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Ismaili History and its Literary Sources

The Ismailis, a major Shi'i Muslim community who have subdivided into a number of branches and minor groups, have had a long and complex history dating back to the middle of the 2nd/8th century. Currently, the Ismailis, who belong to the Nizārī and Ṭayyibī Musta'lī branches, are scattered as religious minorities in numerous countries of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America. Numbering several millions, they also represent a diversity of ethnic groups and speak a variety of languages, including Persian, Arabic and Indic languages, as well as a number of European languages.*

Early Shi'ism

At least during the first three centuries of their history, Muslims lived in an intellectually dynamic and fluid milieu. The formative period of Islam was, indeed, characterized by a multiplicity of communities of interpretation and schools of thought, representing a diversity of views on the major religio-political issues faced by the early Muslims after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad in 11/632. At the time, the Muslims were confronted by many gaps in their religious knowledge and understanding of Islam, revolving around issues such as the unity and attributes of God, nature of religious authority and definitions of true believers. Different religious communities and schools of

thought, which were later enumerated in heresiographical writings, elaborated their doctrines in stages and eventually acquired their distinctive identities and names. In terms of political loyalties, which remained closely linked to theological perspectives, pluralism in early Islam ranged from the stances of those later designated as Sunnis, who endorsed the historical caliphate and the authority-power structure that had actually evolved in the nascent Muslim community (*umma*), to various religio-political opposition communities, notably the Khawārij and the Shīʿa, who aspired towards new orders.

The Shīʿa themselves eventually subdivided into a number of major communities, notably the Ithnāʿasharīs or Twelvers, the Ismailis and the Zaydīs, and several minor groupings. It is the fundamental belief of the Shīʿa of all branches, however, that the Prophet himself had designated his cousin and son-in-law ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), married to his daughter Fāṭima, as his successor – a designation or *naṣṣ* instituted through divine command and revealed by the Prophet at Ghadīr Khumm shortly before his death. A minority group originally holding to this view gradually expanded and became generally designated as the *Shīʿat ʿAlī*, party of ʿAlī, or simply as the Shīʿa. The Shīʿa also came to hold a particular conception of religious authority that set them apart from other Muslims. They held that the message of Islam as revealed by the Prophet Muḥammad contained inner truths that could not be grasped directly through common reason. Thus, they recognized the need for a religiously authoritative guide, or imam, as the Shīʿa have traditionally preferred to call their spiritual leader. A person qualified for such an important task of spiritual guidance, according to the Shīʿa, could belong only to the Prophet's family, the *ahl al-bayt*, whose members provided the sole, authoritative channel for elucidating and interpreting the teachings of Islam.[1] Before long, however, the Shīʿa disagreed among themselves regarding the precise definition and composition of the *ahl al-bayt*, causing internal divisions within Shiʿism.

Initially, for some fifty years, Shiʿism represented a unified community with limited membership comprised mainly of Arab Muslims. The Shīʿa had then recognized successively ʿAlī and his sons al-Ḥasan (d. 49/669) and al-Ḥusayn (d. 61/680) as their imams. This situation changed with the movement of al-Mukhtār who, in 66/685, briefly launched an open revolt in Kūfa, the cradle of Shiʿism, against the

Umayyads. Aiming to avenge al-Ḥusayn's murder, al-Mukhtār organized his own Shi'i movement in the name of 'Alī's third son and al-Ḥusayn's half-brother Muḥammad, known as Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya (d. 81/700), as the Mahdi, 'the divinely-guided one', the messianic saviour imam and restorer of true Islam who would establish justice on earth and deliver the oppressed from tyranny. The new eschatological concept of imam-Mahdi proved particularly appealing to the *mawālī*, the non-Arab converts to Islam who under the Umayyads (41–132/661–750) were treated as second-class Muslims. As a large and underprivileged social class aspiring to the establishment of a social order based on the egalitarian precepts of Islam, the *mawālī* provided a significant recruiting ground for any movement opposed to the exclusively Arab hegemony of the Umayyads and their social structure. Starting with the movement of al-Mukhtār that survived his demise in 67/687, however, the *mawālī* became particularly drawn to Shi'ism and played a key role in transforming it from an Arab party of limited membership and doctrinal basis to a dynamic movement. Henceforth, different Shi'i communities and lesser groups, consisting of both Arabs and *mawālī*, came to coexist, each with its own line of imams and elaborating its own ideas. The Prophet's family, whose sanctity was supreme for the Shī'a, was still defined broadly in its tribal sense to include not only all major branches of the extended 'Alid family – descendants of his sons al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya – but also members of other branches of the Prophet's clan of Banū Hāshim. It was not until after the Abbasid revolution that the *ahl al-bayt* came to be defined more narrowly to include only certain 'Alids.

It was under such circumstances that the Shi'ism of the later Umayyad period developed mainly in terms of two branches or trends, the Kaysāniyya and the Imāmiyya, each with its own internal groupings. In time, another 'Alid movement led to the foundation of a third major Shi'i community, the Zaydiyya. There were also those Shi'i *ghulāt*, individual theorists with often small followings, who existed within or on the margins of the major Shi'i communities. A radical branch, in terms of both doctrine and policy, evolved out of al-Mukhtār's movement accounting for the bulk of the early Shī'a until shortly after the Abbasid revolution. This branch, comprised of a number of interrelated groups recognizing various 'Alids and other Hāshimids as their imams, was generally designated as the

Kaysāniyya by heresiographers who were responsible for coining the names of many of the early Muslim communities. The Kaysānī groups drew mainly on the support of the *mawālī* in southern Iraq, Persia and elsewhere. Many of the Kaysānī doctrines were propounded by the *ghulāt* amongst them, who were accused by the more moderate Shi'is of later times of 'exaggeration' (*ghuluww*) in religious matters. In addition to their condemnation of the early caliphs before 'Alī, the commonest feature of the ideas propagated by the early Shi'i *ghulāt* was the attribution of superhuman qualities, or even divinity, to imams. The Kaysāniyya also pursued an activist anti-establishment policy against the Umayyads, aiming to transfer the leadership of the Muslim *umma* to 'Alids. By the end of the Umayyad period, the main body of the Kaysāniyya, known as the Hāshimiyya, had transferred their allegiance to the Abbasids, descendants of the Prophet's uncle al-'Abbās, who had been cleverly conducting an anti-Umayyad campaign on behalf of an anonymous member of the *ahl al-bayt* with much Shi'i appeal.

In the meantime, there had developed another major branch of Shi'ism, later designated as the Imāmiyya. This branch, the early common heritage of the Ismailis and the Twelvers, had acknowledged a particular line of Ḥusaynid 'Alids, descendants of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, as imams and remained completely removed from any political activity. Indeed, the Imāmiyya adopted a quiescent policy in the political field while doctrinally they subscribed to some of the radical views of the Kaysāniyya, such as the condemnation of 'Alī's predecessors as caliphs. The Imāmiyya, who like other Shi'is of the Umayyad times were centred in Kūfa, traced the imamate through al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī's sole surviving son 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 95/714), with the honorific title of Zayn al-'Ābidīn (the Ornament of the Pious). But it was with Zayn al-'Ābidīn's son and successor Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. ca. 114/732) that the Ḥusaynid line of 'Alid imams and the Imāmī branch began to acquire prominence among the early Shī'a. The Imam al-Bāqir, too, refrained from political activity and concerned himself with the religious aspects of his imamate. In particular, he elaborated the rudiments of some of the ideas which later became the legitimate principles of Imāmī Shi'ism. He is also credited with introducing the important principle of *taqiyya*, or precautionary dissimulation of one's true religious belief under adverse circumstances, which was

later adopted widely by both the Ismailis and the Twelvers. In spite of many difficulties, al-Bāqir succeeded during his imamate of some twenty years in increasing his following. It was, however, during the long and eventful imamate of al-Bāqir's son and successor, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, that the Imāmiyya expanded significantly and became a major religious community with a distinct identity. The foremost scholar and teacher of the Ḥusaynid line of imams, al-Ṣādiq acquired prominence rather gradually during this turbulent period in early Islam when the Umayyads were finally uprooted by the Abbasids.

The Abbasid revolution marked a turning point in early Islamic history, ushering in many socio-political and economic changes, including the disappearance of distinctions between the Arab Muslims and the *mawālī*. But the Abbasid victory proved a source of deep disillusionment for all Shī'a who had expected an 'Alid to succeed to the caliphate after the demise of the Umayyads. The Shī'a were further disappointed when the Abbasids, soon after seizing the caliphate in 132/750, began to persecute their former Shi'i supporters as well as many of the 'Alids. In fact, the Abbasid caliph became in due course the spiritual spokesman of Sunni Islam. It was under such circumstances that many Shi'is, including those Kaysānīs who had not joined the Abbasid party, rallied to the side of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, who had gradually acquired a widespread reputation as a religious scholar. He was a reporter of *ḥadīth* and was later cited as such even in the chain of authorities accepted by Sunnis. He also taught *fiqh* or jurisprudence and has been credited, after the work of his father, with founding the Imāmī Shi'i school of religious law or *madhhab*, named Ja'farī after him. By the final decade of his imamate, al-Ṣādiq had gathered a noteworthy group of religious scholars and associates around him which included some of the most eminent jurists, traditionists and theologians of the time, such as Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/795), the foremost representative of Imāmī *kalām* or scholastic theology. As a result of the intense intellectual activities of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and his circle, the Imāmī Shi'is came to possess a distinctive body of ritual as well as theological and legal doctrines. Above all, they now elaborated the basic conception of the doctrine of the imamate (*imāma*), which was essentially retained by later Ismaili and Twelver Shi'is.[2] This doctrine enabled al-Ṣādiq to consolidate Shi'ism, after its numerous earlier defeats, on a quiescent basis, as it no longer required the imam to rebel

against actual rulers to assert his claims. The last imam recognized by both the Twelvers and the Ismailis, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq died in 148/765. The dispute over his succession led to historic divisions in Imāmī Shi'ism, also marking the emergence of independent Ismaili groups.[3]

Origins and early development of the Ismaili *Da'wa*

A persistent research problem in Ismaili studies relates to the dearth of reliable information. The Ismailis were often persecuted and were, thus, obliged to observe *taqiyya* in their daily life. Furthermore, the authors who produced the Ismaili literature of different periods were generally trained as theologians who normally also served secretly as their community's *dā'īs*, missionaries or religio-political agents, in hostile milieus. As a result of these realities, the Ismaili *dā'ī*-authors were not particularly interested in compiling historical records of their activities. This general lack of interest in historiography is attested to by the fact that only a handful of historical works have come to light in the modern recovery of Ismaili texts. It is also noteworthy that in medieval times only one general history of Ismailism was compiled by an Ismaili author, namely, the *'Uyūn al-akhbār* of Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn (d. 872/1468), the nineteenth *dā'ī* of the Ṭayyibī Musta'lī Ismailis.

The pre-Fatimid period of Ismaili history in general and the opening phase of Ismailism in particular remain rather obscure in Ismaili historiography. It is highly probable that the early Ismailis, conducting a revolutionary movement in an extremely hostile environment, did not produce any substantial volume of literature, preferring instead to propagate their doctrines mainly by word of mouth. The modern recovery of Ismaili literature has confirmed this suspicion. In addition, much of the meagre literature of the early Ismailis was evidently discarded or subjected to revisions in the Fatimid period. Nevertheless, a small collection of early Ismaili doctrinal works has survived to the present day. These include fragments of the *Kitāb al-rushd wa'l-hidāya*, attributed to the *dā'ī* Ibn Ḥawshab, better known as Manṣūr al-Yaman (d. 302/914); the *Kitāb al-'ālim wa'l-ghulām* of Manṣūr al-Yaman's son Ja'far (d. ca. 346/957), who is also credited with compiling the *Kitāb al-kashf*, a collection of six short treatises. The religious texts of the Ismailis produced in later times are themselves invaluable for tracing their early doctrinal history. There

are also those brief but highly significant historical accounts of specific early Ismaili events, notably the *Istitār al-imām* of the *dāʿī* Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nīsābūrī (d. after 386/996), dealing with the settlement of the early Ismaili Imam ʿAbd Allāh in Salamiyya and the flight of ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī, the founder of the Fatimid caliphate, from Salamiyya to North Africa. However, for the initial phase of Ismaili history, the brief accounts of the earliest Imāmī Shiʿi heresiographers al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī (d. after 300/912) and Saʿd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qummī (d. 301/913–14), who were much better informed than Sunni heresiographers about the internal divisions of Shiʿism, remain our main sources of information. The anti-Ismaili polemical writings, too, despite their malicious intentions, serve as important sources on aspects of early Ismailism. In this context, particular mention should be made of the highly influential works of Ibn Rizām and the Sharīf Abu'l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, better known as Akhū Muḥsin, who flourished in the 4th/10th century. Their refutations of the Ismailis have not been recovered, but they were widely available to several generations of Muslim scholars and historians who have preserved them fragmentarily. In modern times, after the pioneering efforts of W. Ivanow (1886–1970), S.M. Stern (1920–1969) and W. Madelung produced ground-breaking studies on early Ismailism. However, scholars still disagree on certain aspects of the early Ismaili *daʿwa*, and some of the outstanding issues may never be resolved due to a lack of reliable sources.

According to most sources, both Ismaili and non-Ismaili, the Imam al-Ṣādiq had originally designated his second son Ismāʿīl, the eponym of the Ismāʿīliyya, as his successor to the imamate by the rule of the *naṣṣ*. There cannot be any doubt regarding the historicity of this designation, which provides the basis of the Ismaili claims. However, matters are rather confused as Ismāʿīl apparently predeceased his father, and three of al-Ṣādiq's sons simultaneously laid claim to his heritage. According to the Ismaili religious tradition and as reported in some of its sources, Ismāʿīl survived his father and succeeded him in due course. But most non-Ismaili sources relate that he died before his father, the latest date mentioned being 145/762–63. These sources also add that during Ismāʿīl's funeral procession in Medina, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq made several attempts to show the face of his dead son to witnesses, though some of the same sources also state that Ismāʿīl was

later seen in Baṣra.[4] At any rate, Ismāʿīl was not present in Medina or Kūfa on Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq's death in 148/765 when three other sons, ʿAbd Allāh al-Afṭaḥ (d. 149/766), Muḥammad al-Dībāj (d. 200/815) and Mūsā al-Kāẓim (d. 183/799) laid open claims to the imamate. As a result, al-Ṣādiq's Imāmī Shiʿi following split into six groups, two of which may be identified as proto-Ismailis or earliest Ismailis. These splinter groups, based in Kūfa and supporting the claims of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar and his son Muḥammad, had evidently appeared in the lifetime of the Imam al-Ṣādiq, but they separated from other Imāmīs only in 148/765.

One of these groups denied the death of Ismāʿīl and awaited his return as the Mahdi, as did another Imāmī group now believing in the Mahdiship of al-Ṣādiq himself. The members of this group, designated as 'al-Ismāʿīliyya al-khāliṣa' or the 'Pure Ismāʿīliyya' by al-Nawbakhtī and Saʿd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qummī,[5] held that the Imam al-Ṣādiq had announced Ismāʿīl's death merely as a ruse to protect him against Abbasid persecution as he had been politically active against them. Indeed on the basis of sketchy biographical details available on Ismāʿīl, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that he had close ties with the more activist circles of the Imāmiyya.[6] Evidently, there were also contacts between Ismāʿīl and Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb al-Asadī, the most prominent of all early Shiʿi *ghulāt* who was for a while in the entourage of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq before being repudiated by him for his extremist views. Soon afterwards in 138/755, Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb and a number of his followers were attacked and killed in the mosque of Kūfa where they had gathered for rebellious purposes. Ismāʿīl's association with Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb is also alluded to in an obscure Persian treatise called *Umm al-kitāb*, which states that the Ismaili religion (*madhhab*) was founded by the disciples of Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb.[7] However, Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb is generally condemned as a 'heretic' in the Ismaili literature of the Fatimid times.[8] The second proto-Ismaili splinter group, known as the Mubārakiyya, affirmed Ismāʿīl's death in the lifetime of his father and now recognized his eldest son Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl as their imam. It seems likely that the Mubārakiyya, derived from Ismāʿīl's epithet al-Mubārak, 'the blessed one', were originally supporters of Ismāʿīl before acknowledging his son Muḥammad as their imam. Be that as it may, Mubārakiyya – a term coined later by heresiographers – was, thus, one of the original names of the nascent Ismāʿīliyya.

As in the case of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar, little is known about the life and career of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, the seventh imam of the Ismailis. The relevant biographical information contained in early Ismaili sources has been reproduced by the *dāʿī* Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn in his *ʿUyūn al-akhbar*.[9] After the recognition of the imamate of his uncle Mūsā al-Kāẓim, soon after al-Ṣādiq's death, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl left Medina, seat of the ʿAlids, and went into hiding, marking the initiation of the *dawr al-satr*, or the period of concealment, in early Ismailism which lasted until the foundation of the Fatimid state and the emergence of the Ismaili imams from their concealment. Henceforth, Muḥammad acquired the epithet of al-Maktūm, 'the hidden one', in addition to al-Maymūn, 'the fortunate one'. Nevertheless, Muḥammad maintained his contacts with the Kūfan-based Mubārakiyya from different localities in Iraq and Persia. He died not long after 179/795, during the caliphate of the Abbasid Hārūn al-Rashīd (170–193/786–809).

No details are available on the relations between the 'Pure Ismāʿīliyya' and the Mubārakiyya or any particular connections between these two groups and the Khaṭṭābīs, the followers of Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb, some of whom may have joined the supporters of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, as claimed by al-Nawbakhtī and Saʿd b. ʿAbd Allāh.[10] It is certain, however, that all these groups were politically active against the Abbasids and they originated within the radical fringes of Imāmī Shiʿism in Kūfa. At any rate, on the death of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, the Mubārakiyya split into two groups. The majority, identified by Imāmī heresiographers as the immediate predecessors of the dissident Qarmaṭīs, refused to accept his death; they recognized him as their seventh and last imam, and awaited his return as the Mahdi or *qāʾim* (riser) – terms which were synonymous in their early usage by the Ismailis and other Shiʿis. A second small and obscure group acknowledged Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl's death and now began to trace the imamate in his progeny. Almost nothing is known with certainty regarding the subsequent history of these earliest Ismaili groups until shortly after the middle of the 3rd/9th century, when a unified Ismaili movement appeared on the historical stage.

Drawing on different categories of sources, including the Ismaili literature of the early Fatimid period, the heresiographical works of Imāmī scholars and even the anti-Ismaili treatises of polemicists, especially the works of Ibn Rizām and Akhū Muḥsin, modern scholarship

has to a large extent succeeded in clarifying the circumstances leading to the emergence of the Ismaili movement in the 3rd/9th century. It is certain that for almost a century after Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, a group of leaders, well placed within the earliest Ismailis, worked secretly for the creation of a unified, revolutionary Shiʿi movement against the Abbasids. Initially attached to one of the earliest Ismaili groups, and in all probability the imams of that obscure group issued from the Mubārakiyya who maintained continuity in the imamate in the progeny of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, these leaders did not openly claim the Ismaili imamate for three generations. They had, in fact, hidden their true identity in order to escape Abbasid persecution. ʿAbd Allāh, the first of these hidden leaders, had organized his campaign around the central doctrine of the majority of the earliest Ismailis, namely the Mahdiship of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl.

The existence of such a group of early Ismaili leaders is confirmed by both the official version of Ismailis of the Fatimid period regarding the pre-Fatimid phase of their history, as reflected in the *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* of the *dāʿī* Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, as well as the hostile accounts of the anti-Ismaili polemicists, Ibn Rizām and Akhū Muḥsin, as preserved by later Sunni historians such as Ibn al-Dawādārī, al-Nuwayrī and al-Maqrīzī, among others. Indeed, with minor variations, the names of these leaders (ʿAbd Allāh, Aḥmad, Ḥusayn or Muḥammad, and ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī), who were members of the same family and succeeded one another on a hereditary basis, are almost identical in the accounts of the later Fatimid Ismailis,[11] and in the lists traceable to Akhū Muḥsin and his source Ibn Rizām.[12] However, in the Ismaili sources these central leaders are presented as ʿAlids descending from Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq while in the anti-Ismaili accounts their ancestry is traced to a certain Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ. Modern scholarship has shown that the Qaddāḥid ancestry attributed to the early Ismaili leaders was a construct of the polemicists who aimed to refute the ʿAlid genealogy of the Fatimid caliph-imams. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ and his son ʿAbd Allāh were, in fact, associates of the Imams al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq and had nothing to do with early Ismailism.

ʿAbd Allāh, designated in later Ismaili sources as al-Akbar (the elder), the first of the early Ismaili leaders after Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, settled in ʿAskar Mukram, in Khūzistān, south-western Persia, where he disguised himself as a merchant. It should be noted that

Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl himself had spent the latter part of his life in Khūzistān; and several early *dāʿīs* including al-Ḥusayn al-Ahwāzī and ʿAbdān also hailed from that part of Persia adjacent to southern Iraq. The Ismaili *dāʿī* Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nīsābūrī relates important details on ʿAbd Allāh al-Akbar and his successors down to ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī in his *Istitār al-imām*. It was from that locality that he began to organize a reinvigorated Ismaili *daʿwa* sending *dāʿīs* to different districts around Khūzistān. At an unknown date in the first half of the 3rd/9th century, ʿAbd Allāh found refuge in Syria, where he re-established contact with some of his *dāʿīs*, and settled in Salamiyya, continuing to pose as a Hāshimid merchant. Henceforth, Salamiyya served as the secret headquarters of the Ismaili *daʿwa*.

