2007 Newsletter

Arabic Flagship Program

We are proud to announce the inauguration of the Arabic Flagship Program at the University of Texas at Austin, with fifteen UT students named Flagship Fellows. The Flagship program has been made possible by a grant from the Language Flagship Organization of the National Security Education Program, and is designed to graduate superior level speakers of Arabic at the end of the Fellows’ undergraduate careers. In addition to educational support for the Fellows, the grant allows us to hire new faculty and staff and provides funding for graduate mentors, developing new courses, cultural events, student activities, additional resources and materials, and increased publicity. The grant will thus benefit not only the Arabic Flagship Fellows, but also the Department and Center programs and students.

The Arabic Flagship Program (AFP), directed by Dr. Mahmoud Al-Batal, Associate Professor of Arabic, will provide Fellows with the same outstanding training in Arabic language and culture that our other students receive, since it is integrated into our regular Arabic program. In addition, the AFP offers Fellows funded summer language study as well as extracurricular opportunities to help them reach the superior level of proficiency in Arabic while simultaneously pursuing an undergraduate major of their choice. While all Flagship programs share the goal of producing superior level speakers of critical languages, the AFP at UT proposes a new model for achieving this goal that relies on intensive study abroad and the commitment and abilities of serious students, whether or not they have any heritage background or have had previous experience with Arabic. In other words, we believe that non-native learners have the ability to reach the superior level of Arabic and beyond.

The AFP will offer students coursework in formal and spoken Arabic at five levels, with intensive summer study at UT available at the elementary and intermediate levels. In addition, we are developing new Arabic Across the Curriculum components to English-language disciplinary courses in Government, History, Geography, Economics, and Religious Studies in which students read and discuss primary texts from the class in Arabic. An example of this is the Shi’ite Political and Religious Ideologues class, which has components taught in both Arabic and Persian. The program also will provide AFP participants who reach advanced-high proficiency with the chance to take courses taught in Arabic that focus on the politics, religions, literatures, and cultures of the Arabic-speaking world, such as Cinema in the Contemporary Middle East, in which students watch contemporary Arab films.
and critique them in Arabic. Some of our advanced Fellows will be taking these courses this coming year.

The study abroad component of our AFP constitutes an important part of our strategy. This summer, two students studied Third-Year Arabic in Damascus with Flagship Instructor Iman Fandi, who spent spring 2007 at UT teaching Arabic classes and getting to know our program and its approach. Normally Fellows will spend one summer in Damascus at either the third- or fourth-year level. At the completion of the four-year undergraduate degree, Fellows will choose to spend a full year in one of the two Arabic Flagship sites in Damascus, Syria, and Alexandria, Egypt. This time spent in the Arabic-speaking world is essential in providing the students with the ability to reach the superior level as well as in gaining an understanding of the cultures and communities of the language they are learning.

The AFP is open to talented undergraduate students of any major and year of study who are committed to achieving superior proficiency in Arabic and who see Arabic as an integral part of their long-term professional goals. Students may apply to the Flagship program at any time during their first three years of Arabic study. The response to our first call for applications was excellent, and we were able to choose thirteen outstanding students from the existing high-quality student pool on the basis of their motivation, long-term commitment to Arabic, and language-learning skills. During our second call for applications an additional two Fellows were accepted into the program, bringing the total to fifteen.

In addition to increasing the number of Fellows, plans for the upcoming year include developing new course offerings, organizing an expanded program of cultural events, and creating a multimedia resource center for Arabic students.

We are also excited to be welcoming two new faculty. The first is Lecturer Uri Horesh, Ph.D. candidate in Arabic Linguistics from the University of Pennsylvania (see p. 5), and the second is Boushra Al-Bathish, Visiting Professor from our partner institution the University of Damascus, Syria, who will be working with our students both here and in Damascus. We expect to begin a search for a new Assistant Professor in Modern Arabic Literature this coming year.

