



Newsletter



OIC RESEARCH CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE

Under the patronage of the Prime Minister of Turkey
Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan:
International Inaugural Conference launched the
"1400th Year of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an"

History congresses

"Islamic Civilisation in the Balkans" (Skopje)

"Islamic Civilisation in Volga-Ural" (Ufa)

Islamic Civilisation in the Mediterranean (Lefkoşa/Nicosia)

"The 1864 Caucasian Migration: War and Exile" (Istanbul)

"The Ottoman State from Söğüt to Three Continents"
(Söğüt, Bilecik)

"Astronomers in Islam and their contribution to
world history of science" (Istanbul)

"Arabs and Turks in the Path of History and Civilisation"
(Damascus)

UNESCO-IRCICA Seminar on "Turkish-African Relations:
Past Routes, Reciprocal Emigration and Present Heritage"
(Istanbul)

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General Meeting on UN-OIC Cooperation held at IRCICA

The Governing Board of IRCICA met on its 25th session

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Symposium on Female Calligraphers

Exhibition of Tiles and Ceramics by fine arts students
at Bilecik University

"Kat'ı" - Paper cuttings exhibition

Meetings, cooperation

New publications

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EDITORIAL

IRCICA Newsletter reaches its readers with two issues combined together. The frequency of the events we organized during the Summer and Fall forced us to publish nos. 82 and 83 in a single edition. This was exceptional; its periodicity will be back to regular in 2011.

The last quarter of 2010 in particular was marked by several activities resulting from IRCICA's initiatives taken in different areas. One of them was the launching of the "1400th Year of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an" on the date of 26 Ramadan 1431 H / 5 September 2010 corresponding to the Laylat al-Qadr. To mark the occasion, we convened an International Inaugural Conference, which was held under the patronage and in the presence of H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey. We are most honoured by the support and encouragement that leaders of the Muslim world have extended to this event. H.E. Maître Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, Chairman of the 11th Islamic Summit Conference, and Chairman of the OIC Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC), sent a Message which was received with gratitude by the conference participants and IRCICA. Two weeks later, on 11-13 October, the COMIAC held its Ninth Session under the Chairmanship of H.E. Maître Abdoulaye Wade, in Dakar, capital of Senegal. During that period I was accorded an audience by the President in his Office, whereby I presented him with our recent publications and outlined recent progress recorded in IRCICA's activities, in particular, the results and recommendations of the inaugural conference of the 1400th Anniversary program.

Since we are covering the latter in detail in this Newsletter, I will only add here that in this endeavour we aimed to create a joint forum to respond to the invitation formulated by the OIC's Council of Foreign Ministers during its 2010 session held last May in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) for the Member States and the OIC subsidiary and affiliated institutions to commemorate this anniversary during 2010-2011 with all means. The inaugural conference succeeded in paving the way for the Member States' and concerned to contribute towards conducting a beneficial and efficient commemoration program. We gave importance to inviting to this event Muslims' unions and associations based outside the Member States. Furthermore, as underlined by IRCICA and by the participants, the Year's activities also aim to address a global audience including non-Muslims: to make the Holy Qur'an understood correctly and carry its message across peoples and cultures.

During the period under review our Centre has implemented a variety of congresses and seminars dealing with history of international relations, history of civilization, science and culture, including the congresses on Islamic Civilization in the Balkans and in Volga-Ural region which were held in Macedonia and Bashkortostan respectively, the congress on Islamic Civilisation in the Mediterranean which was held in Turkish Cypriot State, the congress on Arab-Turkish relations, and congresses about specific themes of history that are of relevance for Muslim world history such as the joint UNESCO-IRCICA seminar on "Turkish-African Relations: Past Routes, Reciprocal Emigration and Present Heritage" and the conference on the 1864 Caucasian Migration. On history of science, the congress on Astronomers in Islam brought out interesting contributions.

In the context of our activities in the area of Islamic arts, in November we coordinated the finalization of another series of training courses in the art of calligraphy involving its different writing styles. The Governing Board of IRCICA devoted part of the opening ceremony of its 25th session convened at the Centre, to the presentation of calligraphy diplomas (Ijaza) by the calligraphy masters to the trainees having successfully completed their courses. I would like to record with pleasure that as of today, 71 calligraphers from 23 countries – from within and outside the Muslim world – have received calligraphy diplomas through the programs IRCICA coordinated over the years. This program, together with the calligraphy competitions IRCICA organises once every three years, produced tangible results: a number of calligraphers having received awards in competitions and / or Ijaza in the past programs have become recognized calligraphers and are teaching calligraphy. These developments indicate the enlargement of interest in Islamic calligraphy world-wide.

The 25th session of the Governing Board of IRCICA, a body composed of ten scholarly and cultural personalities elected from the Member States, has approved our work program proposed for 2011 which will next be submitted to the 12th Islamic Summit Conference to be held mid-March 2011 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. I would like to conclude thanking all institutions and individuals from around the world who are following and participating in our activities. Their interest has always been a source of encouragement for us.

Dr. Halit Eren



Under the patronage of the Prime Minister of Turkey
H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan:

International Inaugural Conference launching the "1400th Year of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an"

Istanbul, 5 September 2010

An International Inaugural Conference was organised by IRCICA to launch a commemoration program of the passage of fourteen centuries AD since the beginning of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an. The commemoration activities will take place during the year 2010-2011 and will be organised by the relevant authorities and institutions of the OIC-IRCICA Member States, Observer States and Muslims' unions and associations across the world.

The inaugural conference was held under the patronage and in the presence of the Prime Minister of Turkey H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The Prime Minister delivered a comprehensive address at the opening ceremony.

H.E. Maitre Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, Chairman of the 11th Islamic Summit Conference, and Chairman of the OIC Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC), sent a Message to the conference which was read at the opening ceremony by H.E. Mamadou Bamba Ndiaye, Minister of Religious Affairs of Senegal.

The Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu delivered an address at the opening ceremony.

Prof. Ali Bardakoğlu, Head of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, gave a comprehensive address.

With more than 100 delegates from the OIC Member States and Observer States and representatives of Muslim communities around the world, the conference marked an auspicious launch for the commemoration program of the 1400th Year of the Revelation of the Holy Quran.

Background

The Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference at its 37th session (Dushanbe, Tajikistan, May 2010) had approved the proposal of IRCICA on declaring the year 2010-2011 as a year for the Commemoration of the passage of fourteen centuries on the revelation of the Holy



Qur'an^(*) (Resolution no. 37/6-C). The Council of Foreign Ministers invited the Member States and the OIC subsidiary and affiliated institutions to commemorate this anniversary with all means.

Launching of the program

In conformity with the OIC Foreign Ministers' decision, the commemoration program, titled "1400th Year of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an", was launched under the patronage and in the presence of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey H.E. Mr. Recep Tayip Erdoğan, with an International Inaugural Conference convened in Istanbul on Sunday 26 Ramadan 1431H / 5 September 2010, date corresponding to the Laylat al-Qadr.

The conference brought together ministers from the OIC Member States and Observer States together with specialists from universities, heads and members of governmental and non-governmental organisations, and representatives of Muslim communities all over the world. The conference was at the same time the first activity organised in the context of the program. Statements were given by the participating ministers, heads of institutions, representatives of Muslim communities.

The working paper presented by IRCICA defined the objectives of the Year taking into consideration suggestions by institutions and specialists from around the Muslim world engaged in research, educational and cultural activities in the study of the Holy Qur'an and

the experiences of IRCICA through its own research and publications relating to copies of the Quran, translations and exegeses of the Quran, history of the printing of the Quran, its monitoring Qur'anic studies all over the world, and other activities in this area that are part of its mandate.

Objectives

In the conducive environment created from the beginning of the Qur'anic revelation 1400 years ago, the civilization of Islam developed and spread across four continents with

concentrations mainly in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the Iberian peninsula, and eastern Europe. Mergers and interactions of this civilization with local cultures created a diversity of traditions, developments of urban centers, sciences and know-how, languages and arts that made the richness of its living heritage.

The Qur'an's message of peace, compassion and tolerance and its emphasis on learning, knowledge and science, are necessary for entire humanity at all times. World peace depends on understanding and achieving these eternal values and principles. Explaining them to believers and to non-believers, making them part of public knowledge, contributing to their application, filling knowledge gaps, correcting misunderstandings and erroneous opinions about Islam and about Muslims, are duties to be fulfilled in the service of the Qur'an.

"1400th Year of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an" aims to contribute in this direction by way of scholarly, educational, cultural and artistic activities that would highlight the

meanings of the Qur'an on various subjects and disseminate the results of these and other similar existing activities worldwide. The Year's program is conceived at international level, for the 2010-2011 period. Some activities, depending on their nature, would continue beyond that.

The Year is given a multi-disciplinary scope engaging efforts not only from the fields of

Qur'anic sciences, related to the contents and the meanings of the Qur'an, but also from other areas concerning the history of the dissemination and the learning of the Qur'an by means of its copies, its translations in world's languages and dialects, and through the arts and techniques which evolved around it.

The International Inaugural Conference held on 5 September launched the program of the "1400th Year of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an" in a functional manner as it constituted itself a joint platform of reflection and consultation on the ways of commemorating the Year in the most appropriate, useful and efficient manner. The activities to be devoted to the Year by countries and by organisations will altogether form the first program in its field to involve the OIC members, observers and the Muslim communities across the world.



The Prime Minister of Turkey Mr. Erdoğan was presented a copy of the "Mushaf of Qatar" by the Minister of Waqfs and Islamic Affairs of Qatar Mr. Qawari

^(*) Resolution no. 37/6-C, section A, para 11, "Approves the suggestion of IRCICA on declaring the year 2010-2011 as a year for the Commemoration of the passage of fourteen centuries on the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, and invites the Member States and the OIC subsidiary and affiliated institutions to commemorate this anniversary with all means."

Following the opening ceremony, the conference continued with its working session, under the chairmanship of Mr. Faruk Çelik, Minister of State of the Republic of Turkey. The working session deliberated on the following subjects:

- a. Principles, scope, perspective and guidelines of the Year's program
- b. Possible events and activities
- c. Activities that are already implemented, planned and proposed by the Member States, national, regional and international organizations
- d. Modalities of organisation, implementation, cooperation, communication and highlighting of the results of the Year's activities.

A total of 25 presentations and statements were delivered during the working session on behalf of the Member States and Muslim communities.

Eight ministers took the floor, representing Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Macedonia, Mauritania, Palestine, Senegal, Sudan, and Turkey; high officials from the ministries, state departments for religious affairs, of the Member States also took the floor. An outline of the proceedings is given below, where the presentations are arranged according to the alphabetical order of the countries.

Mr. Ramiz Zekaj, Director General, Albanian Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation, Tirana, pointed out that today Albanians are settled not only in Albania but also in Macedonia, Kosovo and even Serbia. "Albanians have been interested in Qur'anic studies since they adopted Islam; they rendered considerable services to Qur'anic sciences. Until the beginning of 20th century the Qur'an was not translated into Albanian. Interest in reading the Qur'an is still growing today. ... Speaking of Qur'anic studies, I would like to underline that the King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an

is an important institution. It renders significant services to Qur'anic studies. I would like to take this opportunity also to thank IRCICA here for its studies in this area."

Mr. Bouzeid Boumedienne, Director of Culture, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Awqaf of Algeria, gave information to the audience on the activities being carried out in Algeria. An international competition for the memorization of the Qur'an is ongoing, with the participation of 53 children. "We are trying to keep alive the tradition of memorizing and reciting the Holy Qur'an. We are trying to match old traditions with new technologies. This synthesis of old and new offers us a new model, one that is advanced with respect to form and content." Mr. Boumedienne then touched upon the question of the differences observed in the recitation and explanation of the Qur'an. "In certain countries we see excesses in the reading,

whereby some are trying to develop local methods; this is not advisable. We should underscore and benefit from the richness of our past. Variations in reciting the Qur'an must be preserved; in Africa, in Morocco, in Turkey, this diversity is preserved." Mr. Bouzeid Boumedienne also referred to the aesthetical dimension of Qur'an copies; "Achievements in calligraphy in copying the Qur'an must be underlined. The successes recorded in Turkey in this field since

Ottoman times are praiseworthy."

H.E. Mr. Hidayat Orujov, Chairman, State Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Work with Religious Associations, underlined the significance of the conference in bringing all Muslim countries together which would help strengthen their solidarity. He said "As was pointed out by late President Heydar Aliyev in 1994, the religion of Islam has for centuries formed the basis of the spiritual existence of Muslim peoples and enabled them to acquire a place in the world. In Azerbaijan, the Holy



Mr. Ramiz Zekaj



Mr. Bouzeid Boumedienne



H.E. Mr. Hidayat Orujov



H.E. Mr. Shahjahan Miah

Qur'an is our guide towards progress in the path of God; this path we followed until now and this path we shall follow in future. Perhaps one of the main reasons, maybe the first reason why we are facing problems today is that we have not been able to fully understand and accurately make known to others the contents and the principles of our religion, particularly of our Holy Book. Though Muslims are divided into a number of sects the Qur'an as the sole divine source unites them. Today we have to understand and make known our Holy Book at least as precisely as fourteen hundred years ago. ... In order that brotherhood is strengthened and confidence is built in the Muslim world, we must give importance to wider diffusion of the truth of Islam. In this regard, we consider the Organisation of the Islamic Conference as a significant step and a great opportunity in this direction." Mr. Orujov recommended that "For the Holy Qur'an be understood and learnt correctly, there is a need to promote scholarly publications to be prepared by specialists from the Muslim countries. For that, no doubt, a big task is incumbent upon the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and its institutions." Mr. Orujov presented to IRCICA a beautiful edition of the Holy Qur'an copied in artistic calligraphy under the direction of the President of Azerbaijan H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, as a souvenir of the conference.



H.E. Mr. Shahjahan Miah,

Minister of State for Religious Affairs, Bangladesh, expressed his sincere thanks, on behalf of the government and the people of Bangladesh and himself, to the Prime Minister of Turkey H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who gave his patronage to the event and to IRCICA which organised the meeting. The Minister said that the 1400th anniversary of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an is significant not only for Muslims but for all humanity. "For 1400 years now peoples and countries are enlightened by the light of the Qur'an. In Bangladesh which won its independence in 1971 after a revolution, 85 % of the population are Muslims. We

have 300 000 mosques and tens of thousands of madrasas. The Government of Bangladesh provides all kind of support to these institutions. Around 3800 copies of the Qur'an and books on Qur'anic subjects have been published until now in Bangladesh comprising Qur'an exegeses, books on hadith, encyclopedias and biographies of Islamic scholars. Thousands of madrasas offer courses on recitation, interpretation and memorization of the Qur'an. Most of our universities and all Islamic universities have undergraduate and graduate programs in Qur'anic studies. They also offer PhD programs to study the Qur'an under its different aspects. The information media broadcast special programs relating to Qur'an exegesis. The people of Bangladesh are entirely ready to commemorate the 1400th anniversary of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an. We have planned to publish books and journals, organise seminars, prepare radio and TV programs that highlight this anniversary. I should also mention that on

the occasion of the 1400th year of the revelation of the Qur'an, Islamic Publishing institution will publish a three-volume Encyclopedia of the Holy Qur'an.

