

NEWS OF THE ASSOCIATION

VISITING SCHOLARS PROGRAM - SPRING 1979

Kassem Toueir of the National Museum, Damascus, Syria, has accepted MESA's invitation to spend several weeks in the United States and Canada visiting and lecturing at Middle East centers in the spring of 1979. A summary of his curriculum vita and a list of suggested lecture topics are given below. Persons interested in having Mr. Toueir visit their centers or departments should contact the MESA Secretariat, New York University, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, Washington Square, New York, N.Y. 10003. Please do so as promptly as possible. The Visiting Scholars Program provides travel and per diem allowances.

KASSEM TOUEIR

Master's Degree, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany, 1962.
Vice-Director of Excavations and Archaeological Studies, Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums, National Museum, Damascus. Also, 'Chargé de cours,' Faculties of Fine Arts and Architecture, University of Damascus.

Publications: "Ein Neuer Omayyadischer Goldschatz in Damaskus," *Annales Archaeologiques Syriennes*, 1966 [German and Arabic].
"Die Holzmalereien des Aleppo-Zimmer," *Kunst des Orients*, VI, Islamischen Museum, Berlin, 1969. "Ten Roman Hypogae in Damascus," *Annales Archaeologiques Syriennes*, 1970. "Ceramiques Mameloukes à Damas," *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, 1975. "Tombes Myceniennes a Ras Ibn-Hani," *Archaeologia*, Paris, 1976. "Clay Figurines of the 3rd Millenium," *Syro-Mesopotamian Studies*, Los Angeles, September 1978.

Suggested Lecture Topics:

- 1- The Uncovering and Reconstruction of Qasr el-Banat in Raqqa [important building dated to 12th - 13th centuries A.D.].
- 2- The Uncovering of the Palace of Caliph Haroun al-Rashid in Haraqah, near Raqqa.
- 3- An Attempt at the Possible Meaning of the "Magical Numbers" in Islamic Architecture.
- 4- Ebla, and Its Importance in Syrian Archaeology.
- 5- Overview of the Archaeological Activities in Syria Since the Beginning of the 20th Century [development of the co-operation between the Department of Syrian Antiquities and foreign institutions].

ANNUAL REPORT OF SECRETARY-TREASURER FOR 1977-1978

The activities of the MESA central office during the past year have been divided between carrying out established secretariat operations and searching for ways of improving the Association's financial situation. This report will be divided in a similar way, although at times the division is somewhat artificial.

1. Finances

A year ago the financial picture was bleak, with a substantial

budgetary deficit and still larger deficits looming in the future. Much activity has been directed toward improving this situation during the past year, and, happily, the problem seems to be coming under control. A number of measures have been taken to increase income, pare expenditures, and gain a better knowledge of MESA's true financial status.

A. An economy has been realized in transferring the maintenance of up-to-date membership listings entirely to Cambridge University Press, which also collects MESA dues. This has resulted in the discovery that a large number of members previously listed as "active" had, in fact, allowed their membership to lapse. Consequently, membership in MESA appears to have dropped precipitously over the last year, although, in fact, this drop is simply a result of the more accurate record-keeping:

	Aug. 1977 [Last Report to Board]	Oct. 1978
Membership		
Fellows	689	615
Regular	274	258
Associate	129	139
Student	483	333
Total Membership:	1575	1345
Institutional Members [New Category]:	0	7

Cambridge University Press records for 1977 indicate that the current membership total of 1345 is actually only 31 short of the 1977 figure rather than the indicated 230. The final report for 1978 will probably raise the 1345 figure slightly, so it is more than likely that the membership level has stayed the same over the past year. The steady increase of the last several years seems to have tapered off, except in the category of Associate Member. These new and more reliable membership figures should allow better prediction of dues income, which has fallen short of predicted levels during the last several years.

B. A new arrangement has been put into effect for the publication of the *MESA Bulletin*. The *Bulletin* will appear twice a year, although with the same total number of pages, under the editorship of the Research and Training Committee, with Prof. Jere Bacharach serving as Editor-in-Chief for the first three years. The new arrangement is designed to assure a conscientious continuing editorship while at the same time reducing expenses. The reduction in expenses is made possible by greater efficiency of production, one less issue per year, and a generous partial subvention from the University of Washington at Seattle where the editorial office is now situated. The Secretariat has inaugurated publication of a newsletter to supplement the *Bulletin*. The *Newsletter* will appear three times a year on a schedule staggered with that of the *Bulletin*.

C. The new category of Institutional Membership, designed to draw financial support for MESA from university Middle East programs, has been taken up by seven universities: NYU, UCLA, Colum-

bia, University of Pennsylvania, University of Chicago, University of Washington, and University of Denver. It is hoped that this number will increase during the next year.

D. A terminal support grant has been awarded by the Ford Foundation to help underwrite operating deficits over the next three years, after which the Foundation feels that MESA should be self-sustaining. The grant total is \$17,000 for the period 1978-1980.

E. Dues have been raised for all categories of membership: Students, whose dues had formerly fallen short of the basic cost of the *IJMES* subscription, will pay \$15, which equals exactly the subscription price. They will receive the *Bulletin* and *Newsletter* without cost. Other members' dues will go up to \$40.

F. Miscellaneous economies have been realized in the operation of the MESA central office; e.g., use of conference calls to hold some committee meetings, reducing the secretarial staff, etc.

As a result of these measures, it seems likely that MESA will begin, over the next few years, to bring income and expenditures into line. The goal is to be able to operate the Association on a balanced budget without recourse to substantial grants from outside sources, since such grants are becoming increasingly difficult to secure.

2. Regular Activities

The annual meeting held last year in New York City was very successful financially. The income from the meeting was over \$8,000 and covered the entire budget deficit for 1977. It is hoped that the means used to increase income at that meeting will make future meetings more profitable as well.

IJMES and the *MESA Bulletin* continued their regular publication, and the first issue of the new *MESA Newsletter* has just appeared.

Four visiting scholars toured the U.S. during the final year of a Ford Foundation-funded MESA program. Prof. Roger Arnaldez of France lectured on Islamic philosophy at 12 universities; Prof. Metin And of Turkey visited 12 universities as well, to lecture on the Turkish theater; Prof. Javad Safinezhad from Iran spoke on Iranian geography at five universities; and Prof. Abdel Ghaffar Ahmed of the Sudan lectured on anthropology at 11 universities. The Ford Foundation has renewed funding of the visiting scholars on a diminishing basis for three more years, after which it will terminate unless alternate funding is found. Two scholars have thus far agreed to visit during the calendar year 1979: Prof. Qasim Tweir of Syria and Prof. Tajeddine Baddu of Morocco. The former is Director of the Syrian Department of Antiquities, and the latter is a sociologist.

Finally, the Mobil Oil Corporation has granted a sum of money for disseminating the findings of the Committee on Pre-Collegiate Education, chaired by Prof. Michael Suleiman, with regard to the image of the Middle East put forth within the American educational system. This grant will subsidize trips by members of the Committee to regional conferences on secondary school teaching.

November 4, 1978

Richard W. Bulliet
Executive Secretary