



CEMAT NEWSLETTER

CEMAT is the American Research Center in Tunis, the Centre d'Etudes Maghrébines à Tunis

<http://www.cematmaghrib.org>

CEMAT is the Overseas Research Center of AIMS, the American Institute of Maghribi Studies

<http://www.aimsnorthafrica.org/>

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CEMAT
Impasse Menabrea, 19 bis rue d'Angleterre
Tunis, Tunisia

Phone: 216-71-326-219
Fax: 216-71-328-378

Mail: B.P. 404
1049Tunis-Hached

Director:
Assistant Director:
General Assistant:

Dr. Laurence Michalak
Mr. Riadh Saadaoui
Mr. Faouzi Mahbouli

ceamat@planet.tn
ceamat2@planet.tn

CEMAT was authorized by the Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research of the Republic of Tunisia, March 1985 and authorized by public law 87-42 of August 2, 1987

CEMAT is open Monday - Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. July & Ramadan hours: 8:30 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.



Tunisia Arabic Program 2007 Students posing at CEMAT courtyard

From the Director

What does CEMAT do exactly? Now that I'm in my second year as Director, I have a better idea. The articles in this Newsletter, covering the past year, give part of the answer--an Arabic program, an Islamic Civilization Seminar, lectures, conferences, and so on. However, here I would like to tell you about one of CEMAT's less obvious activities--helping scholars with their research proposals.

Each Fall, the main work of CEMAT is counseling grant applicants and writing letters of support. Fulbright requires that applicants send their proposals to CEMAT. We review each proposal and certify that the research is feasible. We also critique the proposals and offer advice on how to improve them, to make them as competitive as possible. We do this for ten to twenty applicants each season. It requires a lot of work, but it is one of the most rewarding parts of the job.

Of course, some scholars write excellent proposals and need no help. But most can use some help--and some need a lot. We occasionally have to tell scholars that their topics can't be studied here. For example, you can't study "anti-government attitudes of Muslim fundamentalists in Tunisia." Sometimes the topic is good but the applicant is unaware that it has been studied before. For example, one scholar wanted to study why Tunisia has more progressive laws about women's rights than Algeria or Morocco--but was not aware that Mounira Charrad (and others) have written extensively on this topic.

Some proposals contain incorrect information. One scholar wrote that Tunisians no longer identify themselves as Arabs! Another wrote that Tunisian women got the vote before French women did (no--France 1945, Tunisia 1956). Sometimes there is a language problem--such as the student who proposed to interview rural peasants, but knew no Arabic. How would he communicate with peasants? Every proposal should describe the applicant's language skills, or how they plan to acquire them.

We also try to put scholars in touch with Tunisian counterparts. A proposal whose author demonstrates knowledge of Tunisian scholarship and contacts with Tunisian scholars is more likely to be funded. We *want* the students to get funded and come to Tunisia. That's why we help them. Some send us multiple rounds of drafts. Their proposals improve. The student who wanted to study gender legislation revised her proposal to build on previous research, and the student who wanted to study peasants is now studying Arabic and offered plans for further study in Tunisia.

When the proposal is presentable, we provide the applicant with a letter of support, on brightly colored CEMAT letterhead stationery, signed with a flourish and stamped with the CEMAT seal. It is always gratifying when some of these applicants eventually receive awards. We then get to welcome them to Tunisia. We get to see the faces and hear the voices that go with the proposals. When that happens, we like to think that we might have had something to do with their success.

The 2007 Summer Tunisian Arabic Program (TAP2)

The main activity of CEMAT in 2006-7 was the Tunisian Arabic Program (TAP2)--a course in Modern Standard Arabic for American students under the Presidential National Security Language Initiative (NSLI). CEMAT conducted the Arabic program last year too (which accounts for the "2" in TAP2), but this year it was more intense--with an extra week of Arabic instruction (seven weeks instead of six) and twice as many students (thirty instead of fifteen).

The students arrived in late May, after an orientation in Washington, DC. They were a diverse group, ranging from 18 year olds with only one year of college to young professionals in their early 30s. It was also an affable group, with not a single unpleasant person in the bunch.

Each student received four hours of classroom Arabic each day, plus tutoring and homework. This worked out to 150 contact hours--about what they would receive in a year of daily Arabic instruction at an American

university. They stayed at the Carlton Hotel, their home away from home, and received a per diem to buy their lunches and dinners on their own in local restaurants.



Tappers (TAP Students) on a visit to the Jugurtha Table, le Kef
(Photo by Anna Gieselmann)

The CEMAT villa got intensive use. The downstairs conference room was busy all day, since one class used it in the morning and the other in the afternoon. When they weren't in class, the students received tutoring or studied in the courtyard, where ripe black figs occasionally dropped onto their heads from our giant fig tree.