Mr. Şabanali Ahmet, Head of the Supreme Islamic Council of Bulgaria, said that in Bulgaria, similarly to many other Balkan countries, after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire Muslims entered into an effort to maintain their faith and

preserve their identity. "This was not possible until the 1990s; in socialist times the people had difficulties even in finding copies of the Qur'an to read. At present, services relating to the Qur'an are being established in Bulgaria drawing from the experiences of other countries, in particular Turkey." The speaker then gave data on these services: 600 course programs were instituted last summer to teach the Qur'an. A school for the memorization of the Qur'an has been active for some years. "Among countries of the European Union, Bulgaria has the largest Muslim population. However in a country which



Mr. Şabanali Ahmet



Sheikh Ahmed Issa Hassan Elmasarawy



Mr. Alhaj Muhammad L. Touray



Mr. Ahmet Hacrosman

has become full member of the European Union, Muslims' problems grow day by day. Taking the opportunity of our participation in this international platform, I would like to give you the following information: especially during the last three to four months, there have been problems between state authorities and our Council."

Sheikh Ahmed Issa Hassan Elmasarawy from al-Azhar University, Egypt, spoke of the methods of memorizing the Qur'an. He recommended that the "Rabbani" method be followed, this being the method taught by Angel Gabriel to Prophet Mohammed. The Qur'an was recited before it was copied in writing, therefore the method of its recitation is important.

Mr. Alhaj Muhammad L. Touray, President of the Supreme Islamic Council of The Gambia, pointed to the importance of the conference as a platform of cooperation for the development of new strategies. "Islam expanded rapidly in a short period of time, grew with the contributions of peoples from different nationalities and with different languages, and founded one of the world's greatest civilizations. The formation of such a great civilization was made possible by the Qur'an, it is a miracle of the Qur'an. From a small community, there grew a large community and a great civilization. This reality must be underlined and its meanings must be researched. ... We must try to understand the policies applied by our Prophet, follow the key to his strategies; this key was the Holy Qur'an. The Prophet invited everybody to adopt Islam and while doing so he was inspired by the Qur'an. What we need today is to understand the Qur'an in the way the companions the Prophet understood it. We need to grasp how the Qur'an was perceived at that time, and our future depends on our understanding of the Qur'an."

Mr. Ahmet Haciosman, Deputy in the Greek Parliament, representing the Turkish Muslim Community in Greece, said that the conference was going to leave an indelible trace in the memories of the participants and expressed his appreciation to IRCICA for having convened it. "Today the Prime Minister of Turkey gave an important message to us, to the Muslim world. We have to be cautious and question ourselves: are we fulfilling our duty towards the Holy Book? Allah's blessings are numerous. Are we using them properly, as is due? ... Surely the messages given here today will illuminate our path towards the future. Today in this conference we are two colleagues representing

the Turks in the Greek Parliament. Our distinguished Mufti is also with us. In Western Thrace there are 150 000 Muslim Turks. Teaching of the Holy Qur'an is done by our elected Muftis, in mosques."

H.E. Mr. Muhammed Ali Taskhiri, Secretary General, World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought, Islamic Republic of Iran, evoked the fundamental universal aspects of the Qur'anic message as the last message sent by Allah to his servants. Thus the Holy Qur'an completes the message of Allah as the ultimate message to human beings.

Mr. Ammar Mousa Taher al-Mosawi, Director General, Religious Education Office in Diwan of Sheii Waqf, Iraq, said that fourteen centuries the Qur'an is being read in homes and in mosques. "We live around these verses, which guide our lives. At the beginning of some Souras there are some letters the meaning of which is not known to us; scholars say there are profound meanings to them. ... In order to know the secrets of the Qur'an, we have to fully observe its orders in our lives. This Holy Book will be preserved eternally. This Book leads all humanity to Allah and to Paradise. While speaking of the Qur'an, we should refer not only to the past; it does not speak of the past only but speaks at the same time of the present and the future. Therefore we should benefit from the Qur'an in building the future."

Mr. Salih Samarrai, Chairman of the Islamic Center Japan, expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the OIC Member States for their decision to commemorate the 1400th year of the revelation of the Qur'an; he also thanked IRCICA for having made the suggestion in that direction. He gave information on the activities that the Islamic Center of Japan is organising in Japan and also in Korea. Mr. Samarrai pointed to the difficulty in organising such programs in countries where Muslims are in minority. He said that publishing translations and exegeses and promoting Qur'anic education in such countries would be a great service rendered. Mr. Samarrai also gave information on the Muslim community in their region; he said that Islam spreads from the North to the South and that Japan has around 400 mosques.

Mr. Abd al-Karim Salim al-Khasawnah, Mufti of Jordan, pointed to the universal principles and teachings of the Holy Qur'an. He said that the Holy Qur'an brings peoples together



H.E. Mr. Muhammed Ali Taskhiri



Mr. Ammar Mousa Taher al-Mosawi



Mr. Salih Samarrai



Mr. Abd al-Karim Salim al-Khasawnah



H.E. Mr. Mutlaq Rashid al-Qarawi

as exemplified in the present conference. "From the statements made until now, I can speak of a revival in Islam. ... As we all belong to the same Ummah, we must not distinguish between members of this Ummah. ... Just as each nation and each person is being subjected to a test since the earlier times, we are all being subjected to tests today as well. Only in this way can we distinguish good evil"

H.E. Mr. Mutlaq Rashid al-Qarawi, Assistant Undersecretary of External Relations, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs of Kuwait, spoke on behalf of H.E. Mr. Rashid Abdulmuhsin Al-Hamad, Deputy Prime Minister for Legal Affairs, Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Kuwait. Recalling, on one hand, the attacks being directed against the Holy Qur'an and Islam at different places of the world and, observing, on the other, that in many places there is a decadence in the understanding of the Holy Qur'an whereby people perceive it as a text and do not make efforts to grasp its meanings and apply its orders, he said that the Muslim world has to renew its commitment to its duties and responsibilities towards the Holy Qur'an. "We must understand and obey to the Qur'an in the senses it was sent by Allah and understood and practiced by our Prophet." Mr. Qarawi spoke of the activities being carried out in Kuwait. "The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs makes all efforts possible in the country towards the printing of the Qur'an and diffusion of its message worldwide. At the Ministry we are working continuously to institute new venues where the Qur'an would be recited and explained. We have developed a project for the youth in particular to come together and read the Qur'an. We will benefit from any effort we make to better understand the Qur'an. The Qur'an will be read, understood correctly, and with the strengthening of Islamic thought Islam will regain its original status. This is the main goal of our institutions. I would like to mention that in the field of Qur'anic education, 80 course programs have recently been opened where over 2000 students have learnt to read the Qur'an. This year our Ministry has established a Centre for Qur'anic Studies which is also in charge of printing copies of the Qur'an."

H.E. Mr. Hadi Nezir, Minister of State of Macedonia, said that all Muslims are brothers and thanked IRCICA Director General Dr. Eren for convening the meeting. H.E. the Minister told the audience the following anecdote: "an American professor

studied the Holy Qur'an for 25 years and then converted to Islam; telling his story to his students, he said 'I adopted Islam after reading the Qur'an; had I looked at Muslims only I would never do so'. That is to say, reading and understanding the Qur'an is not sufficient; we have to apply the Qur'an's principles in our life and thus serve as example to other peoples. Though we lived under communism for fifty years the call for prayers from our minarets never stopped. We never failed to read the Qur'an in our mosques, we will never fail to do so in future and will obey to it until eternity."

H.E. Mr. Ahmed Ould Neini, Minister of Islamic Affairs and Education, Islamic Republic of Mauritania, reaffirmed Mauritania's readiness to endeavour in the service of the Holy Qur'an and the Islamic civilization. The Minister pointed out that the Qur'anic message must be diffused further, lecture and recitation of the Qur'an must be given emphasis. "In my country, children of very young age succeed in memorizing the Qur'an. We have a radio station that broadcasts recitations of the Qur'an on 24-hour basis. Whenever we see belief in the Qur'an weaken in hearts and minds, we should pay attention to it and multiply our efforts. I would like to thank Turkey for its efforts in this direction."

H.E. Mr. Mahmoud al-Habbash, Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, Palestine, referred to the devoted and self-sacrificing struggle Palestinians are leading for the cause of Al-Quds, the cause of Islam. "Under the hard conditions imposed by occupation, embargo and oppression, we have been able to publish a new edition of the Beit al-Makdis Qur'an copy. Thus efforts to reproduce a facsimile edition of the Beit al-Makdis copy have enabled us to prepare it for printing."

Mr. Murat Yusuf, Mufti of the Muslims in Romania, on behalf of the Muslim community in Romania and himself, thanked IRCICA for having convened the conference in the sacred Laylat al-Qadr of Ramadan. "Thus the Muslim countries on one hand, and the Muslims living in minorities elsewhere on the other, all came together in the Otoman capital which in my opinion corresponds very well to the order of Allah in the Holy Qur'an that reads 'And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided.'" [Al-i Imran, 3/103]

Mr. Muhammed Salim bin Shedid al-Aoufi, Secretary General, King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an,



H.E. Mr. Hadi Nezir



H.E. Mr. Ahmed Ould Neini



H.E. Mr. Mahmoud al-Habbash



Mr. Murat Yusuf



Mr. Muhammed Salim bin al-Aoufi

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, said that the King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an, located in Medina, the place of origin of Islam, endeavours in the service of the Holy Qur'an with the support of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdallah Bin Abdulaziz. "We instituted faculty departments, established programs, organised competitions at national and international levels, the most noteworthy among them being the King Abdulaziz Competition. Many competitions were held at national level. We have a 24-hour radio station and a TV channel for the Qur'an: In addition, we have a TV channel that broadcasts programs relating to the Suna (tradition) of the Prophet. ... The copies of the Qur'an and translations of the Qur'an published at the Medina Complex are distributed worldwide; tens of millions of copies are distributed in Muslim countries every year; a total of 260 million Qur'an copies were distributed until now. Scholars from various part of the world cooperate in this complex. In a few months we shall organise a conference in our Complex..." Referring to the differences in the recitation and the orthography of the Qur'an, "As the Minister in the Sudanese delegation has mentioned, the differences in the recitation and the orthography of copies of the Qur'an must be preserved..."

Mr. Haroon Kala, President, Board of Trustees, AwqafSA, South Africa, recalled that the 300th anniversary of Islam in South Africa was commemorated recently, and that the experience gained in that commemoration would now serve in commemorating the 1400th anniversary of the beginning of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an. Mr. Kala formulated two suggestions of the delegation of South Africa to IRCICA: first, that an institute be established by OIC and IRCICA to work in the area of Qur'an exegesis, and that this institute coordinate the editing of a new exegesis of the Qur'an which would take into consideration the difficulties and problems facing Muslims in our time and which would be arranged according to thematic headings such as social justice, economy, environment, etc. The second suggestion was that efforts be intensified to promote the teaching of Arabic in non- Arabic speaking countries.

H.E. Mr. Azhar al-Tigani, Minister of Awqaf of Sudan, said that in order to protect their societies from violence and extremism, Muslim countries' best guide is their religion, Islam. "Islam is a religion of moderation. We see that Islam calls us to moderation in all aspects of our life. Especially

in the present time, when globalization carries a number of negative elements in it, we have to keep the dynamism of our youth by advising them on the basis of the Qur'an. We must benefit from the activities of institutions such as IRCICA." The Minister said that the Qur'an has to made known to all humanity, and made recommendations on activities to be undertaken during the Year and afterwards. "The message of the Qur'an must be understood wholeheartedly; states must make an effort to promote the lecture of the Qur'an; competitions for the recitation and understanding of the Qur'an must be multiplied at national and international levels. Furthermore, an effort must be devoted to preserving the different recitation methods developed in different regions. Qur'anic studies must be promoted by setting up departments with specially designed curricula in universities. Academic programs must be established, seminars must be instituted. I would like to invite IRCICA to direct a research project on the universality of the Qur'an's message. For example, an analysis of this message from the point of view of the psychology of Qur'an readers can be undertaken, and this psychological analysis can become part of modern scholarship in Qur'anic studies. IRCICA can guide such works with the support of the Member States. ... I would like to thank Turkey for playing a central role in promoting the Islamic civilisation."

Mr. Ahmed al-Mofti, a calligrapher from Syria, praised the project undertaken by IRCICA whereby the Centre publishes editions of the Qur'an copies dating from the time of Caliph Othman. He said that this reminds us of the Qur'anic studies that were done at that time. He suggested that a council be formed to examine existing exegeses and correct distorted and incorrect interpretations they might contain.

Mr. Faruk Çelik, Minister of State of Turkey, informed the participants of the activities of commemoration undertaken in Turkey to commemorate the 1400th anniversary of the revelation of the Qur'an. "Until now 500.000 copies of the Qur'an and its Turkish translation were distributed free. Messages highlighting the Qur'an Year were publicized on 2.500 billboards, with 500.000 posters. Seventeen symposia, twenty panels, and 1.227 lectures were organised in different cities. 1.650 programs of Qur'an recitation were broadcast, 959 competitions and 804 other programs were shown on TV channels. 27.147 Qur'an recitation programs were done, among



Mr. Murat Yusuf



Mr. Ahmed al-Mofti



Mr. Nevzat Valçintaş



Mr. Ahmet Şişman



Mr. İbrahim Şerifi

others. These activities will continue in the coming months.” Mr. Çelik expressed his appreciation to all representatives of the states and associations participating in the conference for their contributions.

Mr. Nevzat Yalçıntaş, former deputy in the Turkish Parliament, suggested that a conference as this one could be repeated each year, or at least once every two years. Then he emphasized the importance of the mosque as a place to learn to read the Qur’an. “The mosque and the teaching of the Qur’an are inseparable from each other. ... Today there are mosques in all major capitals; however there is none in Athens, where live hundreds of thousands of Muslims. ... This has been an excellent meeting where everybody has been able to make suggestions. I hope it will be renewed in the coming years.”

Mr. Ahmet Şişman, from the Holy Qur’an 1400 Platform, Turkey, gave information on the activities being held within the framework of the commemoration program launched under the supervision of the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Turkey. He expressed thanks to IRCICA for carrying the commemoration initiative to international level. Mr. Şişman pointed out that an important aspect of the activities organised in Turkey is the participation of NGOs, and that therefore, all authorities and institutions concerned and pertinent NGOs came together to form the Holy Qur’an 1400 Platform. As to the international aspect of the commemoration, it aims to enlarge it to the entire Muslim world. “The 1400th year is one year among the others, but what we aim by this is to make a new beginning, a good beginning, a regular and strong beginning.”

Mr. İbrahim Şerifi, the Mufti of Muslims of Western Thrace, said that the importance his community attaches to this conference was evident in the wide composition of the delegation attending it. “We are 150.000 Muslims living in Western Thrace for more than eighty years in full attachment to our values. I can say with confidence that we are living in conformity with the Qur’an. 70% of Western Thrace population are able to read the Qur’an from its original Arabic. Our customs and traditions continue in a way that is conform to the traditions of the Prophet. In the Komotini province where I work, we are teaching the Qur’an to 3000 primary school pupils in 95 course programs.”



H.E.Mr. Azhar al-Tigani (L.)

The conference, having heard the statements and presentations made and taken note of the Working Paper presented by IRCICA, formulated suggestions on scholarly, artistic, educational, and other activities that can take place at national, regional and global levels. These are outlined below.

Organisational modalities: authorities and institutions

The authorities and institutions to collaborate in the program of the “1400th Year of the Revelation of the Holy Qur’an” are: the pertinent Ministries and religious authorities in OIC Member States and Observer States; religious representations and associations of Muslim communities in non member states; universities’ departments of Islamic studies, faculties of letters, faculties of fine arts, research institutions and NGOs involved in these areas, the press and public media, specialists of the sciences and the various arts connected with the study and the diffusion of the Qur’an. Engagement and cooperation of civil society, information media, cultural and artistic publications as well as TV channels, is a necessary condition to help widen the audience and the impact of the activities. It was suggested that countries designate their focal points to communicate with IRCICA so that information on their events and activities be included in IRCICA’s archive/records and consequently, in the report of the program.

