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EDITORIAL FOREWORD

The articles in this issue explore the formation and consolidation of national political communities in the Middle East, as well as the atomization of those communities over the past half-decade. The opening section, "Labor and Economy," brings together two scholars of modern Egypt. In "The Egyptian Labor Corps: Workers, Peasants, and the State in World War I," Kyle J. Anderson focuses on Britain's mobilization of Egypt's human resources for the war effort. The British recruited workers and peasants from rural areas of Egypt to serve as laborers in the Egyptian Labor Corps (ELC), which Britain had formed to provide logistical support to its troops in various theaters of war, principally nearby Palestine. By reconstructing the wartime recruitment network through the colonial archive, Anderson considers the broad relationship between the central state extending out of Cairo and rural Egyptian society. Where many historians of modern Egypt have seen a hermetic bifurcation characterized by mutual antagonism, Anderson sees linkages and interdependence that undermine category boundaries. The ELC recruitment effort "bound ordinary Egyptians from all corners of the Nile Valley to one another, to their local administrative officials, and to wartime decision makers in Cairo, in London, and on the front lines of the war." Seeing the relationship between power and resistance as dialectical and mutually constitutive, he shows how, in reaction to wartime mobilization efforts, "workers and peasants developed new ways of interacting with state officials," while "the Anglo-Egyptian state changed its labor recruitment practices in response to recruits, their families, and their communities in the countryside." Anderson's analysis of ELC recruitment concludes by providing important context for rural responses to the outbreak of revolt in 1919.

Taking us back several decades, Kathryn A. Schwartz's article, "The Political Economy of Private Printing in Cairo as Told from a Commissioning Deal Turned Sour, 1871," examines the emergence of a private printing industry in late 19th-century Cairo through the work of Musa Kastali, an Italian-born Jew who was an early and prolific Arabic private printer in Cairo, and other printers. Schwartz points out that while "printings have long been appreciated for their worded content, for what they tell us about their authors, and for the broader development of print technology, they have yet to be examined for what they tell us about the work of those who constructed them physically." She discovers a great deal about Cairo's printers from Musa's 1871 treatise in which, after losing a protracted court battle, he details his dispute with a commissioner in a plea for public support, thus providing a wealth of information on his business practices. Her research suggests that Arabic private printing, rather than a "deterministic force that swept through the region and upended earlier ways of life," emerged contingently out of local traditions of commissioning manuscripts, the one difference being that print commissioning involved risky speculation since the commissioner could never know for certain whether a work would have broad public appeal. "The collaboration of the printer, the commissioner, the writer, and the target public," she concludes, "suggests

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that an earlier and deeper connection existed between print and mass cultural identity than has been acknowledged previously in studies of Egyptian collective belonging."

Whereas the first section considers how shifting state–rural society relations and print practices facilitated the emergence of a national public and nationalist revolt in Egypt, the second section explores national consolidation through history and memory. Nile Green's article, "The Afghan Discovery of Buddha: Civilizational History and the Nationalizing of Afghan Antiquity," examines how, following national independence in 1919, Afghan historians, in conversation with French scholars, articulated a historical identity for the new nation-state centered on Afghanistan's Buddhist and broader pre-Islamic past. Green focuses on the career and scholarship of historian Ahmad ʿAli Kuhzad, who through his role as director of the Afghan Historical Society was at the center of this historiographical effort. As Green points out, the construction of an Afghan national history was conditioned in part by the interwar linkage between national sovereignty and claims to civilization, with Kuhzad and others adapting world civilizational history in challenge to older historiographical traditions. Though their vision of the Afghan past enjoyed the support of state institutions over the decades to come, it did not go unchallenged, particularly by religious interpretations of the pre-Islamic period and its artifacts. Green argues that "in these previously unexcavated historiographical strata lie the roots of the Taliban's iconoclasm, which are revealed as a dialogical response to the state cultural institutions that remade Afghanistan as Aryana." In other words, preceding the Taliban's notorious destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas and Kabul's National Museum was a decades-long battle between historical visions.

From a focus on intellectuals, we turn to popular participation in the construction of national memory. In "Fear and Loathing in 'Gavur' Izmir: Emotions in Early Republican Memories of the Greek Occupation (1919–22)," Ellinor Morack examines a series of recollections published by the Izmir daily *Ahenk* in early 1926, only three years after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. The recollections had been solicited by *Ahenk,* which beseeched its predominantly Muslim readers to record and share their memories of anti-Muslim violence during the Greek occupation of the city (15 May 1919 to 9 September 1922). The solicitation proved effective, for over the following three months the journal regularly printed readers' written accounts, some in several installments. Morack is particularly interested in the role of emotions within these narratives and their relation to subjectivity. She argues that "*Ahenk*'s effort, with its emphasis on emotions and the persecution of Muslims, helped to create and strengthen emotional bonds among the city's old and new Muslim inhabitants, thus contributing to national consolidation." That memory, selective as it was (and always is), played such a crucial role in the early republican formation of the Turkish national imaginary "challenges the widespread notion that this period was characterized by collective amnesia of the immediate past."

The third section, "Literature and Political Critique," highlights fractures in the region's body politics brought about by state authoritarianism and violence. In "Vulnerability and Recognition in Syrian Prison Literature," R. Shareah Taleghani connects recent stories and poems about the children of Darʿa, who were arrested, tortured, and killed by the Syrian regime for acts of protest and rebellion that helped spark the 2011 uprising, to the genre of prison literature (*adab al-sujūn*) in Syria. She observes that these texts contain a "poetics of recognition" mirroring the form of political recognition that is the basis of human rights theory. Analyzing a set of writings on political detention that

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describe human rights violations and invoke the theme of recognition, she shows how these works, in portraying their characters as psychologically and physically vulnerable, provide a "'sentimental education'" to readers that cultivates empathy for the victims and sympathy with their inclusion in the category of the rights-bearing human. Yet, drawing on recent critiques of human rights theory, she argues that these works also tend to emphasize the damaging effects of misrecognition. "Their poetics of recognition," she suggests, "reveals in allegorical form why the foundational reliance on empathy and particular modes of political recognition in rights regimes continues to limit the efficacy of human rights."

Jacob Høigilt's article, "Egyptian Comics and the Challenge to Patriarchal Authoritarianism," also analyzes literary critiques of state repression and violence, though through a different genre. Examining adult comics in Egypt, he contends that this medium, which is new in the Arab world, has "boldly addressed political and social questions" on the minds of many Egyptians, particularly youths. Høigilt interprets the appearance of adult comics as part of a broad cultural efflorescence in Egypt that began in the late 1990s and early 2000s. He is especially interested in how they have served as powerful vehicles for challenging "Egypt's authoritarian, patriarchal order as well as the marginalization of women and gender dynamics in Egyptian society." Høigilt argues that adult comics have contributed to the formation of an "alternative ideology of tolerance, civic rights and duties, individualism, creativity, and criticism of power" that was behind and helped sustain the 2011 uprising that overthrew Husni Mubarak. The comics image featured on the issue cover, by Egyptian artist Andeel, conveys this impulse, while tying together several of the themes raised by Taleghani and Høigilt.

Our roundtable, "Locating Slavery in Middle Eastern and Islamic History," sheds new light on enslavement, slaves, and slave trade networks from the early Islamic to the medieval period. We appreciate Matthew Gordon's efforts to help us organize this discussion. In this issue's review article, "The Environmental Turn in Middle East History," George R. Trumbull IV reviews five exciting new books that represent a bourgeoning interest within Middle East studies in environmental history.

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