

alleged scholars of law among the commoners/Sunnis' (e.g., Ar. pp. 108 and 142). Nevertheless, in his work he clearly borrows from Sunni (Shāfi'i) legal theory, mentions Sunni legal opinions before his own, and often admits that the *ahl al-bayt* agree with the former (Ar. p. 142) or at least with the opinions of some Sunni jurists (e.g., Ar. p. 110). Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's treatise thus manifests a methodological reliance on and a conversation with Sunni thought, but it also attests to a process of forming a sharply demarcated and intellectually independent identity that is to be established and defended even in relatively unproblematic realms such as secretarial manuals. In contrast to the majority of Sunni discussions on law, in which Shi'i opinions simply do not feature because of methodological incompatibility, in al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's work Sunni ideas and opinions loom large.

Beyond some problems, mentioned above, in the translations, the edition is very well done. The Arabic script is clear, elegant, and readable. Overall, this work provides a fascinating view into the complex interaction between al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān and Sunni scholarship.

*Ahmed El Shamsy*

*University of Chicago*

E-mail: elshamsy@uchicago.edu

doi:10.1093/jis/etu030

Published online 27 March 2014

*A Code of Conduct: A Treatise on the Etiquette of the Fatimid Ismaili Mission: A critical edition of the Arabic text and English translation of Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī's al-Risāla al-mūjaza al-kāfiya fī ādāb al-du'āt*

Edited and translated by VERENA KLEMM and PAUL E. WALKER (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011), xii + 84 pp. (English), indices + 74 pp. (Arabic). Price HB £29.50. EAN 978-1780761268.

Verena Klemm and Paul E. Walker's recent addition to the Ismaili Texts and Translation Series is a critical edition and English translation of a short Arabic treatise by the fifth/eleventh century Fatimid author Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī, titled *al-Risāla al-mūjaza al-kāfiya fī ādāb al-du'āt* (A Brief and Concise Treatise on the Code of Conduct for the Dā'īs). Although little is known about its author's biography, followers of the Institute of Ismaili Studies' translation series will recognize al-Naysābūrī as the author of the *Kitāb Ithbāt al-imāma* (Degrees of Excellence: A Fatimid Treatise on Leadership in Islam), an edition of which was prepared by Arzina Lalani, and published in 2010. A third work of his has also come down to us: the *Kitāb Istitār al-imām wa-tafarruq al-du'āt fī al-jazā'ir li-ṭalabihi* (Book of the Imām's Concealment and the Dispersal of Dā'īs in Search of Him to the Islands) is an historical work on the early events of the Isma'ili *dā'wa* in the pre-Fatimid period and one expects that it is only a

matter of time until this final piece in al-Naysābūrī's surviving corpus is also edited and published.

The importance of the current work is noted in the fact that it is 'the only extant work in Ismaili literature that tackles a specific aspect of the *dāwa*: a normative guideline for Ismaili *dā'īs*' (p. 3). Since it was written by a member of the Fatimid *dāwa*, the *Risāla* is without question a crucial eyewitness of how the *dāwa* was self-conceived. This makes al-Naysābūrī's short treatise of considerable value to scholars interested in gaining a rare insider's perspective of the Fatimid *dāwa* in the fifth/eleventh century. For a movement that has had much of its history depicted through the eyes of external, rarely sympathetic, writers, the publication of a critical edition and translation of al-Naysābūrī's treatise is to be welcomed as an important addition to the academic study of the history of Fatimid Shi'ism and of the *dāwa* in particular.

Al-Naysābūrī wrote the *Risāla* as a 'normative guideline' for all members of the *dāwa*. It is not a work of general ethics, but rather an ethics suited for a particular administrative class of individuals. An instructional tone of voice is adopted throughout the text; admonishment is very frequently backed up with proof-texts that give reasons why; and a compelling sense of duty to the Imām and the cause he represents is throughout evinced. In nearly all instances the prescribed guidelines are reified for a particular institutional and socio-political framework that the author has in mind. The resemblance this has to Plato's *Republic*, which, like the *Risāla*, is concerned with questions of ideal governance and participation in a structurally layered hierarchic city-state, are plain to see. In our case, Athens would be Cairo, the philosopher-king the imām-caliph, and the ideal *dā'ī* a member of the upper echelons of Fatimid society, the 'Republic'.

The author employs several literary methods. These range from Qur'ānic and ḥadīth exegesis with an obvious Shi'ī basis, to a form of writing associated with the *Mirror of Princes* genre. The *Risāla* is, therefore, synthetic of several well-established forms of writing in order that it might convey a single and meaningful message to its readers, thus indicating, as Klemm remarks, that 'al-Naysābūrī's treatise belongs to a network of interrelated literary traditions' (p. 11). The ease and flow with which al-Naysābūrī shifts between different genres of writing makes for a work of considerably high literary stature, whose structure and form are variously inspired from a number of literary traditions (Islamic and non-Islamic) but whose meaning and content are all directed for a single, specifically Isma'īli, motive. This is best depicted as an attempt by al-Naysābūrī to answer the question 'What must a *dā'ī* be like?'—the answer to which follows in each of the text's paragraphs which begin with the standard formula 'A *dā'ī* should/should not...' (*wa-yānbaghī li-l-dā'ī an...*). In this way the text's repetitive use of certain literary devices certainly adds power to its persuasive logic.

