

texts to the Arabic world—and hence to the medieval European world—it is important to understand Ḥunayn’s philological methodology. Lamoreaux concludes that Ḥunayn’s use of these terms echoes the term διόρθωσις, which was used in the Greek tradition to designate the process of revision and emendation of a text before publication.

Appendix two (pp. 138–52), a “Prosopography of Translators and Patrons,” summarizes what is known about each of the persons mentioned in the *Risāla*. Lamoreaux goes beyond Max Meyerhof’s attempt to do the same in “New Light on Hunain Ibn Ishāq and His Period,” *Isis* 8.4 (1926): 685–724.

The third appendix (pp. 153–67), “Works of Galen Mentioned by Ḥunayn,” gives details about each work in the other main traditions. For each of the works described by Ḥunayn, Lamoreaux methodically gathers the citations in the standard bibliographic references for Galenic works in the Greek, Arabic, Syriac, and Latin traditions. Each work is listed by its number in the order that it appears in the *Risāla*—the ordering that Bergsträsser reproduced in his 1925 publication, which is now the standard numbering. In the present edition, Lamoreaux also includes in the inner margin by the title of each work the section numbering found in Bergsträsser’s second manuscript. I note here that my only disappointment with the volume at hand is the lack of systematic references to modern editions of Galen translations into Arabic. Recreating a survey like Kessel’s (see below) would not have been practical, since there already exist surveys for the Arabic tradition. The logical place to refer to them, it seems to me, would have been in appendix three, which in my view would have made the present work more complete and useful. As it is, some editions, such as my own of Galen’s *De diebus decretoriis* (London: Ashgate, 2011), are buried in the unwieldy bibliography. The bibliography would also have been more helpful had it been divided into primary and secondary sources.

In appendix four (pp. 168–92), “Inventory of Galen’s Extant Works in Syriac,” Grigory Kessel provides an excellent inventory of Galen’s works in Syriac translation. As discussed by Lamoreaux in the introduction, because Arabic versions of Galen’s works superseded their Syriac versions, most of the Syriac translations have been lost. Thus, every extant bit of Syriac material is precious evidence for understanding how the Greek medical tradition was transmitted to the East. This inventory will be immensely helpful for scholars in finding extant Syriac Galen translations.

This volume exemplifies the combination of beauty, utility, and reasonable pricing for which the several translation series published by Brigham Young University Press have become known. I expect that Lamoreaux’s edition will become a standard reference for scholars of Abbasid intellectual history and classical receptions.

GLEN M. COOPER
SPRINGVILLE, UTAH

The World in a Book: Al-Nuwayri and the Islamic Encyclopedic Tradition. By ELIAS MUHANNA. Princeton: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2018. Pp. xiii + 214. \$39.95.

“This is a small book about a very large book,” Elias Muhanna writes by way of introduction. I would add that *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (The ultimate ambition in the arts of erudition) is not only a large book, but a real monument of Mamluk literature and a good example of its encyclopedic trend. It is the magnum opus, indeed the only work, of the Egyptian Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333), an influential public servant of the bureaucratic apparatus of the Mamluk empire, who decided, after many years in his position in Egypt and Syria, to devote himself to the composition of this monumental enterprise. This compendium of his cultural and professional experience, which the author intended to leave for future generations, was in fact conceived, as Muhanna notes, as a “project of self-edification” (p. 24). His ability as a copyist (al-Nuwayrī was also held in high esteem as a calligrapher) and his exceptional speed of writing allowed him to pen the entire work in a relatively short time and produce multiple copies of it.

Nihāyat al-arab has a complex organization. It is divided into five large sections (*funūn*): the universe; man; animals; plants; and (universal) history, the largest and most important. Each section is

itself divided into five parts, each consisting of a varying number of chapters. This meticulous—but not always transparent—arrangement shows a “zeal of taxonomy” (p. 31) that is somewhat puzzling within the literary tradition to which the text belongs and can be taken as a sign of the generic hybridity that is one of its major features, as Muhanna appropriately affirms. Tackling this gigantic work (over two million words in thirty-one volumes) is an enterprise that would discourage many, not only on account of its size but also because of the broad spectrum of themes it deals with. Indeed, likely by dint of size and wealth of information, scholars have until now mostly mined it in search of specific information, neglecting to study its overall structure and internal organization. Muhanna’s volume, in contrast, is focused on the work in its entirety, and conceived as a lens through which to “shed light on a tradition of Arabic encyclopedism [. . .] that witnessed its fullest flowering in Egypt and Syria during the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries” (p. 1). Muhanna must be congratulated for taking on the challenge of studying the entire *Nihāyat al-arab* and for analyzing it within the larger context of the encyclopedic movement.

The World in a Book contains six chapters, two appendices, figures, tables, and indexes.

Chapter one, serving as an introduction to what follows, begins with an overview of the concept of Islamic encyclopedism in scholarly literature. This is a tricky matter, since the “nebulous character” (p. 9) of this phenomenon and a proper definition for “encyclopedia” are debated issues. The provocative title “Encyclopaedic Activities in the Islamic World: A Few Questions, and No Answers,” which Josef van Ess gave to his chapter in *Organizing Knowledge: Encyclopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Islamic World* (ed. G. Endress, Leiden 2006), is meaningful in this connection. After a review of scholarship on the uncertain definitions of “encyclopedia,” Muhanna engages in a paradigm shift and focuses on “encyclopedism,” dealing with the concept in terms of knowledge practice instead of “common genre,” as prevailed in the past. He also presents a comparative analysis of the reasons behind the birth of the encyclopedic wave and proposes three different frameworks for interpreting it. Al-Nuwayrī’s life and activity, taken as an emblem of this wave, are also described in relation to scribal culture and practices.