Besides language, the program had a cultural studies component, including: (1) weekly lectures on aspects of Tunisian society; (2) a series of Tunisian feature films and documentaries (with English subtitles); (3) a family stay at the end of the third week; (4) excursions to the Tunis medina and week-end trips to the Cap Bon, the Northwest, and the South; and, finally, (5) the students wrote weekly essays about their cultural insights (there are some samples of these essays later in this Newsletter).

Three of the week-ends were free. Some of the students used the time to rest up and review their Arabic; the more energetic ones travelled independently to places like Mahdia, El Djem, Ain Draham and Sousse. One ambitious group took a louage to the Kasserine area, hiked to the base of Jugurtha's Table, climbed to the top of the tall mesa, and spent the night in a shrine overlooking the plain.

We were fortunate to have a strong language staff—four teachers and two tutors--and the final test results were excellent. The program ended with a graduation dinner for the students, teachers, tutors, lecturers, Embassy officials, and CEMAT staff. Each student received a certificate of completion. In mid-July they flew back to the US.

In a final questionnaire, the students' overall rating of the program was 8.6 on a scale of 10. To the question, "What is the likelihood that you will continue Arabic study?" 78% replied "high," 22% replied "medium," and none replied "low." The program was a lot of work for both students and staff, but a satisfying experience. The hard work of the students and the high quality of the instruction were at the core of the program's success.

The Arabic program cost about \$100 per student per day—a very reasonable sum. The students now have a good basis from which to continue Arabic study. Equally important, they leave Tunisia with a positive impression of an Arab-Muslim society (they rated "Tunisia" 9.1 out of 10 on the final questionnaire). TAP2 therefore made an important contribution, not only to US expertise in a critical language, but also to US understanding of this crucially important part of the world.

CEMAT Hosts Fulbright Islamic Civilization Seminar in Tunisia

From May 2nd to 4th, the Center for Maghribi Studies in Tunis hosted a seminar for recipients of Fulbright Islamic Civilization grants. The group consisted of 34 young scholars who briefly interrupted their research, in settings from Morocco to Indonesia, to come to Tunisia and discuss their work. Administered by IIE and

created after the 9/11 terrorist tragedy, this special grant program has as its purpose to increase American understanding of Islam.



Fulbrighters in the Roman Coliseum of El Jem

After a visit to the holy city of Kairouan, the first Islamic capital in North Africa, the Fulbrighters met for two days to discuss their projects. U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia Robert Godec welcomed the group. Then the Fulbrighters presented their research in a series of panels organized around themes, with lively discussions.

A recurring discussion question was, “What is Islam?” In some of the presentations Islam was an all-encompassing way of life, while in others it was more of a subtle style, or a repertoire of metaphors for making sense out of life. In one presentation about Zanzibar, Islam is a source of Koranic injunctions to encourage fishermen to practice conservation and safeguard the environment. In Jordan, Islam is interpreted to encourage family planning but not gender selection. In Morocco, Islam is reinterpreted to discourage polygamy. But in Kuwait, where women acquired the right to vote in 2005, nearly three-quarters of the women responding to a survey by one of the researchers said they would not be willing to vote for a woman candidate for office.

Although Islam supposedly appeals to universal principles, Muslims inevitably manage to infuse it with national and ethnic elements. One Fulbrighter with a background as an events planner described how in Abu Dhabi rules of Islamic modesty have been interpreted to forbid traditional “hair dances” by UAE women in public mixed settings—so their solution is to hire foreign women and train them to do it instead. Thus different Muslims in different places seem to come up with different and sometimes contradictory answers to what is Islamic.

Another popular question was, “What are the boundaries of Islam?” A researcher in Central Asia described how, as a result of being religiously isolated for most of the 20th century under the USSR, Muslims drink vodka and eat pork and see no conflict with their identity. They consider themselves Muslim, although most other Muslims probably would not. Are they Muslim? It depends who you ask.

Perhaps the hardest question of all is the political boundaries of Islam. Can there be an Islamic politics and, if so, what is it? Is Islam democratic or authoritarian (or both)? Under what conditions is violence justified, and by what means and against whom? One young researcher in Egypt is studying Hassan Al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb and Yusuf Al-Qadrawi, who give three very different answers to these questions, from three different times and places.

Most of the Fulbrighters stayed for an optional 3-day visit of the Tunisian South, during which the discussion continued on the bus. In the end, they appeared to leave Tunis with more new questions about Islam than answers to old ones, but that’s probably a good thing.

CEMAT Receives Two New Grants

From the U.S. Embassy/Tunis, CEMAT received a \$10,000 grant for the CEMAT Newsletter, the CEMAT public lecture series, and the American Civilizations Grant Program. Under the latter program CEMAT, in

consultation with the CERES and the US Embassy, will give two scholarships in 2008 for Tunisians to do research in the U.S. (See the following article on the 2007 American Civilizations Grant.)

