CEMAT NEWSLETTER

CEMAT is the American Research Center in Tunis, the Centre d’Études Maghrébines à Tunis

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

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CEMAT was authorized by the Ministry of Higher Education & Research of the Republic of Tunisia, March 1985.

CEMAT is open Monday – Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.
July & Ramadan hours: 7:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
CEMAT is closed the month of August.

Message from the Director

Thirty-five years later finds me back in Tunis. When Lyndon Johnson was president, when Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were shot, I was a student in Tunis one year back in the 1960s. Tunisia was in the throes of the years of socialism and Ariana was an agricultural
village outside Tunis. How times have changed! It is my pleasure to return to these shores of Carthage, where I was a student at the University of Tunis, now known as Faculté du 9 Avril, through a program of the Experiment in International Living. Looking back, that year, 1967-1968, was the beginning of my career, in many ways, as I immersed myself in geography classes at the University and began what has become a life-long attachment to the Maghrib and studies of the Islamic World in general. My life as a geographer truly began here. While my professional career has mostly been engaged with research on land and life in Morocco, I am now rewarded by the professional responsibilities that come as part of the intellectual life of Tunisia. And that is where CEMAT lives, among the thriving sense of inquiry and research that prevails in Tunis.

My university life in America – a geographer in a history department at Clemson University in South Carolina – is on hold while I manage the affairs of CEMAT. CEMAT’s reputation as a center for scholarly research and as a meeting point for scholars of all stripes and nationalities is strong. CEMAT lives through its sponsored scholars, and there is growing interest in America in Tunisian studies. This we must encourage. Likewise, CEMAT seeks to foster relations among scholars of all the Maghrib countries, and through its scholarships and conferences attempts to build bridges from the Atlantic to the Gulf of Gabès. CEMAT and its affiliated center in Morocco, TALM, the Tangier American Legation Museum, will continue to serve the interests of North African and American scholars directly through the linkages we now forge together in the 21st century. To do this, though, CEMAT needs your help. I need to get to know you. Please let me know your interests and concerns as we work for a sound future together.

**CEMAT Researchers 2003-2004**


**CEMAT and TALM Fellows 2003-2004 (Maghribi Grantees)**

- **Moroccan Scholars to Tunisia:**


- **Algerian Scholars to Tunisia:**

Tunisian Scholars to Morocco:

Salah Baizig, Université de Tunis. “Dépouillement des manuscrits inédits au Maroc concernant l’histoire médiévale du Maghreb.”

Fadhel Blibech, Université de Tunis. “Le Patrimoine historique et archéologique et le droit.”


Mohsen Hamli, Université de la Manouba, Tunis. “A Companion to North African Literature in English.”

Maghribi Scholars outside the Maghrib to the Maghrib:

Nabil Boudraa, Purdue University, Indiana. “Collective Memory, Identity and Resistance in the Poetry and Song of Fatima Tabaammrant.” (to Morocco)

Hakim Boulharès, European University Institute, Florence Italy. “Facing Liberalisation: the Political Economy of State-Business Relations in Morocco & Algeria.” (to Morocco)

Ratiba Hadj-Moussa, York University, Ontario Canada. “Encountering New Media: Public Space & Identity in Morocco.” (to Morocco)

Naima Omar, University of Kansas. “To Switch or Not to Switch: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Political Discourse.” (to Tunisia)


AIMS CONFERENCES

2003. The 2003 AIMS Conference, ‘New Media Public Debates in the Maghreb’ (‘Nouveaux moyens d’information et les débats aux pays du Maghreb’) was held at the University of Oran, May 15-18. Mark Tessler, President of Aims, and Mohammed Benziane of the University of Oran led the conference.

2004. AIMS will host its 2004 Conference in Tangier at TALM June 22-25. The theme for the conference, “Rethinking Jewish Culture & Society in the Maghrib” (“Nouvelles perspectives sur la culture et la société juive au Maghreb”) takes as its point of departure the fact that Maghrebi Jewish studies have become a subdiscipline of Jewish studies generally and embrace a large number of scholars from associated disciplines in the human and social sciences. The conference seeks papers from the following areas: historiography and ethnography; urban and rural communities; Muslim-Jewish relations; linguistic literary, and artistic expressions.

