



Korangy, A., Thackson, W.M., Mottahedeh, R.P., Granada, W. (Eds), *Essays in Islamic Philology, History, and Philosophy, Studies in the History and Culture of the Middle East*, De Gruyter, Berlin, 2016.

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The Festschrift of Professor Ahmad Mandavi Damghani, entitled *Essays in Islamic Philology, History, and Philosophy*, and edited by four fine scholars, was published in 2016. It is the 31<sup>st</sup> volume in the series, *Studies in the History and Culture of the Middle East*, which is published as supplement to *Der Islam* by Walter De Gruyter. The volume is divided into four parts. The first part deal with Classical Persian literature and philology, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, with Classical Arabic literature and philology, the 3<sup>rd</sup> concerns Islamic theology, jurisprudence, and philosophy, and the 4<sup>th</sup> is devoted to Islamic history and historiography.

The volume begins with an introductory essay by Professor Korangy (University of Virginia), who provides a short biographical account of Professor Ahmad Mandavi Damghani. This introduction also reproduces three of the *ijāzāt* of Professor Mandavi; one from the late Iranian scholar of Arabic literature, Badī‘ al-Zamānī, another from the great poet and scholar, Amī rī Fīrūzkūhī, and a third from the Grand Ayatollāh Mar‘ashī Najafī. A note from the Grand Ayatollāh Khu‘ī, in which he has praised Professor Mandavi’s edition of *al-Majdī fī Ansāb al-Tālibiyīn*, which was published in 1988. A selected bibliography of Professor Mandavi is included after the introduction (pp. XXIX-XXXIV).

The first part of the book includes essays by Matthew C. Smith (Harvard), Rahim Shaygan (UCLA), and Elaheh Kheirandish (Harvard). Matthew Smith discusses the nationalist imagery of Mohammad Taqī Bahār’s poetry and shows how Bahār used classical imagery and elements in order to promote principles of democratic government and democracy among his countrymen. Rahim Shaygan’s essay is devoted to the exploration of the motif of the two evil brothers in the Old Persian inscription of Darius the Great, Greco-Roman source, and the Classical Persian romance, *Vīs and Rāmīn*. Elaheh Kheirandish’s interesting contribution, *Astronomical Poems from the Four Corners of Persia (c.1000-1500 CE)* provides more than purely astronomical verse. Some of her examples may be better described as “astrological.”

The second part of the volume includes three essays by Alexander M. Key (Stanford), Kristen Brustad (University of Texas at Austin), and Sarah Bowen Savant (Aga Khan University). Professor Key’s paper, a study of medieval translation from Persian into Arabic, discusses medieval Perso-Arabic poetry —chiefly proverbs rendered into verse— from a number of angles, and uses al-Rāghib al-Isbahānī’s famous *Muhādarāt* as a case study. The existing editions of the text not being satisfactory, he judiciously

relies on the oldest extant manuscript of it at the British Library (Add 18529). He concludes that in their use of such translations, Rāghib, like Hamza (another skilled author from Isfahān), may have been responding to the rise of literary Persian in Arabic alphabet and a host of complex social and cultural factors that surrounded this event. Professor Brustad's paper, *The Iconic Sībawayh*, is a delightful study of the Persian father of Arabic grammar. The biographical record of his life being very vague and inconclusive, she considers him as an iconic figure the effects of his scholarship are still noticeable some twelve centuries after his death. Professor Savant takes up the thorny problem of the *Shu'ūbiyya*, the movement that began in the 8th century and promoted the equality of the non-Arab citizens of the Muslim empire with Arabs, and suggests that in addition to its historical role, whatever it may have been, that the term has ideological dimensions that color the way modern scholarship, be it Persian, Arab, or Western approaches it.