**ARABIC FLAGSHIP FELLOWS**

- **Rabiya Ali** (Linguistics) • **Cara Beining** (Arabic Language and Literature)
- **Hannah Burgess** (Government) • **Adrienne Dunlap** (M.A. program, MES) • **Angela Giordani** (English/Religious Studies/Arabic Language and Literature) • **Brittany Hodges** (Arabic Language and Literature/MES) • **Nisreen Hussain** (Arabic Language and Literature) • **Katherine Jernigan** (Government/MES) • **Kaley Keener** (Arabic Language and Literature) • **Tatiana Zhiltsova-Kelley** (Arabic Language and Literature) • **Jennifer Nation** (Plan II/MES/French) • **Anna Russo** (Government/MES/Arabic Language and Literature) • **Kelli Vanderlee** (Government)
- **Sheila Weaver** (Arabic Language and Literature) • **Brandon Wilson** (Government)

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**Grant Enables New Program with ROTC**

The Department of Middle Eastern Studies (DMES) received good news this spring with the announcement that the National Security Education Program had awarded a three-year grant in the amount of $581,000 to DMES and the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs at the University of Texas at Austin. This grant, part of the ROTC Language and Culture Project, is a new initiative designed to provide students participating in ROTC with experience in the languages and cultures of regions important to U.S. national security.

The terms of the grant will allow for the integration of ROTC cadets into DMES's highly respected Arabic and Persian language programs. Through these programs, cadets will gain language proficiency and study abroad experience that will be invaluable to them as they pursue their careers. Both ROTC cadets and MES students will benefit from sharing coursework and experiences.

The ROTC grant will also facilitate the expansion of the Persian language program. The funding provided by the grant will be used to hire a full-time lecturer in Persian, several graduate student mentors, and a language specialist to prepare students for study abroad.

DMES Chair Esther Raizen, who obtained the grant, will oversee the program, coordinating activities with Col. Michael Harris, Chair; Dept. of Air Force Science, Capt. Gabriel Salazar, Chair; Dept. of Naval Science, and Lt. Col. Kevin Vizzarri, Chair; Dept. of Military Science. Michael Hillmann will serve as DMES liaison with the ROTC programs.
Letter from the Chair

Esther Raizen

The academic year 2006-2007 was an exciting one for Middle Eastern Studies at UT Austin, and the upcoming year holds considerable promise as well. The long-term vision guiding the Department involves plans for the development of all DMES programs through carefully monitored growth, collaboration with other departments and colleges in an attempt to increase the visibility of Middle Eastern Studies across campus, innovative and dynamic curriculum, and concentrated efforts to make our mark on the general field of Middle Eastern Studies. A national workshop on Hebrew grammar and the teaching of Biblical Hebrew in April, and the Arabic Teacher Hebrew Development Seminar held on the UT campus for the second time in August represent our firm commitment to the field. Collaborative research on topics such as language learning anxiety among students of Arabic and Hebrew, the factors that contribute to preparing a successful student to achieve superior level proficiency in Arabic, and the state of Persian instruction across the nation are likewise an indication of our interest in the strength of Middle Eastern Studies beyond our own program.

The Department and Center played an active role in the recent hire of Sonia Seeman, an ethnomusicologist specializing in Middle Eastern music, and Stephennie Mulder, an art historian specializing in Islamic art. We also hosted a number of visiting scholars from the Middle East, among them Yoav Gelber from the University of Haifa, who served as UT's first Schusterman Visiting Scholar in Israeli Studies, and Imran Fandi from the University of Damascus, who taught Arabic language at UT and then returned to Damascus as a mentor to UT students studying there over the summer.

Securing external funding is one of our highest priorities at this point in time, as we develop the infrastructure for the next decade. We received a generous grant from the Turkish government in 2006-2007 and again in 2007-2008 in an effort to encourage the study of Turkish. Intensive grant-writing efforts resulted in the award of a planning grant for a National Flagship Program in Arabic and in Persian, and subsequent awards for an Arabic Flagship and an ROTC Language and Culture Project. Next year we will submit a full proposal with the aim of establishing a Persian Flagship at UT in 2008-2009. While both the ROTC and Flagship programs target specific students, one of the principles that guides us in building these programs is the complete integration of the targeted students into our regular classes as we seek to benefit our entire student body through the resources made available by the grants.

