Fortresses of the Intellect

*Ismaili and Other Islamic Studies
in Honour of Farhad Daftary*

Edited by

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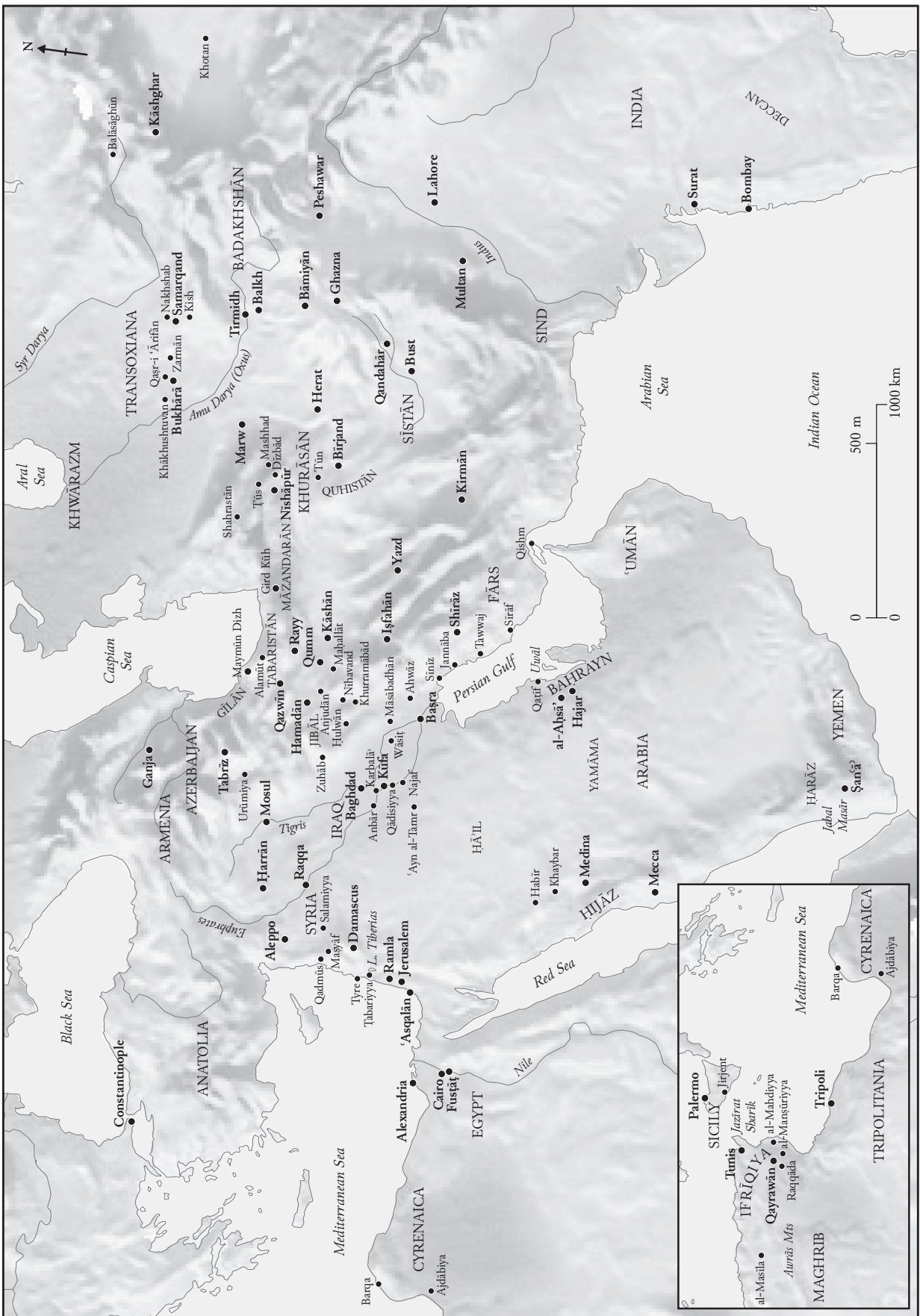
Centres of learning in the Islamic World and other places mentioned in this volume

Introduction: A Biographical Sketch[1]

Omar Alí-de-Unzaga

Farhad Daftary is the world's foremost authority in Ismaili studies. With an impressive record of publications, his scholarship has become the main reference for those conducting research into the historical trajectory of the Ismailis and their imams, as well as into the religious doctrines and philosophical traditions developed in the Ismaili Shiʿi interpretation of Islam. Farhad Daftary's singular contribution to scholarship is to have organised the history of a whole community, its leaders and its doctrines, from materials which were previously scattered and confused, often marred with prejudice and surrounded by legends, into a coherent narrative. He has done this by building a comprehensive historical framework in which Ismaili history and thought not only can be situated in their entirety, but also expressed in a sophisticated yet unpretentious style that unravels complex religious ideas in a clear, fluid and coherent narrative and with an objectivity that is based on the most precise historiographical approaches. Not an Ismaili himself, he has nevertheless had the opportunity to study, observe and engage with both the complexities of documenting the Ismaili past as well as the communities of the present day. A large portion of Farhad Daftary's scholarship consists of disentangling history from myth, of discerning the facts when working with conflicting sources (often only polemical), and above all of setting the record straight on the history of the Ismailis.

He lives in London with his wife Fereshteh (not to be confused with his sister Dr Fereshteh Daftari, an art curator and author based in New York), with whom he has been happily married for more than thirty years.

Family background

A truly cosmopolitan figure, Farhad Daftary was born in Belgium, brought up in Iran and later studied in Italy, England and the United States. A word on his family background is in order. He hails from a very old, aristocratic family in Iran, who have held public office since the eighteenth century. On his paternal side, his ancestry can be traced seven generations back, when his ancestors were mostly in charge of the public finances of the country, under the title (*laqab*) of Mustawfī al-Mamālik,[2] conferred by the Qājār monarchs on individual members of the family. The name of the family, however, originates in the calling of Mīrzā Hidāyat Allāh Vazīr Daftar (d. 1892) and his son Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥusayn Vazīr Daftar (d. 1912), Farhad's great-great-grandfather and great-grandfather respectively, both of whom served successively as what today would be called Ministers of Finance with the title Vazīr Daftar in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth. Subsequently, in the early Pahlavī era, this title developed into the family name Daftari (also Daftary) when family names were adopted for the first time in Iran. The first member of the family to have used the surname as we know it was Farhad's grandfather, Maḥmūd Khān Daftarī (d. 1939), who earlier had been given the title ʿAyn al-Mamālik by Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh Qājār (r. 1896–1907). He acted as his father's deputy in the Ministry of Finance before holding high ranks in Iran's reformed judiciary system in the time of Riḍā Shāh Pahlavī (r. 1925–1941). Farhad's father, Mohammad Daftary (1904–1983), was educated in France, graduating from the famous military academy of Saint Cyr in 1928, and then pursued a military-diplomatic career. It was during one of his postings that Farhad was born, in Brussels on Friday 23 December 1938. Amongst the various distinctions bestowed on Mohammad Daftary, he was notably made a Commander of the Légion d'Honneur by the President of the French Republic in 1950. In the Qājār and Pahlavī eras, the family produced several prime ministers under a variety of names derived from other individual titles. To give but one example, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Vazīr Daftar's younger brother Muḥammad Khān Muṣaddiq al-Salṭana (1882–1967), the future Dr Mohammad Mosaddeq, became Iran's prime minister during 1951–1953 and nationalised the country's oil industry.

Farhad's mother, Farideh née Agha Khani (1914–2010), hailed from another prominent family that can be traced to mediaeval times. She was the great-granddaughter of Sardār Abu'l-Ḥasan Khān (d. 1880), son of Shāh Khalīl Allāh (d. 1817) and the younger brother of Ḥasan ʿAlī Shāh (d.

1881), the spiritual leader of the Nizārī Shiʻi Muslims who was given the title Āghā Khān (Aga Khan) by Fatḥ ʻAlī Shāh Qājār (r. 1797–1834). Sardār Abu'l-Ḥasan Khān had helped his brother when the latter was engaged in military conflicts with the Qājār establishment which eventually resulted in his permanent settlement in India. Sardār himself led military expeditions in the early 1840s and seized parts of Balūchistān before being finally defeated in 1846 by a Qājār army and taken to Tehran. There he remained under house arrest until he was pardoned by Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh Qājār (r. 1848–1896) and married Mihr-i Jahān Khānum, a Qājār princess. Sardār Abu'l-Ḥasan Khān's son, Mīrzā Ismāʻīl Khān (1854–1928), titled Iʻtibār al-Salṭana, who was Farhad's maternal great-grandfather, spent a large part of his early life in the entourage of Aga Khan I in Bombay, where he was known as the Ḥājji Ṣāḥib, for having made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Then in the 1870s, he returned to Iran, received his title and subsequently (after the Constitutional Revolution, 1905–1911) became a member of the Majlis (Parliament), elected from the province of Kirmān, where the family had deep roots. Daftary's maternal grandfather was Iʻtibār al-Salṭana's son Nāṣir Qulī Khān (1873–1941), with the title Mukhbir al-Sulṭān bestowed upon him in 1899 by Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh. Mukhbir al-Sulṭān's mother was the daughter of ʻAlī Qulī Khān Mukhbir al-Dawla (d. 1897) of the eminent Hidāyat family, who were traditionally in charge of the country's Ministry of Post and Telegraph and produced several noted historians and literary figures. Starting with the historian and poet Riḍā Qulī Khān Hidāyat (d. 1871), this family was also closely affiliated to the Dār al-Funūn, an academy of learning founded in Tehran in 1851, marking the beginning of modern education in Iran. Mukhbir al-Sulṭān himself was a graduate of this academy. Farhad Daftary's own earliest memories go back to his grandfather Mukhbir al-Sulṭān, whom he can remember meeting when he was three years old. Mukhbir al-Sulṭān had also inherited a part of this family's collection of manuscripts, documents and photographs, which eventually became incorporated into Farhad's library.