Types and themes of activities

Scholarly, artistic, educational, and other activities to be devoted to the Holy Qur’an on the 1400th year of the beginning of its revelation, and which can be organised at national, regional and global levels, can include the following.

1. Types of activities:

1 Symposiums, conferences and lectures to be held in the Muslim world and beyond, including the major European, Asian and American capitals. These events would be organised in cooperation with major media and TV organs and with universities (their departments of theology, letters, history, their divisions of Islamic studies, comparative religions, Middle Eastern/ African/Asian studies, among others)

2 Additions to the contents of lectures and course materials in the relevant departments of universities to highlight the special occasion of the Year

3 Posting highlights on the Year in websites about Islam and the Muslim world; establishing a special website on this occasion.

4 Holding exhibitions in major museums and libraries

5 Broadcasting TV-radio program series, publishing special issues of major cultural periodicals

6 Promoting the recitation of the Qur’an by various activities including:

i. enhancing recitation courses already conducted in the Member States by special lectures highlighting the 1400th year of the beginning of the revelation



ii. expanding the competitions for the recitation of the Qur'an existing at national and international levels in order to highlight this occasion

iii. organising Qur'an recitation sessions by teams to travel to different venues within and outside the Muslim world; holding sessions for non Muslim audiences at cultural centers and enriching them with lectures/interpretations by scholars

7 Examining the translations of the Holy Qur'an, organising congresses with this aim

8 Instituting award competitions to acknowledge remarkable individual and institutional contributions in:

i. studies (through publications) and audio-visual media products and services (such as documentaries, archives), especially on themes of universal relevance in our time, such as ensuring correct understanding of the meanings of the Qur'an, inter-faith dialogue, etc.

ii. arts and skills developed around the copying of the Qur'an (such as calligraphy, gilding, illumination, binding, inscriptions and applications of verses on various materials)

iii. other achievements in all areas that serve and celebrate the meanings of the Qur'an

9 Promoting the Qur'an museum, by

i. raising awareness and increasing public knowledge about the Qur'an museum, making better known the existing Qur'an

museums and other museums and libraries/archives holding collections of copies of the Qur'an

ii. drawing a roster or a guide to these institutions

iii. supporting the establishment of such museums or library departments at places they do not exist which would help to bring together and preserve the Qur'an copies found at those places

iv. working towards establishing a virtual Qur'an museum on Internet for the reference of all those interested

10 Diffusing programs on major international TV channels and in cooperation with academic institutions in order to generate long distance interactive dialogue and question-and-answer sessions addressing various groups of society – faith communities, students, etc. with the aim of correcting misunderstandings and misinformation about the Qur'an

2. Themes of the activities:

The themes are to be selected from a vast field of knowledge and experience. Examples are:

1 On Qur'anic concepts and teachings and their eternal significance: The Holy Qur'an and the Prophet; The Holy Qur'an as source of civilization; The human being, human rights and tolerance in the Qur'an; Science and learning in the Qur'an; The Qur'an as a source of solutions to present day problems; Misunderstandings and misinformation about the meanings of the Qur'an

2 On the history of the spread of the Qur'an across the world: The oldest and old copies of the Holy Qur'an, making them better known through studies and publications; studying and teaching the history of the printing of the Qur'an; History of translations and exegeses of the Qur'an (bibliographic studies)

3 Relating to fields of studies about the Qur'an: Records and rosters of institutions engaged in the printing and diffusion of the Qur'an, in the study and teaching of the Qur'an, in the conservation of its copies, and other work in the service of the Qur'an

4 On the arts related to the copies of the Qur'an: History of development and significance of the arts related to the Qur'an; Case studies, regional cases, etc. in the history of arts related to



the Qur'an; Inscriptions of Qur'anic verses in architecture and archaeology.

Diffusion and conservation of the results of the program:

1 "1400th Year of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an" is expected to contribute to promoting religious and spiritual life, public and formal education, social solidarity and cooperation among peoples in the Muslim world and beyond and to inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue. The "1400th Year of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an" thus promises to bear a wealth of products in the form of publications, documentary, audio-visual recordings, artworks, etc. Part of which would be additions to sections in libraries, archives and museums. Other results expected to be of long-term benefit include:

- i. greater awareness of the public as well as professionals concerned on the institutions of scholarly research and education engaged in various types of activities in the study and diffusion of the Holy Qur'an
- ii. exchanges and collaboration among the institutions engaged in research, teaching and other activities in the service of the Holy Qur'an
- iii. promotion and encouragement of the studies, authorship, education, arts, etc. relating to the Holy Qur'an, among others.

2 Diffusion and conservation of these results and their mobilization for continued benefit in the service of the Holy Qur'an require that all parties participating in the program provide a regular inflow of information to the archive at IRCICA about their activities and also publicise them in their relevant websites and by other means in order to increase their impact. Regular exchange of information and regular contacts will help to ensure the permanence and continuity of the outcomes of the Year, because in this way international cooperation can be deployed to publish them, to co-organise their expansion into larger projects, to build partnerships in institutionalizing them in the form of long-term research and activity programs, among countless other potential benefits that can thus continue to serve the objectives of the Year even well after its commemoration.

Concluding remarks

State Minister of Turkey Mr. Faruk Çelik, who chaired the working session of the conference, and Dr. Halit Eren, Director General of IRCICA, gave concluding remarks. The Governor of Istanbul Mr. Hüseyin Avni Mutlu greeted the audience expressing congratulations on the occasion of Laylat al-Qadr. The concluding remarks are outlined below.

Mr. Faruk Çelik, Minister of State of Turkey, Chairman of the working session, said that what was being done to commemorate the Year was described during the session, and that future events to be organized during the Year had to be determined. "In our country we have 90 thousand mosques; over 100 thousand permanent staff are serving in them; these figures alone indicate the density of activity in this domain".

The Minister said that the speakers at the session had made important recommendations. "In these recommendations I took note of two points: the activities must be planned in a way to have a strong impact. Everybody must know about the Qur'an. Everybody must feel it. The Qur'an is not addressed to the Muslim world alone; it addresses whole humankind. Therefore, I consider it as a duty in the service of the Qur'an to make known the Qur'an to the entire world, instead of limiting ourselves to certain regions. I believe we must see the matter from this angle. Secondly, in these activities we must make use of new means as well."

IRCICA Director General Dr. Halit Eren said: "Today, a torch has been lit here; a torch that illuminates the international side of the activities to be held in the coming year. His Excellency the Minister proposed that activities of high impact be organized. Actually this morning after the opening, we had a talk with the Head of Religious Affairs of Turkey and agreed on the principle of holding an international conference on the Holy Qur'an, not a one-day conference like this one but a conference which can perhaps look into all aspects of the Qur'an. We shall begin the related preparations as of next week. As to the present one, I would like to recall its background process, which I could not describe earlier due to time limitations. About six months ago, when the Presidency of Religious Affairs launched the Qur'an Year program, some colleagues came to us and asked what IRCICA could do. I said that we could extend an invitation to the Muslim world and raise the matter to international level. Then our suggestion was met positively by the Council of Foreign Ministers. The Council decided that the Year be commemorated in all Muslim countries." Dr. Eren affirmed IRCICA's readiness to cooperate with states, their authorities and institutions and the Muslim communities to organise events and activities during the coming period of one year. "As indicated by His Excellency the Minister, we are expecting to receive suggestions on the activities to be held during the Year, to receive proposals for joint activities, upon which we shall look into the possibility of realising them and also submit these proposals to the forthcoming OIC conferences."

Studies on the orthography of copies of the Quran

Taking into consideration the need felt, among scholarly circles in Quranic studies, to study the copies of the Quran printed in different places with respect to differences sometimes occurring in their orthography, and, taking the opportunity of the presence of scholars in Qur'anic studies at the conference of the "1400th Year of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an", IRCICA convened a meeting of experts at the sidelines of the conference where views were exchanged on the aims and modalities of studies that can be undertaken on the orthography of copies of the Holy Qur'an. The project will continue, in coordination with the authorities concerned and specialists of the Member States.

History congresses:

Fourth International Congress on Islamic Civilisation in the Balkans

Skopje, Macedonia

The Fourth International Congress on Islamic Civilisation in the Balkans (Skopje, capital city of Macedonia) was opened on 14 October 2010 under the patronage and in the presence of the President of Macedonia H.E. Mr. George Ivanov. The congress was organized jointly by IRCICA and the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (MANU). The Secretary General of OIC H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu was present at the opening ceremony of the congress. An audience from universities, cultural and academic circles attended the ceremony.

The first three congresses were held in Sofia, Bulgaria (2000), Tirana, Albania (2003) and Bucarest, Romania (2006) respectively.

The Skopje congress underlined on the whole the reality of multi-faith coexistence in the past and the present in the Balkans, in Macedonia in particular.

In his opening address Prof. Georgi Stardelov, President of MANU, emphasized that the foundations of the culture of tolerance were laid during Ottoman times and that the togetherness thus created will be preserved eternally. He said there can be no peace without inter-faith understanding and dialogue.

The Chairman of the Islamic Religious Community in Macedonia, Haji Sulejman Rexhepi said that in Macedonia there are about 700 mosques and historical monuments dating from Ottoman times and that this heritage needs to be preserved.

The Ambassador of Turkey in Skopje Mr. Gürol Sökmensüer expressed his thanks to the President of Macedonia George Ivanov on the occasion of the congress for the President's close attention to matters relating to Turks living in Macedonia and to the preservation of the Ottoman cultural heritage there.

The Director General of IRCICA Dr. Halit Eren recalled that the congress was fourth in the series organised by IRCICA under the title Islamic Civilisation in the Balkans after the first three, which were held in 2000, 2003 and 2006, in Bulgaria, Albania, and Romania, respectively. But, he said, "it is the first in other respects because it materialised, for the first time in this field of studies, a cooperation scheme between OIC-IRCICA representing fifty-seven countries, on one hand, and Macedonia on the other, with participation from all Balkan countries and from all over the world." He said that studies on the history of the Balkans had seen

considerable progress thanks to the attention directed to them through such cultural and academic activities as the present congress.

Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary General of the OIC, paid a special tribute to H.E. President Gjorge Ivanov, for honoring this meeting with his presence and active participation in his capacity as the President of Macedonia as well as an established academician. He thanked and praised the efforts of the Macedonian Academy of Science and Art and IRCICA. The Secretary General said that most countries of the world are affected and shaped by their geographical locations. "The Balkans in general, and Macedonia in particular are impacted by their geographic positions at a crucial crossroad linking the Balkan with Asia minor and beyond, from one side, and Central and West Europe from the other. It is said that the contacts between the Balkan Nations and the Arab and Muslim worlds go back to the Eighth Century and even before the Christian era. ... From the available studies regarding the quick embracing of Islam in the Balkans, one can see that those Balkan peoples who embraced Islam found in Islam many values and a way of life that suited them and delivered them from harsh circumstances they were suffering from before the Ottoman rule." In this regard he quoted the European historian Stavrianos who wrote that "the Islamic religion itself was the main factor for the quick and large acceptance of Islam." The Secretary General said that the OIC has two Balkan countries as OIC Members, Albania as a full member and Bosnia and Herzegovina as an observer. He expressed the hope that new conditions in the Balkans will revitalize the historically



Prof. Georgi Stardelov, President of MANU

acclaimed peaceful coexistence and make it a reality of the 21st century.

In his comprehensive inaugural address the President of the Republic of Macedonia H.E. Mr. Gjorge Ivanov emphasized that the cultural heritage of the Balkans, in every historical period, has testified to the complexity of life built by different people, different religious, ethnic and linguistic communities. Reviewing the periods of turmoil, instability “Two centuries prior to the collapse of Byzantium, the Balkans suffered from political instability and internal fights between the Greek, Slavic, Venetian rulers and owners. In such an atmosphere did the Ottomans and the Islamic civilization come in the Balkans. In many national histories in the Balkans, the advent of Islam and the Ottoman rule is interpreted as the beginning of a new dark period of the Balkans the Christians will never fully recover from. However, the historical facts indicate something totally different. For example, as Mark Mazover states, an expert very well familiar with the Balkan situation: the old rulers were replaced with new one. The Ottoman soldiers (both Muslims and Christians) were rewarded with property and some of the old Byzantine duties were still being practiced. Reputable Greek and Slavic families converted to Islam and became part of the Ottoman elite, some succeeded, for a short time, to retain their property without having to change their faith. The endless wars that raged in the XIV century on the Balkans were replaced with stability brought by the organized Ottoman state. ... In the 18th and 19th centuries the situation was changed. Uprisings began, new states were established. Again, there were new divisions and the Balkans became a space hard to define. After acknowledging Islam, the Balkan nations had started to think in a more tolerant way of people of other religions and different political affiliations. And there was a reaction with a desire for self-preservation. The feeling of belonging to a community and the heroic deed incentive were strengthened. This had an influence on literature, especially love poetry, folklore and epics.” President Ivanov said that in Macedonia, coexistence between Christianity and Islam can be seen almost everywhere, in the common sacred places, where both Christians and Muslims pray to God together, in the tradition of joint celebration of the most important religious holidays. “In the National Assembly, in the Government, in certain municipalities, senior officials and ordinary employees of different religions work together. ... We are experiencing renewal of the religious feelings of our citizens, Christians, Muslims, Jews. This natural reaction means return to some forgotten values, and an attempt to find new answers to modern times. It is understandable that there are reactions, sometimes concern deriving from the restoration and the new forms of religious life in Macedonia. Therefore, we must know each other better, insist on the notion that respect for one’s own religion is not an act directed against someone else. As is freedom of citizens who do not belong to a particular religion, who certainly have the

right to act contrary to religious rules, cannot and may not be understood as an attack on religion. Macedonian multiethnic and multi-confessional character does not mean that the construction of religious temples should be limited, or studying the religions should be restricted, so as not to offend the others. On the contrary, this means freedom to celebrate religion, as well as freedom not to celebrate any religion. Certainly, religion may not be imposed, and may not intimidate. To be vital, the system of belief must be open and provide an opportunity to the believers to answer adequately to the question of doubt. A strong religion does not force its believers; a strong religion attracts believers like a light in the night. Our outstanding contribution as a country in which religions, traditions and various ethnic groups cooperate in building a common home and are in quest of answers to certain eternal questions, is a proof that a better future for the region, Europe and the world is possible.”

The opening ceremony was followed by a plenary session where scholarly addresses were given by Prof. Georgi Stardelov (“Historic Meeting of Civilisations and Cultures in the Balkans”), Dr. Behjuddin Shehapi from the National Conservation Centre for Cultural Heritage, Skopje (“Islamic Cultural Heritage in Macedonia”), Dr. Halit Eren (“Pax Ottomana” in the Balkans”), President George Ivanov (“The Millet System in the Ottoman Empire”), and Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu (Concluding Remarks).

An Archaeological Exhibition, by Mr. Dragi Mitrevski-Dragica Zivkova, entitled “From the Ottoman Culture on the Skopje Castle” was opened the same day.

The sessions heard 125 papers which were selected from among 300 applications. The presentations were related to the spread and evolution of Islamic culture in the Balkans, religious coexistence, educational and cultural institutions, science and technology, architecture and urbanism, arts, social life and traditions, state and preservation of tangible and intangible Islamic heritage, academic cooperation in Balkan studies, problems encountered, issues relating to dissemination of new research, among others.



