Sephardic Festival

A Sephardic Festival was featured as the 11th Annual Gale Lecture presented by the Jewish Studies Program, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Center. The Festival, which took place at the Harry Ransom Center on October 13, brought three eminent speakers to the campus. William Brinner, chairman of the department of Near Eastern Studies at Berkeley, spoke on the Sephardic Jews in Egypt. Na'im Kattan, novelist in Arabic and French and literary critic, spoke on the Sephardic Jews in Iraq. And Yedida Stillman, head of the department of Judaic Studies at State University of New York at Binghamton, spoke on the Sephardic Jews in Morocco. Seth Wolitz, holder of the Gale Chair of Judaic Studies, opened the Festival by introducing Dean of Liberal Arts Robert King, who dedicated the Festival to the late Hebrew scholar, Eisig Silber-schlag.

Exhibits, films, and a performance accompanied the lectures during the daylong celebration. An ethnographic exhibit in the lobby of the Flawn Academic Center featured “Sephardic Treasures Rediscovered in Texas.” The evening of the celebration Shifra Epstein, lecturer in the Department of Oriental and African Languages and Literatures, presented an instructional tour of the items on display. Sephardic materials drawn from the libraries of the University were on view for a week in exhibits organized by Nathan Snyder, Hebrew Librarian at the Perry Castanada Library, and Michael Laird, Rare Books Librarian at the Humanities Research Center.

Featured films during the day were “Roots of Exile: A Moroccan Odyssey,” “The Jews of Djerba,” and “About the Jews in Yemen: A Vanishing Culture.” The evening concluded with a documentary presentation and musical performance by Flory Jagoda and her company. They presented a performance of authentic and original compositions of Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) music, with lyrics set to the rhythms of Balkan and Mediterranean folk music.

Students, faculty, and members of the community attended the lectures. Professor Stillman interested the many Sephardic members of the audience and Sephardic scholars with slides of Sephardic costumes in Morocco and descriptions of the research that traced motifs of the costumes back to earlier centuries in Spain. Professor Brinner spoke of the extensive Jewish communities in Egypt over the centuries and of their contribution to Jewish culture and thought. Writer and critic Kattan, who grew up in Bagdad, reminded the audience that Jews had been in Iraq since the days of Mesopotamia. He reminisced about his youth when he wrote for a newspaper in Baghdad. Kattan lives and writes in Canada today.

Other sponsors of the festival were the departments of Music, Spanish-Portuguese and Oriental and African Languages and Literatures, the Dean of Graduate Studies, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation and the Jewish Community Council of Austin.

The festival exhibited the work of a Jewish goldsmith in Yemen.
Publications

Number 15 in the Modern Middle East Series will be Arabian Oasis City: the Transformation of 'Unayzah, by Soraya Altorki and Donald Cole. Both authors are anthropologists at the American University in Cairo. Altorki is Saudi Arabian and Cole is American. The book represents an ethnography of a small city in Saudi Arabia as its inhabitants undergo the social changes involved with the oil boom and subsequent decline. The University of Texas Press will bring the book out in early summer of 1989.

The Center is initiating its new program to translate leading, contemporary Middle Eastern authors with the fall publication of By the Pen (Nun' al-Qalam), by the late Iranian author Jalal Al-e Ahmad, translated by M.R. Ghanoonparvar with an introduction by Michael Hillmann. Next in the new series will be All That Is Left (Ma Tabaqqa Lakum) by the late Palestinian author Ghassan Kanafani, translated by Salma Jayyusi’s program, Project for the Translation from Arabic (PROTA), with an introduction by Roger Allen. Also underway in the series is Year of the Elephant (Am al Fil) by Moroccan author Leila Abouzeid and Fragments of Memory (Baqaya Suwar) by Syrian author Hanna Mina.

CASA Awards

Several students from the University have been selected to be scholars at the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA). Marilyn Kiovsky and Zjaleh Hajibashi have received full-year awards. David Haldane and Marc Moebius are full-year alternates. Dunya Mosawy received a summer award and Andrew Vorona is the summer alternate. Alternates are accepted for study, but must pay their own ways.

Honors For Students

Kristen Stilt, senior honors major in Middle Eastern Studies, has been named Dad’s Day Outstanding Student, and has been elected to Mortar Board and the Friar Society. As president of the Liberal Arts Council, she was responsible for organizing the successful International Studies Abroad Fair on campus. Stilt, who is from Houston, is writing an honors thesis under Elizabeth Fernea on attitudes toward the Iranian revolution in both oral and written history.