From the Local Archives and Libraries at Overseas Research Centers Project (LALORC), CEMAT received a \$6,000 grant for a survey of library resources in Tunis, and for cataloguing and of the Beit el-Bennani, a library in Tunis with an uncatalogued collection of over 1,000 historic books from the 18th and 19th centuries. The grant will also cover scanning, annotating and putting online selections from Beit el-Bennani's collection of 14,000 old photographs and negatives of Tunisia.

Farid Amri Conducts Research under an American Civilizations Grant in 2007

The 2007 American Civilizations Grant went to Mr. Farid Amri, a PhD candidate at the University of Jendouba and the Instituted des Langues de Béja. Mr. Amri traveled to California in late Summer to study culture controversies about Islam in the post-9/11 period. In Berkeley he stayed with the Michalak family and in Los Angeles with Roger Riske, a former Tunisia Peace Corps Volunteer who taught English in Moknine and Sousse in the 1960s. Mr. Amri visited scholars at UC/Berkeley, Mills College, San Francisco City College, and UCLA, and he reports that the trip was beneficial for his thesis research. He will give a presentation as part of the CEMAT 2007-8 lecture series.

Interns at CEMAT

CEMAT had four interns during 2006-7: (1) **Sarra Ben Saed**, a business and English student, helped with cataloguing in the Library; (2) **Abel Lomax** and (3) **Dorra Zairi** worked on the CEMAT Libraries project (see the article about grants on a previous page); and (4) **Laura Thompson**, an undergraduate at Georgetown, spent January, February, and part of June and July cataloguing books and solving problems in our computer system. Thanks to all of our interns for their good work!
(see the previous item, "CEMAT Library Grant").

A Successful 2007 AIMS Conference in Oran on Ottoman History of the Maghrib

CEMAT helped with preparations for the 2007 AIMS conference in Oran--"Ottoman Influences in the Maghrib," held June 2-5, 2007. Robert Parks, the CEMA Director in Oran, assisted David Wisley, Professor of History at AUB, who was the academic organizer of the program. CEMAT served as liaison with Dalenda Largueche, the *chef de délégation* of the Tunisian group, and Abdeljelil Temimi, the keynote speaker. The conference was held in Fort Santa Cruz, a 16th century Spanish fortress with a spectacular view of the Mediterranean and the city of Oran. Kudos to Bobby and David for a successful program!



from left to right: Karim Ouaras, Robert Parks, David Wisley, Kenneth Perkins, and Laurence Michalak

2008 AIMS Conference on “Cinema in the Maghrib” will be in Tunisia

The topic of the 2008 AIMS conference is “Cinema and the Maghrib,” and the program will take place in Tunisia, May 23-26, 2008. The program will deal with the “history and dynamics of film in and about the region,” including a broad range of subtopics. Organizers are Professors Michael Toler of Middlebury and Joelle Vitiello of Macalester College. The call for papers has gone out and preparations are underway. See the AIMS website (www.aimsnorthafrica.org) for further details. Send abstracts or inquiries to Mtoler@middlebury.edu or vitiello@macalester.edu.

CEMAT Assists Undergraduate Study Abroad Programs

As part of its mission to facilitate scholarship about the Maghrib, CEMAT helps a number of undergraduate study abroad programs. Each year we do orientations for several such student groups at the CEMAT villa. In 2006-7 these included Oregon State, SUNY/Potsdam, the American University in Paris, Yale, the Air Force Academy, Wyoming, and Tufts. All but OSU and SUNY/Potsdam are brief visits of a week or so.

CEMAT is currently working with the School for International Training (SIT) to help them start a study abroad program in Tunis. SIT offers over 80 academic programs throughout the world, and in Spring 2008 they will add Tunisia to their list. The Tunisia program will be limited to 15 students or less, and the theme will be globalization and the environment. We will provide SIT students with a group membership in CEMAT at a special rate, including library and internet services. AMIDEAST will provide SIT with classroom space and will arrange family stays for the students.

2008 Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting in Montreal

The MESA and AIMS annual meetings take place in Montreal next from November 17 to 20. CEMAT looks forward to participating in the AIMS board and membership meetings as part of the “Meetings in Conjunction” on Saturday, November 17. There will also be three days of scholarly panels, including many on North Africa. CEMAT Director Michalak has organized a panel on “Learning about the Middle East Through Youth Literature,” sponsored by the Middle East Outreach Council and scheduled for Sunday morning, November 18.

MERC Enters its Second year in Tunis

CEMAT continues to work with the Middle East Research Competition (MERC), a program which helps young scholars in the Arab World and Turkey. MERC is a distinguished program, funded by the Ford Foundation, and dating back to 1986. Before Tunis, MERC was previously based in Cairo and Beirut. The program is now well into its second year in Tunis, under the able directorship of University of Tunis Sociology Professor, Dr. Abdelwahab Ben Hafaiedh. MERC’s office is located just around the corner from CEMAT, within CERES on the rue d’Espagne. MERC has been very active in the past year, holding conferences in Tunisia and Syria, with another conference coming up.

