

Activity plan for 2021

I make this report in my own name.

2020 has provided plenty of time for reflection, and it brings me within a few months of the legendary four-score years when strength is 'but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone'. Not that I have any intention of passing away soon, but the Commission shouldn't have to depend entirely on my survival. In 2019 Tony Street asked to be relieved of the job of President, and Ahmad Hasnaoui made clear that because of other commitments he could only take over this job briefly. So from 2021 we have no President.

Over the last decade a number of people have made valuable and generous contributions to meetings of the Commission. But our central problem is that the Commission never generated a community of people who are happy to meet at CLMPST congresses and can find funds to do that. A measure of this was the Prague Congress in 2019, where we found three speakers for a symposium; the grant from DLMPST covered most of the needed funding. But one speaker backed out and another was hospitalised with appendicitis, leaving me on my own. (Saloua Chatti in hospital was at least present through her slides.) We had a decent audience, though as usual at CLMPST congresses it didn't yield anybody who was interested in working in the field.

With hindsight our one symposium that definitely worked well was that at the Manchester Congress of DHST in 2013. There were quite a lot of people there with a keen interest in Arabic and Islamic sciences, mostly connected with the DHST Commission on History of Science and Technology in Islamic Societies (CHOSTIS).

My present feeling is that we have to close the Arabic Logic Commission in its present form because there are simply not the people in DLMPST circles in a position to keep it going. It was worth the attempt because of the clear evidence of increased interest in Arabic Logic around the world, particularly in Iran and some other Islamic countries; the support of DLMPST was very welcome and I would hope that something can be rescued for the future. But a few weeks ago I applied to join CHOSTIS as an individual member—it has many individual members, including several with interests that overlap Arabic Logic. My hope is that it might be possible to pursue the interests of the Arabic Logic Commission as a corner of CHOSTIS. But no commitments of any kind have been made on that front. We wait to see what reaction comes from CHOSTIS. Of course offers and suggestions are always welcome.

Under these circumstances no plans for activities of the Commission in 2021 have been made. If the DHST Congress in Prague goes ahead as planned in July 2021, I am billed to speak on a topic in Arabic logic, but under the aegis of a symposium on 'Mathematical proofs and styles of reasoning: East vs. West'.