

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

RECONSTRUCTING ALAMUT:
NEW APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF THE QIYĀMA AND THE NIZARI POLITY IN IRAN

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Abstract

This research contributes new approaches and readings of the history and thought of the early Nizari Ismailis and their polity in Iran (fl. 1090-1256/483-654). Previous scholarship in the field has been satisfied with picking nuggets of information from the Ilkhanid era chronicles without much regard to the centuries-old systemic prejudices and antipathies towards the Ismailis pervasive in 13-14th/7-8th century modes of historical writing (*ta'rikh*). Secondly, the difference in genre, therefore the audiences and functions of the *ta'rikh* texts and their Nizari sources has rarely been given any consideration. Ismailis themselves did not write *ta'rikh*. Ismaili historical writing, with few exceptions, is found in *sīra* (biography) and *manāqib* (excellences, virtues) reports included in doctrinal texts which were hagiographic in nature and used for didactic, exhortative and perhaps ritual purposes. The Ilkhanid authors moulded such texts plundered from the legendary library at Alamut into their dynastic chronicles.

This dissertation is divided into two parts: the first part introduces methodological approaches and in the second part these methodologies are used to read anew the meagre sources supplemented by newly edited doctrinal treatises. Digital humanities approaches combined with double narrative analyses (DNA) methodologies are used to examine the narratives down to the semantic structures of the Ilkhanid accounts and then the story and discourse are analysed in the embedded Nizari fragments. These analyses show that the accounts of the Nizari polity based on Nizari sources in 'Aṭā Malik Juwaynī's *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā* completed in 1260/658 and Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* completed in 1310/710 became paradigms for later histories and were modelled into modern times. Numerous other new findings have been uncovered including revisions to the biographies of the Mongol *wazīr* Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh, author of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, Bark-Yarūq b. Malikshāh, the Saljūq Sulṭān and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ the founder of the Nizari Ismaili polity in Iran.

In Part Two, the DNA approaches are used to re-read the sources to understand how after the Nizari-Mustali schism, the early Nizaris developed their eschatological and soteriological thought—from the attempts to raise Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (r. 1090-1124/483-518), the founder of the Nizari polity, as the imam, to the declaration of the *Qiyāma* by Ḥasan 'alā *dhikrihi*'l-salām (r. 1162-1166/557-561) and his recognition as imam. The functioning and reach of the *da'wa* (summons) indicates that the conceptions of imamate and the doctrines of *naṣṣ* (designation of the imam), *ta'līm* (authoritative teaching of the imam), *satr* (concealment of the imam) and *kashf* (manifestation of the imam) continued to significantly evolve in the Iranian context. In such discourses, the subdued voices of different Ismaili-Nizari factions and their notions of imamate have been given voice wherever possible. These re-readings also reveal that during the tumult of Saljuq era “factional sovereignties”, the Nizaris pursued multiple forms of engagement with the Saljuqs, not only conflict. Similarly, in examining the decapitation of the Nizari polity in Iran, this research focusses on Nizari-Mongol relations from the time of Chingiz Khān (r. 1206-1227/602-624) and explains their decline over the next three decades and not simply the destruction wrought by Hūlāgū b. Tuluy b. Chingiz Khān's (r. 1256-1265/654-663) forces.

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All that is now
All that is gone
All that's to come
and everything under
the Sun is in tune
but the Sun
is eclipsed by the Moon.

“There is no Dark Side of the Moon, really.
Matter of fact, it's all dark.
The only thing that makes it look light is the Sun.”

Excerpt from “Eclipse”
Pink Floyd, *The Dark Side of the Moon*. (1973)
Lyrics by Roger Waters.
Sampled quote from Gerry O'Driscoll, doorman at Abbey Road Studios

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This dissertation springs forth from two conversations and the meaning of one word. The first conversation was with John Woods when I asked if I could translate a section of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* account of the Nizari Ismailis for the Mongols seminar paper. He said “Why don’t you do the whole thing!” With just two years of study of Persian, I asked “Do you think I can?” And he replied “Do you think you can?” I began the translation in a reading class with Saeed Ghahremani and for the first several weeks kept returning to one word in the second paragraph. The translation of *nākhalaf* as “degenerate” in Steingass and Hayyim Persian-English dictionaries just was not satisfactory. Eventually Lane’s Lexicon revealed a semantic possibility of the root “*khalafa*” that made a prominent sentence in the regnal account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ meaningful. Ḥasan rejected a genealogy written for him by a group of followers saying: “I would rather be a personal slave of the imam (*banda-i khāṣṣ-i imām*) than illegitimately (*nākhalaf*) the son of the imam (*farzand-i nākhalaf-i imām*).” Perhaps for the first time in eight hundred years this sentence was read with its original meaning. The second conversation was at the corner of University and 55th Street with the late Marshall Hodgson—in 2014 Rueben Smith told me that he and his friend Marshall walked home along that same route everyday decades earlier. I mentally asked Marshall “Having pointed to Defrémery’s gloss of the word, why didn’t you use the meaning ‘illegitimately’?” The answer I conjured was that Hodgson along with all other scholars have positioned the Nizari Ismailis as a rebellion against the ‘Abbāsid-Saljūq establishment. My translation pointed to a breach by a group of Ismaili leaders of the central Shi’i doctrine of imamate and to subdued intra-factional voices. Saeed’s gentle encouragement propelled my translations forward and discussions with John and Paul Walker set the course for ten years of research and writing.

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In 2014, Michael Bechtel and I brought together the largest gathering at Chicago of scholars of Islamic Studies for the Islamicate Studies Symposium which commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the posthumous publication of Marshall Hodgson's *Venture of Islam* and the Ismaili Studies Conference which has now become a biennial event. The two years we worked on bringing this massive project to fruition were the best collaboration anyone can hope for. Mick, thank you for being a great dialogue partner and for your friendship.

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There is one very *small* group of people who rarely are acknowledged—those who not only did not help but rather tried to hinder—your words and efforts were a greater incentive to excel than you will ever know, for that, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Lastly, I have the honour of formally thanking the distinguished members of my dissertation committee. My grateful thanks to Farhad Daftary for agreeing to be on my committee from far away and for encouraging my questions and paths of inquiry into sources that he has worked with for decades. Paul Walker, you have been an ocean of learning on all matters of philosophy, Ismaili and particularly Fatimid history as well as being a teacher, dear friend and a considerate champion. I cherish those long lunches and deep discussions. John Woods, I am grateful to be a part of the generations of scholars you have guided not just in the mastery of the craft but in seeing the worlds we study through our human eyes. Through the lapidary work we do, you have modelled how to apprehend the humanity in the acts of demagogues and despots at one end and the sublime friends of God at the other—always seeking to give voice to those without power and paying special attention to confessional ambiguities which are the normal state of life. The many hours of just shooting the breeze or delving deep into matters of history and the human condition will always remain moments of unparalleled intellectual delight. You are truly a *marja'-yi taqlid*. Thank you for all your kindnesses and friendship.

I wish to dedicate this study to two clusters of people: To the pre-modern and modern scholars and teachers whose work has made my work possible and to the students and scholars who will build upon and as importantly, will refute the ideas contained in my work.

To my sister Marzia and brothers: Hasanali, Kassamali, Ramzanali, Jusabali, Sadruddin, Ali (Shaukat), Naushad, Nawaz and to the beloved families of my beloved siblings. Five migrations between Mundra, Kutch to Ngora, Uganda and then a scattering around the planet, in time and space, life and death, but such vast distances are nothing in the heart! Above all, I dedicate this work to my father and three women in my life. To my late father Salehmohamed Ladhu, you journeyed to the end of the world for the betterment of our lives. Your teaching of doing right no matter what the consequences and of quietly giving more than expected resonate with me every day. To my late mother, Kulsum-Bai Moledina Ladha, you were my first teacher. Thank you for inculcating the love of learning even though you had but a few months of formal education, for teaching that pluralism often demands the transgression of boundaries and for never putting limits on questioning. There was nothing sweeter than hearing the stories you told. To my wife, Nimira Samji, for your constant love, nurturing companionship and support and for even venturing to read what I have written. Do you realise that your outbursts of “wow this is interesting” are worth more and more joyful than any other accolade? To my niece, Selena, you wrote me a poem when I started this journey a decade and half ago... in return I have spent my time “away” writing for you these stories of “religious figures and people with sheep”. I hope this humble missive is worthy. With all my love.

Thank you all for being constant reminders of what is good and right.

SAH
Dushanbe, Tajikistan
September 2018/Muḥarram 1440

Note on Transliteration and Usage

British English spelling is mostly used.

The International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) guide for Arabic transliteration has mostly been used with some modifications. The Persian letters گ ژ چ پ have been transliterated as p, ch, zh and g; also ز as z. Non-Perso-Arabic terms and names have also been reproduced in this manner: Hūlāgū not Hūlegü, *baig* not *bek*. Technical terms have mostly been fully transcribed and italicised: ‘*ulamā*’. Frequently occurring names and terms mostly have not been transliterated, although *hamza* (‘) and ‘*ayn* (‘) are indicated: Alamut, Fatimid, Ilkhanid, imam, Ismaili, Juwayni, Muhammad, Nizari, Qashani, Qur’an, Rashid al-Din, Saljuq, Shi’i, Shi’a, sultan, Tabari. Arabic plurals have mostly not been used: *dā’īs* not *du‘at*. The abbreviations b. and bt. are used for “son of” and “daughter of” respectively. Terms such as *dā’ī* (summoner) and *da‘wa* (call, summons) have been used instead of their translations. Iran has been used instead of the commonly found “Persia” and depending on context refers to Īrānzamīn extending west to east from the borders of Anatolia to the Āmū Daryā and south to north from the Khyber Pass to the southern shores of the Caspian Sea.

‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and the Fatimid rulers are referred to as imam-caliph.

I have used the term Ismailitic to refer to the group of movements which exhibited characteristics of adhering to a descendant of Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq and yet are not clearly identifiable as accepting the line of imams through his son Muḥammad or awaiting the latter as the salvific redeemer.

I have used the term “polity” in place of “state” to refer to the Nizari collective in Iran. First, to avoid conflation with issues of the modern nation state and the related aspects of ethno-nationalism which have frequently been projected into the past. Second, to more accurately conceptualise the functioning of the semi-autonomous castellan polities as their leaders attempted concerted action against their opponents. Third, to better envision the status of the heterogeneous inhabitants of areas which came under the Nizari rule while the populace were not necessarily followers of the imams.

“Interpretation of Islam” has mostly been used in place of “sect” since this usage has origins in the study of Christianity—especially in defining “orthodoxy” and “heresy”. These last two terms or the pejorative appellation “Assassins” for the Nizaris along with the Islamicate usages such as “*ghuluww*” (exaggeration) and “*ghulāt*” (exaggerators) have been avoided or marked.¹ These terms and constructs set off with (*sic*), highlight that I do not ascribe to these usages which unfortunately have been foisted and perpetuated by bias, pre-commitment, and prejudice, or more generously, uncritical scholarship and readership. In the study of history and religion in the twenty-first century there should be no place for such usages.

I have used *Qiyāma*, *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt* and *Qiyāmat-i Buzurg* interchangeable in context to refer to the Resurrection, the Great Resurrection or the proclamation by Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām.

¹ Wadād al-Qāḍī, “The Development of the Term Ghulāt in Muslim Literature with Special Reference to the Kaysāniyya,” in *Shīism*, ed. Etan Kohlberg (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003). Wadād al-Qāḍī The *ghulāt* are labeled as exaggerators for their deification of ‘Alī or other imams. The continued use of this pejorative term in our times indicates a lack of respect for the beliefs of others and this usage by Christian scholars reveals a remarkable and ironic lack of self-awareness.

Dates have mostly been given in Common Era (CE)/Hijrī (AH) format using Fourmilab's calendar converter developed by John Walker.² This is an exception to the convention according to which all Hijrī dates prior to 15 October 1582 are converted to the corresponding Julian dates. (pace PW). The Gregorian calendrical reform re-aligned the Julian year with the tropical year. In 1582/990 the Julian calendar had shifted 11 days from the tropical year. The Council of Trent in 1545/952 authorised reform of the calendar so that the liturgical calendar would be in alignment with the tropical seasons and not interfere in the agricultural cycles. On the day of Pope Gregory's introduction of the new system, the Julian date 4 October 1582 corresponded to the Gregorian date 15 October 1582. The scholarly norm of using the Julian calendar prior to 15 October 1582 is a holdover since previous generations of scholars used conversion tables in which Hijrī dates prior the Gregorian reform were only charted in Julian dates—digital converters do not have such limitations. The British Empire adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1752. The scholarly norm avoids the need to adjust centuries of Eurocentric historical dating. I have chosen to consistently convert all Hijrī dates to their Gregorian equivalents for three reasons. First, to allow accurate correspondence with the globally used present-day calendrical system else a second conversion from Julian to the Common Era is required to correlate with our reckoning of time (otherwise what is the point of conversion?). Most scholars do not care about the 11 or so days of difference and so unquestioningly abide by the redundant norm. Second, the Gregorian dates yield more precise correlation with seasons prior to 1585 than the Julian dating system and especially during the centuries central to this research. Third, a happy coincidence for this research is that Gregorian date 15 October 1582 corresponds to the 17 Ramadan 990—a date of epochal significance! Pray read on!

² Available at: <http://www.fourmilab.ch/documents/calendar/>

Reference Texts

Siglum	Reference Text
Q	<i>The Koran Interpreted</i>, Translated by A. J. Arberry. New York: Macmillan, 1955. <i>The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an</i>, Translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. Beltsville, Md: Amana Publications, 2001. <i>The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary</i>, Edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Caner K. Dagli, Maria Massi Dakake, Joseph E. B. Lumbard, and Mohammed Rustom. New York: HarperOne, 2015. <i>The Zekr Quranic Project</i> app for MacOS Available at: http://zekr.org I have mostly used the Yusuf Ali and Arberry translations with modifications and the Arabic text from the Zekr app.
IL2	Ivanow, Wladimir. <i>Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey</i> , Tehran: Ismaili Society, 1963.
BBB	Poonawala, Ismail K. <i>Biobibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature</i> , Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1977.
IL-B	Daftary, Farhad. <i>Ismaili Literature: A Bibliography of Sources and Studies</i> , London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004.
Catalogue	Javan, Karim. <i>Catalogue of Ismaili Persian Manuscripts, the Collection of the Institute of Ismaili Studies (Unpublished)</i> , London: Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2012.
DevLit	Peerwani, Parvin. <i>Catalogue of Isma'ili Devotional Literature in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Brushaski Languages in the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies</i> , London: Institute of Ismaili Studies, 1987.
EI1	<i>The Encyclopaedia of Islam, First Edition</i> , M. Th. Houtsma, T.W. Arnold, R. Basset, and R. Hartmann, eds. Leiden; London: Brill, 1913-1936.
EI2	<i>The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition (Brill Online)</i> , P.J. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs, eds. Leiden: Brill, 2002—.
EI3	<i>The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition (Brill Online)</i> , Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson, eds. Leiden: Brill, 2007—.
EQ	<i>Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān (Brill Online)</i> , Jane Dammen. McAuliffe, ed. Leiden: Brill, 2001-2006.
EIr	<i>Encyclopaedia Iranica (Online)</i> , Ehsan Yarshater, ed. London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982—.
EIslm	<i>Encyclopaedia Islamica (Brill Online)</i> , Edited by Wilferd Madelung, Farhad Daftary, and Kazem Musavi Bojnurdi. London: Brill, 2008—.

TJG	Juwaynī, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik. <i>Ta’rīkh-i jahān-gushā</i> Vol. 3: <i>Mangū Qā’ān, Hūlāgū and the Ismā’īlīs</i> , Edited by Mīrzā Muḥammad b. ‘Abdu’l-Wahhāb-i Qazwīnī (original edition 1912-1937). London: Luzac & Co (HII-etext), 1958.
HWC	Juwaynī, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik. <i>The History of the World-Conqueror</i> , Translated by John Andrew Boyle. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958.
JT	Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. <i>Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh: qismat-i Ismā’īliyyān wa Fāṭimīyān wa Nizāriyān wa Dā’īyān wa Rafīqān</i> , Edited by Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, and Mudarrisī Zanjānī. Tehran: Bungāh-i Tarjama wa Nashr-i Kitāb (HII-etext), 1960.
ZT	Qāshānī (Kāshānī), Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī. <i>Zubdat al-tawārīkh: bakhsh-i Fāṭimīyān wa Nizāriyān</i> , Edited by Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh. Tehran: Mu’assasah-yi Muṭāla‘āt wa Taḥqīqāt-i Farhangī, 1987.