The opening of the exhibition

Fourth International Congress on Islamic Civilisation in Volga-Ural

held in Ufa, Bashkortostan

IRCICA's Fourth International Congress on Islamic Civilisation in Volga-Ural was organised jointly with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, the Government of Bashkortostan, and Bashkir State University, in Ufa, Bashkortostan, on 21-22 October 2010.

H.E. President Rustem Zakievitch Khamitov, President of Bashkortostan Republic, gave his patronage to the event and participated in the opening ceremony. The Secretary General of the OIC H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu addressed the opening ceremony.

The first two congresses in the series were held in Kazan, Tatarstan (2001, 2005) under the patronage of the State Adviser and former President of Tatarstan H.E. Mintimer Shaimiev, and the third one was held in Ufa, Bashkortostan (2008) under the patronage of the former President of Bashkortostan H.E. Murtaza Rakhimov.

A total of 140 papers were accepted for the fourth congress; due to time limitations only 82 of them were presented but all others will be taken into consideration for publication. There were participants from Germany, India, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, the Russian Federation, Tatarstan (Russian Federation), Turkey, Turkmenistan, USA, Uzbekistan.

Opening speeches were given by Prof. Zugura Rakhmatullina, Vice Prime Minister of Bashkortostan, OIC Secretary General Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu, the Supreme Mufti and Chairman of the Religious Board of Russian Muslims Mr. Talgat Tadzhutdin, and IRCICA Director General Dr. Halit Eren.

Vice Prime Minister Prof. Rakhmatullina underlined the importance of throwing light on the lesser known aspects of the deep-rooted Islamic civilization in Volga-Ural region, a subject which maintains its actuality in our time. She cited some of the late Islamic scholars, who, she said, were helping society preserve its moral and cultural values, including Miftakhedin Akmulla, Muhammed Salim Umetbaev, Ziya Kamali, Zaynulla Rasulev, Mufti Rizaeddin Fahretudinov among others. Bashkortostan Republic upholds a policy of tolerance and support of the population's ethnic and religious diversity.

The Secretary General of OIC Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu pointed out that Russia's relations with Islam and the Muslim world are deep seated and rooted in geography and history. "It is important to understand that Islam spread in Russia mainly amicably and peacefully. Muslims form a significant component of the population in the Russian Federation; Russian Muslim communities are a bridge between the Muslim world and the Russian Federation. Today after five years of Russia joining OIC

as observer member we can say that relations between Russia and the Muslim world are progressing in all fields. It is indeed heartening to see that since the end of Soviet era, Islam has gained wider public prominence. Muslims have engaged in a recovery of their national and cultural heritage; mosques have been reopened or rebuilt, and contacts with other Muslims established."

Mufti Talgat Tadzhutdin pointed to the importance of the close relations established between the Muslim world and Russia in recent years and thanked OIC Secretary General Prof. Ihsanoğlu for his endeavours towards strengthening the OIC's cooperation with the Religious Board of Russian Muslims. "As is known, Bashkortostan has a significant place in the history of Russian Muslims and also today. The Religious Board of Russian Muslims was founded 220 years ago in Bashkortostan at the order of Czarina Catherine II. Islamic scholars of world renown came from Volga-Ural region such as Abu an-Naser al-Kursavi, Shikhabuddin Mardjani, Musa Bigiev, Rizaetdin ibn Fakhretdin, Gabdulla Tukai, Miftakheddin Akmulla, Zaki Validi Togan and the muftis and qadis who served in the Religious Board of Russian Muslims. ... From the 1980s onwards new cadres were formed in Bukhara and Tashkent, new mosques were built, the madrasa named after Rizaetdin ibn Fakhretdin was opened, it became an institute later in the 1990s and presently serves as the Russian Islamic





Prof. Zugura Rakhmatullina,
Vice Prime Minister of
Bashkortostan



Mufti and Chairman of the Religious
Board of Russian Muslims
Mr. Talgat Tadzhtudin



Prof. Ahat Mystafin, Rector of Bashkir State University, Ufa with Dr. Eren

University.” The Mufti underlined that the different faiths and cultures of Russia and particularly Bashkortostan do have the understanding and the experience to coexist respectfully of each other’s values.

Dr. Halit Eren expressed his satisfaction that in addition to the academic benefits it offered, holding of the congress in Bashkortostan created a good opportunity to highlight the share and place of this country in the history of the diversity of peoples, cultures, and faiths of Russia in general and the history of Volga-Ural region in particular. He pointed out that “research interest in the history and culture of the region is now heightened, literature is growing in diverse social disciplines, research methodology is systematised and the body of references is being consolidated.”

The Plenary Session heard the following presentations: Dr. Rakhmatullina Zugura Yaganurovna, Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Bashkortostan, spoke of: “Jadidism and Bashkir enlightenment: Consonance of Culturological Attitudes”; Prof. Shingarov George Christovich from the Modern Humanitarian Academy, Moscow, presented a talk titled “Philosophy and theology: the common and the different in the subject of research”; Prof. Yunusova Ayslu Bilalovna, ERI USC RAS, Ufa, on: “Islam in South Ural: Archives, sources, information resources”; Prof. Mehmet İpşirli from Fatih University, Department of History, Istanbul, titled his talk “My Hodja Zeki Velidi Togan”; Prof. Kulsharipov Marat Makhmutovich, from Bashkir State University, spoke on “Some issues related to spreading of extremism and terrorism among Muslims”; Prof. Teyfur Erdoğan, Yıldız Technical University, İstanbul, on “The Impact of Zeki Velidi Togan on Turkish Historiography in the Early Republican Area in Turkey”

Prof. Nabiye Rinat Akhmatgaliyevich from Kazan Federal University, Tatarstan, on “Interconfessional tolerance as a factor in sustainable development of society: an opinion from Tatarstan”; Prof. Abdurakhmanov Makhamadzhan Abdurakhmanovich, from Uzbekistan National University, Tashkent, on “A. Z. Validov’s archaeographical work in Turkestan”; Prof. Mazhitov Niyaz Abdulkhakovich, Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Bashkortostan, on “A. Z. Validi on the origin of Bashkir people”, and Assoc.Prof. Kydyralina Zhanna Urkinbayevna, State History Institute of the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan, Astana, on “Power and Islam in Kazakhstan in the 1920s”.

The congress comprised five parallel workshops, on the following themes:

Workshop 1. Islam and ethnocultural, linguistic, literary and artistic processes in Volga-Ural region: History and modern age (48 presentations)

Workshop 2. Islam and social, political, philosophical, ethical and legal thought of the peoples of Volga-Ural region (28 presentations)





Prof. Ilshat Gafurov, Rector of Kazan Federal University, presented to honorary doctorate certificate to Dr. Halit Eren

Workshop 3. Islamic civilization legacy in the material culture of the region (23 presentations)

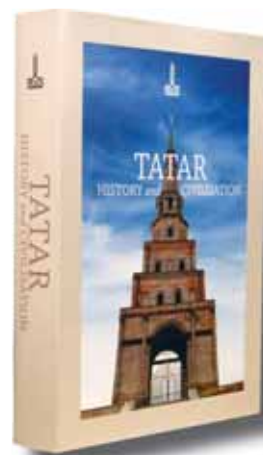
Workshop 4. Jadidism: history, philosophy, educational paradigms (15 presentations)

Workshop 5. Problems and prospects of studying Islamic civilization influence on the peoples of Volga-Ural region (17 presentations).

Parallel to these sessions, a “Conference Dedicated to Ahmed Zek Validi’s 120th Anniversary” was organized, on 22 October. Twenty papers were presented highlighting Ahmed Zeki Validi Togan’s activities and different aspects of his works and scholarship. Studies on the history of the region had gained impulse after the travel book of the Abbasid diplomat Ibn Fadlan dating from 921 became available thanks to the discovery of its copy by Zeki Velidi Togan. After its first publication in 1939 in German the book was translated into various languages, among them its Turkish translation by Professor Ramazan Şeşen (IRCICA) which was first published in 1975. Togan, who was of Bashkir origin, immigrated to Turkey in 1925.

Launching of the book Tatar History and Civilisation

The book titled Tatar History and Civilisation resulted from a joint project of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences of Tatarstan and IRCICA, and was published by the latter in Istanbul earlier this year. It is the first large-scale work on Tatars and Tatarstan to be published in English.



A book launching was conducted in the Tatar capital Kazan on 20 October 2010 under the chairmanship of the State Adviser and former President of Tatarstan Mr. Mintimer Shaimiev. Among those present were the Vice Premier and Minister of Culture of Tatarstan Ms. Zilya Valeyeva, OIC Secretary General Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, the Ambassador of Turkey in Moscow Mr. Aydın Sezgin, the Consul General of Turkey in Kazan Mr. Ahmet Ergin, and a number of faculty, historians and guests.

H.E. Mr. Shaimiev pointed out that this publication was an expression of the process of Tatar people’s assuming their history and assimilating their authentic identity. Mr. Shaimiev expressed the hope that publication of the book in the English language will contribute in making known Tatar history and ethnos on the eve of the World University Games to be hosted by Kazan in 2013 (for more information and outlines of the addresses: www.ksu.ru).

While presenting the book, Shaimiev paid tribute to the outstanding historian, turkologist, prominent public figure, professor of Kazan University Mirkasim Usmanov who died on 11 October 2010 emphasizing his life-long scholarly achievements and his special role in the project. The participants and guests observed a moment of silence. The late Prof.

Mirkasim Usmanov was one of the founders, and Vice-President, of the Academy of Sciences of Tatarstan. Earlier he was the First Vice-Rector and acting Rector of Kazan State University. His work enriched significantly both the source base and the study of the history, literature and culture of the Tatar people over the period between 13th to early 20th centuries. He was the supervisor and the chief editor of the seven-volume fundamental edition History of Tatars Since Ancient Times, and co-editor of the launched book. As an expression of his contributions to scholarship



The ceremony was chaired by State Adviser and former President of Tatarstan H.E. Mr. Mintimer Shaimiev

in history, IRCICA had presented the “IRCICA Award for Excellence in Research” to Prof. Usmanov in 2008.

The book *Tatar History and Civilization* is the outcome of a long-term research activity of scholars of the Institutes of History (Institute of History named after Shihabuddin Marjani), Language, Literature and Art, and Encyclopedia, of the Academy of Sciences of Tatarstan, under the joint supervision of Professor Mirkasim Usmanov and the Director of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences Prof. Rafael Khakimov.

OIC Secretary General Prof. İhsanoğlu, who was the initiator of the project of this book while he was Director General of IRCICA before 2005, said that the book provides most comprehensive insight into various aspects which have never been studied before. Prof. Rafael Khakimov, Director of Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Tatarstan extended words of gratitude to Mr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, “Though we always possessed rich material, the world community expected a different approach. In this book we tried to estimate the contribution of Tatar civilization to global culture, to determine the place and role of Tatars in the Islamic world”.

Dr. Halit Eren, Director General of IRCICA, reviewed the preparation process of the book authored by thirteen Tatar scholars. He said that everything was translated from Russian and Tatar languages into English. He said that scholars of Kazan and IRCICA had cooperated in the best possible way and that the Centre was interested in further development of joint activities.

On the occasion, Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary General of OIC, was conferred Membership of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, in recognition of his contributions in promoting studies on and making known the Tatar culture and civilization. Presenting the membership, Prof. Ahmet Mazgarov, President of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, announced the awarding of Prof. İhsanoğlu with a honorary title of “Foreign Member of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan” in recognition of his status of a prominent scientist and talented organiser of science.

During the same ceremony the Director General of IRCICA Dr. Halit Eren was conferred the title of Honorary Doctor by Kazan Federal University/Kazan State University. Founded in 1804, the latter is one of the oldest universities of Russia. The Rector of Kazan Federal University Prof. İlshat Gafurov announced the decision of the University’s Senate to award Dr. Halit Eren, Director General of IRCICA, with the title of Honorary Doctor of Kazan Federal University.

Earlier on that day, the Secretary General of the OIC and the Director General of IRCICA together with State Adviser and former President of Tatarstan H.E. Mintimer Shaimiev, visited the historical sites in the city of Bolgar at the outskirts of Kazan, where Islam was accepted as the state religion in 922. Restorations and excavations are conducted in the sites, including restorations of the palace of the Bolgar Khanate and ancient mosques.

Professor Mirkasim A. Usmanov Passed Away

The world of learning has lost Professor Mirkasim A. Usmanov, an eminent historian of Tatarstan (Russian Federation). Usmanov was a member of Kazan State University and Research Consultant for Turkic-Tatar and Oriental Manuscripts at the National Library of Tatarstan. Professor Usmanov passed away on 11 October 2010.

Mirkasim Abdulakhatovich Usmanov was born in 1934 in the Xianjiang province of China. He was one of the founders, and Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan during 2005-2007. Earlier, during 1985-1991 Mirkasim Usmanov was the First Vice-Rector and acting Rector of Kazan State University. He has numerous publications that enriched significantly both the source base and the study of historical problems of history, literature and culture of the Tatar people over the period between 13th to early 20th centuries. He was the supervisor and the chief editor of the seven-volume fundamental edition *History of Tatars Since Ancient Times*, and co-editor of IRCICA’s joint project with academics of Tatarstan relating to the publication *Tatar History and Civilisation*. Lastly he was working on locating documentary sources on Islamic culture in various archives of Russia and other countries. He conducted research and publications on scholars and enlighteners representing Turkic peoples in Russia such as Shigabutdin Marjani, Husain Faizkhanov, Rizaaddin Fakhraddin, Ismail Gasprali, Aziz Gubaidullin, Hadi Atlasi, Jamal Validi and others. He rendered remarkable services to the preservation of Islamic written heritage located in Eastern Europe and in countries of the Near and Middle East by collecting the products of this heritage and establishing programs of studies on them.

Prof. Usmanov was presented the IRCICA Award for Excellence in Research in 2008. The award was an expression of appreciation and gratitude for: his contributions to knowledge about Turkic cultures and languages and the preservation of their written heritage; his efforts to develop contacts and cooperation between scholars and specialists in Tatarstan with their counterparts in other countries; and his role in promoting a fruitful cooperation between IRCICA and academic circles in Tatarstan. Usmanov’s life-long scholarly achievements will always be remembered with gratitude. May God bless his soul.



The late Professor Mirkasim Usmanov (on the left) had kindly received the IRCICA Award 2008 (presented by Prof. Raşit Küçük, Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Marmara University)

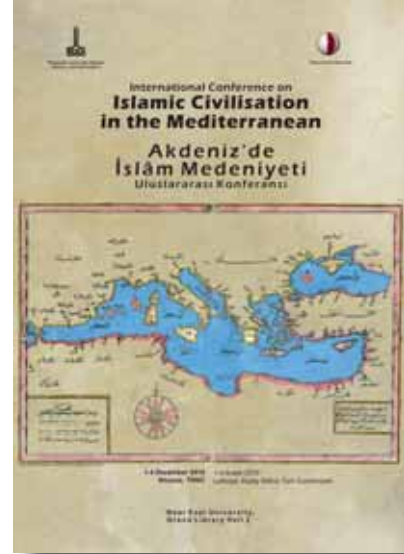
Islamic Civilisation in the Mediterranean Conference

(Lefkoşa/Nicosia, TRNC)

IRCIKA and the Institute for Islamic Research and Intercultural Dialogue, Near East University (Lefkoşa/Nicosia, Turkish Republic of North Cyprus) jointly organised an international conference on “Islamic Civilisation in the Mediterranean”. The conference was opened with the message of TRNC President H.E. Mr. Derviş Eroğlu read by the President’s spokesman Mr. Osman Ertuğ.

