

## A Look Back

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**J**ust as I had long wanted to submit one of my annual reports in verse (but, sadly, never did), I have also thought for some years about writing a memoir framed along the lines of al-Ghazzālī's *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*: "For you have asked me, my brethren in librarianship, about the reasons why I have done *kazā wə kazā*." Another, more recent, voice has called to me, that of Ali Kerim Bey, my second-favorite character in the movie "From Russia With Love," who says to the Russian whom he and James Bond have intercepted on the train and whom they have decided that Kerim will guard, "I've had a particularly fascinating life. Would you like to hear about it?" Inappropriate and vain though it may seem, I think this is an irresistible line.

### Early On

When I was a kid, the first thing I wanted to be—other than a cowboy or, given my environment, a priest—was an archeologist. Specifically, an Egyptologist (not that I knew the word then, as a boy of ten or fewer years). But it was Egypt that fascinated me then, and continues to do so to this day. I have almost no interest in the archeology of the Western hemisphere or the Far East. It is that of Egypt that has always been of greatest importance to me, and secondarily that of the rest of the Middle East and the Classical world.

I was born into and raised in a Roman Catholic Polish-American family in Philadelphia. My parents, both born in Poland, were extraordinarily hard-working and dedicated to the education and betterment of their two sons. The environment we grew up in was rich and diverse. During and after the second World War, numerous soldiers, sailors, and defense workers came into our parents' business with stories of far-off lands, peoples, and events. Richard F. Burton, in one of his books, speaks of war as the Regius professor of geography, a wise comment. The newspapers, which I started reading as a young boy, were full of information about the war and the world. Our relatives and family friends added people to our lives with close personal experience of Poland and other European countries and who spoke Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, German, Hungarian, and other languages. Frequent shopping

trips up to Marshall Street put us in contact with the Yiddish language and mysterious Hebrew letters on synagogues and stores.

In high school, I had four years of Latin and three of German. I elected the Classical course rather than the Scientific, which gave me, instead of a year each of biology, chemistry, and physics, two and a half years of Attic and Homeric Greek, followed by a half year of Physics, the minimum needed to satisfy Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requirements for scientific education. I enjoyed all the language study. We were bilingual at home, and I had discovered that I had a gift for learning languages. Leaving St. Joseph's College High School, the Jesuit prep of Philadelphia, I thought I would likely major in Classical Studies, Classical Archeology, or perhaps something that would get me into Egyptology. But my interests quickly changed.

These days, archeology can be a fairly exciting subject. The study is used to illuminate various aspects of life in the ancient world, from politics to the most ordinary parts of daily life. Egyptologists continue to make major discoveries, but they have also produced important studies of, say, the lives of the builders and creators of the pyramids and the tombs of the Valley of the Kings. Back when I was considering a major in the field, however, archeologists seemed to be totally devoted to pots and pans. Then and in subsequent years, I visited many collections in the U.S. and Europe of Greek and Roman pottery and, while I have been able to appreciate the beauty of much of the work, and I completely understand the importance of pottery as a most useful means of dating the human settlements in which it may be found, I have nevertheless been thoroughly bored. To become an archeologist fifty years ago, I would have had somehow to at least feign interest in pots, and I couldn't.

### **College**

In any event, by the time I was a student at the University of Pennsylvania, my interests had begun to move away from the Classical world and from the idea of becoming a practicing archeologist. I began to teach myself Biblical Hebrew, being fascinated by the structure of the language. I began the formal study of Biblical Hebrew in Penn's Oriental Studies department in sophomore year, under Moshe Greenberg, who was then a freshly-minted Ph.D. from Penn. Dr. Greenberg used a preliminary version of a textbook he was writing. Our reading was the story of Joseph and his brothers.

In addition to my studying Biblical Hebrew, supplemented in the following years by Modern Hebrew taught by Svi Rin, I found myself growing interested in Arabic. After feeble attempts to teach myself something of the language, I began studying Classical Arabic in the OS department. The teaching of Arabic in the first year was, frankly, incompetent. It was handled by a “Bible” student, in the argot of the Oriental Studies Department, that is to say, someone who was either an Assyriologist or an advanced student of Biblical Hebrew who had learned some Arabic as a second or third Semitic language. The second year’s teaching was better, since that was offered by a Jordanian. I also began work with Dr. S.D. Goitein, who gave the courses on the religion of Islam, Islamic history, and the Islamic Seminar, to which undergraduates were admitted. The Orientalist method of teaching was followed: assignment of significant portions of classical texts, which we were required to study intensively, analyzing each word if necessary, so that we could confidently read the texts (which sometimes had typographical errors or other deficiencies) and translate and interpret any portions.

In college I also took German, French, and a summer course that reviewed my Classical Greek, and began the study of Chinese, remaining in that work for a total of five years, undergraduate and graduate school, including a summer’s intensive course at Yale that counted as the second year.

### **Graduate School**

After graduating from Penn in 1962, I tried a professional school but did not do well. I returned to Penn, to the graduate school and the Department of Oriental Studies. There I resumed the study of Arabic and Hebrew and, for a while, Chinese. I soon dropped the latter and concentrated on Semitics. I had a Pennsylvania Senatorial scholarship that required my working part time for the university, a requirement that could be satisfied by concentrating the work into the summer months. It was then that I began work in the library of the University of Pennsylvania, in the Rare Book Collection. I was given responsibility for archival processing, with minimal instruction in what I was to do. I helped process Penn’s collections of the papers of the writers Van Wyck Brooks and James T. Farrell. I can only hope that I did no damage to those collections or to scholarship that might make use of them. Occasionally, when there was no one else on hand, I took a turn supervising the reading room or retrieving rare books from the stacks.

I spent two years in the graduate school, academic years 1963–1964 and 1964–1965. During one of those years, the OS department had a visiting professor from Egypt, Dr. Muhammed Salem Elgarh, who volunteered to teach a class in Egyptian colloquial Arabic. This, other than the few conversations among Arab students that I heard from time to time, was my first exposure to everyday spoken Arabic. One day, before the class, Elgarh asked me if I would like to go to Egypt. I of course said yes, and he said he would set things in motion. Whatever he was going to do didn't pan out, which was all to the good, since his idea was to have me enrol in the secular part of al-Azhar. I doubt that I would have thrived in an environment that was designed for Third World students. What did happen, however, was that the idea of going there took hold of me and I ultimately applied for and won a Fulbright Fellowship that took me to Cairo in September 1965.

