

## Introduction

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Publishers and scholars have often lamented the proliferation of the *Festschriften*. As one distinguished colleague aptly observed, *Festschriften* are superfluous. Like other academic traditions, this unprofitable enterprise may well in time fade from the collective memory of academia, or at least, from the realm of conventional academic publishing. But as humanists we strive to preserve such time-honoured traditions of learning and scholarship, and not merely succumb to the latest trends. The prevailing sentiment in the Academy is that the *Festschrift* represents a long-standing ritual, a selfless undertaking, an enduring token of appreciation and an abiding commitment to honouring an esteemed friend, colleague and mentor, who has profoundly shaped our field and enriched our intellectual lives. In this humanistic spirit the present volume honours Wilferd F. Madelung, Laudian Professor of Arabic (emeritus) at the University of Oxford.

There is no branch of knowledge of medieval Islamic history and religion that Wilferd Madelung has left untouched. Few have been as prolific in the depth and breadth of their scholarship, while possessing the humility, humanity and perspicacity that he does. Professor Madelung is a humanist in the truest sense of the

word who has always eschewed the power and politics of academia and instead, dedicated himself to the pursuit of knowledge. Farhad Daftary briefly examines his intellectual contributions to the field in the biographical sketch which follows this introduction.

My association with Wilferd Madelung is perhaps more recent than that of all the contributors to this volume, as I was one of his last doctoral students at the University of Oxford prior to his official retirement in 1998. Fond memories of the time spent under his tutelage have left an indelible impression on me, as they undoubtedly have on other of his former students. What endeared him most to me as a mentor is his humility, and his ability to teach me to fully appreciate the nuances of texts and faithfully capture in translation their meanings. In brief, he taught me to become a better humanist. This volume represents a small token of lasting gratitude for the hours of selfless dedication to his students and colleagues.

It is a fitting tribute that the volume theme of culture and memory in medieval Islam honours Professor Madelung. In proposing this theme I was reminded of the Aleppan ascetic vagabond 'Alī b. Abī Bakr al-Harawī (d.611/1215) who quite literally left an indelible impression on the places he visited throughout the Islamic world, the Mediterranean and Byzantium during the 12th-century CE. Al-Harawī, whom his biographers regarded as a trickster and magician, was known for leaving graffiti on those sacred and profane antiquities he visited. His *Kitāb al-ishārāt ilā ma'rifat al-ziyārāt*, his best-known work, is essentially a book of memories of sacred places. Al-Harawī's memories were lost, fragmented, reclaimed and reconfigured from what he could remember of those places he and his informants visited. Yet, his work survived and is testament to the magnificent and wondrous places that medieval Muslims, as well as devotees of other faiths and the peoples of bygone civilizations, venerated. Al-Harawī's *Kitāb al-ishārāt* was an *aide-mémoire* which served as the basis for other historical accounts of pilgrimage places and other Syrian pilgrimage works.

Like al-Harawī's work, the present volume represents a form of intellectual graffiti. As scholars, we commemorate, preserve and interpret the past, and in so doing we leave behind an indelible

impression. Our collective work, no matter how significant or minor, may be lost and rediscovered at some point in the future. Nonetheless, it is to be hoped that it will have the permanence of al-Harawī's guide.

The road to producing this Festschrift has been a long one. During the autumn of 1999, I was reminded of the need to organize a Festschrift for Professor Madelung. Emilie Savage-Smith and Paul E. Walker offered invaluable advice and suggested additional contributors in the early stages. Professor Madelung's wife, Dr Margaret Madelung, graciously and enthusiastically gave of her time to suggest potential contributors. After beginning the search for a suitable publisher, that winter Farhad Daftary suggested that we collaborate. It was fortuitous that Farhad with his extensive experience at The Institute of Ismaili Studies should propose a partnership and suggest publishing the volume with I.B. Tauris Publishers in association with the Institute.

It was decided to allow contributors the greatest leeway to broadly interpret one or both elements of the theme of culture and memory. Culture may be understood in an abstract or theoretical sense to refer to aspects of *thaqāfa* and *hadāra* or, alternatively, to modern theoretical discourses on culture, in a ritualistic sense to festivals, celebrations, sacred rites and modalities of ritual behaviour, and in a physical sense to monuments and other architectural and art historical forms. Memory can refer to the faculty of memory, or to specific processes as in ways in which masters and their disciples transmitted and memorized sacred texts and traditions, or conversely, to forgetfulness and forgetting. Equally important is the role of memory in a textual context, as for instance, in historical writing, learning and geography, as well as in the perception and depiction of architectural and art historical forms. Memory can also be understood as remembrance and commemoration of individuals and dynasties in literary or architectural forms.

This volume is divided into three sections. The contributions in the first section focus on the transmission of knowledge. The second section deals with memorializing and remembering. The third section addresses the commemoration of rulers, dynasties

and conquests. Accordingly, contributors explore themes relating to memory, memorization and commemoration in a variety of historical, legal, literary and architectural contexts. Among other things, they examine lists and maps as memory aids, the transmission of knowledge and traditions from medieval to early-modern times, the application of medieval notions of law and statecraft, and the commemoration of individuals, civilizations and dynasties in historical and literary works, and on coinage and monuments.

The goal of this volume is not to present a complete picture concerning culture and memory in medieval Islam, but rather to highlight aspects of this theme. Many important aspects, particularly relating to architecture and art history, are not dealt with in the present volume. As readers will appreciate, some of the most notable *Festschriften* produced from the 1960s through 1980s in the fields of Islamic and Near Eastern Studies sometimes contained brief notes and useful bits of knowledge. As a rule, publishers no longer publish non-thematic *Festschriften*. Regrettably, this precluded a number of our colleagues from contributing.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to our co-editor and friend Farhad Daftary, who selflessly undertook the laborious task of editing the contributions and compiling the bibliography. I would also like to thank the administrative editorial team of the Institute's Department of Academic Research and Publications for their diligence and efficiency – in particular Julia Kolb, who assisted in the early stages, and Kutub Kassam with Nadia Holmes, who helped us to see this work through to completion.