President Eroğlu referred, in his message, to the history of the Muslim Turkish Community in Northern Cyprus and to the efforts made by the community to preserve its Muslim identity and heritage. He informed the audience about the current situation of the reunification talks over Cyprus and said that Turkish Cypriot side will go in good faith to Geneva for the tripartite meeting planned for January: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will bring together Eroglu and Greek Cypriot leader Mr. Demetris Christofias in a move to find a solution to decades-long Cyprus problem. The Turkish Cypriot President told the Islamic countries that Turkish Cypriots need their support more than ever for a fair and long-lasting solution. He thanked the Organisation of the Islamic Conference for issuing resolutions on the Cyprus issue over the years.

The message of Foreign Minister Mr. Hüseyin Özgürgün was read by Undersecretary Mr. Aytuğ Plümer. The Minister expressed his belief that the conference on Islamic Civilisation



in the Mediterranean will throw light on the riches and the depth of this civilization and create a positive environment atmosphere.

The opening ceremony also heard Mr. Hasan Bozer, Speaker of the Parliament of the TRNC, the message of H.E. Prof.





The Founding Rector of Near East University Dr. Suat İ. Günsel was presented a Golden Plaque by IRCICA Director General

Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary General of the OIC, which was read on his behalf by Mr. Bakary Dramé, Assistant Secretary General, and the addresses of the Rector of Near East University Prof. Ümit Hassan and IRCICA Director General Dr. Halit Eren.

OIC Secretary General Prof. İhsanoğlu's message read by Assistant Secretary General Mr. Bakary Dramé underlined the importance accorded in Islam to cooperation and solidarity and recalled the role played by the Mediterranean region as an environment conducive to civilization. He evoked the various efforts deployed by the OIC to reinforce peaceful coexistence of the different faiths and cultures.

The speaker of the Turkish Cypriot Parliament Mr. Bozer referred to the unjust treatment directed to Muslim peoples around the world citing as example the situation in Palestine and the "embargoes" on the Turkish Cypriots. He said that "If an examination in depth is held, it will be seen that the factor

of religion lies in the root of this" and argued that efforts are exerted in the world to cause and maintain Islamophobia. To face this situation the Muslim countries need to further strengthen their cooperation.

IRCICA Director General Dr. Eren said that within the evolution of universal civilization the Mediterranean region assumes a core position: it is the place of origin of all the heavenly religions and the place where cultures and civilisations interacted most closely. It is around the Mediterranean that Islamic civilisation spread, flourished, and interacted with other peoples far and near not only in commerce and finance but in also science and languages. It is also crucial that the growth of Islamic civilisation in this region is one of the main elements that made the Mediterranean a crucible of development and a crossroads of cultures. He outlined the activities of IRCICA conducted in this context.

The Rector of Near East University Prof. Ümit Hassan pointed out that the conference was an excellent platform for the presentation of studies and formulation of new observations and that it would contribute in promoting research in this field.

After the opening addresses, the Founding Rector of Near East University Dr. Suat İ. Günsel was presented a Golden Plaque by IRCICA Director General Dr. Halit Eren. The Founding Rector in turn presented plaques to the representative of the OIC Secretary General Mr. Bakary Dramé and the Director General of IRCICA. During the presentation Dr. Günsel said that the university had until then hosted about 4000 conferences but this one was special because it was going to examine "our tissue".

Two exhibitions were opened on the occasion: selected historical manuscripts from the collections of North Cyprus, and historical photographs of Cyprus selected from the archives of IRCICA.

Through 1st-4 December, around 50 participants from the following countries presented papers: Albania, Algeria, Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Iraq, Iran, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Portugal, Romania, Turkey.



The working sessions

“The 1864 Caucasian Migration: War and Exile” Conference

IRCICA, the Center for Balkan and Black Sea Studies (BALKAR) of Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul, and the Department of Political Science and International Relations of the same university jointly organised a conference on “The 1864 Caucasian Migration: War and Exile”. It was held on 6-7 December 2010 at Yıldız Technical University Auditorium.

Following the opening, introductory speeches were given on “Position of the Caucasian Migration in Research and Public Opinion” Assoc. Prof. Mehmet Hacısalıhoğlu (BALKAR Director), “The Historiography on the 1864 Caucasian Migration” by Prof. Fikret Adanır and “Problems of Sources and Methodology in Research on the 1864 Caucasian Migration” by Prof. Nedim İpek. The sessions themes were: Migration Process and Epidemics, Resettlement of the Emigrees in Anatolia, Resettlement of the Emigrees in the Balkans and in the Arab Provinces, Integration Processes and Problems, and Current Situation. Twenty-six research papers were presented by participants from Turkey and abroad including Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Kosovo, USA.

The successive Russo-Ottoman wars and the resulting expansion of Russian territories caused migrations of Muslim peoples in various parts of the Empire. One of the major migration movements and the largest to originate from Caucasia was the 1864 migration. It is one of the relatively least studied subjects of history. The numbers of migrants, the majority Circassians, reached millions. A large part of the migrants were resettled



in different regions of the Ottoman Empire. The conference aimed at bringing together existing data and research about the processes, promoting exchange of information among researchers concerned and assessing the state of the studies.



Dr. Cengiz Tomar (IRCICA) read the address of Dr. Halit Eren, IRCICA Director General



Conference on “Astronomers in Islam and their contribution to world history of science” at IRCICA

A conference on “Astronomers in Islam and their contribution to world history of science” was organised at IRCICA in cooperation with the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul, on 7-8 May 2010. The Secretary General of the OIC Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu and the Metropolitan Mayor of Istanbul Arch. Dr. Kadir Topbaş were present at the opening ceremony held at Çit Qasr, Yıldız Palace.

The conference was attended by historians of science from Europe, Kazakhstan, Syria, and Turkey. In his welcoming address the Director General of IRCICA Dr. Halit Eren recalled that the conference was planned within the framework of the International Year of Astronomy commemorated by the UN and that events related to the Year were continuing in Turkey and elsewhere. He underlined the objectives of the meeting pointing out that celebration of the 400th year of the use of the telescope by Galileo with this Year would be incomplete without paying tribute to the astronomers of Islam whose works were transferred into and contributed to European science. Dr. Eren outlined the Centre’s activities in the field of history of science in Islam, especially the long-term programs that were launched from the 1980s onwards under the direction and editorship of Prof. İhsanoğlu.

The Mayor of Istanbul Dr. Kadir Topbaş expressed his pleasure to see Istanbul increasingly host significant academic and cultural events. In its 8500-year old civilisational history and its 15000 year-old history as a place of settlement, Istanbul hosted important scientific developments, and particularly in this context, he referred to the observatory that was built on the European side by the Ottoman astronomer Taqi el-Din. He paid tribute to the astronomers in Islam. He said that these astronomers have duly noted and acknowledged their borrowings from other cultures and sources.

Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary General of the OIC, expressed his pleasure that the conference was organised with the cooperation of the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul. He renewed his gratitude to Architect Dr. Kadir Topbaş, Mayor of Istanbul, for his support of international academic and cultural events in general, and those of IRCICA in particular. He said that “during Dr. Topbaş’s Mayorship the city of Istanbul has become a world metropolis, and he has also played a role in the selection of Istanbul as a joint European Capital of Culture 2010. This is an acknowledgment of the historic role Istanbul has played for millennia as the capital of successive civilisations of western and eastern origin.” The Secretary General commended IRCICA for successfully carrying out with its research programs on history of science. He expressed

his happiness to be meeting colleagues from various countries, old friends and new friends.

During the working sessions Professor William Shea from Padua University, Italy, spoke of “Galileo’s Discovery of A New World in the Heavens: A Step Along the Route Opened by Islamic Astronomers and Scholars”.

Dr. François Charette from the University of Frankfurt presented spoke of “Astronomy and its Practitioners in the Mamluk Sultanate”.

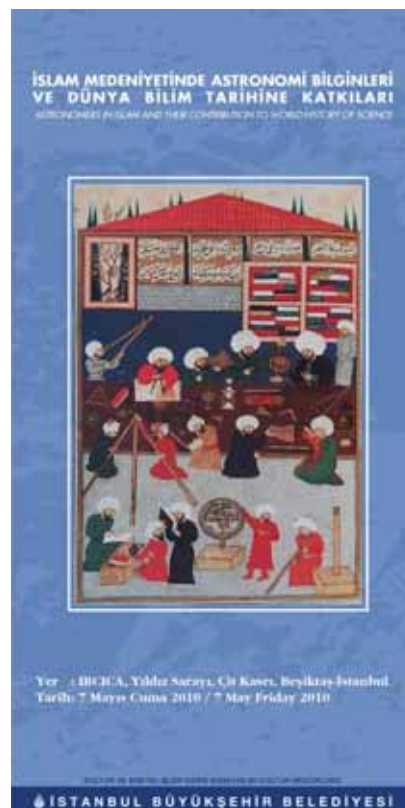
Prof. Atilla Bir (Istanbul Technical University) and Prof. Mustafa Kaçar (Istanbul University) presented a paper on the activities and the innovative contributions of the Turkish mathematician, astronomer and cosmologist Ahmet Ziya Akbulut, particularly his book on the Quadrant.

The paper by Prof. Jan P. Hogendijk from Utrecht University was on “Three Instruments for Finding the Qibla: Islamic Astronomy or European Cartography?”

Prof. Moustafa Mawaldi from the University of Aleppo spoke of “Mathematicians and Astronomers in the Ottoman Period: Astronomical Madrasa of Qadi Zada al-Rumi”.

Prof. Yavuz Unat from Kastamonu University spoke of “Islamic Astronomy and its Effects on the West”.

Dr. Laura Yerekesheva from the Institute of Oriental Studies, Kazakhstan, spoke of “Science and Religion: Medieval Islamic Scholars and Astronomers in Central Asia”. Discussions followed the paper presentations.



"The Ottoman State from Söğüt to Three Continents" Symposium held in Söğüt and Bilecik, Turkey

Söğüt town, the first capital city of the Ottoman Beylik, and the province of Bilecik, were the venue for this symposium on Ottoman history held from 17-20 September. Sixty scholars and researchers participated in it, from 17 countries: Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Kosovo, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, USA and Yemen.

Bilecik University, the Association of Researchers on the Middle East and Africa (ORDAF, Turkey), IRCICA and Istanbul Commerce University collaborated in its organization. The symposium was opened in Söğüt and continued at Bilecik University. The session themes were: "Ottoman administration in the Balkans with respect to the application of political tolerance in the Balkans", "Ottoman administration in Africa", "The Ottoman experience in Asia and Africa from local perspectives", "The Ottoman State from the viewpoint of culture and civilization", "The Ottoman economic, social and political impact in three continents", "The Ottoman administration as a carrier of culture in Africa", "The scope of Ottoman politics and the historiography".



Conference on "Arabs and Turks in the Path of History and Civilisation"

This conference was organised jointly with the Ministry of Culture of Syria, under the patronage of the Syrian Prime Minister Mr. Naji Otri, in Damascus, on 1-3 August 2010. Twenty-one participants from Egypt, Syria, Turkey and UAE presented papers.

The opening at Al-Assad National Library was officiated by the Minister of Culture of Syria Dr. Riyad Nassan Agha. Among those present were the Minister of Culture of Qatar Dr. Hamad Abdul Aziz Qawari, the Ambassador of Turkey Mr. Ömür Önhon, the President of al-Fatih Association Sheikh Hussameddin Farfour, guests from cultural circles.

The Ambassador of Turkey Mr. Önhon underlined that studies on relations between Arabs and Turks had been neglected for a long time which have had repercussions on these relations themselves. Relations between Syria, Turkey and the Arab world are important, advanced, and are based on historical links that bind them together through their history, culture and common traditions. He underlined the need to rewrite history following a scholarly method, that it be rewritten by those concerned, its real owners; this can play an important role in improving relations between Arabs and Turks.

Dr. Afif Bahnasi, art historian from Syria and ex-member of the Governing Board of IRCICA, took the floor on behalf of the conference participants. He underlined the many aspects of Arab-Turkish relations in the political, cultural, linguistic and other areas. He dwelt upon some of these aspects pertinent for the conference including the art and architectural heritage which stands as a testimony of cooperation of Arabs and Turks, the exchanges in languages, in particular the Arabic words borrowed and used in Turkish, and the Turkish interest and contributions in the art of Arabic calligraphy.

Representing the Director General of IRCICA; Dr. Nazih Maarouf outlined the activities of the Centre in various areas, its international cooperation, and recalled in particular the activities conducted jointly with the Government of Syria in the past, such as the seminar on «Arabesque in Traditional Crafts of OIC Countries» held in 1997 under the patronage of the late President Hafez Assad and the conference on «Al-Quds during the Ottoman Period» held in 2009, which both took place in Damascus; he also

recalled the visit of President Bashar Assad to IRCICA during his official visit to Turkey in January 2004.

Dr. Riyad Nassan Agha, Minister of Culture of Syria, spoke of the deep-rooted relations between Arabs and Turks which go back to pre-Islamic times in their respective regions. He gave examples of attitudes deployed by Turks in history with regard to Arab causes, in particular over the question of Palestine, starting from the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid's refusing the offer made by Theodor Herzl to pay down the Empire's foreign debt as against allowing Jews to settle in Palestine.

The conference dealt with various aspects of the relations in the fields of language and literature, arts and architecture.



Unesco-Ircica Seminar On "African-Turkish Relations: Past Routes, Reciprocal Emigration And Present Heritage"

9 July 2010

A Seminar on "African-Turkish Relations: Past Routes, Reciprocal Immigration and Present Heritage" was organised jointly by UNESCO and IRCICA at the latter's premises in Istanbul, on 9 July 2010. The event was part of UNESCO's Slave Route project conducted by its Division for Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, Intercultural Dialogue Section.

The meeting began with the welcoming address of Dr. Halit Eren, Director General of IRCICA, and the opening address of Mr. Ali Moussa-Iye, Chief of the Intercultural Dialogue Section, Division for Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO.

Slavery, as the other major phenomena having influenced the course of world political, economic and cultural history, took different forms and meanings at different times and places. Due to the intensity, duration and enormous dimensions it carried the most currently referred slave route is that which ran across the Atlantic Ocean. However the older and then concomitant routes that ran towards the east and the north of Africa each evolved into different systems and practices at different times. The seminar focused on that part of slavery which ran to the north of Africa in the context of the Ottoman world which is part of the history of African-Turkish relations and their present living heritage. In the Ottoman context and in other areas where they lived, African communities routed outside Africa made a major contribution to political, economic

and cultural history with their skills, their know-how, their traditions and their arts. Their contributions are embodied in all aspects of the world's tangible and intangible heritage, in the music and the cuisine as well as in production techniques in all sectors. It was mentioned during the seminar that through the efforts of the international and regional agencies concerned, the academic community, and the members of the African communities themselves - the Afro-Turkish community in the present case the history and the heritage of the African communities outside Africa will be highlighted increasingly more thoroughly and more objectively and become an indelible part of public conscience. Surely this is the least that can be done to acknowledge African people's share in human history.

