

Editorial

A journal of review is a thing of parts, and, particularly for area studies, the parts do not all fit a single frame. In the last issue, the *Bulletin* initiated a new format for reviewing groups of recordings by genre. As critical guides for types of recorded musical and vocal performances that are available, these extended topical reviews will replace all but the occasional review of single recordings to provide a more coherent and representative coverage than the format of single reviews affords. Some film series will receive similar treatment. We also move these topical reviews to the front with other extended review treatments of research and teaching materials, developments, facilities and perspectives of interest across the multiple disciplines in Middle East studies. This issue also inaugurates a small number of topical review essays on topics that cross disciplinary or regional boundaries, beginning with John Philip's essay on recent thinking about slavery in African studies and Dale Eickelman's essay on a modern treatise on Qur'anic interpretation that has become a best-seller from Morocco to the Gulf. We invite suggestions from members about other such topics you would like to see covered in this fashion.

This format of occasional review essays draws on the model of the *Bulletin's* publication of MESA's annual Presidential Address to focus on research and topics of emerging and cross-disciplinary relevance for and in the framework of area studies. Our focus remains on publications. These essays will complement rather than displace this journal's trademark genre of concise, 500-word reviews of current books and films, which will continue to be the *MESA Bulletin's* staple offering and principal window on publications from and about the Middle East.

With this issue, the *Bulletin* bids farewell, and thanks for six years of service, to Mary Wilson, who with Philip Khoury has selected and secured reviews for books in modern history and politics. This journal and their colleagues have benefited from their efforts to provide an accurate and apt coverage of the largest group of publications in Middle East Studies received by the *Bulletin*.

Your editors select and solicit reviews for books submitted by publishers. What appears here depends on MESA members and *Bulletin* readers, first, having their books sent for review and, then, accepting invitations from the editors to write timely, concise reviews of the books we get. We renew the invitation to the members to have their books sent for review and to let us know of your willingness and areas of expertise to review books. Our goal as editors is to turn discipline-based expertise and research to the use and enhancement of multidisciplinary area studies, and we do this by making use of as many talents as we can.

The increased number of reviews in this issue reflects both this aim and a rising tide of publication in Middle East Studies that is causing us to move some other professional matter from these pages to an on-line form. As an experiment, unsigned "news" content of the *Bulletin*, including research notes and lists of conferences, will be placed on-line over the Internet. The preliminary "site" is gopher.cua.edu via telnet or through remote gopher service. -ED.