HB	Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. <i>Spiritual Resurrection in Shi’i Islam: An Early Ismaili Treatise on the Doctrine of Qiyāmat: Haft Bāb.</i> , Translated by S. J. Badakhchani. London: I.B.Tauris, 2017.
HBAI	Quhistānī, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm. <i>Haft Bāb, or, Seven Chapters</i> , Translated by Wladimir Ivanow. Bombay: The Ismaili Society, 1959.
KP	Anonymous. <i>Kalāmi Pīr: A Treatise on Ismaili Doctrine, Also (Wrongly) Called Haft-Bābi Shāh Sayyid Nāṣir</i> , Translated by Wladimir Ivanow. Bombay; London: Islamic Research Association; [Distributed by] Oxford University Press, 1935.
OA	Hodgson, Marshall G. S. <i>The Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizārī Ismā’īlīs Against the Islamic World</i> , ‘s-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1955.
IS	Hodgson, Marshall G. S. “The Ismaili State,” In <i>The Cambridge History of Iran Vol 5: The Saljuq and Mongol Periods</i> , edited by John Andrew Boyle, 422–82. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.
Venture I	Hodgson, Marshall G. S. <i>The Venture of Islam: Vol. 1 The Classical Age of Islam</i> , Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.
Venture II	Hodgson, Marshall G. S. <i>The Venture of Islam: Vol. 2 The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods</i> , Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.
Ismailis	Daftary, Farhad. <i>The Ismā’īlīs: Their History and Doctrines</i> , Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. (revised edition of: Idem. <i>The Ismā’īlīs: Their History and Doctrines</i> , Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.)
MIHT	Daftary, Farhad. <i>Mediaeval Isma’ili History and Thought</i> , New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
Das Imamāt	Madelung, Wilferd. “Das Imamāt in der frühen ismailitischen Lehre.” <i>Der Islam</i> 37 (1961): 43–135. Translated by Patricia Crone: Madelung, Wilferd. “The Imamate in Early Ismaili Doctrine.” <i>Shii Studies Review</i> 2 (2018): 62–155.
EPS	Walker, Paul E. <i>Early Philosophical Shiism: The Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya’qūb al-Sijistānī</i> , Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Succession	Walker, Paul E. "Succession to Rule in the Shiite Caliphate." <i>Journal of the American Research Center In Egypt</i> 32 (1995): 239–64. Revised in Walker, Paul Ernest. <i>Fatimid History and Ismaili Doctrine</i> , Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 2008. pp II:1-48
Steingass	Steingass, Francis Joseph. "A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary." (1892): http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/steingass/ .
Hayyim	Hayyim, Sulayman. "New Persian-English Dictionary." (1934): 2 v., http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/hayyim/ .
Dihkhuda	Dihkhudā, 'Alī Akbar, and Muḥammad Mu'īn. "Lughat-nāma." http://www.vajehyab.com/ .
Lane	Lane, Edward William, and Lane-Poole, Stanley. "An Arabic-English Lexicon." (1968): http://ejtaal.net/aa/ .
Wehr	Wehr, Hans, and Cowan, J. Milton. "A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic." (1981): http://ejtaal.net/aa/ .

The availability of bibliographies in Ismaili studies illustrates the level of maturity of the endeavour and more importantly, the foresight of the scholars and their institutions in making available such resources principally for the academic communities. The published bibliographies listed here have been invaluable in their own way. Wladimir Ivanow's second edition listed the works known to him and mainly from the collections of the Ismaili Society originally located in Bombay; Ismail Poonawala's biobibliography lists a large number of manuscripts along with studies and biographies of the authors; Farhad Daftary's bibliography lists all the published works to the date of publication. These and many other such resources need to be placed into a constantly updated interlinked digital listing.

Patricia Crone's translation of Wilferd Madelung's very important study of the imamate, "Das Imamat in der frühen ismailitischen Lehre." in *Der Islam* 37 (1961): 43–135 was of immense value. The translation was published in 2018/1439—I have changed all references from the unpublished document I used to: Madelung, Wilferd. "The Imamate in Early Ismaili Doctrine." *Shii Studies Review* 2 (2018): 62–155.

Jalal Badakhchani's editions and translations of the writings of Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī are an invaluable contribution to the study of early Nizari Ismailism.

Introduction

TOWARDS THE END OF DECEMBER 1256/DHŪ'L-QA'DA 654, as the Mongols were destroying the fortifications of Alamut, the famed castle of the Nizari Ismailis who had recently capitulated, a Sunni scholar and official 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā-Malik b. Muḥammad Juwaynī (d. 1283/681) (hereafter: Juwayni) was granted permission by Hūlāgū b. Tuluy b. Chingiz Khān (r. 1256-1265/654-663) to plunder its treasury and library. Anything that he found of value from this principal of castles of the soon to be decapitated Nizari polity was to be placed in the Mongol prince's treasury. Juwayni came across an array of scientific instruments, a large number of books and many texts on Ismaili thought—he described as: “the multitude of lying treatises and false teachings” together with “copies of the noble Koran and all manner of choice books, interweaving good and evil”.¹ He also recorded that he saw diplomatic correspondence exchanged between the Nizaris and the Saljuqs.² In choosing the “rare and precious volumes” to preserve, one of the key texts he saved was the *Sargudhasht-i Sayyidnā* (hereafter: *Sarguzasht*), the account of the life of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ (d. 1124/518), the purported founder of the Nizari polity in Iran. Juwayni's full explanation reads:

چون حق تعالی بواسطه عزیمت و حرکت پادشاه گیتی هولاکو قلاع و رباع آن ملاعین قلع کرد و شرّ ایشان دفع وقت فتح الموت فرمان نفاذ یافت که مؤلف این کتاب بر مستودعات خزانه و مستجمعات کتابخانه مطلع گردد تا آنچه لایق خاصّ باشد مستخرج کند غرض آنست که چون مطالعه کتابخانه که از سالها باز جمع کرده بودند می رفت از کثرت اباطیل فضول و اضالیل اصول در مذهب و عقیدت ایشان که با مصاحف مجید و انواع کتب نفیس مُتَرَج کرده بودند و نیک و بد را با یکدیگر مُنْتَسَج

¹ 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juwaynī. *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā* Vol. 3: *Mangū Qā'ān, Hūlāgū and the Ismā'īlīs*, Edited by Mīrzā Muḥammad b. 'Abdu'l-Wahhāb-i Qazwīnī (original edition 1912-1937). (London: Luzac & Co (HII-etext), 1958). p. 186; 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juwaynī. *The History of the World-Conqueror*, Translated by John Andrew Boyle. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958). p. 666

² TJG. p. 214-5; HWC. p. 682: “I saw several of Sanjar's firmans (*manshūr*) which had been preserved in their library and in which he conciliated and flattered them; and from these I was able to deduce the extent to which the Sultan connived at their actions and sought to be on peaceful terms with them. In short, during his reign they enjoyed ease and tranquillity.”

گردانیده آنچه مصاحف و نفایس کتب بود بر منوال يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ³ از آن میان استخراج می‌رفت
مجلدی کتاب یافت مشتمل بر احوال وقایع حسن صباح که ایشان آنرا سرگذشت سیدنا خوانند آنچه
مقصود بود و مناسب سیاق این تاریخ نقل افتاد و آنچه مصدق و محقق بود ایراد کرده شد.⁴

Having taken what he thought was valuable, he consigned the rest of the library of Alamut to flames. Ironically, according to the Russian and Soviet historian Vasily Vladimirovich Barthold (d. 1930/1349): “it was through his [Juwayni’s] initiative that the famous library of Alamut was saved from destruction”.⁵ Invoking the verse: “he brings forth the living from the dead”, Juwayni arrogated to be the revivifier of knowledge; yet it is, in great part, thanks to this book-burner that a few traces remain.⁶

³ Q30:19 He brings forth the living from the dead, and brings forth the dead from the living, and He revives the earth after it is dead; even so you shall be brought forth.

يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَكَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ

⁴ TJG. pp 86-87; HWC. p. 666:

After God Almighty through the resolve and action of the World-Prince Hülegü had uprooted the castles and dwelling places of those accursed ones and had put an end to their wickedness, at the time of the conquest of Alamut the author of this book received and executed the command to examine what was deposited in their treasury and collected together in their library, in order to extract therefrom whatever was worthy of the Private Treasury (*khāṣṣ*). Now I was examining the library which they had gathered together over a period of many years, and from amongst the multitude of lying treatises and false teachings touching their religion and belief (which they had mingled with copies of the noble Koran and all manner of choice books, interweaving good and evil) was extracting whatever I found in the way of rare and precious volumes after the manner of ‘He bringeth forth the living out of the dead’, when I came upon a book containing the life and adventures of Hasan-i-Sabbah, which they call Sar-Guzasht-i-Sayyidna. From this work I have copied whatever was to the point and suitable for insertion in this history, adducing whatever was confirmed and verified.

⁵ ‘Ārif Tāmīr. *Khams Rasā’il Ismā‘īlīyah*, (Salmīyah, Sūriyā: Dār al-Anṣāf, 1956). that, “The Mongols destroyed the Ismaili library containing one and one half million volumes.” A reflection of the “lost library” trope.

⁶ The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition (Brill Online), P.J. Bearman, *et al.*, eds. Leiden: Brill, 2002—. Barthold, W. and J. A. Boyle. “*ḌJuwaynī*, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā-Malik b. Muḥammad.” There are few if any incontrovertibly authentic written documents from that polity known to exist today.

In his history, the *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā* (*History of the World-Conqueror*) completed in 1260/658, Juwayni wrote extensively about the Ismailis.⁷ He drew mostly on the texts he had acquired at Alamut to write the earliest, most complete account of the Nizari Ismailis. John Boyle in translated the last sentence of the above quote: “[f]rom this work I have copied whatever was to the point and suitable for insertion in this history, adducing whatever was confirmed and verified...”. Rather than “whatever was to the point...” the phrase “*ānchi maqṣūd-i būd*” can be translated “whatever was purposive...”⁸ What was purposive to Juwayni and others from the *Sarguzasht* and such other Ismaili texts? As we unpack Juwayni’s account and similar Persian (and Arabic) *ta’rikh* (history) texts with explicit antipathy towards the Ismailis, how should we unfold the no-longer-extant Ismaili *da’wa* literature fragmentarily embedded within them? What was the “original” purpose of this *da’wa* literature? Namely, what was the nature of the sources and the sources of these sources? Mindful of the contexts in which the texts were produced—especially of their forms and functions—how should the fragments of Nizari writings preserved in antagonistic historiography be read? How do we distinguish between the story (what was recorded) and the discourse (how and why it was so recorded) both in the historical chronicles and then in the embedded fragments of Ismaili *da’wa* literature?

A. Dearth of Sources

The challenge of Ismaili studies has been the scarcity of sources. Those studying early Nizari Ismailism—limited to working with the three Ilkhanid chronicles, their derivatives and a handful of Nizari doctrinal texts—have constantly lamented the dearth of sources. A half a century ago, Wladimir Ivanow complained that

we possess practically no genuine Ismaili sources of information. All that we have are mere “crumbs” of allusions, imbedded in the mass of religious speculations of a much later period, or

⁷ Totalling 171 pages in Qazwini’s edition Juwaynī. *TJG.*; 108 pages in Boyle’s translation Juwaynī. *HWC.*; some forty folios in Paris MS Sup. Persan 205

⁸ *TJG.* p. 187; *HWC.* p. 666

in rabid attacks of the enemies of the Ismaili community who have not left any stone unturned and not an idea unperturbed to advertise the wickedness of their adversaries.

The grandest event in the history of Alamut was the declaration of the return of the Imam, or manifest Imam, and the subsequent “Great Resurrection”, altering the form of the religion. Here also, as in everything connected with the history of Ismailism, we have any amount of cobwebs of fiction which accumulate the poisonous infected dust of rabid passions and intense strife.⁹

The objective of this research, using Ivanow’s terms, has been to methodologically take apart the cobwebs, identify the rabid passions and separate the crumbs of allusions from the poisonous infected dust of the rabid attacks of the enemies. Thereafter, the crumbs, themselves, have been subjected to analyses to retrieve understandings of the traces of the past.

I. Modern Scholarship on Early Nizari Ismailism

Nineteenth century studies of Nizari Ismailism relied predominantly on the polemical Jamā‘i-Sunni centric histories such as those of Juwayni and Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī.¹⁰ As a result, the studies construed Nizari Ismailism as an extreme Shi‘i heresy which either sought the destruction of Islam from within or imported an array of un-Islamic doctrines and practices from ancient Iranian and Indic religious traditions.¹¹ To this effect, the definition of Ismaili in the Oxford English Dictionary read: “...to them belonged the powerful Fatimite dynasty in Egypt, and the fanatical sect of the Assassins.” The Penny Cyclopaedia XVII edition dated 1884 is quoted: “Hasan ibn Šabbāḥ who founded afterwards the terrible sect of the

⁹ Wladimir Ivanow. *Alamut and Lamasar*, (Tehran: Ismaili Society, 1960). p. 24

¹⁰ ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik Juwaynī. *Ta’rīkh-i jahān-gushā of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik Juwaynī*, Edited by Mīrzā Muḥammad b. ‘Abdu’l-Wahhāb-i Qazwīnī. (Leyden; London: E.J. Brill; Luzac & Co., 1912-1937).; Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī. *Ta’rīkh-i guzīda*, Edited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Navā‘ī. (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1985).; Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, and Charles François Defrémery (Tr.), “Histoire des Seldjoukides et des Ismaéliens ou Assassins de l’Iran,” *Extrait du Journal Asiatique* (1849).

¹¹ Farhad Daftary. *The Ismā‘īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). p. 23

Ismaʿīlīs or Assassins.”¹² Over the last eighty years, a number of popular studies have been written to elaborate on the “assassins” myth and describe the of revolt of “heterodox zealots”, their intrigues and violence.¹³ These fantastical legends are not the focus here; instead, in this research I examine original sources with an aim to understand how the history and doctrines of Nizari Ismailism have been construed.

Modern study of Nizari Ismailism has been marked by two intertwined factors. It is characterised first, by the paucity of primary sources and second, by the optiques of modern researchers working on historical sources which have generally vilified the Ismailis. Leaving aside writings based on the so-called assassin legends, modern studies of Nizari Ismailism in Iran fall into three major categories: 1) uncritically written from anti-Ismaʿili sources; 2) studies that question stereotypes in the historical texts to present more balanced analyses of the Nizaris in their contexts; and 3) works bordering on apologetics based on later Nizari perspectives. These developments are marked by two trends. First, there is greater access to critical editions of sources, including the very few but increasingly more accessible Nizari Ismaʿili texts from the Nizari polity and later. Second, more Muslims, particularly Nizari Ismaʿili scholars, trained in the West, have begun to work on the histories of their own traditions in recent decades. As important, perhaps, is the consolidation of historical sources and patronage of research by and at the Institute of Ismaʿili Studies (IIS) founded in 1977/1397 by His Highness the Aga Khan, recognised as the forty-ninth *imam* by the Nizari Ismailis. These factors and trends substantively influence the state of the field.

¹² Ismaʿelian | Ismaʿilian, n. and adj. Second edition, 1989; online version September 2011. <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/100007>>; accessed 04 November 2011. Earlier version first published in *New English Dictionary*, 1900.

¹³ This genre of writing has not been included in this study since little useful materials is derived therefrom.

The approaches of earlier scholarship of Antoine Silvestre de Sacy, Michael de Goeje, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, Charles Defrémery, Edward Browne and Vladimir Barthold¹⁴ has been eclipsed by studies from the mid-20th/mid-14th century onwards. These later scholars generally, have used the critically edited Ilkhanid chronicles of Juwayni and Rashid al-Din as well as the increasing numbers of published Ismaili texts. Wladimir Ivanow, Henri Corbin, Samuel Stern, Marshall Hodgson, Bernard Lewis, Wilferd Madelung, Christian Jambet, Delia Cortese and Farhad Daftary have substantially carried the work forward.¹⁵ Here, I briefly review four of these key studies.

Marshall Hodgson set a new paradigm in the study of Nizari Ismailism. Working with the available histories and studies, he was able to integrate into his doctoral work a number of

¹⁴ Silvestre de Sacy, A. I. *Mémoire Sur la Dynastie des Assassins, et Sur L'Étymologie de Leur Nom.*, 1818; Goeje, M. J. de. *Mémoire Sur les Carmathes Du Bahraïn et les Fatimides*, Leide: E. J. Brill, 1886; Hammer-Purgstall, Joseph. *The History of the Assassins: Derived From Oriental Sources*, Translated by Oswald Charles Wood. London: Smith and Elder, 1835; Defrémery, C. *Essai Sur L'Histoire des Ismaéliens Ou Batinien de la Perse, Plus Connus Sous le Nom D'Assassins*, Paris: 1856; Defrémery, C. "Documents Sur L'Histoire des Ismaéliens Ou Batinien de la Perse, Plus Connus Sous le Nom D'Assassins." *Journal Asiatique* sér. 5, t. 15 (1860): p. 130–210; Browne, Edward Granville. *A Literary History of Persia Vol. 2—from Firdawsi to Sad'Di (1000-1290)*, Bethesda, Md.: Iranbooks, 1997; Bartold, Vasily V. *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, Translated by Clifford Edmund Bosworth. London: Luzac, 1968.

¹⁵ Ivanow, Wladimir. *Alamut and Lamasar*, Tehran: Ismaili Society, 1960. among others; Corbin, Henry. *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, London ; Boston: Kegan Paul International in association with Islamic Publications Ltd., 1983; Stern, Samuel M. *Studies in Early Ismā'īlism*, Jerusalem : Leiden: Magnes Press, Hebrew University ; E.J. Brill, 1983; Hodgson, Marshall G. S. *The Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizārī Ismā'īlīs Against the Islamic World*, 's-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1955; Hodgson, Marshall G S. "The Ismaili State," In *The Cambridge History of Iran Vol 5: The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, edited by John Andrew Boyle, 422–82. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968; Lewis, Bernard. *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967; Madelung, Wilferd. "Das Imamāt in der fruhen ismailitischen Lehre." *Der Islam* 37 (1961); Madelung, Wilferd. *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran*, Albany, N.Y.: Persian Heritage Foundation, 1988; Jambet, Christian. *La grande résurrection d'Alamūt: Les formes de la liberté dans le shi'isme ismaélien*, Lagrasse: Verdier, 1990; Cortese, Delia. "Eschatology and Power in Mediaeval Persian Ismailism," diss., University of London - SOAS, 1993. This very important study in Ismaili studies needs to be published. Daftary, Farhad. *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007; among many others.