The participating scholars and researchers spoke of the systems of administration, the place of this category of manpower in Ottoman economy, the arts and cultural heritage, and various aspects of the immigration and occupations of the Africans in Ottoman lands. The presentations were: "Ottoman legislation and slavery" (Prof. Mehmet Akif Aydın, Marmara University, Istanbul); "Slavery in North Africa and in the Mediterranean during the Ottoman Period" (Dr. Orhan Koloğlu, ex-Director General of Press and Publications, Turkey); "Slavery in the diplomatic relations during the Ottoman Period: The case of Sudan" (Ass. Prof. Tariq M. Nour, University of Khartoum, Sudan); "The Importance of Afro-Turk Study and Research" (Dr. Martin Louis Duncan, Koç University); "The tradition of





slave usage in social life during the Ottoman Period and its reflections in 19th Century Turkish Literature” (Prof. Dr. İsmail Parlatır, Ankara University); “From Abyssinia to the Ottoman Palace: The story of Nadir Agha” (Mr. Ali Can Sekmeç, historian, Turkey); “African Presence in Turkey: from historical facts to cultural survivals” (Ms. Solmaz Çelik, Department of History, Yeditepe University, Istanbul); “Visualizing African Descents in Turkey: Relevance of Images in Capturing the Afro-Turk Presence” (Erik Vrooms, University of Leiden, The Netherlands, and Ahmet Polat, Photographer, Turkey); “Black Slaves in 19th Century Istanbul” (Babür Turna, historian, Turkey). After these presentations, a 57 minute documentary produced by UNESCO, titled “Slave Routes: A Global Vision”, was screened.

Two exhibitions were opened on the occasion of the seminar. “Lest We Forget: The Triumph Over Slavery”, a major exhibition produced by UNESCO, and “Photographs of Afro-Turks”. Information was distributed by UNESCO on the exhibition “Lest We Forget: The Triumph Over Slavery”: it is an enlightening exhibition that offers an inspiring look at the cultural, political, economic and social practices enslaved Africans developed while enduring the dehumanizing conditions of slavery,

has been displayed in different regions of the world since its creation in 2004 on the occasion of the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its abolition. Lest We Forget is an exhibition created by The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, in conjunction with the UNESCO Slave Route Project to mark the United Nations General Assembly’s resolution proclaiming 2004 “The International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition.” The Lest We Forget project is funded by UNESCO. The exhibition is unique in that it focuses less on enslaved Africans as victims and more on the ways in which they reshaped their destinies and place in history through the creation of distinct cultures. In addition, the exhibition explicitly demonstrates the huge economic impact of the slave trade and enslaved African labor on the development of the Americas and Europe and the concomitant disruption of Africa’s economic, political and social life. Some of the lasting cultural contributions explored include language, religion, music and institutions. The exhibition is displayed in approximately 200 m² of space. It was curated by Howard Dodson, Director of The Schomburg Center and a member of the International Scientific Committee for the UNESCO Slave Route Project (Source: UNESCO).



International administrative meetings

General Meeting on UN-OIC Cooperation held at IRCICA

Istanbul

The General Meeting on Cooperation between the Secretariats of the United Nations and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and Their Specialized Organs and Agencies is held once every two years. The 2010 meeting took place at the headquarters of IRCICA in Istanbul between 31 June -1st July 2010.

The United Nations Organisation was represented by H.E. Mr. B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs, UN. Before the opening of the meeting, Dr. Eren guided Mr. Pascoe around the Centre for an information tour on the activities of IRCICA.

H.E. Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Mr. Lynn Pascoe met separately to discuss the cooperation between the two organizations. Together they chaired the opening session and each addressed the meeting.

The meeting was attended by the following UN and OIC bodies:

United Nations System

Department of Political Affairs (DPA), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) - UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID, Alliance of Civilizations, Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Food Programme (WFP), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for

Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD),

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, International Labour Organization (ILO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

Organization of the Islamic Conference:

General Secretariat of the OIC, the OIC Permanent Observer Mission in New York, OIC Permanent Observer Mission in Geneva, Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC), Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH),

Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC), Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade (ICDT), Islamic Development Bank Group (IDB), Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF), Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), Islamic University of Technology (IUT), Islamic Committee of International Crescent (ICIC), Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC), Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF).



H.E. Mr. B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs, UN.



OIC Secretary General H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu addressed the opening session

The meeting first heard the UN report on the activities undertaken since the preceding UN-OIC general meeting (Geneva, July 2008). Then it deliberated upon the following subjects:

Review of cooperation and appraisal of progress achieved in priority areas of cooperation:

1. Political dimension of the UN-OIC cooperation:
 - Conflict prevention and resolution, peace-building, peacekeeping, combating terrorism, disarmament, promotion of human rights, exchange of experience and training;
 - Maintenance of international peace and security (Middle East and Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan/Darfur, Niger, Guinea);
 - Cooperation with the Alliance of Civilizations;
2. Humanitarian issues (protection of and assistance to refugees and IDPs)
3. Human settlements
4. Dialogue among cultures and civilizations and cultural diversity
5. Trade and development (poverty alleviation, tourism)
6. Transport and telecommunications (ICT)
7. Technical cooperation
8. Food security and agriculture
9. Industry and joint ventures
10. Development of science and technology
11. Human resources development
12. Environment, health and population
13. Education (including higher education) and eradication of illiteracy
14. Development of arts and crafts and promotion of heritage
15. Social issues concerning women, children and the youth
16. Decent work and social protection
17. Consideration of ways and means to enhance the mechanism of cooperation'

The Meeting was opened by Dr. Halit Eren, Director General of IRCICA, who said that the Coordination Meeting had increasingly been instrumental for the UN and the OIC and their agencies and institutions to appraise developments and plan the progress in their cooperation. The present period sees developments in this cooperation, since times bring new requirements that directly or indirectly call for renewed efforts on the part of international organizations. "In all our activities, we consider new developments and give importance to cooperation with international and regional organizations. This was realized recently on the occasion of the visit of the Director-General of UNESCO to IRCICA on 22 June, which opened new avenues of concrete cooperation in several areas".

The Secretary General of OIC Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu addressed the meeting qualifying the relationship between the OIC

and the UN as a good example of collaboration in addressing important global challenges of peace, security and development. He added that the OIC which its advantages in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts involving its Member States, is ready to engage in a wide range of partnerships to assist the UN in its genuine efforts to maintain peace and security. He also emphasized the OIC's full commitment to pursue and reinforce its cooperation with the UN in all areas of common interest such as political, humanitarian, economic and human development, science and technology, cultural and social issues, human rights, refugees and migration.

Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary General of the UN affirmed the importance given by the UN to the cooperation process and to making progress on an array of shared concerns. He pointed out that UN is eager to strengthen the ties between the two organizations. He expressed his appreciation of OIC's support of the issues related to Palestine, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somali and the engagement on Iraq and Niger and the strengthening of cooperation against terrorism through the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. He added that the OIC and its members also have a key role to play in advancing the Alliance of Civilization and confronting prejudice, extremism and Islamophobia. He pointed out that the experience of OIC, knowledge and support are crucial to the success across this spectrum of threats and opportunities.

Working papers prepared by the participating organizations, agencies and institutions were distributed to the delegates.



In its suggestions and recommendations the meeting expressed satisfaction at the level of cooperation between the two Organizations and contacts between their respective Secretaries-General. It stressed the importance of general cooperation meetings as fora for setting directions, making assessments, evaluating prospects and providing a follow-up for collaboration. The meeting took note of the Follow-up Report (2008-2010) on Cooperation between the UN and the OIC presented by DPA on the basis of contributions from the UN agencies, programs and organizations as well as the OIC-UN Follow-up Report prepared by ISESCO.

The two organizations stated their commitment to pursue and reinforce cooperation in all areas of common interest including the dialogue of civilizations, the fight against terrorism, economic cooperation, humanitarian affairs, science and technology, social and cultural affairs, human rights issues, the refugees question.

The meeting took note of the activities being carried out to improve collaboration and reviewed the implementation of joint projects. It welcomed the increased political contacts between the Secretaries-General of the two organizations.

Relating to cultural and social issues, where IRCICA's activities are covered, the meeting was briefed by the OIC General Secretariat on activities in the social sphere including the integrated approach being followed in the area of human rights with particular emphasis on women, children, youth and family affairs. The adoption of the OIC Plan of Action for Advancement of Women (OPAAW) and the establishment of the Cairo Centre for Women in charge of monitoring the Plan were mentioned. The Organization's activities with regard to children were also touched upon with reference to the convening of three conferences in Rabat, Khartoum and Cairo with the fourth one in Tripoli being prepared for. The establishment of a new Department of Family Affairs at the General Secretariat and activities in the area of youth were also highlighted.

In relation with IRCICA it was mentioned that the Centre is a member of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilisations since the signing of an MoU at the Third Forum

held in Rio (May 2010). Activities involving UNESCO-IRCICA collaboration were outlined, such as the establishment of a Laboratory for the Conservation of Manuscripts and Old Books as a "Book Hospital" at the Suleymaniye Library in Istanbul, a joint project of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, UNESCO and IRCICA; exchange of information in the field arts and crafts development, in particular providing opportunities for artisans through exhibitions and workshops to exchange and learn from each other's works, techniques, skills and applied traditions; collaboration between UNESCO's World Heritage Center and IRCICA in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement signed between the two parties on 12 June 2009. Furthermore, UNRWA and IRCICA agreed to study possibilities of cooperation with regard to youth, earth technology and refugee housing, preservation of the historic character of Old Jerusalem, refugee camp development and infrastructure design. IDB, UNHABITAT and IRCICA agreed to exchange experience and lessons learned in city development planning, urban regeneration and upgrading, that UNHABITAT will provide training of trainees in strategic planning for local economic development upon demand, and that the three parties will explore possibilities to develop a program of cooperation that promotes economic development in poorer traditional areas of Islamic cities where traditional arts and crafts are living, among others. ILO, IRCICA and IDB agreed to explore possibilities for cooperation in the interest of its common member countries in the area of youth entrepreneurship. UNDP and IRCICA will explore possibilities of cooperation with the programme of Assistance to Palestinian people (PAPP), and with the Special Unit for South-South (Cooperation) in supporting the work of about 10 post graduate students for a 6-weeks study mission in Jerusalem under IRCICA's "Al-Quds/Jerusalem 2015" program. The work will include the study of historical sites and architectural buildings as well as designing restoration plans to be transferred into software for use within the restoration process.

IRCICA and the UNDP's Special Unit for South-South Cooperation reviewed the progress of the plan for recording information on Southern providers of software for use in the preparation of a compendium of archaeological and historical

urban sites in OIC Member States, which was first discussed at the Coordination Meeting of 2006. ESCWA and IRCICA agreed to define means of cooperation in the field of arts and crafts in particular, to support the development of the skills of women and youth working in the sector. It was also agreed to exchange data and expertise in this specific area of cooperation. The two parties will seek the possibility of joining hands for raising awareness on the existing traditional arts and crafts as well as building capacity of cadres working in the field through organising exhibitions and training workshops and seminars that will promote well the arts and crafts.



The participants were briefed by Dr. Eren on the activities of the Library of IRCICA

The Governing Board of IRCICA met on its 25th session

The 25th session of the Governing Board of IRCICA was opened on 26 November in the Centre's conference hall with a ceremony. In its later part the ceremony comprised the presentation of Ijaza (diplomas/licenses) to calligraphers having completed successfully the courses coordinated by IRCICA. The Governor of Istanbul Mr. Hüseyin Avni Mutlu, the Assistant Secretary General of the OIC Ambassador Alim Abdullah Abdulrahman representing the Secretary General of the OIC Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, the Consul Generals of various countries, and guests from cultural and art circles. Following IRCICA Director General's words of welcome, Dr. Abdulaziz Abdullah Turki Subaie from Qatar, Chairman of the Governing Board, spoke on behalf of the Governing Board and expressed thanks and gratitude to the Government of the host country, the Republic of Turkey, for the patronage and support extended to IRCICA. He paid tribute to H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary General of the OIC for the support and the guidance given to IRCICA's activities. He also thanked members of IRCICA Governing Board, IRCICA administration and staff for the responsibilities they assume and their wise and successful contribution in guiding the Centre's activities. He added that the Centre, since its last session, carried out various activities and programs comprising research, symposia, exhibitions and calligraphy competitions. Dr. al-Subaie commended the innovative efforts of the Centre through its program titled "Al-Quds 2015". He evoked the

significant resources to be allocated to it from the generous donation that was extended to IRCICA by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar.

The address of H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary General of the OIC, was delivered by H.E. Ambassador Alim Abdullah Abdulrahman, Assistant Secretary General of the OIC for Political Affairs: "The Governing Board meeting is held at an important time of the Centre's history when it commemorates this year thirty years of continuous productivity and activity in the service of the OIC Member States, introducing its civilization and deep-rooted heritage." The Secretary General pointed out in this message that the year 2010 coincides with another major milestone in the history of OIC, namely the mid-term review of the implementation process of the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action (TYPOA), which was adopted by the 3rd Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference held in Makkah al-Mukarramah in December 2005. "One who follows the activities of the Centre would be proud of the achievements and projects the Centre has made in the implementation of this program."

H.E. Mr. Hüseyin Avni Mutlu, Governor of Istanbul, addressed the audience expressing gratitude for the convening of the meeting in Istanbul and welcoming the participants. Referring to the presentation of calligraphy diplomas, he praised IRCICA's efforts in the service of Islamic arts, in particular calligraphy.



(L-R) OIC Assistant Secretary General Ambassador A. A. Abdulrahman, the Chairman of the Governing Board Mr. A. Turki Subaie, Dr. Halit Eren opening the working sessions

The opening ceremony continued with the presentation of calligraphy diplomas.

The working sessions were held with the participation of the following members of the Board: Dr. Abdul Aziz Abdullah Turki al-Subaie, State of Qatar (Chairman), Dr. Saad Abdul Aziz Al-Rashid, Saudi Arabia (Vice-Chairman), Dr. Mutlaq Rashid Al-Qarawi, State of Kuwait, Mr. Mohammed Ahmed Al-Murr, United Arab Emirates, Amb. Muhammed Assem, Arab Republic of Egypt, Prof. Amadou Cissé Ndiéguène, Republic of Senegal, Prof. Mehmet İpşirli, Republic of Turkey, Ambassador Alim Abdullah Abdulrahman, Assistant Secretary General of OIC representing the Secretary General, Dr. Halit Eren, Director General of IRCICA. Dato Mohammad Najib Bin Ahmad Dawa, Malaysia, was not able to attend the session as he was performing pilgrimage. The following members of the Executive Committee of the Centre also participated in the meeting: Zeynep Durukal, Mohammed Tamimi, Prof. Amir Pasić, Dr. Nazih Marouf, Faisal Benaissa.

Dr. Halit Eren presented his report on the activities implemented in 2010 and the proposed work program for 2011. He gave information on the activities realized including the congresses which were held in OIC Member and also non-Member States such as Bashkortostan and Macedonia and relating to history and culture. He cited the books published, among others, the album of historical photographs of Al-Quds in its Arabic,



H.E. Ambassador Alim Abdullah Abdulrahman, Assistant Secretary General of the OIC for Political Affairs, represented the Secretary General H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu

English and Turkish editions; the edition of the Quran copy attributed to the time of Caliph Othman and located in Cairo; the second volume, concerning translations in Urdu, in the series of bibliographies of manuscript translations of the Holy Quran. Dr. Eren declared that the project concerning the Prince Sultan bin Salman Islamic Architectural Heritage Database had come to a stage where the Member States' providing information to the Centre on their archeological sites and monuments was necessary in order to load this information into the database. After a discussion on the implemented projects, Dr. Eren presented the proposed work program for 2011. The Board approved the proposed work program, which will be submitted next to the OIC's ministerial meetings for adoption.

The Board expressed its utmost gratitude and appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, for the generous donation of 5 million US dollars extended to the Centre. The Board also made recommendations on various aspects of the Centre's work for the coming year.



