

# Activity Report

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This past year has been a very busy and productive year with a focus on two main areas:

- Support for the recently established *Fellowship on Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies at The University of Oxford*, and
- Negotiating and setting up partnership with The British Library for an international, interfaith *exhibition on the manuscripts of the Holy books of the three religions of the book*.

## **I. H.M. King Mohamed VI Fellowship on Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies at Saint Antony's at Oxford.**

This year, the MBS support to the Fellowship covered lecturers, students, and the library

### **1. Guest Speakers**

In collaboration with the Fellowship at Oxford, three Moroccan speakers were sent by MBS to lecture in different areas:

- Mr. Ahmed OSMANE on Democracy and Political Evolution in post independence of Morocco.
  - Mr. Hassan ABOUYOUB on the economic situation and future prospects for Morocco, and
  - Mrs. Rahma BOURQIA on the recent family law reform and its social and legal implications on practice.
- 2.** A round table on national reconciliation practices was held in June focusing on the example of the “*Instance d'Equité et de Reconciliation*” in Morocco, with the participation of some of its members along with academics

3. A scholar-in-Residence, Mr. Mohamed KENBIB spent 6 weeks at Oxford last Fall, serving as advisor and resource person for students and faculty conducting research on Morocco. During his stay Professor KENBIB also lectured on Morocco related topics at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester, and London.
4. Seven Oxford students researching various political, economic and social aspects of Morocco and recommended by Dr. WILLIS, The Mohamed VI fellow at Saint Antony's have benefited from MBS support either through financial support for the intensive study of Arabic at a summer institute (3 students); or through the use of the office space and facilities at the association headquarters in Rabat (4 students). MBS officers have been instrumental for the Oxford student researchers in setting up appointments with scholars and administrative officers for interviews or access to primary data.
5. In consultation with Dr. WILLIS, the MBS sent a substantial set of books to the Oxford center for Middle Eastern Studies Library. These books are used by researching faculty and students working on Morocco related areas. The books were obtained by the MSB as donations from the publishing institutions or purchased for the Chair.
6. The MBS started the tradition of a yearly meeting with Oxford Faculty and officers to go over the relations of the realizations for the preceding year and the prospects for the following year. The MBS took note of areas where it can lend support to the Fellowship program.
7. The MBS started the tradition of a "Lecture Series", organizing a conference in Rabat attended by diplomats, university professors and officers. The theme chosen was "The Presentation of Morocco through English Travel Literature," and the lecture was given by Pr. Mohamed LAAMIRI of the Center for African Studies.

## II. Ahl Al Kitab Exhibition

Following up on the last MBS board recommendation to explore the exhibition feasibility, several meetings were held with The British Library and a number of actions taken to ensure the launching of the exhibition on April 26.

1. The Feasibility Study was financed by His Majesty King Mohamed VI and conducted by The British Library in 2004. The results were very encouraging.
2. Negotiations with The British Library concluded with the following agreements:
  - The exhibit would have 4 axes: One axis for each of the three religions of the book and the fourth for the interfaith dialogue, tolerance, and coexistence.
  - MBS to take the fourth axis
  - MBS to contribute with 25% of the cost
  - The exhibition to be organized under the joint Royal Patronage of His Majesty King Mohamed VI and His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and Chairman of the Three Faith Forum.
  - The opening on April 26 to be chaired by H.R.H. Prince Moulay Rachid and H.R.H Prince Philip.
  - MBS Day to be organized in May 02, to which MBS friends and partners are to be invited. H.E. Pr. Ahmed TOUFIQ to give a lecture on “*Muslims and Democracy.*”
  - MBS to participate with:
    - 4 ancient manuscripts of the *Qur’an* from the Royal Library of Marrakech and the National Library of Rabat
    - 1 ancient manuscript of *Hadith* from The Royal Library
    - 3 music groups: *Françoise Atlan* and the *Fes Orchestra*, *Temsamani* group, *Aissaoua* group
    - 2 Calligraphers
  - MBS will take advantage of the exhibit to organize educational trips for students to visit the exhibit and liaise with British School Children and students in collaboration with the British Council.

- The Ministry of Islamic Affairs will be sending a group of *Oulemas*, *Imams* and *Murshidats* in training for interfaith experience and a closer look at *the other*.

### **III. An institutional brochure is being prepared for the SACRED exhibition**

**IV. A Website for the MBS is almost ready to be open to the public. It is being revised in light of the Comments received from a small Communication committee. The basic version of it will be launched next week to link up with The British Library site for The SACRED Exhibition Coverage.**

### **V. Prospects for next year**

The following are some suggestions to ponder. Any other ideas are most welcome.

- How to better benefit from the Exhibition from April 26 to September 23.
- How to bring a reduced itinerant version of the exhibit of Morocco and get schools to benefit from it.
- How to better support the Mohamed VI Fellowship at Oxford
- How to achieve the scholarship fund with Oxford for Bright Moroccan students
- How to enrich the lecture series in Morocco
- Other suggestions