

IN MEMORIAM

Hassanein Mohamed Rabie 1938–2019

In January 2019, Hassanein Rabie, the Egyptian scholar of medieval Islamic history, passed away. Widely known in Europe and North America to an older generation of scholars because of his scholarship and his lectures in many parts of the world before administrative work came to dominate his life, the following is a summary of Hassanein's academic career.

As an outstanding undergraduate and MA student at Cairo University in medieval Islamic history, Hassanein was awarded a scholarship in 1964 to undertake his PhD at SOAS, London University, under the direction of Bernard Lewis, then the doyen of specialists on medieval Islamic history. Completing his degree in 1969 after serving as a lecturer in medieval Islamic history at SOAS, Hassanein joined the Department of History, which was his official academic home for the rest of his life.

As a scholar, Hassanein was most active during the few decades following his schooling. He published his dissertation as *The Financial System of Egypt (AH. 564–741/ A.D. 1169–1341)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), which is still cited today in studies of Ayyubid and early Mamluk history, a well-deserved long shelf life for any scholarly work. As Hassanein shared with me, his research priority then shifted to editing medieval Arabic texts as he felt that properly trained Egyptian scholars had the Arabic and the methodological skills to do this time-consuming, extremely important work. He edited and annotated Ibn Wasil's *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb fi Akhbar Bani Ayyūb* (History of the Ayyubids) as well as oversaw the work of others.

Hassanein quickly established a reputation as a demanding, but effective teacher at Cairo University and to give his students a broader knowledge of the medieval Mediterranean world, he offered courses on Byzantine history. Discovering that there was very little for them to read in Arabic on that topic, he wrote "Studies in the History of the Byzantine State," which went through six editions from 1983 to 1998. What his colleagues also discovered was that Hassanein was an extremely effective administrator. He became chair of his

Cairo University department, then a vice dean, College of Arts, then dean, and finally a Cairo University vice president from 1993 to 1998 as well as director of Cairo University's Open Education Center, which focused on distance learning. Even after his mandatory retirement Hassanein maintained an active interest in distance-learning for Egyptians.

For over four decades Hassanein served as an advisor to the American Research Center in Egypt where his primary responsibility involved reviewing the applications of Americans who applied for ARCE fellowships to work on Islamic or Coptic topics. He was particularly sensitive to the changing political winds in Egypt and when the wording of a proposed research project would create a problem. He also played a major role in seeking appropriate Egyptian academicians to serve as the American researchers' Egyptian academic advisors. Because of this input ARCE rarely had a problem with Egyptian authorities over the fellows' work.

I first met Hassanein, briefly, in London in 1965 when we were both graduate students, but it was in 1971 that our friendship blossomed and continued until his last years when recurring hospital stays and declining health limited his contacts and movement. We quickly established a routine where each would aid the other in acquiring books or articles for our research interests. Over time we expanded our exchanges to aid colleagues and family members who needed academic material not easily acquired in our home countries. Always a welcoming host, an evening spent with Hassanein and his family was a highlight for me during any visit to Cairo. The scholarly world has lost a demanding scholar, an exceptional teacher, and an effective administrator and, for me, a friend. ✧

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