Early life and education

As mentioned above, Farhad Daftary was born in Europe. Following the outbreak of the Second World War, when he was about two years old, however, his family moved back to Tehran. He attended the Qāʾim-maqām Madrasa for his primary education (1945–1950) and then the Dabīristān-i Alborz (Alborz Secondary School). Founded as the American College by Presbyterian missionaries in 1873 on the outskirts of Tehran,

it changed its name to Alborz College in the early 1930s in deference to the Persianisation of foreign names. The American College had been for several decades (until 1940) under the direction of the eminent educator Dr Samuel L. Jordan (d. 1952). By the time Farhad was a pupil at the college, it had become incorporated into the network of schools overseen by Iran's Ministry of Education and was under the direction of the famous Iranian educator Dr Mohammad-Ali Mojtahedi (d. 1997).[3] There Farhad completed the first cycle of his secondary education (1951–1953). In 1954, Farhad moved with his family to Rome, not to return to Iran for nearly twenty years. He spent two years (1954–1955) finishing his secondary studies at the Overseas School of Rome (which was also known as the American School) in Via Cassia. During his adolescent years, he also devoted a great deal of time to studying the piano, at which he excelled. While in Rome, he studied with a teacher from the Santa Cecilia Academy of Music as well as with the Austrian-born Italian Conte Antonio di Monteforte, whose own teacher had been a student of the renowned Hungarian composer and pianist Franz Liszt. The Count had connections with Iran through his father who, at the invitation of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh Qājār, had organised a modern police force in Tehran.

In 1956, at the age of 17, Farhad was sent to England where he stayed for two years at Concord College in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and then at a private tutorial establishment (Eaton and Wallis) in London studying for his General Certificate of Education (GCE). Meanwhile, he had continued to take piano lessons with Ippolit Motchaloff at the Wigmore Hall Studios in London.

However, his life was to take another course. Pursuing his family's traditional involvement in state financial administration, and perhaps as a natural progression of his education in American schools, in 1958, at the age of nineteen, Farhad Daftary moved to the United States where he pursued his higher education in the field of economics for some thirteen years until 1971. He first enrolled at the American University in Washington DC, where he took a BA degree (1958–1962) and then stayed for a fifth year, receiving his MA in 1963. Deciding to continue his postgraduate studies, in 1964 he enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley, where he initially obtained a second Master's degree.

The choice of Berkeley was in line with Daftary's academic record. He had excelled in his studies, always obtaining straight A-grades in all the courses he took. Berkeley's prestige in the mid-1960s, with its economics department ranking first amongst all American universities, was partly due to the fact that it had a high concentration of Nobel Prize

winners on its academic faculty. Farhad Daftary was on various occasions ranked among the top ten Iranian students in the US (out of the several thousand of his compatriots then studying there). He was even awarded a 'Special Citation' by Iran's Ministry of Education. As a result, the University of California granted him fellowships and graduate scholarships for several years to pursue his doctoral studies, which he started in 1964 and completed seven years later in 1971, somewhat prolonged due to his evolving interest in Ismaili studies. When the time came to choose a specialisation, Farhad opted for economic development. At UC Berkeley he had the privilege to be taught by a number of distinguished professors, among whom was the young (and future Nobel laureate) Amartya Sen, who taught economic development as a visiting professor. Amongst his other famous teachers, mention may be made of Tibor Scitovsky and Abba Lerner, whilst two more of his younger teachers, Daniel McFadden and Peter A. Diamond, would also become Nobel laureates. It was also at Berkeley that he made the acquaintance of Hamid Algar, who had then just joined the Near Eastern Studies Department after completing his doctoral studies at Cambridge University. Daftary's Ph.D. dissertation was entitled 'Economic Development and Planning in Iran', with a detailed analysis of the country's modern economic history.

Ismaili studies as a hobby: a largely unexplored field

It was during his years at Berkeley that Farhad developed a deep interest in Ismaili studies. Through the maternal line of his family he had always seen photographs and documents related to the Aga Khans, but it was at Berkeley that for the first time, he had access to modern studies on Islam and the Ismailis. It was Daftary's interest in economic history, as well as the history of Iran and Shi'i Islam, that led to his new interest in the history of the Ismailis residing in the Middle East and elsewhere. It was in this way that Farhad the economist would be transformed into an authority on Ismaili studies.

From the mid-1960s, Daftary developed and systematically pursued his intense curiosity about the history of the small and often misunderstood community of the Ismailis. He set himself the goal of acquiring copies of any available material on them. Access to old and new publications on the subject was crucial. Berkeley proved an excellent location to be based at, because it had a world-class library with a vast Islamic collection. He embarked on an ambitious project to photocopy all the classical articles in European languages related to Ismailism that he could

get his hands on in an extremely methodical way. When he had finished collecting everything he needed, he had all the articles bound, and ended up with more than thirty volumes of Ismaili-related articles. After that, he systematically collected all the articles of a few more recent authors in the field. He talks with delight about how he did all this before the idea of publishing the collected articles of an author, or a *variorum* series, had entered Islamic studies. Thus, Farhad had collected his own copies of the articles of Paul Kraus (1904–1944), Ḥusayn Hamdānī (1901–1962), Wladimir Ivanow, Marius Canard (1888–1982), Asaf A. A. Fyzee (1899–1981), Samuel M. Stern (1920–1969), and all of the Ismaili articles of the prolific Henry Corbin (1903–1978), as well as the entire vast corpus of the Cambridge Iranologist Edward G. Browne (1862–1926), who made seminal contributions to the literary history of Persia and the various Shi'i communities which had flourished there.

The field of modern Ismaili studies was then still new and emerging, but it already included the oeuvre of a towering figure, Wladimir Alekseevich Ivanow (1886–1970), who had made significant contributions to it. Ivanow had devoted a major part of his life to the recovery, editing and translation of Ismaili texts, especially those produced by the Nizārī branch. It must be said that this was a crucial time in generational terms: On the one hand, Ivanow was approaching his eightieth year and was at the end of his pioneering career. On the other hand, there were younger scholars, such as Marshal G. S. Hodgson, at Chicago, and Samuel Miklos Stern, at Oxford, still very active and in the prime of their academic careers. Both represented a new generation of scholars and were (and are still considered today) two of the leading authorities in modern Islamic studies in the West. Both also had a special interest in the intellectual history of the Ismailis on which they published extensively. Tragically, both died prematurely: Hodgson in 1968, at forty-six, and Stern the following year, in 1969, at forty-eight. These losses presented a turning point in the field and Farhad now became keenly aware that the historical momentum should not be lost and that, although a good start had been made, Ismaili studies still remained a largely unexplored field.

W. Ivanow as a role model

During his doctoral studies Farhad Daftary had the opportunity to correspond with and meet Ivanow in Tehran (where the latter had been living since 1959) in the course of a summer vacation not long before Ivanow's death. Farhad's communications with Ivanow on the state of Ismaili stud-

ies spurred on his interest in the subject. He remembers that he always had more questions than the old master could answer.

Of all the modern pioneers of Ismaili studies, Ivanow was to have by far the greatest influence on Farhad Daftary. He was curious to know what had made a Russian orientalist and a cataloguer of Islamic manuscripts at the Asiatic Museum in St Petersburg before the Russian Revolution become interested in the history and intellectual heritage of this scattered Shiʿi community. He discovered that it had been Ivanow's love of manuscripts that had led him to the Ismaili texts, opening up a new chapter in his life. It had also introduced him to Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III (1877–1957), the 48th Ismaili Imam, who had facilitated Ivanow's intellectual journey. He settled in Bombay where he acquired many Ismaili friends from amongst both Khoja (Nizārī) and Bohra (Ṭayyibī) branches of the community.