The efforts of ʿAbd Allāh and his successors began to bear fruit in the 260s/870s, when numerous *dāʿīs* appeared in southern Iraq and adjacent regions. In 261/874 Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ was converted to Ismailism by the *dāʿī* al-Ḥusayn al-Ahwāzī. Ḥamdān, in turn, organized the *daʿwa* in the Sawād of Kūfa, his native locality, and in other districts of southern Iraq. His chief assistant was his brother-in-law ʿAbdān. A learned theologian, ʿAbdān was responsible for training and appointing numerous *dāʿīs*, including Abū Saʿīd al-Jannābī, who later founded the Qarmaṭī state of Baḥrayn. The Ismailis of southern Iraq became generally known as the Qarāmiṭa, after their first local leader. This term was soon applied to other Ismaili communities not organized by Ḥamdān and ʿAbdān. At the time, there was a single Ismaili movement directed from Salamiyya in the name of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl as the Mahdi. In fact, in order to prepare the ground for the emergence of the Mahdi, in 277/890 Ḥamdān established a *dār al-hijra*, or abode of migration, near Kūfa, where his followers gathered weapons and other provisions. The abode was to serve as the nucleus of a new society for the Ismailis. Later, similar *dār al-hijra*s were established for the Ismaili communities of Yaman, Baḥrayn and North Africa. The Ismailis (Qarmaṭīs) now referred to their movement simply as *al-daʿwa* (the mission) or *al-daʿwa al-hādiya* (the rightly guiding mission), in addition to using expressions such *daʿwat al-ḥaqq* (summons to the truth) or *ahl al-ḥaqq* (people of the truth). Aside from the narratives traceable to Ibn Rizām and Akhū Muḥsin, valuable details on the history of the early Ismaili (Qarmaṭī) movement in Iraq are related by al-Ṭabarī who had access to Qarmaṭī informants.[13]

In the meantime, the Ismaili *da'wa* had appeared in many other regions in the 260s/870s. Centred on the expectation of the imminent return of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl as the Mahdi who would establish justice in the world, the revolutionary and messianic Ismaili movement appealed to underprivileged groups of different social strata; and it achieved particular success among those Imāmī Shi'is who had been disillusioned with the quietist policies of their imams and were, furthermore, left without a manifest imam after al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī (d. 260/874). The *da'wa* in Yaman was initiated by Ibn Ḥawshab, later known as Manṣūr al-Yaman, where he arrived in 268/881 accompanied by his collaborator 'Alī b. al-Faḍl. By 293/905, when 'Alī occupied Ṣan'ā', the Ismaili *dā'īs* were in control of almost all of Yaman. South Arabia also served as a base for the extension of the *da'wa* to other regions such as Yamāma, Baḥrayn and Egypt as well as Sind. By 280/893, on Ibn Ḥawshab's instructions, the *dā'ī* Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Shī'ī was already active among the Kutāma Berbers of the Lesser Kabylia mountains in the Maghrib. And in 273/886, or a few years later, Abū Sa'īd al-Jannābī was sent to Baḥrayn by Ḥamdān and 'Abdān; he rapidly won converts there from among the bedouins and the Persian emigrants.[14]

In a chapter on the Ismailis, added to his *Siyāsat-nāma* shortly before his assassination in 485/1092, the Saljūq vizier Niẓām al-Mulk provides important details on the early *da'wa* in Persia and Khurāsān. It was in the same decade of 260s/870s that the *da'wa* was taken to the region of the Jibāl in Persia by Khalaf al-Ḥallāj, who established his base of operations in Rayy where an important Imāmī community already existed. Under Khalaf's successors as chief *dā'īs* of the Jibāl, the *da'wa* spread to Qumm, another major Imāmī centre of learning, Iṣfahān, Hamadān and other towns of that region. Ghiyāth, the third *dā'ī* of the Jibāl, extended the *da'wa* to Khurāsān and Transoxania on his own initiative. Ghiyāth's chief deputy was the learned theologian Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, who in time became the chief *dā'ī* of Rayy, his native land. Abū Ḥātim further extended the *da'wa* to Ādharbāyjān, in north-western Persia, and to various parts of Daylam in the Caspian region of northern Persia. He succeeded in converting several Daylamī amirs. But the Ismaili *da'wa* was officially established in Khurāsān only during the last decade of the 3rd century/903–12 by Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Khādim, who set up his secret headquarters at

Nīshāpūr. A later chief *dāʿī* of Khurāsān, al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Marwazī, was an eminent amir in the service of the Sāmānids, and he succeeded in extending the *daʿwa* to Harāt, Ghūr, Maymana and other localities in eastern Iranian lands under his control. Al-Ḥusayn al-Marwazī's successor as chief *dāʿī* of Khurāsān was the Central Asian Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasafī, who introduced a form of Neoplatonism into Ismaili thought. He moved his base of operations to his native town of Nakhshab (Arabic, Nasaf) and then to Bukhārā, the Sāmānid capital. Al-Nasafī's success in Transoxania was crowned by his conversion of the Sāmānid amir Naṣr II b. Aḥmad (301–331/914–943), as well as other dignitaries at the Sāmānid court. But in 332/943, in the aftermath of the revolt of the Turkish soldiers who deposed Naṣr, al-Nasafī and his close associates were executed in Bukhārā. Their co-religionists too were persecuted under Naṣr's son and successor Nūḥ I (331–343/943–954), who called for a *jihād* or religious war against the Qarmaṭī 'heretics'. Despite these setbacks, the *daʿwa* survived in Khurāsān and Transoxania under the leadership of other *dāʿī*s, including especially Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī.[15]

Meanwhile, by the early 280s/890s, a unified Ismaili movement had replaced the earlier Ismaili splinter groups. But in 286/899, soon after ʿAbd Allāh, the future Fatimid caliph al-Mahdī, had succeeded to leadership in Salamiyya, Ismailism was rent by a major schism.[16] Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ now noticed significant changes in the doctrinal instructions he received from Salamiyya, and dispatched ʿAbdān there to investigate the matter. In due course, Ḥamdān found out that instead of advocating the Mahdiship of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, the new leader claimed the imamate for himself and his predecessors, the very central leaders of the Ismaili *daʿwa* in the *dawr al-satr*. Refusing to accept this doctrinal change, Ḥamdān and ʿAbdān renounced their allegiance to the central leadership of Ismailism and suspended their *daʿwa* activities. Soon after, ʿAbdān was murdered at the instigation of the *dāʿī* Zikrawayh b. Mihrawayh, and Ḥamdān disappeared. Evidently, as reported by Ibn Ḥawqal, Ḥamdān later changed his mind, joined the faction loyal to ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī and surfaced as a *dāʿī* in Egypt with a new identity, calling himself Abū ʿAlī.[17]

ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī's reform is explained in the above-mentioned letter he later sent to the Ismailis of Yaman, in which an attempt is made to reconcile his reform with the actual course of events in

pre-Fatimid Ismaili history. He explains that as a form of *taqiyya* the central leaders of the early *da'wa* had assumed different pseudonyms, such as al-Mubārak and al-Maymūn, also assuming the rank of the *ḥujja*, proof or full representative, of the absent Imam Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. It is further explained that the earlier propagation of the Mahdiship of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was itself another dissimulating veil, and that this was in reality a collective code-name for every true imam in the progeny of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.

The doctrinal reform of 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī split the Ismaili movement into two rival factions. One faction remained loyal to the central leadership and acknowledged continuity in the imamate, recognizing 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī (d. 322/934) and his 'Alid ancestors as their imams, which in due course became the official Fatimid Ismaili doctrine of the imamate. These Ismailis allowed for three hidden imams (*al-a'imma al-mastūrīn*) between Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl and 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī. This loyalist faction included the bulk of the Ismailis of Yaman and those communities in Egypt, North Africa and Sind founded by *dā'īs* dispatched by Ibn Ḥawshab. On the other hand, a dissident faction, originally led by Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ, rejected 'Abd Allāh's reform and maintained their belief in the Mahdiship of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. Henceforth, the term Qarmaṭī came to be applied more specifically to the dissidents who did not acknowledge 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī, as well as his predecessors and successors in the Fatimid dynasty, as their imams. The dissident Qarmaṭīs, who lacked central leadership, soon acquired their most important stronghold in Baḥrayn in eastern Arabia, where a Qarmaṭī state had been founded in the same eventful year 286/899 by Abū Sa'īd al-Jannābī who had sided with Ḥamdān and 'Abdān. The Qarmaṭī state of Baḥrayn survived until 470/1077–78. There were also Qarmaṭī communities in Iraq, Yaman, Persia and Central Asia.

Abū Sa'īd was murdered in 300/913 and, subsequently, several of his sons rose to leadership of the Qarmaṭī state in Baḥrayn. Under his youngest son Abū Ṭāhir Sulaymān (311–332/923–944), the Qarmaṭīs of Baḥrayn became infamous for their regular raids into Iraq and their pillaging of the Meccan pilgrim caravans. Abū Ṭāhir's ravaging activities culminated in his attack on Mecca during the pilgrimage season in 317/930, when the Qarmaṭīs committed numerous desecrating acts and dislodged the Black Stone (*al-ḥajar al-aswad*) from the corner

of the Ka'ba and carried it to al-Aḥsā', their new capital in eastern Arabia. Sunni polemicists who condemned the entire Ismaili movement as a conspiracy to destroy Islam, capitalized on these events and alleged that Abū Ṭāhir had secretly received his instructions from 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī who was then reigning as the first Fatimid caliph-imam in Ifrīqiya. Modern scholarship has shown, however, that the Qarmaṭīs of Baḥrayn were at the time, like other Qarmaṭī communities, still predicting the imminent appearance of the Mahdi and did not acknowledge the first Fatimid caliph, or any of his successors, as their imams. This also explains why after sacking Mecca, Abū Ṭāhir recognized the expected Mahdi in a young Persian, to whom he handed over the rule in 319/931. The Persian Mahdi embarked on strange behaviour, he abolished the *sharī'a* and Islamic worship, and as he started to execute the notables of Baḥrayn, too, Abū Ṭāhir admitted that the Mahdi had been an impostor and had him killed. The obscure episode of the 'Persian Mahdi' seriously demoralized the Qarmaṭīs. Subsequently, the Qarmaṭīs of Baḥrayn reverted to their former beliefs and their leaders, once again, claimed to be acting on the orders of the hidden Mahdi. They eventually returned the Black Stone to Mecca in 339/950, for a large ransom paid by the Abbasids and not, as alleged by anti-Ismaili sources, in response to the Fatimid caliph's request.

In Yaman, by 291/904, or perhaps earlier, Ibn Ḥawshab's collaborator, the *dā'ī* 'Alī b. al-Faḍl displayed signs of disloyalty. In 299/911, after occupying Ṣan'ā', Ibn al-Faḍl openly renounced his allegiance to 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī and declared war on Ibn al-Ḥawshab, who remained loyal to the Fatimids until his death in 302/914. On Ibn al-Faḍl's demise in 303/915, the Qarmaṭī movement in Yaman disintegrated rather rapidly. In Persia, Qarmaṭism spread widely after 286/899. The *dā'īs* of the Jibāl did not generally recognize 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī's imamate, and awaited the return of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl as the expected Mahdi. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, too, like Qarmaṭīs elsewhere, prophesied the Mahdi's advent for the year 316/928 on the basis of certain astrological calculations. As Abū Ḥatim's predictions did not materialize, he encountered hostilities from his co-religionists and was obliged to seek refuge with an amir in Ādharbāyjān, where he died in 322/934. Later, as attested by coins dating from 343/954–55, some rulers of Ādharbāyjān and Daylam, belonging to the Musāfirid (or Sallārid)

dynasty, adhered to Qarmaṭism and recognized Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl as the Mahdi. In Khurāsān and Transoxania, as well, dissident Qarmaṭism persisted after the establishment of the Fatimid state. The *dāʿī* al-Nasafī affirmed the Mahdiship of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl in his major treatise, *Kitāb al-maḥṣūl*, which acquired a prominent status within the Qarmaṭī circles of different regions.[18]

Meanwhile, the *dāʿī* Zikrawayh b. Mihrawayh had gone into hiding following the events of the year 286/899, possibly fearing reprisals by ʿAbdān's supporters in Iraq. From 288/901, however, he sent several of his sons as *dāʿī*s to the Syrian desert where large numbers of bedouins were converted. Zikrawayh now aimed to establish a Fatimid state in Syria for ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī without his authorization. Soon Zikrawayh's sons summoned their bedouin followers to proceed to Salamiyya and declare their allegiance to the imam who was still guarding his identity. In the event, ʿAbd Allāh, whose position had now been dangerously compromised, secretly left Salamiyya in 289/902 to escape capture by the Abbasid agents sent after him. He first went to Ramla, in Palestine, and then in 291/904, following the defeat of Zikrawayh's movement in Syria by an Abbasid army, he embarked on a historic journey which ended several years later in North Africa where he founded the Fatimid caliphate. Important details on ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī's fateful journey to North Africa are contained in the autobiography, *Sīra*, of his chamberlain Jaʿfar b. ʿAlī who accompanied the imam. After their defeat in Syria in 291/904, Zikrawayh and his sons turned against ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī and in fact established a separate wing of the dissident camp. Zikrawayh was finally defeated and killed in 294/907 by the Abbasids while his Qarmaṭī movement lingered on for a while longer.[19]

The early Ismailis elaborated the basic framework of a system of religious thought which was further developed or modified in the Fatimid period. As only a handful of Ismaili texts have survived from this period, and as the literature of the Qarmaṭīs has disappeared almost completely, it is not possible to trace the development of early Ismaili thought in any great detail. It is nevertheless possible to convey in broad terms the distinctive intellectual traditions and the central teachings of the early Ismailis, as expounded by the unified Ismaili movement during 261–286/874–899. Subsequently, the early doctrines were further developed, modified, or even discarded,

by the Ismailis of the Fatimid times while the Qarmaṭīs followed a separate course. Central to the early Ismaili system of thought was a fundamental distinction between the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and the esoteric (*bāṭin*) aspects of the sacred scriptures and religious commandments and prohibitions. Accordingly, the Ismailis held that the Qur'an and other revealed scriptures, and their laws (*sharī'as*), had their apparent or literal meaning, the *ẓāhir*, which had to be distinguished from their inner meaning hidden in the *bāṭin*. They further held that the *ẓāhir*, or the religious laws enunciated by prophets, underwent periodical changes while the *bāṭin*, containing the spiritual truths (*ḥaqā'iq*), remained immutable and eternal. These truths, indeed, represented the message common to the religions of the Abrahamic tradition, namely, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. However, the truths hidden in the *bāṭin* of these monotheistic religions had been veiled by different exoteric laws or *sharī'as* as required by different temporal circumstances. The hidden truths were explained through the methodology of *ta'wīl* or esoteric interpretation, which often relied on the mystical significance of letters and numbers. In every age, however, the esoteric truths would be accessible only to the elite (*khawāṣṣ*) of humankind as distinct from the ordinary people (*'awāmm*), who were only capable of perceiving the apparent meaning of the revelations. Consequently, in the era of Islam, the eternal truths of religion could be explained only to those who had been properly initiated into the Ismaili *da'wa* and as such recognized the teaching authority of the Prophet Muḥammad and, after him, that of his *waṣī*, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and the rightful imams who succeeded him; these authorities were the sole possessors of *ta'wīl* in the era of Islam. The centrality of *ta'wīl* for the Ismailis is attested by the fact that a good portion of the literature produced by them during the early and Fatimid times, notably the writings of Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, is comprised of the *ta'wīl* genre which seeks justification for Ismaili doctrines in Qur'anic verses.

Initiation into Ismailism, known as *balāgh*, was gradual and took place after the novice had taken an oath of allegiance known as *'ahd* or *mīthāq*. There were, however, no fixed seven or more stages of initiation as claimed by the polemicists. The initiates were obliged to keep secret the *bāṭin* imparted to them by a hierarchy (*ḥudūd*) of teachers. Such ideas provide the subject matter of the *Kitāb al-'ālim wa'l-ghulām*, one of the few surviving early Ismaili texts attributed to

Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman. By exalting the *bāṭin* aspects of religion, the Ismailis came to be regarded by the rest of the Muslim community as the most representative of the Shi'is propounding esotericism in Islam and, hence, their common designation as the Bāṭiniyya. This designation was, however, used in a derogatory sense accusing the Ismailis of generally ignoring the *ẓāhir*, or the *sharī'a*. The available evidence, including the fragmentary texts of the Ismaili oath of allegiance,[20] clearly show that the early Ismailis were not exempted in any sense from the commandments and prohibitions of Islam. Indeed, early Ismaili teachings accorded equal significance to the *ẓāhir* and the *bāṭin* and their inseparability, ideas that were further elaborated in the Ismaili teachings of the Fatimid period. Such generalized accusations of *ibāḥa* or antinomianism against the Ismailis seem to have been rooted in the polemics of their enemies, who also blamed the entire Ismaili movement for the anti-Islamic views and practices of the Qarmaṭīs.

The esoteric truths or *ḥaqā'iq* formed a gnostic system of thought for the early Ismailis, representing a distinct world-view. The two main components of this system, developed by the 280s/890s, were a cyclical history of revelations or prophetic eras and a gnostic cosmological doctrine. The Ismailis applied their cyclical interpretation of time and the religious history of humankind to Judaeo-Christian revelations as well as a number of other pre-Islamic religions such as Zoroastrianism with much appeal to non-Muslims. This conception of religious history, reflecting a variety of influences such as Hellenic, Judaeo-Christian, Gnostic as well as eschatological ideas of the earlier Shi'is, was developed in terms of the eras of different prophets recognized in the Qur'an. This cyclical conception was also combined with the Ismaili doctrine of the imamate inherited from the Imāmīs.

According to their cyclical view, the Ismailis held that the religious history of humankind proceeded through seven prophetic eras (*dawr*s) of various durations, each one inaugurated by a speaker or enunciator (*nāṭiq*) of a divinely revealed message which in its exoteric (*ẓāhir*) aspect contained a religious law (*sharī'a*). The *nāṭiq*s of the first six eras of human history were Adam (Ādam), Noah (Nūḥ), Abraham (Ibrāhīm), Moses (Mūsā), Jesus ('Īsā) and Muḥammad. These *nāṭiq*s had announced only the outer (*ẓāhir*) aspects of each revelation with its rituals, commandments and prohibitions, without

explaining details of its inner (*bāṭin*) meaning. Each *nāṭiq* was, therefore, succeeded by a spiritual legatee (*waṣī*), also called the 'silent one' (*ṣāmit*) and later the 'foundation' (*asās*), who explained to the elite the esoteric truths (*ḥaqā'iq*) contained in the *bāṭin* dimension of that era's message. Each *waṣī* was, in turn, succeeded by seven imams, also called *atimmā'* (singular, *mutimm*), who guarded the true meaning of the sacred scriptures and laws in their *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* aspects. The seventh imam of every era would rise in rank to become the *nāṭiq* of the following era, abrogating the *sharī'a* of the previous era and enunciating a new one in its place. This pattern would change only in the seventh, final era of history. As the seventh imam of the sixth era, the era of the Prophet Muḥammad and Islam, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was initially expected to return as the Mahdi (or *qā'im*) as well as the *nāṭiq* of the seventh eschatological era when, instead of promulgating a new law, he would fully divulge to all humankind the esoteric truths of all the preceding revelations. He would, thus, unite in himself the ranks of *nāṭiq* and *waṣī*, being also the last of the imams as the eschatological Imam-Mahdī. In the final, millenarian age, the *ḥaqā'iq* would be completely freed from all their veils and symbolisms; there would no longer be any distinction between the *ẓāhir* and the *bāṭin* in that age of pure spirituality. On his advent, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl would rule in justice before the physical world is consummated. This original cyclical view of religious history was modified after 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī's doctrinal reform, which allowed for more than one heptad of imams in the era of Islam. Recognizing continuity in the imamate, the advent of the seventh era now lost its earlier messianic appeal for the Fatimid Ismailis, for whom the final eschatological age, whatever its nature, was postponed indefinitely into the future; while the functions of the Mahdi who would initiate the Day of Resurrection (*qiyāma*) at the end of time, were to be similar to those envisaged by other Muslim communities. On the other hand, the Qarmaṭīs of Baḥrayn and elsewhere continued to consider Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl as their Mahdi who on his reappearance as the seventh *nāṭiq* was expected to initiate the final age.[21]

The cosmological doctrine of the early Ismailis, which was evidently propagated orally, has been reconstructed from the fragmentary evidence preserved in later Ismaili texts by S.M. Stern and H. Halm.[22] This doctrine, representing a gnostic cosmological myth, was

evidently espoused by the entire Ismaili (Qarmaṭī) movement until it was superseded by a new cosmology of Neoplatonic provenance. According to this doctrine, through His intention (*irāda*) and will (*mashī'a*), God first created a light (*nūr*) and addressed it with the Qur'anic creative imperative *kun* (Be!). Through duplication of its two letters, *kāf* and *nūn*, the name acquired its feminine form Kūnī. On God's command, Kūnī created from its light Qadar, its male assistant. Kūnī and Qadar were, thus, the first two principles (*aṣlān*) of creation. It was out of the original heptad of consonantal letters of Kūnī-Qadar, also called the higher letters (*al-ḥurūf al-'ulwiyya*), interpreted as the archetypes of the seven *nāṭiq*s and their messages, that all other letters and names emerged; and with the names there simultaneously appeared the very things they symbolized. The doctrine explained how God's creative activity, through the intermediary of Kūnī and Qadar, brought forth the beings of the spiritual world, also accounting for the creation of the lower physical world which culminated in the genesis of Man. The early cosmology also had a key soteriological purpose. Man, who appears at the end of the process of creation, is far from his origins and his Creator. This cosmology, thus, aimed at showing the path for removing this distance and bringing about Man's salvation. This could be achieved only if Man acquired knowledge (*gnosis*) of his origin and the causes for his distance from God, a knowledge that had to be imparted from the above by God's messengers (*nāṭiq*s), as recognized in the Qur'an, and their legitimate successors in each era of human history.

The Fatimid period in Ismaili history

The Fatimid period represents the 'golden age' of Ismailism, when the Ismailis possessed an important state of their own and Ismaili scholarship and literature attained their summit. The foundation of the Fatimid caliphate in 297/909 in North Africa indeed marked the crowning success of the early Ismailis. The religio-political *da'wa* of the Ismā'īliyya had finally led to the establishment of a state or *dawla* headed by the Ismaili imam. In line with their universal claims, the Fatimid caliph-imams did not abandon their *da'wa* activities on assuming power. They particularly concerned themselves with the affairs of the Ismaili *da'wa* after transferring the seat of their state to

Egypt. The *da'wa* achieved particular success outside the domains of the Fatimid state, and, as a result, Ismailism outlived the downfall of the Fatimid dynasty and caliphate in 567/1171, also surviving the challenges posed by the Sunni revival of the 5th-6th/11th-12th centuries. Be that as it may, Cairo, founded by the Fatimids upon their conquest of Egypt in 358/969, became the headquarters of the complex hierarchical Ismaili *da'wa* organization in addition to serving as the capital of the Fatimid state. In Egypt, the Fatimids patronized intellectual activities. They founded major institutions of learning and libraries in Cairo, and the Fatimid capital soon became a flourishing centre of Islamic scholarship, sciences, art and culture, in addition to playing a prominent role in the Indian Ocean as well as the Mediterranean trade and commerce. All in all, the Fatimid period marked not only a glorious age in Ismaili history, but also one of the greatest eras in Egyptian and Islamic histories – a milestone in the development of Islamic civilizations.

It was during this period that the Ismaili *dā'īs*, who were at the same time the scholars and writers of their community, produced what were to become the classical texts of Ismaili literature dealing with a multitude of exoteric and esoteric subjects, as well as *ta'wīl* which became the hallmark of Ismaili thought. The *dā'īs* of the Fatimid period elaborated distinctive intellectual traditions. In particular, certain *dā'īs* of the Iranian lands, notably Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī and Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, amalgamated Ismaili theology with Neoplatonism and other philosophical traditions into elegant and complex metaphysical systems of thought as expressed in numerous treatises written in Arabic. Only Nāṣir-i Khusraw, the last major proponent of that Iranian Ismaili school of philosophical theology, produced all of his works in Persian. With the establishment of the Fatimid state the need had also arisen for promulgating a legal code, even though Ismailism was never to be imposed on all Fatimid subjects as their official religion. Ismaili law, which had not existed during the pre-Fatimid, secret phase of Ismailism, was codified during the early Fatimid period as a result of the efforts of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, the foremost jurist of the Ismailis. The Fatimid Ismailis now came to possess their own school of religious law or *madhhab*, similarly to the principal Sunni systems of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and the Ja'farī system of the Imāmī (Twelver) Shi'is. It was indeed during the Fatimid period that Ismailis made

their contributions to Islamic theology and philosophy in general and to Shi'i thought in particular. Modern recovery of their literature clearly attests to the richness and diversity of the literary and intellectual heritage of the Ismailis of Fatimid times.

The Fatimid period is one of the best documented in Islamic history. Many medieval Muslim historians have written about the Fatimid dynasty and state, and there are also memoirs and a multitude of non-literary sources of information on the Fatimids. In the latter category, Fatimid monuments and works of art have been thoroughly studied, and much progress has been made on the scholarly investigations of numismatic, epigraphic and other types of evidence related to the Fatimids. There are also valuable letters, documents and other types of archival materials from Fatimid Egypt – materials which are rarely available for other Muslim dynasties of medieval times. These sources have been categorized and explained in Paul E. Walker's *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and its Sources* (2002). Furthermore, the extensive Ismaili literature of the period, recovered in modern times, contains some historical details in addition to shedding light on various aspects of Ismaili doctrines propagated during this period. As a result of this relative abundance of the primary sources, Fatimid history and Ismailism of the Fatimid period represent the best studied and understood areas of research within the entire spectrum of modern Ismaili studies.

As a rare instance of its kind in Ismaili literature, for the Fatimid period we also have a few historical works written by Ismaili authors. These include al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's *Iftitāḥ al-da'wa* (*Commencement of the Mission*), completed in 346/957, the oldest known historical work in Ismaili literature covering the background to the establishment of the Fatimid state; and Ibn al-Haytham's *Kitāb al-munāẓarāt* on the first year of Fatimid rule in North Africa which was recently brought to light. There are also a number of short treatises on specific Ismaili events, such as the *dā'ī* al-Nīsābūrī's *Istitār al-imām*. The Fatimid caliph-imams are, of course, treated by the *dā'ī* Idrīs in volumes 5–7 of his *'Uyūn al-akhbār*. Aside from strictly historical sources, Ismailis of the Fatimid period produced a few biographical works of the *sīra* genre with great historical value. Amongst the extant examples in this category, mention may be made of the *Sīra*s of the chamberlain Ja'far b. 'Alī; the courtier Jawdhar, and the chief *dā'ī* al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn

al-Shīrāzī. A wide variety of archival documents, such as treatises, letters, decrees and epistles (*sijillāt*) of historical value issued through the Fatimid chancery of state, or *dīwān al-inshā'*, such as *al-Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya*, and the documents included in Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl's *Majmū'at al-wathā'iq al-Fāṭimiyya* (1958) and in S.M. Stern's *Fāṭimid Decrees* (1964), have survived directly or been preserved in later literary sources, notably in al-Qalqashandī's encyclopedic *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā*. The Geniza documents, consisting of thousands of letters, contracts, petitions, etc., written in Judaeo-Arabic and recovered in an old synagogue in Cairo in 1890, should also be mentioned in this context. Studied extensively by S.D. Goitein (1900–1985), Cl. Cahen (1909–1991) and others, they provide an invaluable source of information on the socio-economic and cultural life of Fatimid Egypt.

