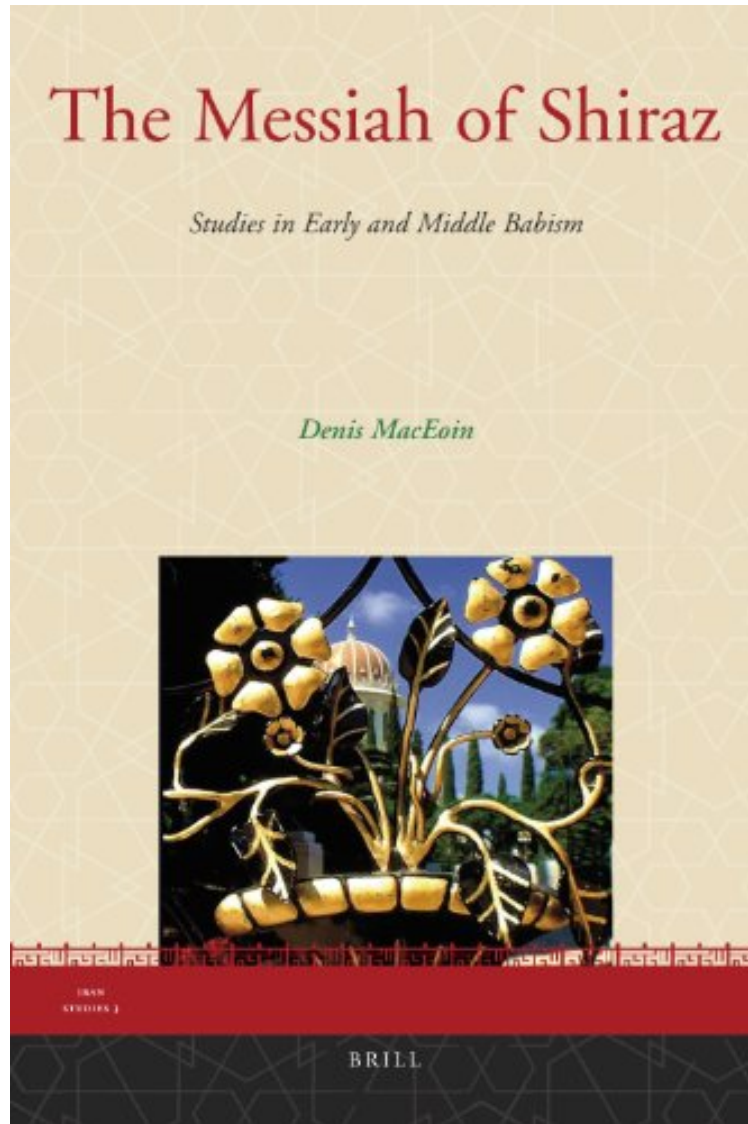


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# The Messiah of Shiraz: Studies in Early and Middle Babism (Iran Studies)

*Dennis Maceoin*

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**Dennis Maceoin : The Messiah of Shiraz: Studies in Early and Middle Babism (Iran Studies)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Messiah of Shiraz: Studies in Early and Middle Babism (Iran Studies):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. ExcellentBy zachThis is probably the only book that I am aware of, other than Abbas Amanat's Resurrection and Renewal, that covers the genesis of the Babi religion in complete depth.

The Babi religion began as a split from Shaykhi Imami Shiism and as a result MacEoin spends a great deal of writing on both Shaykhi Shiism and its founder Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsai and his successors before moving on to describing the historical and theological evolution of Babism. The first half of the book is dedicated to a linear narrative that describes the progression of the Babi religion in its nascent stages to its full split from Shaykhi Shiism. The second half is a collection of articles MacEoin has written on Babi/Bahai studies, which provide a wealth of information regarding the initial formation and evolution of the Babi religion as well as the early stages of the Bahai religion. MacEoin does a wonderful of explaining the development of these religions within their historical context in a very accessible way, making the book an overall enjoyable read. Recommended for students/readers of Shiism (especially its heterodox strands), Iranian religions/history (Qajar period), religious sociology and Babi/Bahai studies.

The 19th century saw an enormous shift in the authority structure of Iranian and Iraqi Twelver Shiism, with the victory of a theological school (Usulism) that stressed the power of the clergy. This is well known. What is less well known is that there was a parallel development of authority in the Shaykhi school and its offshoot, the Babi sect. Here, especially in later forms of Babism, the Shiite claim to charismatic authority reached its limits in hyperbolic attestations of divinity. The present text is in two parts: a study of how Shaykhism bifurcated into a form close to orthodoxy next to the highly unorthodox Babi movement. Part two examines how Babism changed after the death in 1850 of its founder, the Bb.

"[MacEoin's] often excellent grasp of the notoriously complex and idiosyncratic Arabic and Persian of the Bab meant that he could go way beyond most other scholars in this field...An indispensable addition to any library claiming comprehensiveness in the fields of Iranian, Shii-Shaykhi and Babi-Baha'i studies." Stephen Lambden, University of California in Religion 41.2-3 (2011). From the Back Cover The 19th century saw an enormous shift in the authority structure of Iranian and Iraqi Twelver Shiism, with the victory of a theological school (Usulism) that stressed the power of the clergy. This is well known. What is less well known is that there was a parallel development of authority in the Shaykhi school and its offshoot, the Babi sect. Here, especially in later forms of Babism, the ShiEite claim to charismatic authority reached its limits in hyperbolic attestations of divinity. The present text is in two parts: a study of how Shaykhism bifurcated into a form close to orthodoxy next to the highly unorthodox Babi movement. Part two examines how Babism changed after the death in 1850 of its founder, the BAb. About the Author Denis M. MacEoin, Ph.D. (1979) in Persian Studies, University of Cambridge has taught Arabic and Islamic Studies at Newcastle University. His most recent work has been on radical Islam in the United Kingdom. His previous books include The Sources for Early Babi Doctrine and History.