During the past year, the Department was also centrally involved in the search for the Director of the newly established Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies (CJS). The Jewish Studies major will gradually migrate from MES to CJS and will be re-designed in accordance with the broad vision of the new center.

This year has gone by quickly, and the new academic year is already upon us. In concluding this message, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to our students, alumni, faculty, and staff, who together made the achievements and excitement of last year possible. Our plans are ambitious, our mission broad and vital. Collaborative efforts and strong support are essential to our success in 2007-2008 and the years to come. As you plan your charitable contributions for the year and contemplate the ways in which you can make a difference, please consider our programs and students. Small amounts for scholarships, course-development funds, subvention grants, and library purchases will go a long way when joined together. Thank you!

ROTC MENTORS:
Casey Addis (Arabic)
Shahla Adel (Persian)
Blake Atwood (Persian)
Mahyar Entezari (Persian)
Navid Hayeri (Persian)
Nastaran Kherad (Persian)
Alana Witte (Arabic)
Farewell to Two Colleagues
Bj and Bob Fernea Leave Austin

UT Professors Emeriti and longtime Center faculty Elizabeth (Bj) and Robert (Bob) Fernea are moving from Austin to California to be close to their two daughters. Although retired for the last few years, the Ferneas have continued to be valuable sources of information for scholars at home and abroad. Besides the numerous distinguished and academic functions they served, the Ferneas offered their home in Austin as a welcome place for visiting scholars and students and as a venue for Center gatherings over the years.

Bob Fernea came to UT’s Department of Anthropology in 1966 with a degree from the University of Chicago, teaching experience at Harvard and American University in Cairo, and fieldwork in Iraq and Egypt. As Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at UT from 1966 to 1973, he started many far-reaching programs, including the Center’s publications program and its Modern Middle East Series.

Among his varied activities over the years, Bob was President of the Society for Cultural Anthropology and a member of the Board of the American Anthropology Association. He also served as President of the Board of Governors of the American Research Center in Egypt, and was a member of the UNESCO-Egyptian Joint Mission for Museum Planning.

Included among Bob’s publications are Shaykh and Effendi and Nubians in Egypt: Peaceful People. In 1985, Bob co-authored with Bj The Arab World: Personal Encounters, which won the Texas Institute of Letters Carr P. Collins Award.

Bj Fernea, who received her education at Reed College and Mount Holyoke, started her teaching career as an Instructor of English at UT, specializing in translated works from Middle Eastern languages. A pioneer in producing films and books often focused on women in the Middle East, Bj eventually achieved the rank of Professor and went on to become President of the Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) in 1986. During her years of involvement with the Center, she helped create the outreach program and the Modern Middle East Literatures in Translation Series in the publications program.

Her books include Guests of the Sheik: An Ethnography of an Iraqi Village; A Street in Marrakesh; and In Search of Islamic Feminism: One Woman’s Global Journey. Her popular film documentaries have been shown on PBS and British television, and also at international film festivals.

In recent years, both Bj and Bob were honored by MESA. In 2001, Bj won the MESA Service Award, and in 2003, Bob was presented the organization’s Mentoring Award. It is in those functions that Middle Eastern Studies at UT will best remember the Ferneas—as mentors for generations of students and for their extensive service to the discipline.

The Ferneas have based their personal lives in Austin for forty years. The many Texas friends of the Ferneas are sad to see them go on to life in another state. We wish them well as they go forward to, what Bob calls, “their new fieldwork—La Jolla.”

CASA Program Comes to UT

Middle Eastern Studies is pleased to welcome the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) program to UT. Over the 2006-2007 academic year, the administration of the CASA program was gradually transferred from Emory University, following the arrival of Program Director Mahmoud Al-Batal at UT.

The Center for Arabic Study Abroad was established in 1967 to offer intensive advanced Arabic language training. Since its inception, CASA has trained more than 1,350 American college-level students, graduate students, and professors specializing in various areas of Middle Eastern Studies.