Study Abroad in Israel

The University and Haifa University in Israel have signed an agreement for academic collaboration. Both universities will explore opportunities for exchange of faculty and collaborative research, as well as encourage qualified students to pursue programs of study in each other’s institutions. The Director of the Center will oversee and facilitate this University’s participation in the program.

Under this agreement, UT students will have an opportunity to participate in a study abroad program at Haifa. Students may spend a semester or an academic year at Haifa. To apply, students must have been registered at UT during the preceding long session. Undergraduates with a 3.0 GPA and 60 hours and graduates with a 3.5 GPA may apply. Accepted students will pay University of Haifa tuition and receive transferred credit to UT. They will take courses in a wide range of subjects taught in English. In addition, students with appropriate language skills may take courses in Arabic, French, and Hebrew. In order to further integrate into the academic community, UT students will live in regular dormitories with Israeli roommates, both Jewish and Arab.

Applications are due March 1. Further information and applications forms are available at the Study Abroad Office in the International Center, 100 W. 26th Street, or call (512)471-1211. Some financial aid will be available.

Eisig Silberschlag

Eisig Silberschlag, Research Associate with the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, died September 30.

An internationally known scholar of Hebrew literature, Dr. Silberschlag was Visiting Gale Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Texas from 1973–1977 and had been affiliated with the Department of Oriental and African Languages and Literatures and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies since 1973. His published works include numerous books, translations, and essays in literary and scholarly journals in English and Hebrew, as well as several books of poetry. He received various literary prizes for his poetry and his translation of the comedies of Aristophanes from Greek into Hebrew. In 1980 he was the first recipient of the Abraham Friedman Prize for contributions to Hebrew culture in the United States.

Before coming to the University, Silberschlag was professor, dean, and president of Hebrew University in Boston. He will be greatly missed by all those who knew and worked with him.
Lecturers And Visitors

The Center is featuring two lecture series this fall. Once again, a Colloquium Series will be presented on Thursdays at 3:30 in the Center’s Resource room. The Colloquia are an opportunity for the faculty, students, and various friends of the Center to come together, exchange ideas, and expand their horizons. Speakers during the fall have been Ibrahim Muhawi from the Université de Tunis; Kate Gillespie, faculty member of the Marketing Department, UT; Pinar Batur-Vanderlippe, graduate student in the Sociology Department, UT; and Roy Jackson, former Chief of the U.S. Geological Survey Mission to Saudi Arabia. Resource Room Coordinator Aseel Dyck will present a workshop on library and information sources accessible to UT students and faculty, with an emphasis on Middle Eastern Studies. She will make this presentation at a Colloquium in the spring.

Clement Moore Henry (Government, UT) organized a series of public lectures for the fall semester entitled “The Identification of Interests in the Middle East and North Africa.” In September, Ümit Cize Sakallıoglu, from the Middle East Technical University in Istanbul, lectured on “Reflections on Corporatism: The Turkish Experience.” Richard Norton, Professor at the U.S. Military Academy, spoke in October on “Peace in Cyprus?”. “Social Structure and Political Tactics: The Durability of Arab States” was the title of a presentation by Jean Leca, Professor of the Institut d’Etudes Politiques in Paris. And John Waterbury, Professor of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton, spoke November 17 on “Twilight of the State Bourgeoisie?”.

Iraqi Conference

The Center plans to convene an academic conference to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Iraqi Revolution of 1958. Thirteen distinguished scholars have been invited to present papers at this conference, which will be held March 9-11, 1989.

The focus for discussion will be Hanna Batatu’s major study, The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq, published ten years ago. The scholars attending the conference will pursue such themes as the social structure of classes, the part played by Communists and Ba’athists in the emancipation of Iraq from British control, and the social as well as the political consequences of the Revolution. Organizers of the conference, Robert Fernea (Anthropology) and Roger Louis (History), wish to use Batatu’s work as the basis for a wide ranging and encompassing discussion about Arab society in the twentieth century as well as the Iraqi Revolution of 1958. Other participating scholars will be ‘Isam al-Khafaji, Fred Axelgard, Hanna Batatu, Sir Harold Beeley, Norman Daniel, Rashid Khalidi, Roger Owen, Marion Farouk-Sluglett, Peter Sluglett, Joe Stork, Nicholas Thatcher, Abdel Salaam Yousef, and Sami Zubaida.

