Activities of the Netherlands Institute for Academic Studies

The Netherlands Institute for Academic Studies in Damascus (NIASD) offered a wide variety of programs during the calendar year 2009 for Syrian, Dutch, and international students and scholars. The NIASD offers a program of Arabic summer courses. In 2009, 41 students were enrolled. During the summer 2010, the Institute will offer Arabic taught by a team of Syrian instructors between 15 July and 10 August and a course on Christian and Islamic Art and Architecture taught by lecturers from Leiden University and the University of Amsterdam between 20 June and 11 July. Including basic accommodations, the fee for the Arabic course is 800 Euros and for Christian and Islamic Art and Architecture 850 Euros. The deadline for applications is March 15 2010. More information is available at: www.niasd.org

The NIASD has an active film program in which Dutch films subtitled in Arabic are shown. In May 2009, Duska (Jos Stelling, 2007), Tussenstand (Mijke de Jong, 2007), Uitverkorene (Theu Boermans, 2006), Pollecke (Ineke Houtman, 2003), and Kicks (Albert ter Heerdt, 2007) were screened, the latter two as part of the European Film Festival in Damascus. In December 2009, two Dutch documentaries and three features subtitled in Arabic were screened. The documentaries were Rembrandt’s J’accuse and 4 Elements. The feature films had a love theme: HannaHannaH, Een beetje Verliefd (A Little Bit of Love), and Alles is Liefde (All is Love).

In cooperation with the Syrian Directorate General for Antiquities and Museums, the Institute sponsored a lecture by Glenn M. Schwartz (Dept. of Near Eastern Studies at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA) on the royal tombs at Tell Umm al-Marra, in the Jabbul plain east of Aleppo. The excavations have exposed a large mortuary complex associated with local rulers in the period of Syria’s first urban civilization. The Umm al-Marra data reveal the importance of ancestor veneration and kin relationships among the elite of this urban civilization. Prof. Schwartz is co-author with Prof. Peter Akkermans of Leiden University of The Archeology of Syria: from Complex Hunter-Gatherers to Early Urban Societies (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Listserve for Damascus Scholars

Under the direction of Prof. Samer Ali, the University of Texas at Austin hosts a listserv for ex-patriot students and scholars who are living, working or conducting research in Damascus. The purpose of the group is to share information that will help people find work, contacts or housing. It is a moderated group -- subscribers must be students, scholars or other professional -- so please send a short blurb to the moderator saali@mail.utexas.edu, indicating who you are: studying, researching or working abroad. Subscribe and share your knowledge to facilitate life in Damascus. After you subscribe, you can post by sending messages to: DamascusScholars@utlists.utexas.edu
The Isis Press: Specialized Books on Ottoman Diplomatic History

Isis Books is run by Sinan Kuneralp, a publisher, translator, diplomatic historian and editor of books that focus on the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. Since its establishment in 1983—almost 30 years ago this year—Isis Books has published a host of books organized under a variety of series including “Analecta Isisiana”, “Bibliotheca Ottomanica”, “Les Carnets du Bosphore”, “Les Cahiers du Bosphore”, “Études Turques-USHS,” “Travaux du CeRATO”, “Quaderni del Bosforo”. “Studies on Ottoman Diplomatic History”, “Varia Turcica,” “Vienna-Istanbul Philosophy Circle”, “Cuadernos del Bosforo”, “US Diplomatic Documents on Turkey” and publications of “The Center for Ottoman Diplomatic History”.

Recent titles that will be of interest to Syria scholars include: Sinan Kuneralp, ed. The Queen’s Ambassador to the Sultan: Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard’s Constantinople Embassy, 1877-1878 (2009), which includes a report on a visit to Syria and a discussion with the sultan about Syria; Ragip Nurettin Ege, By the Light of a Candle: the Diaries of a Reserve Officer in the Ottoman Army (2009); Haim Gerber, Crossing Borders: Jews and Muslims in Ottoman Law, Economy, and Society (2008); and Poids, mesures, monnaies et cours du change dans les principales localités de l’empire ottomane à la fin du 19e siècle (2002).

Isis Books also has an impressive back list of titles by noted Ottomanists including many familiar to scholars of Syria including Halil Inalcik, Selim Deringil, Robert Dankoff, Suraiya Faroqhi, Virginian Aksan, Huri Islamoglu, H.W. Lowry, D. Quataert, Alexandre Popovic, Colin Imber, Daniel Panzac, Robert Olsen, William Ochsenwald, Roderic Davison, Ronald Jennings, Stanford Shaw, Martin van Bruinessen, Butrus Abu-Manneh, Justin McCarthy, Caesar Farah, Isa Blumi, and many other scholars of the non-Arab provinces of the Empire.

For more information, view the list of books at www.theisispress.com and/or contact Sinan Kuneralp at isis@tnn.net .

Syria. Archéologie, Art et histoire

Syria, qui paraît depuis 1920 sans interruption, est publiée par l’Institut Français du Proche-Orient, en une seule livraison annuelle. La revue se consacre à l’histoire et l’archéologie du Proche-Orient sémitique (y compris Chypre) de la préhistoire à la conquête islamique. Elle publie des articles dans toutes les disciplines de ce champ de recherche, archéologie, épigraphie, philologie, histoire, histoire de l’art ; ces articles peuvent être quelquefois regroupés en dossiers thématiques, mais le plus souvent chaque volume tente de donner, à travers 12 à 18 articles, un panorama varié de la recherche au Proche-Orient ancien. Les langues employées sont le français, l’anglais, l’allemand, l’italien et l’espagnol. Tous les articles sont précédés d’un résumé en français, en anglais et en arabe. La revue publie aussi à l’occasion de courtes notes d’actualité, et consacre dans chaque numéro un épais cahier aux recensions d’ouvrages parus sur le Proche-Orient ancien. La revue est maintenant disponible à http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/revue/syria