The third part of the book, its longest part, is made up of eight essays on various aspects of Islamic theology, jurisprudence, and philosophy. Ghanea Bassiri, Professor of Religion and Humanities in Reed College, begins the section with an essay entitled *Prioritizing Metaphysics over Epistemology: Divine Justice ('Adl) and Human Reason ('Aql) in al-Shaykh al-Mufīd's Theology*. Placing Mufīd's thought in its historical context, he challenges the recent scholarship that sees the Shaykh's introduction of rationalism into Shi'ism as his way of subordinating Imāmism to the theology of the Mu'tazilites. He argues instead that Mufīd's use of *Kalām* went beyond merely a means of defending the Imāmī doctrine and belief. He rather tried to wed the two, and moving away from prevailing modes of theological argumentation in the 4th and 5th centuries A.H., introduced "novel ways of making rational theological arguments" that were based on metaphysics. Professor Ahmad El Shamsy (University of Chicago) has contributed a learned analyses a short Sufi treatise on *dhikr*, which is usually attributed to the mystic, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166) among others. His essay *Returning to God through His Names: Cosmology and Dhikr in a Fourteenth-Century Sufi Treatise*, and considers the work to have been authored by a less famous Sufi thinker by the name of Yūsuf al-Kūrānī (d. 768/1367). Professor Roy Mottahedeh's typically erudite and entertaining essay, *Friendship in Islamic Ethical Philosophy*, is the next essay in this section and A. David K. Owen (Harvard) presents an interesting study entitled *The Poetic Syllogism: Foray into an Inductive Research Proposal*, in which he considers the poetic *qiyās*. The next item, *The Scattered and the Gathered: Abu Hayyān al-Tawhīdī's Infrequently Asked Questions*, by Professor Elias Muhanna (Brown University) discusses Abū Hayyān's infrequently studied *al-Hawāmil wa-l-Shawāmil*, and provides an English translation of selected questions from the text. The volume's next essay by Professor Lynda Clarke (Concordia University), entitled *'Aql (Reason) in Modern Shiite Thought: The Example of Muhammad Jawād Maghniyya (1904-79)*, is a contribution to the study of Imāmī Shi'ism's approaches to modernism. Professor Sarah Eltantawi (Evergreen State College) discusses the treatment of the punishment of "stoning" (*rajm*) in the works of the Shi'ite jurist, Abū Ja'far al-Tūsī's (d.1066/7) and shows how Tūsī's scholarship opened the possibility for "opting out" of this punishment, thought that route was not taken "perhaps because of increasing pressures Tūsī's community came under in Baghdad." In a study of the sermons of Imām 'Alī (PBUH) and their historical, psychological, and literary contexts, Professor Tahera Qutbuddin (University of Chicago) seeks to resolve the contradictions that may

appear in the Imam's pronouncements concerning the world and the hereafter. Her essay, "Alī's Contemplations on this World and the Hereafter in the Context of His Life and Times," concludes the third part of the *Festschrift*.

The fourth and final section of the book is devoted to Islamic history and historiography. Professor Chase F. Robinson (City University of New York) addresses the problem of what it means to speak of the Abbasid Empire in an essay entitled: "Al-ʿAttāf b. Sufyān and Abbasid Imperialism." Professor Michael Cooperson (UCLA) discusses the scarcity of conversion accounts in early Muslim sources in his essay, "An Early Arabic Conversion Story: The Case of al-Fadl b. Sahl," the famous vizier of the Caliph al-Ma'mūn, who converted from Zoroastrianism to Islam. Professor Blain Auer (University of Lausanne), contributes "A Translation of the Prolegomena to Ziya' al-Dīn Baranī's *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*." Ziya' al-Dīn Baranī was a leading intellectual of the reign of the Sultan of Delhi, Muhammad b. Tughluq (r. 1324-51). His translation is based on Sayyid Ahmad Khan's 1862 Calcutta edition of Baranī's *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, which was prepared from five manuscripts.

Two indexes of personal names and geographical places bring the volume to an end. All of the contributors to this volume have been either students of Professor Mahdavi Damghani, or have benefitted from his guidance in their doctoral or other research.

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