### **Cairo**

I forget now what my proposed research project was, except that it was something overly ambitious and having to do with dissertation work on Sufism. I do remember that I never did it, and was grateful that I didn't have to report back to the Fulbright people as to what I had done with their money. My topic was 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī, and I did collect and read texts of his. At some point I came across one of his yet-unpublished works, which became the subject of the dissertation I never completed.

I enrolled in the Center for Arabic Studies at AUC, taking courses in Islamic history and classical and Egyptian colloquial Arabic. I did middling good to poorly in the classes, but didn't really care. I was in contact twice with Professor Elgarh early in my time in Cairo. The second time, he introduced me to his research assistant, Arafa Hussein Mustafa, with whom I instantly connected and who remains a dear friend to this day. Arafa—Samir to those who know him and know why he has the nickname—introduced me to his circles of friends and acquaintances, and I was thrust into Egyptian life and learning Egyptian colloquial. I did much reading of Arabic texts with Arafa—who is the finest comparative Semitist I have ever known—in his family's apartment, trading occasional lessons and pointers in English. I took my classes at AUC, read texts with Arafa, went with him and his friends to the Excelsior bar, and stored up a lifetime of memories. (My friend Arafa retired as Professor für Semitistik am Institut für Orientalistik

in the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Halle an der Saale, Germany.)

Toward the end of my year as a Fulbrighter, I realized that I had not accomplished what I needed to do in Egypt and that I had to extend my time there. So I applied for a fellowship at the Center for Arabic Studies at AUC, and received it. I was overjoyed at the prospect of being able to stay in Cairo for another academic year. My family and my girl friend, back home, were not. The AUC fellowship paid far better than the Fulbright, 120 pounds a month compared with 90. When I left the country, I had a wad of 20 pound notes that was a good two inches thick. I gave three fourths to my landlady and forced the remainder into one of Arafa's pockets, as he refused to take it from me. That came when I joined the AUC group that was evacuated from Cairo to Alex on the Tuesday of the June war. We were put in buses, driven up to the railroad station, then put on a train for Alexandria, where we were interned in a top-floor pension until Saturday with instructions not to set foot out of the pension, to open the blinds, or to peer out of the windows. We were shipped out on Saturday, surrounded by machine-gun toting guards. The Soviet ship left first, and we all laughed at how quickly it pulled away. Some of the Americans took the U.S.-chartered boat that was to go to Piraeus. I had airline tickets that would allow me to take up my flight in Rome, so I went on the German freighter Ankara—straight out of Eugene O'Neill—that went to Crete. There we were bused to a NATO air field and flown to Rome on a paratroop plane. The Fulbright came with a return flight, and AUC gave me another. I combined the two fares for an extensive trip that took me through various parts of West Europe and a long visit to Poland, then a flight to Japan.

In Cairo I boarded with a Christian family that lived a block or so from the AUC campus, on Shari' al-Amir Qadadar. The family consisted of the father, who was a Copt, the mother, who was Greek Orthodox, and a son and daughter, who were raised as Greek Orthodox. Four languages were regularly used in the house, Greek, French, English, and Egyptian Arabic. During my first year there, the father died, and I participated in the rituals of the *ta'azzī* along with the men and shocked the women when I returned to the apartment while they were still using it for their consolation of the widow and children. I also took part in the *dhikrā al-arba'īn* at a Coptic church in Shubra.

I spent lot of my time in the library, using the Arabic collection on the top floor intensively but also making use of the English-language

collections for study and for recreational reading. I also visited the library of Dar al-‘Ulum and used the manuscripts department of the old Dar al-Kutub several times. Those were the days when, in the MSS room, while scholars used the rare books and manuscripts at a bunch of tables that had been grouped together, a fellow went around the room offering refreshment—tea and Pepsi.

One of the other things that I did in Cairo was to haunt the book stores—the Arabic language stores, the Soviet store, which was the closest one to the place where I was living, and the several English-language shops I found. Arafa Hussein took me to various shops he knew and to the periodic book fairs that were held near the Azhar, and also introduced me to a quirky acquaintance of his, Shaykh ‘Ali Kharbush, a wiry little man with a buzzing voice who ran a tiny business as a bookseller. In my time in Cairo, I bought numerous books, most of which I had bound by Haggi Sa‘d. I was introduced to him by Arafa, who was a friend and customer of his, and it was an honor to be admitted to his circle. It was in his *warshah* that I met Fuat Sezgin, when Dr. Sezgin was there having his own books bound, as well as other scholars, including al-Sayyid Saqr. Haggi Sa‘d was not just a superb book binder, but was a scholar in his own right. I had only one book bound by another, Tourian, my Wehr-Cowan dictionary, which is on a shelf just to my right, an ever-present reminder of those days.

On the whole, I loved Egypt, Cairo, and my time there. Being there changed my life in many ways.

### **Back to Penn**

After returning from Cairo, I re-entered Penn’s Oriental Studies department, where I began a concentration in Islamic Studies and Arabic, sort of minoring in Hebrew. I never studied Persian while I was at Penn; when I was an undergraduate and graduate student there, Persian seemed to be a study on its own, with little or no cross-over of study by students majoring in other areas. Turkish was offered during my second period in the OS department. The first year was taught badly, using a near-worthless textbook that was of little help in learning the language. The second year was better taught but still, poorly. It was done pretty much as an afterthought in the department, not as a subject as serious as the other languages that had historically been taught at Penn.

In this second period in the OS department, September 1967–June 1969, I was a National Defense Foreign Language Fellow. I had applied

for the fellowship when I was still in Cairo. I don't recall how I got the forms, which may have been sent to me at the address I was living at, with no problems. I filled them out; then decided that it would be unwise to try to mail the forms in the large brown envelope marked "U.S. Government" through the ordinary Egyptian mails. All or most of the mail that I received was "opened with the knowledge of the censor," or so the pasted-on labels said, and I knew from comments made by people I wrote to back home—for example, why can't you put your letters in order before sending them instead of just sticking the pages any old way in the envelope? —that all my outgoing mail was opened and read, and possibly copied, by the postal censors before being sent on. (The only exception was the film mailers that I sent to Kodak in Rochester, New York; I dropped those in the mail box of the Cairo Hilton Hotel, which seemed less subject to intrusion by the censors.) So I went to the US Embassy, found the post office there, and asked if I could mail my application forms. At first my request was refused, since I was not embassy personnel. I explained why I wanted to use the pouch and showed the envelope, with the to and from addresses both being US government offices, and after some argument, the PO employee relented. Then he asked for 25 cents postage. I hadn't thought of that complication and explained that all I had, after way over a year of living in Cairo, was Egyptian money. He said he was sorry but he could accept only US currency. By this time, a long line of frustrated embassy employees had built up behind me. The fellow behind me reached into his pocket, pulled out a quarter, and paid for my postage, just to get me out of the way. In some ways I owe my NDFL fellowship to that anonymous State Department staffer.