The Fatimid caliph-imams did concern themselves with historiography, and they commissioned or encouraged works which may have been regarded as official chronicles. Indeed, the events and achievements of the Fatimid state needed to be recorded by reliable chroniclers, and this became an important concern of the Fatimids, especially after the transference of the seat of their state from Ifrīqiya to Egypt in 362/973. Henceforth, numerous histories of the Fatimid state and dynasty were compiled by contemporary chroniclers, both Ismaili and non-Ismaili. But with the exception of a few fragments, these chronicles did not survive the downfall of the dynasty.

Ibn Zūlāq (d. 386/996) is one of the earliest Fatimid chroniclers whose works have been lost completely. The tradition of Fatimid historiography was maintained by al-Musabbiḥī (d. 420/1030), an official in the service of the Fatimids who may have been an Ismaili himself. He produced a vast history of Fatimid Egypt and its ruling dynasty, but only a small fraction of the fortieth volume of his *Akhbār Miṣr* has survived in a unique manuscript. Amongst other Fatimid chroniclers whose works have not survived directly, mention may be made of Muḥammad b. Salāma al-Quḍā'ī (d. 454/1062), al-Murtaḍā al-Muḥannak (d. 549/1154) and Ibn al-Ma'mūn al-Baṭā'iḥī (d. 588/1192). Portions of these Fatimid chronicles have been preserved by later Egyptian historians, notably al-Maqrīzī. Indeed, the only extant contemporary account of the Fatimids is the history of Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Anṭākī (d. 458/1066). Amongst later Egyptian historians, who were mostly functionaries in Fatimid administration, mention should be

made of Ibn al-Ṣayrafī (d. 542/1147), a prolific writer who headed the Fatimid chancery of state for more than four decades. A history written by Ibn al-Ṣayrafī has not survived, but two of his other works on Fatimid viziers and institutions have been preserved. During the 7th/13th century, after the demise of the Fatimids, several other histories of the dynasty were written, such as the *Akhbār mulūk Banī ʿUbayd* of Ibn Ḥammād (d. 628/1231), a Berber *qāḍī* of North Africa, and the history of the Fatimid and Ayyūbid dynasties by Ibn al-Ṭuwayr (d. 617/1220), a high-ranking official of the later Fatimids. Ibn Ẓāfir (d. 613/1216), a secretary in the chancery of the early Ayyūbids, produced a universal history in terms of dynasties, with a section on the Fatimids. However, the most extensive history of Fatimid Egypt produced in the 7th/13th century under the early Mamlūks is the *Akhbār Miṣr* of Ibn Muyassar (d. 677/1278), which has survived in an incomplete form.

The Fatimids were treated in a number of regional chronicles and in several universal histories written by Egyptian authors of the later Mamlūk period. Ibn ʿIdhārī, a Maghribī historian who died after 712/1312, included an important account of the early Fatimids in his chronicle of Ifrīqiya entitled *al-Bayān al-mughrib*. Ibn al-Dawādārī, an Egyptian historian and a Mamlūk officer, produced an extensive universal history in 736/1335, *Kanz al-durar*, of which the sixth part is devoted to the Fatimids. Ibn al-Dawādārī has preserved extracts from the anti-Ismaili polemical work of the Sharīf Akhū Muḥsin, as well as the history of Ibn Ẓūlāq and other earlier sources. More extensive paraphrases from Akhū Muḥsin, as well as a detailed history of the Fatimids, are contained in the encyclopedic *Nihāyat al-arab* of al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333). Later, Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470) wrote a voluminous history of Islamic Egypt, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira*, which includes an elaborate account of Fatimid Egypt. There were other Egyptian historians, such as Ibn al-Furāt (d. 807/1405), writing on the Fatimids. However, the only Sunni author to have produced a separate and substantial history of the Fatimids was Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), the dean of the medieval Egyptian historians. He produced an extensive account of the Fatimid dynasty in his *Ittiʿāẓ al-ḥunafā'*. In his topographic work, *al-Mawāʿiẓ wa'l-iʿtibār bi-dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa'l-āthār*, generally known as the *Khiṭaṭ*, too, al-Maqrīzī provides many details on the

Fatimids and their achievements. In both these works, al-Maqrīzī has preserved substantial quotations from Ibn Zūlāq, al-Muḥannak, al-Musabbiḥī, Ibn al-Ṭuwayr and many other earlier authorities whose writings have been lost. Finally, al-Maqrīzī compiled a biographical dictionary, *Kitāb al-muqaffā al-kabīr*, with many entries on persons connected to Fatimid Egypt.

Much valuable information on the Fatimids and the Ismailis of that period are contained in the universal histories of Muslim authors, starting with the *Ta'rīkh* of al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) and its continuation by ʿArīb b. Saʿd (d. 370/980), the Andalusian historian and poet. More significantly, al-Ṭabarī's continuation became the collective work of Thābit b. Sinān (d. 365/975) and some of his relatives belonging to the learned family of Sabean scholars who hailed from Ḥarrān but settled in Baghdad. These histories, too, are almost completely lost, but they are quoted in later universal histories, such as *al-Muntaẓam* of Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200). The most important early universal history containing information on the Ismailis is, however, the *Tajārib al-umam* of Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), who made extensive use of the histories of Thābit and his nephew Hilāl b. al-Muḥassin al-Ṣābi' (d. 448/1056). The tradition of compiling universal histories found its culmination in *al-Kāmil fi'l-ta'rīkh* of Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), representing the peak of Muslim annalistic historiography. Ibn al-Athīr's history is rich in information on both the Fatimids and the Nizārī Ismailis of Persia and Syria.

In modern times, Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (1808–1899) was the first European orientalist to have produced an independent history of the Fatimids, *Geschichte der Fatimiden Chalifen* (1880–81), based on Arabic chronicles, but without using any Ismaili sources. Several subsequent works on the Fatimids, such as S. Lane-Poole's *History of Egypt in the Middle Ages* (1901), De Lacy O'Leary's *A Short History of the Fatimid Khalifate* (1923), and G. Wiet's early publications, were all written before the modern advances in Ismaili studies and as such were based exclusively on hostile Sunni sources. Meanwhile, with the initiation of modern scholarship in Ismaili studies, a number of specialists began to investigate the religious dimensions of the Fatimids and the religio-political milieu in which they rose to power. In this context, particular mention should be made of B. Lewis's *The Origins of Ismāʿīlism: A Study of the Historical Background of the Fāṭimid*

Caliphate (1940) and W. Ivanow's *Ismaili Tradition Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids* (1942). It was under such circumstances that Zāhid ʿAlī (1888–1958), a learned Ismaili Bohra, produced the first history of the Fatimids in Urdu, *Ta'rīkh-i Fāṭimiyyīn-i Miṣr* (1948), using his ancestral collection of Ismaili manuscripts. In the meantime, Egyptian authors themselves had started to compose histories of the Fatimids, starting with Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan (1892–1968), who in 1932 published his doctoral thesis on the Fatimids, *al-Fāṭimiyyūn fī Miṣr*, and in the subsequent editions of this book also drew on Ismaili sources. The progress made since then is amply reflected in the much more comprehensive *al-Dawla al-Fāṭimiyya fī Miṣr* (1992; rev. ed., 2000), written by Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, the dean of contemporary Egyptian historians who has edited numerous Arabic texts on the Fatimids. A number of Egyptian scholars have also written biographies of individual Fatimid caliph-imams. Meanwhile, Western scholarship in Fatimid studies has continued unabated, after the earlier studies of P. Casanova (1861–1926) and M. Canard (1888–1982) who contributed the entry 'Fāṭimids' to the revised edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, as reflected in a growing number of articles and monographs devoted to different aspects of Fatimid history or Ismaili teachings and activities under the Fatimids. In the latter category, special mention should be made of the contributions of H. Halm, who fully uses Ismaili and non-Ismaili sources in his historical studies, and P.E. Walker, who has produced major work on aspects of Ismaili thought in the Fatimid age. Amongst other contemporary scholars who are specifically contributing to Fatimid studies, mention may be made of the Tunisian scholars F. Dachraoui and M. Yalaoui, as well as M. Brett, Y. Lev and Th. Bianquis, while I.K. Poonawala has concerned himself, after the pioneering work of Asaf A.A. Fyzee (1899–1981), with Ismaili jurisprudence under the Fatimids. At the same time, Jonathan M. Bloom and other art historians have been investigating aspects of Fatimid art and architecture, after the initial studies of K.A.C. Creswell (1879–1974), P. Balog (1900–1982), E.J. Grube and others. Much new research in Fatimid-Ismaili studies found expression in the papers presented at an international colloquium, *L'Égypte Fatimide, son art et son histoire*, held in Paris in 1998.

The ground for the establishment of the Fatimid state was meticulously prepared by the *dāʿī* Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Shīʿī (d. 298/911),

who had been active among the Kutāma Berbers of the Maghrib since 280/893.[23] Meanwhile, after leaving Salamiyya, the Ismaili Imam ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī had arrived in Egypt in 291/904, where he spent a year. Subsequently, he was prevented from going to the Maghrib because the Aghlabid rulers of the region had discovered the Ismaili imam's plans and were waiting to arrest him. ʿAbd Allāh instead headed for the remote town of Sijilmāsa, in southern Morocco, where he lived quietly for four years (292–296/905–909), maintaining his contacts with Abū ʿAbd Allāh who had already commenced his conquest of Ifrīqiya with the help of his Kutāma soldier-tribesmen. By 296/908, this Kutāma army had achieved much success signalling the fall of the Aghlabids. On 1 Rajab 296/25 March 909, Abū ʿAbd Allāh entered Raqqāda, the royal city outside of the Aghlabid capital of Qayrawān, from where he governed Ifrīqiya as al-Mahdī's deputy, for almost a whole year. In Ramaḍān 296/June 909, he set off at the head of his army for Sijalmāsa to hand over the reins of power to the Ismaili imam himself. ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī was acclaimed as caliph in a special ceremony in Sijilmāsa on 7 Dhu'l-Ḥijja 296/27 August 909. With these events the *dawr al-satr* in early Ismailism had also ended. ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī entered Raqqāda on 20 Rabīʿ II 297/4 January 910 and was immediately acclaimed as caliph there. An eyewitness account of the establishment of Fatimid rule is contained in Ibn al-Haytham's *Kitāb al-munāẓarāt*. The Ismaili Shiʿi caliphate of the Fatimids had now officially commenced in Ifrīqiya. The new dynasty was named Fatimid (Fāṭimiyya) after the Prophet's daughter Fāṭima to whom al-Mahdī and his successors traced their ʿAlid ancestry.

The Fatimids did not abandon their Ismaili *daʿwa* on assuming power, as they entertained universal aspirations aiming to extend their rule over the entire Muslim community. However, the first four Fatimid caliph-imams, ruling from Ifrīqiya, encountered numerous difficulties while consolidating their power with the help of the Kutāma Berbers who were converted to Ismailism and provided the backbone of the Fatimid armies. In particular, they confronted the hostility of the Khārijī Berbers and the Sunni Arab inhabitants of Qayrawān and other cities of Ifrīqiya led by their Mālikī jurists, in addition to their rivalries and conflicts with the Umayyads of Spain, the Abbasids and the Byzantines. Under these circumstances, the Ismaili *daʿwa* remained rather inactive in North Africa for some

time.[24] Fatimid rule was established firmly in the Maghrib only under al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh (341–365/953–975), who succeeded in transforming the Fatimid caliphate from a regional state into a great empire. He was also the first Fatimid caliph-imam to concern himself significantly with the propagation of the Ismaili *daʿwa* outside the Fatimid dominions, especially after the transference of the seat of the Fatimid state in 362/973 to Egypt, where he founded Cairo as his new capital city. The *daʿwa* policy of al-Muʿizz was based on a number of religio-political considerations. In particular, he was apprehensive of the success of the Qarmaṭī propaganda in the eastern regions, which not only undermined the efforts of the Fatimid Ismaili *dāʿīs* operating in the same lands, notably Iraq, Persia and Transoxania, but also aroused the general anti-Ismaili sentiments of the Sunni Muslims who did not distinguish the Ismailis from the Qarmaṭīs who had acquired a reputation for extremism and lawlessness. Al-Muʿizz's policies soon bore fruit as the Ismaili *daʿwa* and Fatimid cause were reinvigorated outside the Fatimid state. However, he was only partially successful in undermining the Qarmaṭīs and their *daʿwa* activities. Most notably, Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī (d. after 361/971), the *dāʿī* of Sīstān, Makrān and Khurāsān, who had earlier belonged to the dissident faction, transferred his allegiance to the Fatimids; and, consequently, many of his followers in Persia and Central Asia acknowledged the Fatimid caliph-imam. Ismailism also acquired a permanent stronghold in Multān, Sind, where an Ismaili principality was established for a few decades.

The caliph-imam al-Muʿizz permitted the assimilation of the Neoplatonic cosmology elaborated by the *dāʿīs* of the Iranian lands into the teachings of the Fatimid *daʿwa*. Henceforth, this Neoplatonized cosmology was advocated by the Fatimid *dāʿīs* in preference to the earlier doctrine of creation. In the course of the 4th/10th century, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasafī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī set about harmonizing their Ismaili Shiʿi theology with Neoplatonic philosophy which led to the development of a unique intellectual tradition of philosophical theology in Ismailism. These *dāʿīs* wrote for the educated classes of society and aimed to attract them intellectually. This is why they expressed their theology, always revolving around the central Shiʿi doctrine of the imamate, in terms of the then most intellectually fashionable terminologies and themes. After

the initial efforts of al-Nasafī and al-Rāzī, the Iranian *dāʿīs* elaborated complex metaphysical systems of thought with a distinct Neoplatonized emanational cosmology. In this cosmology, fully elaborated in al-Sijistānī's *Kitāb al-yanābīʿ* and other works, God is described as absolutely transcendent, beyond being and non-being, and thus unknowable. Here, the Neoplatonic dyad of universal intellect (*ʿaql*) and universal soul (*nafs*) in the spiritual world replace Kūnī and Qadar of the earlier cosmology; and the emanational chain of creation is traced finally to Man, while recognizing that God created everything in the spiritual and physical worlds all at once.[25] These *dāʿīs* also expounded a doctrine of salvation as part of their cosmology. In their soteriology, the ultimate goal of salvation is the human soul's progression towards its Creator in quest of a spiritual reward in an eternal afterlife. This, of course, would depend on guidance provided by the authorized sources of wisdom in every era of history.[26]

Sharing a common interest in philosophy, a number of major Iranian *dāʿīs* became involved in a long-drawn theological debate with important juridical implications. Al-Nasafī's main work, *Kitāb al-maḥṣūl* (*Book of the Yield*), written around 300/912 and representing the earliest work of a *dāʿī* to contain Greek philosophical materials, has not survived. This book circulated widely in Qarmaṭī circles, and was soon afterwards criticized by al-Nasafī's contemporary *dāʿī* of Rayy, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, who wrote his own *Kitāb al-iṣlāḥ* (*Book of the Correction*) to correct certain antinomian aspects of al-Nasafī's teachings including the view that the final seventh era of history had already commenced on the first appearance of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. Al-Rāzī's *al-Iṣlāḥ* was, in turn, attacked by al-Nasafī's successor in Khurāsān, al-Sijistānī, who wrote a book entitled *Kitāb al-nuṣra* (*Book of the Support*) to defend al-Nasafī's views against the criticisms of al-Rāzī. It is mainly on the basis of al-Sijistānī's numerous extant writings, however, that scholars have recently studied the early development of what Paul Walker has termed philosophical Ismailism, with its Neoplatonized emanational cosmology, elaborated during the 4th/10th century. Later, Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī acted as an arbiter in the prolonged debate that had taken place earlier among the Iranian *dāʿīs*. He reviewed this debate from the perspective of the Fatimid *daʿwa* in his *Kitāb al-riyāḍ* (*Book of the Meadows*), and in particular upheld certain views of Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī against those of

al-Nasafī in affirming the indispensability of both the *ẓāhir* and the *bāṭin*, the letter of the law as well as its inner meaning. This explains perhaps why Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī's *al-Iṣlāḥ* was the only text related to this disputation that was preserved by the Fatimid *da'wa*.

Neoplatonic philosophy also influenced the cosmology elaborated by the Ismaili-connected Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', a group of anonymous authors in Baṣra who produced an encyclopedic work of fifty-two epistles, *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, on a variety of sciences during the 4th/10th century, or just before the foundation of the Fatimid state as argued in numerous studies by Abbas Hamdani. At any rate, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', usually translated as the 'Sincere Brethren' or 'Brothers of Purity', drew on a wide variety of Greek and other pre-Islamic sources and traditions which they combined with Islamic teachings, especially as upheld by the Shi'is. Like the contemporary Iranian *dā'īs*, they aimed to harmonize religion and philosophy, but they do not seem to have had any discernible influence on Ismaili thought of the Fatimid period. It was only in the 6th/12th century that the *Rasā'il* were introduced into the literature of the Ṭayyibī Musta'lī *da'wa* in Yaman. Henceforth, these epistles were widely studied by the Ṭayyibī *dā'īs* of Yaman and, later, by their successors in the Dā'ūdī Bohra community of the Indian subcontinent.

It was also in al-Mu'izz's time that Ismaili law was finally codified. The process had started already in 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī's reign as caliph (297–322/909–934), when the precepts of Shi'i law were put into practice. The promulgation of an Ismaili *madhhab* resulted mainly from the efforts of al-Qāḍī Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān b. Muḥammad (d. 363/974), who was officially commissioned by al-Mu'izz to prepare legal compendia. Al-Nu'mān had started serving the Fatimids in different capacities from the time of al-Mahdī. In 337/948, he was appointed by the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Manṣūr (334–341/946–953) as chief judge (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*) of the Fatimid state. It is to be noted that from the time of Aflaḥ b. Hārūn al-Malūsī, the Fatimid chief judge was also placed in charge of the affairs of the Ismaili *da'wa*. Thus, responsibilities for explaining and enforcing the *ẓāhir*, or the commandments and prohibitions of the law, and interpreting its *bāṭin* or inner meaning, were united in the same person under the overall guidance of the Ismaili imam of the time.

Al-Nu'mān codified Ismaili law by systematically collecting the

firmly established *ḥadīth*s transmitted from the *ahl al-bayt*, drawing on existing collections of earlier Imāmī as well as Zaydī authorities.[27] His initial efforts resulted in a massive compendium entitled *Kitāb al-īḍāḥ*, which has not survived except for one fragment. Subsequently, he produced several abridgements of the *Īḍāḥ*, which was treated as semi-official by the Fatimids. Al-Nuʿmān's efforts culminated in the *Daʿāʾim al-Islām* (*The Pillars of Islam*), which was scrutinized closely by al-Muʿizz and endorsed as the official code of the Fatimid state. Similarly to the Sunnis and other Shiʿi communities, the Ismailis, too, now possessed a system of law and jurisprudence, also defining an Ismaili paradigm of governance. Ismaili law accorded special importance to the Shiʿi doctrine of the imamate. The authority of the infallible ʿAlid imam and his teachings became the third principal source of Ismaili law, after the Qurʾan and the *sunna* of the Prophet which are accepted as the first two sources by all Muslims. In the *Daʿāʾim*, al-Nuʿmān also provided Islamic legitimation for an ʿAlid state ruled by the *ahl al-bayt*, elaborating the *ẓāhirī* doctrinal basis of the Fatimids' legitimacy as ruling imams and lending support to their universal claims. The *Daʿāʾim al-Islām* has continued through the centuries to be used by Ṭayyibī Ismailis as their principal authority in legal matters.

The Ismailis had high esteem for learning and elaborated distinctive traditions and institutions of learning under the Fatimids. The Fatimid *daʿwa* was particularly concerned with educating the Ismaili converts in esoteric doctrine, known as the *ḥikma* or 'wisdom'. As a result, a variety of lectures or 'teaching sessions', generally designated as *majālis* (singular, *majlis*), were organized. The private lectures on Ismaili esoteric doctrine, known as the *majālis al-ḥikma* or 'sessions of wisdom', were reserved exclusively for the Ismaili initiates who had already taken the oath of allegiance and secrecy. The lectures, delivered by the *dāʿī al-duʿāt* at the Fatimid palace, were approved beforehand by the imam. Only the imam was the source of the *ḥikma*; and the *dāʿī al-duʿāt* or chief *dāʿī*, commonly called *bāb* (the gate) in Ismaili sources, was the imam's mouthpiece through whom the Ismailis received their knowledge of esoteric doctrines. Many of these *majālis* were in due course collected and committed to writing, such as al-Nuʿmān's *Taʾwīl al-daʿāʾim* and the *Majālis al-Mustanṣiriyya* delivered by al-Malījī. This Fatimid tradition of learning culminated in the

Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyya of the *dā'ī* al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 470/1078). Another of the main institutions of learning founded by the Fatimids was the Dār al-'Ilm, the House of Knowledge, sometimes also called the Dār al-Ḥikma. Established in 395/1005 by the caliph-imam al-Ḥākim (386–411/996–1021), a variety of religious and non-religious subjects were taught at this academy which was also equipped with a major library. Many Fatimid *dā'īs* received at least part of their training at the Dār al-'Ilm.[28]

Information on the structure and functioning of the Ismaili *da'wa* organization were among the most guarded secrets of the Ismailis. The religio-political messages of the *da'wa* were disseminated by networks of *dā'īs* within the Fatimid dominions as well as in other regions referred to as the *jazā'ir* (singular, *jazīra*, 'island'). Each *jazīra* was placed under the charge of a high-ranking *dā'ī* referred to as *ḥujja*; and every *ḥujja* had a number of *dā'īs* of different ranks working under him. Organized in a strictly hierarchical manner, the Fatimid *da'wa* was under the overall supervision of the imam and the *dā'ī al-du'āt*, or *bāb*, who acted as its administrative head. The *da'wa* organization developed over time and reached its full elaboration under the caliph-imam al-Mustanṣir. It was, however, in non-Fatimid regions, the *jazā'ir*, especially Yaman, Persia and Central Asia, that the Fatimid *da'wa* achieved lasting success.[29] The *da'wa* was intensified in Iraq and Persia under al-Ḥākim. Foremost among the *dā'īs* of this period was Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. after 411/1020). A learned philosopher, he harmonized Isma'ili theology with a variety of philosophical traditions in developing his own metaphysical system, presented in his *Rāḥat al-'aql*, completed in 411/1020. In fact, al-Kirmānī's thought represents a unique tradition within the Iranian school of philosophical Ismailism. In particular, he expounded a modified cosmology, replacing the Neoplatonic dyad of intellect and soul in the spiritual world by a system of ten separate intellects in partial adaptation of al-Fārābī's Aristotelian cosmic system.[30] Al-Kirmānī's cosmology, however, was not adopted by the Fatimid *da'wa*; it later provided the basis for the fourth and final stage in the evolution of Ismaili cosmology at the hands of Ṭayyibī *dā'īs* of Yaman. The Fatimid caliph-imam al-Ḥākim's reign also coincided with the opening phase of what was to become known as the Druze religion, founded by a number of *dā'īs* who had come to Cairo from Persia and Central Asia,

notably al-Akhram, and al-Darazī. These *dāʿīs* proclaimed the end of the historical era of Islam and advocated the divinity of al-Ḥākim. Al-Kirmānī was officially invited to Cairo around 405/1014 to refute the new extremist doctrines from a theological perspective. He wrote several treatises in defence of the doctrine of imamate in general and al-Ḥākim's imamate in particular, including *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, the *Risālat mabāsim al-bishārāt* and *al-Risāla al-wāʿiẓa*. In fact, the doctrine of the imamate provided an essential subject matter for a number of doctrinal treatises written by the Ismaili authors of different periods.

