related to each other and/or to earlier works" (p. 11)—a very broad selection of materials. This breadth necessarily complicates the project.

Recent monographs in Persian and Arabic historiography seldom employ as many resources. For comparison, in the sibling field of Arabic historiography, Najam Haider's recent work—*The Rebel and the Imām in Early Islam: Explorations in Muslim Historiography* (Cambridge University Press, 2019)—explores early Islamic historiography and uses an impressive range of sources in terms of both genre (chronography, biography, and prosopography) and authors' communal affiliations (Twelver Shi'i, Zaydi Shi'i, and non-Shi'i/Sunni); however, this is still a far fewer collection of sources than Quinn's book.

The inherent challenge of such a wide-ranging and ambitious project is the corralling of disparate sources and the need for a variety of historiographical approaches to create a compelling and systematic argument, given the substantive differences in the sources' contexts. Anyone looking to this book for a novel model for reading Persian historical writing will be disappointed, as this is not Quinn's goal. Rather, her project aims to extract these interconnected texts from the restrictively narrow contexts and subfields in which they are often read and identify how authors and texts moved, transformed, and were used across the Persianate world.

Over the past decade, the Persianate sphere as a conceptual framework has become increasingly influential, with important monographs and edited volumes by Nile Green, Mana Kia, Abbas Amanat, and Assef Ashraf, to name a few. This trend is closely tied to the movement towards examining interconnected geographic frameworks that traverse imperial, linguistic, and cultural boundaries, such as the Indian Ocean, with prominent scholarship by Engseng Ho, Sanjay Subramanyan, Johan Mathew, and Fahad Bishara, among others. The frameworks of both the Persianate and Indian Ocean stress interconnectedness, mobility, and transcultural exchanges.

In a field increasingly attuned to the concept of a trans-imperial Persianate world, which stresses transregional connections and connectedness as an avenue for inquiry, Quinn's scholarship should have broad and enduring appeal, particularly for scholars of Safavid, Ottoman, and Mughal history and historiography. Quinn's general argument, that historical writing entailed both continuity and transformation, is neither new nor controversial, but it is extremely valuable in identifying how historiographical models traversed political and geographic boundaries, creating trans-cultural norms and expectations. Quinn's book demonstrates mastery over a wide array of texts and genres, as she is able to see both the forest and the trees, toggling back and forth between the macro and micro views in demonstrating the interconnectedness of individuals, texts, and empires in the Persianate world in the 16th-17th centuries.

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Onomastic Reforms: Family Names and State Building in Iran. Houchang E. Chehabi (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2020). Pp. 109. $17.95. ISBN 9780674248199.

Reviewed by Sivan Balslev, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel (sivan.balslev@mail.huji.ac.il)

Houchang Chehabi's *Onomastic Reforms: Family Names and State Building in Iran* is an in-depth study of one of Reza Shah's state-building reforms that usually receives no more than a paragraph or two in historical surveys of early Pahlavi reforms, namely: the introduction of state registry and family names to Iranian society. This short book (90 text pages in total)

encompasses the rationale and ideology behind the reforms, the legislation enacting them, the practicalities of adopting and registering family names, a comparative analysis of Iran and other semi-colonial countries, mainly Turkey and Thailand, and insights from countries such as Japan. This ostensibly technical topic becomes a light read thanks to Chehabi's prose style, rich with anecdotes and entertaining commentary.

The book contains four chapters, beginning with an introduction discussing family names as a characteristic of "civilization," both in Iran and other countries; a concise historical background of Iran in the first quarter of the twentieth century; and discussions linking the adoption of family names to state-building efforts (most notably to conscription, but also taxation) in Iran. The second and fourth chapters deal with the actual practices of naming both before and after the reforms. The third chapter examines the legislation that formed the state registry and enforced family names, both under the late Qajars and Reza Shah.

As suggested by its name, the book attributes the adoption and registering of family names to Iran's state-building process. This process, Chehabi shows, began before the coup d'état that brought Reza Khan to power; indeed, the cabinet already approved a law in 1918 establishing a Personal Status Registry and asking every family head to choose a family name. At the time, this law was deemed essential to the state's ability to regain some measure of centralization after the First World War, as well as vital to measures such as conscription and taxation. These further measures were similarly discussed, but not implemented, by the *majles*.

Alongside the administrative needs of a modern country, Chehabi brings ample evidence to the fact that these reforms were important for the modernized (self) image of Iran and Iranians. Already under the late Qajars, educated Iranians saw family names as a marker of progress and civilization, and the desire to join "civilized nations" as equals was a common argument in favor of the reform. This urge to attain the status of "civilized country" stemmed from the hope that such would increase the country's sovereignty (p. 7). Furthermore, educated men highlighted the state's inability to distinguish between citizens for various needs as a main reason the country needed such measures.