The conference organizers are Daniel Schroeter (History, University of California at Irvine; djschroe@uci.edu) and Emily Gottreich (Vice-Chair, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of California at Berkeley; emilyrg@uclink.berkeley.edu). Deadline for submission of papers is February 1, 2004.
2005. AIMS will host its 2005 conference in Tunis through the auspices of CEMAT. Tentative dates are May 26 (Thursday) through May 29 (Sunday). The topic will be “The Expansion of the North African City” (“L’Agrandissement des villes maghrébin”). Themes will include geographic and demographic expansion, human and physical impacts, and cultural and environmental changes inherent in the growth of cities in the Maghreb. The conference organizer is James Miller, Director of CEMAT, cemat@planet.tn

Other Conferences in Tunis

“Literary Theory & Its Limits,” Department of Arabic, Institut Supérieur des Sciences Humaines (Ibn Charif), December 2-3-4, 2003. CEMAT supported the participation of two Maghribi scholars at the conference, Professor Mohamed Kharmech of the Faculty of Letters & Human Sciences at the University of Fez, and Professor Taher Rouaniyyaa of the Faculty of Letters at University Beji Mokhtar in Annaba.

“Espace et Identité au Maghreb,” a conference organized by the Institut Supérieur du Mouvement National, will take place in Sfax at the Faculté des Lettres on March 6 and 7th 2004. For further details, please contact Fayçal Cherif at cherif@moumen.com

“Of Memory & Maps,” Department of English, Institut Supérieur des Langues de Tunis (ISLT), April 8, 9, 10, 2004. The conference will “explore theories, representations, and performances of memory and their role in the production of history, culture, and space. Conference organizers are Noureddine Fgaier (n.fgaier@rock.com) and Lamia Ben Youssef (lamiaby@yahoo.com) or by regular mail to:

Noureddine Fgaier /Lamia Ben Youssef
L’Institut Supérieur des Langues de Tunis
14 Rue Ibn Maja
Cité al Khadra, 1003 Tunis -- Tunisia

CEMAT is among the conference sponsors.

“Le Sud Tunisien: Espace de Rencontre et de Lutte,” a conference organized by the Institut Supérieur du Mouvement National, will take place in Sfax at the Faculté des Lettres May 6, 7, and 8 2004. For further details, please contact Fayçal Cherif at cherif@moumen.com

“Out of Place: Text, Memory, and Exile,” a conference commemorating Edward Said and the themes developed in his work, will take place at the Institut Supérieur des Sciences Humaines (Ibn Charif), December 1, 2, and 3, 2004. Organized by the Department of English, participants are urged to present abstracts of their proposals by May 31 to Samira Mechri (samiramechri@yahoo.com) or Rached Khalifa (rachedkhalifa@yahoo.co.uk) or by regular mail to:

Samira Mechri, Institut Supérieur Des Sciences Humaines, 26, Avenue Darghouth Pasha 1007 Tunis -- Tunisia

CEMAT is among the conference sponsors.

Conferences at CEMAT, Spring 2004

1) Dr. Ken Brown, founder and editor of the journal “Mediterranées/Mediterraneans” (Paris) and formerly professor of anthropology at the University of Manchester, gave a talk entitled “Tunisia Revisited” on Monday, January 26, 2004. Brown spoke about the conflicting nature of cosmopolitanism and nationalism and argued that both could be seen through the optic of the small Sahelian community of Ksibet el Mediouni. Questions emerged on the nature of Tunisian identity and comments were made about the broad appeal of such local studies.
2) Professor John Entelis from Fordham University in New York will speak on “American Foreign Policy and the Maghrib” on Monday, March 8, 2004 at 17:00. Professor Entelis, who is director of the Middle East Studies Program at Fordham and co-editor (with George Joffe) of the Journal of North African Studies, will be ready to answer questions about the directions and trends of American foreign policy in the region.

3) Mr. Tom DeGeorges, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History at Harvard University and an AIMS researcher in residence at CEMAT this academic year, will speak on his research and findings on “Tunisian Veterans of the World Wars” on Monday, May 24th at 16:00. Mr. DeGeorges has produced several reviews of Tunisian books while in residence. More information about his talk will be available as the time approaches.

