eva, Universität Zürich, Switzerland
Russo, Annunziata, Naples, Italy
Serrano, Delfina, CSIC, Madrid, Spain
Sh'hadeh, Yousef, University of Krakow, Poland
Stefanova, Galina, University of Sofia, Bulgaria.

Joseph Bell (University of Bergen) suggests a new status of *provisional member*, which would include young researchers who have not yet finished their doctorate, but who would be interested in becoming members later on.

Many members agreed with this proposal, but that would mean that membership conditions (art. 9A) would have to be revised. It is suggested that this point could be discussed at General meeting of the next congress.

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23rd Congress of the UEAI

CENTRE AND PERIPHERY WITHIN THE BORDERS OF ISLAM

Registrations are invited for the 23rd Congress, to be held at the University of Sassari (Sardinia, Italy) from Thursday 28th September to Sunday 1st October 2006, with conference sessions from 28th to 30th September. Local airport transport is provided for those arriving on 27th September and leaving on 2nd October.

An excursion to Nuragic and Phoenician-Punic archaeological sites and a typical central Sardinian countryside village, including a farewell dinner, is planned for Sunday 1st October.

The conference fee, including excursion and farewell dinner, will be €150 (€100 for accompanying person). The fee will be payable until 31st March 2006 (2nd circular). For those who do not wish to participate in the excursion and farewell dinner, the fee will be €100 (€70 accompanying person)

Registration forms are being sent out, and should be returned by 31st December 2005, either by e-mail to <ueai23rdcongres@uniss.it> or by fax to +39 0784 229652 (where further information is also obtainable).

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Conference in Sydney

In December 2006 Sydney University will be the host for an international conference to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Oriental Society of Australia.

This will be a wonderful opportunity to visit Sydney and to see how Arabic and Islamic studies are carried out on the other side of the world, in a country whose nearest neighbour is Indonesia, the most populous of all Muslim countries.

The important details at this stage are:

The conference will run for four days from December 4th to 7th 2006 inclusive.

The official theme of the conference is "World without Walls". However, papers on all relevant topics will be accepted.

Accommodation is available in the Women's College of Sydney University, where also the sessions will be held.

The programme also comprises a dinner and an excursion, which are included in the registration fee (currently set at A\$300, or about £185).

Needless to say we are hoping to attract participants from all over the world. For further information log on to the Conference website:

www.arts.usyd.edu.au/publications/JOSA/events.htm

or contact the editor of the Newsletter. It goes without saying that we will be trying to equal the standards set by the Union, both in intellectual quality and social entertainment, and your editor plans to ensure that all Union members who attend the conference are well looked after. *Ahlan wa-sablan fi Australia.*

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E-mail addresses still needed

A hundred or so members still have not yet provided us with their e-mail address.

Understandably there are some who simply do not have access to e-mail, and we are not all as lucky as Urbain Vermeulen in having three addresses. But one address will be enough, and if you can send it to Silvia Naef or the *Newsletter* it will ensure that you can be contacted directly, e.g. by the Treasurer when you fail to pay your membership fees!

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Project to recatalogue the Chester Beatty Collection of Arabic manuscripts

Word has just come in that Arberry's *Handlist* of the Chester Beatty collection is about to be updated, and the Chester Beatty Library is looking for specialists to help with the cataloguing.

Contact Dr. Elaine Wright, Curator of the Islamic Collections at <ewright@cbl.ie>, who will send you information on the project.

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