Center Receives Rockefeller Grant

The Center has received a four-year grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to form the Institute for the Study of Literature, Religion, and Society in the Contemporary Middle East. The Institute will investi- gate the new relations which have developed between literature, religion and society in the region as a result of the current religious revival. Institute scholars, who will be in residence with the Center, may study the treatment of religion and social problems in contemporary literature; controversies over the acceptability of secular literature; the new religious literature and religion; and the material and social conditions of literary production. The major literatures (Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish) of the Middle East will be considered.

Each year for three years, two scholars will be granted residencies to pursue research in association with the Center. The Center will seek outstanding qualified scholars who expect to be able to complete major research and writing within the area of the Institute's topic. During the last year of the grant period, a major conference on the subject will be held.

Chosen fellows will have the facilities of the University available to them. In addition to faculty and programs in the major Middle Eastern languages and literature, the University has one of the nation's largest general libraries and outstanding vernacular collections in Arabic, Hebrew, and Persian literary materials. Professor Fedwa Malti-Douglas (Arabic) will be the Director of the Institute. Malti-Douglas is also Associate Director of the Center.

The Rockefeller Foundation supports Humanities Fellowships programs at some twenty-seven host institutions. The goal of these programs is to support scholars whose research further understanding of contemporary social and cultural issues and extends international or intercultural scholarship. The host institutions select scholars to receive Rockefeller Foundation stipends, and subsequently encourage interaction between an institution's permanent experts and the visiting scholars.

Tel Yin'am Site Becomes Archaeological Park

The Israel Department of Antiquities has decided to turn the Tel Yin'am dig site, visited for nine years by Harold Liebowitz (Hebrew) and students, into an archaeological park. The exhibition area on the tell will complement a museum to be constructed in the nearby village of Yavne'el, which will house the collection of artifacts from Tel Yin'am spanning a period from 6,000 B.C. to around 600 A.D.

While in Israel for this past summer's trip with students, Liebowitz also conducted a trial excavation at the site of Beit Gan, an early Israelite to late Islamic site. The site is large, according to Liebowitz, and has promise of yielding important remains from the 12th century B.C. to the modern period.
Afghanistan Conference

A Conference called “The Afghanistan Legacy” was held on the University campus October 19-21. Cosponsored by the Centers for Asian Studies, Middle Eastern Studies and Soviet and East European Studies, the event drew scholars from around the world. The Conference was opened with a speech by Jagat Mehta, Visiting Professor of Public Affairs and Asian studies at UT.

Sheila Fitzpatrick, Professor of History and Soviet and East European Studies at UT, chaired a panel entitled “Soviet Lessons of the Afghan War.” Speaker was Jiri Valenta, Professor of Political Science, University of Miami; discussants were author Henry Bradsher and Robert German, Visiting Professor of Public Affairs at UT.

Thomas Thornton, from the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, spoke on “Afghanistan: As a Case Study in Superpower Crisis Management.” Discussants were Lawrence Finkelstein, Professor of Political Science at Northern Illinois University, and Vladimir Plastun from the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow.

Robert Hardgrave, Jr., Professor of Government and Asian Studies at UT, chaired a panel, “Afghanistan: The Regional Impact in South Asia.” Selig Harrison, Senior Associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, participated, and the discussant was Jamsheed Marker, former Pakistani Ambassador to the U.S.

Another panel, “Anatomy of an Entanglement: Afghanistan and Iran,” was chaired by Clement Henry, Professor of Government and Middle Eastern Studies at UT. John Lorentz, Professor of History and International Studies at Willamette University, participated, and David Champagne, Senior Middle East Analyst in the U.S. Army, was the discussant.

On the third day of the Conference, Richard Lariviere, Director of the Center for Asian Studies, chaired the panel “Afghanistan: State Breakdown and Prospects for Reconstruction.” Speaker was Barnett Rubin, Professor of Political Science at Yale University, and journalist Lawrence Lifschultz was the discussant.

An overview of the Conference was conducted by Ambassador Vasiliiy Safronchuk (USSR), Under Secretary General for Political and Security Council Affairs of the United Nations. The Discussant was Robert Peck, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asia in the U.S. Department of State.