Nizari texts which had become available in particular due to Ivanow's towering efforts.¹⁶ In correspondence between the two, the young Hodgson anxiously awaited Ivanow's publication of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Rawḍa-yi taslīm* and asked for access to an advance copy or if he should delay completion of his dissertation to use the published edition.¹⁷ Hodgson used such sources to develop insightfully new understandings of Nizari Ismailism. He construed the movement as a revolt against the Sunni Saljuqs (fl. 1040-1194/431-590) which gained momentum in the life of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. Then as a failure of the onslaught and stalemate under Ḥasan's two successors. Followed by an outright rejection of the world with the declaration of the *Qiyāma* in 1164/559. Finally, decline and followed by rapprochement with the Sunni establishment which was ultimately cut off by the Mongol attack. Using both the Nizari doctrinal sources and the predominantly Sunni histories, Hodgson charted an arc not only of the history but also the doctrinal development of the one and a half centuries of the Nizari polity. Hodgson's dissertation was published in 1955/1374 and further elaborated in his chapter in the Cambridge History of Iran. Hodgson's work remains foundational in the study of Nizari Ismailism.¹⁸

¹⁶ Marshall G. S. Hodgson. *A Dissident Community in Medieval Islam: A General History of the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs in the Alamut Period.*, (1951).

¹⁷ Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ṭūsī, "The Rawdatu't-Taslim (Rawḍat al-taslīm), commonly called Tasawwurat," (1950). See my forthcoming "The Russian Émigré, American Gangster and the Assassins". The relationship between Ivanow and Hodgson was tumultuous. Ivanow. *Alamut and Lamasar*. p. 22; Henry Corbin, and Vladimir (sic) Ivanow. *Correspondance Corbin-Ivanow: lettres échangées entre Henry Corbin et Vladimir (sic) Ivanow de 1947 à 1966*, Edited by Sabine Schmidtke. (Leuven: Peeters, 1999). p. 141. Hodgson in his notes on Alamut and Lamasar wrote that Ivanow had not carried out any archaeological work at the sites and in the margin commented "Thank God!" Marshall G. S. Hodgson Papers 1940-1971 Cf. <https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/scrc/findingaids/view.php?eadid=ICU.SPCL.HODGSONMGS>

¹⁸ Marshall G. S. Hodgson. *The Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizārī Ismā'īlīs Against the Islamic World*, ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1955). the insertion of "Assassins" in the title is worthy of note given the immense emphasis MGS gave to proper use of terminology. A catchy title for the book triumphed over academic rigour! A refined chapter was published in the Cambridge History of Iran in 1968, a few months before Hodgson's untimely death on 10 June 1968/13 Rabi' al-awwal 1388. Marshall G S. Hodgson, "The Ismaili State," in *The Cambridge History of Iran Vol 5: The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, ed. John Andrew Boyle (Cambridge: Cambridge

In 1960/1380, Wladimir Ivanow, having written extensively on Ismailism for over forty years, focused on the development of Nizari Ismailism in the historical background section of his archaeological study: *Alamut and Lamasar—Two Mediaeval Ismaili Strongholds in Iran. An Archaeological Study*.¹⁹ In this very short analysis of history and doctrine, this pioneer of modern Ismaili studies brought to bear his intimate familiarity with Iran, native academic and philological expertise in Persian, his other writings and decades of focus on the subject.

He construed the Nizari polity as a political and military endeavour initiated by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. He wrote: “Sayyid-na’s act of seizing the stronghold of Alamut was not that of a private seizure of a place for asylum, *panah*, using the traditional term. It was a political act, a challenge to the Seljuq government which at that time was still in its prime of might” after the death of imam-caliph Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir with a “mission of saving and reinstalling the continuity of Imamāt.”²⁰ Like Hodgson, he concluded Ismailism as having failed for the twin reasons of “absence of outstanding leaders after al-Mahdi and al-Mu‘izz” (d. 934/322 and 975/365 respectively) in the Fatimid failure to displace the ‘Abbāsids and inability to withstand the two invasions from Central Asia, namely the Saljuqs and the Mongols. He opined that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ “came on to the historical stage too late in the day, and it must be admitted that all his talents and tremendous exertions have become pure waste.”²¹

Ivanow rejected the negative constructions of Nizari history and doctrines in Persian historical writing. He considered these constructions to be adulterations of the Nizari chronicles and

University Press, 1968). Marshall G S. Hodgson

¹⁹ Ivanow. *Alamut and Lamasar*.

²⁰ *Alamut and Lamasar* p. 22

²¹ *Alamut and Lamasar* p. 17

attempted to reconstruct the thrust of the original narratives. In his many works, Ivanow used the predominantly Sunni histories but accorded authority to the Nizari sources and narratives.

In 1967/1387 Bernard Lewis turned his attention to the Nizari Ismailis after his doctoral research focused on early Ismailism and several papers on aspects of Fatimid and Syrian Ismailism.²² This thorough and much praised study not only accessed a broad range of sources,²³ it was also detailed in bibliographic information about their content and utility. Studying primarily the historical rather than doctrinal developments, the author took the predominantly Sunni sources as authoritative and tended to reconcile any differences in these histories.

One of the unique aspects of this work is that it locates the Nizari Ismailis in continua of messianic movements and ritual violence cults. Having lived through an era of incredible and horrific state violence,²⁴ Lewis' study channeled the medieval dismay at the "terror and violence" orchestrated by "fanatical assassins" whilst being almost oblivious to the magnitude of horrors and massacres committed by the "state" actors.²⁵ This example of a situated history reflects the turning point in the author's academic work; he would hereafter become the doyen of geo-political theorists specialising in the Arab-Israeli conflicts and on extremist Islamist movements. In the *deus ex machina* final chapter he lumped the "assassins" among a

²² Bernard Lewis. *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967).

²³ The critical apparatus was inadequate. For example, in numerous instances, Lewis paraphrased or translated short passages from the sources and referenced range of pages where the referenced increment amounted only to a few lines.

²⁴ World War II; the Stalinist repression in the USSR; aftermath of the Maoist revolution in China; the French in Algeria; Vietnam, Palestine and on and on

²⁵ After writing this passage, I came across Nikkie Keddie's review of the book which also has similar sentiments see Nikki R Keddie, "The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam by Bernard Lewis," *Middle East Journal* 4 (1969).

pattern of a number of revolutionary and secretive ritual killing cults. He ended with four conclusions: that the “assassins” were a “profound threat to the existing order, political, social and religious”; they were “no isolated phenomenon, but one of a long series of messianic movements”; the Nizari leadership succeeded in shaping and redirecting the vague desires, wild beliefs and aimless rage of the discontented into an ideology and an organization which, in cohesion, discipline and purposive violence, have no parallel in earlier or later times;” the last “most significant point, is their final and total failure.”²⁶

Farhad Daftary has written a substantial body of works on Nizari Ismailism including academic papers, numerous encyclopaedia articles, several book chapters and a complete monograph focused on the so-called Assassin Legends.²⁷ He has thoroughly dealt with Nizari Ismailism in *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, his *magnun opus* published in 1990/1411.²⁸ In this methodical treatment of the history and doctrinal developments, Daftary’s chapter follows Hodgson’s monograph by mapping: periodisation; historiography of sources and modern studies; the life of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ; succession issues at the death of al-Mustaʿṣir (d. 1095/487)²⁹; the Nizari revolt and struggle with the Saljuqs; the establishment of the Nizari state; declaration of the *Qiyāma*; Syrian Nizari Ismailism; rapprochement with the Sunni

²⁶ Lewis. *Assassins*. p. 139. Straight lines can be drawn from these conclusions to the current anti-Islamic rhetoric in US and other policy circles where all Muslims are stereotyped on the basis of Islamist extremism.

²⁷ Daftary’s Assassin Legends meticulously debunked the legends found in European and Muslim writing over the past eight centuries. Farhad Daftary. *The Assassin Legends: Myths of the Ismāʿīlīs*, (London; New York: Tauris, 1994).

²⁸ Farhad Daftary. *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990). reprinted in 1995 and revised in 2007 Daftary. *Ismailis*.

²⁹ In the front matter, the “Note on the text and abbreviations” states that the “lunar years of the Islamic calendar are generally followed throughout the text and the endnotes (with the exception of chapter 1) by the corresponding Gregorian solar years (e.g., 6th/12th century).” However, the dates prior to 15 October 1582 correspond to the Julian calendar given the author’s reliance on Greville S. P. Freeman-Grenville. *The Muslim and Christian Calendars*, (London: Rex Collings, 1963).

establishment; relations with the Khwārazmshāhs and the Mongols during the reign of Chingiz Khān; and ended with the destruction of the polity under Hülegü (d. 1265/663). Daftary also shed light on many controversial issues such as the explanation of the transference of *imamate* from Egypt by the arrival of a Nizari pretender to Alamut; the policy of assassination; the fluctuating alliances and the collaboration between the Crusaders and the Syrian Nizaris; the complexes of relations with the Saljuqs, ‘Abbāsids, Khwārazmshāhs and the Mongols; asylum for refugees and its impact on the intellectual traditions; the life and work of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī; and the beginnings of the *da‘wa* in India. He elucidated the doctrines related to: *dār al-hijra*; *ta‘līm*; *qiyāma*; *satr* and *taqiyya*.

In this monumental analysis Daftary has drawn upon studies on Nizari Ismailism until the third quarter of the 20th/15th century and has meticulously assimilated a wide array of Arabic, Persian and European sources and literature along with a comprehensive use of Nizari writing. He has relied both on the Sunni histories and the Nizari sources and endeavoured to smooth out some controversies. Daftary’s approach evinces a sympathetic treatment of the Nizari Ismailism delicately balanced with analysis of a multitude of sources not found in previous studies.

This limited survey, by its brevity, does a violence of reducing works of many hundreds of pages in length to short generalisations—the studies analysed here have had enormous impact in the field. Each of the authors has brought to light different interpretations of the meagre primary sources and contributed their particular optique to the body of work. Each author’s propensities to rely either upon the predominantly Sunni historical writing or the Nizari texts or a balance between these has coloured their studies. Hodgson equally used both the Sunni

historical writing along with the available Nizari sources for his studies; Ivanow tended to regard and privilege the Nizari materials as authoritative; Lewis in contrast privileged the Sunni historical writing as authoritative; like Hodgson, Daftary valued both sets of sources. Recent Nizari Ismaili scholars have tended to rely on secondary studies generally and in their analysis of the sources have tended to privilege Nizari perspectives.

At the beginning of the last century, the Nizari Ismailis were studied exclusively from the vantage point of their detractors and were characterised as the “fanatic assassins” commanded by the “Old Man of the Mountain”, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. Numerous articles, theses, book chapters and monographs have been written on Nizari Ismailism in Arabic, Persian, European and South Asian languages, especially, in the second half of the last century. Over the course of the past hundred years, not only due to better access of historical and doctrinal sources but also because of the changes in scholarship, more nuanced images of this community have been developed. In the twenty first century, with greater availability of resources, especially in the hands of parochially oriented scholars, the pendulum may be swinging in the other direction.

Samuel Stern cautioned that what is needed

for the problems of history proper as well as those of the history of doctrines, is an ever watchful critical approach, accurate attention to every detail, a careful balance between scrupulous regard for evidence and cautious and controlled imagination in interpreting it and fitting the details into the whole. An uncritical acceptance of all that is written in the sources is as great an abuse to the critical method as to dismiss documents without further ado, or cast doubts on them unwarrantably.³⁰

II. Two Parts of a Four-Part Study

This research is not a linear account of the history of early Nizari Ismailism nor is it an attempt to legitimise or delegitimise the claims of genealogical continuities of the line of Nizari imams. This is not an anti-Sunni study—it seeks to recover and understand the subaltern voices and

³⁰ Samuel M. Stern, “Heterodox Ismā‘īlism at the Time of al-Mu‘izz,” *BSOAS* 17 (1955). republished in Samuel M. Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā‘īlism*, (Jerusalem : Leiden: Magnes Press, Hebrew University; E.J. Brill, 1983). p. 253

privilege them where they have long-been marginalised. I have limited my scope to the Nizari Ismailis in Iran and have not focussed on the Nizari *da'wa* in Syria or India. I have striven to understand not just how the *dā'i*-authors but also how the non-elite Nizari Ismailis might have thought about the events and issues analysed. This is an exercise in historiography and theology wherein I have endeavoured to separate the story from discourse—what is said from how and why it is said—in the Jamā'i-Sunni chronicles and then again in the Nizari *da'wa* literature fragmentarily preserved in these chronicles. In addition to these *ta'rīkh* sources, I have used published Ismaili *da'wa* literature and Nizari treatises that I have edited and translated. This research examines the constructions and definitions of boundaries which ultimately demarcated the damned from the saved. These boundaries were delineated by Jamā'i-Sunni author-historians and polemicists who marked the Ismailis as “heretical” and beyond the pale, and reciprocally, by the Ismailis *dā'i*-authors who at different times labeled the elite among their communities as the *awliyā'* (friends of God) or *ahl-i waḥdat* (people of Unity) and all others as the *ahl-i taḍādd* (people of discord), namely, beyond the pale.³¹ While these mutual exclusions and their consequences are important, I have also been keenly attentive to identify nodes of confessional ambiguities and relations between the opposed groups.³² I have endeavoured to identify subdued and non-elite voices and paid particular attention to examine traces of intra-factional contestations in the establishment of hegemony.

This dissertation is divided into two parts: in the first part, I introduce and establish methodological approaches and in the second part, I apply these methodologies to read anew the meagre sources that have been used by scholarship in the field supplemented by the

³¹ Ṭūsī, Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad. *Shī'i Interpretations of Islam: Three Treatises on Islamic Theology and Eschatology*, Edited and Translated by Seyyed Jalal Badakhchani. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010). pp 62ff

³² John E. Woods. *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999). pp 3-4

content and narrative analyses of the newly edited texts. In the second part, I have also laid out, in outline, the beginning points for the third and fourth parts of this research, namely, extensive studies of the theology and cosmology of the *Qiyāma* and the history of Nizari-Mongol relations. Given over a century of scholarly laments at the paucity and inadequacy of available sources to study the early Nizari Ismailis, after six hundred pages of in-depth analyses, to submit to you that what you have in your hands, constitutes only two parts of a four-part study—is both audacious and humbling. The audacity lies in the expectation that others will find the larger project of value and interest. It is humbling in that, using the same three Ilkhanid chronicles used by other scholars, my approaches and questions have opened many directions of inquiries and unearthed a multitude of new findings. As with any work written over many years there may be many duplications and inconsistencies—the reader’s forbearance is requested.

In the present two parts, my approach has been to demonstrate my findings with detailed textual and narrative analyses so that the reader will have, at their fingertips, the necessary evidentiary materials to substantiate the conclusions. The intention has been to facilitate easy access to these sources I have used—in addition to my narrative explanations not only to support my arguments but to enable the reader to arrive at their own different conclusions if they should so choose.

A. Part One: Archaeology of Sources

In the six chapters in Part One, I outline and demonstrate methodologies and tools to re-read the Persian and Arabic historical sources and the fragments of Nizari *da’wa* texts they embedded. These methods of double narrative analyses (DNA)—to use a metaphor invoking architecture and archaeology—examine an edifice that has been standing for a very long time

to determine its form and functions but also to understand its exterior and internal framework down to the basic building blocks. The analyses are particularly focussed on the contours on which the edifice stands and the schools of architecture which gave rise to its designs. The ultimate effort is to excavate and analyse the different set of buildings which existed on the spot and endure only as distant echoes in some of the building blocks of the current structure.

In Chapter One, I present a brief survey and analytical syntheses of the evolution of Islamicate historiography to examine the contiguities and discontinuities between Ismaili *da'wa* literature and general Islamicate historical writing. The major explanations of the resurgence of Persianate historiographical and literary traditions by recent scholarship are examined and challenged—particularly the tendencies to link language with religious identity. A shift away from the legitimatory functions of the literary production in the service of the ruling and intellectual elites to audience reception and use is proposed.

In Chapter Two, I continue to examine the contours of epistemologies which undergirded Islamicate writing and constructions of Shi'ism and specifically, Ismailism. Using theories of prejudice and collective memory I situate the tropes and tendencies in doxographies (*firaq*) and refutational (*radd*) literature. I outline frameworks for understanding the epistemologies, approaches and functions of this literature which created and perpetuated norms of historic consciousness and collective memory from generation to generation of Islamicate—particularly Sunni—scholars and bureaucrats. In examining Shahrastānī's (d. 1153/548) account of the Nizaris in his *K. al-milal wa-l-niḥal* (*The Book of Religious Communities and Sects*) I show that it not only lacked the dogmatic repudiation found in other texts in the genre but that the entire work's organising principle followed the famous *ḥadīth* of the seventy-two

erring sects and the one saved one within the *Ummah* of Muḥammad. In the structure of the text, Shahrastānī located the Nizaris at the apex and culmination of the seventy-three interpretations of Islam.

