



A'YĀN AL-ŠĪ'A

A'YĀN AL-ŠĪ'A, a monumental dictionary (56 vols. altogether) of Shi'ite celebrities and learned men compiled by the Shi'ite scholar Sayyed Moḥsen Amīn 'Āmelī (d. 1952), the spiritual leader of the Imami community in Damascus from 1901 and a member of the Arab Academy of Damascus from 1942. The first volume, in two parts (1st ed. Damascus, 1935), is a collection of articles written by Moḥsen Amīn in defense of both the Imami Shi'ite doctrine and a view of history against what he considered to be unfair or polemic statements by non-Shi'ite classical and modern authors. About half of part one has been translated into Persian by Kamāl Mūsawī and published with additional material provided by Ḥasan Amīn (*Dāyerat al-ma'āref-e šī'a*, Tehran, 1345 Š./1967). The second volume is devoted to the life of the Prophet and his daughter Fāṭema, while the next two volumes deal with the lives of the imams up to Ḥasan al-'Askarī. From the fifth volume onwards, the biographies (many of them only a few lines in length) are arranged in alphabetical order according to the name of each individual presented. The fortieth volume (Saida, 1957), however, is devoted to Sayyed Moḥsen himself. It contains his autobiography with a list of his writings (pp. 98-102) and a great number of articles by contemporaries in praise of his achievements as a modernist religious scholar and author. Starting with this volume, the work is edited by the author's son, Sayyed Ḥasan Amīn, and printed in Beirut and/or Saida. Volumes 53 (1962) to 56 (1963) are supplements. In 1969 the first installment (32 pp.) of another supplement (ed. Ḥasan Amīn) appeared in Beirut. Some of the earlier volumes have been reprinted several times. A new edition in folio format and six volumes was published in Tehran in 1980.



Apart from the *A'yān*, 'Āmelī produced a considerable number of other important writings, ranging in topic from the historical geography of Jabal 'Āmel to a diary of his travels to Iraq, Iran, Egypt, and the Ḥejāz.

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