During this second period of my residence in the OS department, I worked on my dissertation, which was to be an edition, translation, and commentary of a work by 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī, *Kitāb ṣuḥbat al-faḳīr lil-amīr*. I got most of the translation done, save for words and expressions that still puzzle me. But I never completed and submitted the dissertation, ultimately leaving Penn as an A.B.D.

In addition to being an NDFL fellow, I worked in the University of Pennsylvania library. At this remove, my memory is faulty: perhaps working on-campus was a condition of the fellowship. In any event, there was no teaching job for me, even though I had returned from Egypt pretty much fluent in Egyptian colloquial Arabic and enormously strengthened in my classical Arabic. It was only in the library that my services were needed. I was given a job in Van Pelt, the new

library, in the newly-established Asian Reference Division, and worked there for two years. The first year I was an assistant to a young woman whose name I remember only as Liz, who had some background in Middle Eastern languages. I did ordering of the books and other materials that she selected or for which she got requests and accessioning of items as they came in. In the second year, Louis Jacob became head of the division and—there is no *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* in this—my responsibilities expanded greatly. Liz was gone and, although just a graduate student working part-time, I effectively became Penn's Middle East bibliographer. I selected materials, took faculty and student requests, placed orders to dealers in the Middle East, Europe, and the US, maintained files, opened packages when they arrived, accessioned new receipts, and cleared invoices for payment—exactly what I later did for more than 30 years as a professional librarian.

Penn's Middle East studies efforts were expanding and the library was receiving attention from the OS department. One of the faculty, in charge of the ME effort, took me to a meeting with the director of the university library, for a discussion about a possible future in which Penn would pay for my getting a library degree at Drexel Institute, next door, while I would continue to work toward my doctorate at Penn, then my being employed by the library as Middle East bibliographer. Nothing came of that meeting and things went in a different direction. Dr. Labib Zuwiyya Yamak was brought in as a consultant in Middle East bibliography. Labib would come down to Penn from Cambridge several times each month to look over what was being done and especially to select materials for the collections. He would sit at Lou Jacob's desk and go through the dealers' lists that I had for him and others that he had brought along, making his check marks. I would look over his shoulder and ask him why he had marked off those specific titles. He would explain why, providing me with very useful information. Toward the end of my time at Penn, instead of Labib's occasional appearances as consultant, the OS department decided to bring in a full-time and experienced person to jump-start the Middle East collecting efforts. Tom Naff, who was in charge of the expansion of Middle East in Oriental Studies, had been at Oxford and had an affinity for Oxonians, and the person he brought in was Derek Hopwood. So, although I had been Middle East bibliographer *de facto* despite being only a graduate student and hourly worker in the university library, I got to work under the tutelage of Labib Zuwiyya Yamak and to hand

off my operation to Derek Hopwood. David Partington came by during this period to visit Asian Reference and we got to talk, the beginning of a long friendship.

During that second year I had student assistants to help me with the work in Asian Reference Division. One was an Egyptian whom I was ordered to take on because the terms of his fellowship required that he be employed on campus and it had been decided that the best place for him would be in the library, with me. I found the fellow to be sincere as all get out but unteachable. I had learned and in turn taught him the three-check system for searching. He, in turn, came up with a system that employed some six to eight checks: author, title, edition, place, publisher, date, etc. It was incomprehensible. I could not get him to drop the system he had come up with and stick with what I had taught him, and I could not get rid of him. I finally started giving him projects that would take him to the other side of the library building for the longest time possible. When he had finished, I would glance over his work, come up with some other pointless make-work, and send him back out of my sight and out of my hair. I believe he became a professor of economics.

Another assistant I had was Eric Ormsby, who was then a younger graduate student of Goitein's. On Dr. Goitein's retirement and move to Princeton, Eric transferred and got his Ph.D. from that university. The success that Eric has had in the world of librarianship can not be traced back to his working as my assistant at Penn and to the amateurish training I gave him. If anything, it shows that the truly gifted can survive anything.

During my second period in the OS department, September 1967–June 1969, I found myself growing increasingly disaffected with graduate study and with the idea of becoming a professor, with my life devoted to teaching and research. Teaching, particularly of languages, did have some appeal, but the only real teaching experience I had had was as a catechism instructor back in high school, and that episode had not gone well. Researching and writing books and articles had absolutely no appeal for me. Having read many learned articles in Islamic studies and having attended conferences and symposia, I couldn't see the point. What did interest me, increasingly, was books.

When I was a kid, we had a shelf or two of books in the house—I still have most of the volumes—but I never read them, except for Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*, which I read in two long sittings when I

was about 10 or 11. I read comic books, magazines, and, everyday, Philadelphia's morning and evening newspapers, the *Daily Inquirer* and the *Evening Bulletin*. But not books. It was only when I was reaching high school age that I began to develop an interest in reading books and became fascinated particularly by historical novels. However, becoming a librarian was the last thing I would have wanted to do. The image of the librarian in those days was that of Mary Bailey in George's alternative life in *It's a Wonderful Life*: dour, lonely, sour, depressed, poor, and certainly not one of life's higher achievers.

But increasingly, in that second period in graduate school, I felt the pull of books and libraries. This applied even to technical things, like wondering how libraries got things done, what the mysterious numbers at the bottom of LC cards meant, etc. I had been spending time in book stores as well as libraries since my high school years. There were old book stores in Philadelphia that I patronized regularly—Leary's, sadly long gone, was a great one—and I put much of my allowance into building a large personal library. I found I simply enjoyed being in book stores, poring over the shelves, looking for certain titles and certain kinds of books, and developing habits of buying. I built most of my collection of P.G. Wodehouse when I was a teenager and the books were still cheap, and over the years used (and still use) a technique of determining whether a store's pricing was reasonable or not by looking at its copies of T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and *Revolt in the Desert*, Morier's *Hajji Baba*, and sometimes another title that varied. It was a fairly reliable and useful system.