TAMES Eighth Annual Meeting

The Texas Association of Middle East Scholars met for the eighth year on The University of Texas at Austin campus on September 30–October 1. Fourteen speakers delivered papers at the three sessions on Archaeology, Ethnology, and Economics; Art and Literature; and History and Politics. Several events were planned in conjunction with this year’s meeting. The Turkish Students’ Association served a lunch on Friday of representative Turkish foods. On Friday afternoon, Michael Hillmann (Persian, UT) introduced the Iranian film “The Secrets of the Treasure of the Haunted Valley.” After a Middle Eastern dinner Friday night, Mehdi Abedi (Rice University) gave a recitation from the Shah-Nameh.

A business meeting followed the panels on Saturday, where Tom Thompson of San Antonio was announced as the new president of the association. New council members are Albert Chammah (Management and CMES, UT) and Annes McCann-Baker (CMES, UT).

Outreach News

On October 15, the Center cosponsored the second annual conference of the Texas Alliance for Geographic Education. Over two hundred teachers and educators from around the state participated. Fedwa Malhi-Douglas (Arabic) and Paul English (Geography) were coordinators representing The University of Texas. The National Geographic Society sent a representative from their Geographic Education Division.

Annette Pomeroy, Outreach Coordinator at the Center, was elected to be on the Board of Directors for the Middle East Outreach Council (MEOC). The Center has worked closely with MEOC since its organization in 1981 as a nationwide network of information and resources on the Middle East.

Fedwa Malti-Douglas (Arabic) had published in the spring of 1988 her book Blindness and Autobiography: al-Ayyam of Taha Husayn with Princeton University Press. Two articles by Malti-Douglas also appeared during this period: “Badi‘ al-Zaman Hamadhani,” in the Encyclopaedia Iranica and “Medical Science and Sexual Power in the Fiction of Nawal as Sa’dawi,” in the Bulletin of Science, Technology, and Society. In October of 1987, Malti-Douglas delivered a paper, “Hayy ibn Yaqzan as Male Utopia” for a special conference in London on Hayy ibn Yaqzan sponsored by the Welcome Institute for the History of Medicine and the British Academy. She also served on the Visiting Committee to evaluate the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard. During the fall, Malti-Douglas delivered public lectures at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; the University of Colorado, Boulder; and the University of Michigan. During this time, Malti-Douglas was appointed to the editorial boards of Genders and Nisa’. She returned in the fall from a nine-month, Fulbright sponsored research trip to Egypt, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Morocco, and France. While abroad she delivered papers in Cairo in French and Arabic.

Gail Minault (History) was editor of the publication Abul Kalam Azad: An Intellectual and Religious Biography (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988) by Ian H. Douglas. During 1987–88, Minault was a Fellow at the National Humanities Center in North Carolina.

Denise Schmandt-Besserat (Art) chaired a session of the symposium “Problems in Decipherment,” at the University of Wisconsin at Madison on April 9. From July 8 through 22 she was part of the invited faculty at the NATO Advanced Study Institute on The Origin of Human Language, in Cortona, Italy. Schmandt-Besserat was an advisor for “Great Discoveries,” a television series on archaeology, and she had published “Tokens at Uruk” in Baghdader Mitteilungen, vol. 19, 1988.

Abazar Sepehri (Middle East Collection) has just published an article in MELA notes, no. 45 (Fall, 1988), on contemporary Persian publishing in exile.

Robert Vitalis (Government) received his Ph.D. from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in May with a thesis entitled Building Capitalism in Egypt: The Abbud Pasha Group and the Politics of Construction. He was invited to deliver a paper at the third annual conference on Ottoman History at the Fernand Braudel Center of the State University of New York at Binghamton on October 7–8. His paper is entitled “The Emergence of Local Business Groups in Nineteenth Century Egypt.”

Caroline Williams (Architecture) was invited by the National Council for U.S.–Arab Relations in Washington to be on the national Selection Committee for the Malcolm H. Kerr High School Scholars. In July she was the escort for the twelve participants who were selected for a month of study and travel in Egypt.

John A. Williams (Art) is spending the academic year at The College of William and Mary as the William R. Kenan, Jr., Distinguished Professor in the Humanities. He is teaching courses in the History of North Africa, the Art of the Later Muslim Empires, and Muslim Political Theory. He is also offering a Seminar for Faculty.

Old And New Faculty

M. R. Ghanoonparvar, who was a lecturer in Persian during 1987–88, has gone to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. He was awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship for the 1988–89 academic year to complete research and write a book entitled In a Persian Mirror: Images of the West and Westerners in Persian Fiction.