Academic programs are offered at the American University in Cairo (AUC) and, beginning in the summer of 2007, at the University of Damascus in Syria. This year, six UT students were selected as CASA Fellows: five in the Cairo program and one in the new Damascus program.

CASA is represented by a consortium of twenty-eight American universities and colleges who serve a vital role in directing various academic, financial, and administrative aspects of the CASA programs.
MES Welcomes a New Lecturer in Arabic

**Uri Horesh**

As part of the expansion made possible by the new Arabic Flagship Program, the Department of Middle Eastern Studies is pleased to announce the addition of new faculty member Uri Horesh, who took up the position of Lecturer in Arabic this summer. Horesh, who will be defending his dissertation by the end of the year on the phonological variation in Palestinian Arabic spoken in Israel, comes to us from Georgetown University, where he served as Visiting Lecturer from 2005–2007.

Arabic is actually Horesh’s third language. A native of Israel, Horesh grew up between Tel Aviv and New York City as his father completed his graduate work, but as his family settled back in Tel Aviv, he realized the importance of learning Arabic as a citizen of the Middle East.

Horesh graduated with a B.A. in Semitic Languages from Tel Aviv University and moved to the U.S. in 2000 to begin his Ph.D. in Sociolinguistics at the University of Pennsylvania, where his research focused on spoken Arabic in communities in Palestine and Israel. Spoken Arabic is an understudied field, and Horesh hopes to remedy this situation by showing how it gives insight into the broader issues of society and modern culture.

While at the University of Pennsylvania, Horesh was a volunteer for the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Center, and volunteered for the Human Rights Campaign in Washington, D.C. He plans to become active in similar organizations here in Austin.

Faculty Highlights

**MAHMoud AL-BATAL** (DMES) received funding to continue development of *Aswaat Arabiya*, a Web-based project aimed at creating authentic listening materials for Arabic online.


**DIANA DAVIS** (Geography) published *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome: Environmental History and French Colonial Expansion in North Africa* this summer, and recently received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Ruskamp Program of the ACLS (American Council of Learned Societies) for her new book project, “Imperialism and Environment in the Middle East.”

**YOAV DI-CAPUA** (History) received a research grant from the American Philosophical Society for 2007-2008.


**BARBARA HARLOW** (English) has spent the past year as Visiting Professor and Acting Chair of English and Comparative Literature at the American University in Cairo. She will return to UT in the fall.

**CLEMENT HENRY** (Government) received a grant from the American Institute for Maghrib Studies to spend three months in North Africa in the fall of 2007 to study retired political elites.

It is with sadness that we report that Carol F. Justus passed away on August 1, 2007, in Austin. Dr. Justus was Adjunct Associate Professor in the Departments of Classics and Middle Eastern Studies, and worked for the Linguistics Research Center’s Indo-European Documentation Center. She is survived by her husband, Danien McWhirter. All of us at MES extend our deepest sympathies to Carol’s family and friends.

MES also mourns the loss of Winfred P. Lehmann, Louann and Larry Temple Centennial Professor Emeritus in the Humanities, who died August 1, 2007. With his strong interest in less commonly taught languages, he was a staunch supporter of the Department and Center for Middle Eastern Studies.
Outreach and Events

Outreach Spotlight: Restoring Women to World Studies

Hemispheres, the international outreach consortium, presented its Summer Teachers Institute, “Restoring Women to World Studies,” on the UT campus in early June. Thirty-five K-12 educators from around the state of Texas attended the three-and-a-half day program, an annual event which provides depth content and discussion about a chosen topic that spans the four world regions represented by Hemispheres (Latin America; the Middle East; Russia, East Europe & Eurasia; and South Asia). This year, the Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) in the McCombs School of Business Administration continued its co-sponsorship of the workshop, providing an exciting new business element to Hemispheres’ programming.

Kamala Viswaswaran, Associate Professor of Anthropology, gave the introductory lecture of the workshop, which focused on the ways that gender has been considered in the fields of anthropology and gender studies, and also in K-12 education. She provided an insight into the terminology and gender constructs that appear in many of the textbooks that the participants use in their own classrooms. For example, many of the textbooks present issues related to gender in stark black-or-white terminology, suggesting that women in countries like India and Iran have no rights, while women in the United States have completely equal rights with men. The material covered by Dr. Viswaswaran was revisited again and again over the course of the workshop, as participants, speakers, and moderators sought to challenge such simplistic notions in subsequent lectures.

