

## In Memoriam

### Michael E. Bonine 1942-2011

MICHAEL EDWARD BONINE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MESA (1982–89), active member of the University of Arizona's Department of Near Eastern Studies (Chair, 2001–11), and founding director of Arizona's School of Middle Eastern and North African Studies (2011) passed away on December 21, 2011 of complications from intestinal cancer. Born in 1942, Mike attended the University of Texas, Austin where he received his Ph.D. in Geography. The focus of his dissertation was the Iranian city of Yazd which he first visited in the late 1960s having driven a Land Rover with his wife Marilyn from London. His love of travel and his reputation for the breadth of his intellectual interests and for the quality of his work as a photographer of human and physical geography were established from that first trip to the Middle East.

Mike's range of academic interests is reflected in his many single authored and edited volumes and numerous articles. Beginning with *Yazd and its Hinterland* (1980) and his last co-edited volume, *Is There a Middle East?: the Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept* (2011), issues of human and physical geography fascinated him. In the last book Mike drew together a wide range of maps used by Western scholars to demonstrate how their choice of a map reflected their working definition of the Middle East. Mike's own definition was very broad and was also reflected in his travels and research program. Whenever he travelled in Muslim lands he carried a compass so that he could determine the direction of prayer in places of worship by actually measuring the qibla direction from which he concluded that in Moroccan cities topography played a critical role in a pre-modern mosque's direction of prayer while in pre-modern Egypt, different dynasties had different answers as to what was the proper direction. *Qanats* (underground waterways) from China to the Arabian Peninsula fascinated him and led to a number of critical publications on this topic.

In recent years, working with his former graduate student Aomar Boum, Mike became fixated on ostriches, ostrich eggs, and ostrich feathers and their role in human societies over time and space. From Africa to Australia, from the

use of ostrich eggs in Coptic churches to the appearance of ostrich feathers as a fashion statement in the late nineteenth century, Mike and Aomar collected data with a jointly authored work forthcoming. There was another side to Mike that most colleagues did not know. He was an avid, aggressive collector of Middle Eastern banknotes. He would fly to conventions of banknote collectors, visit dealers in many of the cities where MESA met, and follow sales on e-Bay. Mike had an eye for quality pieces and was willing to do what it took to acquire the pieces he wanted. In the end he turned his hobby into a scholarly activity as he systematically collected banknotes of the Imperial Bank of Persia. Extensive research and painstaking studies of the eighteen denominations printed for the twenty-eight bank branches resulted in a draft of a monograph which explained in detail the history of the Imperial Bank of Persia banknotes. This work will appear as a publication of the American Numismatic Society.

As MESA Executive Director Mike turned the organization from a small operation run by one full-time faculty with almost no staff into the professional organization which it is today. Changes included MESA headquarters having full responsibility for the annual meeting, introducing a number of awards and establishing more rigorous procedures for the acceptance of papers for the annual meeting. He also encouraged the growth of independent organizations and welcomed them into MESA as affiliate organizations. The larger and permanent staff that now runs MESA is a direct result of his leadership.

Mike's commitment to his students was one of the hallmarks of his career as a teacher and mentor. Every MESA meeting he made it a priority to look up former students as he followed their careers and encouraged them. Over his decades at the University of Arizona, whose faculty he joined in 1975, Mike mentored thousands of undergraduates and graduates and felt a tremendous sense of responsibility in supporting them. Lying in the hospital during his last month, he demanded that a Skype video connection be set up so he could participate in the oral examination of a student so that his illness would not hold up that student's progress. From his hospital bed he was texting syllabi for the next academic term, afraid that somehow he would not be meeting his responsibilities to those enrolled students.

Mike believed strongly in the value of travel, and with his colleague Donna Swain led numerous overseas trips for Arizona students. Eventually Mike visited over 100 countries, most of them with groups of students. These trips were also an opportunity for photography and many a MESA meeting included enlarged photographs he had taken in a wide range of Muslim countries. Appropriately, the University of Arizona created the "Michael Bonine Memorial Travel and Research Award" in his memory. Many of Mike's enlarged photographs were sold in a special auction to support

the fund. Readers of this note who wish to may also contribute by going to <http://menas.arizona.edu/content/donations-welcomed-michael-e-bonine-memorial-travel-research-award>.

For almost thirty years Mike and I roomed together at the annual MESA meeting. Ironically, for all I knew of Mike including his love of Arizona's football and basketball teams, there was one topic Mike was reluctant to discuss—himself. His commitment to his family, his students, his friends and his scholarship were his primary focus and he was clearly very happy with those priorities. The profession has lost an active, wide-ranging scholar, a dedicated teacher, and a highly qualified administrator, and for me and those who knew him, a wonderful friend. ✧

Jere L. Bacharach  
*University of Washington*

## **Friedemann Büttner** **1938-2012**

FRIEDEMANN BÜTTNER, EMERITUS PROFESSOR IN THE POLITICS of the Near and Middle East at the Free University Berlin, lost his courageous fight against cancer on 4 September 2012. Born on 18 May 1938, Friedemann studied political science, Near Eastern Studies, and theater in Göttingen, Munich, London, and Oxford.

The 1960s, when Büttner was a student at Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich, were the most tumultuous years in post-World War II Germany (then still West Germany). In 1962, the “Spiegel Affair” racked the still fragile democracy of the country, and the Schwabing riots in Munich were harbingers of more protests to come in 1968 against German authoritarianism and U.S. policies in Vietnam. Consistent with his earlier support for the independence of Algeria, Büttner was deeply involved in these events and participated in many demonstrations. His studies, as well as his political engagement, were inspired by his thesis advisor, Eric Voegelin, a political philosopher who had fled Nazism in 1938 and had returned to Germany from the U.S. in 1958.

After a British Council scholarship in 1964 at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London and St. Antony's College, Oxford, Büttner completed