

**Statement to the members of the Middle East Medievalists from the President of the
association**

February 2023

Dear MEMbers!

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the new year of MEM as your new president. I would like to start off by expressing my sincere gratitude to Stephennie Mulder for her insightful and forward-looking leadership as president until January 2023. She and the MEM board have ensured that MEM during its most trying years during the height of the Covid pandemic continued to remain strong and to make impact through critical initiatives, such as the sponsorship of medieval-themed panels at MESA, the overseeing of dissertation and book prizes in 2020, 2021, and 2022, the issuance of statements in support of peace in the region and creating opportunities for people of color through a dedicated fellowship. Under Stephennie's presidency, MEM saw a diversification in its impact, including scholars in its board who work in diverse fields and disciplines and recognising the work of colleagues in cultural heritage and libraries. The growth of our MEMbership has also enabled the open access, online journal, *Al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā*, to flourish, now under new co-editors, Alison Vacca and Zayde Antrim.

I am looking forward to working with the fantastic board and all our members over the next three years to move MEM to the next stage of its exciting journey. My vision for MEM is underpinned by five key aims: first, to diversify MEM's research and outreach support to as many languages and regions of the medieval Islamicate world as possible; secondly, to expand MEMbership that can ensure greater financial stability and boost MEM's impact; third, to expand our portfolio of MEM projects, for example, through the establishment of new fellowships for scholars at risk and those working in neglected areas of research, and stepped up provision of financial support to the open access journal *Al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā*; fourth, to establish a more regular, up-to-date information stream with our MEMbership on our activities and plans; and fifth, to expand our events focus beyond MESA to other, non-US based conferences and events.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of my colleagues on the MEM board if you would like to share your ideas for how MEM can achieve any of these aims.

I look forward to working with you all, and thank you for all you do to help MEM thrive, and my best regards,

Arezou Azad

Dr Arezou Azad
Senior Research Fellow
Programme Director, Invisible East
President, [Middle East Medievalists](#)
Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
University of Oxford