

## THE EDITOR'S DESK

One of the most important duties of any scholarly journal is that of publishing reviews of scholarly publications. A proper review must not limit itself to providing a summary of a book's contents, however useful this may be; it must also evaluate its contribution to the field and, in particular, point out where the author has failed to apply available monographic and source materials and where he has erred in detail. The latter duty in particular requires that the reviewer be a specialist in the area covered by the book and that, if possible, he be familiar with many of the sources used by the author. It is unfortunate that some scholarly journals tend to choose reviewers not so much because of their expertness in relation to the book at hand, but rather because of their willingness to 'review anything'. Fairness to authors and readers alike requires that such a practice be avoided by *IJMES*. During the past two years, it has been a primary policy of this journal to choose as reviewers only scholars who are particularly competent in the area of each book being reviewed, as demonstrated by publication or special experience. These scholars have been asked, not merely to summarize, but to evaluate and to frankly criticize the books assigned to them. It is unfortunate that a few authors whose works have been considered in this way have met the results not with the understanding that the reviews were intended to add to knowledge in the field, but rather as personal affronts in a field where the frank and honest review has often been the exception rather than the rule. If authors do disagree with the findings of the reviewers, they may reply, but they should limit their discussions to direct points of difference and should not allow personal pique to drive them to lengthy replies questioning the motives and honesty of the reviewers.

With such considerations in mind, it is the obligation of *IJMES* to find the most qualified reviewer for each book; it is the obligation of qualified reviewers to agree to undertake reviews in the areas of their specialties, regardless of the press of other, often urgent, obligations; it is their further duty to examine each book with care and to report their conclusions with frankness; it is the duty of the Review Editor to make certain that this is done fairly and to encourage the publication of replies when these are to the point, concise, and without invective; and it is the duty of the Editor to publish both reviews and replies as quickly as possible, within the limitation that his primary obligation must be that of publishing original articles as rapidly as possible after they have been evaluated and accepted. In this connection, authors should note that because of the large backlog of articles accepted for publication in *IJMES*, replies can be published relatively quickly only if they are short and concise and do not themselves require extensive replies in turn by the reviewers.

## 2 *Editors Desk*

During the first two years of *IJMES*, I have acted as Book Review Editor in addition to my editorial duties. However the heavy burden of the latter and the need for specialists in each field to pick the most competent possible reviewers have required the establishment of a separate board of Book Review Editors. I am pleased and grateful to announce that the following scholars have agreed to serve in this capacity:

Professor Amin Banani, University of California, Los Angeles (Iran)

Professor Oleg Grabar, Harvard University (Architecture, Art, and Archaeology)

Professor Kemal Karpat, University of Wisconsin (Modern Turkey)

Professor Ira M. Lapidus, University of California, Berkeley (Islamic history)

Professor Avigdor Levy, Tel Aviv University (Israel)

Professor Thomas Naff, University of Pennsylvania (Modern Arab world)

Professor Stuart Schaar, Brooklyn College, City University of New York (North Africa)

I will serve as Book Review Editor for the Ottoman Empire. Members of the Editorial Board will continue to advise the Editor on articles submitted for publication as well as on book reviews in their own special fields.

The wide range of fields represented by the Book Review editors is paralleled in the range of subjects discussed by our contributors in this issue. Nabil M. Kaylani, of the Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York, discusses Syrian politics and the rise of the Syrian Ba'ṯh movement and party from its origins in 1940 until it contributed to the union of Syria and Egypt in 1957 and 1958. One is left with the question of how much the Ba'ṯhists have been able to apply the high philosophical ideals expressed by their founders when confronted with the problems and temptations of power since 1958. Gene R. Garthwaite, of Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, breaks important new ground in describing the development of the Bakhtiyâri tribal confederation in Iran starting in 1840 and analyzing the various internal political intrigues among leaders of the confederation as well as in its relationship with the government of Iran and with Great Britain from that time until the outbreak of World War I. Jane Perry Clark Carey and Andrew Galbraith Carey, of New York City, describe the development of agriculture in Turkey under the influence of the first (1963–1967) and second (1968–1972) five-year development plans of the Turkish government. And C. Edmund Bosworth, of the Department of Semitic Studies, University of Manchester, presents the first of a two-part article transmitting the information provided by the prolific Mamlûk historian al-Qalqashandî concerning the leaders of the non-Muslim communities in Egypt at that time, while in addition showing that although the Jews and Christians were, indeed, tolerated minorities with a special place in Islam, they were, at times, subject to considerable intolerance and persecution at the hands of Muslim rulers as well as the leaders of the Muslim judicial and governmental institutions.

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