Dr. Saad Abdul Aziz Al-Rashid, Saudi Arabia



Dr. Mutlaq Rashid Al-Qarawi, State of Kuwait



Mr. Mohammed Ahmed Al-Murr, United Arab Emirates



Amb. Muhammed Assem, Arab Republic of Egypt



Prof. Amadou Cissé Ndiéguène, Republic of Senegal



Prof. Mehmet İpşirli, Republic of Turkey

Presentation of Ijaza (diplomas/licenses) to calligraphers having completed the courses coordinated by IRCICA

Sixteen calligraphers from six countries (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, UK, UAE, USA) received diplomas. The Consul Generals of Algeria, Albania, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Sudan, Syria present that day, the Governor of Istanbul, the Assistant Secretary General of OIC, the District Governor of Güngören (Istanbul), the Governing Board members, the Advisor to H.H. the Emir of Dubai Mr. Houaireb Mheiry, and the Director General of IRCICA presented their diplomas.



Mr. Abdunlasir Mustafa Bashaan Badrani from Saudi Arabia received a diploma in the thuluth-naskh style from his teacher the well-known calligrapher Mr. Hasan Çelebi. Born in Syria, Mr. Badrani studied medicine at the University of Aleppo. He taught physics and chemistry at the universities of Mecca, Taif and Jeddah. He lives in Saudi Arabia since 1994.



Mr. Ferhat Kurlu from Turkey received a diploma in the taliq style from Mr. Hasan Çelebi. Earlier he had received a diploma in the thuluth-naskh style. Kurlu is the imam of Meşrutiyet Mosque in Nişantaşı, Istanbul.



Sir Mark Allen from London, UK received an Ijaza from Mr. Nassar Mansour (Jordan) in the muhaqqaq style. Sir Allen was educated in Arabic and Turkic Languages at Oxford University. As a member of the British diplomatic service from 1973-2004 he served in Abu Dhabi, Cairo, Belgrade and Amman.



Prof. Nihad Dukhan, faculty member at the Department of Mechanical Engineering of Detroit Mercy University, Michigan, received an Ijaza in the thukuth-naskh style from Hasan Çelebi. In the USA he had learnt calligraphy from the American calligrapher Muhammed Zakariya.



Ms. Fatima Saeed Bakkali from Dubai, UAE, studied computer science. She followed the courses given by Hasan Çelebi and Davut Bektaş since 1994 and received a diploma in the thuluth-naskh style in 2008. She teaches calligraphy and coordinates exhibitions at the Dubai Center for Arabic Calligraphy. The day she received her second diploma, in the diwani style.



Mr. Ayman Hassan from Kuwait received an Ijaza in the Taliq style from Mr. Hasan Çelebi. Until now he was trained in this art by Prof. Ali Alpaslan, Ahmet Ziya Ibrahim, Davut Bektaş and since 2003 by Hasan Çelebi. He participated in IRCICA's competitions.



Mr. Mohammed Mandi, Deputy Director of the Abu Dhabi Culture and Arts Authority, received an Ijaza in the diwani-jaly diwani style from Hasan Çelebi. Earlier he had received a diploma in the thuluth-naskh style from the same professor. Mr. Mandi had started learning calligraphy from Sayed Ibrahim in Egypt. His inscriptions ornament mosques in different parts of the world.



Mr. Ahmet Kutluhan from Turkey received an Ijaza in the taliq style from Hasan Çelebi. He had earlier received a diploma in the thuluth-naskh style from Mr. Çelebi. Mr. Kutluhan is the imam of Halil Rifat Pasha Mosque in Şişli, Istanbul.



Mr. Khalifa al-Shimi, an architect from Egypt was given a diploma in the diwani-jaly diwani style by Hasan Çelebi. Mr. Shimi works for the Government of Sharjah as designer. He had participated in IRCICA's calligraphy competitions.



Mr. Erol Akça, a lawyer from Turkey, received a diploma in the thuluth-naskh style from Mr. Hasan Çelebi. After retiring from his law career Mr. Akça devoted himself to the arts of calligraphy and music.



Ms. Majida Salim al-Mazim from Sjarjah, United Arab Emirates, received a diploma in the thuluth-naskh style from Mr. Çelebi. Ms. Al-Mazim had earlier studies calligraphy at the Calligraphy Institute in Sharjah and also participated in IRCICA's competitions.



Mr. Mithat Topaç, a graduate of Istanbul Technical University's Business Administration department, studied calligraphy with Izzettin Sav and Ömer Faruk Özoğul and in later years with Mr. Davut Bektaş. He received a diploma in the thuluth-naskh style from Mr. Bektaş.



Mr. Abdullah Gün from Turkey received an Ijaza from Hasan Çelebi in the taliq style. Earlier he had obtained an Ijaza in the thuluth-naskh style from the same teacher. He is retired from civil service in the Eminönü/Istanbul Mufti's office.



Mr. Seyit Ahmet Bursalı from Turkey studied calligraphy first with his father Mustafa Necati Bursalı and from 2002 onwards with Hasan Çelebi. He received a diploma in the thuluth-naskh style from Mr. Hasan Çelebi.



Mr. Cemali Gündoğdu from Turkey received an Ijaza in the thuluth-naskh style from Mr. Ferhat Kurlu. Mr. Gündoğdu teaches religion at public education in Istanbul.



Mr. Şerafettin Akçeşme from Turkey studied theology. He followed courses given by Kadir Sakaoğlu and has been studying with Mr. Mümtaz Seçkin Durdu, from whom he received that day an Ijaza in the thuluth-naskh style.

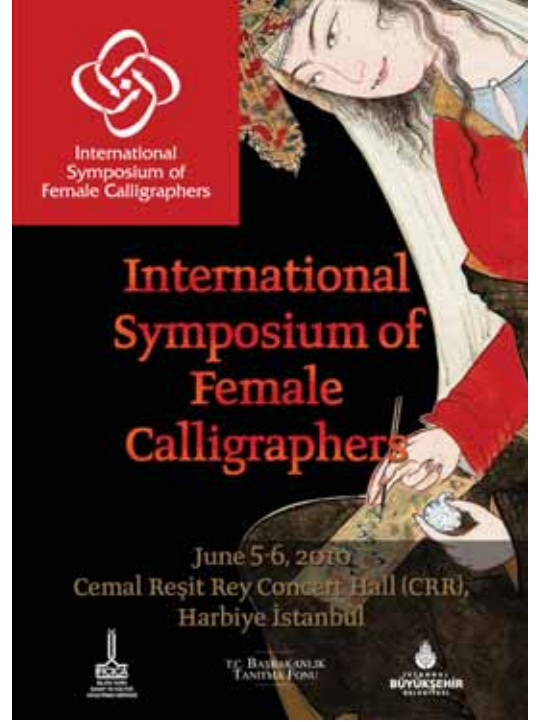
Art events

International Symposium on Female Calligraphers

A symposium was devoted to “Female Calligraphers”: through 4-6 June 2010, IRCICA, the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul and the Turkish Prime Ministry’s Promotion Fund organised different events it comprised. The Prime Minister of Turkey H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan gave his patronage to it and the opening address.

The contributions of female calligraphers to the development of this art, their status in art circles and society, their works in the past and at present and at different places, were among the subjects discussed during the plenary by specialists, teachers, and artists. Another component of the symposium was a ceremony whereby a group of teachers of calligraphy, namely Ayten Tiryaki, Fevzi Günüş, Hasan Çelebi, Hüseyin Kutlu and Hüseyin Öksüz gave Ijazas to twenty-four calligraphers they had trained. Plaques of gratitude were presented to teachers having trained a number of female calligraphers: Ali Rıza Özcan, Ayten Tiryaki, Betül Kırkan, Davut Bektaş, Efdalüddin Kılıç, Erol Dönmez, Fevzi Günüş, Feyza Kırkan, Fuat Başar, Hasan Çelebi, Hüseyin Kutlu and Hüseyin Öksüz received plaques. Talks were given by: Ms. Ayten Tiryaki (Turkey), on “Women’s Place in Calligraphy Art in Turkey”; Ms. Elaheh Khatami (Iran), on “Works of Female Calligraphers in Iran”; Ms. Soraya Syed Sanders (UK), “Calligraphy Education in Europe”; Ms. Nuria Garcia Masip (Spain), on “Female Calligraphers in the World”; Ms. Zübeyde Cihan Özsayiner (Turkey), on “Female Calligraphers of the Ottoman Period”; Ms. Rachida Dimassi (Tunisia), on “Female Calligraphers in the Arab World”. Calligraphy workshops were conducted by Iranian, European and Turkish calligraphers.

An exhibition was organized by IRCICA presenting a total of 160 works of 62 female calligraphers from Iran, Iraq, Spain, Syria, Turkey, UAE, UK. IRCICA also published and distributed the catalogue of the exhibition. The latter was on display for two weeks.



Group photograph of the Prime Minister of Turkey Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Mrs. Erdoğan, the teachers of calligraphy and their students who received diplomas

An exhibition of tile and ceramics titled "Istanbul, History"



Students from Bilecik University's Vocational School and Bozüyük Vocational School, Turkey, displayed their works at IRCICA from 8-12 June 2010 at an exhibition titled "Istanbul, History". The exhibition was organised within the framework of 2010 Istanbul Cultural Capital. A total of 131 works including miniature paintings, engravings, screen printings, tiles, ceramics and photographs were displayed. The Rector of Bilecik University Prof. Azmi Özcan, the Rector of Yıldız Technical University Prof. İsmail Yüksek, the Mayor of Bilecik Mr. Selim Yağcı, university professors and students were present at the opening. The exhibition's objective of highlighting past and present riches of the city through creative expressions and different mediums was underlined.



Exhibition of paintings and paper cuttings: "A secret to be discovered: Istanbul"

This exhibition was opened by the Minister of Culture and Tourism of Turkey Mr. Ertuğrul Günay and IRCICA Director General Dr. Halit Eren on 27 November. A total of sixty works by two female artists were displayed: the paintings of Nevin Karayağız and the paper cuttings (Kat'ı) of Meryem Güney. Both have reflected and expressed their perceptions of Istanbul's hidden treasures and heritage in their works.

Ms. Karayağız's paintings displayed in her earlier exhibitions as well as this one reflect themes of history and heritage. She also practices the arts of marbled paper and ceramics.

Ms. Güney practices the art of calligraphy in the thuluth and naskh styles. She has an "İjaza" (diploma) in the art of paper cutting.

In the Near and Middle East the art of paper cutting is known by the word "Kat'ı" meaning "cutting". This art has a 2000-year old history. It is one of the classical arts that are enjoying a renewed interest and a revival. It saw a remarkable development in the Muslim world, reaching a peak in the 16th century; in its classical style it continued to flourish until the beginning of 19th century. Among its important representatives are Sheikh Muhammed Dost, Fahri of Bursa, Mahmud of Ghazne. Leather or any other suitable material can be used as well as paper.



Meetings, cooperation

Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation Signed with ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)

IRCICA signed a memorandum of understanding with the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) of the economic cooperation organization based in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. The memorandum was signed during the visit of Mr. Hojatullah Ayyoubi, President, ECI and Mr. Ahmed Jelali, Adviser, to IRCICA on 2 November 2010.

The meeting with Dr. Halit Eren covered various topics including possible means of enhancing cooperation between IRCICA and ECO Cultural Institute. It was followed by a visit to the various research departments where the guests received first-hand information on the activities conducted. The MOU between the two parties foresees cooperation and consultation, representation at each other's functions and exchange of information and documents.

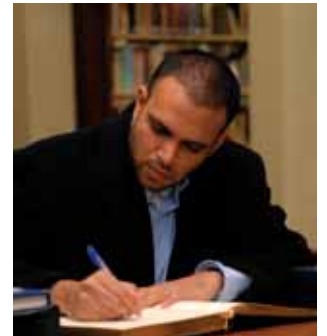


Mr. Rashad Hussain, US Presidential Special Envoy to the OIC, visited IRCICA

IRCICA was honoured to receive Mr. Rashad Hussain, the US President's Special Envoy to the OIC visited IRCICA, on 10 December 2010. Mr. Hussain was accompanied by his Deputy Mr. Arsalan Suleman and Ms. Hannah A. Draper, Political Officer at the Consulate General of the USA in Istanbul. In the absence of Dr. Halit Eren, who was in Qatar that day attending the Doha Festival for Handicrafts co-organised by IRCICA, his deputies Mr. Mohammed Tamimi and Ms. Zeynep Durukal briefed the guests on the objectives and activities of the Centre. Mr. Rashad visited the two buildings of the Centre's headquarters housing the Centre's library and archives and saw the Centre's publications.

Mr. Rashad Hussain signed the Visitors' Book, expressing appreciation of the Centre's work and congratulating it for assembling a wonderful collection of materials which he praised as a tremendous service to humanity.

On behalf of the US Consulate General Ms. Draper signed the Visitors' Book congratulating the Centre for its hard work and dedication to an important cultural and historical dialogue.



The visit of UNESCO Director-General Ms. Irina Bokova



Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, visited IRCICA on 22 June 2010. The meeting with Dr. Halit Eren revolved around the coinciding main areas of the two organisations' respective missions. The Director-General of UNESCO highlighted in particular their engagement in promoting studies and debate on inter-cultural relations and their efforts to encourage education towards a "culture of peace". She expressed the wish that cooperation between UNESCO and IRCICA can be intensified to contribute in giving more substance to the work each organisation is doing. Dr. Halit Eren, IRCICA Director General, gave examples of the Centre's research and publications on relations between cultures at the level of "civilizations" and in various "regional" contexts. He expressed the wish that cooperation between the two organisations can increase further around the new projects and programs that respond to the growing requirements of cultural relations. He said that one of the best examples of ongoing cooperation is the joint project coordinated by the Ministry of Culture of Turkey, UNESCO and IRCICA to set up "Book Hospital" at Suleymaniye Library in Istanbul for the conservation and restoration of old books and manuscripts. During the same meeting, Prof. Amir Pasic, Head of the Department of Architecture, IRCICA, gave information to Ms. Bokova on the

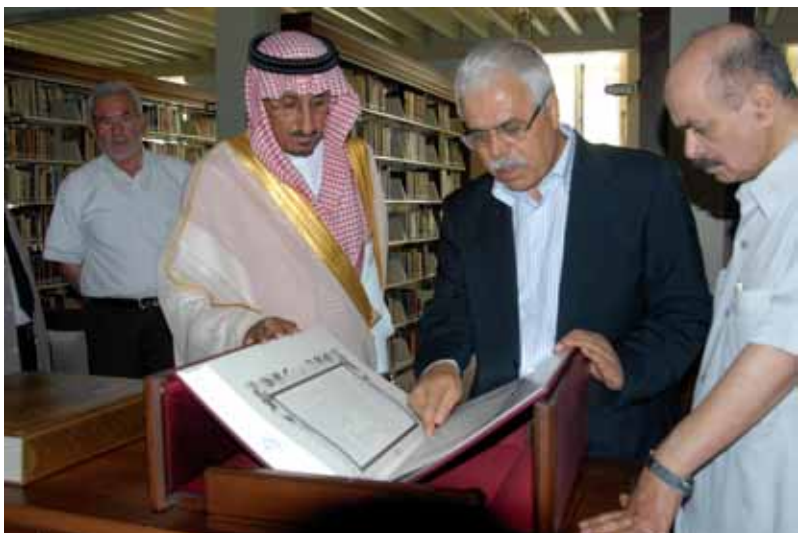
Centre's architectural and urban studies program relating to Al-Quds/Jerusalem. Ms. Bokova described UNESCO's work relating to the heritage sites in the region, and there were exchanges of views on architectural and urban preservation issues.