Texas Association of Middle East Scholars Meets in Houston

The 1989 annual meeting of TAMES was held at Rice University on October 20-21. President Tom Thompson opened the meeting by dedicating it to former president M.A. Jazayery (UT-Austin).

A graduate-student panel from UT-Austin was chaired by Catherine and Najeeb Ahmad. Nabil Abdelfattah spoke on “Western Women Meet Eastern Men: An Analysis of Three Arabic Novels”; Moira Killoran on “Turkish Cypriot Identity Contestation in Literature”; Roberta Micallef on “Hizir: A Cross Cultural Hero of the Middle East and the Balkans”; and Greg Noakes on “The Emotional Tragedy of War: Mohammed Dib’s Who Remembers the Sea.”

Byran Augustin (Southwest Texas State University) and J. David Martin (Midwestern State University) presented slides and a talk on the March 1989 Joseph T. Malone Fellows Study Tour of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain taken by the Texas Committee of U.S.-Arab Relations Council. Ali Eftekhary (UT-Austin) also spoke of summer travel in his talk on “Travels in Iran, Summer 1989.”

On Saturday morning Tom Thompson moderated an open discussion on religion, politics and literature as seen through the works of Middle Eastern authors such as Naguib Mahfouz, Jalal Al Ahmad, Salman Rushdie, Ali Shariati and others. Discussants were Mehdi Abidi (Rice University), M.A. Jazayery (UT Austin), Abazar Sepehri (UT Austin), and Fred Van der Mehden (Rice University).

Panel II was chaired by Elizabeth Fernea. Speakers from UT-Austin were Aseel Dyck on “Gertrude Bell: Traveler and King Maker”; Caroline Attié on “Two Contemporary Lebanese Women Writers: Layla Ba’albaki and Hanan al-Shaikh”; Ann McCann-Baker on “Mothers, Sons, and Tribalism: Religion in Sitt Marie-Rose, Lebanon 1975”; and Elizabeth Fernea on “Writing Culture: The Issue of Gender in the Production of Ethnography.”

Panel III was chaired by Ann Bragdon. Speakers were Abdalla Al-Kurd (University of Houston) on “Popular Alternative Education in Al-Intifada”; Nada Mardini (Rice University) on “Language Modification among Arab Students at the American University of Beirut”; and Samir Ashrawi (Texaco) on “Resistance Through Cultural Expression: Palestinian Music Under the Israeli Occupation.”

New officers announced at the Business Meeting are President Avraham Zilkha (UT-Austin) and Council Members Ann Bragdon (Houston) and Robert Vitalis (UT-Austin).

Visiting Scholars

Abdulaziz Yassin al-Saqqaf, chair of the Department of Economics at Sanaa University in the Yemen Arab Republic, visited the University during September.

Two visiting professors from Egypt were Thana Aly El Kabani, Assistant Professor of Accounting at Monafia University; and Anwar Abdel Salama, Professor and Head of the Department of Personnel Management at Sadat Academy in Alexandria, Egypt. Both scholars were on campus under the Faculty Enrichment Summer Program of the Binaal Fulbright Commission.

The Center is glad to have Professor Cem Taylan here for the academic year. He is an Assistant Professor at Fen-Edebiyat Fakultesi, Bogazici University in Turkey.
Student News

Gwen Okruhlik has been accepted as a Fulbright scholar to research private sector business in Saudi Arabia during the 1989-1990 academic year. She will spend the majority of her time in Jiddah, but also hopes to travel to Riyadh for her research. Okruhlik was a State Department intern for the United Arab Emirates during the summer. Her office was in Abu Dhabi. Okruhlik is completing her dissertation for a degree in Government.

Anthropology graduate student Ann Gardner, a Fulbright scholar doing her research in Cairo and Sinai, received a National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement grant to complement her Fulbright. She is studying the effects on Bedouin women of recent sedentarization in the Sinai desert, especially in regard to women's status, women's health, and informal tribal networks.

Kristen Stilt, honors graduate in Middle Eastern Studies, received a Fulbright to study in Kuwait. She is working at the Language Institute at the University of Kuwait for the 1989-90 academic year.