MERC has launched several ambitious new initiatives, including in-service methods workshops for young Arab and Turkish scholars and an international database (OUTROUHAT) to centralize information about MA and PhD theses on the Middle East and Turkey. The MERC Scientific Committee, composed of scholars from Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, meets periodically to review funding applications and to award grants. CEMAT Director Michalak consults regularly with MERC, and Assistant Director Riadh Saadaoui continues to serve as MERC’s accountant. To learn more about MERC’s many activities, to see a list of grants and grant opportunities and to read their October newsletter, visit the MERC website at <http://mercprogram.org> <<http://mercprogram.org/>>.

A Peace Corps Reunion in Tunisia after Forty Years

In North Africa, the Peace Corps has at different times in the past sent Volunteers to Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania, and many of these former volunteers have gone on to become scholars of the Maghrib. Thus CEMAT facilitated a reunion of fourteen people—seven former Peace Corps Volunteers who had served in Tunisia in the 1960s, plus spouses, sons and friends. All gathered in Tunisia in October 2007. They were the first Peace Corps English teachers to come to Tunisia. Back then they were fresh-faced young adults in their mid-twenties. Now they are in their mid-sixties, with gray hair and expanding waistlines. One of them is me--Larry Michalak.

Back in the 1960s we flew into the small Al-Aouina airport—the only airport in Tunisia at that time. For the 2007 reunion, people flew into Tunis-Carthage Airport—a large modern structure, and only one of several airports around Tunisia. In 1964 Tunisia had 3.5 million inhabitants and only a few luxury hotels. Now Tunisia has a population of over ten million, receives over 6.5 million tourists a year, and has hundreds of hotels as part of major investments in tourism.

We travelled independently for part of the time. One of us took a louage to Kef and found his best Tunisian friend from 40 years ago. Several of us had taught in the Sahel, so we returned to Sousse. In the old days we had been supporters of the local soccer team, l'Etoile--which, coincidentally, is currently in first place in Tunisia and is playing for the club championship of Africa.

Over the course of many long meals, we got reacquainted with Tunisia's tasty cuisine, washing it down with Tunisian beer and wine. The wine was good when we lived here in the 1960s. Four decades later we found it even better, and agree that we should find a way to import Tunisian wine to the US.

We talked a lot--about marriage(s), children, jobs, and what had become of old Peace Corps friends. We found that we all like to travel, which is probably part of why we joined the Peace Corps. Also, we are all ecumenical in our outlooks—respectful of Islam, and appalled at the misunderstandings of Islam that are unfortunately current in the U.S. today.

It was a pleasant reunion. One of our group spoke of having been worried that Tunisia might not measure up to his memories, but he was reassured by what he saw here. In general, Tunisia is a relatively prosperous country with a large middle class and very little poverty. As we departed with our various souvenirs (rugs, ceramics, books, and little tin ash trays with our names written in Arabic), we agreed that we probably shouldn't wait 40 years for the next reunion!

CEMAT Held a Series of Five Public Lectures in 2006-7

- (1) December 6, 06, Rodney Collins, PhD candidate in anthropology, *La Vie des Cafés a Tunis*.
- (2) January 17, 06: Olfa Baklouti, Prof. of English, Université de Gabes, *La Liberté de la Presse aux USA*.
- (3) February 28, 07: Prof. Emeritus of Sociology Ridha Boukraa, U of Tunis, *Comprendre la globalisation*.
- (4) April 4, 2007: Robert Boldi, National Space Center/Huntsville, and Visiting Fulbright Lecturer, L'Ecole Nationale d'Ingénieurs de Tunis (ENIT), *Atmospheric Degradation in Tunisia*.
- (5) April 26, 2007: Paula Homes-Eber, cultural anthropologist and author of *Daughters of Tunis: Women, Family, and Networks in a Muslim City*; spoke on *Les Femmes et la famille à Tunis*.

CEMAT Co-sponsors Scholarly Events with Tunisian Educational Institutions

CEMAT occasionally cosponsors scholarly programs with Tunisian educational institutions, providing travel costs or accommodations for a scholar from Morocco or Algeria. In 2006-7, CEMAT cosponsored:

- 1) "Itinérance de la connaissance," organized by the Arabic Department of the Institut Supérieur des Sciences Humaines de Tunis (ISSHT). CEMAT sponsored a Moroccan scholar, Yaktine Said from the Faculté des Lettres de Rabat, to participate in this conference, held at the Institute 22-24 November 2006.

2) The Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Sfax organized an international colloquium on “Jeunes, dynamiques identitaires et frontières culturelles” at Hammamet on 16-17 February, for which CEMAT offered an air ticket for an Algerian scholar, Prof. Nadjet Mekideche, who presented a paper on contextual approaches to identity.

