

Middle East Section (MES) Annual Report 2004

Submitted by Jenny White, MES President

This report covers MES activities from November 2004-2005. I extend my thanks to outgoing president Dan Varisco and President-elect Bill Beeman for their help on behalf of MES.

1) Accomplishments during the period covered.

Board Members and Officers

Jessica Winegar was elected to fill the at-large position on the board vacated by Bill Beeman, who has been elected president for 2006-2008 and is now taking an active role as president-elect. This will be the last year for board members Dawn Chatty (2003-2006), Sayed El-Aswad (2003-2006); archaeology board member Mitchell Rothman, who has been very active in integrating archaeology into MES activities; and student representative Andrew Gardner (2003-2006), who has also taken the lead in developing a new MES website and will manage it as webmaster. Flagg Miller will continue as treasurer and Laurie King-Irani as Secretary.

Membership and Finances

As of October, 2005, MES membership was 321, slightly down from the previous year. No MES Student Paper Prize was awarded in 2005 due to the dearth of submissions. Dan Bradburd headed the committee. Gregory Starrett served as column editor for the *Anthropology News*.

The Net Assets of MES as of September, 2005 were \$13,869, with annual revenues of \$2,912 so far in the year. All items are under the amount budgeted. We have sufficient funding to consider new initiatives in the future.

The Program for the 2005 AAA Annual Meeting

In 2005 MES sponsored two exciting panels:

1) *Middle East Section, Archeology Division Invited Session: **From Sumer to Southern Iraq***. This was a double session, organized and chaired by Mitchell Rothman. Participants were Jennifer R Pournelle, Elizabeth Stone, Donny George, Scott J Rufolo, Guillermo Algaze, Gil Stein, Mitchell Rothman, Donald S Whitcomb, Peter Reiss, Edward L Ochsenschlager, and Henry T Wright.

2) *Middle East Section, General Anthropology Division Invited Session: **Reconfiguring the Middle Eastern Diasporas: State Interventions, Identity Shifts, and Transregional Contexts***, organized by Andrew Shryock, chaired by David McMurray, with participation by Jeffrey T Jurgens, Zareena Grewal, Mara A Leichtman, Engseng Ho, and Paul Silverstein.

A workshop popular in previous years was continued: **Teaching Anthropology of the Middle East, North Africa, and Islam**, organized by Rochelle A Davis.

The MES business meeting was devoted to a special panel organized by Dan Varisco entitled "Careers in Development: Anthropologists at Work in the Middle East and SW Asia", which includes Dawn Chatty (The Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford), Anis Ahmad Dani (Social Policy Advisor, The World Bank) and Peter Reiss (Development Alternatives, Inc.). The panelists discussed career opportunities in development and commented on their own experience as development anthropologists.

2) Future plans or activities (3-5) year time frame)

Planning for the 2006 AAA Meeting

Bill Beeman will lead the 2006 program committee. As usual, one of two sponsored MES panels will be dedicated to archaeology under the leadership of Mitchell Rothman. A panel proposal on the ethics of doing fieldwork in the Middle East took shape during the MES business meeting and MES members working on this panel will seek Presidential status.

MES Website

MES has hired a professional website designer, Nancy McNamara of Academicwebsites.com to design a website that can be easily maintained by a designated MES member. Andrew Gardner has led the design project and has volunteered his time to maintain the site once it is up. \$1500 was allotted for this in the budget, of which \$750 was paid in January 2006.

MES Initiative: An Online Journal

The web infrastructure for **CyberOrient** has been finalized. Papers are starting to arrive for the first issue and are under peer review. The online journal is scheduled to launch in March.

MES Board and Officers (Nov. 2005- Nov. 2006)

President: Jenny White (jbwhite@bu.edu) 2004-2006

Outgoing President: Daniel Varisco (daniel.m.varisco@hofstra.edu)

President-elect: William O. Beeman (William_Beeman@Brown.EDU)
(2005-2006, president-elect; 2006-2008, president; 2008-2009, outgoing president)

Treasurer: Flagg Miller (flagg.miller@lawrence.edu)

Secretary: Laurie King-Irani (lkirani@uvic.ca)

Board Members:

Jessica Winegar (jessicawinegar@hotmail.com) 2005-2008

Dawn Chatty (chattymylne@dsl.pipex.com) 2003-2006

Sayed El-Aswad (melaswad@hotmail.com) 2003-2006

Andrew Gardner (gardner@email.arizona.edu) 2003-2006 (Student Rep)
Mitchell Rothman (rothman@pop1.science.widener.edu) 2003-2006 Archaeology

Ex-Officio Members:

Column Editor: Gregg Starrett (gsstarre@email.uncc.edu)
MESA Liaison: Larry Michalak (otis@uclink4.berkeley.edu)