The Ismaili *daʿwa* activities outside the Fatimid dominions reached their peak in the long reign of al-Mustanṣir (427–487/1036–1094), even after the Sunni Saljūqs replaced the Shiʿi Būyids as overlords of the Abbasids in 447/1055. The Fatimid *dāʿīs* won many converts in Iraq and different parts of Persia and Central Asia. One of the most prominent *dāʿīs* of this period was al-Muʾayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī who after his initial career in Fārs, in southern Persia, settled in Cairo and played an active role in the affairs of the Fatimid *dawla* and Ismaili *daʿwa*. In 450/1058, al-Mustanṣir appointed him as *dāʿī al-duʿāt*, a post he held for twenty years, with the exception of a brief period, until his death in 470/1078. He has left an invaluable account of his life and early career in his *Sīra*,[31] which reveals this *dāʿī*'s central role as an intermediary between the Fatimids and the Turkish military commander al-Basāsīrī who briefly led the Fatimid cause in Iraq against the Saljūqs. Al-Basāsīrī seized Baghdad in 450/1058 and had the *khuṭba* read there for one whole year for al-Mustanṣir before he was eventually defeated by the Saljūqs. Al-Muʾayyad established closer relations between Cairo and several *jazīras*, especially Yaman where Ismailism had persisted in a dormant form throughout the 4th/10th century. By the time of al-Mustanṣir, the leadership of the *daʿwa* in Yaman had fallen into the hands of the *dāʿī* ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī, an important chieftain of the Banū Hamdān in the mountainous region of Ḥarāz. The *dāʿī* ʿAlī al-Ṣulayḥī rose in Ḥarāz in 439/1047, marking the effective foundation of the Ṣulayḥid dynasty ruling over different parts of Yaman as vassals of the Fatimids until 532/1138. On ʿAlī's death in 459/1067, Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī was appointed as chief *dāʿī* of Yaman while ʿAlī's son Aḥmad al-Mukarram (d. 477/1084) succeeded his father merely as head of the Ṣulayḥid state. The

dāʿī Lamak had earlier spent five years in Cairo, staying and studying with the chief *dāʿī* al-Muʾayyad at his residence at the Dār al-ʿIlm. From the latter part of Aḥmad al-Mukarram's reign, during which time the Ṣulayḥids lost much of Yaman to Zaydīs there, effective authority in the Ṣulayḥid state was transferred to al-Mukarram's consort, al-Malika al-Sayyida Ḥurra (d. 532/1138). She played an increasingly important role in the affairs of the Yamanī *daʿwa* culminating in her appointment as the *ḥujja* of Yaman by al-Mustanṣir. This represented the first assignment of a high rank in the *daʿwa* hierarchy to a woman. These events, and the Ṣulayḥids in general, are treated in ʿUmāra al-Yamanī's *Taʾrīkh al-Yaman*, and in the seventh volume of the *dāʿī* Idrīs's *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*.[32] The Ṣulayḥids also played an active part in the renewed efforts of the Fatimids to spread the *daʿwa* on the Indian subcontinent. The Ismaili community founded in Gujarāt by *dāʿī*s sent from Yaman in the second half of the 5th/11th century evolved into the modern day Ṭayyibī Bohra community.

Meanwhile, the Ismaili *daʿwa* had continued to spread in many parts of the Iranian world, now incorporated into the Saljūq sultanate. By the early 460s/1070s, the Persian Ismailis in the Saljūq dominions were under the leadership of ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAṭṭāsh who had his secret headquarters in Iṣfahān, the main Saljūq capital. He was also responsible for launching the career of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ who in due course led the Ismaili *daʿwa* in Persia. In Badakhshān and other eastern parts of the Iranian world, too, the *daʿwa* had continued to spread after the downfall of the Sāmānids in 395/1005.[33] One of the most eminent *dāʿī*s of al-Mustanṣir's time, Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. after 462/1070) played an important part in propagating Ismailism in Central Asia as the *ḥujja* of Khurāsān; he also spread the *daʿwa* to Ṭabaristān and other Caspian provinces.[34] It was mainly during his period of exile in Yumgān that Nāṣir extended the *daʿwa* throughout Badakhshān while maintaining his contacts with the *dāʿī* al-Muʾayyad and the *daʿwa* headquarters in Cairo. It was during those years in the midst of the Pamir mountains that Nāṣir produced the bulk of his poetry as well as his theological-philosophical writings, including the *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn*, his last known work completed in 462/1070 at the request of his Ismaili protector and amir of Badakhshān, Abuʾl-Maʿālī ʿAlī b. al-Asad. The Ismailis of Badakhshān, now divided between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, and their offshoot groups in the Hindu Kush region,

situated in Hunza and other northern areas of Pakistan, regard Shāh Nāṣir-i Khusraw as the founder of their communities. By the time the Qarmaṭī state of Baḥrayn was finally uprooted in 470/1077–78 by the local tribal chieftains, other Qarmaṭī groups in Persia, Iraq and elsewhere too had either disintegrated or switched their allegiance to the Ismaili *da'wa* of the Fatimids. There was now, once again, only one unified Ismaili *da'wa* under the supreme leadership of the Fatimid caliph-imam.

During the long reign of al-Mustanṣir the Fatimid caliphate had already embarked on its decline resulting from factional fighting in the Fatimid armies and other political and economic difficulties. The ravaging activities of the Turkish regiments which led to a complete breakdown of law and order finally obliged al-Mustanṣir to appeal for help to Badr al-Jamālī, an Armenian general in the service of the Fatimids. Badr arrived in Cairo in 466/1074 and soon assumed leadership of civil, judicial and religious administrations in addition to being 'commander of the armies' (*amīr al-juyūsh*), his main title and source of power. He managed to restore peace and relative prosperity to Egypt in the course of his long vizierate of some twenty years when he was the effective ruler of the Fatimid state. Badr died in 487/1094 after having arranged for his son al-Afḍal to succeed him in the vizierate. Henceforth, real power in the Fatimid state remained in the hands of viziers who were normally commanders of the armies, whence their title of 'vizier of the sword' (*wazīr al-sayf*), and normally also in charge of the *da'wa* organization and activities.

Al-Mustanṣir, the eighth Fatimid caliph and eighteenth Ismaili imam, died in Dhu'l-Ḥijja 487/December 1094, a few months after Badr al-Jamālī. Thereupon, the unified Ismaili *da'wa* split into two rival factions, as al-Mustanṣir's son and original heir-designate Nizār was deprived of his succession rights by al-Afḍal who quickly installed Nizār's younger half-brother to the Fatimid throne with the title of al-Musta'lī bi'llāh (487–495/1094–1101). The two factions were later designated as the Nizāriyya and Musta'liyya after al-Mustanṣir's sons who claimed his heritage. Al-Afḍal immediately obtained for al-Musta'lī the allegiance of the notables of the Fatimid court and most leaders of the Ismaili *da'wa* in Cairo who also recognized al-Musta'lī's imamate. Nizār refused to pay homage to al-Musta'lī and fled to Alexandria where he rose in revolt, but was defeated and killed in 488/1095. The

imamate of al-Mustaʿlī was recognized by the Ismaili communities of Egypt, Yaman and western India. These Ismailis who depended on the Fatimid regime later traced the imamate in the progeny of al-Mustaʿlī. The bulk of the Ismailis of Syria, too, joined the Mustaʿlī camp. On the other hand, the Ismailis of Persia who were then already under the leadership of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ supported the succession rights of Nizār. The Central Asian Ismailis seem to have remained uninvolved in the Nizārī-Mustaʿlī schism for quite some time.

The Fatimid state survived for another 77 years after the Nizārī-Mustaʿlī schism of 487/1094. These decades witnessed the rapid decline of the Fatimid caliphate which was beset by continuing crises. Al-Mustaʿlī and his successors on the Fatimid throne, who were mostly minors and remained powerless in the hands of their viziers, continued to be recognized as imams by the Mustaʿlī Ismailis who themselves soon split into Ḥāfiẓī and Ṭayyibī branches. On al-Mustaʿlī's premature death in 495/1101, the all-powerful vizier al-Afḍal placed his five-year-old son on the throne with the caliphal title of al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh. Al-Afḍal was murdered in 515/1121; and when al-Āmir himself was assassinated in 524/1130, the Mustaʿlī Ismailis were confronted with a major crisis of succession. A son, named al-Ṭayyib, had been born to al-Āmir a few months before his death; and he had been designated as the heir apparent. But on al-Āmir's death, power was assumed by his cousin, ʿAbd al-Majīd, a grandson of al-Mustanṣir and the eldest member of the Fatimid family, and nothing more was heard of al-Ṭayyib. After a brief confusing period in Fatimid history, when Twelver Shiʿism instead of Ismailism was adopted as the official religion of the Fatimid state by al-Afḍal's son Kutayfāt who had succeeded to the vizierate, ʿAbd al-Majīd re-emerged on the scene in 526/1132 proclaiming himself as caliph and imam with the title of al-Ḥāfiẓ li-Dīn Allāh; and Ismailism was reinstated as the Fatimid state's religion.[35]

The irregular proclamation as imam of al-Ḥāfiẓ, whose father (Abu'l-Qāsim Muḥammad b. al-Mustanṣir) had not been imam previously, caused a major split in the Mustaʿlī Ismaili community. As in the case of the Nizārī-Mustaʿlī schism, the Mustaʿlī *daʿwa* headquarters in Cairo endorsed the imamate of al-Ḥāfiẓ, who claimed al-Āmir had personally designated him.[36] Therefore, it was also acknowledged by the Mustaʿlī Ismailis of Egypt and Syria as well as a portion of the

Musta'līs of Yaman. These Ismailis, who recognized al-Ḥāfiẓ and the later Fatimid caliphs as their imams, became known as the Ḥāfiẓiyya. On the other hand, the Ṣulayḥid queen of Yaman, al-Sayyida Ḥurra, who had already drifted away from Cairo, upheld al-Ṭayyib's cause and recognized him as al-Āmir's successor to the imamate. As a result, the Musta'lī community of the Ṣulayḥid state, too, recognized al-Ṭayyib's imamate. These Musta'lī Ismailis of Yaman, with some minority groups in Egypt and Syria, initially known as the Āmiriyya, became later designated as the Ṭayyibiyya. The Ismaili traditions of the earlier times were maintained during the final decades of the Fatimid dynasty. These included the appointment of chief *dā'īs* as administrative heads of the Ḥāfiẓī *da'wa*, the regular holdings of the *majālis al-ḥikma*, and the activities of the Dār al-'Ilm, which was moved to a new location in Cairo in 526/1132. The Ḥāfiẓī theologians of this period must have, therefore, concerned themselves with literary activities. However, after the demise of the Fatimid dynasty and caliphate, there were no longer any Ḥāfiẓī communities left in Egypt or elsewhere to preserve their literature. The extant anonymous *al-Qaṣīda al-Shāfiya*, originally composed by a Ḥāfiẓī poet, may be a sole exception.

The Ayyūbid Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, who had acted as the last Fatimid vizier, ended Fatimid rule on 7 Muḥarram 567/10 September 1171, when he had the *khuṭba* read in Cairo in the name of the reigning Abbasid caliph al-Mustaḍī'. A few days later, al-'Āḍid (555–567/1160–1171), the fourteenth and final Fatimid caliph, died after a brief illness. The Fatimid *dawla* had, thus, ended after 262 years.[37] On the collapse of the Fatimid caliphate, Egypt's new Sunni Ayyūbid masters began to persecute the Ismailis, also suppressing the Ḥāfiẓī *da'wa* organization and all the Fatimid institutions. The immense treasures of the Fatimids and their vast libraries were pillaged or sold. For a while longer, however, certain direct descendants of al-Ḥāfiẓ and a few false pretenders claimed the imamate of the Ḥāfiẓīs. Some of them led revolts which received limited support in Egypt. Al-'Āḍid had appointed his eldest son, Dā'ūd, as his heir apparent; and, after al-'Āḍid, the Ḥāfiẓīs recognized him as their next imam. But Dā'ūd, like other members of the Fatimid family, had been placed in permanent captivity in Cairo. In 569/1174, a major conspiracy to overthrow Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and restore Fatimid rule was discovered in Cairo. The chief conspirators included 'Umāra, the famous Yamanī poet and historian, a former chief *dā'ī* as

well as several Ismaili jurists and Fatimid commanders. 'Umāra and several others were executed on Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's order. A few more minor revolts, led by Fatimid pretenders or Ismailis, occurred during the final decades of the 6th/12th century. After Dā'ūd b. al-'Āḍid (d. 604/1207), his son Sulaymān (d. 645/1248), conceived secretly in prison, was evidently acknowledged as the imam of the Ḥāfiẓī Ismailis.

The Ḥāfiẓiyya had disintegrated almost completely in Egypt by the end of the 7th/13th century, when the Fatimid prisoners were finally released by the Mamlūks who had succeeded the Ayyūbids. In Yaman, the Zuray'ids of 'Adan and some of the Hamdānids of Ṣan'ā' had adhered to Ḥāfiẓī Ismailism until the Ayyūbid conquest of southern Arabia in 569/1173. The main source for the history of the Zuray'ids, who also acted as the chief *dā'īs* of the Ḥāfiẓī *da'wa*, is the *Ta'rīkh al-Yaman* of 'Umāra al-Yamanī, who personally knew some members of the dynasty.[38] The Ḥāfiẓīs may still have enjoyed some prominence in Yaman by the beginning of the 7th/13th century when the fifth *dā'ī* of the Ṭayyibīs, 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 612/1215), found it necessary to write a polemical work, *Tuḥfat al-murtād*, refuting the claims of al-Ḥāfiẓ and his successors to the imamate and defending the legitimacy of the Ṭayyibī *da'wa*. For all practical purposes, on the collapse of the Fatimid caliphate, Musta'lī Ismailism survived only in its Ṭayyibī form.

The Yamanī and Indian phases of Ṭayyibī Ismailism

The Ṭayyibī Ismailis recognized al-Āmir's infant son, al-Ṭayyib, as their imam after al-Āmir, rejecting the claims of al-Ḥāfiẓ and the later Fatimids to the imamate. Ṭayyibī Ismailism found its permanent stronghold in Yaman, where it received the initial support of the Ṣulayḥids. The Ṭayyibīs divide their history into succeeding eras of concealment (*satr*) and manifestation (*kashf* or *ẓuhūr*), during which the imams are concealed or manifest. The first era of *satr*, coinciding with the pre-Fatimid period in Ismaili history, ended with the appearance of 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī. This was followed by an era of *ẓuhūr* which continued in the Fatimid period until the concealment of the twenty-first Ṭayyibī Imam al-Ṭayyib, soon after al-Āmir's death in 524/1130. Al-Ṭayyib's concealment, it is held by the Ṭayyibīs, initiated another era of *satr*, during which the Ṭayyibī imams have all remained

hidden (*mastūr*) from the eyes of their followers; and the current *satr* will continue until the appearance of an imam from al-Ṭayyib's progeny. The current period of *satr* in Ṭayyibī Ismailism has, in turn, been further divided into a Yamanī phase, extending from 526/1132 to around 997/1589, when the Ṭayyibīs were split into Dā'ūdī and Sulaymānī factions, and an Indian phase, covering essentially the history of the Dā'ūdī Ṭayyibī *da'wa* during the last four centuries. There were essentially no doctrinal differences between the two Ṭayyibī communities, which were to follow separate lines of *dā'īs*.

The history of the Yamanī phase of Ṭayyibī Ismailism is essentially a history of the activities of the various *dā'īs* and their relations with the Zaydīs and other local dynasties of medieval Yaman. The literary sources for this phase have been fully discussed in the relevant sections of A. Fu'ād Sayyid's bio-bibliographical survey of the sources on Yaman's Islamic history.[39] For the earliest period in Ṭayyibī history, the chief authority is once again 'Umāra al-Yamanī's *Ta'rīkh al-Yaman*. Ismaili historiography on the subject, as expected, is rather meagre with the major exception of the works of the *dā'ī* Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn (d. 872/1468). The still unpublished *Tuḥfat al-qulūb* of the *dā'ī* Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī (d. 596/1199) is another important source on the history of the early Ṭayyibī *da'wa* in Yaman. Professor Abbas Hamdani has prepared a critical edition of the *Tuḥfa*, which will be published in the near future.

Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn b. al-Ḥasan remains our major source on the history of Ṭayyibī Ismailism in medieval Yaman. He hailed from the prominent Banū al-Walīd clan of Quraysh, who led the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* in Yaman for more than three centuries. In 832/1428, Idrīs succeeded his uncle, 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Alī al-Walīd, as the nineteenth *dā'ī muṭlaq* of the Ṭayyibīs. Idrīs, who took special interest in the affairs of the *da'wa* in Gujarāt, was also a warrior and participated in several battles against the Zaydīs. Idrīs produced three extensive historical works. As the head of the Ṭayyibī *da'wa*, Idrīs was very well-informed about the affairs of the Ismaili community in Yaman. He also has extensive quotations from numerous Ismaili sources and archival documents which have not survived. In the seventh and final volume of his *'Uyūn al-akhbār*, he provides valuable information on the Ṣulayḥids and the *da'wa* in Ṣulayḥid Yaman, as well as on the later Fatimids and the opening phase of Ṭayyibī Ismailism. His second

historical work, *Nuzhat al-afkār*, deals especially with the history of the Ismaili *da'wa* in Yaman from the collapse of the Ṣulayḥid dynasty in 532/1138 until 853/1449. In the *Nuzhat al-afkār*, which is still in manuscript form, particular attention is paid to the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* in India and the relations between the Ṭayyibī communities of Yaman and India. Thirdly, in the *Rawḍat al-akhbār*, which is a continuation of the previous history, Idrīs relates the events of his own time, from the year 854/1450 to 870/1465. This is also an important source on the history of the Ṭāhirids (858–923/1454–1517) who ruled over Yaman after the Rasūlids (626–858/1229–1454) and were allied with the *dā'ī* Idrīs. The recently published *Rawḍat al-akhbār* is also an important autobiographical source on Idrīs's career. Ḥusayn F. al-Hamdānī was the first modern scholar to indicate the importance of Idrīs's historical works for studying Ismailism in Yaman while also pointing out their occasional biases.[40]

The history of the Indian phase of Ṭayyibī Ismailism, too, revolves around the activities of different *dā'īs*, in addition to the polemical accounts of various disputes and minor schisms in the Dā'ūdī Bohra community arising mainly from competing claims to the leadership of the *da'wa*. A number of Dā'ūdī *dā'īs* and authors have produced historical works on the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* in India, some of which have been written in a form of Arabicized Gujarātī, i.e., Gujarātī transcribed in Arabic script, adopted as the language of the Dā'ūdī *da'wa* and Bohras. The majority of the Ismaili sources produced in South Asia, however, mix legend and reality rather indiscriminately. As a result, the history of Ṭayyibī Ismailism in India, especially for the earlier centuries, remains shrouded in mystery. Among the few accurate Ismaili histories produced in India, is the *Muntaza' al-akhbār*, in two volumes, written in Arabic by Quṭb al-Dīn Sulaymānjī Burhānpūrī (d. 1241/1826), a Dā'ūdī Ṭayyibī Bohra with a high rank in the *da'wa* organization. The first volume of this work deals with the history of the twenty-one imams recognized by the Ṭayyibī Musta'līs, and the second volume covers the history of the Ṭayyibīs and their (Dā'ūdī) *dā'īs* until 1240/1824. Another noteworthy history of Ismailism in South Asia is the *Mawsim-i bahār* of Muḥammad 'Alī b. Mullā Jīwābhā'ī Rāmpūrī, a functionary of the Dā'ūdī *da'wa* who died in 1315/1897 or a year later. This three-volume work, in Arabicized Gujarātī and drawing on the *Muntaza' al-akhbār* and a number of earlier sources

which have not survived, is considered by the Dā'ūdī Bohras as an authentic source of their history. The first volume on the stories of the prophets and the second volume on the imams were completed during 1302–11/1885–93, after the third volume on the history of the *dā'īs* in Yaman as well as the *da'wa* in India from its origins until the time of the author. The third volume was compiled in 1299/1882 and lithographed shortly afterwards.

The Ṭayyibīs of Yaman and South Asia have preserved a good portion of the literary heritage of the Ismailis, including the classical works of the Fatimid period and the texts written by Yamanī Ṭayyibī authors. These manuscript sources, collectively designated as *al-khizāna al-maknūna* 'the guarded treasure', were mostly transferred after the 10th/16th century from Yaman to India, where they continued to be copied by better-educated Bohras of Gujarāt and elsewhere. This literature was classified and described for the first time in the *Fahrasat al-kutub wa'l-rasā'il* of al-Majdū', a Dā'ūdī Bohra scholar who died in 1183/1769 or a year later. All this, as well as the devotional sectarian and polemical writings of the Dā'ūdī Bohras themselves, are also listed in the relevant sections of I.K. Poonawala's *Biobibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature* (1977). At present, there are major libraries of Ismaili manuscripts in Sūrat, Bombay and Baroda, seats of the Dā'ūdī, Sulaymānī and 'Alawī Bohras in India, and in some private collections in Yaman within the Sulaymānī community there. The largest collections of such manuscripts in the West is located at The Institute of Ismaili Studies Library in London.

In modern times, a number of Dā'ūdī Bohras, who account for the overwhelming majority of the Ṭayyibī Ismailis, have written on various aspects of their community. But historical works of any value have remained rather few in number. The *Gulzare Daudi* (1920), written by Mullā Abdul Husain, a Dā'ūdī functionary who became a dissident, served as one of the most popular and influential books in English on Ṭayyibī Ismailism in India. Several other Dā'ūdī authors, such as Hasan Ali Badripresswala Ismailji and Najm al-Ghani Khan, wrote historical works in Gujarātī or Urdu. The late Zāhid 'Alī produced in Urdu the fullest contemporary account of the Ṭayyibī doctrines in his *Hamāre Ismā'īlī madhhab* (1954). Several members of the distinguished al-Hamdānī family, descendants of Muḥammad 'Alī b. Fayḍ Allāh al-Ya'būrī al-Hamdānī (d. 1315/1898), a prominent

Dā'ūdī scholar from Sūrat, have written on Ṭayyibī Ismailism and on the *da'wa* in India. Muḥammad 'Alī's grandson Ḥusayn b. Fayḍ Allāh al-Hamdānī (1901–1961) and the latter's son Abbas Hamdani have also made their family collections of Ismaili manuscripts available to libraries and scholars at large. Asaf A.A. Fyzee (1899–1981), a learned Sulaymānī Bohra, produced pioneering work on Ismaili jurisprudence – a field of enquiry later adopted by I.K. Poonawala, himself from another learned Bohra family. With a few exceptions, notably John N. Hollister's *The Shi'a of India* (1953), Western scholars and Ismaili specialists have not produced major works on Ṭayyibī Ismailism. On the other hand, a number of dissident Dā'ūdīs, led by Asghar Ali Engineer, who have been involved in various reformist groups organized against the *dā'ī* and his policies have written on Bohra institutions and practices.[41]

The Ṭayyibī *da'wa*, as noted, survived the downfall of the Fatimids, because from early on it had developed independently of the Fatimid state. It received its initial support from the Ṣulayḥid queen, al-Sayyida Ḥurra, who had been looking after the affairs of the Musta'lī *da'wa* in Yaman with the help of the *dā'ī* Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī (d. ca. 491/1098) and then his son Yaḥyā (d. 520/1126). It was soon after 526/1132 that the Ṣulayḥid queen broke her relations with Cairo and declared Yaḥyā's successor al-Dhu'ayb b. Mūsā al-Wādi'ī as the *dā'ī muṭlaq*, or *dā'ī* with absolute authority, to lead the affairs of the Ṭayyibī Musta'lī *da'wa* on behalf of their concealed Imam al-Ṭayyib. This marked the foundation of the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* independently of the Ṣulayḥid state as well. On al-Dhu'ayb's death in 546/1151, Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmidī succeeded to the leadership of the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* as the second *dā'ī muṭlaq*. The Ṭayyibī *da'wa* spread successfully in the Ḥarāz region of Yaman even though it did not receive the support of any Yamanī rulers after the death of the Ṣulayḥid queen in 532/1138.[42] After Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī (d. 557/1162), the position of *dā'ī muṭlaq* remained hereditary among his descendants until 605/1209 when it passed to 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd of the Banū al-Walīd al-Anf family of the Quraysh and remained in this family, with minor interruptions, until 946/1539. During the Yamanī period, the Ṭayyibīs maintained their unity in Yaman and won an increasing number of converts in western India.

In the doctrinal field, the Ṭayyibīs maintained the Fatimid

traditions, and, in like manner, they emphasized the equal importance of the *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* aspects of religion, also retaining the earlier interest of the Ismailis in cyclical history and cosmology which served as the basis of their gnostic, esoteric *ḥaqāʾiq* system of religious thought with its distinctive eschatological themes. This system was, in fact, founded largely by Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī who drew extensively on al-Kirmānī's *Rāḥat al-ʿaql* and synthesized its cosmological doctrine of the ten separate intellects with gnostic mythical elements. The Ṭayyibī modification of al-Kirmānī's system, first elaborated in Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī's *Kanz al-walad*, in effect, represents the fourth and final stage in the development of the Neoplatonized cosmology in Ismaili thought. By astronomical and astrological speculations, the Yamanī Ṭayyibīs also introduced certain innovations into the earlier cyclical conception of religious history, expressed in terms of the seven prophetic eras. They conceived of countless cycles leading the sacred history of humankind from its origins to the Great Resurrection (*qiyāmat al-qiyāmāt*). The Ṭayyibī *ḥaqāʾiq*, explained in many sources such as the *Tāj al-ʿaqāʾid* of ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 612/1215), find their fullest description in Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn's *Zahr al-maʿānī*, an extensive compendium of esoteric doctrines completed in 838/1435. Subsequently, the Ṭayyibīs made few further doctrinal contributions while copying the earlier texts. From early on, the Ṭayyibīs also used al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān's *Daʿāʾim al-Islām* as their most authoritative legal compendium. In modern times, Henry Corbin has studied extensively the various aspects of Ṭayyibī thought, especially its cosmology and eschatology with what he called its 'drama in heaven', also discussing important parallels between these doctrines and those found in Manichaeism and other Iranian religions.[43]

The Ṭayyibī *daʿwa* organization has drawn on Fatimid antecedents with certain modifications. As in the case of imams, every *dāʿī muṭlaq* has appointed his successor by the rule of the *naṣṣ*. The Ṭayyibī *dāʿī*s in Yaman were among the most educated members of their community; many became outstanding religious scholars and produced the bulk of the classical Ṭayyibī literature related to the *ḥaqāʾiq*. The *dāʿī muṭlaq* was normally assisted in the affairs of the *daʿwa* by several subordinate *dāʿī*s designated as *maʾdhūn* and *mukāsir*. Meanwhile, the Yamanī *dāʿī muṭlaq*s had maintained close relations with the Ṭayyibī community of western India. There, the Ismaili converts,

mostly of Hindu descent, were known as Bohras, a name believed to have been derived from the Gujarātī term *vohorvū* meaning 'to trade', since the *daʿwa* originally spread among the trading community of Gujarāt. The Ismaili Bohras of Gujarāt were persecuted under the Sunni sultans of the region from 793/1391, obliging them to observe *taqiyya* in the guise of Sunnism. With the establishment of Mughal rule in 980/1572, however they began to enjoy a certain degree of religious freedom in India and conversions to Sunni Islam ceased.