Graduate students who worked or traveled in the Middle East during the summer of 1989 were Catherine and Najeeb Ahmad, who worked in Cairo and traveled through Egypt, the West Bank, and Pakistan; and Moira Killoran, who did thesis research in Cyprus and interviewed Cypriot scholars. CASA fellowship recipients who started studying Arabic in Cairo during the summer are Marietta Mugford, Hosam Aboul-Ela, and Marc Moebius.

Undergraduates were also busy last summer pursuing Middle Eastern Studies overseas. Andy Wigginton, recipient this year of a University Presidential Scholarship, received a scholarship from the American Research Institute in Turkey to study Turkish at Bosphorus University. Scott Jensen worked in Washington as an intern in the House of Representatives. Angela Assed traveled to Druze villages in Syria for research on changing marital patterns. Scott and Angela received credit for their work under the Practicum (Applied Middle Eastern Studies) course offered by the Center as part of its program for majors. Ann Baddour is a State Department intern at the Amman desk in Washington, D.C. this fall. Robert Fitzpatrick was a State Department intern in Riyadh.

FLAS recipients for the 1989-90 academic year are Catherine Ahmad (Arabic), Najeeb Ahmad (Arabic), Linda Boxberger (Arabic), Rebecca Eaton (Arabic), Zjaleh Hajibashi (Persian and Arabic), Daniel Lefkowitz (Arabic), James Paul Tanner (Hebrew), Jenny White (Turkish), and Darrow Zeidenstein (Arabic). 1989 Summer FLAS recipients were Brian Evans (Arabic), Carla Higgins (Arabic), and Daniel Lefkowitz (Arabic).

Tim Dickey, 1978 graduate, has won a Peabody Award for his four-part Christian Science Monitor television series "Islam in Turmoil." The series also won the National Headliners' second place award for Outstanding Documentary by a Television Network" and the National Education Association's award for the "Advancement of Learning through Broadcasting." Another graduate, recent CMES masters student Shannon Maher, has been hired by the Department of the Army at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where she will be working with her knowledge of Arabic.

John and Caroline Williams

Center faculty, staff, and students have missed John and Caroline Williams and their marvelous teaching and lecturing abilities, since the couple's move to Virginia. John and Caroline had taught at the University since 1973 with interspersed periods at the American University in Cairo. John accepted the Kenan Professorship in the Humanities at The College of William and Mary University in 1989. He had been Professor in Art and Middle Eastern Studies at the University. Among his publications are Islam (1961); Themes of Islamic Civilization (1971); The Abbasid Revolution, vol. XXVII History of al-Tabari (1985); The Early Abbasid Empire (1988). Caroline was a lecturer in Architecture and Middle Eastern Studies at the University. She is coauthor of the 3rd edition of The Islamic Monuments of Cairo: A Practical Guide (1985).

Outreach Program

The Middle East Resource Center’s Teaching Materials Catalogue is in print and available free upon request. It lists audiovisual as well as printed materials, and is organized by subject and by country. The CMES Resource Center is also distributing for the Middle East Outreach Council a Teacher’s Supplements for Middle Eastern Studies, Folder #1. It contains folksongs, folkdances, folktales, proverbs, recipes, a spreadsheet of facts and figures, and a glossary drawn from languages of the Arab World, Israel, Iran and Turkey.

On October 28 the Outreach Program conducted a teacher’s workshop in Houston at the request of the Texas Committee for the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations. The title was “Cultural and Physical Geography of the Arab Islamic World.”

Outreach Coordinator Annette Pomeroy has been selected for the Advisory Committee for AIMEAST’s newsletter. She is also the Selection Committee Chair for Austin of the Malcolm H. Kerr High School Scholars Program in Arab and Islamic Studies.

Scholarships in Hebrew

Scholarships for Hebrew Studies are available for upper division and graduate students. The deadline is November 20. Applications should be submitted to Hebrew Studies, UNI 116, University of Texas, Austin, 78712. (512) 471-1365

Denise Schmandt-Besserat (Art History) had published "The Origins of Visible Language" in Anthropological Approach to the Origin of Human Language, Vol. I, the proceedings of the NATO Advanced Study Institute at Cortona, Italy. She was interviewed in June for "The Nature of things" by Richard Longley, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Television. Schmandt-Besserat was the coordinator of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Language Origins Society, at UT Austin during August, where she organized the panel "The Origin of Visible Language in the New World."