3) For an international conference on “Intangible Cultural Heritage” in Mahdia, 18-25 February, under the sponsorship of the Institut National du Patrimoine, CEMAT provided an air ticket for a Moroccan scholar, Dr. Najima Thaythay Rhozali, who gave a paper on Popular children’s festivals and changing identity in Morocco.

4) A one-day “Homage to Clifford Geertz,” the recently deceased American anthropologist who is well known in part for his research in Morocco, was held 30 April 2007, sponsored by The University of Tunis El-Manar. CEMAT provided accommodations for three participants.

A Diversity of Visitors and Researchers Visit and Use CEMAT

In the course of the Academic Year 2007-2008, CEMAT had 908 person-visits, including 209 researchers. The 209 researchers were from 18 countries: Tunisia (131); USA (43); Algeria (5); France and the UK (4 each); Italy, Austria and Mauritania (3 each); Libya, Morocco and Palestine (2 each); and Canada, Germany, Gambia, Norway, Spain, Korea and Russia (1 each).

Meetings of CEMAT Researchers in 2006-7

CEMAT scholars met four times in 2006-7—November 14, January 31, March 7, and May 24. At each meeting we discussed the individual research projects, offering suggestions on resources, information and contacts. At the second meeting, Christine Moderbacher of the University of Vienna gave an extended presentation on representations of women in Tunisia, followed by a critique from Tunisian Psychologist Dr. Lilia Labidi, and general discussion. Our third meeting on featured U.S. Ambassador Robert Godec for a roundtable discussion. The fourth meeting of the year was followed by an end-of-the-year dinner.



Ambassador Robert Godec presiding over a meeting of CEMAT Researchers

List of Researchers at CEMAT During 2006-7 and Fall 2007

Current scholars (as of November 2008) are marked with an asterisk (*)

- **Julie Bard**, Portland State U, OSU Study Program, 9-12/06.
- **Debbie Barnard**, Prof/French, Tennessee Tech, the medina in Tunisian lit, 5-7/07.
- **Naor Ben-Yehoyada**, PhD Cand/anthro, Harvard, Tunisian fishermen in Sicily, 6-7/07
- **Robert Boldi**, Natl Space Ctr, Huntsville, Vis Fulbr Lec, pollution, ENIT, 2006-7
- **Naima Bou Safara**, Prof/Ling, U Kansas, Bourguiba’s speeches. 6-7/07
- **Dylan Boye**, OSU, OSU Study Program, 9-12/06.
- **James Burman**, GWU, International Affairs, Arabic study, 7-9/06.
- **John Champagne**, Prof/Engl, PSU/Erie, Fulbr Lec, U Tunis/Manouba, Media, 06-07.
- **Melissa Chirico**, E Pennsylvania, Arabic/IBLV, Fulbright Crit Lang Grant, 6-10/07.
- ***Julia Clancy-Smith**, Prof/Hist, U Ariz, book research, 19th cen migrations, 9-11/07
- **Rodney Collins**, PhD Cand/Anthro, Columbia, Fulbright, coffeehouses in Tunis, to 12/06
- ***Sangho Chung**, Korean, New School, Vis Prof Ec Dev, U Tunis/Manouba, 2007-9.

