

at least with the comfortable consensus that has grown up around such languages—than they are with the majority of the Semitic languages currently or recently spoken. The Modern South Arabian group remains

an inadequately appreciated reservoir of information. Those willing to devote to these languages the attention that they merit are sure to be amply rewarded.

Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought: A New Persian Edition and English Translation of Nasir al-Din Tusi's Rawda-yi taslim. Edited and translated by S. J. Badakhchani. Ismaili Texts and Translations 5. London and New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005. Pp. xix + 287 (English) + 220 (Persian). \$55.

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In his spiritual autobiography, *The Deliverer from Error* (*al-Mungidh min al-Dalāl*), al-Ghazali, the famous eleventh-twelfth-century Sunni scholar, judged only four groups among the Muslims to be worth evaluating as “seekers after truth.” These were the theologians, the philosophers, the Sufis, and the Ismailis. Throughout his life, al-Ghazali struggled with Ismaili thought, which had come to represent one of the most powerful intellectual voices in the Muslim world of his time. In particular, he grappled with the Ismaili concept of *ta‘lim* (authoritative instruction from the Imam of the Prophet’s family) as a means to certain knowledge. Sadly, almost all Ismaili writings on this subject perished when the Shī‘ī state centered at the fortress of Alamut was destroyed by the invading Mongols and its famous library torched by ‘Atā-Malik Juwaynī. One of only a handful of works to survive was the *Paradise of Submission* (*Rawda-yi taslīm*), and we are therefore indebted to S. J. Badakhchani for his critical edition and translation of this singularly important text. This new edition and translation, which also includes an “Introduction” by Hermann Landolt and a “Philosophical Commentary” by Christian Jambet, largely supersedes Wladimir Ivanow’s earlier study, *The Rawdatu’t-Taslīm Commonly Called Taṣawwurāt*, published in 1950, which suffered because of the defective nature of the manuscripts then available.

The *Paradise of Submission* consists of twenty-seven chapters on diverse themes ranging from the Creator and the cosmos, the nature of human existence, the varieties of human knowledge, ethics, eschatology, the soul’s progression, prophethood, and the imamate. It is, in fact, a magisterial *summa* of medieval Ismaili doctrines. As is well known, due to the destruction of Ismaili sources at Alamut, the community has been largely represented, or rather misrepresented, in the

writings of its enemies. The work presented by Badakhchani is therefore refreshing as it allows us direct access to writings by exponents of this important school of Islamic thought.

The new edition is clearly superior to the 1950 edition of the text, and the translation strikes a good balance between accuracy and readability. The foundations of this edition and translation were laid in Badakhchani’s 1989 doctoral dissertation at Oxford University. The quality of the translation has improved substantially from that earlier attempt, and the English is a pleasure to read. The sectioning of the treatise is well done and allows for easy cross-referencing between the Persian edition and the translation. On rare occasions though, there are infelicities. For example, if §320 and §321 were joined together, there would be no need to interpolate the word *khwānand* into the text. In addition, as is inevitable in translations of works in a new field, technical terminology is apt to be misunderstood. A prominent example of this is the central Ismaili concept of *muhiqq*, which Badakhchani translates in the index (p. 284) as “truthful adept,” while also opting for “followers of truth” (pp. 63, 74), “those who attest to the truth” (p. 56), and “truthful master” (pp. 74, 78, 93) elsewhere. However, unless the context dictates otherwise, this term should generally be understood as referring to the Imam or the Prophet (in which case “those who attest to the truth” and “truthful master” are appropriate translations), as is made quite explicit in the text itself (see, for example, §§266, 389, 422, 478–79). As the treatise explains, the *muhiqq* is the one through whom truth (*ḥaqqa*) becomes manifest, just as the intellectual (*‘aql*) is the one through whom intellect (*‘aql*) becomes manifest (cf., however, the explanation given by the translator on p. 254, n. 53, in which he tries to make a distinction

