

*m/file*

**NEWS**

**Binghamton**  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

#87-048

Office of University Communications  
State University of New York  
107 Administration Bldg.  
Binghamton, N.Y. 13901  
(607) 777-2174

**Contact:** Lee Shepherd

March 2, 1987

International Sephardic Studies Conference at  
SUNY-Binghamton to Draw Scholars From Around the World

The first international and interdisciplinary conference on Sephardic Studies to be held in the United States will take place on the campus of the State University of New York at Binghamton on April 5-7. Some 60 scholars from Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Israel, Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico, Canada and the United States will deliver papers on their research, spanning the fields of history, culture, sociology, language and literature, musicology, folklore and art history of the Jews of Spanish and Portuguese origin. Scholars will also have an opportunity to meet informally to exchange ideas.

The conference, co-directed by Yedida K. Stillman, director of the Judaic Studies Program at SUNY-Binghamton, and George K. Zucker of the University of Northern Iowa (Visiting Professor of Spanish at Binghamton this semester) was planned in response to an upsurge in interest in Sephardic Studies, an increasingly important field of academic scholarship. Sephardic Studies will be approached from an academic, rather than religious perspective, according to Stillman.

Sephardic Studies focuses on the culture of the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492 and Portugal in 1497. Some emigrated to Holland, but the

--more--

majority settled in the Ottoman Empire, which practiced religious and cultural tolerance. Some of the largest Jewish colonies were founded in Morocco, Tunisia, Istanbul (then Constantinople), Rhodes, and Salonika, communities which flourished until the Second World War, when they met the same fate as the Ashkenazi Jews of Europe. The majority of Sephardim now live in Israel, with some communities in Latin America and in the United States. Large Sephardic communities can be found in New York City, Atlanta, Miami and Seattle. Sephardic Jews make up a large portion, if not quite half, of world Jewry.

Two conference events will be free and open to the public. Nicholas Stavroulakis, Director of the Jewish Museum of Greece, Athens, will give the keynote address on "The Dress of the Jews of the Ottoman Empire (an illustrated lecture). His talk will begin at 8 p.m. on Sunday, April 5 in the University Union, room 133. At 7:30 p.m. on Monday, April 6, Flory Jagoda and her family will give a concert of Sephardic music. The program will be held in Casadesus Recital Hall, Fine Arts Building. Jagoda recounts the rich history of Spanish Jews, and sets it to the rhythm of Balkan and Mediterranean folk music. A form of oral history, Jagoda is passing her culture through music to the next generation. Jagoda, a vocalist and guitarist, has a large repertoire of liturgical and folk music, which she performs alone or in family concerts with her children.

The Sephardic Studies Conference will focus on several general topics including: The Sephardic family and the role of women; Sephardic Jews in America and Israel; Sephardic art and music; and Sephardic culture: History and development.

--more--

Sponsors of the conference include the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate Office, SWANA and the Jewish Student Union, all at the University; the University of Northern Iowa; the Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies and Culture, Inc.; the Broome County Jewish Federation; Jack P. Newman; S. Levy Inc.; and Iowa Electric Light and Power Co.

The visiting scholars are to be housed in homes of community members, according to Stillman. Anyone who would like to house a Spanish, French or Italian-speaking guest is asked to call 777-3070.

--##--