

way, Shohat's project aimed at capturing the voice of this silenced Arabic, and the cultures of its many Jewish speakers. And she was successful.

MONA HASSAN, *Longing for the Lost Caliphate: A Transregional History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2016), Pp. 408. \$45.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780691166780

REVIEWED BY ERIC J. HANNE, Department of History, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Fla.; e-mail: [ehanne@fau.edu](mailto:ehanne@fau.edu)

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Mona Hassan's *Longing for the Lost Caliphate* is an insightful addition to the current discourse—both academic and in the popular press—on the Muslim world's relationship with the caliphate. Informed by a global historiographical approach, Hassan's work revolves around two touchstones in the history of the Islamic caliphate: the Mongols' destruction of Baghdad and execution of the Abbasid caliph, al-Musta' sim, in 1258; and the newly formed Turkish republic's abolition of the institution of the caliphate and its exiling of the last caliph Abdulmecid II in 1924. Using the "Muslim imaginary" as a point of focus, the author explores the "complex constellations of meaning and networks that shaped Muslim reactions to the disappearance of the Islamic caliphate" (p. 2), raising two related questions: what was believed to have been lost; and in the Muslim world's attempt to "recapture" the Islamic caliphate how did it redefine the institution at various points and places in time? This ambitious diachronic and transregional study that covers over half a millennium works in large part because of Hassan's decision to limit both the scope of her research and its presentation.

Hassan's main goal was to search for common traits between the 13th-century and 20th-century reactions to the loss of the caliphate, challenging the conventional wisdom that holds that there was no sustained outcry following the 13th-century catastrophe or that the *imāma* was no longer a topic of juridical discourse. Her research highlights the sustained role, both symbolic and otherwise, the caliphate played from the 13th to the 21st centuries. Eschewing an approach that would highlight political developments, she investigates and elucidates the "cultural associations" related to the Sunni caliphate; the result is an illuminating intellectual history of the elites' handling of this tragic loss in the pre-modern and modern eras, or in Hassan's words, "the multifarious refractions of the Muslim cultural memories of the caliphate" (p. 16). Through judicious and productive use of myriad sources (e.g., poetry, chronicles, treatises, archival/press accounts, etc.), Hassan provides insightful analysis of many of the key voices addressing the central importance of the caliphate to the Muslim world. In so doing she touches on such key concepts as nostalgia, collective memory, and—most importantly—the disparate ways in which the cultural elites in both the pre-modern and modern eras both reified and redefined this central Islamic institution. Her task was made all the more feasible when she limited the scope of her network of source material: for the premodern era, she utilized mainly Arabic and Persian textual and material evidence both in published and manuscript form; for the modern era, Hassan expanded her "net" to include published and archival works in Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, Turkish, French, and English. Each of her chapters revolves around the key themes that dominated the respective time periods covered.

One of the key themes that runs throughout the work—nostalgia—plays a central role in Hassan’s discussion of the reactions to the 1258 loss of the Abbasid caliphate and Baghdad. Basing her analysis of memory and history on Halbwach and others, she makes effective use of the chronicles, poetry, and other *adab* literature. What was intriguing was her juxtaposition of the loss of Baghdad (city) and the loss of the caliphate (institution) in her consideration of such scholars as al-Subki and Ibn al-Kazaruni. Her coverage of the intellectuals’ reactions to these two losses incorporated references to bodily desecration, the sacrality of space, and eschatological concerns. Whereas Hassan’s first chapter is more thematic, she takes a more prosaic approach in her second chapter, which deals with various Mamluk leaders’ attempts to utilize a “restored caliphate” to legitimize and strengthen their regional position. One of Hassan’s goals for her larger work was to contextualize the responses to the loss of the caliphate, and she goes far in achieving that goal in her second chapter, which underscores the *realpolitik* inherent in the Mamluks’ bid to restore the caliphate as well as to gain the support of the ‘ulama’ in their efforts.