- **Jennifer DeBoer**, MIT, engineering education in Tunisia, 3-6/07.
- ***Sarah Epstein**, 2006-7, MA Arabic Lit student at U Tunis, 3rd year in Tunisia
- ***Jeremy Farrell**, Tulane and AMIDEAST, Christian and Muslim ascetics, 07-08
- **Richard Fraenkel**, retired AID ag expert, ag change in the Tunisian Northwest. 5-6/07
- **Juliet Frerking**, Stanford, Fulbright, women and legal change in Tunisia, 10/06-6/07
- ***Kristine Goulding**, Arabic at IBLV, women's status in Tunisia, since 7/06
- ***Karim Hamdy and Laura Rice**, OSU program directors, 9-12/06 and 9-12/07
- **Simon Hawkins**, Prof/Anthro, Franklin and Marshall, tourism merchants, 9-10/07
- ***Patrick Hazleton**, Islamic education and texts in Tunisia, 07-08
- **Chauncey Harris**, Oxford (UK), Rhodes Scholar, Italians in Tunisia, 12/2006.
- **Blake Heiss**, OSU, OSU Study Program, 9-12/06.
- **Josie Hendrickson**, PhD Cand/Emory, Maliki fatwa-s, 9-10/07
- **Dafna Hochman**, PhD Cand/Columbia, modes of Arab government, 5-6/07
- ***Scott Johnson**, ex-PCV/ Tunisia 1972-74, Tunis resident and consultant
- ***Alyson Jones**, PhD Cand/U Michigan, women and popular music, 6/07-9/08
- **Shayee Khanaka**, ME Librarian/UC Berkeley, book buying trip, 4/07
- **Siri Lamoureaux**, OSU grad stu, teaching English linguistics, ISLT, 2006-7
- ***Martin Latreille**, Canada, IRMC, changes in marriage and the family, 9/07-
- ***Abel Lomax**, AMIDEAST English Teacher, CEMAT Library Project Intern, 07-08
- ***Douja Mamelouk**, PhD Cand/Georgetown, images of men in Tunisia literature, 8/07-
- ***Nadia Mamelouk**, PhD Cand/U Va, Tunisian women's journal Leila (1936-41), 9/07-
- **Jennifer Martin**, OSU, OSU Study Program, 9-12/06.
- ***Mary McCullough**, Samford College, Fulbright Lec/Ibn Sharaf, return migration, 07-08
- **Jim Miller**, Prof. Geog/Clemson, consulting, 12/06 and 5/07
- **Christine Moderbacher**, Anthro MA cand., U. Vienna (Austria), Gender, 11/06-2/07
- **Iraj Omidvar**, Prof/English, SPolyState U/ Ga, U Sfax Vis Fulbright Prof English, 06-07
- **Valerie Orlando**, Prof/ French, U Maryland, Fulbright, Tun women authors, 3-6/07
- **Anne Richards**, Prof/S PolyState U/Ga, U Sfax Vis Fulbright Prof English, 06-07
- **Abderrahman Robana**, Prof/Bus, Alfred U, financial markets, 9/06-1/07
- **Zakia Robana**, Prof./Lang, Alfred U, oral cultures in Djerba, 9/06-1/07
- ***Christiane Schroeder**, PhD Cand/U Leipzig, small businesses in Tunisia, 9-12/07
- ***Sarah Vincent**, PhD Cand, LSE/anthropology, marriage and divorce in Tunisia, 06-07
- ***Dorra Zairi**, returned Arabic tutor, CEMAT Library Project Intern, 07-08

News of the CEMAT Library

Over the past year CEMAT has purchased many new books, mostly in English, to add to the Library collection (see below the list of the new acquisitions). The biggest news is that CEMAT compiled a list of 164 PhD theses from the period 2000-2005. AIMS is purchasing these theses as electronic downloads, and will make them available to scholars of the Maghrib through all three AIMS libraries—Tunis, Tangier, and Oran. CEMAT had not purchased any new North Africa dissertations since 2001, so the new theses will finally bring us up to date.

New Books at CEMAT

The following books have been received at CEMAT since January 2007

- Abdella Doumato, Eleanor, ed. *Teaching Islam: Textbooks and Religion in the Middle East*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007
- Abou El Fadl, Khaled. *The Search of Beauty in Islam*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006.
- Abou El Fadl, Khaled. *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy*. Princeton University Press, 2004
- Abou El Fadl, Khaled. *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*. HarperSanfrancisco, 2007
- Abraham, Nabeel, ed. *Arab Detroit: from Margin to Mainstream*. Wayne State University Press, 2000
- AFTURD. *Egalité dans l'héritage : Histoire, droits et société*. AFTURD, 2006
- AFTURD. *Egalité dans l'héritage : Plaidoyer pour l'égalité dans l'héritage*. AFTURD, 2006
- Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam*. Yale University Press, 1992

- Al Aswany, Alaa. The Yacoubian Building. Happer Perennial, 2002
- Al Koni, Ibrahim. The Bleeding of the Stones. Interlink Books, 2002
- Amin, Samir. Europe and the Arab World. Zed Books, 2005
- Asad, Talal. Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity. Stanford University Press, 2003
- Bidwell, Margaret. Morocco: The Traveller's Companion. Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 1992
- Bowen, John R.. Why the French don't like Headscarves: Islam the State and Public Space. Princeton University Press, 2007
- Brauch, Hans Gunter, ed. Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for the 21st Century. MacMillian Press, 2000
- Cailler, Bernadette. Carthage ou la flamme du brasier. Mémoires et échos cher Virgile, Senghor, Mellah, Gachem, Augustin, Ammi, Broch et Glissant. Editions Rodopi, 2007
- Cesari, Jocelyne. When Islam and Democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and the US. Palgrave, 2004
- Chaouachi, Kamel. Tout savoir sur le narguilé : Société, culture, histoire et santé. Maisonneuve & Larose, 2007
- Charrad, Mounira. State and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. University of California Press, 2001
- Chelbi, Mustapha. Musique et Société en Tunisie. Editions Salammbô, 1985
- Clark, Peter, ed. Sardines and Oranges: Short Stories from North Africa. Banipal Books, 2005
- Cooper, Paul E.. Libya: The Dream or Nightmare. The Quit Leaf Group, 2004
- El-Azhary Sonbol, Amira, ed. Beyond the Exotic: Women's Histories in Islamic Societies. Syracuse University Press, 2005
- Espósito, John L.. Women in Muslim Family Law. Syracuse University Press, 2001
- Finkelstein, Norman G.. The Holocaust Industry. Verso, 2000
- Geertz, Clifford. Culture, Custom, and Ethics. Fred Inglis, 2000
- Geertz, Clifford. Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author. Stanford University Press, 1988
- Geertz, Clifford. The Interpretation of Cultures. Basic Books, 1973
- Geertz, Clifford. Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology. Basic Books, 2000
- Geertz, Clifford. After the Fact: Two Countries, Four Decades, One Anthropologist. Harvard University Press, 1996
- Geertz, Clifford. Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics. Princeton University Press, 2001
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Narratives of Cross Cultural Experiences in Tunisia by the TAP2 Arabic Students