Farhad Daftary takes pleasure in recounting Ivanow's achievements. He had made available much unknown material, of which his editions of Persian Nizārī texts are the most enduring element. Other scholars were working on the Arabic sources, but Ivanow devoted himself to the Nizārī texts which were almost exclusively, except for some texts of Syrian provenance, in Persian and which had been used as the religious language of the community from the time of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (d. 1124). Thus he made the bulk of the extant Nizārī literature available to the wider academic world, which represented a major advance in the field in contrast to the hitherto almost total lack of availability of such textual resources. When asked to summarise his own contribution, Daftary always refers back to Ivanow, acknowledging his intellectual debt to this pioneer. In fact, he has not missed any opportunity to recognise Ivanow as 'the leading pioneer' of modern Ismaili studies.[4] Farhad Daftary's tribute to Ivanow has taken various forms: he wrote Ivanow's obituary (see Bibliography, nos. 16 and 24) and survey articles on his publications (Bibliography, nos. 15 and 22); published a collective volume by way of the Festschrift that Ivanow had never received (Bibliography, no. 9; see below); and has also contributed encyclopaedia articles on Ivanow (Bibliography, nos. 96 and 129); he is also editing Ivanow's memoirs and is currently collaborating through The Institute of Ismaili Studies with the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences on the organisation of a conference to be held in 2011 in St Petersburg to commemorate Ivanow.

Back at Berkeley, and when not engaged on his doctoral work, Farhad's main occupation was the study of the Ismailis, including the compilation of an Ismaili bibliography that served as the basis of his *Ismaili Literature*

(Bibliography, no. 4) published more than four decades later. He also embarked on an extensive programme of collecting books, articles and other documents, which was complemented by correspondence with many of the leading authorities in Ismaili studies at the time. One of these authorities was Abbas Hamdani, who had then just started his career at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. Professor Hamdani belonged to a distinguished family of Dāʾūdī Ṭayyibī Ismaili scholars from Yemen and India, who possessed a significant collection of Ismaili manuscripts. This collection, readily accessible to scholars, was to be eventually donated to The Institute of Ismaili Studies Library in London. He also established correspondence with the late Sherali Alidina and other leaders at the then Ismailia Association in Karachi, Pakistan.

Bibliophilia: the making of a private library

Farhad Daftary's interest in Ismaili studies was slowly turning from a hobby into an all-absorbing activity and a highly structured project of collecting the sources and studying them. Not without some nostalgia, Farhad Daftary describes one of his main activities at Berkeley for several years as a continuous toing and froing between the Central Library there and the photocopy shop on the campus. In this way he came to possess copies of all the existing articles on the Ismailis, including those of the nineteenth-century orientalists, E. M. Quatremère (1782–1857), A. I. Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838), C. F. Defrémery (1822–1883) and J. M. de Goeje (1836–1909), as well as the modern scholars noted above. It was thus, with these self-made *variorum* volumes, that he started his own library collection.

He had now also begun acquiring all the books in Arabic and in European languages on Ismaili subjects then available, in addition to searching for out-of-print and rare works through a number of antiquarian book dealers, such as E. J. Brill in Leiden and Ad Orientem in England, etc., and for decades he regularly corresponded with them. Similarly, he familiarised himself with the Ismaili publications of the Islamic Research Association, established in 1933 in Bombay, which was later effectively transformed in 1946 into the Ismaili Society.[5] They had published five editions and translations of Nizārī texts by Ivanow, and Daftary purchased all of them from Bombay. He recounts how during the years of his doctoral studies, one of the most exciting moments virtually every day was when he heard the postman knocking at the door, delivering the books he had ordered. When he had started corresponding with Ivanow in Tehran, the

Russian scholar was residing temporarily at the house of his friend, M. H. Asadi, who owned a bookshop in Bahārsitān Square and distributed the publications of the Ismaili Society throughout the Middle East. There, Daftary found many of Ivanow's books which now are no longer available (and even then were very difficult to obtain), and so he did not hesitate to buy them.

As a devoted bibliophile, he has continued, throughout his career, to acquire rare volumes. He talks proudly about his library. Amongst the manuscripts in his collection, mention may be made of the copies of the Qur'an commissioned or personally copied in the nineteenth century by his maternal forebear, Sardār Abu'l-Ḥasan Khān, and a beautifully illuminated copy of the complete *Dīwān* of Ḥāfiẓ, the famous Persian poet of the fourteenth century, commissioned by Sayyid Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī (d. 1792), Shāh Khalīl Allāh's father and the 44th Nizārī Ismaili Imam who was the governor of Kirmān during the era of the Zand dynasty.[6] Apart from extensive collections on Ismaili and Persian history, his library also includes rare travelogues on Iran (Persia), like G. Barbaro and A. Contarini, *Viaggi in Persia* (1545), accounts composed by two Venetian ambassadors to Persia in the late fifteenth century; Sir Thomas Herbert, *A Description of the Persian Monarchy* (1634), the first English account of Persia; John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia* (1698); Jean Chardin, *Voyages en Perse*, in various editions including its 1811 critical edition by L. Langlès in ten volumes plus an atlas; and Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia* (1815), which he acquired in the 1960s for $300 (less than a tenth of its current market value!). He also acquired rare lithographed editions of Persian texts and histories, such as the *Tārīkh-i Firishta* (1822) and mediaeval accounts of the Crusades, such as J. Bongers (ed.), *Gesta Dei per Francos* (1611), with references to the contemporary Nizārī Ismailis. His library is all the more impressive given the fact that for years he had his books leather-bound in Tehran by a specialist binder, Friedrich Lankamerer (1922–2002), the son of a German engineer posted to Iran in the early twentieth century.

By the time Farhad completed his Ph.D. and was ready to return to Iran, he had amassed an extensive library of Ismaili sources and studies, perhaps the largest private collection of its kind. In fact, as he himself declares, he had for many years initially conducted most of his research on the basis of materials from his own collection.

Return to Iran: from promising career to a life-long passion

Back in Iran, in 1972, after spending almost two decades abroad, Farhad Daftary embarked on what at the time looked like a promising professional career in line with his family tradition and expectations. He became an Advisor to the Plan and Budget Organisation, the government body that prepared Iran's five-year economic development plans and annual budgets. Then a year later, in 1973, he was appointed Director of the Economic Research Department at the Central Bank of Iran, which had only been established the previous decade, and where he remained for several years. At this juncture, Farhad had the opportunity to pursue a successful career in the government's financial and economic administrations but he decided to take a different route: in 1974 he left the public sector. He became the co-founder and Director of Yekom Economic Consultants, the first (as its Persian name, Yekom, indicates) firm of consultants specialising in economics and management in Iran, with a separate section for water resources projects. Following his bibliophilic character, Daftary made a point of establishing a library at the company, which soon became the best private library of its kind in Tehran, with a major share of his own economics books incorporated into it.

During the years 1973–1977, Farhad Daftary also taught post-graduate courses on economic history and development at the Faculty of Economics of both the National University and Tehran University. During those years Farhad published a number of economic articles, and prepared several consultancy reports for the Iranian government and various international agencies such as the International Labour Office in Geneva.[7]

Events in the late 1970s, after the Iranian Revolution, accelerated Daftary's shift to a new discipline altogether. At the end of 1978 with the overthrow of the Shah there was general euphoria in Iran for a brief period of time. But almost immediately, the Iran–Iraq war broke out in 1980 and there was no possibility to travel outside the country for several years. His next visit abroad did not, in fact, take place until 1985. It was under such circumstances that with the encouragement of his wife, Fereshteh, he finally decided the time had come to write a book on the Ismailis.

The story of a history

Farhad Daftary took up the challenge and embarked on a new and fascinating enterprise: writing a comprehensive history of the Ismailis. Throughout the decades in California and Tehran, he had continued to

pursue his personal interest in collecting and studying materials produced by scholars in the field of Ismaili studies while Ivanow had continued to be a role model for him in several respects. Firstly, Ivanow was also someone who had moved from his original discipline of Iranian languages and dialects to the field of Ismaili studies. Just as the time spent in Bombay, making Ismaili acquaintances there and being introduced to Aga Khan III, had opened up a new chapter in Ivanow's life, so Daftary was about to embark on a similar journey. This personal interest had become a passion and an intellectual challenge and now Daftary had the chance to devote his full attention to it. As a pioneer, Ivanow had had to lay the foundation for studying Ismaili history and doctrines. When Ivanow started his Ismaili studies in the 1930s and earlier, there was next to nothing published of the Nizārī Ismaili texts, and for more than three decades he set himself the task of identifying the gaps in the field and filling them with his contributions. That was exactly the model adopted by Daftary from the time of his graduate studies at Berkeley and it remained the model that he was to follow during his unfolding career in Ismaili studies: he made it his ongoing concern to take stock of what had been done before him, what was the current state of Ismaili studies, and then to identify the gaps in the field pointing to new directions for research.

The notorious lack of methodological underpinnings in Islamic studies in general was perhaps to some extent compensated for in Ismaili studies by Farhad Daftary's training. Economics was, in his own words, 'the most precise and quantifiable of the social sciences'. This training, he says, had provided him with a good intellectual discipline, a sound methodology and a facility for clear thinking and well-organised analysis, argumentation and writing. When presented with the inevitable question of how he managed to succeed in a new field of research, on the margin of his other activities, Daftary has one constant answer, demonstrating his belief in 'steady' scholarship: there are no short cuts or fast tracks to scholarship. Rather than intensive and exclusive research carried out in a concentrated span of time on a specific subject, one might say that he has pursued extensive scholarship regularly, on a daily and progressive basis, even if only for a few hours each morning or evening. This method has yielded very fruitful results, as can been seen in the bibliography of his works of some 240 titles (with many more in the pipeline). A rigorous editor himself, Daftary has also had inputs of various kinds into all the publications produced by The Institute of Ismaili Studies since the mid-1990s (and currently exceeding 80 monographs and texts).