Included among the speakers was Hina Azam, Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies, who offered an introduction to the concept of "gendered space": the notion that the private sphere—that of the home and family—was traditionally considered the realm of women, while the public sphere—business, politics, and religion—was thought to be men’s domain. In the pre-modern era, Dr. Azam suggested, women could be successful in the public or “male” sphere by exaggerating their piety and leadership abilities, which “de-feminized” them to a certain degree and allowed them to navigate in a traditionally male domain. This theme of public vs. private spheres was addressed many times over the course of the workshop, touching on all of the world regions represented and reinforcing the notion that this is not solely a Middle Eastern or Islamic phenomenon.

The culmination of the week was a brainstorming session in which participants were grouped according to the level they teach and asked to develop “essential questions” related to a matrix of topics covered during the workshop. Hemispheres plans to use this material as the basis for an upcoming curriculum unit and has already been asked to present portions of the material covered during the workshop at upcoming professional development sessions scheduled for fall 2007 and spring 2008.

Diversity in the Ottoman Empire

In March, CMES, the Raindrop Foundation, and the Institute of Interfaith Dialog co-sponsored a two-day conference on “Diversity in the Ottoman Empire.” Held at the Thompson Conference Center, the program featured an impressive slate of Ottomanists from the United States, Egypt, Turkey, and the United Kingdom, including Linda Darling (University of Arizona), Kemal Karpat (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Ilhsan Yılmaz (SOAS-University of London), and Tom Gage (Humboldt State).

The conference focused on a variety of topics, such as the implications of the Ottoman millet system, intercommunal relations on the borders of the Empire, and the history of Jewish and Christian communities under Ottoman rule, with the intention of determining whether various aspects of the Ottoman experience can still have practical applications in the modern world. The proceedings of the conference are currently being revised for eventual publication.
The UT Middle East Ensemble, or "Bereket," had a phenomenal inaugural year. Founded in fall 2006 by Dr. Sonia Seeman (Assistant Professor, UT School of Music), the ensemble numbered sixteen performers by its final concert of the season on May 3, 2007. During the year it achieved Dr. Seeman's twin goals of collaboration with other UT departments and community outreach. Its repertoire includes Turkish, Persian, and Arabic music from all time periods.

The ensemble debuted to the university community on Thursday, October 19, 2006, at a reception for Dr. Mahmoud Al-Batal's beginning Arabic class held at the Texas Union. Dr. Esther Raizen's students sang Hebrew songs with the group as part of its end-of-term concert on November 30. Its debut before the greater Austin community came on December 7, when some of its members performed at Congregation Agudas Achim (on the Dell campus) at the sixth annual "Many Lands, Many Faiths" concert. This was followed by a December 9 appearance with other UT ethnographic music ensembles at Momo's Club in downtown Austin.

After these successes the group sought a more memorable name, and at the end of the term Dr. Seeman dubbed it "Bereket." The full ensemble gave its first performance under this name on March 3, 2007, at the popular "Explore UT" event, regaling visitors with music from several Middle Eastern countries. On March 31, a subset of Bereket members performed a selection of pieces for the advisory board of the School of Music at the Winship Drama Building.

Bereket enjoyed another widely successful appearance on April 16 at Darwin's Pub on Sixth Street, where some of its members performed at the graduation reception for Michael Eagle, director of Bereket's percussion section and new M.M.A. (master of musical arts). The wonderful sound coming through the pub's open windows caused many a passerby on the street to stop and listen!

The year's highlight was Bereket's final concert on May 3, where it was enthusiastically received by a full house in the MRB Recital Studio. The full ensemble was joined by special guests Mina Kim (piano doctoral student, UT School of Music) and students from the Arabic and Persian language classes. The program included an entire Ottoman Turkish fasıl, folk music from Iran, long-lost piano works from 1920s Egypt (orchestrated by Dr. Seeman), and popular Arabic songs, along with many exciting solo improvisations.

