



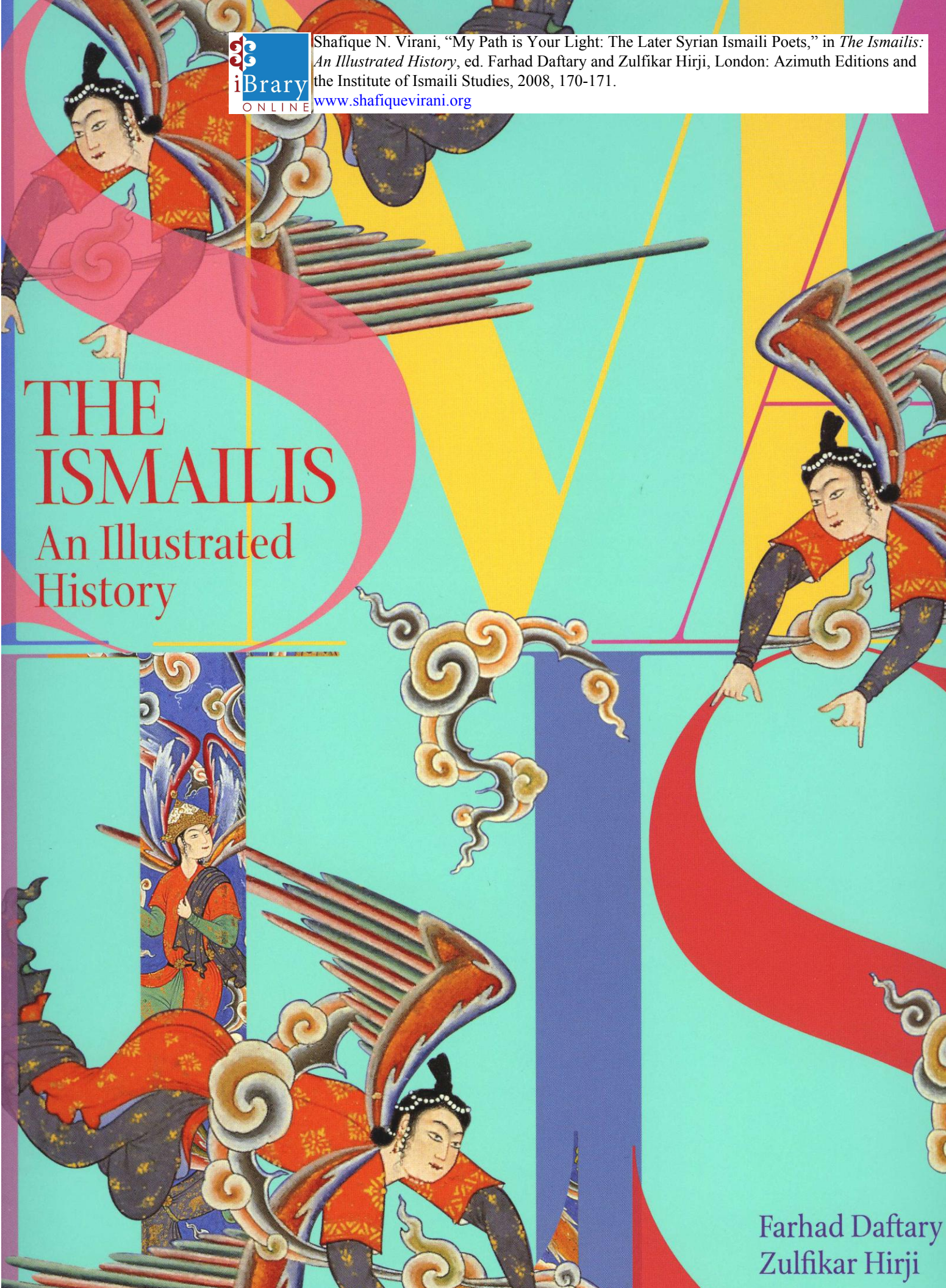
Shafique N. Virani, "My Path is Your Light: The Later Syrian Ismaili Poets," in *The Ismailis: An Illustrated History*, ed. Farhad Daftary and Zulfikar Hirji, London: Azimuth Editions and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2008, 170-171.

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THE ISMAILIS

An Illustrated History

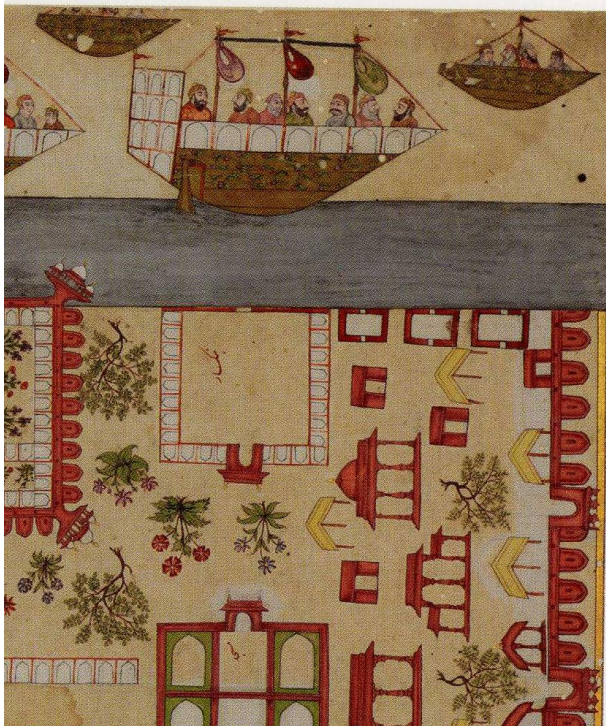
Farhad Daftary
Zulfikar Hirji





to a position of responsibility by Shah Nizar, is evidence that the Syrian community regarded the difficulties of the journey as irrelevant compared with its objective:

*O people of the House of God in his realm
of angels
You have captured my longing, my desire
At your splendour all eyes gaze
Hearts overflow with your secret
My path is your light
I swear
By the solitudes I devote to your love
By the sincerity of the call of
'I am here'
That I cry out to you
In the hours before dawn
That my eyes yearn only
For a vision of your beauty
That all day long
Naught else occupies my heart [SV]*



left

Map of Persia from Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779–1859), *An Account of the Kingdom of Cabul and its Dependencies in Persia, Tartary and India* (1815).

above

Illustration of a horse-drawn caravan or palanquin from a French translation of James Morier's (1780–1849) *Second Voyage to Persia* (1818).

below

This painting from India by Anis al-Hujjaj (1088–1091/1677–1680) shows departures from the port of Surat, Gujarat.

Nonetheless, the Imams once again moved their headquarters to Shahr-i Babak in the southeastern Persian province of Kirman, closer to the route taken by the Khoja pilgrims. By then, the centre of gravity of the Nizari community had shifted towards the Khojas, both in terms of their numbers and of financial resources. In Persia, as a result of persecution and dissimulation, many Nizari groups had actually become Ithna'ashari Shi'i, especially in the urban areas. With the improved flow of religious dues, notably the *dassondh* sent from India, the 42nd Nizari Imam, Hasan 'Ali, acquired extensive properties in Shahr-i Babak as well as in the city of Kirman, enabling him to administer the affairs of the community. He was also the first Nizari Imam to effectively abandon the traditional *taqiyya* practices. He became actively involved in the affairs of Kirman, also establishing close relations with the province's Afsharid ruler Shah Rukh (r.1160–1172/1747–1759).