In Chapter Three, I explore the form and functions of Nizari *da'wa* literature and propose that barring a few examples, Ismailis did not write history *qua* history in the *ta'rikh* genre. The historical information recorded in their writings predominantly conforms to *sīra* (biography) and *manāqib* (virtues, excellences) literature. This is significant because the principal mode of Ilkhanid historiography was the dynastic chronicle. In this genre each dynast or protagonist of an account was written about within the arc of the dynasty which was the beneficiary of good fortune (*dawla* pl. *duwal*) in its establishment and lost it in decline over time due to corruption and heresy. The chroniclers moulded the “*akhbār*” (reports) from Nizari *da'wa* texts consisting of *sīra* and *manāqib* at their disposal into their *ta'rikh* template.³³ The author-historians, immersed or even caged in collective memory and subject to the prejudices described in the chapter two, incorporated into their chronicles the *da'wa* literature that fell into their hands. The retrieval and analyses of these sources of the sources warrant that the norms and structures of the respective genres be taken into consideration. I also examine the lives and works of the three Ilkhanid chroniclers and propose a revision to the biography of Rashid al-Din which explains the reason why the *Jāmi' al-tawārikh* is fairer in treatment of the Ismailis.

In Chapter Four, the external and internal frameworks of the Ilkhanid chronicles are examined stripped down to their basic building blocks. The first layer maps the Nizari sources indicated to have been used by the chroniclers. The second layer maps the focalisations of the accounts by determining the length of each regnal account; by comparing the lexical usages across the

³³ Personal communications with John Woods

aggregate of the three chronicles, within each individual chronicle account of the Nizaris and within their regnal accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. The third layer scrutinises the account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ down to the plot and narrative levels. A demonstration of the use of the data obtained through these analytical methods is presented. The results from these methodologies made possible by means digital humanities tools and software used for qualitative analysis are briefly written up here—greater functionality, of course, is attainable through digital presentation of the data.

In Chapter Five, the “genealogies of texts” are examined at the content and discourse level by comparisons of the three Ilkhanid chroniclers’ reports on specific events. The stemmatic reliances of later histories on the paradigms set up—particularly by Juwayni and Rashid al-Din—are studied along with accounts which were independent of these models due to distances of time and place or the chronicler’s direct and personal interactions with the Nizaris. The historical writing is assessed and compared to the doxographic and repudiatory texts examined in chapter two to establish the extent to which the 13-14th/7-8th century author-historians rehearsed and perpetuated inherited prejudices and antipathies and how these influences in their historical accounts should be taken into account.

In Chapter Six, the Nizari sources embedded in the Ilkhanid accounts are excavated in five case studies: i) The Narratives of Conversion of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, ii) Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s Debates at Mayyāfāriqīn, iii) Saljuq Capture of Shāhdiz from the Ismailis, iv) The Executions of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s Two Sons, and v) Nizari Relations with the Saljuqs. These case studies demonstrate how the writings of Nizari *da’wa* literature should be accessed through the screen of Ilkhanid era *ta’rīkh* using methodologies outlined in the preceding chapters. The double narrative

analyses (DNA) methodologies are used to penetrate the writings of the Saljuq and Ilkhanid era author-historians and then to examine the fragments from the quills of the Nizari authors.

B. Part Two: Reconstructing Alamut

In Part Two: Reconstructing Alamut, I apply the DNA methodologies to examine anew how, after the Nizari-Musta'lian schism, the early Nizaris developed their eschatological and soteriological thought—from the attempts to raise Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ as the imam to the declaration of the *Qiyāma* by Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām (r. 1162-1166/557-561) and thereafter. I analyse the evolution of the conceptions of imamate and the developments in the Nizari polity in Iran. I examine the doctrines of *naṣṣ*, *ta'līm*, *satr* and *kashf* and the functioning and reach of the *da'wa* as well as the differing notions of imamate among the Ismaili-Nizari factions. During the tumult of what I call the “era of factional sovereignties”, I analyse the relations between the Nizaris and the Saljuqs—identifying engagement, not just conflict. Finally in examining the destruction of the Nizari polity, I explore the relations between the Nizaris and the Mongols from the time of Chingiz Khān (r. 1206-1227/602-624) and their precipitous decline.

In Chapter One, I examine the proliferations of the Ismaili *da'wa* in Iran leading up to and following the succession crisis after the death of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir. I postulate a “Fatimid eastern policy” which had gradually formed a wide pincer around the 'Abbāsīd-Saljuq establishment—this policy if it was ever formally conceived, fell apart after the death of al-Mustanṣir. During the Nizāri-Musta'lian schism, the Ismailis of Iran exclusively chose Nizār as their imam—I examine the contexts and reasons for this, and highlight subdued voices and traces of factionalism among the leadership. Lastly, I analyse the relations between the Saljuq xenocracy which in its long process of indigenising and sedentarising confronted

the autochthonous Nizaris who were attempting to consolidate a territorial polity attributing sovereignty to the Nizari Ismaili imamate and aiming to establish a Shi'i theocracy.

In Chapter Two, I examine how groups in the Nizari polity responded to the *satr* (concealment) of the imams. I analyse the discourse of authority between the Nizari Ismailis and their principle opponents—the Jamā'i-Sunni and the Fatimid Ismailis. I use treatises I have edited and translated 1) to explore how the Nizaris expanded the doctrines of *naṣṣ* and *ta'līm* and 2) to examine traces of factionalism among the Nizaris I have labelled as *satrists* and *zuhūrists*—those who sought to persevere in the concealment of the imam versus those who sought the immediate manifestation of the salvific actor—the *Qā'im* of the *Qiyāma*.

In Chapter Three, I compare the Qur'anic concept of the *Qiyāma* and the event at Alamut and Nizari doctrines of the *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt*. I dissect the different explanations of how a descendant of Nizār b. al-Mustaṣṣir was believed to have become the head of the Nizari polity in Iran—this includes the analysis from the sources of Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām's genealogy back to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. I explore the socio-political and religious reconfigurations of society brought about by Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām's counter-revolution of the *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt*. I detail the continued contests between the *satrists* and *zuhūrists* in the Sunni interlude implemented under the imam Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan and the gradual reinstatement of the teachings of the *Qiyāma* by his successor. I analyse accounts of the shifting alliances, especially of the Nizaris and the Mongols and analyse the collapse of this alliance which led to the decapitation and end of the Nizari polity and the massacres by Hūlāgū b. Tuluy b. Chingiz Khān's forces.

III. Sources for the Study of Early Nizari Ismailism

The Ilkhanid chronicles continue to be the principal sources of early Nizari history despite their antipathies towards Ismailis. I have attached greater reliance on the information from these Ilkhanid accounts on the basis that Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and Qashani directly accessed Nizari texts—the last two also appear to have relied on Nizari witnesses. Scholars such as Ibn al-Athīr and Maqrīzī and other author-historians did not have access to such Nizari sources—their information was based on remoter reports. The retrieval of understandings of past actualities, therefore, requires processes of careful forensic excavation of fragments of Nizari writing. The double narrative analysis described above, first, places the Ilkhanid chronicles within a matrix of their contexts and norms of writing and then the extracted Nizari fragments and information sourced from the chronicles and Nizari *da'wa* literature can be analysed as described under Part One: Archaeology of Sources.

Three Ilkhanid era sources have been used to differing extents by all previous studies; the first two have been used by all scholars in the field and the third has only been put to limited use over the past five decades since its publication. All three are inter-related and essential for the study of the Nizari Ismaili polity in Iran:

Table Ia: Ilkhanid Chronicles as Sources for the Study of Early Nizari Ismailism

Siglum	Chronicle
TJG	<i>Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā</i> of 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā-Malik b. Muḥammad Juwaynī (d. 1283/681)
JT	<i>Jāmi' al-tawārikh: qismat-i Ismā'īliyyān wa Fāṭimiyān wa Nizāriyyān wa Dā'iyyān wa Rafīqān</i> of Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh b. 'Imād al-Dawla (d. 1318/718)
ZT	<i>Zubdat al-tawārikh: ta'rikh-i Ismā'īliyya wa Nizāriyya wa Malāḥida</i> of Jamāl al-Dīn Abū'l-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh b. 'Alī Qāshānī (d. ca 1337/738)

Each of the histories was compiled after the destruction of the Nizari polity by the Mongols in 1256/654. Juwayni, was integrally involved, as a representative of the Mongols, in the

negotiations with the Nizaris. After the surrender of the fortress of Alamut, he was given access to its renowned library by Hūlāgū. The section of the *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā* on the Ismailis and in particular the Nizaris utilises the texts and materials from that library. The *TJG* completed in 1260/658 became one of the paradigms for Persian historical writing about the Ismailis. (Cf. Part One:3-III-A-i). Mīrzā Muḥammad b. 'Abdu'l-Wahhāb-i Qazwīnī published the first critical edition in three volumes over the years 1912-37/1330-56 and it was republished in 1958/1378.³⁴ The translation of the entire *TJG* was published by John Andrew Boyle in 1958/1378.³⁵ I have used the later publication with the *siglum* TJG; I have also frequently consulted the 1931/1350 publication of facsimile of a manuscript dated 1291/690³⁶ and Boyle's translation has been used with modification with the *siglum* HWC.

The second history, the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, was initially commissioned as a history of the Mongols by Maḥmūd Ghāzān b. Arghūn (r. 1295-1304/694-703) was expanded under the patronage of Muḥammad Khudābanda Ūljāytū b. Arghūn (r. 1304-1316/703-716) to include the histories of the peoples and polities that Mongols came into contact with. As such, it has a section on the Ismailis and the Nizaris. Regarded as one the earliest world histories, the *JT* was completed in 1310/710.³⁷ While I have referred to Rashid al-Din as the author of the *Jāmi'*, it is very likely that this prolific *wazīr* had a team of scholars collaborating on the project.³⁸ The

³⁴ Juwaynī. *Jahān-gushā*; Juwaynī. *TJG*.

³⁵ Juwaynī. *HWC*.

³⁶ 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juwaynī. *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā of Juwayni, Vol. III: Being a Facsimile of a Manuscript Dated A. H. 690 Belonging to Wahīd-ul-Mulḳ*, Edited by Edward Granville Browne, and E. Denison Ross. (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1931).

³⁷ The section on the Ismailis was completed in 1314/714. Cf. Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh: qismat-i Ismā'īliyyān wa Fāṭimīyān wa Nizāriyān wa Dā'iyyān wa Rafiqān*, Edited by Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, and Mudarrisī Zanjānī. (Tehran: Bungāh-i Tarjama wa Nashr-i Kitāb (HII-etext), 1960). p. 195

³⁸ EI2. Morgan, D.O. "Rashīd al- Dīn Ṭabīb."

complete *JT* remains to be published and translated into English. Boyle's translation of the section from the *Jāmi'* dealing with the genealogy of Chingiz Khan and his descendants became available in 1971/1391. Wheeler Thackston translated the *JT* in three volumes in 1998-99/1419-20; however, he did not include the section the Ismailis in this work.³⁹ Another fractional translation, done by Kenneth Luther and Clifford E. Bosworth in 2001/1422 focused on the history of the Saljuq Turks.⁴⁰

The history of the Nizari Ismailis follows the structure of the analogue in the *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā* and contains numerous verbatim passages copied from it. The divergences from Juwayni's work are not limited to the less vitriolic language and more objective approaches; in many sections the *Jāmi'* provides different and more detailed information suggesting independent access to the Nizari sources and perhaps even personal contacts with Nizari informants. Rashid al-Dīn, his father and grandfather Muwaffaq al-Dawla 'Alī were at Alamut until the time of its surrender.⁴¹ (Cf. Part One:3-III-A-ii) I have translated the section on the Nizaris.⁴² This section is available Dabīr Siyāqī's editions of 1958/1378 and republication in 1988/1409;⁴³ Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh and Mudarrisī Zanjānī 1960/1380⁴⁴ and

³⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh (Compendium of Chronicles)*, Translated by Wheeler M. Thackston. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1998).

⁴⁰ Zāhīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī. *The History of the Seljuq Turks from the Jāmi' al-tawārikh: an Ilkhanid adaptation of the Saljūq-nāma of Zāhīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī*, Edited by Clifford E Bosworth. Translated by Kenneth A. Luther. (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001).; Cf. Ṣadr al-Dīn 'Alī b. Nāṣir Ḥusaynī. *The History of the Seljuq State: a Translation with Commentary of the Akhbār al-dawla al-Saljūqīyah*, Translated by Clifford Edmund Bosworth. (London: Routledge, 2011).

⁴¹ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 307

⁴² To be published 2020/1442

⁴³ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Faṣlī az Jāmi' al-tawārikh: Sarguzasht-i Ḥasan Ṣabbāḥ wa jānishīnān-i ū yā Tārikh-i firqah-i Rafīqān wa Ismā'iliyān-i Alamūt*, Edited by Muḥammad Dabīr Siyāqī. (Tehran: Kitābkhānah-i Ṭahūrī, 1958).; Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Faṣlī az Jāmi' al-tawārikh: Sarguzasht-i Ḥasan Ṣabbāḥ wa jānishīnān-i ū yā Tārikh-i firqa-yi Rafīqān wa Ismā'iliyān-i Alamūt*, Edited by Muḥammad Dabīr Siyāqī. (Tehran: Nashr-i Alburz, 1988).

⁴⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *JT*.

Muḥammad Rawshan's edition of 2008/1429.⁴⁵ I have preferred Dānishpazhūh and Mudarrisī Zanjānī edition since they used a large set of manuscripts. I also frequently consulted Dabīr Siyāqī's edition and the British Library MS 7628 transcribed for Shāhrukh b. Tīmūr (r. 1377-1447/779-850) in 1443-44/837.⁴⁶ The Rawshan edition, while later, is of little additional value since it does not correct the Dānishpazhūh edition in any significant manner and inconveniently for textual analyses, the publishers chose to remove the critical apparatus to endnotes. The *siglum* JT is applied in this study to the Dānishpazhūh edition.

The third history, *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*, was written by Jamāl al-Dīn Abu'l-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh b. Alī Qāshānī. Qashani served both Ūljāytū and Abū Sa'id (d. 1335/735); he worked under Rashid al-Din and has claimed the *Jāmi'* as his own work usurped by the *wazīr*. His chronicle of Ūljāytū's reign contains a general Islamic history up to the fall of the 'Abbāsids and a section on the history of the Fatimids and the Nizaris. Qashani's work which closely follows the structures of the *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā* and the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, has been under-utilised. (Cf. Part One:3-III-A-iii). There are different analyses of the inter-relationship between these three histories. My analysis shows the filial relationship between Juwayni and Rashid al-Din; in some cases Qashani who followed the structure and used the content of the other two—especially Rashid al-Din—is more reliable based on the thoroughness and its smoothed out narratives. I am in the process of producing an annotated translation of this text. Dānishpazhūh published the first edition in 1964/1384 and a second in 1987/1407 in which he included the facsimile of the

⁴⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh: Tārīkh-i Ismā'īliyān*, Edited by Muhammad Rawshan. (Tehran: Mīrās-i Maktūb (HII-etext), 2008).

⁴⁶ Available at: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_7628

Tehran University MS 9067 copied in February 1581/*Muḥarram* 989.⁴⁷ This second edition of the *Zubdat* is used in this study with the *siglum* ZT.

Most later Persian historians followed the models of Juwayni and Rashid al-Din. I have established stemmatic relationships between these three Ilkhanid era histories and their derivative works, such as: Qazwīnī (d. 1339/740)⁴⁸, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū (d. 1430/833) who essentially copied Rashid al-Din's section on the Nizaris with minor changes,⁴⁹ Mīrkhwānd (d. 1499/903)⁵⁰ and Khwānd Mīr (d. 1535/942).⁵¹ (Cf. Part One:5-I and II). The vastly differing perspectives of the contemporary annalistic chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233/631)⁵² and the *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī* of Jūzjānī,⁵³ who visited the Nizari polity on diplomatic missions provide complementary insights. In addition, a number of dynastic histories such as the *Saljūq-nāma* of Ṣāḥib al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī

⁴⁷ Jamāl al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh b. 'Alī Qāshānī. *Tārīkh-i Ismā'īlīyah: bakhshī az Zubdat al-tawārīkh*, Edited by Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh. (Tabriz: Shafaq, 1964a).; Jamāl al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh b. 'Alī Qāshānī. *Zubdat al-tawārīkh: bakhsh-i Fātimīyān wa Nazāriyān*, Edited by Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh. (Tehran: Mu'assasah-yi Muṭāla'āt wa Taḥqīqāt-i Farhangī, 1987).

⁴⁸ Qazwīnī. *Guzīda*.

⁴⁹ Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū. *Majma' al-tawārīkh al-sultāniyya: qismat-i khulafā'-i 'Alawiyya-yi Maghrib wa Miṣr wa Nizāriyān wa Raḥiqān az tārīkh-i Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū*, Edited by Muḥammad Mudarrisī Zanjānī. (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ittilā'āt, 1985).

⁵⁰ Muḥammad b. Khwāndshāh Mīrkhwānd. *Tārīkh-i rawḍat al-ṣafā'*, Edited by Jamshīd Kiyānfar. (Tehran: Aṣāṭir, 2001).

⁵¹ Ghiyāth al-Dīn b. Humām al-Dīn Khwānd Amīr. *Tārīkh-i ḥabīb al-siyar fī akhbār-i afrād-i bashar*, Edited by J. Humā'ī. (Tehran: Kitābkhānah-i Khayyām, 1954).; Ghiyāth al-Dīn b. Humām al-Dīn Khwānd Amīr. *Dastūr al-wuzarā': shāmil-i aḥwāl-i wuzarā-yi Islām tā inqirāḍ-i Taymūriyān*, Edited by Sa'īd Nafīsī. (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Iqbāl, 1976).