But Bereket's work was not over. On May 6, the group's percussion section, along with Bereket violist Elena Bessire, joined Dr. Guido Olivieri (Lecturer, UT School of Music) and the UT Early Music Ensemble in the Recital Studio, performing a piece by Lully—the "Turkish March," composed in 1675 for the score of Molière's Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme. On May 9, Dr. Seeman and percussionist Jay Whitley gave a lecture/demo to students at the Del Valle Middle School; and on May 11, four of the group's instrumentalists performed two short programs/demos for the students of Ojeda Middle School.

Bereket will resume its weekly rehearsals on Thursday, August 30, from 7–10 p.m. in room 6.252 of the Music Rehearsal Building. Anyone interested in Middle Eastern music is welcome, regardless of musical background or ability. Watch for the group's first gig this fall at the Old Pecan Street Festival in Austin on September 29!
The lives of Iraqi women living in exile and a story of revolt on a mythical island off the coast of Yemen are the latest offerings from the Center’s Modern Middle East Literatures in Translation Series, thanks in no small part to a generous grant of $15,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts.

In *Women on a Journey*, Iraqi-born and British-based writer and artist Haifa Zangana skillfully details the lives of five Iraqi women as they adapt to life in exile in London. The five women, from disparate backgrounds, find common ground as they support each other in the challenges they face in a land so different from that of their birth.

Available in November, *Siraj: An Arab Tale*, by popular Egyptian novelist Radwa Ashour, tells the poignant story of a mother and son as they are drawn inextricably into a revolt against their island’s despotic sultan. Beautifully rendered into English from the Arabic by Barbara Romaine, *Siraj* speaks of the unity that develops among varied peoples as they struggle against a common oppressor and illuminates the rich cultures of both the Arab and African inhabitants of the island.

We look forward to publishing M.R. Ghanoonparvar’s translation of *Fortune Told in Blood* by Davud Ghaffarzadegan in spring 2008. This novel recounts the story of two Iraqi soldiers serving in the Iran–Iraq War as they are sent as lookouts to a mountaintop bunker. The author, an Iranian, writes from the Iraqi perspective, thus humanizing the enemy and challenging the reader to do so as well.

The Center’s Modern Middle East Series is having an equally productive year, taking us to Yemen in Shelagh Weir’s *A Tribal Order: Politics and Law in the Mountains of Yemen and Iran* in Farhang Rajae’s *Islamism and Modernism: The Changing Discourse in Iran*, available in November, explores the origins of the Islamic Republic and its evolution by placing it within the greater context of an Iranian-Islamic response to the challenges of modernity over the course of the 20th century.

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 took the world by surprise. Few believed the Pahlavi dynasty, considered the most powerful monarchy in the third world, would fall so quickly and completely. Iran’s long history of modernization led many to assume that it would never permit a religious movement to hinder its progress, but Farhang Rajae, Professor of Political Science at Carleton University, argues that the Islamic movement was, in fact, shaped by encounters with modernism.

While many studies have examined the reasons for the fall of the Shah, few have explored the origins and evolution of the Islamic Republic. Using an extensive array of primary sources, especially interviews, Rajae traces four generations of Muslim activists involved in the creation and shaping of the Islamic movement in Iran.

To purchase our books, visit http://www.utexas.edu/utpress/subjects/cmes.html.
excerpt from

Women on a Journey

She preferred wearing long skirts at the office, though only in the office, as they made her feel less inhibited and less aware of the way she was sitting and moving. In fact, they gave her a greater sense of freedom.

Once, in the middle of a sharp argument, Sahira and Majda had looked at her in astonishment when she told them that she understood why women wore the hijab. In a strange way, she’d pointed out, the veil lent women equality in traditionally male areas of Arab society, such as the workplace.

"I don't understand your argument. Explain what you mean, please," Majda asked.

"Majda! Sarcasm won't get you anywhere. In my opinion, when a woman wears the veil, she immediately ceases to be the center of attention."