On the death of the twenty-sixth *dāʿī muṭlaq*, Dāʾūd b. ʿAjabshāh, in 997/1589 or 999/1591, his succession was disputed leading to the Dāʾūdī-Sulaymānī schism in the Ṭayyibī *daʿwa* and community. By then, the Ṭayyibī Bohras in India, who greatly outnumbered their Yamanī co-religionists, desired to attain their independence from Yaman. As a result, they acknowledged Dāʾūd Burhān al-Dīn (d. 1021/1612) as their next *dāʿī* and became known as Dāʾūdīs. A small number of Yamanī Ṭayyibīs, too, supported the Dāʾūdī cause. On the other hand, a minority of Ṭayyibīs, who accounted for the bulk of the community in Yaman, recognized Sulaymān b. Ḥasan (d. 1005/1597) as their new, twenty-seventh *dāʿī*; they became known as Sulaymānīs. Henceforth, the Dāʾūdī and Sulaymānī Ṭayyibīs followed separate lines of *dāʿīs*. The Dāʾūdī *dāʿīs* continued to reside in India, while the headquarters of the Sulaymānī *daʿwa* were established in Yaman. Subsequently, the Dāʾūdī Bohras were further subdivided in India due to periodical challenges to the authority of their *dāʿī muṭlaq*. As one such instance, in 1034/1624, ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm (d. 1046/1637) founded the ʿAlawī splinter group who established their own line of *dāʿīs*. At present, the ʿAlawī Bohras are a very small community centred in Baroda (Vadodara), Gujarāt. The present ʿAlawī *dāʿī*, the forty-fourth in the series, is Sayyidnā Abū Ḥātim Ṭayyib Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Ṣāḥib who succeeded his father in 1394/1974.

In 1200/1785, the headquarters of the Dāʾūdī *daʿwa* was transferred to Sūrat, where the forty-third *dāʿī*, ʿAbd ʿAlī Sayf al-Dīn (1213–1232/1798–1817), founded a seminary known as Sayfī Dars, also Jāmiʿat Sayfiyya, for the education of Dāʾūdī scholars and functionaries. This seminary, with a major library, has continued to serve as an institution of traditional Islamic learning for the Dāʾūdī Bohras. Since 1232/1817, the office of the *dāʿī muṭlaq* of the Dāʾūdī Ṭayyibīs has remained among the descendants of Shaykh Jīwanjī Awrangābādī, while the

community has experienced intermittent strife and crisis rooted in opposition to the *dāʿī*'s authority. The present *dāʿī muṭlaq* of the Dāʾūdī *daʿwa*, Sayyidnā Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn, succeeded his father Sayyidnā Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn (1333–1385/1915–1965) as the fifty-second in the series. The total Dāʾūdī population of the world is currently (2004) estimated at around 900,000 persons, located mainly in India. Since the 1920s, Bombay (Mumbai), with its largest single concentration of Bohras, has served as the permanent administrative seat of the Dāʾūdī *dāʿī muṭlaq*. The Ṭayyibī Bohras, together with the Nizārī Khojas, were also among the earliest Asian communities to settle, during the nineteenth century and subsequently, in East Africa. Their settlement received particular encouragement from Sultan Saʿīd (1220–1273/1806–1856), of the Āl Bū Saʿīd dynasty of ʿUmān and Zanzibar, who aimed to expand his trade relations with India. In time, the Indian Ismaili traders, who had originally emigrated to Zanzibar, the sultan's capital since 1256/1840, moved to the growing urban centres of East Africa. But from the early 1970s, due to the anti-Asian policies of Ugandan and other African governments, many Ismailis left Africa for the West.

In Yaman, the leadership of the Sulaymānī Ṭayyibīs has remained hereditary, since 1088/1677 with few exceptions, in the same Makramī family. Unlike the Dāʾūdīs, the Sulaymānīs have not experienced succession disputes and schisms. The Sulaymānī *dāʿī*s established their headquarters in Najrān, in north-eastern Yaman, and ruled over that region with the military support of the local Banū Yām. In the twentieth century, the political prominence of the Sulaymānī *dāʿī*s, checked earlier by Zaydīs and the Ottomans, was further curtailed by the Saʿūdī family; Najrān was, in fact, annexed to Saudi Arabia in 1353/1934. The present *dāʿī muṭlaq* of the Sulaymānīs, the fiftieth in the series, Sayyidnā al-Ḥusayn b. Ismāʿīl al-Makramī, succeeded to office in 1413/1992 and lives in Saudi Arabia. At present, the Sulaymānī Ṭayyibī Ismailis of Yaman number around 70,000 persons. The Sulaymānī Bohras represent a very small community of a few thousands in India. Similarly to the Dāʾūdīs, the Sulaymānīs withhold their religious literature from outsiders.

Nizārī Ismailism of the Alamūt period

By the time of the Nizārī-Mustaʿlī succession dispute of 487/1094, Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, who preached the Ismaili *daʿwa* within the Saljūq dominions in Persia, had emerged as the leader of the Persian Ismailis. He was then clearly following an independent policy, and his seizure of the fortress of Alamūt in 483/1090 had, in fact, signalled the initiation of the Persian Ismailis' open revolt against the Saljūqs as well as the foundation of what would become the Nizārī Ismaili state. The Nizārī state, centred at Alamūt, with its territories scattered in different parts of Persia and Syria, lasted some 166 years until it was destroyed by the Mongols in 654/1256.

The circumstances of the Nizārīs of the Alamūt period were radically different from those faced by the Ismailis of the Fatimid state and the Ṭayyibīs of Yaman. From early on, the Nizārīs were preoccupied with a revolutionary campaign and their survival in an extremely hostile environment. As a result, they produced military commanders rather than learned theologians. Futhermore, Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and his seven successors at Alamūt used Persian as the religious language of their community. This made it very difficult for the Nizārīs of Persia and adjacent Persian-speaking, eastern lands to have ready access to the Ismaili literature produced in Arabic during the Fatimid period, although the Syrian Nizārīs using Arabic did preserve some of the earlier texts. At any rate, the Persian Nizārīs did not produce a substantial literature;[44] the bulk of their literature, including the collections of the famous library at Alamūt, was either destroyed in the Mongol invasions or lost soon afterwards during the Mongol Īlkhānid rule over Persia (654–754/1256–1353). The Syrian Nizārīs were spared the Mongol catastrophe and were permitted by the Mamlūks to remain in their traditional strongholds. Subsequently, many of the literary sources, produced or preserved by the Syrian Nizārīs, perished in the course of prolonged hostilities with their Nuṣayrī ('Alawī) neighbours.

The Nizārī Ismailis of the Alamūt period did, nevertheless, maintain a sophisticated intellectual outlook and a literary tradition, elaborating their teachings in response to changing circumstances. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ himself was a learned theologian and was credited with founding an impressive library at Alamūt. Later, other major Nizārī fortresses in Persia and Syria were equipped with significant

collections of books, documents and scientific instruments. In the doctrinal field, only a handful of Nizārī works have survived directly from that period. These include the *Haft bāb-i Bābā Sayyidnā*, or the *Seven Chapters* of Bābā Sayyidnā, two honorific titles reserved for Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. This is an anonymous work written around 596/1200, several decades after Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's death in 518/1124. There are also those Ismaili works written during the final decades of the Alamūt period and attributed to Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), who spent some three decades in the Nizārī fortress communities of Persia. Among the Ismaili corpus of al-Ṭūsī's works, mention should be made of the *Rawḍat al-taslīm*, which is the single most important source on the Nizārī teachings of the Alamūt period. A few Nizārī texts, which are not extant otherwise, have been fragmentarily preserved in the *Kitāb al-milal wa'l-niḥal* of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's contemporary, Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), the famous heresiographer and theologian who was influenced by Ismaili ideas if not an Ismaili himself, as well as in some post-Alamūt Nizārī writings. Al-Shahrastānī himself wrote several works, including a partial Qur'an commentary called *Mafātīḥ al-asrār wa-maṣābīḥ al-abrār*, and a philosophical treatise in refutation of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics, *Kitāb al-muṣāraʿa*, using Ismaili ideas and the methodology of *taʾwīl* or esoteric interpretation.

The Nizārī Ismailis of the Alamūt period, too, maintained a historiographical tradition in Persia. They compiled chronicles in the Persian language recording the events of their state according to the reigns of the successive lords of Alamūt.[45] This historiographical tradition commenced with the *Sargudhasht-i Sayyidnā*, covering the biography of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, designated as Bābā and Sayyidnā ('our master') by the contemporary Nizārīs, and the events of his rule as the first lord of Alamūt. The reign of Ḥasan's successor, Kiyā Buzurg-Umīd (518–532/1124–1138), was covered in another chronicle known as the *Kitāb-i Buzurg-Umīd*. The chronicle of Buzurg-Umīd's son and successor, Muḥammad (532–557/1138–1162), was compiled by a certain Dihkhudā 'Abd al-Malik Fashandī, who was also the commander of the Nizārī fortress of Maymūndiz, near Alamūt. The events of the Nizārī state during the later Alamūt period, when the imams themselves were leading the affairs of their community, were recorded by other official chroniclers, such as Raʾīs Ḥasan Munshī Bīrjandī who

was also a poet and secretary (*munshī*) to Shihāb al-Dīn Manṣūr, the Nizārī chief in Quhistān during the first half of the 7th/13th century.

All the Nizārī chronicles, kept at Alamūt and other strongholds in Persia, perished in the period of Mongol rule. However, some of these chronicles and other Nizārī documents, such as the *fuṣūl* or epistles of the lords of Alamūt, were seen and used extensively by three Persian historians of the Īlkhānid period, namely, 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 681/1283), Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh (d. 718/1318), and Abu'l-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh Kāshānī (d. ca. 738/1337). The Ismaili histories of these authorities remain our main sources on the Nizārī *da'wa* and state in Persia during the Alamūt period. Having joined the entourage of Hülegü, Juwaynī accompanied the Mongol conqueror on his military campaigns against the Nizārīs in 654/1256; he also participated in the peace negotiations between Hülegü and the Nizārī Imam Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh. Juwaynī received permission to visit the Alamūt library before the destruction of that fortress by the Mongols. As a result, he succeeded in saving a number of what he called 'choice books', including the *Sargudhasht-i Sayyidnā*, and used these Ismaili sources in writing his history of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and his successors at Alamūt, who he labelled the *da'wa* of the 'heretics' (*malāḥida*) and the 'new preaching' (*da'wat-i jadīd*). He composed this account soon after the fall of Alamūt and added it to the end of his *Ta'rīkh-i jahāngushā* on Mongol victories, completed in its present form in 658/1260. Juwaynī's history of the Persian Nizārīs, permeated with invective and curses against them, is preceded by sections relating to the earlier history of the Ismailis, a pattern adopted by later Persian historians. Rashīd al-Dīn's history of the Ismailis is contained in the second volume of his vast *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* (*Collection of Histories*) completed in 710/1310. More detailed than Juwaynī's account, Rashīd al-Dīn doubtless had direct access to the same Ismaili sources in addition to his predecessor's work. Rashīd al-Dīn quotes more extensively from the Nizārī chronicles and also displays a sense of relative objectivity rarely found in other Sunni historians writing on the Ismailis. Few details are known about the life of Kāshānī, a Persian (Twelver) Shi'i historian belonging to the Abū Ṭāhir family of leading potters from Kāshān. It is known, however, that he was associated with Rashīd al-Dīn and was probably involved in producing parts of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, although his claim to the entire authorship of that work is

very doubtful.[46] At any rate, he included a section on the Ismailis in his *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*, a general history of the Muslim world until the demise of the Abbasids. Kāshānī's account, which came to light in 1964, is the fullest of the three sources.

Later Persian historians who produced summary accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and his successors, based themselves mainly on Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn, occasionally drawing also on sources of legendary nature. Amongst such authors writing general histories with sections devoted to the Ismailis, the earliest and perhaps the most famous is Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī (d. after 740/1339), who benefited from the patronage of Rashīd al-Dīn himself. In 730/1330, he completed his *Ta'rīkh-i guzīda*, a general history of Islam and the dynasties ruling over Persia, with a section on the Fatimids and the Ismailis (*malāḥida*),[47] and dedicated it to Rashīd al-Dīn's son and successor as Īlkhānid vizier, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad. Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī included a section on the lords of Alamūt also in his versified history, *Ẓafar-nāma*, recently published for the first time.[48] Among later Persian chroniclers writing on the Ismailis, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū (d. 833/1430), court historian of the Tīmūrid ruler Shāhrukh (807–850/1405–1447), is one of the most important. In 826/1423, he began to compile a vast universal history, *Majmaʿ al-tawārīkh*, at the request of Shāhrukh's son Bāysunghur (d. 837/1433), a patron of poets and of the arts. In the third volume of his history, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū devoted an extensive section to the Fatimids and the Nizārī state of Persia, following closely the account of Rashīd al-Dīn. Muḥammad b. Khwāndshāh, known as Mīrkhwānd (d. 903/1498), is a later historian of note who wrote a detailed account of the Persian Nizārīs of the Alamūt period, which was first published in Paris in 1813.[49] This represented one of the earliest accounts of the Persian Ismailis made accessible to European orientalists. Mīrkhwānd's grandson, Ghiyāth al-Dīn b. Humām al-Dīn Muḥammad, known as Khwānd Amīr (d. 942/1535–36) also wrote on the Ismailis in his own general history which was completed in 930/1524.[50] The Nizārī rulers of Alamūt continued to be treated, in later medieval times, and to various extents, by Persian historians such as Qāḍī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ghaffārī (d. 975/1567).

Another category of literary sources on the Persian Nizārīs of the Alamūt period are the contemporary chronicles of the Saljūqs. 'Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 597/1201) was evidently

the author of the earliest Saljūq history with references to the Nizārīs, *Nuṣrat al-fatra,* which has survived only in an abridgement compiled in 623/1226.[51] Mention should also be made of Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī's (d. 582/1187) *Saljūq-nāma,* composed around 580/1184 and used by many later chroniclers; the *Akhbār al-dawla al-Saljūqiyya,* written around 622/1225 and ascribed to Ṣadr al-Dīn 'Alī al-Ḥusaynī, and al-Rāwandī's *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr,* a history of the Great Saljūqs completed around 601/1204 with many references to the Persian Nizārīs.[52] The medieval regional histories of Daylam and other Caspian provinces in northern Persia, starting with Ibn Isfandiyār's *Ta'rīkh-i Ṭabaristān* written in 613/1216–17,[53] provide another category of historical sources on the Persian Nizārīs. Finally, both Syrian and Persian Nizārīs are treated in many general histories of the Muslim world by Arab authors, most notably in *al-Kāmil fi'l-ta'rīkh* of Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233) whose biography of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ is independent of the official *Sargudhasht-i Sayyidnā,* compiled at Alamūt perhaps on the basis of an autobiographical account.

The Nizārīs of Syria produced their own religious literature, including numerous poetical works in Arabic, during the Alamūt period.[54] This literature has not been sufficiently studied in modern times, as the relevant manuscript sources are not readily accessible. The Syrian Nizārīs have also preserved many of the Ismaili texts of the Fatimid period, works of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman and others. The Persian Nizārī works of the Alamūt period were evidently not translated into Arabic in Syria, and, similarly the religious literature of the Syrian Nizārīs was not rendered into Persian. Nor did the Syrian Nizārīs compile official chronicles like those produced by their Persian co-religionists. Amongst the few surviving Syrian Nizārī works, a special place is occupied by the *Faṣl min al-lafẓ al-sharīf,* which includes a biographical account of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān (d. 589/1193), the most famous *dā'ī* of the community, in addition to sayings attributed to him. This hagiographic work containing various anecdotes based on the oral tradition of the Syrian Nizārīs, may have been compiled much later by the *dā'ī* Abū Firās Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maynaqī (d. 937/1530 or 947/1540), or possibly by another Syrian Abū Firās who lived two centuries earlier. The main literary sources on the history of the Syrian Nizārīs, from the arrival of the first *dā'īs* dispatched from Alamūt in the earliest years of the 6th/12th century until the complete

subjugation of the Nizārī castles by Mamlūks in 671/1273, are the local histories of Syria as well as general Arab chronicles.[55] Amongst the relevant authorities, the most important are Ibn al-Qalānisī (d. 555/1160), the Damascene chronicler, Ibn al-'Adīm (d. 660/1262), the historian of Aleppo, and Ibn al-Jawzī's grandson known as Ṣibt (d. 654/1256).[56] Of particular interest here are also works of several lesser known historians, notably al-'Aẓīmī (d. after 556/1161). For the later decades, the histories of Abū Shāma (d. 665/1267) and Ibn Wāṣil (d. 697/1298), amongst others, are of significance.

The non-literary sources on the Persian Nizārīs of the Alamūt period are rather insignificant. The Mongols demolished the major Nizārī fortresses of Persia, which may have provided valuable archaeological evidence. At any rate, these fortresses have not been scientifically studied; and, the few excavations undertaken in modern times probably caused more damage to the sites than they yielded results. All in all, no epigraphic evidence has been recovered from the Nizārī castles of Persia, which were equipped with impressive defence and water supply systems, while relatively limited hoards of Nizārī coins minted at Alamūt have also been recovered.[57] On the other hand, the Nizārī castles of Syria, which have been much better preserved, have yielded valuable archaeological, including epigraphic, information.[58]

The development of Nizārī studies in broad terms is covered in the next chapter. Here it is sufficient to recall that the distorted image of the Nizārīs, made famous in medieval Europe as the Assassins, was retained by the orientalists until at least the 1930s, when W. Ivanow, the founder of modern Nizārī studies, began to produce his numerous publications based on genuine Nizārī source materials. Subsequently, Marshall G.S. Hodgson (1922–1968) produced the first scholarly monograph on the Nizārīs of Alamūt period in his *The Order of Assassins* (1955), a misleading title which he himself later recanted.[59] After these pioneering efforts, few Islamicists have concerned themselves with the medieval history of the Nizārīs. On the other hand, there have periodically appeared 'sensational' and popular types of monographs on the so-called 'Assassins' – a misnomer for the Nizārī Ismailis which has continued to be used by many Western authors, as in W.B. Bartlett's *The Assassins: The Story of Medieval Islam's Secret Sect* (2001), to name a recent example.

By 487/1094, Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, as noted, had emerged as the leader

of the Persian Ismailis. As an Ismaili Shi'i, he could not tolerate the anti-Shi'i policies of the Saljūqs, who as the new champions of Sunni Islam aimed to uproot the Fatimids. Ḥasan's revolt was also an expression of Persian 'national' sentiments, as the alien rule of Saljūq Turks was greatly detested by the Persians of different social classes. This may explain why he substituted Persian for Arabic as the religious language of the Persian Ismailis, accounting also for the popular success of his movement.[60] It was under such circumstances that in al-Mustanṣir's succession dispute, Ḥasan supported Nizār's cause and severed his relations with the Fatimid regime and the *da'wa* headquarters in Cairo which had lent their support to al-Musta'lī. By this decision, Ḥasan founded the independent Nizārī Ismaili *da'wa* on behalf of the Nizārī imam who then remained inaccessible; and, as a result, the Nizārī *da'wa* survived the downfall of the Fatimid dynasty, similarly to the subsequent fate of the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* in Yaman.

The revolt of the Persian Ismailis soon acquired a distinctive pattern and method of struggle, suited to the decentralized power structure of the Saljūq sultanate and their much superior military power. Ḥasan devised a strategy to overwhelm the Saljūqs locality by locality, amir by amir, and from a multitude of impregnable mountain strongholds. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ did not divulge the name of Nizār's successor to the imamate. In fact, numismatic evidence shows that Nizār's own name appeared on coins minted at Alamūt for about seventy years after his death in 488/1095, while his progeny were blessed anonymously. The early Nizārī Ismailis were, thus, left without an accessible imam in another *dawr al-satr*; and, as in the pre-Fatimid period of concealment, the absent imam was represented in the community by a *ḥujja*, his chief representative. Ḥasan and his next two successors as heads of the Nizārī *da'wa* and state, were indeed recognized as such *ḥujjas*. It seems that already in Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's time many Nizārīs believed that a son or grandson of Nizār had been secretly brought from Egypt to Persia, and he became the progenitor of the line of the Nizārī imams who later emerged at Alamūt.

From early on in the Alamūt period, outsiders had the impression that the Persian Ismailis had initiated a 'new preaching' (*al-da'wa al-jadīda*) in contrast to the 'old preaching' (*al-da'wa al-qadīma*) of the Fatimid times. The 'new preaching' did not, however, represent any new doctrines; it was merely a reformulation of the old Shi'i doctrine

of *taʿlīm*, or authoritative teaching by the imam. It was mainly Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ himself who restated this doctrine in a more rigorous form in a theological treatise entitled *al-Fuṣūl al-arbaʿa*, or *Four Chapters*. This treatise, originally written in Persian, has been preserved only fragmentarily by al-Shahrastānī and our Persian historians.[61] The doctrine of *taʿlīm*, emphasizing the autonomous teaching authority of each imam in his own time, became the central doctrine of the Nizārīs who, henceforth, were designated as the Taʿlīmiyya. The intellectual challenge posed to the Sunni establishment by the doctrine of *taʿlīm*, which also refuted the legitimacy of the Abbasid caliph as the spiritual spokesman of all Muslims, called forth the reaction of the Sunni establishment. Many Sunni scholars, led by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), attacked the Ismaili doctrine of *taʿlīm*. It is to be noted that the Nizārīs, as a matter of general policy, do not seem to have responded to these polemics.

By 489/1096, when the fortress of Lamasar was seized, Ḥasan had acquired or built numerous mountain strongholds in Rūdbār, Daylamān, the centre of Nizārī power in northern Persia. Meanwhile, the Ismailis had come to possess a network of fortresses and several towns in Quhistān, in south-eastern Khūrāsān, which remained the second most important territory of the Nizārī state in Persia. Later, the Nizārīs acquired Girdkūh and other fortresses in the regions of Qūmis, Arrajān and Zagros. In the opening years of the 6th/12th century, Ḥasan began to extend his activities also to Syria by sending Persian *dāʿīs* from Alamūt, led by al-Ḥakīm al-Munajjim (d. 496/1103). In Syria, the *dāʿīs* confronted many difficulties in the initial phases of their operations in Aleppo and Damascus; and it took them several decades before they succeeded in various ways to acquire a network of castles, collectively referred to in the sources as the *qilāʿ al-daʿwa*, in the Jabal Bahrāʾ (present-day Jabal Anṣāriyya), a mountainous region between Ḥamā and the Mediterranean coastline in central Syria. These castles included Qadmūs, Kahf and Maṣyāf, which often served as the headquarters of the chief *dāʿī* of the Syrian Nizārīs. There, the Nizārīs confronted the enmity of various local Sunni rulers as well as the Crusaders who were active in adjacent territories belonging to the Latin states of Antioch and Tripoli. By the final years of Ḥasan's life, however, the anti-Saljūq revolt of the Nizārīs had lost its momentum, much in the same way that the Saljūqs under Barkiyāruq (d. 498/1105)

and Muḥammad Tapar (d. 511/1118) had failed in their prolonged military campaigns to uproot the Persian Ismailis from their mountain strongholds.[62] Ismaili-Saljūq relations had now entered a new phase of 'stalemate'.

On Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's death in 518/1124, Kiyā Buzurg-Umīd succeeded him as the head of the Nizārī *da'wa* and state. A capable administrator like his predecessor, Buzurg-Umīd (518–532/1124–1138) maintained the policies of Ḥasan and further strengthened and extended the Nizārī state. The Ismaili-Saljūq stalemate essentially continued during the long reign of Buzurg-Umīd's son Muḥammad (532–557/1138–1162) as the third lord of Alamūt. By then, the Nizārī state had acquired its distinctive administrative structure. Each Nizārī territory was placed under the overall leadership of a chief *dā'ī* appointed from Alamūt; the leader of the Quhistānī Nizārīs was known as *muḥtasham*. These *dā'ī*s as well as the commanders of major fortresses enjoyed a large degree of independence and local initiative, contributing to the dynamism and resilience of the Nizārī movement. Highly united with a remarkable sense of mission, the Nizārīs acknowledged the supreme leadership of Alamūt and obeyed without any dissent the religious policies initiated at that fortress by the imam's *ḥujjas* and, subsequently, by the Nizārī imams themselves. Meanwhile, the Nizārīs had been eagerly expecting the appearance of their imam, who had remained inaccessible since Nizār's murder in 488/1095.

The fourth lord of Alamūt, Ḥasan II to whom the Nizārīs refer with the expression *'alā dhikrihi'l-salām* (on his mention be peace), succeeded to leadership in 557/1162 and, soon after, declared the *qiyāma* or resurrection initiating a new phase in the religious history of the Nizārī community. On 17 Ramaḍān 559/8 August 1164, in the presence of the representatives of different Nizārī territories who had gathered at Alamūt, he delivered a sermon in which he proclaimed the *qiyāma*, the long awaited Last Day. About two months later, a similar ceremony was held at the fortress of Mu'minābād, near Bīrjand, and the earlier *khuṭba* and message were read out by Ra'īs Muẓaffar, the *muḥtasham* in Quhistān. There, Ḥasan II's position was more clearly equated with that of al-Mustanṣir as God's caliph (*khalīfa*) on earth, implicitly claiming the status of imam for the lord of Alamūt.[63]

Ḥasan II relied heavily on Ismaili *ta'wīl* and earlier traditions,

interpreting *qiyāma* symbolically and spiritually for the Nizārīs. Accordingly, *qiyāma* meant nothing more than the manifestation of unveiled truth (*ḥaqīqa*) in the person of the Nizārī imam; it was a spiritual resurrection only for those who acknowledged the rightful imam of the time and were now capable of understanding the truth, the esoteric and immutable essence of Islam. It was in this sense that Paradise was actualized for the Nizārīs in this world. They were now to rise to a spiritual level of existence, transcending from *ẓāhir* to *bāṭin*, from *sharīʿa* to *ḥaqīqa*, or from the literal interpretation of the law to an understanding of its spirituality and the eternal truths of religion. On the other hand, the 'outsiders', the non-Nizārīs who were incapable of recognizing the truth, were rendered spiritually non-existent. The imam proclaiming the *qiyāma* would be the *qāʾim al-qiyāma*, 'lord of resurrection', a rank which in Ismaili religious hierarchy was always higher than that of an ordinary imam.

Ḥasan II's son and successor Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad devoted his long reign (561–607/1166–1210) to a systematic elaboration of the *qiyāma* in terms of a doctrine. The exaltation of the autonomous teaching authority of the present imam now became the central feature of Nizārī thought; and *qiyāma* came to imply a complete personal transformation of the Nizārīs who were expected to perceive the imam in his true spiritual reality. Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad also made every Nizārī imam potentially a *qāʾim*, capable of inaugurating an era of *qiyāma*. In the spiritual world of resurrection, there would remain only three categories of persons, ranked in terms of their relationship to the Nizārī imam. These include the 'people of opposition' (*ahl-i taḍādd*), the non-Nizārīs who exist only in the realm of appearances (*ẓāhir*) and are spiritually non-existent. Secondly, there are the ordinary followers of the Nizārī imam, the 'people of gradation' (*ahl-i tarattuḅ*), who have penetrated the *sharīʿa* to its inner meaning. However, they have access only to partial truth, as they still do not fully understand the *bāṭin*. Finally, there are the 'people of union' (*ahl-i waḥdat*), the Nizārī super-elite, or the *akhaṣṣ-i khāṣṣ*, who perceive the imam in his true spiritual reality as the epiphany (*maẓhar*) of the word (*kalima*) of God; only they arrive at the realm of *ḥaqīqa*, in a sense the *bāṭin* behind the *bāṭin*, where they find full truth and as such, enjoy salvation in the paradisal state actualized for them in this world.[64] Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad also explicitly affirmed the Nizārid

Fatimid descent of his father and, therefore, of himself. He explained that Ḥasan II was in fact an imam and the son of a descendant of Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir who had earlier found refuge in Alamūt. Henceforth, the Nizārīs recognized the lords of Alamūt, beginning with Ḥasan II, as their imams.[65]

Meanwhile, the Syrian Nizārīs had entered into an important phase of their own history under the leadership of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, their most famous leader who had been appointed as chief *dāʿī* in Syria by Ḥasan II soon after his own accession in 557/1162. Sinān reorganized and strengthened the Syrian Nizārī *daʿwa*, also consolidating their network of fortresses in the Jabal Bahrā'. Furthermore, he organized an independent corps of *fidāʾī*s, designated more commonly in Syria and in the Arabic sources as *fidāwīs* (*fidāwiyya*), self-sacrificing devotees of the community who were sent on dangerous missions to remove selected enemies who had posed serious threats to the survival of the Nizārīs in particular localities. Aiming to safeguard his community, Sinān entered into intricate and shifting alliances with the major neighbouring powers and rulers, notably the Crusaders, the Zangids and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. The Syrian Nizārīs had intermittent conflicts with the Templars and the Hospitallers, Frankish military orders which often acted independently in the Latin East. The only one of the Syrian *dāʿī*s to act somewhat independently of Alamūt, Sinān evidently taught his own version of the doctrine of *qiyāma*. He led the Syrian Nizārīs for almost three decades to the peak of their power and fame until his death in 589/1193.[66]

Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad's son and successor, Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan (607–618/1210–1221), was concerned largely with redressing the isolation of the Nizārīs from the larger world of Sunni Islam. Consequently, he publicly repudiated the doctrine of *qiyāma* and ordered his followers to observe the *sharīʿa* in its Sunni form, inviting Sunni jurists to instruct his people. Indeed, Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan did his utmost to convince the outside world of his new policy. In 608/1211, the Abbasid caliph al-Nāṣir acknowledged the imam's rapprochement with Sunni Islam and issued a decree to that effect. Henceforth, the rights of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan to Nizārī territories were officially recognized by the Abbasid caliph, as well as the Khwārazm Shāhs, who were then establishing their own empire in Persia as successors to the Saljūqs, and by other Sunni rulers. The Nizārīs evidently viewed Jalāl al-Dīn

Ḥasan's declarations as a restoration of *taqiyya*, which had been lifted in the *qiyāma* times; the observance of *taqiyya* could imply any type of accommodation to the outside world as deemed necessary by the infallible imam. Be that as it may, the Nizārī imam had now successfully achieved peace and security for his community and state.

Under 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (618–653/1221–1255), Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan's son and successor as the penultimate lord of Alamūt, gradually the Sunni *sharī'a* was relaxed within the community and the Nizārī traditions associated with *qiyāma* were once again revived, although the Nizārīs continued to appear to outsiders in Sunni guise. The Nizārī leadership now also made a sustained effort to explain the different doctrinal declarations and religious policies of the lords of Alamūt. As a result, all these teachings were interpreted comprehensively within a coherent theological framework, aiming to provide satisfactory explanations for the seemingly contradictory policies adopted at Alamūt. Intellectual life indeed flourished in the long reign of 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad, receiving a special impetus from the influx of outside scholars who fled the first waves of the Mongol invasions and took refuge in the Nizārī fortress communities. Foremost among such scholars, who availed themselves of the Nizārī libraries and patronage of learning, was Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), who made major contributions to the Nizārī Ismaili thought of the late Alamūt period during his prolonged stay amongst them.

It is mainly through al-Ṭūsī's extant Ismaili writings, notably the *Rawḍat al-taslīm*, that we have an exposition of the Nizārī thought of the Alamūt period, especially as it developed after the declaration of the *qiyāma*. Al-Ṭūsī explained that *qiyāma* was not necessarily a final, eschatological event, but a transitory condition of life when the veil of *taqiyya* would be lifted so as to make the unveiled truth accessible. In the current cycle of history, however, the full *qiyāma*, or Great Resurrection (*qiyāmat-i qiyāmāt*) would still occur at the end of the era initiated by the Prophet Muḥammad. The identification between *sharī'a* and *taqiyya*, implied by the teachings of Ḥasan II, was now made explicit by al-Ṭūsī who also identified *qiyāma* with *ḥaqīqa*. Thus, the imposition of the Sunni *sharī'a* by Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan was presented as a return to *taqiyya*, and to a new period of *satr* or concealment, when the truth (*ḥaqīqa*) would be once again concealed in the *bāṭin* of religion. The condition of *qiyāma* could, in principle, be granted by

the current Nizārī imam at any time, because every imam was potentially also an *imām-qā'im*. In his integrated theological presentation, human life could alternate between periods of *qiyāma*, when reality is manifest, and *satr*, when it would be concealed requiring the observance of *taqiyya*. In this sense, the term *satr* was redefined to imply the concealment of the religious truths and the true spiritual reality of the imam, and not just the physical inaccessibility of the imam, as had been the case in the pre-Fatimid and early Alamūt times.[67] The teachings of the late Alamūt period brought the Nizārīs even closer to the esoteric traditions more commonly associated with Sufism.

Nizārī fortunes in Persia were rapidly reversed after the collapse of the Khwārazmian empire which brought them into direct confrontation with the invading Mongols. When the Great Khan Möngke decided to complete the Mongol conquests of western Asia, he assigned first priority to the destruction of the Nizārī Ismaili state, a task completed with some difficulty in 654/1256 by his brother Hülegü who led the main Mongol expedition into Persia. Shortly before, in 653/1255, 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad had been succeeded by his eldest son Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh, who would rule for exactly one year as the last lord of Alamūt. The youthful imam engaged in a complex, and ultimately futile, series of negotiations with Hülegü. Finally, on 29 Shawwāl 654/19 November 1256, Khurshāh descended from the fortress of Maymūndiz in Rūdbār in the company of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and Nizārī dignitaries, and surrendered to the Mongols. With the fall of Alamūt a month later, the fate of the Nizārī state was sealed. Alamūt and many other fortresses were demolished, though Girdkūh resisted its Mongol besiegers for another fourteen years. In the spring of 655/1257, Khurshāh himself was killed by his Mongol guards in Mongolia, where he had gone in order to meet the Great Khan. By then, the Mongols had massacred large numbers of Nizārīs who had been placed in their protective custody.

In the meantime, the Syrian Nizārīs had been led by other *dā'īs* after Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān. From the time of the Imam Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan's rapprochement with Sunni Islam, relations between the Syrian Nizārīs and their Muslim neighbours had improved significantly, while periodic encounters of different kinds continued with the Franks. The last important encounter between the Nizārīs and the Crusaders, who still held the Syrian coastline, occurred in the

early 650s/1250s in connection with embassies exchanged with Louis IX, the French king better known as St. Louis (d. 1270), who led the Seventh Crusade (1248–1255) to the Holy Land. John of Joinville (d. 1317), the king's biographer and secretary, has left a valuable account of these dealings, including a curious disputation between an Arabic-speaking friar and the chief *dāʿī* of the Syrian Nizārīs.[68] Subsequently, the Nizārīs collaborated with the Mamlūks and other Muslim rulers in defeating the Mongols in Syria. Baybars, the victorious Mamlūk sultan, now resorted to various measures for bringing about the submission of the Nizārī strongholds in Syria. Kahf was the last Nizārī outpost there to fall in 671/1273. However, the Syrian Nizārīs were permitted to remain in their traditional abodes as loyal subjects of the Mamlūks and their Ottoman successors. Having lost their political prominence, the Nizārīs henceforth lived secretly as religious minorities in numerous communities scattered in Syria, Persia, Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

Nizārī Ismailism of the post-Alamūt period

The post-Alamūt period in Nizārī Ismailism covers more than seven centuries, from the fall of Alamūt in 654/1256 to the present time. The Nizārī communities, scattered from Syria to Persia, Central Asia and South Asia, now elaborated a diversity of religious and literary traditions in different languages. The first five centuries after the fall of Alamūt represent the longest obscure phase of Ismaili history. Many aspects of Ismaili activity in this period are not still sufficiently studied due to a scarcity of primary sources. A variety of factors, related to the very nature of Nizārī Ismailism of this period, have caused special research difficulties here. In the aftermath of the destruction of their state and fortress communities in Persia, the Nizārīs were deprived of the centralized leadership they had enjoyed during the Alamūt period. After Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh's son and successor, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, there was a split in the line of the Nizārī imams and their followers, dividing the community into rival Muḥammad-Shāhī and Qāsim-Shāhī branches. The Nizārī imamate was, thus, handed down through two parallel lines while the imams remained in hiding and were inaccessible to most of their followers for about two centuries.

More complex research difficulties arise from the widespread

practice of *taqiyya* by the Nizārīs of different regions. During much of the post-Alamūt period of their history, the Nizārīs were obliged to dissimulate rather strictly to safeguard themselves against rampant persecution. They concealed their true beliefs and literature in addition to resorting to Sunni, Sufi, Twelver Shi'i and Hindu disguises in different parts of the Iranian world and the Indian subcontinent. It is important to note that in many regions, the Nizārīs observed *taqiyya* for very long periods with lasting consequences. Although this phenomenon has only recently been studied by a few scholars, notably cultural anthropologists, it is certain that long-term dissimulation under any guise would eventually result in irrevocable changes in the traditions and the very religious identity of the dissimulating community. Such influences might have manifested themselves in a variety of manners, ranging from total acculturation or full assimilation of the Nizārīs of a particular locality into the community chosen originally as a protective cover, to various degrees of interfacing and admixture between Ismaili and 'other' traditions without necessarily the loss of their Ismaili identity. Probabilities for complete assimilation or disintegration were particularly high during the early post-Alamūt times when the Nizārīs were effectively deprived of any form of central leadership, including especially the guidance of their imams. In the event, for several centuries, the Nizārī communities developed independently of one another under the local leadership of their *dā'īs*, *pīrs*, *shaykhs*, *khalīfas*, etc., who often established their own hereditary dynasties.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that the dissimulating Nizārī Ismailis did not generally attract the attention of outsiders and historians during much of this period. The difficulties of studying post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismailism are further aggravated by the fact that the Nizārīs produced relatively few religious texts, while, following the demise of their state in 654/1256, they had lost their earlier interest in historiography as well. The difficult conditions under which the Nizārīs have often lived and the generally limited standards of education attained by the community until recent times made it impossible for the Nizārīs to produce outstanding theologians and authors comparable to their contemporary Ṭayyibī *dā'īs* in Yaman. Furthermore, already from the Alamūt period the Persian-speaking Nizārīs did not have much access to the Arabic Ismaili literature of the Fatimid times,

which was preserved and used extensively by the Ṭayyibī Ismailis. Of all the Nizārī communities, only the Syrians were able to preserve a certain number of the Arabic texts of the classical Ismaili literature.

In the light of these problems, further progress here would require the acquisition of better understanding of the historical developments as well as the religious and literary traditions of major Nizārī communities of this period, especially those in South Asia and different parts of the Iranian world. The Nizārī Ismaili literature of the post-Alamūt period can be classified into four main categories, namely, the Persian, the Badakhshānī or Central Asian, the Syrian, and the South Asian or the *ginān* literature. The Nizārī sources produced in Persia, Afghanistan and the upper Oxus region are written entirely in the Persian language, while the Syrian texts are in Arabic. The Nizārīs of South Asia, designated as Khojas, who elaborated a distinctive Ismaili tradition known as Satpanth or 'true path', have used various Indian languages in committing their doctrines to writing in the form of devotional hymns known as *ginān*s and using the Khojkī script developed by themselves.

The Nizārīs of Persia and adjacent regions did not produce any doctrinal works during the earliest post-Alamūt centuries. Only the versified works of Ḥakīm Sa'd al-Dīn Nizārī Quhistānī (d. 720/1320), a poet and government functionary from Bīrjand in south-eastern Khurāsān, remain extant from that period. He was perhaps also the first post-Alamūt Nizārī author to have chosen verse and Sufi forms of expression to conceal his Ismaili ideas, a model adopted by later Nizārī authors in Persia. The revival of the *da'wa* activities during the Anjudān period also encouraged the literary activities of the community, and a number of better educated Persian Nizārīs began to produce the first doctrinal works of the period. The earliest amongst these authors were Abū Isḥāq Quhistānī (d. after 904/1498), and Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (d. after 960/1553), a *dā'ī* and poet who visited the contemporary Nizārī imam in Anjudān. The writings of these authors contain important historical references as well. Amongst later authors, mention may be made of the poet Imām Qulī Khākī Khurāsānī (d. after 1056/1646) and his son 'Alī Qulī, better known as Raqqāmī Khurāsānī; they, too, resorted to poetry and Sufi expressions. More doctrinal works by Persian Nizārī authors appeared during the 13th/19th century and later times, marking a modern revival

in Nizārī literary activities. This revival was encouraged by the Nizārī imams following the transference of their residence to India. Amongst such works written in Persian mention may be made of the *Risāla dar ḥaqīqat-i dīn* and the *Khiṭābāt-i ʿāliya* of Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh al-Ḥusaynī (d. 1302/1884), the eldest son of Āqā ʿAlī Shāh, Āghā Khān II, and the works of Muḥammad b. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, known as Fidāʾī Khurāsānī (d. 1342/1923), who was also the only Persian Nizārī author of modern times to have written a history of Ismailism, *Hidāyat al-muʾminīn al-ṭālibīn*, a work permeated with anachronisms and inaccuracies.[69] The Nizārīs of Persia did not attract the attention of Persian historians of the post-Alamūt period until modern times. Only a few chroniclers writing during the first three post-Alamūt centuries, including Sayyid Ẓahīr al-Dīn Marʿashī (d. after 893/1488) and other historians of the Caspian region, occasionally have important references to the Persian Nizārīs. It was after the middle of the 12th/18th century, when the Nizārī imams had acquired political prominence in Persia, that the chroniclers of the Zand and Qājār dynasties there, such as Aḥmad ʿAlī Khān Vazīrī Kirmānī (d. 1295/1878), Riḍā Qulī Khān Hidāyat (d. 1288/1871) and Muḥammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk Sipihr (d. 1297/1880), made frequent references to those imams and their activities.

The Nizārī Ismailis of Badakhshān and the adjacent areas in the upper Oxus have retained their distinctive literary tradition, drawing on the Persian Ismaili literature of different periods with particular reference to the writings of Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. after 462/1070) as well as the Sufi traditions of Central Asia. Consequently, the Badakhshānī Nizārīs have preserved and transmitted the anonymous *Umm al-kitāb*, which does not contain any specific Ismaili ideas, the genuine and spurious writings of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, all written in Persian, as well as the Nizārī literature of later times representing the coalescence of Nizārī Ismailism and Sufism; they have also preserved many anonymous works as well as the writings of the great mystic poets of Persia, who are regarded as their co-religionists. The Nizārīs of these remote regions in the Pamirs do not seem to have produced many noteworthy authors in the post-Alamūt period, with some exceptions such as Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī (d. after 856/1452); but they have preserved the bulk of the Ismaili literature of different periods written in Persian elsewhere. These manuscript sources have been held in

numerous private collections, especially by the local religious leaders known as *khalīfas*, in Shughnān, Rūshān, Ishkāshīm and other districts of the Gorno-Badakhshān province of Tajikistan. The Nizārīs of Afghan Badakhshān, too, have extensive collections of manuscripts, about which information is not readily available. The Nizārīs of Hunza, Chitral, and the districts of Gilgit, now all situated in northern areas of Pakistan, have preserved a selection of Persian Nizārī works, although they themselves speak a host of local languages and dialects such as Burushaski and Wakhi rather than Persian. This literature was originally made available to them by their Badakhshānī neighbours, who themselves speak a number of local dialects, like Shughni, in addition to a Tajik version of Persian. The Ismailis of Badakhshān do not seem to have compiled histories of their community, but there are references to Ismailis in a few local histories of the region.

The Syrian Nizārīs, who adhered almost entirely to the Muḥammad-Shāhī branch of Nizārī Ismailism until the 13th/19th century, developed their own limited literature in Arabic. As they also preserved some of the Ismaili works of the Fatimid period, certain earlier Ismaili traditions continued to be represented in the Nizārī texts of the Syrian provenance.[70] The most famous Syrian *dāʿī*-author of this period was Abū Firās Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maynaqī, who died in 937/1530 or ten years later. However, the attribution by ʿĀrif Tāmir of a number of Ismaili works, such as the *Kitāb al-īḍāḥ*, to this author, has proven incorrect. The Nizārīs of Syria were evidently not persecuted by the Ottomans, who mention them and their castles in their land registers of the region. In fact, the Syrian Nizārīs did not attract much outside attention until the early decades of the nineteenth century, when they became entangled in recurrent conflicts with their Nuṣayrī neighbours. It was around the same time that European travellers and orientalists began to make references to them. In the 1840s, the Syrian Nizārīs successfully petitioned the Ottoman authorities for permission to restore Salamiyya, then in ruins, for the settlement of their community. Meanwhile, the Syrian Nizārīs belonging to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line had not heard, since 1210/1796, from their last known imam, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, who lived in India. As they failed to locate him, the majority of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārīs of Syria transferred their allegiance in 1304/1887 to the Qāsim-Shāhī line, then represented by Aga Khan III. An Ismaili minority, centred in Maṣyāf

and Qadmūs, remained loyal to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line, and are still awaiting the reappearance of their imam. In modern times, ʿĀrif Tāmir (1921–1998), a Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī, and Muṣṭafā Ghālib (1923–1981), a Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī, have written extensively on the history of the Syrian Nizārī Ismailis in addition to producing editions (alas often defective) of many Arabic Ismaili texts.

The Nizārī Khojas of the Indian subcontinent, as noted, elaborated their own literary tradition in the form of the *ginān*s, containing a diversity of mystical, mythological, didactic, cosmological and eschatological themes.[71] Many *ginān*s contain ethical and moral instructions for the conduct of religious life and guiding the spiritual quest of the believer. As an oral tradition, some *ginān*s also relate anachronistic, hagiographic and legendary accounts of the activities of *pīr*s, as the chief *dāʿī*s in India were called, and their converts; and, as such, they are not generally reliable as historical sources. The *ginān*s are composed in verse form and are meant to be sung and recited melodically. The earlier Ismaili literature, produced in Arabic and Persian, was not until recently available to the Khojas. The authorships of the *ginān*s are attributed to Pīr Shams al-Dīn, Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn and a few other early *pīr*s. Originally transmitted orally, the *ginān*s began to be collected and recorded from the 10th/16th century. The *ginān*s exist in a mixture of Indian languages, including Sindhī, Gujarātī, Hindī, Panjābī and Multānī. The bulk of the recorded corpus of the *ginān* literature, comprised of about one thousand separate compositions, has survived in the specific Khojkī script developed and used extensively by the Nizārī Khojas. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, an increasing number of *ginān*s have been published in India.

Drawing mainly on the *ginān*s and their oral traditions, the Nizārī Khojas and related communities like the Imām-Shāhīs compiled a few historical works in Gujarātī during the nineteenth century. There also appeared the *Noorum Mobin* (1935) of Alimahomed J. Chunara (1881–1966), which was treated for several decades as the quasi-official history of the Nizārī Khojas. In more recent times, a number of Khojas have studied various aspects of their Satpanth tradition and its literature. Foremost among such scholars, mention should be made of Azim Nanji, Ali S. Asani, Aziz Esmail, Zawahir Moir (Noorally) and Tazim Kassam. At the same time, several European scholars, notably Françoise Mallison and Dominique-Sila Khan, have contributed to

this field of South Asian religious studies from social and anthropological perspectives. All in all, numerous aspects of Nizārī Ismailism of the post-Alamūt period remain obscure; and modern scholars, after the initial efforts of W. Ivanow, have not produced major studies dealing with this phase of Ismailism. As noted, further progress here would require studying the individual Nizārī communities and their separate literary and intellectual traditions.

As a result of modern progress in Nizārī studies, three main periods may be distinguished in the history of post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismailism: (a) an obscure early period covering the first two centuries after the fall of Alamūt in 654/1256; (b) the Anjudān revival in Nizārī *da'wa* and literary activities, from around the middle of the 9th/15th century until the 12th/18th century; and (c) the modern period dating to the middle of the 13th/19th century when the residence of the Nizārī imams was transferred from Persia to India and subsequently to Europe. This chronological categorization provides the frame for our brief discussion of post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismailism.