Hassan’s discussion shifts abruptly in the following chapter when she provides an overview of how the intellectual elite conceptualized the caliphate in the post-13th century. She brings to the fore the scholars’ treatment of such issues as the legal necessity of the *imāma* and the *umma*’s obligation for obedience, subjects that had been addressed in prior centuries but that now required revisiting. In addition to producing a strong argument to revise our understanding of Ibn Jama’a’s and Ibn Taymiyya’s views on the subject, Hassan offers us a broad overview of the intellectual *zeitgeist* with regard to the caliphate (e.g., al-Dhahabi, al-Subki, Ibn Khaldun, al-Qalqashandi, al-Suyuti). This chapter might have been strengthened had Hassan provided the reader with her reasoning for selecting particular scholars and not including others (e.g., Shihab al-Din al-Qarafi). More discussion of the discourse among the scholars would also have been a helpful addition. Hassan does, however, address debates among the cultural elite in her next chapter when she provides a broad analysis of the myriad responses to the Grand National Assembly’s (GNA’s) abolition of the institution of the caliphate in 1924. In addition to introducing the reader to the debates between Mustafa Sabri and Ahmad Shawqi, Hassan explores how the nascent Turkish republic addressed immediate reactions to the loss of the caliphate both in Turkey and the larger Muslim world.

This exploration is continued in the final two chapters of her work, as Hassan outlines how disparate groups attempted to reconcile themselves to the loss of the centuries-old institution. Although she integrates some of the key intellectual voices into her discussion, much of the focus of these chapters is on the futile attempts of the intellectual and cultural elites to establish a multinational effort to address the restoration of the caliphate. Hassan’s final chapter highlights just how difficult this task would be given the complexity of the debate among some of the leading scholars of the day. As was the case with her previous chapter on the intellectual response in the 13th and 14th centuries, a clarification as to her reasoning for choosing some scholars over others would have been helpful. The author leaves the reader with some tantalizing avenues for further research in her epilogue, which touches upon “efforts” made by such figures/groups as Hasan al-Banna, Hizb al-Tahrir, the “Islamic State” (referred to as *Daesh*, the Arabic acronym, by the author) and others to further redefine the caliphate in their own image. By the end of Hassan’s work, the reader will have a better understanding of

how the concept of the caliphate was realized at key points in the pre-modern and modern Muslim eras. While structurally this reader would have appreciated more connectivity among the chapters and a more robust concluding section, Hassan's rigorous scholarship propels the field forward in its approach. This reviewer applauds Mona Hassan on her foray into one of the more understudied institutions in the field of Islamic studies. *Longing for the Lost Caliphate* gives us a hint as to the reason so few scholars have taken on the arduous task and scholars should be thankful for Hassan's courage and efforts in this regard.

ELIAS MUHANNA, *The World in a Book: Al-Nuwayri and the Islamic Encyclopedic Tradition*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2018). Pp. 232. \$39.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780691175560

REVIEWED BY KIRSTEN BECK, Department of Classical, Middle Eastern, and Asian Languages and Cultures, Queens College, City University of New York, Queens, N.Y.; e-mail: [kbeck@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:kbeck@qc.cuny.edu)

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Elias Muhanna's *The World in a Book* is a delightfully readable and careful study of Shihab al-Din al-Nuwayri's (d. 1333) impressive encyclopedia, *Nihayat al-Arab fi Funun al-Adab (The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition)*, and follows Muhanna's abridged English translation of al-Nuwayri's vast Arabic text. Muhanna's robust contextualization of al-Nuwayri's project allows him, through his study of the *Ultimate Ambition*, to bring into relief both the idiosyncratic and common motivations and the working methods that drove the fervent encyclopedic activity of late Islamic medieval scholarship and administration.

The questions undergirding this study concern why and how Arabic encyclopedism thrived during the 13th through 15th centuries, and Muhanna's approach to them considers factors ranging from the sociological, professional, and political to the epistemological and psychological. The multifaceted answers he proposes throughout this monograph successfully challenge the long-held belief that what drove encyclopedic activity in the Mamluk Empire was a fear, inspired by the Mongol conquests, that all knowledge would be lost. Muhanna suggests that the persistence of this explanation may stem from the strong evidence that similar anxieties did indeed drive early modern European encyclopedism. In the medieval Islamic context, however, Muhanna argues that the principal motivations for encyclopedic production emerged from the distinctive characteristics of the scholarly (Chapter 3) as well as administrative (Chapter 4) institutions in the Mamluk Empire. A more detailed discussion of the particular differences between Mamluk and Abbasid administrative structures and practices might further focus this otherwise persuasive argument, which deemphasizes the impact of the conquests on this production. Their impact, Muhanna points out, was not psychological but sociological, as it led to a "more densely interconnected" Eurasian continent and the transformation of Cairo and Damascus into "school cities." These changes, then, contributed to a sense not of loss but of "the expanding boundaries of knowledge" and "an overcrowding of authoritative sources" (p. 19).