Tahirih in History: Perspectives on Qurratu'l-'Ayn From East and West. Los Angeles, Kalimat Press, 2004, xiv+292 p. [Studies in the Bábí and Bahá'í Religions, 16]

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- 1 This collection brings together material of a very disparate nature written about Qorrat al-'Ayn Ṭāhera over the span of more than a century, including scholarly articles, devotional biographies, journalistic appreciations, a few samples of Ṭāhera's own prayers and poems, and an excerpt from one literary work in which she figures as a character. The bulk of these articles have been published previously, though not all of them were easily accessible; a few of them are translated to English here for the first time. The work under review, then, presents neither new information nor a synthesis of older views, nor an exploration of the archetypal qualities of female sainthood enshrined in the various writings about Ṭāhera, but rather a retrospective sample of what has been written about her, with a spotlight on perspectives from South Asia, documenting the images of Ṭāhera that a geographically, historically, ethnically and religiously diverse group of readers has formulated over the past century and more.
- 2 The material is grouped into four sections: "Baha'i Sources" (two articles, by 'Abd al-Bahā' and Shoghi Effendi) "Eastern Impressions" (eight articles, most written in India or Pakistan, some originally in Urdu), "Western Considerations" (seven articles) and "Tāhīrīh's Writings" including a bibliographic survey by Denis MacEoin and a prayer and poem of Ṭāhera in translation). A one-page chronology listing in order the composition/publication dates of these various works would have been useful in helping readers chart the development of the image and growing reputation of Tahirih. The Bibliography (pp. 265-279) is full, but not exhaustive. Twenty-five of her Persian poems are printed in *nasta'liq* calligraphy in the end of the book (pp. 281-92)

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Thèmes : 11.1.1. Littérature persane classique

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