The symposium’s outstanding group of interdisciplinary scholars will seek to assess the ongoing meaning and utility of the term “Arab Jew.” Does the term serve as a valuable scholarly construct to describe the cultural composition and outlook of Jews from Arab countries? Does it have utility as a category by which people choose to identify themselves? If so, does the category of the Arab Jew also point toward a political stance, perhaps analogous to the notion of the “pariah” à la Bernard Lazare and Hannah Arendt?

An important and innovative feature of this gathering will be a series of graduate student panels, featuring the work of fine junior researchers whose work stands at the cutting edge of historical and literary scholarship in the fields of Middle Eastern, Jewish, and cultural studies.
The Idea of the Arab Jew

The UCLA Center for Jewish Studies and the UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies are pleased to present this international symposium on the idea of the Arab Jew. The term “Arab Jew” has been used in both scholarly and political discourse for decades, and calls to mind the memorable claim of the Iraqi–Jewish educator, Ezra Haddad (1900–1972), that “we are Arabs before we are Jews.”

Cover: Amulet, 19th Century.
Inside: “Es-sabbah,” a Judeo-Arabic newspaper from Tunis (1905).