Avraham Zilkha participated in a Hebrew proficiency workshop in Chicago in conjunction with the annual meeting of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew. In August he delivered a paper entitled "The Use of the Dictionary as a Teaching Aid" at the World Congress of Jewish Studies which was held at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Zilkha's Modern Hebrew-English Dictionary was published this year by Yale University Press and has been nominated by the Press in competition for the National Book Awards in the scholarship category.

Publications Program

Arabian Oasis City, The Transformation of Unayzah by Soraya Altorki and Donald Cole is Number 15 in the Center's Modern Middle East Series. Published in August, the book is based on extensive interviews and participant observation with both men and women in the ancient oasis city Unayzah of central Saudi Arabia. The authors recorded and analyzed the transformation that occurred in this city during the twentieth century: the creation of the present Saudi Arabian state and of the new national economy based on the oil boom and the consequent slump in the industry. By demonstrating that the area was not exclusively dominated by tribalism and Bedouin nomads, this empirical case study destroys stereotypic views about Saudi Arabia. It shows that women, although veiled, played active roles in work outside the household. The social impact of change over the years is, however, profound—especially the gradual replacement of the extended family by the nuclear family, changing patterns of husband-wife relationships, the impact of self-earned income on the status of women, and the emergence of a new middle class of employees and entrepreneurs. Cole and Altorki, both professors of anthropology at the American University in Cairo, provide an interesting collaboration between a Saudi Arabian female scholar and an American male scholar.

The Center, in conjunction with the University of Texas Press, has recently initiated a new series, the Modern Middle East Literature in Translation Series. Early books in the series were By the Pen by Jalal Al-Ahmad (published by the Center) and Maze of Justice by Tawfik Al-Hakim (published by the Press). This November brings publication of Year of the Elephant, A Moroccan Woman's Journey Toward Independence by Leila Abouzeid.

In Year of the Elephant, a fictional treatment of a Muslim woman's life, a personal and family crisis impels the heroine to reexamine traditional cultural attitudes toward women. Cast out and divorced by her husband, she finds herself in a strange new world as she actively participates in the struggle for Moroccan independence from France. Year of the Elephant is uniquely Moroccan and emerges from North African Islamic culture itself. First published in Arabic in Morocco in 1983, this novel almost immediately sold out. Leila Abouzeid is an author, script writer, and journalist. Elizabeth Ferna (CMES and English—UT Austin) wrote the Introduction for the book.

Both books may be ordered through the University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713, (512) 471-7233.

Lecturers

The Colloquium Series held at the Center's Resource Room continues its Thursday afternoon lectures this year. Ali Ektekhary opened the series on September 28 with a talk, "Observations on Iran, March-July, 1989," resulting from his recent trip to Iran. Eftekhary is a doctoral candidate in Foreign Language Education Studies at the University. On October 5 Ron Houston, Director of the University Folk Dance Society, gave a lecture on "Choreography: The Influence of the Ottoman Empire on World Dance." Sedwa Multi-Douglass, Associate Director of the Center, spoke of "Poetry and Patriarchy: The Autobiography of Fadwa Tuqan" on October 19. "The Sober Logic of Turkish" was the title of Eser Taylan, Lecturer in Turkish, on October 26.


Samuel W. Lewis, President of the United States Institute of Peace and past US Ambassador to Israel, will lecture as part of a program series sponsored by the United States Institute of Peace. The Center is one of the cosponsors of this program. This speech will be held in the Bass Lecture Hall, LBJ School of Public Affairs, on November 13 at 4:00 P.M.
Faculty News

John Bordie (Foreign Language Education) worked with the American University of Beirut faculty on a language teaching workshop in Cyprus during August. Fulbright has awarded Bordie a two-year sequential research lectureship at the Universities of Mosul and Baghdad to begin in December.

