

## Editorial

This issue not only marks my fourth as editor of the *MESA Bulletin*, but also ushers in some changes in the manner in which the journal is delivered. MESA will continue to send hard copies of this publication to all individual and institutional members of the Association. In addition, however, we also have decided to make it simultaneously available online at <http://w3fp.arizona.edu/mesassoc/Bulletin/welcome.htm>. Most publications that have gone online charge for access and/or establish 'firewalls' restricting right of entry to recent issues. This site, however, is open to all. By providing open access to the *MESA Bulletin* online, we hope to increase our readership, especially among colleagues and students in parts of the world where hard copies are hard to find. We also believe that, especially after appropriate search engines are developed, the online version of this journal will be a splendid tool for secondary and university students investigating topics in Middle East studies. Please do visit our site, and tell your colleagues and students about it.

This issue also introduces the publication of synopses of MESA's 'thematic conversations.' In addition to articles, review articles, and book reviews, four of the discussions from MESA 2000 in Orlando Florida—'Representations of the Ottomans,' 'Religion as Explanation: Putting Islam First,' 'Issues in Teaching and Research in Medieval Islamic Studies,' and 'Insiders/Outsiders: Emic/Etic Study of Women and Gender in the New Millennium'—are included below.