EDITORIAL FOREWORD

This issue opens with two articles that explore "Ottoman Belonging" during two significant moments bookending the Ottoman past. The first of these moments is the Ottoman Empire's incorporation of Arab lands after its defeat of the Mamluk Sultanate in 1515–17; the second is the emergence of Ottoman imperial citizenship in the period between the 1908 Constitutional Revolution and World War I, which precipitated the empire's collapse. Helen Pfeifer's article, "Encounter after the Conquest: Scholarly Gatherings in 16th-Century Ottoman Damascus," traces the intellectual component of the Ottoman Empire's absorption of formerly Mamluk subjects after rapidly conquering an immense territory stretching from Damascus to Cairo to Mecca. As Western European states expanded to control new territories and peoples, the Turkish-speaking Ottomans from the central lands (Rumis) had new encounters of their own—with the Arabic-speaking inhabitants of Egypt, Greater Syria, and the Hijaz. The conquest transferred the seat of political power in the Islamicate world from Cairo to Istanbul. Yet, as Pfeifer discusses, the Ottomans understood that their newly acquired political power had no parallel in cultural and religious domains, where prestige belonged predominantly to Arab scholars. Focusing on *majālis* (sing. *majlis*), or scholarly gatherings, in Damascus, Pfeifer traces "one of the greatest instances of knowledge transmission and cultural encounter in the history of the Ottoman Empire," through which this asymmetry was overcome. By facilitating the circulation of books and ideas, she argues, scholarly gatherings—two depictions of which are featured on the issue's cover—gave rise to an "empire-wide learned culture as binding as any political or administrative ingredient of the Ottoman imperial glue."

The article by Samuel Dolbee and Shay Hazkani, "'Impossible is not Ottoman': Menashe Meirovitch, ʿIsa al-ʿIsa, and Imperial Citizenship in Palestine," examines a much later moment when the Ottoman state sought to integrate the empire, this time through the concept of Ottoman imperial citizenship. Focusing on early 20th-century Palestine, the authors explore the secret journalistic partnership between Menashe Meirovitch, a prominent Zionist agronomist (and Ottoman citizen), and ʿIsa al-ʿIsa, the Christian editor of the Jaffa-based newspaper *Filastin* and among the founders of Palestinian nationalism. This collaboration—in the positive sense of the term rather than in the pejorative sense often used to frame Mandate-era Arab-Jewish encounters—produced the literary persona of an Arab Muslim peasant by the name of Abu Ibrahim. Using this pen name, Meirovitch authored a series of columns in French in 1911–12 that were translated into Arabic, edited, and published in *Filastin* by al-ʿIsa under the header "Rasaʾil Fallah" (Peasant Letters). By demanding agrarian and political reforms toward the betterment of the empire, the columns exhibited "imperial citizenship par excellence." The two men's understanding of Ottoman imperial citizenship was defined most of all by a shared commitment to modernism, which "brought them together more than nationalism, language, or religion pulled them apart." Dolbee and Hazkani's

analysis "calls into question some of the predominant ways of dealing with the press as a source in early 20th-century Middle East historiography . . . and complicates both conventional narratives of nationalism's emergence in Palestine and more recent efforts to understand Ottoman imperial citizenship."

From Menashe Meirovitch's performance as Abu Ibrahim we move to Luigi Achilli's article, "Becoming a Man in al-Wihdat: Masculine Performances in a Palestinian Refugee Camp in Jordan." Achilli's article—one of two in the category "Oppositional Subjectivities"— focuses on the performance of masculinity among Palestinian youths in al-Wihdat refugee camp in Jordan. According to Achilli, Palestinian masculinity is widely perceived in Jordan as a site of cultural and political difference and as the source of refugees' inability to assimilate into Jordanian society. Ironically, this view partly coincides with scholarship on Palestinian masculinity that draws on the concept of hegemonic masculinity, for in both cases Palestinian masculinity is understood as uniform. Following this logic, Palestinians in exile, including in Jordan, are stuck in a double bind: by performing hegemonic Palestinian masculinity, they reproduce Palestinian nationalism but are unable to reap the socioeconomic rewards of assimilation; by eschewing that performance they may assimilate successfully but at the cost of ostracism within their communities for falling short of nationalist ideals. Achilli argues that "hegemonic masculinity is not the only way of being a man in the camp. Not only are certain attributes generally associated with subordinate masculinities and/or femininity . . . sometimes preferred over more manly virtues, they might even constitute an important source of nationalist agency."

The next article, Pınar Kemerli's "Religious Militarism and Islamist Conscientious Objection in Turkey," examines the Turkish state and military's use of Islamic concepts such as jihad and martyrdom to legitimize mandatory conscription. It also looks at the Islamist conscientious objectors (COs) who since the 1990s have resisted both obligatory military service and the state's production and dissemination of an "official Islam." Since the establishment of the republic, the Turkish state has sought to cultivate a "pious and patriotic defense force," in part by refashioning pre-republican religious values of soldiering. Kemerli argues that the religious content of military education and the extension of that content to the national school curriculum after the 1980 coup helped the state to sustain rapport in military ranks and popular support for conscription despite high death tolls among combat soldiers. On its ascension to power (in part by disempowering the military), the Islamist Justice and Development Party continued to emphasize the religious value of serving in the military. However, as Kemerli shows, this association between Islam and army service has been powerfully critiqued by a small group of COs. "Weaving together their own interpretations of jihad and martyrdom with transnational theories and ideologies," she argues, "Islamist COs present a powerful critique of Turkish militarism and its religious claims." By highlighting "the difficulties faced by nationalist projects to discipline religious imaginaries and put them to the service of the modern state," Kemerli's discussion contributes to recent literature in various fields on religion and secularism in Turkey.