I was working in the library at Penn and spending most of my day there, whether on the job or not. Even while working, I was allowed freedom to wander around the building and ask librarians what they were doing and why. They were extremely generous with their time and information. Notably generous was the late Sarkis Minassian, who was Penn's Middle East cataloger then. Sarkis was a courtly old Armenian from Cairo who was gracious to a fault. He was a good librarian who was also a most kind, generous, and forgiving man. When I would, in my ignorance, complain to him about how things had been classified, he would show me the LC schedules and gently explain why he was bound to follow them. He would agree that they were deficient, but say—and which of us has not during our careers had to do the same?—that he had no choice but to follow LC even though we both knew it was wrong. I cringe at the memory of how I spoke to that kind and

gentle old man. Sarkis gave me many lessons in librarianship but far more valuable ones in how to be a human being.

Lyman Riley, then Penn's "Library Bibliographer" —an early version of head of collection development—was enormously helpful to me then in fostering my wandering around and asking questions and himself providing information. It was handy that I came to know him not through the library but as a fellow student. Thanks to Penn's generous policies allowing staff enrolment in courses, Lyman was a fellow student in some of Dr. Goitein's classes even while he was a full-time senior staff member of the library.

When I was in Cairo, I had had a run-in with an AUC library staff member who had tried to rip a picture of King Fuad or Faruq out of a book I was returning. I had snatched the book back from him. We got into an argument, he threatened to report me to the police, and I threatened to report him to the library administration—and did. This led to several meetings with the AUC librarian, James Van Luick, in which I learned that the police threat had been real and serious but that the staff member had been disciplined. In our discussions, the librarian suggested to me the possibility of my becoming a Middle East specialist librarian. He sort of oversold the future since I recall his saying that I would be 'able to write my own ticket.' I found out the hard way that it was not to be so.

Nevertheless, with that seed planted in my mind; my ever-increasing interest in the book *per se* and lack of interest in academic dialogue and research; and my growing dissatisfaction with the looming prospect of endless years in graduate school followed, perhaps, by work as a professor God knows where, I decided to step away from the graduate work and to pursue a library degree at the School of Library Service of Columbia University. I did so despite a warning from Dr. Goitein, who often knew me better than I did, that he was afraid that "we are going to lose you." I assured him that this was not so, but he was a wise man who saw the future better than I did.

### **Columbia University School of Library Service**

I enrolled in Columbia's School of Library Service in 1969 and spent a year there, instead of the usual year and a half, being given credit for my graduate work. In one of the classes I did a paper on Ibrahim Müteferrika's press. It was handy that Columbia's collections were rich enough that, having copies of the Müteferrika editions in rare books,

the library could afford to have others in the stacks. It was at Columbia that I met the woman who became my wife a couple of months after we graduated, Pamela Frazer.

Toward the end of my year at Columbia, I sent out letters to all the institutions I knew around the country that had Middle East collections, looking for a job. Quite a few of the libraries have yet to reply. One place I wrote to was Princeton. I received a very kind personal response from Rudolf Mach, saying he regretted that, given my background and qualifications, he had no position he could offer me. However, it was his understanding that Yale had never replaced Dr. Leon Nemoy and that there might still be a vacancy there. I had never even thought of Yale, which was not an institution that came instantly to mind then when thinking of Middle East collections. On the strength of Mach's suggestion, I sent Yale a letter of inquiry and received an immediate and welcoming response and invitation to interview. Within weeks, I took the train to New Haven, was interviewed by Bernice Field, then head of technical services, and the university librarian, who withheld making me an offer pending receipt of transcripts from Columbia.

Within the space of a couple of months, my life changed completely: I was offered and accepted the job, moved all my goods to the apartment that my fiancée and I found in New Haven, began work at Yale, returned to Philadelphia to be married, and then returned to begin life in New Haven with my wife.

After I accepted Yale's offer, Pam and I met with Leon Nemoy, Yale's former Near East Curator, at his retirement office at Dropsie College on Broad Street in Philadelphia. He was extremely gracious to us and gave me encouragement and suggestions about the job at Yale. He was also frank about some of the problems he had faced, notably in budgeting. I later met with Dr. Goitein, who again expressed his feelings that I would never complete my Ph.D. He also made a cryptic statement that has puzzled me ever since: "Remember, Jajko, you must do well at Yale; after all, Leon Nemoy is a great scholar."

## **Yale**

I began work at Yale, in Sterling Memorial Library, in July, 1970. I was initially unclassified in an L-I-V system, since the administration claimed not to know where to slot me, but wound up as and remained an L-III, with the title of Near East Bibliographer-Cataloguer. My major responsibility turned out to be the Yale Judaica Collection. I

had to do much quick on the job learning of Rabbinic Hebrew, the *rashe tevot* that rabbis and religious writers habitually use, and many other things that had not been taught in the courses in Biblical and Modern Hebrew I had taken, and brush up my Yiddish. I got a lot of help from certain of the faculty, especially from S.Z. Leiman, who had been a graduate student in the OS department at Penn. Judah Goldin was also extremely generous. Unfortunately, I later had run-ins with other faculty members, whom I will not name. To some it was at the very least an incongruity that the Judaica collection should be managed by a Roman Catholic Polish-American.

I selected materials for the collections, acquired them, opened the boxes when they arrived, checked the new receipts against invoices, and cleared invoices for payment—exactly what I had done as a graduate student at Penn. In addition, I provided reference services and handled all public contacts relating to the collections I was responsible for. I handled the PL-480 programs and the backlogs of materials, which held thousands of volumes, there having been a four-year period during which Yale had not had a full-time Judaica or Near East librarian. I also selected blanket order dealers and wrote and managed the blanket orders. At Yale, I first had a blanket order for all Judaica with the J. Biegeleisen Co. of New York. The blanket order program expanded greatly when the Israel PL-480 program ended, and I later transferred some of the business to A.I. Weinberg, and ultimately split the Israeli business between Weinberg and Rabbi Hanan Rivkin. I believe I was Rabbi Rivkin's first blanket order in the US. I will add here that in both my professional positions, I wrote blanket order agreements on my own, never clearing them with my immediate supervisors or the administration, even though I was legally obligating my libraries and universities. I never saw the need to.

I had a dual responsibility at Yale, for the Yale Judaica Collection, which included Hebrew, Yiddish, and other materials, and also Near East materials, which were primarily Arabic. I was responsible to two distinct and non-overlapping groups of faculty. It was not unusual for me to have five or more faculty members come in to see me during the day, one after the other, each professor expecting me to be expert in his area, with my being required to switch from language, area, and subject, from Judaica to Islam and back, from ancient times to modern day, instantaneously and with fluency.

