

**Modern Greek Studies Association
Biennial Conference, October 13-16, 2011
New York, NY**

**Harold M. Leich
European Division
The Library of Congress**

October 13 (Thursday)

3 pm.: Library Committee Meeting

Present: Harold Leich (Library of Congress; Committee Chair), Rhea Karabelas Lesage (Harvard), George Paganelis (California State U., Sacramento), Dia Philippides (Boston College), David Jenkins (Princeton), Anthony Oddo (Yale U.), Gisela Kam (Princeton). Minutes recorded by Lesage and Leich.

Chair Harold Leich welcomed the group, stating that the agenda was an open one since, while he had requested a time slot for a formal Library Committee meeting, he never received a reply from the organizers. Leich noted that the budget crisis over the past few years happened just when the Collaborative Project for Hellenic Resources was ready to take off (December 2008). Lesage added that efforts to move the project forward were hampered by the crisis as individual institutions tried to cope with layoffs, travel funding cuts, and juggling day-to-day operations.

The discussion proceeded to institutional updates, beginning with LC, which in September offered an early retirement package for many categories of employees; employees accepting the package will have to retire by November 3, 2011. As far as is known, nobody involved with Modern Greek is taking the package. Oddo reported that there have been severe budget cuts to Modern Greek collection funding at Yale, and mentioned that they are relying heavily on the "Borrow Direct" program to make up the difference. "Borrow Direct" is a patron-initiated rapid book request and delivery system. It enables faculty, staff and students to search the combined library catalogs of Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, U. of Pennsylvania, Princeton, Yale and the Center for Research Libraries -- a collection of over 50 million volumes -- and directly request expedited delivery of circulating items.

The issue of collaborative collection development was raised. Since most of the major U.S. Modern Greek collections use the same approval-plan vendor (Oionos, in Athens), and each has the same basic collecting profile, we are probably all getting more or less the same materials. Should any attempt be made to divide up collecting responsibility?

The discussion moved on to sharing cataloging projects and shared collection development. There is a question about newspapers – who is getting what? Few libraries are

collecting Greek newspapers in hard copy any more (Princeton and Harvard are the exceptions), relying on the (so far cost-free) digital versions. Nobody knows how long this free access to the full-text versions of Greek newspapers will last, or whether the back issues are being reliably archived.

Lesage is still looking, so far in vain, for the first Greek-American newspaper published, beginning in 1893 (*Νέος κόσμος*). The topic of Greek-American newspapers is of concern for everybody, since there seem to be no complete holdings of any paper at any single American library, even for such important titles as *Εθνικός κήρυξ* (National Herald). We should try to compile a list of what has been filmed or digitized, identify gaps, and try to fill in the missing issues. Paganelis noted that the Tsakopoulos Collection has a strong collection of Greek-American newspapers.

Professor Philippides stated that the archives of the Pancretan Association of America¹ will be deposited at the Maliotis Center in Boston;² arrangements are in process.

Paganelis announced that his library has many Greek duplicates, which he is willing to exchange with other libraries.

Leich's 2-year term as chair of the Library Committee is over as of this conference, his successor being Anthony Oddo from Yale.

5.30-7.30 pm.: Panel: Library Collections and Bibliographic Projects

Michaela Karampini-Iatrou (independent scholar, Athens) gave a paper, "The Multiple Uses of Cavafy's Library," based on her research using the 964-volume personal book collection of poet Constantine Cavafy, located at the Laboratory for Modern Greek Studies (Σπουδαστήριο νεοελληνικών σπουδών) in Athens. She has examined Cavafy's handwritten corrections and marginalia in a number of published volumes of his own poetry, and noted that many books given to Cavafy as gifts (often with inscriptions from their authors) were never read—the pages had never been cut. Her goal in the project, which still continues, is to seek out additional implications for Cavafy's biography, based on his personal library.

Dia Philippides (Boston College) presented "Found in Translation: Modern Greek Literature Without Borders," on efforts to expand her 1990 bibliography of English translations of works of Modern Greek literature.³ A second edition is in preparation. The tool is useful not only as a bibliography in and of itself (particularly for finding translations published in periodicals and collections), but also as a way of tracking the spread of interest in Modern Greek

¹ <http://www.pancretan.org/>

² <http://maliotis.org/>

³ Dia M. L. Philippides, *A Census of Modern Greek Literature: Checklist of English-language sources useful in the Study of Modern Greek Literature, 1824-1987* (New Haven: Modern Greek Studies Assn., 1990).

literature throughout the English-speaking world. Philippides showed statistics on the most frequently translated authors, which countries publish how many English translations of Modern Greek literary works, and the number of different translations into English of the most popular Greek authors (the big four being Constantine Cavafy, George Seferis, Odysseas Elytis, and Yannis Ritsos).

Anthony Oddo (Yale U. Library) spoke on the development of Modern Greek collections at Yale University Library over the past 35 years. Yale's library was relatively late getting into the Modern Greek field, and funding has fluctuated year by year, sometimes dramatically. Since Yale is heavily dependent on its endowment for income for funding acquisitions and staffing, the years since the financial downturn have not been good. Yale is actively participating in the "Borrow Direct" ILL program with other Ivy League libraries, which to a certain extent mitigates against the effects of Yale's decreased acquisition funding.

Harold Leich (Library of Congress) gave a report on improvements 2006-2011 in Modern Greek collection development and public service at the Library of Congress. 2006 saw an acquisitions trip to Athens (September), the choice of a new approval plan vendor (Oionos) with whose performance LC is very pleased, and participation in a Modern Greek resource sharing conference (December) at the Gennadius Library in Athens. A 2009 merger of acquisitions and cataloging units along geographic lines has improved productivity in both processes. New exchanges have been established, especially in Cyprus, to bring in materials by non-commercial publishers. Public service has been expanded by increasing use by the academic community and the general public of the "QuestionPoint/Ask-a-Librarian" digital reference service. It is not yet known how much of a budget cut LC will be subject to for fiscal year 2012.
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