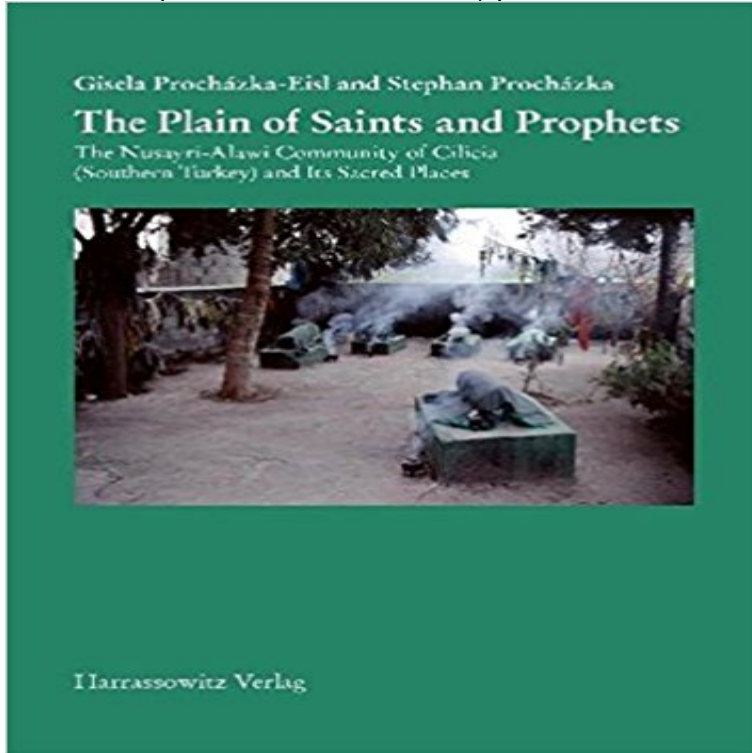


The Plain of Saints and Prophets: The Nusayri-Alawi Community of Cilicia (Southern Turkey) and its Sacred Places



This is the first detailed study on the Nusayri-Alawi community of Cilicia available in a Western language. The Alawis are an Arabic speaking religious minority of ca. 300,000 people living in the Turkish provinces of Adana and Mersin. The book contains chapters devoted to the history of Alawi settlement, the community's identity and social structures, and prejudices they have to face from the majority population. Also covered are religious practices like feasts and beliefs like metempsychosis. The heart of the book is an analysis of the numerous Alawi sanctuaries. Long-term field research enabled the authors to document a vital, highly mobile practice of saint veneration performed at continuously changing sacred places. Besides a catalogue of nearly 200 shrines and several detailed case studies there are chapters on the age and origins of the sacred places, the rites performed there, and the structure of the pilgrims. A major aim of the study is to present the local Alawi saint veneration in a broader Islamic context by describing the sacred landscape, analyzing current changes and tendencies, and discussing the paramount role of women in the practice of saint veneration and in the perceived sacredness of the holy places. (Harrassowitz Verlag 2010)

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