Students in the 2007 Tunis Summer Arabic Program were asked to do "critical incident reports"—personal narratives of Aha! Experiences. Here is a selection of their narratives, in slightly edited form.

CARTHAGE. Today we went to Carthage. It was beautiful to walk through the ruins in a warm rain. My group moved on before I was ready to, so I spent the rest of the time alone. It was the strangest feeling to wander through the ruins of great civilizations of the past, touching stones. Walking where the Phoenicians once sacrificed babies, and where Romans sacrificed animals to their gods. Where Dido and Carthage burned, seeing the sea on which Aeneas sailed, the mountains in the distance. I wondered what our civilization would look like in a thousand years if allowed to fall into ruin; metal and plastic lying entangled, some stone broken, old cans and broken pieces of color ground into dust. Someone walking in the rain through a fallen, once towering, civilization.

AHA! AND HUH? Honestly, I'm not sure that I've had a real cross-cultural "aha!" experience yet. Everywhere I go, I am surrounded by people whose lives are a source of great curiosity to me. I wonder where they are going, what their homes are like, what is important to them, how they feel about Tunisia, how they feel about America, etc. But there's a formidable barrier between myself and them. I don't speak French and I'm just beginning to learn Arabic, so I can't communicate with them. It's frustrating. This is not to say I haven't had some very fun and interesting experiences. I definitely have, but many of my experiences might be better described as "huh?" experiences than "aha!" experiences.

A TRIP TO SIDI BOU SAID. My companions and I headed down the hill to the beach where one of us greeted a group of local Tunisians. Soon, they realized that with some effort, they could communicate with us. A singing, dancing bout ensued, the apex being when one of them dedicated the American pop song "smack that" to one of my fellow female travelers. This bizarre cultural juxtaposition of an American pop song being dedicated by a Tunisian to a recently arrived American student will always be etched in my memory. The Tunisians spoke about their lives, their work, their children, and their fiancées. We told them about how we were in Tunisia to study Arabic and learn about Tunisian culture. They said that after our brief encounter had changed their views and that they no longer thought that all Americans despise Arabs.

ARABIC. Week two was filled with small triumphs but for the most part seemed to rush past in a blur. As tough as Arabic is, I feel confident that we are surrounded by people who are qualified to help us succeed. Despite the stress of learning new vocabulary and foreign grammar I am getting progressively more enthusiastic about the process and feel like this is in itself a really great development. I am excited about the rate of our progress and the enthusiasm of those helping us. Two weeks ago I was staring at squiggles and wondering how I'd ever learn to read; today I can walk through the medina and read most anything. In due time I'll actually know what I'm reading.

AMERICAN OR CANADIAN. Why do some of us say we're Canadian when traveling abroad? I'm willing to bet that part of the reason Canadians have such a great reputation overseas is because so many upstanding Americans are hesitant to associate themselves with the government that represents them. Unfortunately, this means that people aren't meeting respectable Americans to offset the America they see on television. If someone asks me where I'm from, I'm going to say America. I may not agree with everything my country does, but I'm proud to be an American and I'd like to set the record straight on what to expect from your typical American.

ISLAM IN TUNISIA. Tunisians seem to have a very liberal practice of Islam. For instance, I don't see lots of women wearing *hijab*. Most wear clothing resembling Westerners. The mosques seem not to be that crowded during prayer times. There is a Christian church in the middle of the main street illustrating the strong tolerance Tunisians have for different peoples and ideas. Generally men and women interact regularly in public, and I have seen young Tunisians showing public displays of affection. You can see how open Tunisian society is just by walking down the street. Generally, Tunisians are friendly, accommodating and accepting. I feel welcomed no matter what I am doing and am able to interact easily with the Tunisians despite language barriers. Whether eating out at a restaurant, attending a soccer match, or practicing my Arabic with the hotel staff, Tunisians are positive and outgoing. Perhaps it is Tunisia's rich cross-cultural history and identity that make this a very open and hospitable place.