⁵² 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr. *Al-kāmil fī'l-tārīkh*, Edited by Carl Johan Tornberg (original edition 1853-1867). (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir (HII-etext), 1965).; 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr. *The Annals of the Saljuq Turks: Selections from al-Kāmil fī'l-tārīkh*, Translated by D. S. Richards. (London: Routledge, 2002).; 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr. *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period from al-Kāmil fī'l-tārīkh*, Translated by D. S. Richards. (Aldershot, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

⁵³ Minhāj al-Dīn 'Uthmān b. Sirāj Jūzjānī. *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, Edited by 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī Qandahārī (1946). (Tehran: Dunyā-yi Kitāb, 1984).; Minhāj al-Dīn 'Uthmān b. Sirāj Jūzjānī. *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī: A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia, including Hindustan; from A. H. 194 (810 A.D.) to A.H. 658 (1260 A.D.) and the Irruption of the Infidel Mughals into Islam*, Translated by H. G. Raverty. (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1881-1899).

⁵⁴and polemical works such as the writings of the Mustalian Fatimids,⁵⁵ al-Ghazālī (d. 1111/505)⁵⁶ and Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 1092/485)⁵⁷ as well as the travelogues of several Muslims and European Christians are drawn upon for this study. (Cf. Part One:5-III).

A. Nizari Da'wa Literature Sources

Independently surviving texts from the Nizari Ismaili polity era are rare; a few survive in the form of fragments embedded in other texts. The Nizari texts which were the original sources for the Ilkhanid chronicles are presently not known to be extant. The largest body of works detailing history and doctrines of Nizari Ismailism in Iran, especially the post-Qiyāma phase are attributed to Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī (d. After 1243/640) and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274/672). (Cf. Part One:3-I and II).

Ivanow listed some 62 works from what he called “The Alamut School”, out of these, 19 are ascribed to some eight authors who lived in the period 1090-1256/483-654.⁵⁸ Similarly, he identified 33 works of “The Ismaili Literature of Syria” of which seven are attributed to authors

⁵⁴ Zāhīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī. *The Saljūqnāma of Zāhīr Al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī: A Critical Text Making use of the Unique Manuscript in the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Edited by A. H. Morton. (Warminster: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2004).; Nīshāpūrī. *Seljuq Turks*.

⁵⁵ Abū ‘Alī Maṣṣūr al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh. *Al-hidāya al-Āmiriyya fī ibtāl da‘wat al-Nizāriyya*, Edited by Asaf A. A. Fyzee. (London: Islamic Research Association via Oxford U. P., 1938).

⁵⁶ Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, “*Faḍā’ih al-Bāṭiniyya wa faḍā’il al-Mustaẓhiriyya* (The Infamies of the Bāṭinis and the Virtues of the Mustaẓhiris),” in *Freedom and fulfillment: an annotated translation of al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl and other relevant works of al-Ghazālī* by Richard McCarthy (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980). Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī; Richard Joseph McCarthy. *Freedom and Fulfillment: an annotated translation of al-Ghazālī’s al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl and other relevant works of al-Ghazālī*, Macmillan Reference USA, 1980).; Farouk. Mitha. *Al-Ghazālī and the Ismailis: A Debate on Reason and Authority in Medieval Islam*, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001).; Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī. *The Just Balance: al-Qisṭās al-mustaqīm*, Translated by David Pearson Brewster. (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1978).

⁵⁷ Abū ‘Alī Ḥasan b. ‘Alī Niẓām al-Mulk. *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings: the Siyāsat-nāma or Siyar al-mulūk*, Translated by Hubert Darke. (London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).

⁵⁸ Wladimir Ivanow. *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey*, (Tehran: Ismaili Society, 1963). pp. 132-158

of this era.⁵⁹ Almost a decade and a half later, Ismail Poonawala ascribed 26 works to seven authors of this period out of a total of 124 Nizari texts from the Persianate context⁶⁰ and 19 works attributed to six authors out of a total of 44 texts from Syria in this period.⁶¹

Most of these works are spread amongst several manuscript collections, principal among these is that of the Institute of Ismaili Studies. A small number of the texts have been published over the last century through the efforts of a handful of scholars and some have been translated into European languages. Under the aegis of the IIS this trickle, at times, becomes a systematic flow. Some of the texts pertinent to this research are detailed below:

Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā, the biography of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ contains several autobiographical episodes and may have been based on Ḥasan's own writing. Juvayni, Rashid al-Din and Qashani quoted or paraphrased it in their accounts of the life and career of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. Rashid al-Din and Qashani gave more extensive quotations suggesting that they had direct access to the text.⁶² The original text is believed not to be extant.

Poonawala lists the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* manuscript which he considered to be spurious⁶³ and the IIS collection also has two manuscripts, namely IIS Persian-MS 162 and 177 with the purported caption of *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*. Their content is identical and neither conforms to

⁵⁹ *IL2* pp. 168-173

⁶⁰ Ismail K. Poonawala. *Biobibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature*, (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1977). pp. 251-286 and 351-355

⁶¹ *BBB* pp. 287-297 and 348-350

⁶² Juwaynī. *TJG.*, pp. 186-216; *HWC.* pp. 666-683; *JT.* pp. 97-134, and *ZT.* pp. 133-168.

⁶³ Tehran-Markazī F 2835 in a *majmū'a*, microfilm from Wazīrī Collection (Mic. Cat., 735).

the biography recorded by the Ilkhanid chroniclers.⁶⁴ More copies of this text exist in Badakhshan. In July, 2018/*Dhū'l-qa'da* 1439 I was able to peruse a copy in the hand of the Khalifā Shāh-i Kalān (d. 2014/) in Porshniev. The text conforms to IIS Persian-MS 177. Does this suggest a Central Asian provenance of the urtext? (Cf. Part One:7-I).

Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's *Fuṣūl-i arba'a* (Four Epistles) survives as a fragment translated into Arabic by his contemporary al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153/548),⁶⁵ the Ash'arī theologian and heresiographer who is believed to have been an Ismaili.⁶⁶ The three Ilkhanid historians have paraphrased the text in which Hasan establishes the necessity of an authoritative teacher, namely the *imam* of the time who through *ta'lim* (authoritative teaching of the *imam*) provides spiritual guidance for humanity.⁶⁷ On his way to Cairo, Hasan was engaged in a disputation with a Shāfi'ī 'ālim at Mayyāfāriqīn where he used a similar syllogism to argue that Ismailism relying on *ta'lim* was preferable to the disagreement among the Shāfi'ī *mujtahids*. This suggests that Ḥasan had already elaborated notions of *ta'lim* before departure for Egypt and the purpose of his journey was not for training as often asserted. (Cf. Part Two:1-III).

⁶⁴ I have edited and translated these texts and plan to publish these in my study on the biography of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ.

⁶⁵ Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm Shahrastānī. *Kitāb al-milal wa'l-niḥal*, Edited by Muḥammad b. Faṭḥ Allāh Badrān (original edition 1955). (Qumm: Al-Sharif al-Razi (etext), 1985).

⁶⁶ Poonawala. *BBB*. pp 254-257; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 340; EI2. G. Monnot "al-Shahrastānī"

⁶⁷ TJG. pp 195-199; HWC. pp 671-673; JT. pp 105-107; ZT. pp 142-143

B. Works of Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī also known as Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib

Jalal Badakhchani has established that the *Haft bāb* (Seven Chapters) completed in 1200/596 was the work of Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī (d. after 1243/640).⁶⁸ This work is a synthesis of earlier Ismailitic thought with the Nizari doctrines related to the declaration of the Qiyāma by the imam Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām. The *Haft bāb* is written in simple language aimed at the average believer.⁶⁹ The text was originally published by Wladimir Ivanow in 1933/1352; however, it lacked the necessary *apparatus criticus* to be a critical edition.⁷⁰ Marshall Hodgson translated the text and published it with a commentary in 1955/1374.⁷¹ Badakhchani using some 19 manuscripts has published a critical edition along with a translation.⁷² IIS Persian MS-32 is principal manuscript used for this edition. I have relied on Badakhchani’s edition and where appropriate on my transcription of the text directly from IIS Persian MS-32.⁷³

⁶⁸ Seyyed Jalal Badakhchani, “Poems of the Resurrection: Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib and his Dīwān-i Qā’imiyyāt,” in *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and Other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary*, ed. Omar Ali-de-Unzaga (London, New York: I.B.Tauris, 2011). Seyyed Jalal Badakhchani p. 433 and Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, “Spiritual Resurrection in Shi’i Islam: An Early Ismaili Treatise on the Doctrine of Qiyāmat: Haft Bāb,” (2017). p. 2 Badakhchani wrote that his “name has also been recorded variously as Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan, Malik al-Kuttāb Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan, Ra’īs Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī and Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Bīrjandī.” In the previous reference he had also listed: “Sayyid al-Du‘at Ṣalāḥ al-Dawla wa’l-Dīn, Mushī-yi Jahān, Mubdi‘ al-Nazm wa’l-Nathr Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd”

⁶⁹ HB p. 5 and p. 45 Tr. p 86.

⁷⁰ “Two early Ismaili treatises: Haft bāb-i Bābā Sayyid-nā and Maṭlūb al-mu’minīn,” (1933). pp 4-42

⁷¹ Hodgson. OA. pp 279-324

⁷² HB.

⁷³ In Late July 2018 I acquired a scan of one of the oldest copies of the Haft Bāb—a MS from Zong in the Wakhan Valley of Badakhshan. Which will be used in my future study of the Qiyāma.

The *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyāt* attributed to Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ is perhaps one of the most important new additions to the corpus of published Nizari texts in the second decade of this century.⁷⁴ In the

Haft Bāb Ḥasan wrote that

I have started the second *Dīwān*, which might be around 5000 couplets. If the light of the divine success shines upon this servant and life permits, I will finish it myself. And if I were not to live long and fail [to complete it], the *Qā'im* of the *Qiyāmat*, out of his bounty will raise another servant, as he did in my case, lift him high from the lowest of the low, and will finish the work in his speech.⁷⁵

The 157 odes of the *Qā'imīyyāt* cover a wide variety of subjects and include substantial amount of embedded historical material. Almost decade ago I had proposed the importance of the “the coordinations and relations between the Mongols and Nizaris, as well as the causes of the drastic shift in Mongol policy” which led to the eventual destruction of the Nizari polity.⁷⁶ The *Dīwān* published near that time contains odes which attest to the alliance with Chingiz Khan and the later collapse of this alliance from Nizari perspectives. In addition, the *Dīwān* contains an abundance of doctrinal material, in particular, on the teachings of the *Qiyāma*.

C. Works of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī

Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ's younger contemporary and colleague, the polymath, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's works also are vital sources for the study of Nizari thought. His *Sayr wa sulūk*, translated as *Contemplation and Action*, written in the form of letter to the chief *dā'ī*, it is Ṭūsī's spiritual autobiography which contains a narrative of his conversion to Ismailism as well as details of Nizari doctrines.⁷⁷ In addition, there are three short treatises, namely: *Tawallā wa tabarrā*

⁷⁴ Badakhchani, “Poems of the Resurrection.”; Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Dīwān-i qā'imīyyāt*, Edited by Muḥammad Riṣā Shafī'ī Kadkanī. (Tehran: Mīrās-i Maktūb, 2011).; Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Dīwān-i qā'imīyyāt (Tajik)*, Edited by Ato Mirkhoja. (Dushanbe: Bukhoro, 2014).

⁷⁵ HB. p. 50 Tr. p. 91. Also fn 236: “The *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyāt* constitutes 4784 hemistichs.”

⁷⁶ Shiraz Hajiani, “The Great Resurrection–Reconstructing Alamut. Proposal for Doctoral Research Submitted to the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago,” (2012).

⁷⁷ Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ṭūsī, “Contemplation and Action (*Sayr wa sulūk*): the Spiritual Autobiography of a Muslim Scholar,” Edited and Translated by Seyyed Jalal Badakhchani. London; New York: I.B. Tauris, (1998).

(*Solidarity and Dissociation*), *Maṭlūb al-mu'minīn* (*Desideratum of the Faithful*) and *Āghāz wa anjām* (*Origin and Destination*); and a major work, the *Rawḍa-yi taslīm* (*Paradise of Submission*) also known as the *Taṣawurrāt* (*Reflections*)—all are vital to the study of Nizari doctrine after the declaration of the *Qiyāma*.

In the *Tawallā wa tabarrā*, Ṭūsī, described the processes by which the external and internal turning towards the truthful teacher and away from all that would be contrary to his teachings. This step-wise movement of solidarity from lust and anger to chastity and forbearance ultimately to contentment (*riḍā*) and submission (*taslīm*) leads to certitude and oneness with the people of Unity (*ahl-i waḥdat*). Their every action is in the way of God and even a momentary lapse is the cause of falling away.

The *Āghāz wa anjām* elaborates eschatological exegeses which Ṭūsī described as a short account of what has been witnessed of the ultimate end of creation by travellers on the path to the Hereafter (*sālikān-i rāh-i ākhirat*), similar to what is written in the Divine Book (*shabih bi ānchi dar kitāb-i ilāhī mastūr ast*) and has been uttered on the tongue of the prophets and the imams (*awliyā*), peace be upon all of them, concerning the Resurrection, Paradise, Hell and so forth—not as described by scholars (*ahl-i dānish*), but as witnessed by men of insight (*ahl-i bīnīsh*).⁷⁸

Ṭūsī ties his discussions of the Qur'anic End of Times to the theme of the Ismaili teachings of the *Qiyāma*. In the ultimate analyses he quotes a *ḥadīth* that “[t]his world is forbidden to the people of the Hereafter, and the Hereafter is forbidden to the people of this world, and both of them are forbidden to the people of God.”⁷⁹

The *Maṭlūb al-mu'minīn* is a simpler shorter text which contains a summary from the *Fuṣūl-i mubārak*, of the *imam* Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihī’l-salām, and other Nizari works. The four chapters

⁷⁸ Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ṭūsī, “Shi‘i Interpretations of Islam: Three Treatises on Islamic Theology and Eschatology,” (2010). pp 47-48

⁷⁹ *Shi‘i Interpretations* p. 87. Cf. also p. 31 fn 54.

include a discussions of eschatology, qualities of a believer, doctrine of solidarity and dissociation (*tawallā* and *tabarrā*), and the seven pillars of the *sharī'a* and their esoteric interpretation (*ta'wīl*).⁸⁰

Lastly, the *Rawḍa-yi taslīm* (*Paradise of Submission*) in which Ṭūsī recorded the conceptions concerning the origin and return (*mabda' wa ma'ād*), ethics and human relations (*mu'āmalāt*) which have been established in the mind of this most humble servant of the *Da'wat* in proportion to his deficient understanding and comprehension. Because any oral discourse when rendered in writing will be better placed in the imagination, from the imagination it will better reach the critical comprehension, whence it is better consolidated in the memory, thus it is better preserved.⁸¹

Rawḍa-yi taslīm is divided into 27 chapters which address doctrines of theology, cosmogony, anthropology, eschatology prophethood and *imamate*. This encyclopaedic treatise contains the most elaborate treatment of Nizari Ismaili belief of the post-Qiyāma era. This is one of the few complete and comprehensive works to have survived from the Nizari polity after the Mongol invasion of 1256/654 and is therefore a vital source for the study of early Nizari thought.⁸² (Cf. Part One:3-II).

D. Translations of Primary Sources

Hodgson's dissertation contained a bibliographic note in which he listed Ivanow's unique and monumental body of editions and translations in Ismaili studies. Over the last seven decades many more editions and translations have become available. Such works even if not specifically mentioned are in the background of this research. The influence some of these important works is present not only in my use of their content and concepts but in my

⁸⁰ Two early Ismaili treatises: *Haft bāb-i Bābā Sayyid-nā* and *Maṭlūb al-mu'minīn*. pp. 43-35. *Shi'i Interpretations*. I have discovered a translation by Marshall Hodgson and am working on a paper comparing translations of Badakhchani, Hodgson and my own.

⁸¹ Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ṭūsī, "Paradise of Submission (*Rawḍat al-taslīm*): a Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought," (2005). p. 15

⁸² The *Rawdatu't-Taslim* (*Rawḍat al-taslīm*), commonly called *Tasawwurat*.; *Paradise of Submission*.

difference from the approaches, in many cases, of exemplary scholars in the field of Persianate and Islamicate studies. Jalal Badakhchani's editions and translations have been an extremely important contribution to the study of Nizari Ismaili thought. In places, I have made minor modifications to his translations for purpose of conceptual differences or in a few cases where his translations reflect usage of a previous manuscript and the edition of the Persian texts reflects that a different variant had been substituted but the translation was not accordingly realigned.⁸³ The numerous other primary texts in translation have similarly been used with necessary modifications. The excerpts from JT and ZT are my translations unless otherwise specifically noted.

E. Manuscripts used in this Research

As already mentioned above, I have consulted: 1) the 1931 publication of facsimile of a manuscript dated 1291/690⁸⁴ of the TJG; 2) the British Library MS 7628 transcribed for Shāhrukh b. Tīmūr (r. 1377-1447/779-850) in 1443-44/837⁸⁵ of the JT; and 3) the facsimile of the Tehran University MS 9067 copied in February 1581/Muḥarram 989 of the ZT.⁸⁶ (Cf. Part One:3-III and 5). In addition to the Ilkhanid and later chronicles I have edited and translated treatises from a selection of manuscripts scans obtained from the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS Persian

⁸³ This is a function of the long gap between early drafts and final publications—JB had already translated the *Haft Bāb* in 2001/1422 but the final edition and translation was published in 2017. HB. The careful reader might also identify this symptom in a few places in this research which began over a decade ago.

