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QUICK STUDIES



INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Quick Studies

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In this issue, we inaugurate a new front section, Quick Studies. Our intention is to expand the academic mission and international breadth of the journal by opening its pages to discussion of ongoing research in the field of Middle East studies and by inviting reflections on some of the critical questions in our field today.

Quick Studies comprises two sections. In the first section, we invite senior scholars to present and comment on data and other kinds of research materials in one of three possible categories. In "As You Read It," the author focuses on textual sources: a court case (as in this issue), a poem, a letter, or virtually any excerpt from a primary written text is presented along with a commentary about how the author reads it in the context of his or her research. In "As You See It," the author supplies visual material such as a photograph (as in this issue), a painting, a map, or any representation of a material object accompanied by discussion of how he or she views this material, again in the context of ongoing research. In "As You Chart It," the author presents data in the form of a table or graph, accompanied by explanatory text. This format allows experienced researchers to draw our attention to the primary materials that underpin their analytical work and to educate us in the methods they use to interrogate these materials. We are grateful to Professor Nelly Hanna of the American University in Cairo and Professor Lilia Labidi of Université Libre de Tunis for responding to our invitation to contribute to the pilot version of this section. We welcome submissions from senior scholars in any one of the three categories for future issues. (Commentary on the source should run approximately 400 words; please e-mail submissions to our editorial office, ijmes@georgetown.edu.)

In the second section, "Question and Pensées," we pose one question of broad relevance in the field of Middle East studies to two or three scholars and invite their brief reflections. This issue features *pensées* by Professor Roger Owen (Harvard University) and Professor Elizabeth Thompson (University of Virginia) in response to the question, "What is a strikingly new characteristic of imperial

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projects—or the way they are analyzed—in the Middle East?" Owen chooses to reflect on fundamental changes in the imperial project itself, whereas Thompson discusses recent shifts in the historiography of imperialism in the Middle East. We are indebted to both scholars for answering our call to respond at short notice and for serving as exemplars for future iterations of Question and Pensées. We invite *IJMES* readers to submit questions of general interest to the scholarly community, and we will select a question for each issue and solicit responses from appropriate scholars.

We thank members of the *IJMES* editorial board who helped us conceptualize Quick Studies. We trust the *IJMES* readership will agree that this modest expansion of the journal's format will promote the exchange of ideas among colleagues in the field of Middle East studies.

Judith E. Tucker, Editor
Sylvia Whitman, Assistant Editor

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