



ANJOMAN-E ESMĀ'ĪLĪ

ANJOMAN-E ESMĀ'ĪLĪ (Isma'ili Society), a research institution founded on 16 February 1946 in Bombay, India, under the patronage of the third *Āqā Khan*, Solṭān Moḥammad Shah (1294-1376, 1877-1957), the 48th imam of the Nezārī Isma'ilis. Its primary objective, according to the charter, has been “the promotion of independent and critical study of all matters connected with Ismailism” with the stated policy of refraining from all religio-political propaganda activities.

The Anjoman-e Esmā'īlī grew out of the Islamic Research Association, founded in Bombay in 1933, also under the patronage of the Agha Khan III. The person most responsible for the creation and promotion of both institutions was Wladimir Ivanow (1886-1970), a distinguished Russian scholar in Isma'ili studies, who had left Russia soon after the October Revolution to spend the next forty years in India. Ivanow worked with his colleagues in the executive committee of the Association, notably its president Ali M. Mecklai and its secretary Asaf A. A. Fyzee, to give an Isma'ili focus to the research and publications of the Association and eventually transformed it into the new Isma'ili Society, with Mecklai continuing as its president.

With Ivanow as honorary editor and principal author, the Society established a publications series, including texts, translations, and monographs in Persian, Arabic, English, and Gujarati. Ivanow's close relations with Isma'ili sectarians gave him access to carefully guarded private collections of Isma'ili manuscripts, a large number of which he procured for the Society's library. Indeed, Ivanow was the moving force of the Society, and it encountered



difficulties after his departure for Tehran in 1959. By 1964 the publication series was discontinued, and the Society itself was in effect absorbed by the Isma'ili Association of Pakistan in Karachi.

Between 1946 and 1963 the Society published twenty-eight major items, twenty-two of which were contributed by Ivanow himself. The most important Isma'ili texts, edited and translated for the first time by Ivanow include: Nāṣer-e Ḳosrow's *Šeš faṣl* (Bombay, 1949); Naṣīr-al-dīn Ṭūṣī's *Rawżat al-taslīm* (Bombay, 1950); *Pandīyāt-e javānmardī*, containing the sayings of the late 9th/15th-century imam Mostanṣer Be'llāh (Bombay, 1953); *Haft bāb* of Abū Eshāq Qohestānī, a Nezārī author of the early 10th/16th century (Tehran, 1336 Š./1957); *Faṣl dar bayān-e šenākt-e emām*; the *Taṣnīfāt*, attributed to Ḳayr-kvāh Herātī, a Nezārī missionary of the mid-10th/16th century (Tehran, 1961); and some works by Šehāb-al-dīn Shah (d. 1302/1884), the eldest son of Āqā Khan II. The Society's last publication, and Ivanow's final work, is *Ismaili Literature* (Tehran, 1963), a bibliographical survey of the extant Isma'ili manuscript literature providing detailed information on some 900 titles.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also "The Islamic Research Association," *JRAS*, 1938, pp. 480-81.

A. A. A. Fayzee, *Islamic Research in Bombay*, Bombay, 1948, pp. 1f.

F. Daftary, "W. Ivanow," *Middle Eastern Studies* 8, 1972, pp. 241-44.