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From the Editor

In This Issue
The present volume of RoMES begins with the text of immediate past President Fred M. Donner’s address, delivered to MESA members at the annual meeting in Denver, Colorado, November 18, 2012. In his essay titled “MESA and the American University,” Donner describes the importance of Middle East studies—in comparison a small program of studies within the complex of schools, departments and programs in some, but not all, American universities—an area of academic research and teaching that has nonetheless grown dramatically during the past half century. This has occurred partly in response to events in the Middle East and to American foreign policy. Yet Middle East studies centers and curriculums have had to face their share of the economic austerity that confronts institutions of higher education as a whole. And we are seeing a general shift in national educational policy away from the humanities and social sciences—the disciplinary homes of most scholars and students in Middle East studies—to the physical sciences, technology, as well as away from classroom teaching to virtual classrooms online. Donner concludes his engaging but troubling analysis of higher education today, and the fate that Middle East studies inevitably shares with it, by suggesting steps that we as faculty, students, policy makers and concerned citizens can and ought to be taking in response.

As the articles and reviews appearing in this issue of RoMES were being prepared for publication, demonstrations to preserve a park just off Taksim Square in Istanbul were beginning—leading in a few days to a standoff between the growing demands of demonstrators and a hardening of police responses ordered by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. We asked associate editor Sultan Tepe, a political scientist from the University of Illinois at Chicago, who was preparing to leave for Istanbul to conduct previously planned research,