His earlier training helped: according to Daftary, in order to write on

history, one must be very organised and systematic, be familiar with the historiography of the subject and then bring together a full range of the sources. Next one must be able to assess these sources, then analyse and interpret them, producing a sequential history. In his view a historian must have a logical mind (he benefited from studying both logics and mathematics), and also be able to substantiate (as in proving a hypothesis) and assign relative importance to events (this is where his background in quantitative methods in economics has come in very handy). One must also avoid unnecessarily complicating the issues by writing in an indeterminate and obscure style. He has set it upon himself to explain the misunderstood history of a misrepresented community. The readership he had originally in mind was principally the scholarly community, but he also took into account the educated non-specialist reader. He wanted to explain Ismaili history in an accessible and clear manner. In his view, 'the beauty of scholarship is to have the ability to express difficult concepts and ideas in simple terms and language'. He gives as an example the time when he was asked what, exactly, was meant by 'esoteric literature'. He thought for a minute and said: 'It is based on the distinction between a literal and a hidden meaning, between what is perceived and what really exists; it also implies the need for a guide to help others proceed in this spiritual journey in search of certain ultimate truths.' Indeed, anyone who has dealt with Farhad Daftary quickly realises his ability to present complex ideas in concise and clear terms with no verbiage or frills.

Having read the bulk of the existing literature on the Ismailis, in a variety of languages, the main question in Farhad Daftary's mind was: Why do we not possess a book that deals with all the periods and phases of Ismaili history? It had become clear to him that the first and indispensable task to be accomplished in this regard was a comprehensive history of the Ismailis, something which did not yet exist. He set this as his overriding objective: a history as comprehensive as possible, covering all Ismaili communities and groupings, tracing and documenting their doctrines and intellectual elaborations, stretching from the formative period of Shi'i Islam to the present time, using all available materials, published and unpublished, remaining always aware of the nature and biases (often hostile) of the mediaeval sources. It was difficult to decide on a methodology for this task. The most appropriate model for Daftary was Marshall Hodgson's *The Order of Assassins* (unfortunately mistitled as later admitted by the author himself),[8] a book on the Alamūt phase of Nizārī Ismaili history (1090–1256), with an approach and structure that could serve as a model for Ismaili history in its entirety with all its phases as first identified by Ivanow.

Meanwhile, he had started studying Arabic systematically, with the eminent Professor Ādhartāsh Ādharnūsh (also a regular contributor on Arabic literature to the *Great Islamic Encyclopaedia*) and made good use of the libraries at the University of Tehran, especially the one at its Faculty of Literature. He also began to visit Ismaili heritage sites in Iran, including several of the major fortresses and the mediaeval sites in Anjudān, Kahak and Kirmān which had been visited by Ivanow in the 1930s; indeed, in the 1970s he was the first scholar to visit them since Ivanow and he found that further deterioration had taken place at some sites.[9] In Kirmān he found that some of the eighteenth-century structures and monuments described by Ivanow were actually no longer in situ. Then he went to Maḥallāt (where there was still in existence part of a wall of the residential compound of Aga Khan I as well as the Ḥusayniyya founded by him in the 1830s). Subsequently, he organised an expedition with some friends to Alamūt. After a difficult journey with two Range Rovers, which inolved crossing a river in Rūdbār, they erected tents and spent the night at the foot of the rock of Alamūt. The locality was breathtaking. It was also very emotional for him – in fact, he can only describe the experience as resembling a 'pilgrimage', something he had aspired to do for a very long time: he could finally stand on the spot where almost 900 years earlier Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, founder of the Ismaili state in Persia, had stood. The visit was giving tangible substance to his research. The historian ʿAṭā Malik Juwaynī (d. 1283), who visited Alamūt just before its destruction by the Mongols in 1256, had described the fortress as majestic and now Farhad could see for himself that even its ruins remained so. Another trip was made later to the fortress of Lamasar, stopping at the ruins of the castle of Shamīrān, the seat of the Musāfirid dynasty of northern Persia (and visited in 1047 by the Persian poet and Ismaili *dāʿī* Nāṣir-i Khusraw on his way to Fatimid Cairo). He also went to the castle of Girdkūh, which had been besieged by the Mongols for seventeen years until 1270, and where the stones of the mangonels used by the Mongols against the local Nizārī garrison are still scattered on the ground. In 1985, he visited the Ismailis of Khurāsān (where the bulk of their community in Iran resides). There in the village of Dīzbād, in the mountains between Mashhad and Nīshāpūr, he attended the ceremonies of Naw Ḥiṣār which take place annually on the last Friday of August, an occasion when the Ismailis of Iran gather and take part in elaborate rituals which include the recitation of the mystical poetry of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273) and other great Persian poets. This was Daftary's first encounter with the contemporary Ismailis of Iran who are very much attached to their traditions. He was shown rare manu-

scripts, and given photocopies of some of them; he met the elders of the community who showed him manuscripts of collected poems of Ismaili poets such as Khākī Khurāsānī (d. after 1646), and his descendant Fidāʾī Khurāsānī (d. 1923), whose *dīwān* of poetry remains unpublished.

The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines

Farhad Daftary's research for this book had effectively begun in the mid-1960s and lasted over twenty years. But he actually started to write the book in 1978 and it took him a further eight years to complete its first draft. His initial plan laid out the work in seven chapters: five main chapters on the Ismailis (covering the four phases devised by Ivanow, early, Fatimid, Alamūt and Post-Alamūt, and including also a chapter on the Mustaʿlian Ismailis) with two initial chapters on the early Shiʿa, and on the progress in Ismaili studies. And this was indeed the way the book was structured and finally published in 1990 under the title *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*.[10] He allowed himself roughly one year for each chapter, with the object of covering all the key events, personalities and doctrinal developments in each period. Each chapter naturally underwent numerous drafts and was expanded and revised many times. Nowadays, even with all the technological advances that scholarship can make use of, this may seem daunting, but not excessively so. However, in the early 1980s his chapters were typed by his wife Fereshteh on an electric IBM typewriter. The need to make revisions to the typescript raised continuous difficulties that had to be resolved with ingenious solutions. On many occasions, he had to count the words and letters of a revised passage to ensure that the new text could be accommodated without any change in the page layout!

From very early on Daftary was aware that this mammoth task could not be accomplished in isolation and that he would need to be in touch with some established scholars in the field of Ismaili studies. For this purpose, he started corresponding with Professor Wilferd Madelung, then the Laudian Professor of Arabic at Oxford University and a leading contributor to modern Ismaili studies, and informed him that he was working on this project, a history of the Ismailis. He asked Madelung if he would agree to read through the chapters, which he did. In 1985, Farhad Daftary finally had the chance to travel outside Iran. He visited Paris, London and Oxford, where he conducted further research in various libraries and met a number of scholars. By then, he had written three chapters ('Progress in Ismāʿīlī Studies', 'Origins and Early Development of Shīʿism' and 'Early

Ismāʿīlism'). At Oxford, he showed them to Madelung at the Oriental Institute and subsequently received positive comments from this foremost authority, which encouraged him to continue along the lines he had set himself, especially after Madelung's approval of the third chapter, which was one of his own main fields of expertise. Madelung's reviews of the chapters continued and their relationship has been maintained to this day (indeed, Daftary was closely involved in the Festschrift for Madelung and his affiliation to The Institute of Ismaili Studies as Senior Research Fellow).[11]

Farhad Daftary's focus was obviously on history. He was especially interested in investigating how the different Muslim communities had arisen, especially within Shiʿi Islam. He was attracted towards investigating the disputes arising over the succession to the Prophet. Was there a theological component to it? Yet again, though the Fatimid period of Ismaili history was relatively well known when Daftary started writing his book, there was next to nothing in modern scholarship on much of the seven centuries after the Alamūt phase in Nizārī history. Daftary's book filled this gap in a structured manner, particularly through the original research he carried out using a large number of Persian regional histories, especially those on Ṭabaristān (Māzandarān) and other Caspian provinces. For this long period he essentially followed again the categorisation introduced by Ivanow: the early period of this phase (that is to say the first two centuries after the Mongol destruction of the Nizārī state, centred at Alamūt, in 1256), the Anjudān period (beginning in the fifteenth century, when the imams of the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī line had settled in the village of Anjudān near Maḥallāt in central Iran), and the modern period (from the 1840s onwards). As Madelung says in the Foreword to *The Ismāʿīlīs*, in some areas the book covers 'entirely new ground'; the second feature of the book praised by Madelung is that it 'offers a first comprehensive and detailed synthesis of the complex history of Ismāʿīlism', reflecting 'the progress of recent research' and integrating an 'evenly readable account'.

