

العصور الوسطى

al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā

The Newsletter of Middle East Medievalists

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Number 1

President's Message

Greetings to all! Since the idea for MEM was initially broached during the 1988 MESA meeting in Los Angeles, we have come a long way. Our membership now numbers approximately 135 and includes individuals from the United States, Western Europe, the Muslim world, and Israel. We have been accepted officially as an affiliated organization by MESA and have applied for similar status with the American Historical Association, a process which takes six to eight months (We applied last May.). We have been quite successful in sponsoring panels at the annual meeting of MESA, both last year at Toronto and, in a few weeks, San Antonio. At Toronto, our first panel, on periodization in Islamic history, was very well attended and met with an enthusiastic response. MESA has been quite accommodating in accepting our proposed panels and we like to think that their quality is the reason why. Certainly, MEM has given a big boost to the "cause" of medieval Islamic history/Islamic studies within MESA. All in all, we have much for which to be thankful.

However, there is always more to do and we need substantially increased participation from you, the members. Over the past year-and-a-half, we have had, frankly speaking, little input from the membership. At this point, there really is no sense of membership. The Executive Committee continues to act as an oligarchy which from time to time, dictates policy and takes positions on various matters. This it must gradually cease to do. It is one thing to lead, quite another to impose. For MEM to continue to play a genuine and vital role, it must have the input of its members. Simply put, in what direction to you want this organization to go? Do you want its functions to remain the same or shall we expand in ways to be decided by you? You the members must respond and let us know what you are thinking, what ideas you have.

I have a few suggestions. First, money always helps, so if you have not done so, please

pay dues (the sum of \$12.50 remains for all!), including those participating in MEM-sponsored panels. Second, MEM must continue to actively push for the inclusion of quality panels on medieval topics at future MESA meetings. Third, we should, once the application process is completed, sponsor panels at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association and have some sort of information table available there for all who are interested. Fourth, might the membership consider organizing a summer institute of some kind, perhaps for secondary school instructors on the place of medieval Islamic history in the setting of world history? Finally, we must continue to foster contacts among medievalists on an international basis and make MEM the clearinghouse for valuable communications which take place among its members.

I hope my comments have been helpful. While I will be unable to attend this year's MESA meeting, I hope much will be accomplished in San Antonio by MEM. I welcome your observations, either by phone or by letter. Best of luck!! -- Sam Gellens

MEM Annual Meeting

The Board of Directors and officers of MEM are pleased to announce that our 1990 Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, November 10, 1990 from 7-8:30 p.m. in Room 205 on the Upper Level of the San Antonio Convention Center, located near the Marriott Riverwalk Hotel. All members who have paid their 1990 membership dues are cordially invited to attend and participate. In addition to electing officers for 1991, the Annual Meeting will also consider the future direction of MEM. Regarding the election of officers, the Annual Meeting will have to decide whether to retain current officers for an additional year or replace them with new officers. Please submit all nominations to Dr. Christopher S. Taylor, Secretary/Treasurer of MEM as soon as possible. If members have any additional items they wished discussed at the

annual meeting, please inform Dr. Taylor by Monday, November 5th. We hope that many of you will be able to attend our annual meeting since it is being held on a Saturday evening.

Immediately following the annual meeting we hope to have an informal reception which should give members an opportunity to catch-up on the news of old acquaintances and a chance to meet new friends. We ask all of those who will be able to attend the MEM reception to clip the coupon at the end of this newsletter and send it to: Dr. Christopher S. Taylor, P.O. Box 705A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520 with a check for five dollars so that we can have an accurate count of how many people will be attending. This will also allow us to arrange for enough drinks and snacks at the reception. Hope to see you there!

Medieval Panels at MESA

We are very glad to report that there will be a large number of excellent panels on medieval topics at this year's MESA conference. We like to think that MEM has played more than a small role in the proliferation of these panels. The following panels have all been sponsored by MEM:

Sunday, November 11th from 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Arabia in the Medieval Period

Chair: Fred M. Donner

Discussant: McGuire Gibson

"The Hanifa Tribe in the Early Islamic Period,"
Fred M. Donner (University of Chicago).

"Coinage and Money in Umayyad Arabia,"
Michael L. Bates (American Numismatic Society).

"The Composition of Social Support for Muhammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's 'Revolt' in A.H. 145," Tayeb El-Hibri (Columbia University).

"Zabid before the Ottomans," E.J. Keall (Royal Ontario Museum).