⁸⁴ Juwaynī. *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā of Juwayni, Vol. III: Being a Facsimile of a Manuscript Dated A. H. 690 Belonging to Wahīd-ul-Mulk.*

⁸⁵ Available at: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_7628

⁸⁶ Qāshānī. ZT.

MS 32, 162, 177 and 823),⁸⁷ (Cf Part Two:2-II-B); the University of Tehran Library (Tehran Markazī F 2835 from microfilm of the Vazīrī MS Mic. Cat. 735)⁸⁸ (Cf Part One:6-IV, 7-I Part Two: 1-IV-A and 2-IV-E) and the Iranian Majlis Library (MS 901).⁸⁹ (Cf Part One:7-I; Part Two:1-IV-A).

IV. Religio-political Context of the Early Middle Period

Islamicate societies in the Early Middle Period were characterised by the pendulous shifts of power. The collapsing centralised absolutist rule of the ‘Abbāsids (fl. 750-1258/133-656) coincided with the emergence of the Fatimid imam-caliphate in North Africa (fl. 909-1171/297-567) and the Buyid amirate in Iran and Iraq (fl. 932-1061/320-454). For the next century and a half, Islamicate domains were ruled by these Shi‘i dynasties. After the battle of Dandānqān in 1040/431, the eastern Islamicate domains were overrun by the Saljuqs (fl. 1040-1194/431-590) who for the most part patronised Ḥanafī Sunnism. After displacing the so-called Buyid captivity of the ‘Abbāsīd realm, the newly establishing Jamā‘ī-Sunni establishment under the Saljuq sultanate gradually began to peel back the Shi‘i institutions that had been created during the Shi‘i centuries. The ‘Abbāsids did not fare any better during the Saljuq “captivity” as the Saljuqs busied themselves in capturing territory from the Byzantines and the Fatimids in Syria and Anatolia. The nomadic Saljuqs Turks, reliant on Persianate bureaucrats from the east, were a xenocracy. As they expanded their empire, they underwent a long process of indigenising and sedentarising. In this time they were confronted by an indigenous attempt to consolidate and expand sparse and scattered centres of local power into a

⁸⁷ I am grateful for the University of Chicago Humanities Division Research Travel Grant and to Dr. Farhad Daftary and Professor Eric Ormsby for kindly permitting me to have access to the digitised Manuscripts at the Institute of Ismaili Studies. My grateful thanks also to Shah Hussain, Assistant Librarian at IIS for his help, support and time and for making certain MSS scans available to me during my research trip at the Institute in 2013.

⁸⁸ Poonawala. *BBB*. p. 353. I am grateful to Janis Esots and Nazeer Lotfi Fard for their help in obtaining parts of this manuscript.

⁸⁹ Available online via <http://dlib.ical.ir/> as سرگذشت حسن صباح record: 500813; file: 15744-01.pdf.

territorial polity attributing sovereignty to the Nizari Ismaili imamate and aiming to establish a Shi'i theocracy.

The canvass of Iranian history in the 12th/6th is partially marked by the relations and conflicts between the Saljuq-ʿAbbāsid establishment and the Nizari Ismailis. With the devolution of the Saljuqs in the last quarter of the century, the Khwārazmshāhs (fl. 1077-1231/470-628) and the resurgent ʿAbbāsid caliphs became part of the narratives. Chingiz Khān's invasion of 1219-21/661-618 realigned societies, their boundaries, governance and relations in the eastern Islamicate realms. The Nizari rulers were amongst the first to form an alliance with the Mongols as their armies crossed the Āmū Daryā. Over the next three decades as the Mongol expeditionary forces were replaced by armies of occupation, the Nizaris fell out of favour and both Güyük Qāʾān (r. 1246-1248/644-646) and after him Mangū Qāʾān (r. 1251-1259/649-657) resolved to do away with them. The latter ordered his brother Hūlāgū to march west with a prime objective to annihilate the Nizari Ismaili polity in Iran.

These events occurred in a timeframe Marshall Hodgson labelled the “Early Middle Period”

between 945-1258/334-656.⁹⁰ He wrote that during the five centuries after 945, the former society of the caliphate was replaced by a constantly expanding, linguistically and culturally international society ruled by numerous independent governments. This society was not held together by a single political order or a single language of culture. Yet it did remain, consciously and effectively, a single historical whole. In its time, this international Islamicate society was certainly the most widely spread and influential society on the globe. (We shall refer to the period before about 1250 as the Earlier Middle Period; to the period from then to about 1500 as the Later Middle Period.)⁹¹

While the contours of his analyses have merit at the remove of Oikoumenic world-historical level, in practical ground realities, the construal of a unitary society which after 945/334 “was

⁹⁰ Marshall G. S. Hodgson. *The Venture of Islam: The Classical Age of Islam*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). pp 233ff and Marshall G. S. Hodgson. *The Venture of Islam: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). pp 3ff

⁹¹ *Venture II* p. 3

not held together by a single political order or a single language of culture [remained] consciously and effectively, a single historical whole” lacks validity. The peasant tilling a patch of land in *Mā warā’ al-nahr* had little societal or linguistic connection with a fellow farmer in the Sawad of Kūfa, let alone with a Berber nomad or an Iranian bureaucrat.⁹² This periodisation tied to the institution of Jamā’ī-Sunni post-prophetic authority—namely the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate and its transformations—misconstrues the vast geographic territories and immensely separate and diverse Islamicate peoples into a unitary whole. Even at the level of the caliphate, as far back as the succession of Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786-809/170-193), the ‘Abbāsīds ceased to centrally control the Islamicate domains, if they had ever done before. With the proclamation of the Fatimid caliphate in 909/297 and in response, that of the Umayyads of Spain in 929/317, even the notion of a single legitimate ruler of the Islamicate domains, *de facto*, dissipated.⁹³

Nonetheless, Hodgson’s ground breaking analyses resulted from his compelling assimilation and synthesis of the trans-regional import of the sources. Those sources, it must be noted, were written by author-historians who wrote about a stratum of their societies—the one that they aspired for and belonged to. The world was far more complex than they could encapsulate and in their processes, they marginalised a greater part of their world.⁹⁴ (Cf. Part One:1 and 2).

⁹² Even in the 21st/15th century, few intellectuals in Central Asia, let alone farmers, would identify with fellow Muslims in other parts of the world beyond a nominal recognition of *ham-dīnī* (shared faith).

⁹³ Hodgson’s choice of 945/334—the year in which the ‘Abbāsīd capital was taken over by the Shī’ī Buyids—is arbitrary given that almost a century earlier, the centralised control of the caliphate practically ceased.

⁹⁴ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa is often posited as an example of a 14th/8th century traveller whose journey through the extents of the Islamicate domains demonstrated a contiguous society. He simply navigated the contiguous stratum of Arabo-centric Islamic society. The wonders in his travelogue are witness to the vastly different societies he marvelled at and mostly even failed to comprehend.

Picking up the thread of Hodgson's depiction of the Early Middle Period, he argued that this period was one of general prosperity. That under the Sung (fl. 960–1279/349–678) in China there was commercial expansion and indication of early industrialisation propelled by increased access to gold through mining and from trading in the Southern Seas. On the other end, in Europe, there was intensification of agriculture with adoption of new plows to farm the colder northern reaches. As a result the Islamicate domains, located centrally on the Eurasian trade routes, prospered from agrarian production as well as long-distance commercial tendencies. With such prosperity, investment of human time and material resources yielded cultural efflorescences. This prosperity built on symbioses between rural and urban populations would advance further development and complex institutions. Attack by less developed groups would diminish communities and their capacities. Hodgson supposed that complex institutions

might survive many a conquest and much serious internal tension, and more often than not the ravages of warfare or the damages of political mismanagement could be repaired if they did not recur too continuously for too long. But in the long run, such resiliency depended on a high level of prosperity, which in turn depended on a balance of many favourable circumstances which were not necessarily self-perpetuating.⁹⁵

In the Early Middle Period, Iran and Iraq were subject to three major invasions which resulted in major disruptions of complex institutions: 1) the Buyids who took Baghdad in 945/334—Hodgson's *terminus a quo* of the Early Middle Period, 2) the Saljuqs who took Baghdad in 1055/446, and 3) the Mongols who took Baghdad in 1258/656—Hodgson's *terminus ad quem*. (Cf. Part Two-IV-A and 3-III-C). It is during the early part of this period that the Ismaili *da'wa* in Iran was gravitating towards the Fatimids to form a pincer around the 'Abbāsid-Saljuq establishment. I have termed this gradual process the "Fatimid Eastern Policy", which however, was never consistently enacted nor resourced. (Cf. Part Two:1-II-C). In 1095/487, at

⁹⁵ *Venture II* p. 5

the death of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustansir (r. 1036–1095/427-487), the Ismailis in Iran severed their ties with the Empire and laid the foundations of Nizari Ismailism.

A. Periodisation of the Nizari Polity in Iran

Hodgson divided the history of the Nizaris into three periods shown in the table Ib.⁹⁶

Table Ib: Hodgson's Periodisation of Early Nizari Ismailism

Period	Dates	Ruler	Sub-characterisations
Dā'īs of Daylamān	1090-1162	Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ d. 1124	General rising
		Buzurg Ummīd d. 1138	Consolidation
		M. b. Buzurg Ummīd d. 1162	Stalemate
Imams of the <i>Qiyāma</i>	1162-1210	Ḥasan II d. 1166	Abolition of the outer law
		Muḥammad II d. 1210	Self-contained spirituality
Imams of the <i>Satr</i>	1210-1256	Ḥasan III d. 1221	Alliance with the caliphate
		Muḥammad III d. 1255	Aggressive isolation
		Khūrshāh d. 1257	Fall of Alamut

Farhad Daftary followed the same periodisation stating that on the basis of the reigns of different lords of Alamūt as well as their teachings and religious policies,

the history of Nizārī Ismā'īlism of this period may be subdivided into three phases. During the initial phase (483–557/1090–1162), covering the reigns of the first three rulers of Alamūt, the Nizārīs succeeded in establishing and consolidating their *da'wa* and independent state. In the second phase (557–607/1162–1210), coinciding with the reigns of the fourth and fifth lords of Alamūt who were recognized as imams, the Nizārīs symbolically turned to the realm of the 'resurrection' (*qiyāma*), which made the community spiritually and psychologically independent of the outside world, a world that was now considered spiritually irrelevant. In the third and final phase (607–654/1210–1256), concurrent with the rules of the last three lords of Alamūt, the Nizārīs, while partially retaining their inwardness and teachings emanating from the declaration of the *qiyāma*, attempted a rapprochement with the Sunnī world and also revived their political aspirations – endeavours that were terminated by the invading Mongols.⁹⁷

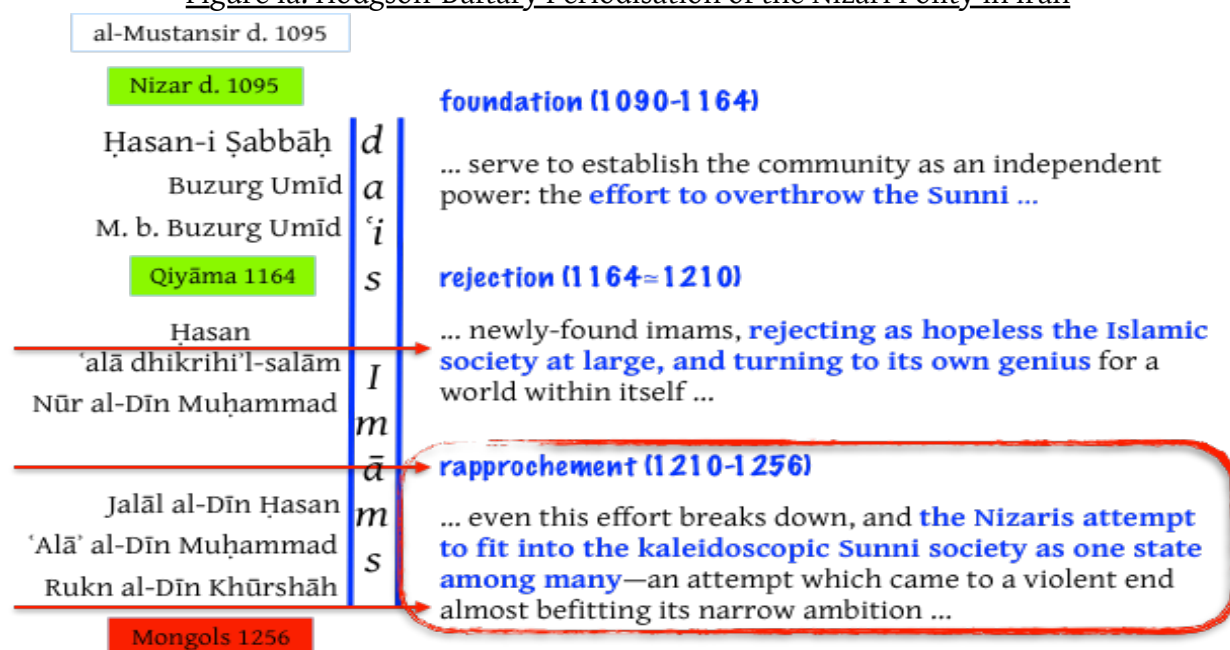
During the period Hodgson designated “Dā'īs of Daylamān”, the Nizari imams were also in *satr*. His usage implies non-existence of the imams prior to Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām’s declaration

⁹⁶ Hodgson. OA. p. 42

⁹⁷ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 303

of the Qiyāma and thereafter the imams went into *satr* in the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan. The period labelled “Imāms of the *Satr*” is inconsistent—the Nizaris maintained that Jalāl al-Dīn had become Sunni exercising *taqiyya* (dissimulation) and that this was a period of *satr* (concealment of true doctrine); however, the imams of the period were not in *satr* in the Ismaili technical sense. All three were manifestly known as imams (*kashf*). The third issue is that he shifted between military-political to theological bases for demarcating turning points.⁹⁸

Figure 1a: Hodgson-Daftary Periodisation of the Nizari Polity in Iran

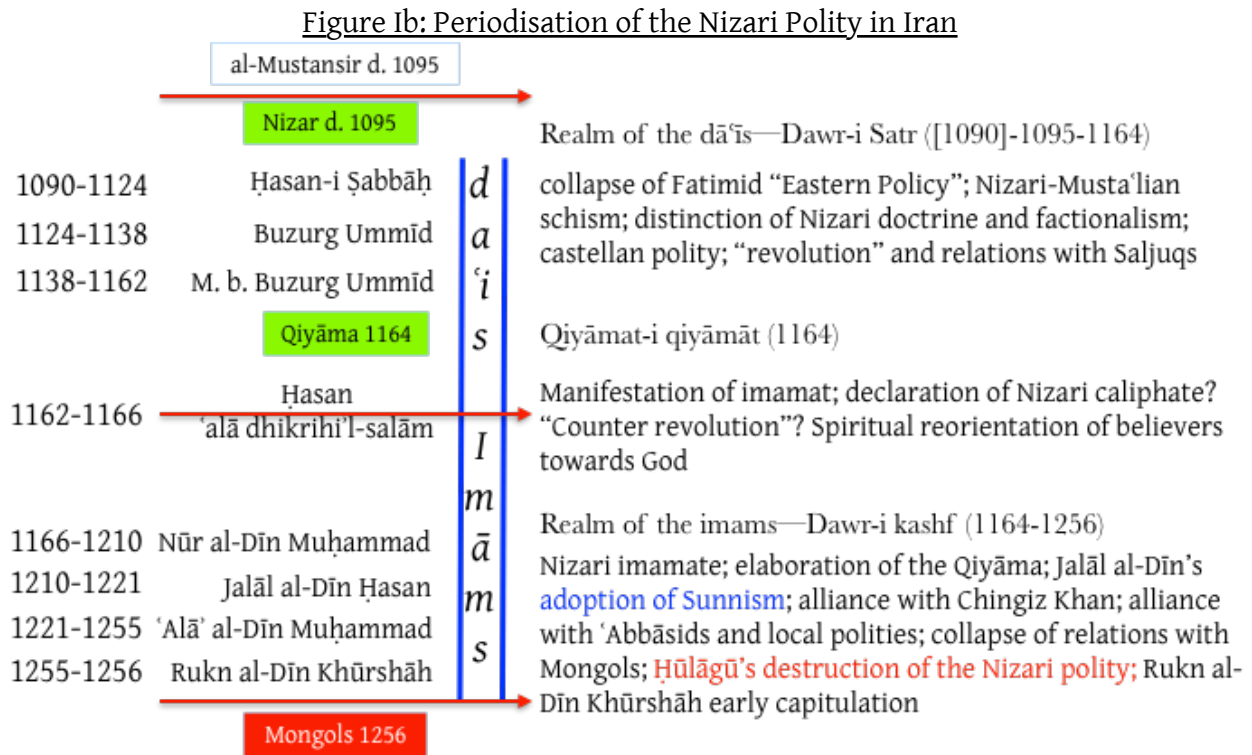


Hodgson: *Order* (1955) p. 42 Daftary: *Ismailis* ([1990] 2007) pp 302-303

Daftary corrected these inconsistencies in his delineation of turning points; however, he carried over Hodgson's significant error of characterising the third phase during which the Nizaris “attempted a rapprochement with the Sunnī world”. Within twenty years of the acquisition of Alamut, there were more than three instances in three different contexts where the Nizari leadership represented themselves as a community amongst other Muslims and in two of these instances they were willing to or recognising themselves to be subjects of the

⁹⁸ as he does in the *Venture* between institutional (Sunni caliphate) and technological (gunpowder) designations for his demarcations.