Although Daftary's main concern was the chronological history of the Ismailis he also sought to cover the main intellectual and theological developments in a systematic fashion. If the history of the Ismailis had still to be unravelled, it was clear to him that, at that time, the doctrines of the various Ismaili groups were even more difficult to understand clearly. At the time, scholars had just begun to understand, for example, who the Qarmaṭīs were. Until then, after the earlier studies of de Goeje, Ivanow had the most realistic understanding of them, but his information, too, was still sketchy and confused, as he had only managed to scratch the surface

of the subject. By the early 1960s, new hypotheses had been proposed in three articles by Stern (in 1955, 1960 and 1961)[12] and by Madelung in another three articles (in 1959 written in German, which Daftary later had translated into English, in a slightly revised version, and published as part of an edited volume on the Ismailis in 1996; and in 1961 again in German; and in his article on the Qarmaṭīs for *EI2*).[13] He was similarly interested in clarifying the controversial issues surrounding the opening phase of Ismailism, but the few early sources only provided conflicting information. Basically subscribing to the Stern-Madelung position he spent some time trying to resolve the alleged identification of the early Ismailis with the Khaṭṭābīs, followers of Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb (d. 755), a contemporary of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 765). This identification was first propounded in the works of the early Imāmī Shiʿi heresiographers, such as al-Nawbakhtī (d. ca. 912) and al-Qummī (d. 913),[14] as a part of their polemical treatment of the early Ismailis, and also reasserted in the early studies of Bernard Lewis and Henry Corbin; he arrived at the conclusion that this identification was groundless and that it had to be rejected, in line with Madelung's view.[15] This conclusion was strongly substantiated by the fact that later mediaeval Ismaili authorities, like al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d. 974), the foremost jurist of the Fatimid period, condemned the Khaṭṭābiyya as 'heretics' for having propagated the divinity of the imams, something that went against the doctrine of the Fatimids.[16] This also explains why Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. ca. 1021), the most learned contemporary Ismaili theologian, was called to Cairo by the Fatimid Imam-Caliph al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (r. 996–1021) to refute the emerging doctrines of the founders of the Druze religion, who were beginning to preach the divinity of al-Ḥākim. Subsequently, Daftary refined his own ideas on the early Ismailis and published several studies on the subject.[17]

The move to London and affiliation with The Institute of Ismaili Studies

In 1985, on his travels to Europe, he visited The Institute of Ismaili Studies in London for the first time. The Institute had been founded by His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan only eight years earlier in 1977 and was then located in one of its early temporary premises on Great James Street in London. Incidentally, this year was crucial for the Ismailis in the UK, since a major institution, the Ismaili Centre in South Kensington, London, was inaugurated in April, giving the Ismailis the greatest degree of visibility and exposure they had ever experienced in a Western environment.

In the library of the Institute, Farhad Daftary found many manuscripts and also new publications in Arabic that contributed towards his research. Also, for the first time, he met Mr Shams Vellani, then the Institute's Executive Officer, who showed great interest in Daftary's project. On his return to Iran, he resumed his work and completed the final draft of his book in 1987.

On Farhad Daftary's next visit to London in 1987, he gave Mr Vellani a draft of the work, and the latter subsequently suggested that he join the Institute to prepare the work for publication. Daftary accepted, but it took another year to return to Tehran and wrap up all his affairs and commitments there. In 1988 he settled in London with his wife, just before turning fifty. He officially joined the Institute in September 1988. By then, the Institute had developed a teaching programme under its Department of Education and had also produced its first publications: English translations of two sets of collected articles by Henry Corbin, undertaken by the Paris branch of the Institute then still operative and directed by the Iranian philosopher Daryush Shayegan, an old friend of Daftary's, and a two-volume catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts in its library. A small number of scholars were also working there on different texts, including J. Badakhchani and H. Haji (both contributors to this volume).

Farhad Daftary's immediate task now was to get his book published. Two further years were needed to fine-tune the work with additional annotations, based on the resources at the library of the Institute and elsewhere. Wilferd Madelung read through the remainder of the typescript providing his customary meticulous comments. Daftary sent copies of the typescript to the University Presses of Cambridge and Oxford; both had this work evaluated by scholars and eventually both accepted it for publication. In the end Daftary decided on Cambridge University Press as his publisher and the book finally appeared in 1990.

A historian of historians

The Institute had started its publications with Corbin's highly intricate phenomenological essays, reconstructing Ismaili doctrines within a metahistorical frame. However, Daftary attached greater weight to historiography and textual analysis in many of the Institute's subsequent publications. Asked about this matter, he says that in a historical investigation of events, a chronological framework is of the highest importance since ideas do not develop in a vacuum, but out of previous ideas; and events, often, are responses to previous events. And textual materials, conveying

the literary and intellectual heritage of a community, are indispensable for studying and understanding that heritage.

One of Farhad Daftary's constant interests has been the figure of the modern historian and his role in shaping history-writing. During his doctoral studies, he had carried out research on the lives and times of many economists. Once his attention shifted to Ismaili studies, he adopted a similar methodology for contextualising the contributions of the key figures in the field. Several of his early publications were devoted to scholars' lives and achievements. In the majority of his books, too, he has always tried to begin by explaining the state of the field of research and the individuals who have shaped the study of Ismaili history.[18]

Asked about his great interest in modern historians, he responds by saying that studying a person's life reveals much about his context, his interests, his thought. We are, as he says, the products of our own histories and intellectual environments. He believes in the theory of 'challenges and responses' in history-writing: when historians write, they are often responding to something, even though it is frequently the case that a hundred years later people may not know what it was that they had been responding to. Unfortunately, he adds, it may also happen that the historians themselves may have fabricated or misinterpreted the required evidence, producing polemical material that will be used as a reliable source by later historians. And if a 'fiction' is repeated often enough it may eventually be taken as representing a 'fact'. Looking into the lives of scholars and the contexts in which they worked has enabled him to have some understanding of what it was that they responded to, or, in his words, 'why was a certain author writing what he was writing?' This kind of two-fold historiography has added an extra dimension to his work, making him keenly aware of the necessity of evaluating one's sources and distinguishing fact from fiction.

Stories versus history: insiders and observers

In 1992, two years after Farhad Daftary produced his *magnum opus*, there was an organisational restructuring at the Institute. Now, under the deanship of Dr Aziz Esmail, a new Department of Academic Research and Publications was created. Daftary was appointed as the first head of that department, a post he has retained to this day despite the demands of his other responsibilities.

Next, he devoted his attention to one of the most contentious and least understood issues in the entire history of the Ismailis: the 'black legend'

that had developed about them and had spread in the middle ages in both the Islamic world and in Europe. His book on this subject, *The Assassin Legends: Myths of the Isma'ilis*, was published in 1994. This was a research issue of immense interest and complexity due its popular appeal and intricacies. Daftary was initially interested in understanding the etymology of the word 'assassin' and its connection with the Ismailis: why were they referred to by their neighbours in Syria and in the Caspian region of northern Persia as *ḥashīshī*s or *ḥashīshīn*; and, following them, in the European sources as 'assassins'? Why were there so many fanciful tales around this? Not much progress in research on this topic had taken place since the pioneering study of Silvestre de Sacy (d. 1838), the doyen of the nineteenth-century orientalists, who had solved the etymological puzzle of the word 'assassin'. Showing that it derived from the Arabic word *ḥashīsh*, de Sacy himself nevertheless subscribed at least partially to the legends, as recounted by Marco Polo and other mediaeval Europeans, as being accurate accounts of the secret practices of the Ismailis. *Ḥashīshī* was a term of abuse in Arabic, which was then used in reference to the Nizārī Ismailis in some polemical Sunni and Zaydī sources. The derogatory term itself then gave rise to the tales circulating in the mediaeval Crusader circles, connecting the Ismailis with the consumption of hashish (a product of hemp) and appearing variously in European sources. These so-called 'Assassin legends' have no counterparts in Arabic or Persian sources of the same period, despite their authors' hostile stances. Farhad Daftary's conclusion was that the tales were fabricated by the Crusader circles and their occidental observers themselves to justify what they perceived as 'irrational' behaviour (martyrdom) that had to be given a rational explanation (as behaviour motivated under the influence of intoxicating drugs such as hashish).

If the first edition of *The Ismā'īlīs* had had a significant impact in the field (with numerous reprints, reviews and regular citations in academic literature), *The Assassin Legends* was no less interesting to scholars: it attracted thirty reviews in the lustre following its publication. Nevertheless, was it possible that Farhad Daftary's formal affiliation with an institution connected to the community on whose past he was writing could somehow tarnish his academic rigour and objectivity? While the vast majority of the reviewers welcomed the book and its role in deconstructing the centuries-old myths, there were also one or two who questioned the project as they thought he was an Ismaili, an 'insider' of a religious community, taking an apologetic stance.[19] When suggestions of apologetic intentions were made by one such reviewer, Daftary was quick

to publish a rebuttal in the same journal declaring: 'I would like to state that I am not an Ismaili, and that my academic affiliation to The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, has in no way affected my academic objectivity […] My main aim in writing *The Assassin Legends* was to trace the roots of some of the major legends surrounding the Nizari Ismailis of the medi-aeval times […] and it has never been my intention to be apologetic.'[20] However, a more important phenomenon was now taking place. Although the academic credibility of institutions linked formally or informally with a Christian faith community, like the various schools of divinity, theology faculties and even entire universities, had been accepted without question on both sides of the Atlantic for hundreds of years, Western academics were now witnessing the fact that an academic institute connected to a Muslim community and based in central London could produce research of the highest calibre, deeply committed to the standards of critical schol-arship and yet empathetic to the historical and intellectual preoccupa-tions of Muslims, and more particularly in this case, the Ismailis. Farhad Daftary had achieved this difficult balance, as he defines himself neither as an 'insider' nor an 'outsider' but as a close and empathetic 'observer'. In the context of the 'Assassin legends', too, he maintains that much in the same way that 'fiction' through repetition over time becomes accepted as 'fact', then facts also need to be repeated frequently and widely enough to replace fictions.