"In other words," Adiba interjected, "it negates her existence... her presence."

"No, I don't think so," Iqbal said. "It just means she's no longer an object of desire and interest. She still exists as an employee or in her functional capacity. I wear long dresses and skirts and long-sleeved shirts in the office, but I don't think I count for less because of that. On the contrary, I feel I'm more on par with the men. Outside the office I wear what I like."

Majda stuck out her neck and rested her elbows on the table that was between them in the café.

"You're a hypocrite," she said.

"I'd rather use the word 'aware,'" Iqbal laughed cheerfully.

"Aware? Aware that a man is free to look at you when and how he wants? Why doesn't he cover up his foul, prying eyes in the office?" Majda retorted.

"I really think he should do the same as Iqbal," Adiba smiled, "and change his eyes like she changes her clothes, when he goes to the office. He ought to put on a different pair of eyes from the ones he wears outside, and use these exclusively to look at his women colleagues in a neutral fashion. When he's outside the office, he's free to take them off and wear any other pair he wants."

"I am so pleased that my innocent remark has made even dear Adiba have a joke at my expense." Iqbal said.

Adiba chuckled. She touched Iqbal's hand gently and said, "I'm sorry. But you have to admit that such an invention would solve the perennial problems that exist between men and women."

excerpt from

Siraaj: An Arab Tale

The secret was sinking in, preserved in the people's hearts, locked up like the treasures of the wealthy, until the hour came when everyone turned his key in the lock, picked up his lamp in his right hand, and set out with the others.

Boys and girls, men and women, the elderly supported upon their canes or seated on litters borne by the able-bodied, infants at their mothers' breasts, plantation slaves, fishermen, sailors, pearl divers, carpenters, blacksmiths, and masons—all released their birds in the direction of the fortress and followed them, the lanterns in their hands.

Thousands of lanterns glowed in the darkness, blazing trails rugged and twisting, ascending. The guards in the highest towers saw them, and stared at them, and doubted their own eyes: lightning that blinded! Extraordinary lightning that cleaved the earth and not the sky! Lightning that traveled, climbing toward them. They were wondering among themselves, when the flocks of birds took them unawares. And they began to fire.
People

MES Welcomes New Faculty

Fehintola Mosadomi

The Department of Middle Eastern Studies is pleased to announce the arrival of Fehintola (Tola) Mosadomi. Formerly a Senior Lecturer at the Center for African and African American Studies, Mosadomi joined DMES as Assistant Professor in the fall of 2006, teaching Yoruba language and culture. Her background in Interdisciplinary Linguistics is a tremendous asset to the Department, and she is working with other faculty to develop courses that examine women and culture in the Middle East and Africa.

Mosadomi, known for her cutting-edge scholarship on the Yoruba language and culture, did not begin her career intending to focus on Yoruba. When the native of Nigeria graduated in 1976 with a diploma in French teaching from the Centre de Linguistique Appliquée at the Université de Besançon, she planned to devote her career to teaching the French language. To further this goal, Mosadomi pursued a B.Ed. from the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, an M.A. in Languages and Literatures, as well as an M.A. in General Linguistics, from the University of Delaware, and began work on a Ph.D. at Tulane University, teaching French at the secondary and college level all the while. But her focus began to shift as she worked on her Ph.D., and Mosadomi decided to explore her roots and her native language, something she hadn’t had the opportunity to do as a child. In 1998 she received her Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Linguistics, with a focus on Yoruba phonology.

Mosadomi’s current search is focused on creating a Yoruba grammar textbook and developing technology to accompany the book. In addition to this project, Mosadomi recently spent time traveling around Nigeria collecting interviews with Nigerian women. She uses the interviews as supplemental material for her class on Yoruba women.

Mosadomi, a popular teacher, has received the John Warfield Outstanding Teaching Award, as well as the 2007 Black Essence Teaching Award.

Hina Azam

Hina Azam joined Middle Eastern Studies as Instructor of Islamic Studies in spring 2006 and will be promoted to the rank of Assistant Professor this fall. Azam, who teaches Introduction to Islam, The Qur’an, and Classical Islamic Studies, received her Ph.D. in January from Duke University. Her dissertation, entitled “Sexual Violence in Maliki Legal Ideology: From Discursive Foundations to Classical Articulation,” examines the construction of sexual violation in classical Islamic law.