Saljuqs. (Cf. Part One:6-V). That is, in the first phase already “the Nizaris attempt[ed] to fit into the kaleidoscopic Sunni society as one state among many”.⁹⁹ This, according to Hodgson and Daftary, is characteristic of the last phase of their periodisations.¹⁰⁰ I have reconfigured these periodisations to reflect not the politico-military successes or failures but rather to privilege the Nizari religious perspectives.



I have demarcated two phases and a turning point: the Realm of the *Dā'īs*—*Dawr-i satr* extended from Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's acquisition of Alamut to the proclamation of the *Qiyāma* by Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām; the Realm of the Imams—*Dawr-i kashf* began with the proclamation and ended with the destruction of the Nizari polity in Iran by the Mongols. The *Qiyāmat-i qiyāmāt* was the turning point in which the Nizari community transitioned from *satr* to *kashf* of their imams.

⁹⁹ Hodgson. OA, p. 42

¹⁰⁰ OA p. 42; Daftary. *Ismailis*, pp 302-303

The *Qiyāmat-i qiyāmāt* was epochal for the Nizari Ismailis—there is even evidence that calendrical reckoning marked the event as a new beginning. Outside of the Nizari communities there was no substantive change in the relations with non-Nizari Ismailis—the Sunnis did not even take notice of the event of the *Qiyāma*. In the description of the two phases and this very important moment, I have indicated some major themes which are central to this research. These are detailed in the next section and analysed in great depth in the following chapters.

V. Themes and Structures

The Ilkhanid chronicles written in 13-14th/7-8th century modes of *ta'rikh* preserve the earliest and most complete sources for the history of early Nizari Ismailism because they were based on texts acquired from the legendary library of Alamut and embed fragments of Nizari *da'wa* literature. Ismailis did not write *ta'rikh*. Ismaili historical writing, with few exceptions, is found in reports in doctrinal texts in the genres of *sīra* (biography) and *manāqib* (excellences, virtues). This history embedded in Islamicate historiographical texts requires a methodology of double narrative analyses (DNA). DNA necessitates the unwinding of the story and discourse of the historical text and then, again, of the fragments of embedded Ismaili sources. These need to be sequenced and analysed to arrive at interpretations of past actuality. (Cf. Part One:1-6).

The 13-14th/7-8th century historians who wrote these *ta'rikh* texts were drawn from courtly clerical classes; however, they shared the same historical horizons and prejudices as their forebears who emanated from the classes of Jamā'i-Sunni legists and scholars of religion. Only the rare authors (and the few modern studies relying on them) have escaped the inherited historic consciousness and hermeneutic trap of their writing about the Ismailis and especially of the early Nizaris as beyond the pale. (Cf. Part One:2-5).

The regnal account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ in these chronicles is longer than that of all the other rulers and has been analysed in great detail in this research. The account states, for example, that Ḥasan travelled to Egypt for training. Yet the evidence attests that he was already a proficient *dā'ī* before his arrival in Cairo. His travels were part of his function in the upper echelons of the *ḥudūd-i dīn* (the hierarchy of the *da'wa*) in Iran. (Cf. Part One:6-II and Part Two:1-III).

Because the *da'wa* hierarchy in Iran had understood Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir to be the designated successor to his father, the imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir, the Ismailis in Iran accepted the imamate of Nizār, without any known exceptions. The *da'wa* in Iran rejected a supposed revocation of *naṣṣ* claimed at al-Mustanṣir's deathbed by the Fatimid wazīr al-Afḍal b. Badr al-Jamālī. (Cf. Part Two:1-III).

The concepts of *naṣṣ* (designation of the imam) and *ta'līm* (authoritative teaching of the imam) refined in the 8th/2nd century remained critical in the understandings of the imamate. They were litigated in the Nizari Musta'lian schism, they informed the doctrines of *satr* (concealment) of the Nizari imams and the proclamation of the *Qiyāma* (Resurrection) as the imamate became manifest (*kashf*). (Cf. Part Two:2).

One of the key turning points in the chronicle accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ is the assassination of the wazīr Nizām al-Mulk (d. 1092/485). This killing attributed to the Nizaris and the possible poisoning of the Saljuq Sultan Malikshāh—at the behest of the 'Abbāsīd caliph a month later, unleashed internecine struggles for power among the supporters of his sons. In this era of “factional sovereignties” the coalitions built for each claimant were characterised by shifting

alliances of amīrs. The Nizaris had tumultuous and, at times, peaceful relationships with their adversaries, the Saljuqs, Abbasids and Mongols. These relations warrant a reassessment and are a focus in this study. (Cf. Part One:6, Part Two:1 and 3).

Modern scholarship anchored in 19-20th/14-15th century philological methodologies has given primacy to the writing of ideologues and elites, and has rarely accorded even a conjectural reference to the masses not written about in the texts. The characteristics of Nizari history are more germane by consideration of the populaces accepting the *da'wa* than just the designs of the ideologues. Nizaris were divided into factions I have called “*satrists*” and “*zuhūrists*”. The *zuhūrists* advocated for the manifestation of soteriological authority in addition to the political and religious authority espoused by the *dā'ī* rulers of the Nizari polity—even in jeopardy of Shi'i and particularly Ismaili theories of imamate. The *satrists* sought to persevere in the absence of the concealed Nizari imam. The *zuhūrists* won out with the declaration of the *Qiyāma* and the establishment of a line of imams as the rulers of the Nizari polity in Iran who claimed descent from Nizār the son of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustansir. (Cf. Part Two: 1-3).

The declaration of the *Qiyāma* was a total transformation of the socio-political and religious contexts of the Nizari communities. The Qur'an describes the *Qiyāma* as an apocalyptic eschatology which culminates in the Judgement and End of Times. The declaration of the *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt* by Ḥasan 'alā' *dhikrihi'l-salām* had little resonance with the cataclysmic finalities described in the Qur'ān. The declaration of the *Qiyāma* established Ḥasan 'alā' *dhikrihi'l-salām*'s authority and supremacy amongst the Nizaris. The language of cosmological eschatology was reminiscent of the previous ending of a period of *satr* when the Mahdi was to

establish justice and equality in the world marred by injustice and inequality and would have ushered the end of times. The imam al-Mahdi ushered the rule of the Fatimid imams claiming descent from ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. The counter revolution of the *Qiyāma* brought about a reorientation of the Nizari communities such that their elite were called the *ahl-i waḥdat* (people of Unity) and they lived in accord and in the presence of God. (Cf. Part Two:2 and 3).

The *Qiyāma* proclaimed by Ḥasan ‘alā’ *dhikrihi*’l-*salām* and the related theological and socio-political reformulations left lasting impacts not only on Nizari Ismailism but perhaps on wider Islamicate eschatological thought. In the centuries after the destruction of the Nizari polity, scholars have surmised the rise of ‘Alid loyalism, *ṭarīqa* Sufism and array of messianic movements carried the fragrance of the teachings of the *Qiyāma*. At the time, however, not even a ripple of commentary was noted on this epochal transformation. Over time, Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, the founder of Nizari Ismailism, despite being elevated to the rank of the *ḥujja* (proof of the imam) who blew the first trumpet call of the *Qiyāma*, after the proclamation of the *Qiyāma* and the manifestation of the imamate was eclipsed and has little persistent resonance in the present-day community he founded. (Cf. Part Two:3).

Towards the end of the early middle period, the Nizaris were the first polity west of the Āmū Daryā to form an alliance with Chingiz Khān. This alliance collapsed after three decades as the Mongol expeditionary forces were replaced by a much larger military occupation. The Nizaris, I argue, ceased to be of value in protecting the westward trade routes. (Cf. Part Two:3).

Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh capitulated prematurely to the Mongols based on the counsels of his advisors hoping to salvage the former alliances. Hūlāgū entertained this possibility but this

was ultimately rejected by Mangū Khān. The Nizari polity was decapitated and large populations massacred to be written about in the Ilkhanid chronicles. (Cf. Part Two:3).

A. On Theory and Method

No event is ever recorded in objective completeness even if that were ever possible. After its passing, the moment is captured by the recorders with glimpses of the natural facts of the event within matrices of discursive narration and then conveyed to the listener-readers at whatever remote time for their interpretive apprehension. This conveyance, with the exception of the rare works of a few self-reflexive author-historians, is in the manner of narrations of natural facts about the event. The reception by the listener-reader is then fraught with dangers of misinterpretation if their apprehension is a direct consumption of the account without the necessary unpacking of the discursive narrations to understand and grasp the glimpses of natural facts of the events as they may have happened. Each sound reading of the event, therefore, necessitates the distillation from the narrations of the glimpses of past actuality which when re-assembled allow the listener-reader to formulate their own composite of these glimpses to understand and apprehend the events within new matrices of discursive narrations, in their own time. It goes without saying that the greater part of historical writing is discursive narrations—the actual precipitate of past actuality amounts only to traces. With this thematic, structural, and conceptual background of the contexts of emergence of early Nizari Ismailism in the early Middle Period and the rise and fall of the Nizari polity in Iran let us turn to the new approaches to the study of the Qiyāma and the Nizari Polity in Iran and reconstruct Alamut.

PART ONE
ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOURCES

1. Sources of the Sources

PERSIAN HISTORICAL WRITING IN THE MIDDLE PERIODS drew from a confluence of Arabic historiography as it developed after the emergence of Islam and the norms of Iranian notions of rulership and society dating back at least to pre-Islamic era of the Sasanids. In recent decades a number of articles, edited volumes and several monographs have been published on subjects of Islamicate historical writing in Arabic and Persian.¹ These studies have often analysed the works of individual scholars and extrapolated broader characteristics and developments of the *ta'rikh* genre. There is little agreement in the scholarship on whether *ta'rikh* constituted a science in Islamicate contexts and if so, there is no accepted fixity as to when such understandings came to pass. Reflecting present-day debates in historiography, scholars of history have frequently arrived at diametrically opposed analyses on the nature of the works of individual Islamicate “historians” and by extension the wider endeavour.²

¹ Charles Melville, ed. *Persian Historiography* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012). Julie Scott Meisami, “Rulers and the Writing of History,” in *Writers and Rulers: Perspectives on Their Relationship From Abbasid to Safavid Times*, ed. Louise Marlow, and Beatrice Gruendler (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2004). Julie Scott Meisami, “History as Literature,” *Iranian Studies* 33 (2000). Julie Scott Meisami. *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999). Franz Rosenthal, “Historiography,” in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. David L. Sills (New York: Macmillan Co, 1972). Franz Rosenthal Marilyn Robinson Waldman. *Toward A Theory of Historical Narrative: A Case Study in Perso-Islamicate Historiography*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980). Tarif Khalidi. *Islamic Historiography: The Histories of Mas'udi*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975). Bernard Lewis, and P. M. Holt, eds. *Historians of the Middle East* (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1962). Sarah Foot, Chase F. Robinson, and Ian Hesketh, eds. *The Oxford History of Historical Writing. Vol. 2, 400-1400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Claud Cahen, “History and Historians,” in *Religion, learning, and science in the 'Abbasid period. The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, ed. M. J. L. Young, J. D. Latham, and R. B. Serjeant (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Julia Bray. *Writing and Representation in Medieval Islam: Muslim Horizons*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2006). Marshall G. S. Hodgson, “Two Pre-Modern Muslim Historians: Pitfalls and Opportunities in Presenting Them to Moderns,” in *Towards World Community*, ed. John Ulric Nef (The Hague; W. Junk, 1968). To list a few.

² See for instance: Boaz Shoshan. *Poetics of Islamic Historiography: Deconstructing Ṭabarī's History*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004). and Tayeb El-Hibri. *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography: Hārūn al-Rashīd and the Narrative of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

These types of analyses and discussions of sources—barring very rare exceptions—have not been part of Ismaili studies.³ In this brief survey and analytical synthesis of developments of Islamicate historiography I examine the contiguities and discontinuities between Ismaili *da'wa* literature and general Islamicate historical writing. Needless to say, this review is neither exhaustive nor conclusive; however, it is hoped that this will situate conceptions of Ismaili historical writing within the wider spectra of Islamicate historiography and contribute to re-assessments and refinements of methodologies of analyses of Ismaili writings that have been labeled as “history” and unquestioningly “mined” for “historical facts”.

In this chapter I detail how the explanations of the resurgence of Persianate historiographical and literary traditions in recent scholarship are contradictory and unsatisfactory. Issues of language and religious identity are discussed and the forms and functions of Persian historiography are explored. Using Marshall Hodgson’s schematisation of the *A'yān-Amīr* system as developed by John Woods, I identify modes of reaction by sectors of stratified Islamicate societies to social and doctrinal challenges and in reverse, I suggest the most prominent targets of the Ismaili *da'wa*. In these examinations I explore if it is valid to associate language and race as markers of sectarian religious commitments? Shifting focus and agency from the rulers and their quills for hire to their populace and societies at large, I ask can reception rather than the patronage of intellectual production—for social engineering to legitimate the ruling houses and to bolster the spread of Sunni versus Shi'i interpretations of Islam—be more useful for analyses of the processes and purposes of such intellectual production? In the patterns of Arabic and Persian historiography, the Ismailis have been

³ Paul E. Walker. *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and its Sources*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002). is a unique and comprehensive study of sources not only in Ismaili studies but in the field of Islamicate studies generally. Several published bibliographies of sources and literature indicate the level and maturity of the endeavour of Ismaili studies and the far-sighted vision of their authors in making such resources available for scholarship.

construed as social disrupters and that these “heretics” if not contained would lead to the downfall of society. In historiography as well as other genres of writing, the portrayals of Ismailis conformed to negative stereotypes of the pernicious “internal other”. How should this type of writing which was misinformed and intentionally misinforming about the thought and practices of the Ismailis be read to access Nizari history and doctrines for which Persian historical writing remains the primary repository?

I. Islamicate Historiography in Arabic

The developments in early Islamicate historical writing are examined in this section to elucidate the nature of the *taʾrīkh* genre and the perspectives of those involved in producing this literature over time.

A. Origins

Islamicate historiography in Arabic began with the accounts of the campaigns (*maghāzī*) of the Prophet Muḥammad (fl. 610-632) and his biographies (*sīra* pl: *siyar*). The extant early works, dating a century and half after his death, suggest many decades of oral transmission which were then captured in writing.⁴ While multiple accounts of a particular event exist simultaneously in their oral form, committing the event to writing results in the privileging of the last recitations received by the writer. Over long periods of time, the written forms endure

⁴ Ibn Ishāq, Muḥammad, and ‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Hishām. *The Life of Muhammad: a Translation of Ibn Ishāq’s Sīrat rasūl Allāh*, Translated by Alfred Guillaume. (Karachi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001 (1955)); R. Stephen Humphreys. *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991). p. 2 “As it happens, our principal accounts of the life of Muhammad were all composed in their definitive form between 750 and 850-i.e., about a century earlier-by Ibn Ishāq [d. 150/767], al-Wāqidī [d. 207/823], and Ibn Sa’d [d. 230/845].”; Chase F Robinson, “Islamic Historical Writing, Eighth Through the Tenth Centuries,” in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*. Vol. 2, 400-1400, ed. Sarah Foot, Chase F. Robinson, and Ian Hesketh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Chase F Robinson p. 252 “The earliest extant biography belongs to Ibn Hishām [d. 833/218], but this book is more accurately understood as a redaction, expurgation, and recasting of what is conventionally championed as the first large-scale Prophetic biography, which belonged to Ibn Ishāq.”

beyond the oral transmissions and the multiple recountings become frozen into singular narratives. This problem was partially ameliorated by the collection of multiple reports of the same event. Franz Rosenthal postulated that “it is more likely that there existed a method of oral transmission that was supplemented by unpublished written notes that were the reporters’ personal *aide-memoires*”.⁵ The systemisation into “canonical” texts is described by Chase Robinson as “a stringing together of discrete accounts (*akhbār*, sing. *khbar*), each usually credited to eye-witnesses or those reporting on their authority in a prefacing ‘chain of transmission’ (*isnād*), which posits the handing down, through oral, aural, or aural/written dictation or copying, of the account in question.”⁶

B. Ḥadīth to Chronography

With increasing distance from the events, *khbar-isnād* (report-chain of transmitters) emerged as the principle methodology of transmission of historical information. The soundness and validity of the *ḥadīth* (pl. *aḥādīth* = the reports⁷ of actions or sayings of the Prophet) was ensured through the un-impeachability of the transmitters.⁸ Stephen Humphreys observed that while the chains of transmitters extended to contemporaries of the events, in the 9th and 10th centuries, in writing about early Islamic history, the compilers were relying on sources written a century earlier; as such those authors, actually, were the direct sources and the alleged original narrators and not necessarily the initial persons listed in the *isnāds*.⁹ Over time,

⁵ Rosenthal, “Historiography.” p. 41

⁶ Robinson, “Islamic Historical Writing.” p. 247

⁷ Hodgson. *Venture I*. p. 64. The term *ḥadīth* is often extended to include events beyond the life of the Prophet. The use of “tradition” adapted from Judeo-Christian scholarship is inappropriate.