Each paragraph of the treatise focuses on a particular virtue the *dā'ī* must strive to attain or a vice that he must work hard at removing from his character and his work. In some cases these are quite general and suitable to any good, moral life; in others, there is a clear mark of Isma'īli sentiment. A *dā'ī* is a microcosm of the Fatimid state, an individual who comports himself best in his role as representative of the Imām, both in his personal relations with others as well

as in the specific duties that accompany his office and position in society. Thus, apart from calling *dā'īs* to possess traits such as generosity and temperance, the treatise recommends *inter alia* that the *dā'ī* be 'sound of opinion and skilled in administration' (p. 53), be able to 'govern individuals in accord with confessional and legal rules' (p. 54), be in a position 'to travel and observe the various regions so that he be acquainted with the nature of the inhabitants of those regions' (p. 55), etc. Such instances of our author's conscious attempt to impose a normative standard to the function of the *dā'ī* supplies an important lens through which the modern reader can better understand how the *dā'wa* was self-conceived. Whether or not al-Naysābūrī's recommendations met with historical reality is an entirely separate question, of course; that they are indicative of the kind of internal logic that justified the *dā'wa* and its activities is almost certainly guaranteed. With these points in mind, it is also conceivable that the work was written with an external (i.e. non-*dā'ī*) audience in mind, and the highly idealized impression the *Risāla* portrays of the *dā'wa* may be indicative of its attempt to ameliorate an institution that had begun to show signs of weakness.

The book itself is divided into three sections: an introduction (in two parts) (pp. 1–31); the English translation of the text and index (pp. 33–84); and a critically edited Arabic version of the work (pp. 1–74 of the Arabic section). The first introduction by Klemm gives a description of the work, its author, the context in which the work emerged, an outline of the literary genres that have inspired al-Naysābūrī, and a description of the manuscripts on which the edited text is based. The second part of the introduction by Paul E. Walker attempts to situate the treatise in a particular period of Fatimid history. Walker's analysis is an integral component of the book, which offers an important historical gloss that helps the reader to better appreciate the motives that could have led to its composition. According to Walker's analysis, which builds on evidence from the *Risāla* itself and material from al-Naysābūrī's *Ithbāt al-imāma*, socio-political events between 396–7–405/1006–1014–15 are likely to have formed the backdrop for the text's authorship. This was a period in which the caliph al-Ḥākim's authority was questioned for a number of seemingly arbitrary decisions concerning the closure of the *majālis al-ḥikma*, regular sessions for the instruction of Isma'īlis, and a shift in policy that appeared to sympathize with Sunni practices. To compound matters, al-Ḥākim's frustrations with the *dā'wa* for having failed to meet its objectives and his decision to remove its chief *dā'ī*, Mālik b. Sa'īd al-Fāriqi, on suspicion of his collusion with al-Ḥākim's sister and political rival, Sitt al-Mulk, all contributed to a growing sense of political turmoil. Such events not only undermined al-Ḥākim's image, they also questioned the value and purpose of the *dā'wa* itself. Al-Naysābūrī's repeated use of the phrase 'A *dā'ī* should . . .', as well as the number of recommendations which followed it, could be seen as an attempt to placate a growing public dissatisfaction with the *dā'wa* with a work that was drafted as if a kind of mandate for office, if, that is, the work was read by the ordinary citizens of Cairo.

As for the Arabic text and its translation, careful attention has been paid to ensure accuracy and to preserve the prosaic quality of its original. The text has

been helpfully sectioned with corresponding paragraph numbers in the Arabic and English. Verses from the Qur'ān are fully vocalized to distinguish it from the author's own prose, and the same has been done with sayings attributed to the Prophet and the Shi'i Imāms. It is unfortunate that while references are provided in most cases for the ḥadīths cited in the Arabic edition of the text, they are not included in the English translation. As for the translation, it is smooth and articulate, showing a greater preference for literary style than literal accuracy. This is to be regarded as a positive move taken by the translators given the nature and genre of the text in question.

Overall, Verena Klemm and Paul E. Walker's work is a welcome addition to a growing library of Arabic editions published by the Isma'ili Institute. It adds another important piece to the study of the history of Isma'ili Shi'ism, which has to be regarded as a positive step in facilitating better understanding of that tradition as it is portrayed by Isma'ili thinkers and writers. The work would therefore be of particular appeal to anyone interested in the history of Fatimid Shi'ism, as well as to anyone with general interest in Shi'i literature.

*Wahid M. Amin*

*Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Oxford*

E-mail: [wahid.amin@theology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:wahid.amin@theology.ox.ac.uk)

doi:10.1093/jis/etu025

Published online 24 March 2014

*In the Age of Averroes: Arabic Philosophy in the Sixth/Twelfth Century*

Edited by PETER ADAMSON (London: The Warburg Institute, 2011), 282 pp., index. Price HB £60.00. EAN 978-01854811540.

This is the sixteenth volume of the Warburg Institute Colloquia series, which includes two previous volumes on Islamic philosophy, (1) volume eleven, titled *Classical Arabic Philosophy: Sources and Reception* (2007) and (2) *In the Age of Al-Fārābī: Arabic Philosophy in the Fourth/Tenth Century* (2008), both edited by Peter Adamson. The present volume, which is also edited by Peter Adamson, is based on the international conference bearing the same title, which took place at the Warburg Institute in London from 14 to 16 February 2008.

In the Introduction, Peter Adamson explains how this volume represents some of the latest research in the field of Islamic philosophy and how it contributes to our knowledge of some little known or hitherto unknown aspects of this tradition, challenging the view that Islamic philosophy was dealt a serious blow by al-Ghazālī or that Averroes was the last Islamic philosopher in the Aristotelian tradition. Adamson also points out that the volume is devoted to the developments that occurred in this field in the twelfth century across the Islamic world rather than to Averroes himself, who was chosen for the title, according to Adamson, because he is the medieval Islamic philosopher whose name is more likely to be recognized by non-specialists.