Chapter two contains the presentation of *Nihāyat al-arab*’s internal organization and arrangement, which are compared with other works of the same kind. Mapping the structure of *Nihāyat al-arab* instead of only consulting it for specific information gives fresh insight into its place among other encyclopedic works of the same period. This approach is instrumental in reconsidering the organizational impetus of such works and the way authors led their readers: for example, cross-references are useful for insights into a book’s thematic consistency and the relationship established between different fields of knowledge. In choosing this approach, Muhanna’s book also provides a new understanding of the dialectics of genres used in this monumental work: although essentially cosmographical, *Nihāyat al-arab* is characterized by a generic hybridity, which is explained within the context of a general Mamluk development (p. 55). This chapter also contains an in-depth examination of *Nihāyat al-arab*’s main source for its hypotactic organization, al-Waṭwāt’s *Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-‘ibar*.

Chapter three contains the discussion of al-Nuwayrī’s sources and examines the interconnectedness of scholarly activity and encyclopedic compilation, paying attention to the sociology of culture and the cultural dynamics of the Mamluk period. In particular, the influence of the author’s life on the encyclopedia (e.g., the inclusion of anecdotes or notes deriving from personal experience) is carefully analyzed alongside knowledge derived from written sources. Examples (e.g., the contradictory descriptions of the hippopotamus, pp. 74–77) are brought to show how al-Nuwayrī integrates mimetic and schematic modes, the first derived from personal experience and the second from “tradition” (*adab*), in the way scholars transmitted and circulated their vision of the world. The combination of these two ways of describing reality makes al-Nuwayrī an “ecumenical compiler” (p. 79), which is an effective expression to define his way of dealing with an abundance of written texts and overflow of information, especially when compared with the approach of authors such as Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umārī and al-Qalqashandī.

As other studies on encyclopedism and the imperial state have done, chapter four delves into the link between sociocultural context and encyclopedism. In particular, it examines the effect of practices typical of imperial institutions (chancery and financial administration) on the management and arrangement of information and on the way encyclopedists address their audience. Bureaucratic experience,

Muhanna states, drove a shift in approaches to knowledge from attention to the pedigree of the source to accuracy and contemporaneity of information (p. 90).

Chapter five treats al-Nuwayrī's work as a copyist, appropriately stressing that copying was conceived as different from mere replication. For example, editing and "mark-up," even if limited, were done in order to make manuscripts "more reader-friendly" (pp. 110, 112). In line with the recent trend of research into working methods of premodern scholars, this chapter addresses that of al-Nuwayrī, although—as Muhanna states—many important questions (e.g., the effect of archival practices on his working method, or the way he managed his papers and notes) remain open and are "left to other scholars to ponder" (p. 122).

Chapter six centers on the reception of *Nihāyat al-arab* in the Islamic world and Europe up to the modern period, with special attention given to the Dutch reception as a case study. This chapter underscores the variety of scholarly approaches, grounded in different motivations, to this gigantic work: philological, linguistic, historical, scientific, anthropological, and so forth. In the twentieth century, engagement with al-Nuwayrī's oeuvre culminated in the edition of *Nihāyat al-arab* (Cairo 1923–1997), which, followed by a second edition (Beirut 2004), has made this monumental work accessible to a larger audience.

The two appendices are a welcome addition. Appendix A, to be read in connection with chapter two, is a most useful list of contents of *Nihāyat al-arab*, instrumental for mapping its internal organization; appendix B offers a key to navigating *Nihāyat al-arab*'s contents in both of the printed editions.

The World in a Book is a timely contribution to the ongoing debate on Islamic encyclopedic works and, in general, on issues related to the organization of knowledge. It also offers a vivid picture of the cultural dynamics during the Mamluk period, including links between the scholarly and political life. Stressing the relevance of "imperial" bureaucracy, it emphasizes the "not accidental" connection between knowledge and statecraft so typical of that period, especially as it relates to "the importance attached to gathering data in the service of the state" (p. 104). It is instructive reading for Arabists, Mamlukists, and sociologists of culture in general, as well as a thought-provoking reflection on the meanings of the concept of encyclopedism in the Mamluk period (and beyond) and on the diverse factors driving it.

ANTONELLA GHERSETTI
CA' FOSCARI UNIVERSITY OF VENICE

Between Christ and Caliph: Law, Marriage, and Christian Community in Early Islam. By LEV E. WEITZ. *Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion.* Philadelphia: UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS, 2018. Pp. viii + 340. \$65.

Around 680, a West Syrian Miaphysite priest refused to give communion to a woman; since she had married a Muslim she was no longer fit to receive the Eucharist and to be considered part of the Church. The woman's Muslim husband came to see the priest and threatened to kill him if he did not give his wife communion. What to do? The question was put to monk and bishop Jacob of Edessa (d. 708) whose response was cautious. In theory, by marrying an infidel this woman had broken Church law and placed herself outside the community of the faithful; excommunication was the appropriate response, and hence the priest was right to refuse her communion. Yet, Jacob wrote, such harsh treatment would only push her to apostatize, to convert to Islam. Better to find an intermediate solution, to ask her to perform penance and to permit her to receive communion and to remain a member of the Church (see pp. 201–2). While the threat of murder made this incident unusual, it is otherwise a common example of the constantly porous and shifting nature of confessional boundaries in what the historiography tends to call the "Muslim" world.

Lev Weitz examines a rich mine of documentation, principally in Syriac and Arabic, concerning the Western Syrian Miaphysite Church (often known as "Jacobite") and the Eastern Syrian Church