

## Editorial

The *Bulletin*, as MESA's journal for the state of the craft in research and teaching about the Middle East, falls between the Association's *Newsletter* and the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, and its brief evolves with developments in scholarship on the Middle East.

This issue inaugurates an enlarged group of associate editors for the principal contemporary disciplines in Middle East studies. Within a broadly topical format that has proved flexible, we intend to increase coverage of economic analyses, popular culture, the growing number of studies on the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula and across the board in two areas that are increasingly important for research and teaching in all disciplines of Middle East studies.

**Computer software and services:** We will be concerned not only with tools for research and teaching, but also with the impacts of "information technologies." Since the *Bulletin* depends on contributions of MESA members as well as reflects what they are doing, let us know if you are able and willing to review software and services, and let us know of research on computing relevant to Middle East studies.

**Relations to adjacent regions:** Developments in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, Central Asia, religious and economic ties with Southeast Asia, the Middle Eastern diaspora in contemporary Europe and the end of the Cold War all forge, or reforge, ties that challenge conventional area studies. Increasing internationalization of Middle East Studies and of the region itself makes relations to neighboring regions and areas of scholarship newly problematic. While our core focus remains on studies of the Middle East, we also recognize that "Middle East" means different things to different people, in different disciplines and for different periods, and that contemporary scholarship undergoes changes which affect topics and methods in area studies that the *Bulletin* tracks.

Previous editors have made the *Bulletin* a source for timely, informative and concise reviews of research and teaching resources, which we reaffirm as the journal's priority. The core format of substantive reviews of no more than 500 words, and sometimes fewer, of current books, films, exhibitions, recordings and software is one that we intend to maintain to ensure coverage appropriate for a multidisciplinary area studies audience. In keeping with this journal's focus on the state of the craft, the editors do not encourage controversy in these pages. While views expressed are those of their authors, all communications that appear in the *Bulletin* will be edited for brevity, clarity and civility.

We encourage members to make known their willingness and expertise to contribute reviews of books, exhibitions, films, recordings and software. We seek the widest possible participation and also welcome suggestions of material and topics that should be covered in the *Bulletin*.

Finally, we acknowledge the long and generous service of departing editors Lorraine Sakata (for Recordings), John Esposito (for Religion) and, especially, Jere Bacharach.

- ED.

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\*Dr. Bishai is a Senior Lecturer on Arabic at Harvard University