After the meeting, the Director-General of UNESCO and her colleagues visited the library and the research sections of the Centre. Ms. Bokova was in Istanbul to attend the Summit Meeting of the Heads of State of Southeast European Countries on Cultural Corridors (23 June 2010).

Visit of Dr. Fahd al-Simari, Secretary-General of the King Abdul Aziz Foundation for Research and Archives, Riyadh

On 5 August IRCICA was honoured by the visit of Dr. Fahd al-Simari, Secretary-General of the King Abdul Aziz Foundation for Research and Archives and King Abdul Aziz Museum, Riyadh. Dr. al-Simari and his colleagues were guided by Dr. Eren on a tour to the different research departments and the library during which they received information on the activities. During the talks on developing cooperation between the two institutions, Dr. al-Simari informed IRCICA on the large-scale project to produce an Encyclopedia of Haj which is undertaken jointly by King Abdul Aziz Museum, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Institute for Haj Research in Makkah, the Ministry of Haj, the General Presidency for the Two Holy Mosques Affairs, the Ministry of Higher Education and Bin Laden Group. The encyclopedia will document the history of Haj, the routes, the history of the Haram Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah and the expansion works carried out on them over the centuries. It is the biggest research project ever on the Two Holy Mosques and the annual pilgrimage. It will involve inputs from specialists in all social sciences and draw from archival sources all over the world.

Recording his impressions, Mr. al-Simari noted that "It is a great pleasure for the Muslim to see the efforts of IRCICA invested in the context of coordination, supervision and the follow-up of the diverse activities it undertook in cooperation with other parties. No doubt these efforts of IRCICA, its staff, will be a gain for all Muslims."



Mr. Sardar Aseff Ahmad Ali, Federal Minister of Education of Pakistan, visited IRCICA

IRCICA was honoured to receive at its headquarters H.E. Mr. Sardar Aseff Ahmad Ali, Member of the National Assembly and Federal Minister of Education of Pakistan, on 12 July 2010. Dr. Eren briefed the Minister on the activities of IRCICA; words of appreciation were exchanged on the progress of cooperation between the Government, the academic and cultural institutions of Pakistan on one hand and IRCICA on the other, as exemplified by the forthcoming Archeology Congress to be held in Islamabad on 21-25 January 2011. The Minister recorded his impressions in the Visitors' Book: "Truly this is one of the most important centres of Islamic research and exquisite arts."



Mr. Mohammed Abdulsettar al-Sayed, Minister of Waqfs of Syria, at IRCICA

On 22 July, Mr. Mohammed Abdulsettar al-Sayed, Minister of Waqfs of the Syrian Arab Republic, visited IRCICA. The meeting with Dr. Eren reviewed the events, most of which are academic congresses, organised in recent years jointly by the Government of Syria and IRCICA. The Minister also received brief information on recent progress in the activities of the Centre. The Minister recorded his impressions in the Visitors' Book expressing happiness "to visit this great Islamic center and to discover its rich scholarly and historical heritage."



Mr. Mahlim Hakimuddin, representative of the Sultan of Bhara Dr. Mohammed Burhanuddin, visited IRCICA

The Centre was honoured to receive Mr. Mahlim Hakimuddin, representative of Dr. Mohammed Burhanuddin, the Sultan of Bhara, and his delegation, on 14 October 2010. In the absence of Dr. Eren, Mr. Mohammed Tamimi, Deputy Director General, and Mr. Abdullah Topaloğlu, Director, IRCICA Library, briefed the distinguished guests on the Centre's objectives and activities and guided them on a tour to the different departments. At the end of his visit Mr. Hakimuddin recorded his impressions in the Centre's Book, underlining science and scholarship: "Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (PBUH) said: 'Science is a precious heritage'. These noble words teach us to engage in science, to acquire it and to transfer it at the same time. During our visit to this historical city of Istanbul, we were happy to see the interest and the care this great center of learning accords to the Islamic heritage and its lofty civilization."



Visit to IRCICA of Dr. Ghaith bin Mubarak al-Qawari, Minister of Waqfs and Islamic Affairs of Qatar

On 22 July, Mr. Mohammed Abdulsettar al-Sayed, Minister of Waqfs of the Syrian Arab Republic, visited IRCICA. The meeting with Dr. Eren reviewed the events, most of which are academic congresses, organised in recent years jointly by the Government of Syria and IRCICA. The Minister also received brief information on recent progress in the activities of the Centre. The Minister recorded his impressions in the Visitors' Book expressing happiness "to visit this great Islamic center and to discover its rich scholarly and historical heritage."



The Governor of Istanbul Mr. Hüseyin Avni Mutlu visited IRCICA

Mr. Hüseyin Avni Mutlu, Governor of Istanbul, participated in the opening ceremony of the 25th Session of the Governing Board of IRCICA on 25 November 2010. Earlier, on 5 September he had participated in the International Inaugural Conference of the "1400th Year of the Revelation of the Holy Quran" which was held outside the Centre; this last visit on the occasion of the Board session was therefore a good opportunity for Dr. Eren to brief the Governor on the activities and show the resulting publications, the library, etc. Mr. Mutlu recorded his impressions in the Visitors' Book, congratulating the Centre for its remarkable success in transmitting the Islamic civilization to the forthcoming generations.

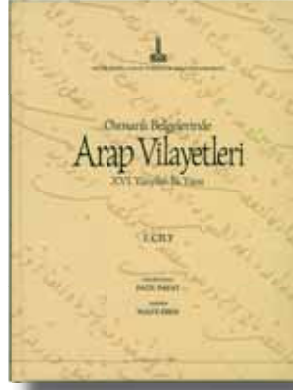


The Governor of Istanbul received information on the activities

Osmanlı Belgelerinde Arap Vilayetleri. XVI. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısı (The Arab provinces in Ottoman documents. First half of the 16th century)

Preparation, Translation and Study by Fazıl Bayat,
Vol. I, IRCICA; Istanbul, 2010, XXXVI, 412, XVI p.
(in Arabic and Turkish)

This book is the first volume of a series being prepared by Dr. Fazıl Bayat (IRCICA) in the Arabic language to serve researchers in the history of the Ottoman period. The Ottoman official documents are invaluable references for studies on the history of the countries which were once part of the Empire as well as of the Empire itself.



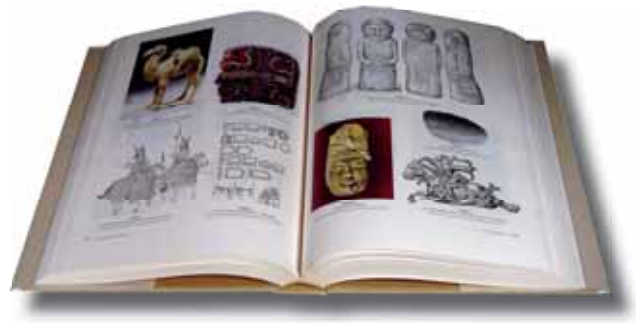
These documents are preserved in the Department of Ottoman Archives in Istanbul attached to the Turkish Prime Ministry's Directorate General of State Archives, other State archives, including the Topkapı Palace Museum. In this research project, documents relating to the Arab lands on subjects such as administrative history, rural development efforts, public works, public health, education, science and scholarship, press and publications, are compiled and translated into Arabic and published together with the Latin-script transcriptions of the texts in Ottoman Turkish. This first volume contains 104 documents in total selected from the Muhimme registers of the 15th and 16th centuries. The original text of each document is presented side by side with its Arabic translation where the reader can see the excellent loyalty of the latter to the former. Furthermore, the author examined and analysed each document, outlined it in a simplified form, and added clarifications whenever necessary to facilitate comprehension. The documents are presented in eleven sections, titled according to places or subjects, but also taking into account their contents. The documents show a large diversity: there is correspondence between the Ottoman and Mamluk sultans, documents relating to the reign of Sultan Selim I, the phase preceding the conquest of Baghdad, Mecca and pilgrimage, Yemen and the Red Sea, North Africa, waqfs and religious affairs, petitions submitted to the Sublime Porte, foreign traders and tourists, administrative, foreign, financial and military affairs. Two sets of ruznames (daily records, journals) are annexed: those relating to Sultan Selim I's campaign to Syria and Egypt, and Sultan Süleyman's campaign to Iraq. The volume reflects the expertise and meticulousness of its author. The series will continue with subsequent volumes to result from this project.

Tatar History and Civilisation

Edited by Damir Ishaqov, Project Director: Halit Eren,
Project Advisors: M.A. Usmanov, R.S. Khakimov,
translated by Ilnur I. Nadirov, IRCICA, 2010

This is a rich and comprehensive book on the history and civilization of the Tatars and the first to be published in the English language. It is a collaborative work in which 35 scholars from Tatarstan participated. The book begins with the comprehensive Introduction by Dr. Damir Ishaqov titled "The Tatar World: Ethnos, Culture and Language". It is followed by Part I on History, containing 10 chapters. This part evaluates the historical transformation of Tatar society and institutions from pre-Islamic times to the post-Soviet era. Part II on Social Structure and Economic Development in Tatar Society, which has six chapters, focus on the social structure, economic development and daily life of Tatar community. Part III on Culture, with 10 chapters, covers the evolution of Tatar language, educational institutions, arts and culture. Each part ends with a section of photographs. The book was originally prepared in the Tatar language under the coordination of IRCICA Director General Dr. Halit Eren and the scholarly advice of Professors Mirkasim A. Usmanov and Rafael S. Khakimov; it was translated into English by Ilnur Nadirov, and prepared for publication at IRCICA.

Knowledge of Tatar history and civilization around the world was until recently confined to a limited circle of specialists. However interest in the subject has been growing recently as is reflected through the IRCICA conferences on Volga-Ural history and civilization among others. The Conclusion by Prof. Rafael Khakimov points to the importance of the Tatar factor in understanding the history of Russia and the whole world. IRCICA believes that the present publication will contribute importantly in this direction. Research and learning interest about the Tatar factor in history and civilization will grow simultaneously with the process Khakimov describes concisely and meaningfully at the end of his Conclusion: "Today many things have fundamentally changed, but Tatar civilization leans on its own experience and values". There is a great deal to draw from this experience and these values, as the published studies have already demonstrated.



Sullam al-Wusul ila Tabaqat al-Fuhul
(The Ladder of Elevation to the Lives of the Great and Famous by Generation)
Katib Chalabi

Edited and Introduction by Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, in collaboration with Mahmoud Al-Arnaut and Saleh Sadawi Saleh, Indices by Selahaddin Uygur, 2 eds.: Arabic-English and Arabic-Turkish, 6 vols.; IRCICA, Istanbul, 2010, Vol. I: 501 p. Ar. + 50 p. English or Turkish; Vol. II: 439 p.; Vol. III: 473 p.; Vol. IV: 485 p.; Vol. V: 489 p.; Vol. VI: Index, 420 p.

The present book is a critical edition of the major biographical work Sullam al-Wusul by Katib Chalabi (d. 1657), one of the most important Ottoman scholars of the 17th century. His most well-known works are Kashf al-Zunun (bibliographical), Sullam al-Wusul (biographical), Fezleke (general Islamic history) and Cihannuma (geographical). The first cited, an outstanding bibliography in history of science, and the last cited, were published many times. Sullam al-Wusul was not published until today (Fezleke either).

The book is arranged in two editions of 6 volumes each. The main body is in Arabic in both editions, whereby the comprehensive Introduction by Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu and the Preface by Dr. Halit Eren are provided in also English in one of the editions and also in Turkish in the other edition. The sixth volume altogether is the Index.

Work towards this publication was conducted at the initiative and under the editorship and coordination of Prof. İhsanoğlu on the occasion of the 2009 Katib Chalabi Year proclaimed by UNESCO. It was conceived in the context of IRCICA's objective to publish major sources of culture and learning that are part of the Muslim world's heritage and render them available to researchers.

In the comprehensive Introduction, İhsanoğlu explores some features of Islamic literature in the area of biography as observed over the centuries. Historians of the Muslim world wrote hundreds of books in every branch of biography: "While some of these contained the biographies of scholars belonging to specific branches of science or to certain sects, others dealt with the life stories of statesmen, scholars and religious authorities who lived in specific places or specific periods of time. These kinds of biographies were usually arranged by category and by date. ... Another type of biographies contained information on important statesmen, scholars, religious figures, authors, artists, etc. having lived in history. ... This type of general biography was usually arranged alphabetically. ...



Katib Chalabi is the leading, or one of the leading personality among those who produced general biographies."

This biography records the lives and works of important statesmen and scholars in Islamic history and also of renowned personalities from pre-Islamic times who held a place in learning and literature. In the second part of the book Katib Chalabi gives information about the personalities' names derived from their places of origin or their genealogy. In the prologue, he explains the method he followed in the book, comments on the science of history, and adds information on names derived from places or genealogy. In this regard Sullam al-Wusul is also a book on genealogy.

The Index section has been added to the edition. It is composed of four parts: personal names, place names, publication titles, names of institutions.

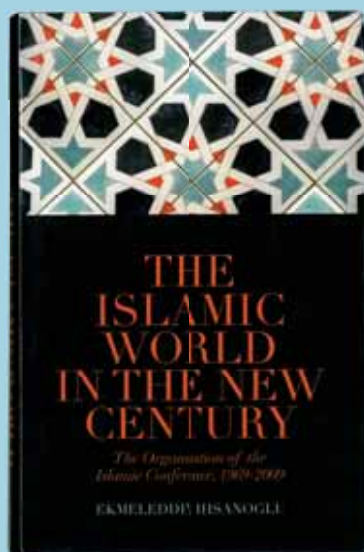
IRCICA is pleased to render this major work on the history of science and culture available to researchers and interested readers.

Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, **The Islamic World in the New Century.
The Organisation of the Islamic Conference, 1969-2009**

Columbia/Hurst, C. Hurst & Company, London, xii+330 p.

This is the first book on the international causes and concerns of the Muslim world over the past forty years and achievements of Islamic solidarity through the mission of the OIC, authored by one of its leading figures: Professor Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, its ninth and current Secretary General.

The Organisation of the Islamic Conference is the only intergovernmental body of the Muslim world and also the largest such system outside the UN. It was founded with the objectives of responding to the Palestine crisis and dealing with other common Muslim concerns. Over the decades its purview expanded into the areas of development, economic cooperation, science, education, culture, human rights, the rights of women and the rights of children, post-disaster humanitarian relief, among many other subjects, and addresses today all international issues in addition to Muslim causes. The number of its member countries grew from 25 at start to 57 at present.



The author was involved in the OIC's evolution for the past thirty years, in his capacity as the founding Director General of IRCICA (1980-2004), before becoming its Secretary General at the beginning of 2005. His insightful treatment of international issues of relevance for the Muslim world and for the OIC such as peace-building and conflict resolution, Islamophobia, elimination of poverty, human rights, the rights of women and the rights of children, post-disaster humanitarian relief, among others, and the OIC's strategies of action in these areas, are of great value. So are his elaborate chapters on the ongoing reforms introduced during his mandate to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organisation: the reader will find in it a focus on the main stages of its recent development, revealing the factors that led to and the results obtained from the reform and restructuring process operated since 2005. These chapters also reflect the initiatives led by the Secretary General towards improving the institutional structure and operations of the Organisation and reinforcing its role and functions on world scene.

In the climate of closer interactions and awareness of peoples and cultures of each other, the book highlights the OIC's role in representing the Muslim world and catalyzing problem-solving approaches in different areas and global platforms.

On the 40th year of the OIC, Prof. İhsanoğlu's book provides a clear picture of the Organisation past and present and its objectives and potentials in addressing the challenges of the 21st century within and beyond the context of the Muslim world.

