

From the Editor's Keyboard

This issue contains very interesting essays and reviews, but also carries the sad recognition that, among others, MESA has lost two honorary fellows, Annemarie Schimmel and Edward Said. Each of them has had a profound impact on the field of Middle East Studies, and each touched the lives and shaped the work of countless scholars and teachers. Their influence, as with that of others we have lost this year, will continue to shape the field, and can be seen in the essays and reviews in this volume, including the essay by Paula Sanders.

Along with a fascinating essay by John M. O'Connell, on ethnic identity and music in Turkey, it is also fitting that among the features of this issue of the *Bulletin* is the first of a new series of essays devoted to examination of the state of Middle East Studies today – around the world. Our first installment, by Erik Jan Zürcher, discusses Middle East Studies in the Netherlands, and future issues of the *Bulletin* will concern the field in other countries, as well as in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Hopefully, these essays will encourage vital discussion among *Bulletin* readers, and MESA members, regarding how the field has developed, current trends, arguments and controversies, and future possibilities for the field. Without continuous and rigorous discussion among those in the field, we face little chance of being able to confront effectively problems such as poor funding, ideologically motivated attacks, and the declining popularity of the field among graduate and undergraduate students. Even if *Bulletin* readers and MESA members were not facing these challenges, I believe it is essential that everybody in the field, defined globally, undertake serious and sustained contemplation and discussion of their priorities, their role in developing and improving the field, and their responsibilities to students, the greater public and to the pursuit of knowledge.

I hope you find this issue of the *Bulletin* interesting, thought provoking and enjoyable reading.