During my eleven and a half years at Yale I expanded the Judaica collection greatly, especially in the areas of Jewish law, Talmud com-

mentary, and Yiddish and modern Hebrew literature. I was also in charge of Near East selection, acquisitions, cataloging, and reference. Early on in my Yale career, the library began to switch over from its home-made Yale classification system to LC. It became clear that the Arabica that had hitherto been found in one location thanks to the Yale system would, under LC classification, be dispersed throughout millions of books in the stacks. I proposed to Miss Field that YUL set up a "Near East" section for Arabic and other Near East vernacular materials, to continue the practice of keeping such materials together for the benefit and convenience of the readers, and my suggestion was adopted. By the time I left Yale, there were about 10,000 volumes in the new Near East stack section.

In my later years there, LC dropped Yale from the Cairo PL-480 program. LC had hired a committee of ARL to survey the ME PL-480 member libraries and academic programs. Unfortunately, the Near East Languages and Literatures department ignored ARL's questionnaire, and the committee was less than satisfied with the responses that we in the library gave. We were kicked out. But we fought back. After days of research in the Yale Law Library, I drafted a multi-page response that was sent to LC with only minimal changes over the signature of the university librarian. Some time later, we were informed that a special share would be created for Yale and that we would remain in the Cairo PL-480 program. A couple of libraries were not so aggressive in their response and were kicked out, the Hoover Institution being one of them.

I had numerous assistants during my eleven and a half years at Yale. The first was Michael Marcus, who was from the New Haven area. Mike had Hebrew, of greatest interest to YUL, and Arabic as well. He worked for me for a couple of years until deciding to enter one of Yale's graduate programs. My next assistant was Amnon Zipin, who had taken a terminal M.Phil. degree from Yale's graduate school and was looking for work. Amnon was in many ways the ideal candidate for the job. He was of course fluent in Hebrew, being a native speaker; he was highly educated; he had some Yiddish; and he was fluent in Arabic, thanks to his years in Israeli military intelligence. Amnon worked as a non-professional Subject and Language Specialist, doing pre-order and precatalog searching and cataloging. After a few years, Amnon decided quite reasonably that he wanted to move ahead rather than remain a non-professional. He enrolled in the library program of Southern Connecticut State University and got his MLS. I went to the university

librarian to ask that Amnon be reclassified, rather than lose him. The request was refused. At about the same time, Fawzi Khoury was looking for a Judaica person to assist him in the University of Washington library. I recommended Amnon, and Fawzi flew him out to Seattle for an interview. Afterwards, Fawzi telephoned me to complain. He had found Amnon's personality problematic, couldn't see how he could hire him, and also couldn't see how I could have recommended him. We spoke for a long time, and finally Fawzi accepted my arguments. He hired Amnon, who spent several years in Seattle working for Fawzi. They became the best of friends. Then Amnon left to succeed Charles Cutler as Judaica librarian at Ohio State, a most important position, and it was in Columbus that he met his untimely death. To me it was deeply and personally significant that, despite that telephone call of complaint of years before, it was Fawzi who delivered a moving eulogy of Amnon at the first MELA meeting held after his passing.

Perhaps the most important assistant I had during my years at Yale was Leah Adler. Born in Israel, raised from her early teenage years in Switzerland, the daughter of the chief rabbi of one Swiss city and married to the son of the chief rabbi of another, a graduate of the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, and a woman more learned in Judaism than most rabbis, Leah became my right hand in working with the Judaica Collection. One thing she did not have, to begin with, was Yiddish, and we both found it funny that the Roman Catholic Polish-American should be teaching the basics of Yiddish to the Israeli-born rabbi's daughter. But she soon saw connections with Swiss German, and from then on needed no more lessons, only occasional coaching with the Slavic vocabulary of Yiddish. Leah worked for me for years. I gave her a supervisory role, assigning other people who were at her same level to work for her rather than report directly to me. She accessioned materials, did pre-order and pre-catalog searching, and did copy cataloging and a modified form of original cataloging that we had developed, and she trained and supervised others in these and other tasks. I did not realize how much I had delegated to Leah to do and how much I relied on her until she resigned from Yale because her husband, a physician, had taken a job in a hospital on Long Island. Within a few days of her departure, my operation had ground to a halt. I was unable to do anything, simply unable to function. It took me ages to realize that it was because I had delegated so much to her and now, once again, had to do it all on my own, and simply could not. Rebuilding was enormously difficult.

My last assistant at Yale was Leonard Mathless. Lenny was married to the daughter of a New Haven rabbi. He and his wife had been living in Columbus, Ohio, where Lenny had worked in the OSU library as a non-professional. After Leah left, there was a rethinking of what my Near East Division would do, or rather what the staffing would be, and it was decided that Near East needed a full-time Judaica cataloguer. Lenny, who by then had the library degree, was hired for the job, with the promise that he would be chief Judaica cataloguer. (In the Yale context, by the way, I use the Yale spelling of the word, with the “u.”) My last big job at Yale, other than working on a large-scale exhibit called “Judaica at Yale,” was to train Lenny. We worked closely together for more than a year, with me training Lenny in Yale’s arcane ways from the bottom up. When I left, Lenny found that he was not to be named “chief Judaica cataloguer.” I did what little I could, by letter. I do not think that the issue was resolved in his favor. In any event, within all too few years, the issue was rendered moot when Lenny died prematurely.

It was at Yale that I first fired a subordinate, a subject and language specialist on a level with Leah. I very much regretted doing so and always felt that I was pressured into the dismissal by the personnel office, which wanted me to show myself to be an administrator, not “just” a librarian. I also came to an agreement with another assistant that she should leave because she could not get along with Leah and, frankly, Leah was more valuable to me. There was also a graduate student in Arabic who worked for me as a subject and language specialist whom I wound up dismissing because she violated the terms of a written agreement for a temporary leave.

Over the years, I had my own difficulties at Yale, as many of my MELA colleagues know. I will not go into those difficulties here but will say only that it became evident to me a couple of years after I started working there that I would be happier somewhere else. I liked Yale, and certainly liked the prestige of the Yale name, and my family and I had begun to enjoy many aspects of life in Connecticut. But I did not get along with the university librarian. I began looking for positions elsewhere and, over the years, applied for several. I got turned down everywhere. Being rejected like that begins to wear on one’s self-confidence. Am I that bad a librarian? What’s wrong with me that library X isn’t interested in me, despite all the nice things people said to me while I was there?