Sunday, November 11th from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

The Political Economy of Agriculture in the Medieval Islamic World

Chair: Mahmood Ibrahim

Discussant: Andrew Watson

"Iqta' and Periodization of Islamic History,"
Mahmood Ibrahim (California State Polytechnic University).

"The Role of the Agricultural Manual in Medieval Iran: The Case of the *Irshad al-zira'ah*,"
Maria Eva Subtelny (University of Toronto).

"Agrarian Fiscal Reforms and the Coptic Church in Early Islamic Egypt," Gladys Frantz-Murphy (Regis College).

"The Organization of Agricultural Labor in Medieval Islamic History," Peter von Sivvers (University of Utah).

Monday, November 12th from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Issues and Directions in Pre-Modern Islamic Historiography

Chair: Christopher S. Taylor

Discussant: Gladys Frantz-Murphy

"The Pilgrimage Guides to the Cemeteries of Medieval Cairo: A New Source for the Social History of Religion," Christopher S. Taylor (Yale University)

"A Framework for the Understanding of Early Islamic Economic History," Michael Morony (University of California, Los Angeles).

"Waqfiyyas as a Source for the History of Religious Institutions in Mamluk Cairo,"
Jonathan P. Berkey (Mount Holyoke College).

Monday, November 12th from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Generational Continuity: Families and Traditions

Chair: Jere Bacharach

Discussant: Stephen Humphreys

"Turkish Commanders of the 9th Century: Fathers and Sons," Matthew S. Gordon (Columbia University).

"'Ilm as the Link to the Past and Future,'" Elizabeth Savage (School of Oriental and African Studies).

"From Marinos to Muhammad - Continuity and Change in Families of Harrarian Notables," Lutz Richter-Bernburg (American University in Cairo).

"Sharifian Notable Families of Damascus (850-1070)," James E. Lindsay (University of Wisconsin, Madison).

"Eunuchs and their Households in Mamluk Cairo," Shaun E. Marmon (University of Rhode Island).

The following panels, while not officially sponsored by MEM, may be of interest to MEM members:

Monday, November 12th from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

The Development of Islamic Philosophy

Chair: Charles E. Butterworth

"The Political Teaching of al-Razi," Charles E. Butterworth (University of Maryland).

"Estimation (Wahm) in Avicenna: Logical and Psychological Dimensions," Deborah L. Black (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies).

"Platonisms in Islamic Thought," Paul E. Walker (McGill University).

"Sa'd b. Namsur b. Kammuna's Commentary on Suhrawardi's Intimations," Hossein Ziai (University of California, Los Angeles)

"Muhammad-Baqir al-Sadr on Induction," John Walbridge (Baha'i Encyclopedia Project).

Monday, November 12th from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Exploring the Meanings of Tariqa Membership: Medieval India, Iran and Central Asia

Chair: Jo-Ann Gross

"The Naqshbandi Order in Transition: A Central Asian Shaykh in Mughal India," David Damrel (Duke University).

"Ashraf Sufis: Ahrari Naqshbandis in Early Mughul India," Stephen F. Dale (Ohio State University).

"The Herat Naqshbandi Order in the Timurid Period: The Right People in the Right Place at the Right Time?" Jo-Ann Gross (Trenton State College).

"A Tariqah without a Silsilah? The Career of an Uvaysi Sufi in Timurid Central Asia," Devin DeWeese (Indiana University).

Tuesday, November 13th from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Constructing Cities in Islamic History through Architecture, Local History, and Travel Accounts: 10th - 18th Centuries

Chair: Fatma Müge Göçek

"Khurasan in the Eyes of its Historians: 10th - 12th Centuries," Soheila Amirsoleimani (University of Michigan).

"The Urban Implications of Ayyubid Architectural Patronage in Aleppo," Yasser Tabbaa (University of Michigan).

"The Foundations of Shah Ismail's Reign: Ardebil, Lahijan and Rasht," Shiva Balaghi (University of Michigan).

"The Most Beautiful City of the Levant: Izmir in the 17th and 18th Centuries," Mine Ener (University of Michigan).

Tuesday, November 13th from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

New and Revised Genres in 4th/10th Century Arabic Prose

Chair: Wadad al-Kadi

"Ibn al-Nadim's Kitab al-Fihrist," Annie Higgins (University of Chicago).

"Early Arabic Awa'il: A Genre Revisited," Katherine Howe Lang (University of Chicago).