Shifra Epstein (Hebrew) was a guest editor of a special issue of the Jewish Folklore and Ethnography Review, devoted to the study of material culture.

Elizabeth Fernea (CMES and English) was promoted from Senior Lecturer to Professor of English during the summer. She will continue to teach classes cross-listed in Middle Eastern Studies. Fernea was elected to the governing board for the Texas Institute of Letters. During June she served as a judge on the Paisano Committee that awards two residency fellowships for the arts each year.

Robert Fernea (Anthropology) as chairman of the Ethics Committee of the American Anthropology Association delivered a final report on ethics in the profession at the Association’s annual meeting in November.

Kate Gillespie (Marketing) was awarded the College of Business Administration Foundation Advisory Council Teaching Award for Assistant Professors. She published “Political Risk Implications for Exporters, Contractors and Foreign Licensors: The Iranian Experience” in Management International Review, 1989, Vol. II. Gillespie traveled to Cairo during the summer to explore opportunities for summer internships for the joint MBA/MA in Middle Eastern Studies and Business. She then continued to the West Bank with Catherine Ahmad to interview Palestinian industrialists.

Clement Henry (Government) attended Tunisia Day in April at the School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C., and presented a paper on his ongoing research, to appear in a volume edited by William Zartman. Henry spent June continuing field work on commercial banking and political change in the Maghreb. He is organizing a Conference on Technology and Social Change, to be held in Tunis in the summer of 1990, under the auspices of the Center of Maghreb Studies and supported by a Ford Foundation grant.


Roger Louis (History) edited, with Roger Owen, Suez 1956: the Crisis and its Consequences, which was published this year by the Oxford University Press. The book is the product of two conferences sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington D.C. and the Middle East Centre at St. Antony’s College, Oxford. In October 1988 he gave a paper at the meeting of the German Historical Association on the dissolution of the European colonial empires, and participated in a Ditchley Conference on political biography. In January 1989 he visited New Delhi to help make arrangements for a series of conferences to be sponsored by UT Austin, the Nehru Memorial Library and St. Antony’s on “India: the First Ten Years of Independence.” In March 1989 Louis cochaired with Robert Fernea a conference on the Iraqi Revolution of 1958. In April he lectured at the University of the South and the University of Southern California. In June he presented a paper at a conference at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem on “Crossroads in the Palestine Problem.” At Present, Louis is on a Faculty Research Assignment and is spending the semester as a Visiting Fellow in the Middle East Program at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. He is to give the Chichele Lectures on “Leo Amery and the Middle East and India” at All Souls College, Oxford in May 1990.


Ian Manners (Geography) was elected to the Governing Board of the Holy Land Conservation Fund. In October he visited Turkey as a lecturer for the American Geographical Society, speaking on current developments in the discipline and on contemporary issues in environmental resource management.


Gail Minault will attend in December an international conference in New Delhi to mark the centennial of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the leading Indian Muslim nationalist. She will present a paper entitled “The Elusive Maulana: Some Reflections on Writing Azad’s Biography.” Minault has been invited to give a series of seminars at the Centre d’Etudes de l’Inde et de l’Asie du Sud of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris.
New Faculty and Staff

The Center is very happy to welcome Sherman Jackson as a new assistant professor in Arabic. He comes to the University from the Center for Arabic Study Abroad in Cairo, where he was Director. Professor Jackson's areas of expertise include classical Arabic and interpretation of Islamic texts and legal materials. He is currently a candidate for the Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania. He has previously taught at Villanova University, Middlebury College and the University of Pennsylvania.

Also welcome is Eser Taylan, Visiting Associate Professor in the Department of Oriental and African Languages and Literatures, where she teaches Turkish. Born in Turkey, Professor Taylan received her Ph.D. at UCLA. She has taught at the University of California at Berkeley and Bogazici University in Turkey.

The Center's new staff member is Deborah Littrell, who has been appointed as Resource Center Coordinator. She is responsible for managing the Resource Center, reserving books and films for Middle Eastern Studies courses, coordinating the annual meeting of TAMES, and arranging schedules for visitors to the campus. Ms. Littrell holds masters degrees in library science and public administration, and has had more than 12 years of experience in library and administrative positions.

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