New Books at CEMAT

The following books have been received recently at CEMAT:

Mohamed Berrada, The Game of Forgetting. Texas, 1996
Driss Chraibi. The Butts. Three Continents Press, 1983
Dale F. Eickelman, ed. New Media in the Muslim World: The Emergence of the Public Sphere. Indiana, 2003.
Jean Fontaine, _Itinéraire dans le pays de l'autre_. L'Or du Temps, 1998
Fred Halliday. _Nation & Religion in the Middle East_. Lynne Rienner, 2002.
Raymond Hinnebusch, ed. _The Foreign Policies of Middle East State_. Lynne Rienner, 2002.
Abdelkebir Khatibi. _Triptyque de Rabat_. Noël Blandin, 1993
Michael Moran. _Younger than that Now: A Peace Corps Volunteer Remembers Morocco_. Full Court Press, 1994

The debate between culture and religion may never be settled, but from the rapidly changing American context, here is a new entry. New Faiths, Old Fears wrestles with the question of how Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism fit into the pattern of American life. Essentially a contribution coming from the sociology of religion, Bruce Lawrence’s discussion takes us into the variegated world of Americans new – by virtue of both culture and religion – to the established picture of an America dominated by white Protestant society. Race fits into Lawrence’s equation, too, as he takes on all the facets of what he terms the emergent “kaleidoculture.” In five short chapters, focusing on “American Religion as Commodity Culture,” “Civil Society and Immigrants,” “New Immigrants as Pariahs,” “Religious Options for Urban Immigrants,” and “Reimagining Religious Pluralism,” Lawrence touches on all the significant bases that affect cultural change in the United States. He concludes that the “constant tug-of-war between religion and culture” is “unresolvable yet productive” and asks “can cultural difference survive societal change” as the faiths new to America elicit old fears that lurk deep in American conceptions of race and cultural superiority and inferiority.

Effectively Lawrence answers his question by saying “yes,” but the clarity of the questions posed and the descriptions of the answers offered leaves much to be desired here in what should be an important contribution on religion, race, immigration, and culture. Topics are unsteadily held in his grasp; we move around much here. Lawrence surveys an impressive quantity of literature, and anyone interested in knowing the names and topics participating in these areas can glean much from this work. The book is cluttered by an attempt to place what were originally five lectures into a theoretical framework; the language is jargonistic and sentences are marred by neologisms and repetitive descriptions. How many times American society can be identified as “piebald” becomes sport in these pages. On one page, one reads “A detailed semiotic examination of Sikh history reveals how inherently polysemic is the notion of civil society” (p. 60). On the next page one reads, “What the immigrants confront no less than the citizens of the state where they hope to relocate is technicalism.” This is very
hard going. Too bad. Clear writing, an unmuddled statement of purpose, and a logical and factual presentation of the various subjects under analysis here would make this a much better – and useful -- book.
– Jim Miller, CEMAT Director.

Websites to Discover

Here are three websites that highlight the role of Tunisia and Morocco in the interconnected world in which we live:

http://www.tunisiancommunity.org/ "The Tunisian Community Center." Developed for the Tunisian community in the USA, this is an attractive and informative site. Very cool music, lovely front page where Tunisian and American flags combine. Mission statement, membership link. Contact via email at: info@tunisiancommunity.org

http://www.tunisie-canada.com/index_ie.html A Tunisian-Canadian site, run by a Tunisian in New Brunswick. Seems to be directed toward emigration to Canada and Tunisian students in Canada. Interesting, compared to the US Tunisian site, in that its geography and culture revolve around the Province of Quebec almost entirely.

http://friendsofmorocco.org/ "Friends of Morocco" (FOM) site, run by the organization of the same name, which is the returned Peace Corps (RPCV) Association of Morocco. A wealth of web-based information on Morocco, with links to the FOM newsletter and many useful areas. Moroccan weekly news; resources for teaching about Islam and the Arab World, news & views. Links to the RPCV group for Tunisia, Friends of Tunisia (FOT) at http://friendsofmorocco.org/Newsletters.htm

A Tunisian proverb or two

armih men estah iji waqef ...... “Throw him from the roof, he falls standing on his feet” ...(---he’s a lucky man!)

âyn lehsud fiha úd ...... “A log in the eye of the envious” ...... (--said to ward off jealousy or covetousness; often used to avoid the evil eye)

These are taken from one of favorite books at CEMAT, Isaac Yetiv’s 1001 Proverbs from Tunisia (Three Continents Press, 1987.)