Finally, in 1982, the MELA president telephoned me while I was at work at my desk in Sterling Memorial Library, to ask if I would be willing to attend the conference of Africana librarians that was to be held in the very near future in SML and then give a report at the next MELA meeting. I agreed happily, since going to such a meeting beat working. When I got to the meeting room in SML, I was surprised to see David Partington there. We sat together in the front row of the seats that had been set up for spectators and talked. During a break in the action, a highly attractive Chinese-American woman came over from among the Africana librarians, asked David if he was indeed Dr. Partington, and asked to speak with him.

She said she was from the Hoover Institution, and told him that the Hoover was reopening its Middle East Collection. Could David recommend any candidates for the post of Middle East Bibliographer? David knew my situation at Yale and my longing to get out. He moved his arm in a sweeping gesture, pointed to me, and said that he could not “recommend anyone better for the position than Mr. Jajko right here.”

I later spoke at length with the woman from the Hoover and got information from her and then applied for the job. This time, however, I decided to avoid the kiss of death that I felt had plagued me in my previous applications. I kept my application secret from all but a few trusted friends at Yale.

I asked a couple of my friends to serve as references, among them Moore Crossey, Yale’s African Curator, who was a good friend of the African curators at the Hoover, including the woman who had attended the meeting in Sterling Memorial Library. They all agreed to keep my application confidential. To my great gratification, I got a call from Dr. Peter Duignan, then curator of the Africa-Middle East Collection of the Hoover Institution inviting me to interview. At first I demurred, because my Mother was scheduled for a serious operation in Philadelphia just after the appointed day. When Peter said that that was fine, he would just go to the next person on his list, I agreed to travel to Stanford.

I was overwhelmed by the contrast between Stanford’s Spanish architecture and the beauties of its campus and the English college Gothic of Yale. I was even more overwhelmed by the casual atmosphere of Hoover Tower and its small shops, which were a total contrast to the tight-ship environment of the Yale University Library. I desperately

wanted the job but left home disappointed and convinced that I would never get it, having firmly put my foot in my mouth in response to a question asked of me by one of the people who took me to lunch. But some weeks later, as I sat at my desk in SML, I got a call from California and the offer of the job, which I instantly accepted.

Some days later, having told only a couple of trusted friends, I was called to a meeting by the head of the Catalogue Department, who wanted to talk about planning. We sat in his office for the longest time, with him outlining plans and me supplying input and offering comments but growing increasingly uncomfortable. Finally, I stopped him and said that I couldn't continue with the discussion any longer because it involved a future in which I wouldn't figure, since I was going to submit my resignation the following day. Monty Montee, my boss, said he fully understood my reasons for leaving, was sorry that I was going, and envied me, since he greatly loved the West and planned on retiring there. The next day, after handing in my letter of resignation, I went around SML telling various people I knew there that I would be leaving. It was when I was doing this that I experienced one of the nicest things that ever happened to me during my Yale years. I had asked the few people I had told of my application to the Hoover or whom I had asked to serve as references to keep it a secret, so as to avoid the kiss of death of the library administration's putting in their oar. While going around Sterling Memorial Library, telling my friends I would be leaving, I found the then Southeast Asia Curator Charlie Bryant working in his collection's reading room. I knocked on the door; the always-cordial Bryant greeted me. I said that I wanted to tell him that I was going to leave Yale. Charlie immediately perked up and said, "Hoover!" I was astounded and asked, "How did you know?" Charlie replied, "Oh, we all knew; we just didn't say anything because we didn't want you to feel bad in case you didn't get it." Absolutely one of the nicest things that happened to me during my eleven and a half years at Yale.

### **Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace**

I began work at the Hoover on 3 January 1983, as Middle East Bibliographer-Cataloger in the Africa-Middle East Collection, under curator Dr. Peter Duignan. The beautiful woman from whom I had first heard of the job, Karen Fung, was deputy curator in charge of the African Collection. We became next-door office neighbors for most of my time at the Hoover.

My new library colleagues were friendly and welcoming. I found that one of them, Joseph Dwyer, then deputy curator of the Slavic and East European Collection, was an old friend. When I was a graduate student at Penn, Joe was the Slavic bibliographer there. He was a friend of Sarkis Minassian and was himself fluent in Persian and knew a lot of Arabic and some Turkish. Joe was away when I began work at the Hoover but he returned some weeks into my tenure there and we resumed our friendship.

I had been in California only a few times before I started my job at the Hoover, once when changing planes at SFO, another time for a MESA meeting in Los Angeles, and then for my interview, a very quick visit thanks to my having to hurry back home so that I could be in Philadelphia at the very least when my Mother came out of surgery. I was unprepared for the cold, it being colder than in the Bay Area than it had been in Connecticut, and for the rains of that El Nino winter. Within a week of so of my arrival, while hurrying in to work in the morning, I tripped and fell in the street and broke my right hand. I wore a cast for a couple of months. But I was hard at work. At first, thanks to my Yale training, I waited for someone to tell me what I was supposed to do. Then, with a few words of encouragement from others, it dawned on me that this was a new world, far removed from the shores of Long Island Sound, and that it was up to me to get myself started.

I began surveying and learning the cataloged materials and organizing and listing the existing uncataloged backlogs, which were considerable in number. Within a couple of months of arrival at the Hoover, I began cataloging Arabic, using what I had been taught and built on at Yale and, in the process, redesigning the look of Hoover's Middle East cataloging.

One thing we did not have at the Hoover Institution was a backlog of uncataloged Cairo PL-480 books. Not that the Hoover had been super-diligent in its cataloging and had managed to wipe out the backlog. The Hoover was one of the several libraries that was thrown out of the PL-480 program as a result of the ARL committee's report of a few years before, the one that we had fought successfully at Yale. Hoover had had to report that numerous—perhaps hundreds—of packages of books lay still unopened, let alone uncataloged, and when LC tossed the Institution out, the Hoover accepted the orders to ship the yet-unopened packages to Portland State University.

In addition to cataloging, I started ordering materials for the Hoover. My responsibilities were Arabic, primarily, and Turkish and Persian secondarily, with responsibility also for European-language materials from and on the Middle East and Islam. I had almost no budget to begin with, and over the years the acquisitions budgets allotted me were never large. By way of contrast, when Stanford University Libraries opened its first-ever curatorship for the Middle East just before I retired, the SUL ME acquisitions budget was more than four times as much as I had had in my best years at the Hoover. Of course, at the Hoover we concentrated on contemporary history, politics, and economics, touching on other subjects only if they were related to current history and politics—but still, you can only do so much with a tiny budget.