Zvi Steinfeld is a Visiting Professor in Hebrew Studies this year. He comes from Israel where he is Professor and Chair of the Talmud Department at Bar Ilan University.
Faculty And Staff News

Allen Douglas (French and CMES) had a book published in France entitled L'Ideologie par la bande: Héros politiques de France et d'Egypte au miroir de la BD. Coauthored with F. Malti-Douglas, the book was published by the CEDEJ. Douglas spent a nine-month, Fulbright sponsored research trip in Egypt, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Morocco, and France. He delivered a paper, “Voyages et échanges culturelles dans une bande dessinée arabe,” at a special conference on “Exchanges,” sponsored by the CEDEJ and the IFAO in Cairo in June. In November, he will deliver a paper at a conference in Tunis on the cultural dimensions of development, sponsored by the Centre d'Études et de Recherches Economiques et Sociales.

Shifra Epstein (Hebrew) received a grant from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture to conduct field work in Poland on Hasidic pilgrimages to sites where the founders of the Hasidic movement are buried. She was there in March and returned in August to film a video documentary entitled “Pilgrimage to Poland: 1988,” which is now being edited. The filming was sponsored by the LBJ School of Public Affairs.

Elizabeth Fernea (CMES and English) received a three-month Fulbright grant this past summer to do a preliminary survey of the situation of children in the Arab world. She chose Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, and Kuwait for her areas of research. Fernea will write a chapter on the subject for Children in Comparative and Historical Perspective to be edited by Joseph Hawes and Ray Hiner and published by Greenwood Press. Fernea plans later to expand her research into a book on children in the Arab world.

Robert Fernea (Anthropology) was elected Chairman of the Board of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). CAORC is an umbrella organization that promotes the interests of research centers that American academic institutions participate in abroad. CAORC is located at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., and is supported in part by congressional appropriations.

Clement Moore Henry (Government) presented papers resulting from his ongoing research into the financial reform and political change in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, and Turkey. The papers were presented at a workshop sponsored by the Center for Maghreb Studies in Tunisia at Tangier from May 30 through June 4, and at a conference in Aix-en-Provence hosted by CRESM June 9–11. Also during the summer, Henry did field work in the five countries that are the focus of his research, supported by a Social Science Research Council grant. This fall he made a presentation in Venice, Italy, at the International Council meeting of Morgan Guaranty on September 29–30.

Michael Hillmann (Persian) was invited to present a paper at a seminar at Harvard University on “Women Biographies and Autobiographies in Contemporary Iran” in early May. Called “Forugh Farrokzhad’s Autobiographical Voice,” the paper will appear in a volume published by Harvard’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies in 1989. Also on Farrokzhad is a volume Hillmann edited called Forugh Farrokzhad A Quarter-Century Later, based on a conference he organized at the University in February of 1987. Hillmann was invited to participate in the fall 1988 Alumni Institute Lecture Series on International Literature at Rice University. His lecture on October 25 was entitled “Iranian Writers Answer Montesquieu’s Question: Comment peut-on être Persan?”

M. A. Jazayery (Persian) has just published Languages and Cultures: Studies in Honor of Edgar C. Polomé, which he coedited with Professor Werner Winter, of the Seminar für Allgemeine und Indogermanische Sprachwissenschaft der Universität in Kiel, West Germany. Publisher was Mouton de Gruyter of Berlin, New York, and Amsterdam. Sixty-four scholars from the U.S., Canada, India, and Europe contributed articles in a variety of fields, including Indo-European linguistics, sociolinguistics, religious studies, and literature, with a biographical sketch and bibliography of Professor Polomé done by Jazayery. Other contributors from the Center include Peter Abboud (Arabic) and Winfred P. Lehmann (Linguistics). The book is Volume 36 in a series, Trends in Linguistics (Studies and Monographs).

Harold Liebowitz conducted the summer season of excavation at Tel Yin’am in Israel. Participants at the dig found among other objects a uniquely decorated bronze javelin head and several pieces of silver jewelry. This year Leibowitz initiated excavation at another site, Beit Jann, located at the northwest edge of Moshavah Yavne’el. Beit Jann yielded evidence of occupation from the Israelite period to the Islamic period and promises to be an interesting site. Liebowitz also published a book entitled Terra-cotta Figurines and Model Vehicles dealing with those objects excavated by the University of Chicago at Tel Selenkahyte, Syria.
New Resource Center Coordinator

Aseel Dyck has assumed the half-time position of managing the Resource Center and being responsible for programs and services to University students, faculty and visitors to the campus. Annette Pomeroy remains the Outreach Coordinator responsible for responding to schools and communities beyond the campus. Born in Baghdad, Dyck has masters degrees in modern Near East history (from the American University of Beirut) and library science (from the University of California, Berkeley). She has worked extensively in libraries in the Middle East and in the United States.

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