Promoting scholarship

Farhad Daftary has contributed significantly to The Institute of Ismaili Studies, establishing it as a recognised academic centre for Ismaili studies. One of the aims of the Institute has been to promote scholarship on Islam, and he made this his own objective. He himself had originally published outside the Institute because there was no publishing programme as such. Now, he established the Institute's first publication series: the Ismaili Heritage Series, which was initiated in 1996 under his own general editor-ship. This was designed to be a series of monographs with the objective of exploring the intellectual and religious heritage of the Ismailis, a heritage which still resonates in the contemporary world since the community is very much in existence. He signed contracts with several of the leading authorities who had already contributed to a collective volume he had just edited, *Mediaeval Isma'ili History and Thought*. Four years later, in 2000, he established a second series, the Ismaili Texts and Translations Series, again under his general editorship and with an editorial board of eminent schol-

ars of Ismaili studies. This new series was devoted to critical editions and annotated translations of authentic texts in Arabic and Persian produced by the Ismailis themselves, or about them, clarifying the actual teachings of the community. The series had a two-fold objective: to produce materials for further progress in the field and to address the misrepresentations of Ismaili doctrines and practices. The primary selection criteria for the series were major texts that remained unpublished as well as texts that had been published in defective editions. He invited Professor Madelung, who had already taught at the Institute, to be a consulting editor for the series. Daftary's general support of sound academic projects is well known and he has generously supported or sponsored a number of publications, conferences and other academic initiatives both inside and outside the Institute. He has also promoted the publications of various types of anthologies of Ismaili literature and other Islamic texts, especially those related to the contributions of Shi'i Muslim scholars who have been hitherto marginalised in Islamic studies in the West.

Meanwhile, Farhad Daftary had also started developing the academic faculty of his Department of Academic Research and Publications. Wilferd Madelung became a Senior Research Fellow, a position which through Daftary's initiative was later offered to Professors Hermann Landolt (in 2002) and M. A. Amir-Moezzi (in 2007) as well. He contributed to developing and running the Institute's Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH), in which two years were spent on an innovative course at the Institute and a third year studying for a Master's degree at a British university. While the intellectual design of this innovative academic programme was the brainchild of Aziz Esmail and Mohammed Arkoun (1928–2010), who had been another Senior Research Fellow and one of the governors of the Institute, Daftary was responsible for finding and engaging most of the lecturers for this programme. Thus, he contributed to the students' exposure to some of the best minds in the field of Islamic studies in the UK, as he successfully invited eminent scholars from Cambridge (Patricia Crone, Charles Melville and John Cooper), Oxford (Julie Scott Meisami), or Edinburgh (Carole Hillenbrand and Robert Hillenbrand), and Manchester (C. Edmund Bosworth), some of them contributors to this volume, to teach in this programme. This approach not only brought the Institute's graduate students into contact with these scholars, but it also facilitated the admission of the students to the best UK-based universities in their third year. Daftary himself has been regularly teaching a survey course on Ismaili history in this programme since its inception in 1994.

Mediaeval Isma'ili History and Thought

Daftary kept his own publication activities alive despite intensive
administrative duties. His next publication, this time an edited volume,
Mediaeval Isma'ili History and Thought (1996; see Daftary Bibliography,
no. 9), was designed to cover selected areas in Ismaili studies that needed
further attention. This was to be a turning point in its own right since he
had now started to galvanise other scholars in the field of Ismaili studies.
For the volume, he assembled some of the most renowned scholars in the
field, such as Ali Asani, Heinz Halm, Abbas Hamdani, Wilferd Madelung,
Azim Nanji, Ismail K. Poonawala and Paul E. Walker, again, some of
them contributors to this volume, and also several others, like C. Edmund
Bosworth, Carole Hillenbrand and Charles Melville who were then also
teaching at the Institute. This process widened his circle of academic
friends and colleagues. He now had the opportunity to meet some of
these scholars for the first time in London. With others, such as Abbas
Hamdani, he had already established working relationships through
correspondence. He dedicated this collective volume to Ivanow, who had
never had a Festschrift and, beyond a few circles, had never received suffi-
cient recognition for his pioneering accomplishments in modern Ismaili
studies.

In this volume Farhad Daftary also demonstrated his ability to make
materials available in English as the primary language of scholarship in
the West. The first two chapters of this edited volume were, in fact, trans-
lations from the German: Madelung's 1959 groundbreaking article on the
Qarmaṭīs and the Fatimids, and a summary in English of Halm's seminal
habilitation work on the pre-Fatimid Ismaili cosmology.[21] Equally, in his
Assassin Legends he had inserted an annotated English translation of de
Sacy's classical study in French on the Nizārīs, *Mémoire sur la dynastie des
Assassins* (pp. 129–188). All these translations were meticulously produced
by Azizeh Azodi (1922–2008), an Iranian polyglot then living in Paris.
Later, she translated into English Halm's book for the Ismaili Heritage
Series, under the title *The Fatimids and their Traditions of Learning* (1997).

Daftary's work began to have some impact also in the Middle East.
By 1997, *The Ismā'īlīs* and *The Assassin Legends* had been translated into
Arabic and Persian. The Persian translation of *The Ismā'īlīs* received the
'Best Book of the Year Award' in Iran (see Daftary Bibliography, no. 1(b));
and then subsequently when a group of religious scholars from the main
seminary in Qumm compiled a collection of studies on the Ismailis, they
had their work evaluated by Daftary who was also invited to contribute

an extensive introduction to the volume (Daftary Bibliography, no. 47). Subsequently, Daftary himself became active in commissioning translations of the Institute's publications into Arabic, Persian and Urdu as well as some European languages. He also responded to translation requests from various publishers in a wide range of countries. At the time of writing this introduction, Daftary's own works have been variously translated into fourteen languages, including Arabic and Persian, as well as French, German, Gujarati, Italian, Indonesian (Bahasa), Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Tajik (in Cyrillic alphabet), Turkish and Urdu. Some of his books have been translated also into Hungarian through the initiatives of István Hajnal (a contributor to this volume) who is single-handedly promoting Ismaili and Qarmaṭī studies in Budapest. Further, Daftary has ensured that most of the major publications of the Institute (other than the Arabic and Persian texts published in the Ismaili Texts and Translations Series) are translated into Arabic and Persian as well as other languages such as Gujarati, Portuguese, Russian, Tajik (Cyrillic) and Urdu, languages used by the Ismailis of different countries.

Aiming to make his own major publication more broadly accessible, given that the eight-hundred page volume of *The Ismāʿīlīs* was essentially a highly specialised academic work, he decided to devote his next two years to working on *A Short History of the Ismailis* (1998; see Daftary Bibliography, no. 3), published in the Islamic Surveys series under the general editorship of Carole Hillenbrand. It is important to note that this book is not a summary or a condensed version of his *magnum opus*. For a start, it is organised thematically within a chronological frame. He also added much new material, incorporating more recent progress in the field since the time of writing *The Ismāʿīlīs* more than a decade earlier. This also attested to the accelerated speed of progress in Ismaili studies.

There followed an interlude whilst he edited two more multi-authored volumes: *Intellectual Traditions in Islam* (2000; see Daftary Bibliography, no. 10), based on the proceedings of a conference organised by the Institute in 1994 at Churchill College, Cambridge, covering an overview of intellectual life in Islam as expressed through different traditions, and a Festschrift in honour of Wilferd Madelung, *Culture and Memory in Mediaeval Islam* (2003, see Daftary Bibliography, no. 11), which Daftary co-edited with Joseph W. Meri, a former student of Madelung's who was at the time a research associate at the Institute. Subsequently, Daftary was instrumental in launching the Institute's *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ* ('Epistles of the Brethren of Purity') series, which will result in the critical edition of the Arabic text and annotated English translation of this work in seventeen

volumes by more than twenty scholars. Daftary serves on the Advisory Board of this series of publications, with Nader El-Bizri as its general editor. In terms of promoting scholarship in Ismaili studies, quite aside from organising an extensive programme of publications for the Institute and inviting various scholars to participate in these efforts,[22] Daftary also arranged for subventions to publishers which made other Ismaili publications possible. In this category, two cases merit particular attention here: the second volume of H. Halm's trilogy of books on Fatimid history,[23] and the Ismaili section of the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* of Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh (d. 1318),[24] a chief primary source on the Nizārī Ismaili state of Persia in mediaeval times. The latter book was dedicated to Farhad Daftary.