At the Hoover, I was responsible for selection, acquisition, reference, public contacts, locating and developing sources of library and archival materials, training and supervising such staff as I had, and cataloging. These responsibilities, and in particular cataloging, had me overlapping into several departments and having a couple of supervisors impinging on my work. In practice I acted as a free agent, generally keeping my boss more or less informed about what I was doing but making all the decisions for the collection on my own. Cataloging was always a sore point. As I had discovered at Yale, and as I had never been able to persuade any administrator, being in charge of selection, acquisition, and cataloging meant that I was my own bottleneck. The better I was as a selector and acquirer of materials, as a collection builder—what I had always wanted to be and what I was good at—the worse I was as a producer of finished and cataloged product. I was never able to convince any administrator of this. I did get statements like, “The only reason you want a cataloger is because the other curators have them.” In the end, I decided that building the collection was more important than cataloging what was on hand while foregoing further acquisitions. This cost me negative evaluations. But in the end, an existing position was rewritten, changed into a cataloger slot—in the Catalog department, not under me—and Muhammad Al-Faruque was hired as our Middle East cataloger.

Copy cataloging had previously been done also by two assistants. The first real assistant I had was Sophie Rentz, wife of the former curator of the collection, Dr. George Rentz. The Rentzes had a beautiful house on the Stanford campus that was full with George’s collections of books and papers. After years in D.C., they returned to their Stanford

home just about when I started at the Hoover. When a non-professional slot was opened up for me, I had two candidates for the job, and Sophie got it. She worked for me for quite a few years. It was a sometimes contentious relationship. When I had Sophie type catalog cards, she would often format them in ways that caused me to bounce them back for correction. She would tell me that she had formatted them according to the way it was done at LC. I would tell her that I wanted the cards done in the format I had set up for the Hoover. And so it went.

During Sophie's tenure as a non-professional at the Hoover, George Rentz became seriously ill and died. Sophie afterwards sought to sell George's collection, using a local book seller as an agent. I looked the collection over and was interested in the rare Arabic imprints that George had acquired, but couldn't raise the money to buy them. After the book dealer was unable to sell the collection, Sophie consigned part of it to an auction house, where the prices went way above what I could afford personally or in my book budget. After retiring, Sophie moved to the Middle East, where, some years later, she died. I lost track of the collection until the trip to Saudi Arabia in 2000 that came at the sudden invitation of Dr. Fahd Al-Semmari of Darat al-Malik 'Abd al-'Aziz to attend the Janadriyah festival in Riyadh. Of the several librarians who were able to drop everything and take advantage of the invitation, Chris Murphy and I were the only ones who were left to take a tour of the Prince 'Abd Allah Library—a tour that, in retrospect, was well-planned in advance by our Saudi hosts. Chris immediately spotted a banner that had been commissioned by King Jan III Sobieski of Poland to send to the Vatican as a souvenir of his victory over the Turkish armies of Karamustafa that had besieged Vienna in 1683. The Library of Congress had bid at auction for the banner until the price had risen beyond LC's budget, and the banner had been sold to an unknown buyer. Chris greeted the banner with a cry of 'so that's who bought it!' or words to that effect. As for me, I glanced at an exhibit case as I was walking past it and saw several diaries and other papers of George Rentz, and was informed that the library had acquired his collection. Later, at lunch, I met the dealer who had bought the Rentz collection and heard from him how he had acquired it.

Within a couple of years of my starting at the Hoover, a position opened up at LC for which I applied and was short-listed. I was interviewed and went through the process, which got me nowhere at LC but did get me my continuing appointment at Stanford several years sooner than expected. I applied again at LC a couple of times more and was

short-listed and interviewed. I will freely admit that at least one of the interviews was disastrous. But, even though things were not panning out at the Hoover Institution as I had hoped and as had at first been suggested, I decided to stick it out. There were several reasons for this:

\* I liked the Hoover and in general felt comfortable there, and also felt that I was doing a good job in building the collections.

\* My son and daughter spent the last year or two of elementary school and their middle school in the Cupertino schools, and then moved on to high school with kids they knew, and the idea of uprooting them again didn't make sense.

\* We all liked this part of California, the southern end of San Francisco Bay. Further, while I had always felt something of a stranger in Connecticut, I could feel the roots sinking into the soil of California as soon as I moved here on my own, several months before my wife and children joined me.

\* Lastly, my career was winding down, but my wife's career had taken off, as she had moved from being a public librarian in Connecticut, to librarian in a prep school, to head of a nursing library, and in California, from head of a NASA library, to head of a hospital library, to highly-paid head of a pharmaceutical library in private industry. While my position on the Stanford campus came with the university's college tuition allowance for our kids, my wife's salary grew to be substantially more than mine. So I stayed.

I was hired in 1982 to reopen Hoover's Middle East Collection, which had effectively been closed for six years. In 2003, I agreed to accept a voluntary layoff, and when I left on August 31 of that year, my collection was again closed, this time probably for good. My entire, and large, uncataloged backlog was transferred to the Stanford University Libraries, and portions of the cataloged collections were stripped from the stacks and moved either to on-campus or remote storage. No one was hired to succeed me.

**Thoughts in closing**

Some comparisons and contrasts from my career:

\* At Yale, I had spent eleven and a half years as an L-III, while area curators, some with less in-house responsibility than I had, were ranked higher than me and were paid higher salaries. When I left, after having been responsible for both Judaica and Near East, my position was divided, and separate Judaica and Near East curatorships were established, the relevant faculty groups finally having gotten their acts together and forcing a response from the library.

\* When I interviewed at the Hoover, a Stanford library administrator also interviewed me, bringing up Stanford's then-impending entry into the world of Jewish studies and the possibility of my contributing as the library's bibliographer. I did have a responsibility for Near East and Judaica selection for the university library for a couple of years until that partial slot was cut for budgetary reasons.

