

A "State of the Craft Conference"?

The members of the Research and Training Committee are currently attempting to determine whether or not the Committee should initiate a "State of the Craft" project with reference to Middle Eastern studies. If such a project should be undertaken, how could it be of greatest benefit to the MESA membership? What should be its goals? Presumably, this project would focus on such matters as teaching methods, teacher training, and instructional materials for both language and area courses on all degree levels; it would raise issues such as: How adequate are current publications for classroom use? What is the state of visual aids? What are the needs for textbooks in specific disciplines? What problems are associated with the teaching of Middle Eastern languages currently? What of general courses for the non-specialist? What can be done to improve the relationship between large centers of Middle Eastern studies and small programs at other schools? What other problems should receive attention?

Before deciding whether or not to undertake such a project (and before any planning should we decide to go ahead) it is necessary to know what the membership of MESA thinks of this idea and how the membership would like to see such a project carried out. We hope you will take the time to express your reactions in the form of suggestions to Chairman Ernest McCarus (Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104) or to any other member of the MESA committee. Without a substantial expression of interest from the membership it is unlikely that a State of the Craft conference will be planned.

Suggestions for Visiting Program 1974-1975

Members of the Association are invited to submit names of suitable candidates for the Visitors' Program to the Secretariat for consideration by the board. Please send in name, address, and a few sentences suggesting their qualifications. Preference is given to those who are relatively young and who have been relatively infrequent visitors to the United States and Canada. They should normally be scholars and intellectuals who are from the Middle East and who reside there, but each year's list may include one from elsewhere. They should be prepared to lecture and to lead seminars, as well as engage in informal contacts with faculty and students in the various Middle East centers they will visit.

Suggestions for IJMES?

The editor of IJMES, Stanford J. Shaw, requests that those members who have not yet done so please let him know their opinions about what improvements can be made in the Journal. Do they feel that articles are too long or too short, do they want more or fewer book reviews, would they like to have the "Notes and Commentaries" section expanded, would they like a section listing articles of interest in other scholarly journals, would they like to have issues devoted to special topics or countries? The editor would appreciate it if all members would help him by giving their opinions.