"Siwan al-Hikma and the Claiming of the Greek Tradition," Marion Holmes Katz (University of Chicago).

"Satire in Tawahidi's Akl.laq al-wazirayn," Sheila Gibson Baumiller (University of Chicago).

Tuesday, November 13th from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Medieval Islamic Society and Thought

Chair: Abbas Hamdani

"Between Bureaucracy and Lit: Andalusian Secretaries (kuttab) at the Party-Kings' Courts (VII/XI AC)," Bruna Soravia (Université de Paris III).

"Al-Fawa'id al-madaniyyah and the Akhbari Movement," Devin J. Stewart (Emory University).

"The Treatment of the Khawarij in a Heterodox Heresiography," Jeffrey T. Kenney (University of California, Santa Barbara).

"An Arab Grammarian's (al-Sirafi) Criticism of Greek Logic," Shukri B. Abed (Truman Institute, Hebrew University).

"Childhood in Medieval Islam: An Ideal Image," Carol L. Barger (Louisiana State University).

"Death and the Meaningfulness of Life in a Poem of Ibn Khafajah," Magda al-Nowaihi (Princeton University).

News of Interest to the MEMbership

Professor Frank C. Spaulding, the editor of *The Middle East & South Asia Folklore Newsletter*, has asked us to bring this publication to the attention of our members. The aim of the *Newsletter* is to inform scholars about developments, conferences, publications and ongoing fieldwork relating to folklore of the Middle East and South Asia. The Spring 1990 issue (vol. 7, no. 2) has recently been published.

The *Newsletter* is published at the Center for Comparative Studies in the Humanities at The Ohio State University and appears tri-annually. Subscriptions are \$6.00 for U.S. residents; \$10.00 for institutions and foreign subscribers. Address inquiries, subscriptions and submissions to: *The Middle East and South Asia Folklore Newsletter*, Center for Comparative Studies in the Humanities, 306 Dulles Hall, 230 West 17th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210.

Milestones

In this column the editors of *al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā* hope to inform members of significant news involving individual medievalists in our field. It would be very helpful if members would be so kind as to inform the Secretary/Treasurer of all professional appointments, new publications, academic awards and honors or other developments of significant interest to the general membership of MEM.

We would like to note with congratulations the following appointments: Jean-Luc Krawczyk has been appointed as Assistant Professor of Middle East History at the University of Houston. Stephen Humphreys has been appointed as the King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud Professor of Islamic Studies and Professor of History at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Gladys Frantz-Murphy has been appointed Professor in the Department of History and Government at Regis College. Paul Chevedden has been appointed Assistant Professor of History at Manchester College. Rueven Amitai-Preiss was recently awarded his Ph.D. and he will be a visiting fellow at Princeton University during the 1990-91 academic year.

We are pleased to note the recent publication of Vera B. Moreen's new work: *Iranian Jewry During the Afghan Invasion. The Kitāb-i Sar Guzasht-i Kashan of Babai b. Farhad*, *Freiburger Islamstudien Band XIV*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990). Also, Bernard Lewis' latest work: *Race and Slavery in Islam* was recently published by Oxford University Press.

It is with deep regret that we inform the membership of the passing of Dr. Joseph Roberts after a long illness on September 20th.

1991 Annual Dues

It's that time of year again. Please be sure to send your 1991 MEM dues as soon as possible. The dues will again be \$12.50 for all members. There are still a number of people on our mailing list who have not yet joined MEM officially. If you have not yet joined, please do so now. Please send a check in U.S. dollars, drawn on U.S. bank and made out to: "Middle East Medievalists" to: Dr. Christopher S. Taylor, Secretary/Treasurer, Middle East Medievalists, P.O. Box 705A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520.

Please send all news items and correspondence concerning *al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā*, the MEM Newsletter, to Dr. Taylor at the address noted above.

MEM Reception in San Antonio

If you will be attending the informal reception we are planning immediately following the MEM Annual Meeting on Saturday, November 10, 1990 about 8:30 p.m. in Room 205 of the Convention Center please clip out this coupon and return it with a check for \$5 by November 5, 1990 so that we can make proper arrangements.

Yes, I will be attending the MEM Reception. Please find enclosed my check, made out to Middle East Medievalists, for \$5.00/person.

Name: _____

Number Attending: _____

Please Return This Coupon Before November 5th to:

**Dr. Christopher S. Taylor
P.O. Box 705A Yale Station
New Haven, CT 06520**