\* At both Yale and the Hoover Institution, I was prevented from engaging in acquisitions travel or was given only limited travel support. At the Hoover, while there were no explicit promises, the fact that the Middle East collection was being reopened and that certain commitments were being made held out great prospects for the future. The first time I proposed acquisitions travel to the Middle East, however, my then-library director literally laughed in my face. I did travel later, several times, but to the U.K., and a couple of times to the European Continent. I made useful and interesting contacts with Bahraini and other exiles, met a couple of times with Dr. Saad Al-fagih of MIRA and also with Muhammad Al-Massaari, had a one on one meeting in a London rail station café with Shaykh Umar Bakri Muhammad, and in Leiden had a couple of memorable meetings with Dr. Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, one of the most impressive people I have ever had the honor to talk with. The one trip I got to the Middle East was in 1997, when Hoover sent me to Egypt to pick up the papers of Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. I met Dr. Boutros and also his brother Wassef, head of the Coptic Archeological Society. They took me to the family's private compound in the patriarchate in Cairo and made materials from the Boutros-Ghali family private archive available to the Hoover for a copying project. Both these collections in the Hoover Institution Archives will be open to researchers on November 18, 2007. One of the personal projects that was of greatest importance and satisfaction to me in my years at the Hoover was the collection of archival materials relating to

the USS Liberty. I was able to obtain the collections of several members of the Liberty crew, including James Ennes, Ronald Kukal, and the late Captain William McGonagle, commander of the Liberty during the attack.

\* In both libraries, I had restrictive acquisitions budgets that severely limited my ability to develop the collections I was responsible for. During my tenure at the Hoover Institution, at one point my acquisitions budget was rather arbitrarily cut by 25%. Forced to reduce purchasing, I almost entirely eliminated the buying of Persian and Turkish.

\* In both positions, I was given limited and uneven support staff. At one point during my Yale years, I had as many as ten people working away in my Near East Division, counting several half-time Subject and Language Specialists like Leah Adler and the ten-hour-a-week students we were allowed to hire to type and file cards, shelve books, etc. At other times, I had no staff at all, and the entire load of what had become a fairly big operation fell on my shoulders.

\* In both positions, I was responsible for both bibliography—selection, acquisitions, public contacts, reference, etc.—and cataloging, as well as training and supervision. The better I was as a selector and acquirer of materials, the more I was able to get for my libraries, the less I was able to catalog. As bibliographer and cataloger, I was always my own bottleneck, an impossible position. It is perhaps little wonder that, over the years, I greatly envied my MELA colleagues who were librarians at schools that had strong Middle East programs or centers and that seemed to value and support their Middle East librarians.

\* At Yale, I was trained first in descriptive cataloging in the one-on-one system in use then. For subject work, I was placed under the wing of the Slavic Division, since I could handle all the languages cataloged there except for Hungarian and the Baltic ones. When it was my turn to train people, I adopted a similar system, spending hours with people until I was sure that they had a solid grasp of the basics and could handle what was required of them. When I trained people at Yale, after several weeks of intensive work I would start a new lesson by telling them to set aside, almost forget, what I had taught them up to that point, because now they would have to approach the work from a different perspective. At Yale we had an extensive bibliography collection that had been accumulated over the years to help catalogers use the old Yale Classification System, parts of which required determining the date of first publication, which became part of the Cutter number.

This collection included all the standard manuscript catalogs, copies of catalogs of other libraries, etc. I taught my people how to use these as need arose, the emphasis in those days being on searching the various LC and NUC sets. At the Hoover, we had fewer such resources, but the training was still intensive and thorough.

\* At Yale, I was ranked as an L-III, Near East Bibliographer-Cataloguer. At the Hoover, I was ranked as a Librarian, third level up in a four-level system. Hired as Middle East Bibliographer-Cataloger, I became Assistant Curator of the Middle East Collection, or actually of the Africa-Middle East Collection, after a colleague in another curatorship who was junior to me was named Assistant Curator. (The former Middle East Collection had been combined with the Africa Collection after the retirement of George Rentz.) A few years later, I became Deputy Curator, but I held that title even after the curator, Peter Duignan, retired and I had a direct report to the deputy director of the Institution. It was only in my last year that I was named Curator of the Middle East Collection. But I had had full responsibility for the collection from my first day on the job, and these were title changes only, with no effect on my ranking in the system or, for all intents and purposes, on my salary.

\* When I was at Yale, I had realized within a couple of years of starting that it was, shall we say, not the ideal location for me. Over the years I applied for jobs here and there and interviewed all over the place, never getting an offer. Self-doubt was the inevitable result. When I learned of the Hoover job, I decided to handle my application differently to avoid the administrative kiss of death, and succeeded. I moved my family 3,000 miles to a very different environment and a new start. California took hold of me immediately, whereas I had felt a stranger most of the time in Connecticut—and been treated as one by the natives. The Hoover job was full of promise at first. Then, over the years, it stalled. The Middle East was, on the whole, peripheral to the grand vision of the administrators of the Institution. Occasional attempts by the administrators to ‘do something about the Middle East’ were feeble and half-hearted until a decently-funded project on collecting on Islamic Fundamentalism was begun, but in the end that project fizzled out. By the time it was clear that Hoover was not going to go all out in supporting Middle East, however, I had decided that I would stick it out. My wife’s career had taken off, she was deeply involved in a challenging job that had her traveling regularly to Europe and attending many meetings around the U.S., and she was earning a

large salary. We had gone out of our way to ensure that our kids would have stability and continuity in their primary and secondary education and were supporting them in college, partly with the tuition benefit provided by Stanford.

From time to time, I have mused on what I have done with my life and what I might have or should have done differently. My wife, who is wiser than me, has brought me back down to earth and told me that I have been in pretty much the best places for me. I have worked in prestigious schools, but have not had to teach or do research. I have worked with books and been able to use my training and my mind. I have had, I believe, the respect of my peers and most of those who have worked for me, if not of most of those I have been forced to report to. And, most important of all, I have supported my family and raised and educated my son and daughter.

During my library career, MELA has been of great importance to me. It was exciting, when I was already working at Yale, to hear that an organization of Middle East librarians was forming. I participated in the SUNY Binghamton meeting and so qualified as a founder. My wife and new baby son accompanied me to Binghamton, and so I have double memories of that gathering. I have treasured the friendships that I made or strengthened through MELA. Some were new, some were continuations of friendships begun before, in Cairo. One new friendship was forged over an improbable evening playing Pong at the conference put together by John Eilts in Ann Arbor. Another was strengthened by annual “expensive” dinners during the MELA meetings. I won’t mention names, because I might inadvertently forget to mention someone. I miss those who retired before I did and deeply regret the loss of those who have died. Comparing notes with my colleagues, sharing complaints and war stories, picking up pointers and information and learning from my colleagues, these and many other things were of great value to me over the years, as was just being with people who understood. I tried to serve MELA a couple of times as vice president/program chairman and president and also by occasionally suggesting changes to the By-Laws or MELA’s practices and procedures, and, at the urging of the late Lesley Wilkins, I chaired the first David H. Partington Award Committee. And now, as I told Lesley it was my intention to do before she persuaded me to chair the committee, I bow out.