Bibliographies

For Madelung's Festschrift, Farhad Daftary had invested much effort in compiling a bibliography of the works published by this polymath and highly prolific German scholar, which he arranged chronologically. Indeed it had been through bibliographical studies that Daftary had entered the field of Ismaili studies, by using an index card system in Berkeley. For more than four decades, he had been collecting bibliographical information. This passion for bibliographies finally culminated in his publication of *Ismaili Literature* (2004; see Daftary Bibliography, no. 4), which has the subtitle 'A bibliography of sources and studies'. Previously, there had been two important bibliographical works in Ismaili studies.[25] Whereas those works had been devoted exclusively to manuscript sources, Daftary was now presenting a bibliography of all the published works, primary sources as well as secondary studies, on Ismaili-related subjects, an area which had not been covered by the other two bibliographies. Given the rapid progress in the field, Daftary is currently compiling notes for a second edition of his *Ismaili Literature*.

Daftary had been equally active in publishing journal articles and contributing chapters to collected volumes. In 2005, he selected ten of the most significant articles he had published by that time, and collected them in a volume entitled *Ismailis in Medieval Muslim Societies*, in which some of the studies appeared in expanded forms with additional notes while others were slightly abridged.

Works of reference

Farhad Daftary was aware that the bulk of the academic publications on Ismaili studies might be read only by specialists, and that most scholars in the wider field of Islamic studies, as well as researchers and students in general, remained largely unaware of the complexities of Ismaili history and thought. Consequently, he decided to embark on a project of writing both English and Persian entries for encyclopaedias and other reference works, and these currently number more than 130 (See Daftary Bibliography, nos. 76–211). He started with the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (*EIr*), the then major new work of reference in Islamic and Iranian studies. In the early 1990s, after the publication of *The Ismāʿīlīs*, he was invited to be the consulting editor for that encyclopaedia's Ismaili articles, identifying the entries and their prospective authors. In that role, he himself has contributed many articles to *EIr*. His major contributions to the *EIr* are 'Carmatians', a ten-page article published in 1990, and the seventeen-page entry on 'Isma'ilism: iii. Isma'ili History', published in 2007. Meanwhile, Professor Bosworth, then one of the main editors of the second edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (*EI2*), which was in its final volumes, got him involved in writing many of their remaining Ismaili articles, starting with 'Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad', published in 1993. Several of his later articles appeared in the *Supplement* to *EI2*.

By the early 1990s, vast Islamic encyclopaedias had started to be produced also in Persian in Iran. Thus, we now have the *Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī* (the 'Great Islamic Encyclopaedia' or *GIE*) and the *Dānishnāma-yi Jahān-i Islām* ('Encyclopaedia of the World of Islam' or *EWI*). The entries in the latter were initially translations of those published in *EI2* or other works of reference. Daftary became an academic consultant for the *Dānishnāma*, contributing many of their new Ismaili entries, and has worked closely also with the *GIE*. He has written the detailed twenty-two-page article 'Ismāʿīliyya' for the *GIE*, published in 1998.

He and Madelung are also the Editors-in-Chief of the *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, an abridged English version of the ongoing *GIE*. This translation project had been initiated by John Cooper (1947–1998) in the early 1990s with his translations of some forty articles. Years later, Daftary was contacted by Kazem M. Bojnurdi, Director of the Centre for the Great Islamic Encyclopaedia, in order to involve the Institute in this project: they had a meeting in Tehran and agreed to collaborate, calling the prospective publication *Encyclopaedia Islamica* at Daftary's suggestion. What made

this vast work of reference appealing was the fact that, in addition to covering Islam in all regions, it concentrated on two categories of entries not found widely anywhere else: on Shiʿi personalities, ideas and concepts, and on the history and culture of the greater Persianate world. Since this fell within the Institute's mandate, the project was thereafter taken on board and the translated volumes are being published in association with E. J. Brill of Leiden. Daftary himself edits all the Ismaili-related articles and monitors the work of the team of editors and translators involved in this project with Reza Shah-Kazemi acting as its managing editor.

Over the years, Daftary has also been closely involved in the work of the Institute's library. For example, he played a key role in facilitating the library's acquisition of the Zāhid ʿAlī Collection of some 221 Arabic Ismaili manuscripts in 1997, also arranging for Delia Cortese (another contributor to this volume) to compile a descriptive catalogue of that collection.[26] Zāhid ʿAlī (1888–1958), one of the pioneers in modern Ismaili studies, belonged to another learned family of Dāʾūdī Ṭayyibī Ismailis with an important collection of manuscripts.

Directorship

Professor Azim Nanji (now at Stanford University and the author of the Foreword to this volume) was the Director of The Institute of Ismaili Studies for a decade (1998–2008). In the last two years of that period (2007–2008), Daftary served as Associate Director of the Institute. After Nanji's departure he served a stint as Acting Director, before being appointed in September 2009 as the Institute's Co-Director, together with Professor Karim H. Karim. At the same time, he has continued to head the Department of Academic Research and Publications. Asked about his association with the Institute, Daftary repeatedly asserts that he has learnt a great deal through his experience of working there for more than two decades. The Institute has in many ways shaped his intellectual experience and sharpened his scholarship. For example, while originally he would use the term 'sect' to refer to the Ismailis and other Shiʿis, in the second edition of *The Ismāʿīlīs* he uses 'community' and 'communities of interpretation' (in the plural), since he is now reluctant to use the former term to refer to a community that still exists on the contemporary scene (as opposed to those short-lived sects of mediaeval times).

In 2008, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of His Highness Prince Karim al-Husayni, Aga Khan IV, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of his accession to the imamate of the Nizārī Ismailis, Farhad Daftary's

Department of Academic Research published, among other works, five books to specifically commemorate the event.[27] One of these was a book he himself co-authored with Zulfikar Hirji, *The Ismailis: An Illustrated History* (Daftary Bibliography, no. 7), a work, the first of its kind, addressed to a general audience, containing hundreds of images (several of them from Daftary's private collection) documenting the eventful history of the Ismailis in a lucid and accessible manner.

More recently, Daftary has edited *A Modern History of the Ismailis*, a publication designed to fill, at least partially, the gap in our knowledge of the recent history of the Ismaili communities, including the Ṭayyibīs, in different geographical locations (Syria, India and Pakistan, East Africa, Tajikistan and the rest of Central Asia, with the least explored region of all, China). Farhad Daftary's work is still ongoing. He belongs to a generation of prolific scholars, well reflected in his recent contributions to the festschriften of many of his friends and colleagues, including C. Edmund Bosworth, Hermann Landolt, Urbain Vermeulen, Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti, Etan Kohlberg, Carole Hillenbrand, Paul E. Walker, Heinz Halm and Charles Melville (the last two forthcoming).

As the recent author of the long chapter on 'Varieties of Islam' in *The New Cambridge History of Islam* (Daftary Bibliography, no. 74), covering mainly the various Shi'i communities, he is now working on an expanded version of that study. This will be published in monographic form as *A Short History of Shi'i Islam*. Daftary's broader interests in Shi'i studies is aligned with the Institute's expansion of its remit into covering all communities and schools of thought within Shi'i Islam. Daftary's current work includes three other research projects, to which he has regularly devoted his attention for years: a *Historical Dictionary of the Ismailis*; a book on *Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and his Times*; and, as mentioned earlier, an edition of W. Ivanow's memoirs (*Fifty Years in the East: An Autobiographical Sketch*). Daftary has been a member of various academic and professional associations and societies, including The British Institute of Persian Studies, on whose Governing Council he served for two terms (2002–2007).

New horizons in Ismaili studies

Over the past forty years, Farhad Daftary's impressive publication record has contributed to our knowledge of the events related to Ismaili history and the intricacies of the intellectual traditions elaborated by the Ismaili Shi'is. His greatest contribution is to have produced a straightforward narrative account of them in a framework constructed in accordance with

the view of Ismaili history outlined earlier. As we have seen, Daftary's work continues as strong as ever. Yet, it may be in order here to identify what areas in Ismaili studies are still unexplored. The following observations are not intended as a critique of Farhad Daftary's approach to Ismaili history, but rather to present some possible avenues of research that future generations of scholars may wish to consider when embarking on this field.

i. Contextual, comparative and thematic approaches

The religious significance of Ismaili thought within Islam can be assessed in the context of the history of religions. A comparative approach with other groups in Islam (other Shiʿi groups, Sufis, theological and philosophical schools) seems imperative if we are to understand the significance of Ismaili ideas. Similarly, those ideas can be studied in the light of similar literature produced in other religious traditions, especially those groups that propounded an esoteric understanding of scriptures and that formed around a charismatic authority. Similarly, the enterprise pursued by the various Ismaili authors can be studied in close connection with their contemporary intellectual history. Thus, one might analyse, for example, al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān's (d. 363/974) role in the history of Ismaili Shiʿism vis-à-vis the contributions of other similar figures such as al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941) for Ithnāʿasharī Shiʿism and al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) for Sunni Islam; or Fatimid-sponsored theories of the *imāma* vis-à-vis contemporaneous *imāma* theories sponsored by the Umayyads of al-Andalus and the ʿAbbasids of Baghdad; or the *ginān*s in the wider context of Indo-Muslim literature; or the doctrine of *taʿlīm* in the light of similar Sufi theories of knowledge and leadership; or the theory and practice of Ismaili *taʾwīl* together with the *taʾwīl* practised by the Muʿtazilīs, the Sufis and others; or the provocative question, 'What has Alamūt got to do with Cairo?' (the question is reminiscent of the statement by Tertullian about Athens and Jerusalem). These are just some examples of the research possibilities at our disposal.