between singular and plural uses of *muhīqiq*). A comparative analysis of the usage of such technical terms would have been greatly enhanced had the work included an index to the Persian edition; the index to the English text is also quite rudimentary. On occasion the translation departs from the text of the edition. In §345, for example, where the English translation has an *idāfa* construction, reading “in the spirit of true prudence (*taqīyya-yi haqīqī*, [sic, *haqīqī*, and in the Persian text actually *haqīqatī*]) . . . ,” the edition reads *wa-bi mūjib[-i] taqqiya* [sic, *taqīyya*], *haqīqatī* . . . , with a comma separating the two words, giving a very different meaning. Fortunately, such inconsistencies do not detract significantly from the overall value of the work.

Of greater consequence is the attribution of the

treatise solely to Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī. While this learned divine had a hand in composing the *Paradise of Submission*, one of the colophons and certain linguistic features make it quite clear that a prominent Ismaili dignitary by the name of Ṣalāḥ al-Dawla wa-al-Dīn Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd also played a major role in its compilation. This issue, among others, is ably discussed in Landolt’s erudite introduction to the text, and it is surprising that Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd’s name is not acknowledged alongside Tūsī’s on the title page of the publication.

Overall, however, Badakhchani is to be congratulated for preparing with precision and clarity a highly readable rendering of this important work, which will be of tremendous interest to scholars of Islamic intellectual history, philosophy, Shi‘ism and Sufism.

Bayt al-‘Aqqad: The History and Restoration of a House in Old Damascus. Edited by Peder Mortensen. Proceedings of the Danish Institute in Damascus 4. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2005. Pp. 440 + 319 figs. + 3 fold-out plates. \$53. [Distributed by The David Brown Book Co., P.O. Box 511, Oakville, Conn. 06779.]

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The volume begins with a foreword by Erik Hoffmeyer, chairman of the board of trustees of the C. L. David Foundation in Copenhagen, which financed the restoration of the Bayt al-‘Aqqad to house the Danish Institute in Damascus under a fifty-year lease from the government of Syria. No figures are given regarding the cost, but obviously it was a very substantial sum.

Not much is known about the ‘Aqqad family, but the name refers to a maker of trimmings, tassels, fringes, and such, so the name presumably derives from the trade carried out by the family. For details, see the chapter by Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen and Stefan Weber.

There are remnants of a Roman theater, but the earliest visible parts of the building date from the fifteenth century, following the destruction of Damascus by the Mongols in 1401. It is located in Suq al-Suf, ten meters south of the Street Called Straight.

Bente Lange, in a chapter called “Bayt al-‘Aqqad: The Buildings and Their Restoration,” gives details of what remains of the building (with very informative before-and-after photos) and discusses the kinds of decisions that had to be made on restoration. The disagreements (both between the Danes and Syrians and among the members of the two national groups themselves) are not glossed over but, out of disre-

tion, specific details are few (a general example is given on p. 111). What is important is the end result, and magnificent it is!

The *iwan* is graced with a replica of a Mamluk lamp in the Hassan Mosque in Cairo with a special silver-inlaid Arabic inscription in Kufic script dedicated to the Danish Institute (figs. 40–42).

Jens Damborg’s chapter “Implementing the Restoration Plan” provides copious details on the site itself (including a basketball hoop from the building’s most recent use as a school, pigeon droppings, resident rats, and such). Details here include some schematic sections showing construction features no longer visible. A major challenge was to provide sanitary and technical installations for heat, toilets, bathrooms, etc. as unobtrusively as possible.

Marianne Boqvist has a chapter on building materials and construction techniques, and Verner Thomsen and Jan Castello discuss the painted decorations on walls, ceilings, doors, and windows. Several decorations are clearly dated by an inscription to 1763. This chapter is especially important in illustrating the conditions before restoration, during restoration, and the final result.

A major part of the volume is given over to the history of the house, including walls from the theater of Herod the Great. These are documented with