A JOYFUL LADY. In my travels I have never worried much about my tattoos, and I find the reception of my tattoos as a positive experience. On a walk through the neighborhood behind the hotel, I stopped in a little shop. An elderly woman, dressed in modest clothing, veiled, and no more than four and half feet tall, reached for my hand. She rubbed at the tattoos on my knuckles. To her surprise, the tattoos did not rub away. She giggled. She then found the tattoo on my hand, and her laughter escalated. As this woman held my hand, she asked about any other "henna" on my body. Showing her my arms brought the woman to tears of elation; she laughed her heart out. I explained, in our strange mixture of verbal and physical languages, the meaning (if any) of the tattoos I wear all over my body. Throughout my narrative, she continued to hold my hand in such a tender, loving manner. A truly joyful moment!

UNPERFECT CONTACT. Last Friday, I saw a number of Tunisians attempt a play in English, their third language. As the master of ceremonies stated at the beginning, "you will see a show by unperfect [sic] actors." Despite the "unperfectness" of their attempt, the play was quite good and I could tell that it came from the heart. The most meaningful part for me came afterwards, when the Americans got to mix with the Tunisians. We stood around talking and then I walked home with them. We headed through the medina, making conversation the whole way about all manner of things: American TV shows, what Arabs thought of Americans and

vice versa. It was at that point that I finally felt that I had a real taste of Tunisian life. For the first time while I have been here, the cultural gravity of America was overpowered by Tunisian gravity and I talked with Tunisians on their turf.

I'M READING ARABIC! In the midst of our third week of studying the Arabic language it dawned on me this morning in class as I was looking at pages of squiggles and dots that my brain was not only recognizing familiar sound combinations, but these once-strange shapes were starting to make sense and, "Aha! I can read!" Week one felt like I was standing in front of a fire hydrant, being bombarded full-force by illogical shapes, sounds, and concepts. Tutoring was no use because I was so overloaded and confused. Towards the middle of week two I felt my frustration building. I felt I should be "getting it" and yet, I was still overwhelmed at the end of the day. By the end of week two I was feeling that Arabic was simply not for me and the next weeks were going to be torture. Although no "studying" occurred over the weekend trip to Hammamet, the mental break transformed my outlook. Immersion in the language and consistent study do breed success! We are only two days into week three and I feel as if I have a completely new outlook on the Arabic language.



Elizabeth Guthrie (second left) with her Tunisian Host Family



Katie Jones showing the henna on her hands

FRESH SARDINES IN KELIBIA. It all started with the sardines. Sitting on top of the beautiful restaurant's whitewashed roof looking down on the Mediterranean port with an ancient fort balanced on a steep hillside above, enjoying the cool sea breeze. Soon the tray of sardines rose from the masterful kitchen of our gracious host. The fish looked like they had all made the mistake of jumping out of the calm waters of the port and right onto a platter. I assured myself that these fish had no place in or around my mouth. Why was everyone so attracted to the deathly platter of slaughtered minnows? Why were these people willing to eat something so disturbingly fresh looking? But I also knew that if I wanted to try them I couldn't allot myself much time to think about it. I walked up to the platter, grabbed a fish by the tail, lifted a piece of tender flesh off the bone and into my mouth and prepared for disgust. But what sat in my mouth was a flavorful mix of spices, light lemon flavor and quickly disintegrating fish flesh. I couldn't believe it. This weekend, my host family treated me to brik with only partially cooked egg in it and fresh sea bass. It was amazingly tasty. Such experiences make me more and more open to taking risks and pushing my limits.

LOST IN TRANSLATION. On Monday my cross-cultural experience was a conversation between the front desk lady and me. The conversation went like this:

Me (dropping my key off): Shu-krahn...
 Her (on the phone): One moment, please!
 Her (hanging up the phone): Today.... You have to... (pause)....die.
 Me (turning red): No, you are wrong, you mean...
 Her (nodding): Yes, today you have to die!
 Me (out of breath): Uuuh? You mean...
 Her: No, not die... move to a different room.

LOTUS EATERS. Every weekend I get closer to the famed land where Odysseus's men were tempted by the sweet petals of the lotus flowers, and every weekend I come closer to understanding the magical pull to which they fell victim. Since setting foot in Tunisia, I have been impressed by the astoundingly surprising sights, sounds, flavors, and scents that Tunisia has to offer. Every new discovery comes when I am least prepared for it and in a way that I never saw coming. By now, I've begun to stop hypothesizing and I just accept whatever comes my way. The men of Odysseus's crew must have done the same. Adventurers, they saw many of the sights I have now seen or will soon see, but through different eyes. This past weekend I laid eyes on some of the same ancient olive trees that Odysseus himself may have seen when he was held captive by Circe. It was surreal to watch archaeologists slowly brushing sand off mosaic floors that have sat untouched since the times of the Phoenicians. I looked out over an ocean so shallow you can wade for nearly 15 miles, over buried treasures and across the foundations of homes and streets from Roman times. I am left wondering if we will feel the same way as Odysseus's crew; will we be able to leave?