In contrast with a view of history as a concatenation of events, rulers, imams and authors, another fruitful approach might be the thematic approach. Possible themes to be explored can then encapsulate research questions such as, 'Is there such a thing as an Ismaili approach to the Qurʾan?'; 'Do Ismaili and Ithnāʿasharī forms of Shiʿism differ in essence?'; 'Is it right to assume (as Marshall Hodgson did)[28] that Ismailism is to Shiʿism what Sufism is to Sunnism?'

ii. Problematising methods and theories

It is vital to build on Farhad Daftary's historiographical achievements, but it is equally important for future scholars to put them to the test. New methodological tools developed in the fields of historiography, anthropology, religious studies and discourse analysis can be used to deconstruct the ways in which the Ismailis have constructed their own history, literature, self-image and religious identity. Similarly, while the emphasis on history, and the history of the Ismaili imams in particular, is undoubtedly indispensable, more attention might be given to the communities – their diverse customs and practices, both historically and in the present times. It is possible that questions such as these will be followed by other, perhaps contrasting, views or even re-readings of Ismaili (and wider Islamic) history.

iii. New technologies

Finally, mention must be made of the chances that new technologies offer for the history of ideas. In the first place, texts could be made available through electronic media to researchers in every country to facilitate the exchange of scholarship. Manuscripts can be digitalised and texts can be made available so that they can be explored by key-words (and Arabic roots) through search engines. What only three decades ago was almost unthinkable is now possible: glossaries and lexicons of technical terms in Ismaili works might be created so that they are better studied together with other texts from other, better known, traditions. An online database of Qur'anic citations in Ismaili sources is a necessary step towards an in-depth research into their exegesis and hermeneutical approach.

*The contributors would like to join the editor of this volume
in offering their collective work to Dr Farhad Daftary
with esteem and affection.*[29]

Notes

1. Much of the information contained in this introduction is based on a series of interviews I conducted with Farhad Daftary during the course of 2010.
2. On this and other Persian titles see Ahmad Ashraf and Ali Banuazizi, 'Class System: v. Classes in the Qajar Period', *EIr*, vol. 5, pp. 667–677.
3. See Y. Armagani, 'Alborz College', *EIr*, vol. 1, pp. 821–823.
4. See Daftary, 'Ivanow, Vladimir Alekseevich', *EIr*, vol. 14, pp. 293–300.
5. See Daftary, 'Anjoman-e Esmāʿīlī', *EIr*, vol. 2, p. 84.
6. See Daftary Bibliography, no. 7, pp. 40–41, 172–173.
7. See Daftary Bibliography, nos. 17–21, 78.
8. Marshall G. S. Hodgson, 'The Ismāʿīlī State', in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5, ed. J. A. Boyle (Cambridge, 1968), p. 424, n.1.
9. See W. Ivanow, 'Tombs of Some Persian Ismaili Imams,' *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, NS, 14 (1938), pp. 49–62, also his *Alamut and Lamasar* (Tehran, 1960).
10. See Daftary Bibliography, no. 1.
11. See Daftary Bibliography, no. 11.
12. These three articles of S. M. Stern are respectively: 'Heterodox Ismāʿīlism at the Time of al-Muʿizz', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 17 (1955), pp. 10–33; 'The Early Ismāʿīlī Missionaries in North-West Persia and in Khurāsān and Transoxania', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 23 (1960), pp. 56–90, and 'Ismāʿīlīs and Qarmaṭians', in *L'Élaboration de l'Islam* (Paris, 1961), pp. 99–108; all three repr. in his *Studies in Early Ismāʿīlism* (Leiden, 1983), pp. 257–288, 189–233 and 289–298, respectively.
13. W. Madelung's two original German articles were based on his doctoral thesis written in 1957 at the University of Hamburg. See respectively, his 'Fatimiden und Baḥrainqarmaṭen', *Der Islam*, 34 (1959), pp. 34–88; revised tr. as 'The Fatimids and the Qarmaṭīs of Baḥrayn', in Daftary, ed., *Mediaeval Ismaʿili History and Thought* (See Daftary Bibliography no. 9), pp. 21–73; and his 'Das Imamat in der frühen ismalitischen Lehre', *Der Islam*, 37 (1961), pp. 43–135; and 'Ḳarmaṭī', *EI2*, vol. 4, pp. 660–665.
14. Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shīʿa*, ed. H. Ritter (Istanbul, 1931), pp. 58–59; Saʿd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt wa'l-firaq*, ed. M. J. Mashkūr (Tehran, 1963), p. 81.
15. B. Lewis, *The Origins of Ismāʿīlism: A Study of the Historical Background of the Fāṭimid Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 33–35; H. Corbin, *Étude préliminaire pour le 'Livre réunissant les deux sagesses' de Nasir-e Khosraw* (Tehran and Paris, 1953), pp. 14–19; W. Madelung, 'Khaṭṭābiyya', *EI2*, vol. 4, pp. 1132–1133.
16. Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān b. Muḥammad, *Daʿāʾim al-Islām*, ed. Asaf A. A. Fyzee (Cairo, 1951–1961), vol. 1, pp. 49–50; English trans. by A. A. A. Fyzee, completely revised by I. K. Poonawala, as *The Pillars of Islam* (New Delhi, 2002–2004), vol. 1, pp. 65–66.

17. See Daftary Bibliography, in addition to chapter 3 in nos. 1 and 6, in nos. 23, 29–31, 33.

18. See, for example, Daftary Bibliography, no. 1, pp. 1–31, no. 3, pp. 1–20, no. 4, pp. 84–103, no. 5, pp. 27–41, no. 6, pp. 1–33, as well as nos. 23, 44 and 57.

19. See the review of Daftary's *The Assassin Legends* by Patrick Franke in *Die Welt des Islams*, 35 (1995), pp. 134–136.

20. See Daftary's response to Franke's review, 'An den Herausgeber/To the Editor', *Die Welt des Islams*, 36 (1996), p. 144.

21. H. Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismāʿīlīya: Eine Studie zur islamishcen Gnosis* (Wiesbaden, 1978); idem, 'The Cosmology of the Pre-Fatimid Ismāʿīliyya', in Daftary, *Mediaeval Ismaʿili History and Thought* (Daftary Bibliography, no. 9, pp. 75–83).

22. See The Institute of Ismaili Studies, Department of Academic Research and Publications, *Catalogue of Publications 2010* (London, 2010).

23. H. Halm, *Die Kalifen von Kairo. Die Fatimiden in Ägypten 973–1074* (Munich, 2003).

24. Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh, *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh: tārīkh-i Ismāʿīliyān*, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan (Tehran, 1387 Sh./2008).

25. W. Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey* (Tehran, 1963); I. K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismāʿīlī Literature* (Malibu, CA, 1977).

26. See D. Cortese, *Arabic Ismaili Manuscripts: The Zāhid ʿAlī Collection in the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies* (London, 2003).

27. Apart from *The Ismailis: An Illustrated History*, these were: *An Anthology of Ismaili Literature; Master of the Age: An Islamic Treatise on the Necessity of the Imamate; Arts of the City Victorious: Islamic Art and Architecture in Fatimid North Africa and Egypt;* and *Word of God, Art of Man: The Qurʾan and its Creative Expressions.*

28. Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago, 1974), vol. 1, p. 393: 'In some ways, but not all, the Ṣūfīs represented in a Jamāʿī-Sunnī milieu what Bāṭinī piety represented in a Shīʿī milieu.'

29. I would like to thank a number of individuals who have made this volume possible and helped me at different stages: Marjan Afsharian, Fayaz Alibhai, Alessandro Cancian, Rahim Gholami, Bilal Gökkir, Asma Hilali, Nadia Holmes, Hafiz Karmali, Kutub Kassam, Shahram Khodaverdian, Julia Kolb, Hena Miah, Isabel Miller, Lisa Morgan, Patricia Salazar and Fiona Ward.

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I. Books (**nos. 1–8**)
II. Edited books (**nos. 9–14**)
III. Articles, book chapters and miscellanea (**nos. 15–75**)
IV. Encyclopaedia articles and contributions to
other reference works (**nos. 76–211**)
V. Book reviews (**nos. 212–245**)

I. Books

1.   *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, with a Foreword by Wilferd Madelung (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990). pp. xviii + 804 + 20 plates + 1 map; repr. 1992, 1994, 1995, 1999, 2004. Also published in India (New Delhi: Munshiram Monoharlal Publishers, 1990); for the second ed. see no. 6.

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1(c)   Tajik (Cyrillic transcription): Abdusalom Makhmadnazar, tr., *Ismoiliyon: tarikh va aqoid* (Moscow: Ladomir, 1999). p. 816.

1(d)   Turkish: Ercüment Özkaya, tr., *Muhalif İslamın 1400 Yılı: İsmaililer, Tarih ve Kuram* (Ankara: Rastlanti Yayınları, 2001). pp. 571.

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Abbreviations

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