The third pair of articles deals with "Political Controversies in Medieval Islamic Thought." In "Sapping the Narrative: Ibn Kathir's Account of the *shūrā* of ʿUthman in *Kitab al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya,*" Aaron Hagler examines the famous Syrian historian and *mufassir* (exegete) Ibn al-Kathir's historical work *Kitab al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya fī*

al-Ta'rikh (The Book of the Beginning and the End in History). Based in some measure on al-Tabari's *Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa-l-Muluk* (History of Prophets and Kings)*,* this account was part of a 13th- and 14th-century attempt "to provide a Sunni answer to a generally ʿAlid-legitimizing corpus of early Islamic historical accounts." In the aftermath of the Mongol invasions and in the context of Sunni-Shiʿi tensions, Ibn Kathir (and others) sought to rehabilitate the image of Syria and the Umayyads. Hagler focuses in particular on Ibn Kathir's account of the *shūrā,* or council, formed by the caliph ʿUmar to choose a successor from among its six members. Using textual analysis, Hagler shows that "whether through narrative aside or criticism of other historians, Ibn Kathir's recasting of a pro-ʿAlid grudge story as an Umayyad apologetic highlights moments of sectarian contention and emphasizes the evolution of Sunni opinion on ʿAli and ʿUthman."

In the second article of this group, "The Political Controversy over Graeco-Arabic Philosophy and Sufism in Nasrid Government: The Case of Ibn al-Khatib in al-Andalus," Ali Akhtar reinterprets the trial of the famed literary figure and chief dignitary Lisan al-Din ibn al-Khatib, which took place in the 14th century during the reign of the Nasrid sultan Muhammad V. The trial centered on Ibn al-Khatib's *Rawdat al-Taʿrif fi al-Hubb al-Sharif* (The Garden of Knowledge of Noble Love), a work commissioned by the sultan in which Ibn al-Khatib argued that "Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato, Sufis of al-Andalus such as Ibn ʿArabi, and early Sufis of Iraq such as al-Junayd and al-Muhasibi, all used different intellectual paths to pursue the same goal: love of God." Historians long thought that the theologically conservative chief qadi al-Nubahi used the work, and particularly its support of philosophy and Sufism, merely as a pretext for removing Ibn al-Khatib from power and enhancing his own authority. Situating the case within the history of political and scholarly debates in Andalusia over theology and religious authority, Akhtar takes the inverse position: "Ibn al-Khatib's philosophical ideas had specific implications in a contemporary scholarly debate about Sufi religious authority, with his position in favor of Sufis propelling the power rivalry between him and the chief qadi into a court case that led to his demise." The article highlights the contingency of political processes in the medieval Islamic world and the importance of intellectual debates to their outcomes.

This issue's roundtable examines "The Digital Age in the Middle East." Over the past few decades many commentators and policymakers, particularly in Europe and the United States, have drawn a direct line between access to digital technology and the emergence of liberal, secular subjects and societies—what in his essay Gholam Khiabany terms "the myth of 'technologies of freedom.'" This tendency was especially acute during the Arab uprisings of 2011, for which digital technology, with its origins in the "West," was credited. As several of our contributors point out, however, this myth has been repudiated in part by the widespread adoption of these technologies by extremist groups such as al-Qaʿida and Islamic State. Digital technology, like all forms of technology before it, is shaped by local circumstances just as much as it remaps cultural, political, and social topographies. But the "technologies of freedom" myth has also been repudiated by the utility of digital technology to state surveillance apparatuses, security regimes, and imperialist interventions, all of which involve the marriage of private capital and state power. While addressing these and other issues, the roundtable also points to new avenues of research into digital technology in the region.

Sticking with the theme of technology, the review article by Aaron Jakes, entitled "The New Materialism? Globalization and Technology in the Age of Empire," examines five recent books in history that, in ways intersecting with some of the roundtable essays, challenge a pervasive, presentist assumption that globalization is new. Historicizing globalization through different methods, these works show that in the 19th and 20th centuries new technologies fostered the intensification of human mobility and interaction. This gave rise not to the "gradual homogenization of the world," but rather to "a singular, even, and unified global space . . . comprising many distinct and overlapping geographies" as well as conceptions and experiences of time. Jakes sees the books under review as representing a "new materialism" that "actively refute[s] the explanatory force of capitalist social relations while assigning historical agency to nonhuman objects." While calling for greater attention "to how capital, as value in motion, is both dependent upon *and* irreducible to its various tangible manifestations," he argues that this new literature on globalization invites us to reconsider the very contours of Middle East studies.

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