After graduating with a B.A. in Philosophy and Communication from Loyola University in Chicago, Azam decided that, as a practicing Muslim woman with feminist leanings, she wanted to study more about Islam, gender, and feminism in order to explore the seeming contradictions in her own position. With this goal in mind, she pursued an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from Duke University. As she completed her Ph.D., Azam taught at St. Mary’s College in California and at Stanford University.

As she settles into life in Austin, Azam is preparing her dissertation for publication and expanding her research interests. She is currently developing an article that examines hijab in terms of its role in molding Western Muslim women’s sexuality. While pursuing new academic interests, Azam has also found time to return to classical piano after a long hiatus.
Wendy Moore joined CMES as publications editor in October 2006. Wendy is no stranger to the Center and its publications, having worked with the previous publications editors in her capacity as Middle Eastern Studies acquiring editor at the University of Texas Press.

Wendy holds a B.A. and an M.A. in history from Texas A&M University and has wide experience in academic publishing. Prior to spending five years at UT Press, she worked at both the University Press of Florida and Texas A&M University Press.

An animal lover, Wendy volunteers her time at the Humane Society of Austin. She also participates in Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Texas.

CMES welcomed a new graphic designer, Kathy Phan, in September 2006. She is a recent graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, with a B.A. in Asian American Studies and a B.S. in Advertising (Texas Creative Sequence). Kathy designs much of the printed media produced by the Center, including the books in the Modern Middle East Literature in Translation Series. Her creative talent is on display in the layout of the recently released Women on a Journey and will be seen in the cover design and layout of the forthcoming Siraj: An Arab Tale.

In addition to her work at the Center, Kathy is also a designer at Eliza Page, a local jewelry and accessories boutique. More of Kathy's handwork can be seen at the new IKEA in Round Rock and at Sony Style in The Domain.

The new Arabic Flagship Program has also allowed for the expansion of our staff, with the addition in January of Chelsea Sypher as AFP Program Coordinator. Chelsea works with the Flagship's director, Mahmoud Al-Batal, to recruit and fund students so that they may reach superior level Arabic through study here at UT and abroad.

Chelsea brings a wealth of international experience to the position. As a child she lived in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain. Later, she received a B.A. in International Relations from the University of Sussex, a teaching certificate from International House, and an M.Sc. in Applied Linguistics from Edinburgh University. Prior to working at CMES, Chelsea taught English for five years at Oman's Sultan Qaboos University.

In April Fiorenza Bruni became Special Events Coordinator for CMES and Program Administrator for the Center for Arabic Study Abroad. With seventeen years at UT, Fiorenza brings quite a background to the job. Her own experiences of living and studying abroad are also of tremendous benefit.

After graduating from UT with a degree in Italian, Fiorenza went on to earn her M.A. in Italian Language and Literature from Middlebury College, where she spent a year studying at the University of Florence.

While for many years Fiorenza has nurtured her creative instincts by writing poetry, short stories, and articles, recently she decided to take up painting, and for the past two years her work has appeared on the promotional posters for the San Antonio Festival of Flowers. Quite an accomplishment! Fiorenza, though, claims her son, Daniel, an honors student and high school senior, as her finest achievement.

Our newest staff member, Loretta Wang, took up her duties as Financial Affairs Coordinator in July. Loretta has an impressive background in accounting and general administration. With a B.B.A. from Providence University in Taiwan, Loretta worked for the Asia divisions of Bank of America, Scania, and Bell Helicopter. Four years ago she decided to immigrate to the United States, and worked at UT's Facilities Services for two years before moving to CMES.

While living in Taiwan, Loretta had the opportunity to travel extensively, and now that she's settled into life in Austin, she's ready to start planning future trips—she'd really like to see Eastern Europe. In the meantime, she's exploring Austin and the Hill Country and tackling the challenge of keeping an eye on her son as he attends college in Taiwan.