In the aftermath of the Mongol debacle, contrary to Juwaynī's claim, the Nizārī Ismailis of Persia survived the downfall of their state. Many migrated to Badakhshān and Sind, where Ismaili communities already existed. Other isolated Nizārī groups soon disintegrated or were assimilated into the religiously dominant communities of their locality. The centralized *da'wa* organization also disappeared, to be replaced by a loose network of autonomous *dā'īs* and *pīrs* in the regions. Under these circumstances, scattered Nizārī communities developed independently while resorting to *taqiyya* and different external guises. Many Nizārī groups in the Iranian world, where Sunnism prevailed until the rise of the Safawids, disguised themselves as Sunni Muslims. Meanwhile, a group of Nizārī dignitaries had managed to hide Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh's minor son, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, who succeeded to the imamate in 655/1257. Shams al-Dīn was taken to Ādharbāyjān, in north-western Persia, where he and his next few successors to the imamate lived clandestinely. Certain allusions in the unpublished versified *Safar-nāma* (*Travelogue*) of the contemporary poet Nizārī Quhistānī indicate that he may have seen the Nizārī imam in Tabrīz in 679/1280. Shams al-Dīn, who in certain legendary accounts has been confused with Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's spiritual guide Shams-i Tabrīz, died around 710/1310. An obscure dispute over

his succession split the line of the Nizārī imams and their following into the Qāsim-Shāhī and Muḥammad-Shāhī (or Mu'min-Shāhī) branches.[72] The Muḥammad-Shāhī imams, who initially had more followers in Persia and Central Asia, transferred their seat to India in the 10th/16th century and by the end of the 12th/18th century this line had become discontinued. The sole surviving Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārīs, currently numbering about 15,000, are to be found in Syria where they are locally known as the Ja'fariyya. The Qāsim-Shāhī community has persisted to the present time, and their last four imams have enjoyed prominence under their hereditary title of Āghā Khān (also Āqā Khān and Aga Khan). It was in the early post-Alamūt times that Persian Nizārīs, as part of their *taqiyya* practices, disguised themselves under the cover of Sufism, without establishing formal affiliations with any of the Sufi *ṭarīqa*s then spreading in Persia and Central Asia. The practice soon gained wide currency among the Nizārīs of Central Asia and Sind as well.

In early post-Alamūt times, the Nizārīs had some success in regrouping in Daylam, where they remained active throughout the Īlkhānid and Tīmūrid periods. A certain Khudāvand Muḥammad (d. 807/1404), a Muḥammad-Shāhī imam, even occupied Alamūt for a while, before he was dislodged by Sayyid 'Alī, the powerful Zaydī ruler of Daylamān. The Nizārīs did not survive in the Caspian region after the 10th/16th century.[73] Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Jahāngīr (d. 998/1589) and his son Sulṭān Jahāngīr (d. 1006/1597), belonging to the Banū Iskandar rulers of Kujūr, adhered to Nizārī Ismailism and spread it in their dominions; they represent the last known references in the sources to Ismailis in northern Persia. Only a few isolated Nizārī groups survived a while longer in Daylam during the Safawid period when Alamūt was used as a prison. In Badakhshān and other parts of Central Asia, the Ismailis evidently acknowledged the Nizārī imamate only during the late Alamūt period as a result of the activities of *dā'ī*s dispatched from Quhistān.[74] These *dā'ī*s founded dynasties of *pīr*s and *mīr*s who ruled over Shughnān and other districts of Badakhshān. In 913/1507, Shāh Raḍī al-Dīn b. Ṭāhir, a Muḥammad-Shāhī imam, established his rule briefly over a part of Badakhshān with the help of his followers there. Subsequently, the Badakhshānī Nizārīs were severely persecuted by the local Tīmūrid, and then, Özbeg rulers.

By the middle of the 9th/15th century, Ismaili-Sufi relations had

become well established in the Iranian world. Indeed, a type of coalescence had emerged between Persian Sufism and Nizārī Ismailism, two independent esoteric traditions in Islam which shared close affinities and common doctrinal grounds. As an early instance of this coalescence, mention may be made of the celebrated Sufi *mathnawī* poem, *Gulshan-i rāz* (*The Rose-Garden of Mystery*), composed by the Sufi master Maḥmūd-i Shabistarī (d. after 740/1339), and its later commentary, *Baʿḍī az taʾwīlāt-i Gulshan-i rāz*, by an anonymous Persian Nizārī author. Among other examples, Central Asian Nizārīs consider ʿAzīz al-Dīn Nasafī (d. ca. 661/1262), a local Sufi master, as a co-religionist, and they have preserved his treatise *Zubdat al-ḥaqāʾiq* as an Ismaili work. Owing to their close relations with Sufism, the Persian-speaking Nizārīs have also regarded several of the great mystic poets of Persia, such as Sanāʾī, ʿAṭṭār and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, as their co-religionists. The Nizārī Ismailis of Persia, Afghanistan and Central Asia have preserved their works and continue to use their poetry in their religious ceremonies. Soon, the dissimulating Persian Ismailis adopted the more visible aspects of the Sufi way of life. Thus, the imams appeared to outsiders as Sufi masters or *pīr*s, while their followers adopted the typically Sufi appellation of disciples or *murīd*s.[75] By then, the Nizārī imams of the Qāsim-Shāhī line had emerged in the village of Anjudān, in central Persia, and initiated the Anjudān revival in Nizārī Ismailism. With Mustanṣir biʾllāh (II) (d. 885/1480), who carried the Sufi name of Shāh Qalandar, the Qāsim-Shāhī imams became definitely established in the locality where a number of their tombs are still preserved.[76] Taking advantage of the changing religio-political climate of Persia, including the spread of ʿAlid loyalism and Shiʿi tendencies through Sunni Sufi orders, the imams successfully began to reorganize and reinvigorate their *daʿwa* activities to win new converts and reassert their authority over various Nizārī communities, especially in Central Asia and India where the Ismailis had been led for long periods by independent dynasties of *pīr*s. The imams gradually replaced these powerful autonomous figures with their own loyal appointees who would also regularly deliver the much needed religious dues to the imam's central treasury.

The Anjudān period witnessed a revival in the literary activities of the Nizārīs, especially in Persia, where the earliest doctrinal works of the post-Alamūt period were now produced. In the context of

Nizārī-Sufi relations during the Anjudān period, valuable details are preserved in a book entitled *Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī*, containing the religious admonitions of Imam Mustanṣir bi'llāh (II). In this book, later translated into Gujarātī for the benefit of the Khojas, the Nizārīs are referred to with common Sufi expressions such as *ahl-i ḥaqīqat*, or the 'people of the truth', while the imam is designated as *pīr* or *murshid*. The imam's admonitions start with the *sharīʿat-ṭarīqat-ḥaqīqat* categorization of the Sufis, describing *ḥaqīqat* as the *bāṭin* of *sharīʿat* which could be attained only by the believers (*muʾmins*). The *Pandiyāt* further explains, in line with the earlier Nizārī teachings of the *qiyāma* times, that *ḥaqīqat* consists of recognizing the spiritual reality of the imam of the time.[77] The Nizārīs now essentially retained the teachings of the Alamūt period, especially as elaborated after the declaration of the *qiyāma*. The current imam retained his central importance in Nizārī doctrine, and the recognition of his true spiritual reality remained the prime concern of his followers.[78]

The advent of the Safawids and the proclamation of Twelver Shiʿism as the state religion of their realm in 907/1501, promised more favourable opportunities for the activities of the Nizārīs and other Shiʿi communities in Persia. The Nizārīs were, in fact, now able to reduce the intensity of their *taqiyya* practices. However, this new optimism was short-lived as the Safawids and their *sharīʿat*-minded *'ulamā'* soon suppressed all popular forms of Sufism and those Shiʿi movements which fell outside the confines of Twelver Shiʿism. The Nizārīs, too, received their share of persecutions. Shāh Ṭāhir al-Ḥusaynī (d. ca. 956/1549), the most famous imam of the Muḥammad-Shāhī line whose popularity had proved unacceptable to the founder of the Safawid dynasty, was persecuted in Shāh Ismāʿīl's reign (907–930/1501–1524). However, Shāh Ṭāhir fled to India in 926/1520 and permanently settled in the Deccan where he rendered valuable services to the Niẓām-Shāhs of Aḥmadnagar. It is interesting to note that from early on in India, Shāh Ṭāhir advocated Twelver Shiʿism, which he had obviously adopted as a form of disguise. He achieved his greatest success in the Deccan when Burhān Niẓām-Shāh, after his own conversion, proclaimed Twelver Shiʿism as the official religion of his state in 944/1537. Shāh Ṭāhir's successors as Muḥammad-Shāhī imams continued to observe *taqiyya* in India under the cover of Twelver Shiʿism.[79] In this connection, it is to be noted that in the *Lamaʿāt al-ṭāhirīn*, one

of the few extant Muḥammad-Shāhī texts composed in India around 1110/1698, the author (a certain Ghulām ʿAlī b. Muḥammad) conceals his Ismaili ideas under the double cover of Twelver Shiʿi and Sufi expressions; he eulogizes the Ithnāʿasharī imams whilst also alluding to the Nizārī imams of the Muḥammad-Shāhī line.

Meanwhile, the second Safawid monarch Shāh Ṭahmāsp persecuted the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārīs of Anjudān and had their thirty-sixth imam, Murād Mīrzā, executed in 981/1574. By the time of Shāh ʿAbbās I (995–1038/1587–1629), the Persian Nizārīs, too, had successfully adopted Twelver Shiʿism as a second form of disguise, which was now widely adopted by the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī imams and their followers in Persia and adjacent lands.[80] By the end of the 11th/17th century, the Qāsim-Shāhī *daʿwa* had gained the allegiance of the bulk of the Nizārīs at the expense of the Muḥammad-Shāhīs. The *daʿwa* had been particularly successful in Afghanistan, Central Asia and several regions of the Indian subcontinent.

In South Asia, the Hindu converts originally belonging to the Lohana caste, became known as Khoja, derived from the Persian word *khwāja*, an honorary title meaning lord or master corresponding to the Hindi term *thākur* by which the Lohanas were addressed. As noted, the Nizārī Khojas developed a religious tradition, known as Satpanth or the 'true path' (to salvation), as well as a devotional literature, the *ginān*s. The earliest Nizārī *pīr*s, missionaries or preacher-saints, operating in India concentrated their efforts in Sind. Pīr Shams al-Dīn is the earliest figure specifically associated in the *ginān* literature with the commencement of the Nizārī *daʿwa* there. By the time of Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, a great-grandson of Pīr Shams, the *pīr*s in India had established a hereditary dynasty. Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, who died around the turn of the 9th/15th century, consolidated and organized the *daʿwa* in India; he is also credited with building the first *jamāʿat-khāna* (literally, community house), in Kotri, Sind, for the religious and communal activities of the Khojas. In India, too, the Nizārīs developed close relations with Sufism. Multān and Ucch in Sind, in addition to serving as centres of Satpanth *daʿwa* activities, were the headquarters of the Suhrawardī and Qādirī Sufi orders. Ṣadr al-Dīn was succeeded as *pīr* by his son Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn, who reportedly visited the Nizārī Imam Mustanṣir bi'llāh (II) in Anjudān. Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn's brother Tāj al-Dīn was evidently the last person appointed as *pīr* by the Nizārī

imams who were then making systematic efforts to end the hereditary authority of the *pīr*s in India.

Periodically the Khojas experienced internal dissensions, while many reverted back to Hinduism or converted to Sunnism, the dominant religions of the contemporary Indo-Muslim society. It was under such circumstances that a group of Nizārī Khojas of Gujarāt seceded and recognized the imamate of Nar Muḥammad (d. 940/1533); they became known as Imām-Shāhīs, named after Nar Muḥammad's father Imām Shāh (d. 919/1513), one of Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn's sons who had attempted in vain to become a *pīr* in Sind. The Imām-Shāhīs, who produced their own *ginān* literature and split into several groups following different *pīr*s, soon denied any connections with Ismailism. Meanwhile, in the absence of *pīr*s, the Nizārī imams maintained their contacts with the Khoja community through lesser functionaries known as *wakīl*s or *bābā*s. The origins and early development of the indigenous form of Ismailism known as Satpanth on the Indian subcontinent remain obscure. In particular, it is not clear whether Satpanth Ismailism resulted from the conversion policies developed locally by the early *pīr*s who operated in India at least from the 7th/13th century, or whether it represented a tradition that had evolved gradually over several centuries dating further back, possibly even to Fatimid times. Be that as it may, Satpanth Ismailism may be taken to represent an indigenous tradition reflecting certain historical, social, cultural and political circumstances prevailing in the medieval Indian subcontinent, especially in Sind. On the evidence of the *ginān*s, it seems plausible that the *pīr*s did attempt ingeniously to maximize the appeal of their message to a Hindu audience of mainly rural and uneducated lower castes. Hence, they turned to Indian vernaculars, rather than Arabic and Persian used by the educated classes. And for the same reasons, they used Hindu idioms and mythology, interfacing their Islamic and Ismaili tenets with myths, images and symbols already familiar to the Hindus. The teachings of Satpanth Ismailism are clearly reflected in the *ginān* literature.[81]

In the meantime, with the fortieth Qāsim-Shāhī imam, Shāh Nizār (d. 1134/1722), the seat of this branch of the Nizārī *daʿwa*, then representing the only branch in Persia, was transferred from Anjudān to the nearby village of Kahak, in the vicinity of Qumm and Maḥallāt, effectively ending the Anjudān period in post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismailism.

By the middle of the 12th/18th century, in the unsettled conditions of Persia after the demise of the Safawids and the Afghan invasion, the Nizārī imams moved to Shahr-i Bābak in Kirmān, a location closer to the pilgrimage route of Khojas who then regularly travelled from India to see their imam and deliver the religious dues, the *dassondh* or tithes, to him. The Khojas were by then acquiring increasing influence in the Nizārī community, both in terms of their numbers and financial resources. Soon, the imams acquired political prominence in the affairs of Kirmān. The forty-fourth imam, Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī, also known as Sayyid Abu'l-Ḥasan Kahakī, was appointed around 1170/1756 to the governorship of the Kirmān province by Karīm Khān Zand (1164–1193/1751–1779), founder of the Zand dynasty in Persia; earlier the imam had been the *beglerbegi* or governor of the city of Kirmān.[82] It was in his time that the Niʿmat Allāhī Sufi order was revived in Persia. Imam Abu'l-Ḥasan had close relations with Nūr ʿAlī and Mushtāq ʿAlī Shāh among other Niʿmat Allāhī Sufis then active in Kirmān. On Abu'l-Ḥasan's death in 1206/1792, his son Shāh Khalīl Allāh succeeded to the Nizārī imamate and eventually settled in Yazd. Shāh Khalīl Allāh was murdered in 1232/1817, and was succeeded by his eldest son Ḥasan ʿAlī Shāh, who was later appointed to the governorship of Qumm by Fatḥ ʿAlī Shāh (1212–1250/1797–1834) and also given properties in Maḥallāt. In addition, the Qājār monarch of Persia gave one of his daughters in marriage to the youthful imam and bestowed upon him the honorific title of Āghā Khān (Āqā Khān), meaning 'lord' or 'master' – this title has remained hereditary among Ḥasan ʿAlī Shāh's successors. This Nizārī imam, who maintained his own close relations with the Niʿmat Allāhī Sufi order, has left a valuable autobiographical account of his early life and career in Persia in a work entitled *ʿIbrat-afzā*.[83]

Ḥasan ʿAlī Shāh was appointed to the governorship of Kirmān in 1251/1835 by the third Qājār monarch, Muḥammad Shāh. Subsequently, after some prolonged confrontations between the imam and the Qājār establishment, Āghā Khān I, also known as Āghā Khān Maḥallātī, left Persia permanently in 1257/1841. After spending some years in Afghanistan, Sind, Gujarāt and Calcutta, the imam finally settled in Bombay in 1265/1848, marking the commencement of the modern period of Nizārī Ismailism. As the spiritual head of a Muslim community, Āghā Khān I received the full protection of the British

establishment in India. The Nizārī imam now launched a widespread campaign for defining and delineating the distinct religious identity of his Khoja following. The Nizārī Khojas were not always certain about their religious identity as they had dissimulated for long periods as Sunnis and Twelver Shi'is, while their Satpanth tradition had been influenced by Hindu elements. With the help of the British courts in India, however, the Āghā Khān's followers were, in due course, legally defined as Shi'i Imāmī Ismailis. In the event, the bulk of Khojas reaffirmed their allegiance to Āghā Khān I and acknowledged their Ismaili identity while minority groups seceded and joined Twelver Khoja and other communities.

Āghā Khān I died in 1298/1881, and was succeeded by his son Āqā 'Alī Shāh who led the Nizārīs for only four years (1298–1302/1881–1885). The latter's sole surviving son and successor, Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh, Aga Khan III, led the Nizārīs for seventy-two years, and also became internationally known as a Muslim reformer and statesman. Aga Khan III, too, made systematic efforts to set his followers' identity apart from those of other religious communities, particularly the Twelvers who for long periods had provided dissimulating covers for Nizārīs of Persia and elsewhere. The Nizārī identity was spelled out in numerous constitutions that the imam promulgated for his followers in different regions, especially in India, Pakistan and East Africa. Furthermore, the Nizārī imam became increasingly engaged with reform policies that would benefit not only his followers but other Muslims as well. He worked vigorously to consolidate and reorganize the Nizārīs into a modern Muslim community with high standards of education, health and social well-being, for both men and women, also developing a new network of councils for administering the affairs of his community. The participation of women in communal affairs was a high priority in the imam's reforms. Aga Khan III, who established his residence in Europe in the early part of the twentieth century, has left an interesting account of his life and public career in his *Memoirs*.[84]

Aga Khan III died in 1376/1957 and was succeeded by his grandson, known to his followers as Mawlana Hazar Imam Shah Karim al-Husayni. The present, Harvard-educated imam of the Nizārī Ismailis, the forty-ninth in the series, has continued and substantially expanded the modernization policies of his predecessor, also developing numerous new programmes and institutions of his own which

are of wider interest to Muslims and Third World countries at large. He has created a complex institutional network generally referred to as the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), which implements projects in a variety of social, economic and cultural areas. In the field of higher education and educational institutions, his major initiatives include The Institute of Ismaili Studies, founded in London in 1977 for the promotion of general Islamic as well as Ismaili studies, and the Aga Khan University, set up in Karachi in 1985. More recently, he established in Tajikistan the University of Central Asia to address the specific educational needs of the region's mountain-based societies.

Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, as he is known internationally, has his secretariat near Paris. By 2004, when the Nizārīs celebrated the forty-seventh anniversary of his imamate, Aga Khan IV had established an impressive record of achievement not only as an Ismaili imam but also as a Muslim leader deeply aware of the demands of modernity and dedicated to promoting a better understanding of Islamic civilizations with their diversity of traditions and expressions.[85] Numbering several millions, the Nizārī Ismailis have emerged as progressive and prosperous Muslim minorities in more than twenty-five countries of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America.

Notes

* This chapter is partially based on the author's *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge, 1990) and *A Short History of the Ismailis* (Edinburgh, 1998).

1. The issues surrounding the succession to the Prophet and ʿAlī's legitimate claims to leadership are thoroughly investigated in W. Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1997). For a modern exposition of the traditional Shiʿi view on the origins of Shiʿism, see Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Shiʿite Islam*, ed. and tr., S.H. Nasr (London, 1975), especially pp. 39–73, 173–190.

2. See Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl min al-kāfī*, ed., ʿA.A. al-Ghaffārī (Tehran, 1388/1968), vol. 1, pp. 168–548, containing the earliest Shiʿi *ḥadīths* on the imamate reported mainly from Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq. Many of the same *ḥadīths* are reiterated in al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān's *Daʿāʾim al-Islām*, ed. A.A.A. Fyzee (Cairo, 1951–61), vol. 1, pp. 3–98; English trans., A.A.A. Fyzee, completely revised by I.K. Poonawala, as *The Pillars of Islam*:

Volume I, *Acts of Devotion and Religious Observances* (New Delhi, 2002), pp. 5–122. See also S. Husain M. Jafri, *Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam* (London, 1979), pp. 235–300, and Ayatollah Ja'far Sobhani, *Doctrines of Shi'i Islam: A Compendium of Imami Beliefs and Practices*, ed. and tr., R. Shah-Kazemi (London, 2001), pp. 96–120.

3. Many interesting ideas on the origins and early development of Shi'ism are contained in M.A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam*, tr., D. Streight (Albany, NY, 1994). See also A.R. Lalani, *Early Shī'ī Thought: The Teachings of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir* (London, 2000), and W. Madelung "Shī'a", *EI2*, vol. 9, pp. 420–424. A number of classical studies on the Imāmiyya may be found in E. Kohlberg, ed., *Shi'ism* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 1–167.

4. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, ed., S.M. al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī (Qumm, 1409–12/1988–92), vol. 3, p. 309; Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, *Sarā'ir wa-asrār al-nuṭaqā'*, ed., M. Ghālib (Beirut, 1984), pp. 262–263; Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, *Zahr al-ma'ānī*, ed., M. Ghālib (Beirut, 1991), pp. 200–201; his *'Uyūn al-akhbār*, ed., M. Ghālib (Beirut, 1973), vol. 4, p. 334, and Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād: The Book of Guidance*, tr., I.K.A. Howard (London, 1981), p. 431.

5. Al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, *Kitāb firaq al-Shī'a*, ed., H. Ritter (Istanbul, 1931), pp. 57–61, and Sa'd b. 'Abd Allāh al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt wa'l-firaq*, ed., M.J. Mashkūr (Tehran, 1963), pp. 80–81, 83. On the relationships between these two closely connected heresiographies, see W. Madelung, "Bemerkungen zur imamitischen Firaq-Literatur", *Der Islam*, 53 (1967), pp. 37–52; reprinted in his *Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam* (London, 1985), article XV; English trans., "Some Remarks on the Imāmī Firaq Literature", in Kohlberg, ed., *Shi'ism*, pp. 153–167. See also F. Daftary, "The Earliest Ismā'īlīs", *Arabica*, 38 (1991), pp. 220 ff.; reprinted in Kohlberg, ed., *Shi'ism*, pp. 235 ff.

6. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol. 3, pp. 302, 309–310; Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, *Sarā'ir wa-asrār al-nuṭaqā'*, pp. 256–257, 258; Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, *'Uyūn*, vol. 4, pp. 332–350; Abū 'Amr Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl*, as abridged by Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, ed., Ḥ. al-Muṣṭafawī (Mashhad, 1348 Sh./1969), pp. 217–218, 244–245, 321, 325–326, 354–356, 376–382, 390, and F. Daftary, "Esmā'īl b. Ja'far al-Ṣādeq", *EIR*, vol. 8, pp. 625–626.

7. *Umm al-kitāb*, ed., W. Ivanow, in *Der Islam*, 23 (1936), text p. 11; see also H. Halm, *Die islamische Gnosis* (Zurich and Munich, 1990), pp. 113–198.

8. See, for example, al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, vol. 1, pp. 49–50; tr., Fyzee and Poonawala, vol. 1, p. 65.

9. Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, *'Uyūn*, vol. 4, pp. 351–356; see also his *Zahr al-*

maʿānī, pp. 204–208.

10. Al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shīʿa*, pp. 60–61, and Saʿd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt*, p. 83.

11. See ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī's letter to the Ismailis of Yaman, as preserved by Jaʿfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, edited by Ḥusayn F. al-Hamdānī under the title of *On the Genealogy of Fatimid Caliphs* (Cairo, 1958), text pp. 10–12.

12. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed., M.R. Tajaddud (2nd ed., Tehran, 1973), p. 238; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, vol. 6, ed., Ṣ. al-Munajjid (Cairo, 1961), pp. 17–20; Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ al-ḥunafāʾ*, ed., J. al-Shayyāl and M.Ḥ.M. Aḥmad (Cairo, 1967–73), vol. 1, pp. 22–26; Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 25, ed., M.J. ʿA. al-Ḥīnī et al. (Cairo, 1984), p. 189, and Muḥammad b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī al-Yamānī, *Kashf asrār al-Bāṭiniyya*, ed., S. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī (Cairo, 1357/1939), pp. 16 ff. See also A. Hamdani and F. de Blois, "A Re-examination of al-Mahdī's Letter to the Yemenites on the Genealogy of the Fatimid Caliphs", *JRAS* (1983), pp. 173–207.

13. See Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk*, ed., M.J. de Goeje et al. (Leiden, 1879–1901), III, pp. 2124, 2126–2127; English trans., *The History of al-Ṭabarī:* Volume XXXVII, *The ʿAbbāsid Recovery*, tr., Philip M. Fields (Albany, NY, 1987), pp. 169, 171–173.

14. Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, III, pp. 2188 ff., 2196–2197, 2205, 2232; tr., Fields, pp. 77 ff., 86–89, 98, 128–129; ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. and tr., C. Barbier de Meynard and A. Pavet de Courteille (Paris, 1861–76), vol. 8, pp. 191 ff.; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, vol. 6, pp. 55–62, 91 ff.; al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol. 1, pp. 159 ff., and al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 25, pp. 233 ff.

15. The best modern treatment of the early *daʿwa* in Khurāsān and Central Asia, with a survey of the sources, is to be found in S.M. Stern, "The Early Ismāʿīlī Missionaries in North-West Persia and in Khurāsān and Transoxania", *BSOAS*, 23 (1960), pp. 59–60; reprinted in his *Studies in Early Ismāʿīlism* (Jerusalem and Leiden, 1983), pp. 189–233.

16. For the issues and the sources, see W. Madelung, "Das Imamat in der frühen ismailitischen Lehre", *Der Islam*, 37 (1961), pp. 59–65, 69 ff., and F. Daftary, "A Major Schism in the Early Ismāʿīlī Movement", *SI*, 77 (1993), pp. 123–139.

17. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, ed., J.H. Kramers (2nd ed., Leiden, 1938–39), pp. 96, 295; French trans., *Configuration de la terre*, tr., J.H. Kramers and G. Wiet (Paris and Beirut, 1964), pp. 94, 289, and W. Madelung, "Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ", *EIR*, vol. 11, pp. 634–635.

18. For surveys of the Qarmaṭīs and the relevant sources, see W. Madelung, "Fatimiden und Baḥrainqarmaṭen", *Der Islam*, 34 (1959), pp. 34–88; English trans., "The Fatimids and the Qarmaṭīs of Baḥrayn", in *MIHT*, pp. 21–73; W.

Madelung, "Ḳarmaṭī", *EI2*, vol. 4, pp. 660–665, and F. Daftary, "Carmatians", *EIR*, vol. 4, pp. 823–832.

19. A detailed account of the activities of Zikrawayh and his sons is contained in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, III, pp. 2218–2246, 2255–2275; English trans., *The History of al-Ṭabarī:* Volume XXXVIII, *The Return of the Caliphate to Baghdad*, tr., F. Rosenthal (Albany, NY, 1985), pp. 113–144, 157–179. See also ʿArīb b. Saʿd al-Qurṭubī, *Ṣilat ta'rīkh al-Ṭabarī*, ed., M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1897), pp. 9–18, 36, 137; ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī, *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa'l-ishrāf*, ed., M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1894), pp. 370–376; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, vol. 6, pp. 69–90; al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol. 1, pp. 168–179, and al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 25, pp. 246–276. For the best modern study of the subject, see H. Halm, "Die Söhne Zikrawaihs und das erste fatimidische Kalifat (290/930)", *WO*, 10 (1979), pp. 30–53, and his *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, tr., M. Bonner (Leiden, 1996), pp. 66–88, 183–190.

20. See H. Halm, "The Isma'ili Oath of Allegiance (*'ahd*) and the 'Sessions of Wisdom' (*majālis al-ḥikma*) in Fatimid Times", in *MIHT*, pp. 91–98.

21. See H. Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, tr., R. Manheim and J.W. Morris (London, 1983), pp. 1–58; H. Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismāʿīlīya* (Wiesbaden, 1978), pp. 18–37, and F. Daftary, "Dawr", *EIR*, vol. 7, pp. 151–153.

22. S.M. Stern, "The Earliest Cosmological Doctrine of Ismāʿīlism", in his *Studies in Early Ismāʿīlism*, pp. 3–29; Halm, *Kosmologie*, pp. 38–127, 206–227, and his "The Cosmology of the Pre-Fatimid Ismāʿīliyya", in *MIHT*, pp. 75–83.

23. See al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, ed., W. al-Qāḍī (Beirut, 1970), pp. 71–222; ed., F. al-Dashrāwī (Tunis, 1975), pp. 47–257; M. Talbi, *L'Émirat Aghlabide 184–296/800–909: Histoire politique* (Paris, 1966), pp. 579–672, and Halm, *Empire of the Mahdi*, pp. 9–128.

24. W. Madelung, "The Religious Policy of the Fatimids toward their Sunnī Subjects in the Maghrib", in M. Barrucand, ed., *L'Égypte Fatimide, son art et son histoire* (Paris, 1999), pp. 97–104.

25. See al-Sijistānī, *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, ed., H. Corbin (Tehran and Paris, 1949), pp. 4–15; his *Ithbāt al-nubūʾāt*, ed., ʿĀ. Tāmir (Beirut, 1966), pp. 2–3, 28, and Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn*, ed., H. Corbin and M. Muʿīn (Tehran and Paris, 1953), pp. 210–232.

26. See P.E. Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism: The Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 67–142, and his *Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī: Intellectual Missionary* (London, 1996), pp. 26–103.

27. W. Madelung, "The Sources of Ismāʿīlī Law", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 35 (1976), pp. 29–40; reprinted in his *Religious Schools and Sects*, article XVIII, and I.K. Poonawala, "Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān and Ismaʿili

Jurisprudence", in *MIHT*, pp. 117–143.

28. Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-mawāʿiẓ waʾl-iʿtibār bidhikr al-khiṭaṭ waʾl-āthār* (Būlāq, 1270/1853–54), vol. 1, pp. 390–391, 458–460; Halm, "The Ismaʿili Oath of Allegiance", in *MIHT*, pp. 98–112; his *The Fatimids and their Traditions of Learning* (London, 1997), pp. 23–29, 41–45, 71–77, and P.E. Walker, "Fatimid Institutions of Learning", *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 34 (1997), pp. 182–186, 189–193.

29. S.M. Stern, "Cairo as the Centre of the Ismāʿīlī Movement", in *Colloque international sur l'histoire du Caire* (Cairo, 1972), 437–450; reprinted in his *Studies in Early Ismāʿīlism*, pp. 234–256; A. Hamdani, "Evolution of the Organisational Structure of the Fāṭimī Daʿwah", *Arabian Studies*, 3 (1976), pp. 85–11; F. Daftary, "The Ismaili *Daʿwa* outside the Fatimid *Dawla*", in Barrucand, ed., *L'Égypte Fatimide*, pp. 29–43, and his "*Dāʿī*", *EIR*, vol. 6, pp. 590–592.

30. For studies of al-Kirmānī's system, see D. de Smet, *La Quiétude de l'intellect: Néoplatonisme et gnose Ismaélienne dans l'oeuvre de Ḥamîd ad-Dîn al-Kirmânî (Xe/XIes.)* (Louvain, 1995), pp. 35–377, and P.E. Walker, *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Ḥākim* (London, 1999), especially pp. 80–124. See also F. Daftary, "Ḥamid-al-Din Kermāni", *EIR*, vol. 11, pp. 639–641.

31. See also V. Klemm, *Die Mission des fāṭimidischen Agenten al-Muʾayyad fī d-dīn in Šīrāz* (Frankfurt, etc., 1989), pp. 2–63, 136–92, and her *Memoirs of a Mission: The Ismaili Scholar, Statesman and Poet al-Muʾayyad fiʾl-Dīn al-Shīrāzī* (London, 2003), especially pp. 19–86.

32. ʿUmāra al-Yamanī, *Taʾrīkh al-Yaman*, ed. and tr., H.C. Kay in his *Yaman, its Early Mediaeval History* (London, 1892), text pp. 1–102, translation pp. 1–137; Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, ed. and summary English trans., A.F. Sayyid, in collaboration with P.E. Walker and M.A. Pomerantz, as *The Fatimids and their Successors in Yaman: The History of an Islamic Community* (London, 2002), text pp. 5–174, translation pp. 33–73. For the best modern coverage of the Ṣulayḥids, see Ḥusayn F. al-Hamdānī, *al-Ṣulayḥiyyūn waʾl-ḥaraka al-Fāṭimiyya fiʾl-Yaman* (Cairo, 1955), especially pp. 62–231.

33. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fiʾl-taʾrīkh*, ed., C.J. Tornberg (Leiden, 1851–76), vol. 9, pp. 211, 358; vol. 10, pp. 122 ff., 165–166; V.V. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, ed., C.E. Bosworth (3rd ed., London, 1968), pp. 304–305, 316–318, and Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, pp. 167–169, 212–218.

34. W. Ivanow, *Nasir-i Khusraw and Ismailism* (Bombay, 1948); A.E. Bertel's, *Nasir-i Khosrov i ismailizm* (Moscow, 1959); H. Corbin, "Nāṣir-i Khusrau and Iranian Ismāʿīlism", in *The Cambridge History of Iran:* Volume 4, *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*, ed., R.N. Frye (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 520–542, and A.C. Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw, The Ruby*

of Badakhshan: A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher (London, 2000).

35. Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl ta'rīkh Dimashq*, ed., H.F. Amedroz (Leiden, 1908), pp. 203, 229, 242 ff., 262, 270, 272–273, 295–296; Ibn Ẓāfir, *Akhbār al-duwal al-munqaṭi'a*, ed. A. Ferré (Cairo, 1972), pp. 94–101; Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, ed., A. Fu'ād Sayyid (Cairo, 1981), pp. 113–141; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, vol. 6, pp. 505–556; al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āẓ al-ḥunafā'*, vol. 3, pp. 135–192, and Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira* (Cairo, 1348–92/1929–72), vol. 5, pp. 237–287.

36. Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā fī ṣinā'at al-inshā'* (Cairo, 1332–38/1914–20), vol. 9, pp. 291–297; reprinted in *Majmū'at al-wathā'iq al-Fāṭimiyya*, ed., Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (Cairo, 1958), text pp. 249–260, commentaries pp. 71–102.

37. The best modern study of the Fatimid dynasty after al-Āmir, and the Ḥāfiẓī–Ṭayyibī schism, is S.M. Stern's "The Succession to the Fatimid Imam al-Āmir, the Claims of the Later Fatimids to the Imamate, and the Rise of Ṭayyibī Ismailism", *Oriens*, 4 (1951), pp. 193–255; reprinted in his *History and Culture in the Medieval Muslim World* (London, 1984), article XI. See also P. Casanova, "Les derniers Fāṭimides", *Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique Française du Caire*, 6 (1897), pp. 415–445, and Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, pp. 256–297, where full references to the sources are cited.

38. 'Umāra al-Yamanī, *Ta'rīkh al-Yaman*, in Kay, *Yaman, its Early Mediaeval History*, text pp. 48–59, translation pp. 64–80. 'Umāra's section on the Zuray'ids is cited more correctly by Ibn al-Mujāwir (d. 690/1291) in his *Ta'rīkh al-Mustabṣir*, ed., O. Löfgren (Leiden, 1951–54), vol. 1, pp. 121–127, also in O. Löfgren, ed., *Arabische Texte zur Kenntnis der Stadt Aden in Mittelalter* (Uppsala, 1936–50), vol. 1, pp. 40–47.

39. See A.F. Sayyid, *Maṣādir ta'rīkh al-Yaman fi'l-'aṣr al-Islāmī* (Cairo, 1974), especially pp. 99–219.

40. Al-Hamdānī, *al-Ṣulayḥiyyūn*, p. 5.

41. For further details, see J. Blank, *Mullahs on the Mainframe: Islam and Modernity among the Daudi Bohras* (Chicago, 2001), pp. 229–257, 301–307.

42. See A. Hamdani, "The Dā'ī Ḥātim Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī (d. 596 H./1199 A.D.) and his Book *Tuḥfat al-Qulūb*", *Oriens*, 23–24 (1970–71), especially pp. 279 ff., and F. Daftary, "Sayyida Ḥurra: The Ismā'īlī Ṣulayḥid Queen of Yemen", in Gavin R.G. Hambly, ed., *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage and Piety* (New York, 1998), pp. 117–130.

43. See, for instance, H. Corbin, *Histoire de la philosophie Islamique* (Paris, 1964), pp. 124–136; English trans., *History of Islamic Philosophy*, tr., L. Sherrard (London, 1993), pp. 84–93; his *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, pp. 37–58, 65 ff., 76 ff., 103 ff., 173–181, and his *L'imam caché* (Paris, 2003), pp.

57–67.

44. W. Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey* (Tehran, 1963), pp. 127–136, and I.K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature* (Malibu, CA, 1977), pp. 251–263.

45. F. Daftary, "Persian Historiography of the Early Nizārī Ismā'īlīs", *Iran, Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, 30 (1992), pp. 91–97.

46. See Abu'l-Qāsim Kāshānī, *Ta'rīkh-i Uljāytū*, ed., M. Hambly (Tehran, 1348 Sh./1969), pp. 4–5, 54–55, 240–241, and his *Zubdat al-tawārīkh: bakhsh-i Fāṭimiyān va Nizāriyān*, ed., M.T. Dānishpazhūh (2nd ed., Tehran, 1366 Sh./1987), pp. 3–4.

47. Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, *Ta'rīkh-i guzīda*, ed., 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Navā'ī (Tehran, 1339 Sh./1960), pp. 508–528. Ḥamd Allāh's section on the Persian Ismailis was first published in French translation in Charles F. Defrémery's "Histoire des Seldjoukides", *JA*, 4 série, 13 (1849), pp. 26–49. Subsequently, a partial edition with French translation was produced by Jules Gantin under the title of *Târîkhè Gozîdè. Les dynasties Persanes pendent la période Musulmane* (Paris, 1903), pp. 452–515 (covering the Ismailis). It was, however, Edward G. Browne (1862–1926) who for the first time produced a complete facsimile edition of this history for the E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, *The Ta'rīkh-i Guzīda; or, 'Select History'* (Leiden and London, 1910), pp. 509–527, with a later abridged English translation for the same series (Leiden and London, 1913), pp. 122–131.

48. Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, *Ẓafar-nāma*, facsimile ed., N. Pūrjavādī and N. Rastigār (Tehran and Vienna, 1377 Sh./1999), vol. 1, pp. 655–656; vol. 2, pp. 859–872.

49. Different parts of Mīrkhwānd's *Rawḍat al-ṣafā'* were published in Europe during the nineteenth century. For the first edition of its Ismaili section, together with French translation, see *Histoire de la dynastie des Ismaéliens de Perse*, in *Le Jardin de la Pureté*, ed. and tr., Am. Jourdain, published in *Notices et Extraits des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Impériale et autres bibliothèques*, 9 (1813), especially pp. 143–248.

50. Khwānd Amīr, *Ḥabīb al-siyar*, ed., J. Humā'ī (Tehran, 1333 Sh./1954), vol. 2, pp. 450–479.

51. See al-Fatḥ b. 'Alī al-Bundārī, *Zubdat al-nuṣra*, ed., M. Th. Houtsma (Leiden, 1889).

52. Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq-nāma*, ed., Ismā'īl Afshār (1332 Sh./1953); Ṣadr al-Dīn 'Alī b. Nāṣir al-Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla al-Saljūqiyya*, ed., M. Iqbāl (Lahore, 1933), and Muḥammd b. 'Alī al-Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, ed., M. Iqbāl (London, 1921). For more details on Saljūq chronicles, see Cl. Cahen, "The Historiography of the Seljuqid Period", in B. Lewis and P.M. Holt, ed., *Historians of the Middle East* (London, 1964), pp. 68–76, and

Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Edinburgh, 1999), pp. 141–280.

53. Ibn Isfandiyār, *Ta'rīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, ed., 'Abbās Iqbāl (Tehran, 1320 Sh./1941); abridged English trans., E.G. Browne as *An Abridged Translation of the History of Ṭabaristān* (Leiden and London, 1905).

54. See Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature*, pp. 169–173, and Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, pp. 287 ff.

55. See Claude Cahen, *Syrie du nord à l'époque des Croisades* (Paris, 1940), pp. 33–93; J. Sauvaget, *Introduction to the History of the Muslim East: A Bibliographical Guide*, based on the second edition as recast by Cl. Cahen (Berkeley, 1965), pp. 162 ff., and F. Gabrieli, "The Arabic Historiography of the Crusades", in Lewis and Holt, ed., *Historians of the Middle East*, pp. 98–107. For a survey of different categories of sources on the Syrian Nizārīs, see B. Lewis, "The Sources for the History of the Syrian Assassins", *Speculum*, 27 (1952), pp. 475–489; reprinted in his *Studies in Classical and Ottoman Islam (7th–16th Centuries)* (London, 1976), article VIII.

56. Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl ta'rīkh Dimashq*, ed., Amedroz; also ed., S. Zakkār (Damascus, 1403/1983); Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab min ta'rīkh Ḥalab*, ed., S. al-Dahhān (Damascus, 1951–68), 3 vols., and Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, ed., J.R. Jewett (Chicago, 1907); ed. A. Sevim (Ankara, 1968).

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62. Carole Hillenbrand, "The Power Struggle Between the Saljuqs and the Ismaʿilis of Alamūt, 487–518/1094–1124: The Saljuq Perspective", in *MIHT*, pp. 205–220.

63. Juwaynī, vol. 3, pp. 222–239; tr., Boyle, vol. 2, pp. 686–697; Rashīd al-Dīn, pp. 162–170; Kāshānī, pp. 199–208; Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins* (The Hague, 1955), pp. 146–159, and Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, pp. 385–391.

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65. See *Haft bāb-i Bābā Sayyidnā*, ed., W. Ivanow, in his *Two Early Ismaili Treatises* (Bombay, 1933), pp. 4–42; English trans., Hodgson, in his *Order of Assassins*, pp. 279–324; al-Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa*, text pp. 42, 44–45, 47–56, 98–99, 101–102, translation pp. 46–47, 49–50, 52–63, 111–112, 115–116; Juwaynī, vol. 3, pp. 240–242; tr., Boyle, vol. 2, pp. 697–699; Rashīd al-Dīn, pp. 170–173, and Kāshānī, pp. 208–214.

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67. Al-Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa*, text pp. 61–63, 101–102, 110, 117–119, 132–133, 143, 145, 147, translation pp. 67–69, 115–116, 126, 136–138, 154–155, 173 and elsewhere.

68. John of Joinville, *Memoirs of John Lord de Joinville*, tr., T. Johnes (Hafod, 1807), vol. 1, pp. 194–197, also in John of Joinville and Geoffroy of Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, tr., M.R.B. Shaw (New York, 1963), pp. 277–280, and Daftary, *Assassin Legends*, pp. 79–82.

69. For the Persian literarature of the Alamūt period, see Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature*, pp. 137–154, and Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, pp. 263–286.

70. Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature*, pp. 168–173, and Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, pp. 293–297.

71. See Azim Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (Delmar, NY, 1978), pp. 50–96, and Ali S. Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment: The Ismaili Devotional Literature of South Asia* (London, 2002), pp. 1–53 and 124–152 (on the Khojkī script).

72. This schism was first brought to the attention of modern scholars in W. Ivanow's "A Forgotten Branch of the Ismailis", *JRAS* (1938), pp. 57–79. See also 'Ārif Tāmir, "Furū' al-shajara al-Ismā'īliyya al-Imāmiyya", *al-Mashriq*, 51 (1957), pp. 581–612.

73. See Ẓahīr al-Dīn Mar'ashī, *Ta'rīkh-i Gīlān va Daylamistān*, ed., M. Sutūda (Tehran, 1347 Sh./1968), pp. 52–68, 69–70, 76 ff., 81 ff., 89, 121, 123–30

74. Mīrzā Sang Muḥammad Badakhshī and Mīrzā Faḍl 'Alī Beg Surkh Afsar, *Ta'rīkh-i Badakhshān*, ed., A.N. Boldyrev (Leningrad, 1959), pp. 227–253, and Ghurbān Muḥammad-Zāda and Muḥabbat Shāh-Zāda, *Ta'rīkh-i Badakhshān*, ed., A.A. Yigāna (Moscow, 1973), pp. 87–94.

75. F. Daftary, "Ismā'īlī-Sufi Relations in Early Post-Alamūt and Safavid Persia", in L. Lewisohn and D. Morgan, ed., *The Heritage of Sufism:* Volume III, *Late Classical Persianate Sufism (1501–1750)* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 275–289.

76. On Anjudān and its Nizārī antiquities, which are rapidly disappearing, see W. Ivanow, "Tombs of Some Persian Ismaili Imams", *JBBRAS*, NS, 14 (1938), pp. 49–62, and F. Daftary, "Anjedān", *EIR*, vol. 2, p. 77.

77. Mustanṣir bi'llāh (II), *Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī*, ed. and tr., W. Ivanow (Leiden, 1953), text pp. 2–3, 11, 13, 14, 34–36, 54–58, 65–68 and elsewhere.

78. Abū Isḥāq Quhistānī, *Haft bāb*, ed. and tr., W. Ivanow (Bombay, 1959), text pp. 19–20, 37–38, 53–54, 58, 67–68, translation pp. 19–20, 37–38, 53–54, 58, 67–68; Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī, *Kalām-i pīr*, ed. and tr., W. Ivanow (Bombay, 1935), text pp. 46, 72–73, 86, 95–96, 100, 114–116, and his *Taṣnīfāt*, ed., W. Ivanow (Tehran, 1961), pp. 18 ff.

79. Muḥammad Qāsim Hindū Shāh Astarābābī, better known as Firishta, *Ta'rīkh-i Firishta*, ed., J. Briggs (Bombay, 1832), vol. 2, pp. 213–231; 'Alī b. 'Azīz Ṭabāṭabā, *Burhān-i ma'āthir* (Hyderabad, 1936), pp. 251–270, 274 ff., 281 ff., 291, 308, 314, 324–326, 338–339, 361, 381, 433, 448–450, 502–503 and elsewhere; Qāḍī Nūr Allāh al-Shūshtarī, *Majālis al-mu'minīn* (Tehran, 1375–76/1955–56), vol. 2, pp. 234–240; Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, pp. 271–275, and F. Daftary, "Shāh Ṭāhir and the Nizārī Ismaili Disguises", in T. Lawson, ed., *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt* (London, forthcoming).

80. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, pp. 471–474, 487–491.

81. For some listings of the *ginān*s, see Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature*, pp. 174–181; Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, pp. 298–311, and Ali S. Asani, *The Har-*

vard Collection of Ismaili Literature in Indic Languages (Boston, 1992). The *ginān* collection of The Institute of Ismaili Studies Library, numbering some 150 items, has not yet been catalogued; see Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment*, pp. 130–131.

82. ʿAlī Riḍā b. ʿAbd al-Karīm Shīrāzī, *Taʾrīkh-i Zandiyya*, ed., E. Beer (Leiden, 1888), pp. 52–56; ed., Ghulām Riḍā Varahrām (Tehran, 1365 Sh./1986), pp. 74–77; Aḥmad ʿAlī Khān Vazīrī, *Taʾrīkh-i Kirmān*, ed., M.I. Bāstānī Pārīzī (2nd ed., Tehran, 1352 Sh./1973), pp. 543–565; Riḍā Qulī Khān Hidāyat, *Rawḍat al-ṣafā-yi Nāṣirī* (Tehran, 1339 Sh./1960), vol. 9, pp. 250, 252, 255; Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān Iʿtimād al-Salṭana, *Taʾrīkh-i muntaẓam-i Nāṣirī* (Tehran, 1298–1300/1881–83), vol. 3, pp. 53–54, and Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, pp. 499–503.

83. On Āghā Khān I, in addition to his *ʿIbrat-afzā* (Bombay, 1278/1862), pp. 8–49; ed., Ḥ. Kūhī Kirmānī (Tehran, 1325 Sh./1946), pp. 1–86, see Vazīrī, *Taʾrīkh*, pp. 602–604, 608–13; Fidāʾī Khurāsānī, *Kitāb-i hidāyat al-muʾminīn al-ṭālibīn*, ed., A.A. Semenov (Moscow, 1959), pp. 146–176; Hidāyat, *Rawḍat al-ṣafāʾ*, vol. 10, pp. 169, 249–253, 259–261; Muḥammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk Sipihr, *Nāsikh al-tawārīkh: taʾrīkh-i Qājāriyya*, ed., M.B. Bihbūdī (Tehran, 1344 Sh./1965), vol. 2, pp. 248, 334–335, 350–356, 358–360, 364; Iʿtimād al-Salṭana, *Muntaẓam-i Nāṣirī*, vol. 3, pp. 165, 167, 173–174, 175–176, 177; N.M. Dumasia, *A Brief History of Aga Khan* (Bombay, 1903), pp. 62–95; H. Algar, "Maḥallātī, Āghā Khān", *EI2*, vol. 5, pp. 1221–1222, and Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, pp. 504–516, 717–720, where full references to the sources and studies are cited.

84. See *The Memoirs of Aga Khan: World Enough and Time* (London and New York, 1954). Several biographies of this imam have also been published.

85. See Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, pp. 518–532, 537–548, and his *A Short History of the Ismailis*, pp. 206 ff.