Family names became a new characteristic of the reformist elite. Indeed, the book demonstrates, Europhile, modernized Iranians already started adopting family names before the state required them to do so (p. 28). Newspapers were a place for promoting the reform, as well as where advice on and admonition of people's choice of names appeared. The press also served as an announcement board, where men published ads informing the public of their newly-chosen names. Some such ads are included in the book and, while not strictly necessary, add some "color" for Persian readers.

The dynamic of the state legislature following the practices of the educated elite is similarly apparent in other reforms of the early Pahlavi period—the most visible example of which is the male (and, to a degree, female) dress reform, where the fashion choices of the male elite became subject to state law. Chehabi shows, here and in other studies, that Reza Shah's modernizing reforms were not, in fact, a break from the Qajar past; they were based on previous debates and attempts at reform. This view strengthens recent studies aiming to shift the focus of research on this period from the person of Reza Shah to the cadre of administrators and bureaucrats surrounding him, whose role in reforming the country was no less significant.

Chehabi bases this study on a wide variety of primary sources, from official documents and newspapers to autobiographies and personal communications with Iranian contacts. This allows for new insight around the practicalities of how Iranians chose their family names and their reaction to state attempts at registration. The book shows, for example, how various people were forced to change their chosen name due to its similarity to names chosen by the royal family or senior court officers; how, in rural areas, peasants who avoided registration were assigned ridiculous family names by irate officials; and

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how some names preserved Qajar titles or honorifics now forbidden by law. It also discusses state measures to enforce the law.

The chapters regarding traditional and modern naming practices provide, in a way, a guide to Iran's social stratification in the late Qajar and early Pahlavi period. Illustrating the significance and origins of titles and honorifics can assist the non-Iranian scholar in navigating the personalities, positions, and professions of the higher strata of Iranian society. These chapters also provide explanations for phenomena such as the inflation of honorary titles under the late Qajars; the incompatibility of many important *Olamas*' familiar names (most notably Khomeini) with their "official" family names; the existence of brothers with different family names; and the fact that women often preserved their maiden name rather than adopt their husbands' family name, as required by law.

This book is a valuable and interesting reading for scholars and students of modern Iran, those interested in state-building processes in semi-colonial settings, and readers interested in the meanings behind Iranian family names.

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Women Write Iran: Nostalgia and Human Rights from the Diaspora. Nima Naghibi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016). Pp. 211 (paperback). ISBN 978-0816683840

Reviewed by Leila Moayeri Pazargadi, Nevada State College, Henderson, NV, USA (leila.pazargadi@nsc.edu)

Nostalgia is the foundational motif in Nima Naghibi's latest work, *Women Write Iran: Nostalgia and Human Rights from the Diaspora*. Nostalgic longing for a prerevolutionary Iran threads together autobiographical works of the author's study. Surveying various mediums and genres like social media posts, human rights testimonials, documentary films, prison memoirs, and graphic memoirs, Naghibi deftly explores diasporic works that examine the relationship between autobiographical protagonists and a changing postrevolutionary Iran. By focusing on the contemporary memoir boom, Naghibi evaluates texts that have thrived in the diaspora; she even recuperates texts previously ignored or neglected by the public and literary scholars alike. To highlight this nostalgic longing for home, Naghibi surveys Iranian works produced after the 1979 revolution that look back at prerevolutionary life, as opposed to works that focus on post–9/11 revived hostilities and geopolitics. Identifying Iranian diasporic writers consumed with nostalgia, she argues, "*the return . . .* is the fantasy, *not* the departure; for them there is little romance in being elsewhere" (9, Naghibi's emphasis). In that vein, she asserts that her mission is to expand notions of Iranian identity and longing for home that were first discussed in Zohreh T. Sullivan's well-known *Exiled Memories: Stories of Iranian Diaspora*, published in 2001 (14). Indeed, in this well-researched and well-written exploration of Iranian women diasporic writers, Naghibi engagingly explores Iranian diasporic writing, particularly as it relates to the power of nostalgia and how it can transform perceptions of both past and present.

To begin, Naghibi wastes no time wading into controversial waters. As a focal point of her explorations in chapter 1, "Claiming Neda," she examines the way in which the death of Neda Agha-Soltan during the 2009 Green Movement in Iran was documented and disseminated, particularly across social media platforms. Naghibi identifies how Iranians, particularly those abroad, adopted Agha-Soltan as a martyr for their own traumatic experiences resulting in loss of home and cause for relocation following the 1979 revolution. Using the Islamic