⁸ Rosenthal, “Historiography.” p. 41. “Historical truth, like religious truth, was considered ensured by the unimpeachable character of the succession of men through whom a given item of information was transmitted, the so-called chain of transmitters or *isnād*.”

⁹ Humphreys. *Islamic History*. p. 73. This very important point is explored further in chapter 3 below.

as the chains of transmission multiplied and became longer, biographical research and science of study of reports (*‘ilm al-rijāl*) was required and dictionaries were produced to corroborate the standing of the transmitters. These expanding prosopographical works, initially focussed on a particular city or region, then began to be organised by generations (*ṭabaqāt*) of transmitters.¹⁰

The chronological arrangements of multiple reports of individual events listed along with their chains of transmitters led to annalistic chronicles—the principal mode of organisation of Arabic historiography. From 638/17 as the *Hijrī* calendar was established for administrative purposes, the annalistic chronicles began to list series of events for each year after the *Hijra* (emigration of Prophet Muḥammad from Mecca to Yathrib, later called Medina).¹¹

The *ḥadīth* collections, often arranged thematically, “focused on the life of Muhammad, began to serve the political and social needs of the new religion”; they also gave the impetus for recording of other historical materials, which were written predominantly by the same scholars of religion.¹² The biographies of the Prophet were written in the eighth and early ninth century around the same time as the *ḥadīth* collections of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī (d. 870/256) and Muṣlīm b. al-Ḥajjaj al-Nīsābūrī (d. 875/261) were assembled.¹³ Bukhārī also “wrote several collections of terse biographies of religious authorities. He entitled each of

¹⁰ Cahen, “History and Historians.” p. 195 “This voluminous collection is of untold value to us, not only for its intrinsic merit but because it is often the only source to provide us with information before such information has been modified by a change of outlook in later works.”

¹¹ 1-Muḥarram-1 = 19-July-622; *History and Historians* pp 196-7

¹² Rosenthal, “Historiography.” pp 41-43 “al-Bukhari (d. 870), the author of the most authoritative collection of Prophetic traditions, wrote several collections of terse biographies of religious authorities. He entitled each of these works History, thus establishing himself in Muslim consciousness as a historian”; also see Cahen, “History and Historians.” p. 193

¹³ Both were Persianate authors from Central Asia!

these works History [*Ta'riḫ al-kabīr*], thus establishing himself in Muslim consciousness as a historian.”¹⁴ Such histories were heavily characterised by the methodologies of the *ḥadīth* collections. According to Rosenthal for “a very large and influential part of its production, Islamic historiography is indebted to scholars trained in the religious studies who earned their living by virtue of this training but whose literary activities included the writing of histories.”¹⁵ Tarif Khalidi noted, however, that the processes of *ḥadīth* collection and historiography “were twin, though not identical, disciplines”.¹⁶

Both the *ḥadīth* collection paradigm and the annalistic chronography resulted in episodic and macaronic treatment of the subject matter which Robinson suggested “might be called the atomistic and compound quality of narrative.”¹⁷ This methodology reached its epitome, and according to Claude Cahen, its “swan-song”, in the *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk* (*History of the Prophets and Kings*) of Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (923/310) such that those who wrote history in subsequent periods were continuators in that they added a *dhayl* (lit: tail) beginning in the last years covered by Ṭabarī up to their own time.¹⁸ Even as longer prose passages increasingly became the mainstays for historical writing, the oral nature of *khbar-isnād* transmission remained. “Books were often ‘published’ by their authors through dictation, and they were typically reproduced by dictations that were then ‘read back’ by the student-copyist to ensure accuracy.”¹⁹

¹⁴ Rosenthal, “Historiography.” p. 43

¹⁵ *Historiography* p. 43

¹⁶ Khalidi. *Islamic Historiography*. p. 24

¹⁷ Robinson, “Islamic Historical Writing.” p. 247

¹⁸ Cahen, “History and Historians.” pp 197-201;

¹⁹ Robinson, “Islamic Historical Writing.” p. 247

C. Narrative Histories

The ‘Abbāsīd (fl. 750-1258/132-656) revolt in 750/132 and the relocation of the Sunni caliphate further east, in Baghdad, brought increasing numbers of Persianate scholars and bureaucrats to the endeavour of historical writing.²⁰ These Iranian scholars wrote in Arabic which had been imposed as the administrative language of the realm by the Umayyad (fl. 661-750/41-132) caliph ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān’s (r. 685-705/66-86) reforms in 692/73.²¹ Like their fellow Iranian, Ṭabarī, historians such as Balādhurī (d. 892/279), Dīnawarī (d. 896/283), Ya‘qūbī (d. 897/284), Miskawayh (d. 1030/421)²² and others became more selective in their use of multiple reports. In their accounts, transmissions conflicting with their chosen narrative were “relegated to the end of each report where they appear almost as footnotes to the main text”.²³ In due course, use of the *isnād* began to fall away; Khalidi observed that new historical themes being explored “had little or no reference to Tradition”; that on the one hand many key events of the past were so established that chains of transmitters were irrelevant and on the other hand new matters in the expanding Islamicate realms, for example relating to India and the Byzantines, simply did not allow for these methodologies.²⁴ The suppression of the *isnād* and

²⁰ Cahen, “History and Historians.” p. 194: “The arrival on the scene of an important civil and military Khurasanian element, which rapidly became Arabicized, resulted under the ‘Abbāsīds in an outcrop of Iranian authors from the third/ninth century onwards. They were able, however, to preserve or develop certain specific customs, and so the various trends, which will be discussed later, were able to coexist.” Jan Rypka. *History of Iranian Literature*, Edited by Karl Jahn. (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1968). p. 438 has argued that these Persian authors sought better opportunities and thus wrote in Arabic.

²¹ Cahen, “History and Historians.” 212: “Writers in Arabic, Persian by birth, were to disregard historical works written in Persian, with very few exceptions, so that two parallel lines of documentation evolved which were unaware of, and completely independent of each other.”

²² Rypka. *Iranian Literature*. pp 149-50

²³ Khalidi. *Islamic Historiography*. 24

²⁴ *Islamic Historiography* pp 24-25; Robinson, “Islamic Historical Writing.” p. 249 “There were logical and practical limits to applying *isnād* methodology to pre- and non-Islamic history, not the least of which being that non-Muslims could hardly be expected to achieve the probity and trustworthiness of Muslims.”

the use of only preferred reports brought about a shift from the episodic reports to longer narrative prose. According to Khalidi, by the late ninth century, when Abu al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 956/345) wrote his history, continuous narrative was a firmly established mode of historiography.

D. Ta’rīkh as a Science

It is worth noting that modern scholarship is divided on whether and when history became recognised as a formal Islamicate science. At one end, Cahen suggested that “writing of history constituted an independent genre, even when it was practised by authors who also wrote works of a different kind” and that the term *ta’rīkh* came to be applied to the genre by the ninth century.²⁵ On the other end, Fred Donner remarked that writing history in the Classical

Period was

a sideline, pursued by people whose main activity was something else: the study of religious knowledge (*‘ilm*), *ḥadīth*, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Qur’anic study, etc.—all of which were respected and recognized disciplines at which it was possible for some people, at least, to earn a living. The cultivation of religious knowledge (*‘ilm*, *fiqh*), on the other hand, was central to the early Islamic community’s need to define the cultic, social, and ethical norms by which its members should live.²⁶

Humphreys also contended that

well into Ottoman times at least, there was no historical profession in Islam. That is, history was not recognised as a formal science with a specific subject matter, method and technique which could be taught and transmitted; nor was there any institutionalised way for a would-be historian to acquire the knowledge and skills of his craft; nor did anyone actually expect to make a living by working as a historian. History was neither a subject in the schools nor an element in any regular curriculum. History was the work of self-taught amateurs, whose regular professions ... lay elsewhere.²⁷

Julie Meisami in agreement stated that “[d]espite the ubiquity of historical writing, history, as a discipline with a specific object and a distinctive methodology, held no established place in classifications of the sciences; nor was it part of the curriculum of public education in the

²⁵ Cahen, “History and Historians.” p. 197

²⁶ Fred McGraw Donner. *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*, (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1998). p. 256

²⁷ EI2. Humphreys “Ta’rīkh”

mosque or, later, the *madrassa*.”²⁸ Irrespective of when such formalisations took place, for the most part Islamicate historians had other and more important full time occupations;²⁹ each brought their professional concerns, methodologies and norms to their writing. Nancy Partner’s observation that “there were no historians who were something else first and more importantly” aptly describes the writers of human history—with a few outstanding exceptions—in most contexts until modern times.³⁰

By the early Middle Periods, Islamicate historical writing was influenced by the increasing number of officials at caliphal and the many provincial courts—steeped in the *adab* traditions of poetry, oratory, ancient Arab tribal lore, rhetoric, grammar and philology, they also applied their quills to writing chronicles. These clerics at court brought with them the refinement and ornamentation of chancellery writing. Fundamental developments came about when scholars of religion were joined by court officials in the endeavour. The new contexts of production, reception and patronage gave orientations to historical writing, described as the *siyāsa* (governance) outlook, which focussed on rulership and government.³¹ The proximity enjoyed by this class of bureaucrat-“historians” gave them privileged access to and knowledge of the

²⁸ Meisami, “History as Literature.” p. 2; Melville, s. p. xxvi;

²⁹ Meisami. *Persian Historiography*. p. 6

³⁰ Conrad Hirschler, “Islam: The Arabic and Persian Traditions, Eleventh–Fifteenth Centuries,” in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*. Vol. 2, 400-1400, ed. Sarah Foot, Chase F. Robinson, and Ian Hesketh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Conrad Hirschler p. 282 Noted: “Early philosophical classifications of the sciences, such as those by al-Farabi (lat. Avennasar) and al-Tawhidi, had not yet referred to history as an independent field of knowledge. However, from the eleventh century onwards we see a shift as educational classifications of sciences started to include history more regularly as a discipline in its own right.”

³¹ *Arabic and Persian Traditions* 275

functions of the courts and their writing, no doubt, was also coloured by the impetus to secure continued patronage.³²

While the central component of this production was the annalistic chronicle, in due course modifications were introduced. Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1201/597) and Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233/630) brought together elements of “the annalistic chronicle and the biographical dictionary by appending alphabetically arranged obituaries of notable figures (including scholars) to the events of each year”.³³ Ibn al-Athīr frequently introduced an excursus when a topic overlapped several years.³⁴ Eventually, under the influence of the Iranian historians, dynastic histories also began to emerge—charting the reign of each ruler in place of the year-by-year accounts.

II. Islamicate Historiography in Persian

Tectonic shifts in Islamicate historical writing occurred with the resurgence of Persian as a literary language in the 10th/3rd-4th century and as Persian became the administrative language in polities from Anatolia to India.³⁵ During the previous two centuries, Arabic was the hegemonic language of learning. Bertold Spuler, in a continuity of Arabocentric scholarship of the 20th/14-15th century, incorrectly stated “that apparently no real historiography existed in pre-Islamic Persia” and that “there was no prototype of Persian historiography when the

³² Melville, s. p. 187 “Most of the historical works already mentioned have an element of propaganda in their make up, especially those most intimately associated with court patronage.”

³³ EI2. Humphreys “*Ta’rīkh*”. Nīshāpūrī. *Saljūqnāma*. Already in the twelfth/sixth century, Nīshāpūrī had begun to write such hybrid accounts, though writing in Persian, he wrote dynastic history.

³⁴ see for instance Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. sub anno 494/1100-1101 tr. pp 40-47

³⁵ Humphreys. *Islamic History*. p. 5

Arabs conquered the Iranian highlands”.³⁶ Having stated that “the influence of Arabic in the Muslim world with its richly developed culture was so great that it would have been really unwise to write history in any other language than Arabic” and ignoring patterns such as of dominance and patronage, he set up a circular argument “that there was an historiographical prototype in the Arabic language but none in Persian. This appears to me an important reason for the fact that nearly all Iranians interested in history wrote-and had to write-their works in Arabic: al-Ṭabari, al-Dīnawarī, al-Bīrūnī, and others.”³⁷

In contrast, Ehsan Yarshater observed that while no historical books survive from pre-Islamic Iran, there is evidence of the existence of “comprehensive written histories” at least in the Sasanian era (fl. 224-651) which were the sources for the re-construction of pre-Islamic Iranian history.³⁸ Yarshater noted that a key feature of these histories was that “no distinction was made between the factual, the legendary, and the mythical. All three are blended in a unified whole, presented as a continuous narrative of events.”³⁹ Additionally, that there was a “strong religious bias” in the writing and that the historiography exhibited no distinct sense of

³⁶ Bertold Spuler, “Evolution of Persian Historiography,” in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis, and P. M. Holt (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1962). Bertold Spuler pp 126-127; Similarly, Julie Meisami quoted H. A. R. Gibb: “the influence of the Persian tradition was equally unfavorable... As soon as history passed outside the Islamic field the old difficulty of distinguishing between legendary, semi-legendary and historical elements reappeared, and with it the tendency to take on trust whatever materials were available. It was this tendency which was now reinforced by the character of the sources from which the Arabic compilers drew their materials for the ancient history of Persia and other lands.” She continued: “Gibb tended to see the course of historical writing as one of decline, as its pristine Islamic origins were influenced by ‘foreign’ elements and as historians turned, around the middle of the 4th/10th century, to the writing of ‘contemporary annalistic’ (that is, dynastic) history. ‘It was at this unfavorable juncture’, he commented, ‘that historical works began to be written again in Persian’. Meisami. *Persian Historiography*. p. 2

³⁷ Spuler, “Evolution of Persian Historiography.” p. 127

³⁸ Ehsan Yarshater, ed. *The Cambridge History of Iran Vol. 3: The Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968). 3.1:359-64

³⁹ *CHIranIII* pp 3.1:366 Historical writing by Ismailis also exhibits these characteristics.

chronology since the “exploits of vassal kings and heroes were subsumed under the reigns of their sovereigns, an arrangement which reflected the great power and prominence of the king of kings in Sasanian Iran.”⁴⁰

A. Resurgence of Persianate Literary Traditions

A significant amount of early Islamicate historical writing in the Nile-to-Oxus region was done by Iranians in Arabic. The Arab conquerors, dependent on former Iranian officials, had continued to keep the financial registers in Middle Persian and in the last decade of the 7th/1st century in the west and in 741-2/124 in Khurāsān imposed Arabic as the administrative language and as a result also in other spheres of intellectual activity.⁴¹ The (re-)emergence of Persian as a vehicle of culture and learning has been credited to the Sāmānid court (fl. 819-1005/204-395) in Bukhara.⁴² Elton Daniel listed “the evolution of the New Persian language; the development of a system for writing it; its sanction as a chancery language; the formation of its literary tradition, mostly in the form of poetry; the waning influence of a centralizing caliphate; the appearance of more or less autonomous local dynasties; a renewed interest in the ancient history or pseudo-history of Iran”⁴³ as preconditions for the rise of Persian historiography. Numerous and often conflicting explanations have been postulated for the reorientation towards Iranian traditions and the resurgence of Persian historical writing. The explanations by several scholars who have written on Persian historiography can be divided into five broad themes.

⁴⁰ *CHI*IranIII pp 3.1:367

⁴¹ G. Lazard, “The Rise of the New Persian Language,” in *The Cambridge History of Iran Vol. 4: From the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*, ed. Richard N. Frye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).G. Lazard p. 602

⁴² Hodgson. *Venture II*. p. 293

⁴³ Elton Daniel, “Rise and Development of Persian Historiography,” in *Persian Historiography*, ed. Charles Melville (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012).Elton Daniel p. 103. He refers to the usage of Arabic script for new Persian.

1. DECENTRALISATION OF THE ‘ABBĀSID REALM

The first theme is that the Sāmānids sought independence from the ‘Abbāsids. According to Meisami “it is true that the 10th century seems to have seen a significant increase in writing in Persian, this impression may be due to accidents of survival and preservation; and impulses to ‘revive’ Persian were probably more ‘separatist’ than ‘nationalist,’ as local rulers sought independence from the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate.”⁴⁴ The “translations” of learning from Arabic into Persian created a

perception of the connection between the transfer of learning and that of power. When temporal power in the East had passed from the Persians to the Arabs, so had Persian learning, as well as Persian cultural, administrative and imperial traditions. Now that learning was coming home, re-translated into Persian at the behest of Persian-speaking rulers. What better way for the Samanids to symbolize their appropriation of temporal power in the East than by the appropriation of Tabari’s authoritative History, “Persianized” with respect to both form (the transformation of Tabari’s discrete accounts into continuous narrative) and perspective, which now becomes decidedly Eastern.⁴⁵

G. Lazard, similarly, remarked that the “explanation usually given is that it was obviously due to the distance of these regions from the capital and the existence of Iranian dynasties which were practically independent of the caliph” that Iranian traditions re-emerged and that the Sāmānids desired to promote a “national” literature.⁴⁶ His suggestion that the “political aspect is less important than the remoteness from the centres of culture” contradicts a second theme of explanation; namely, the Sāmānīd claims to be the true heirs and restorers of Persian rule and Persian imperial traditions⁴⁷ in competition with the Buyids⁴⁸ and other ruling houses.

2. SUPPORT FOR CLAIMS OF DYNASTIC LEGITIMACY

The Buyids (fl. 932-1062/320-454), who ruled most of the ‘Abbāsīd realm, claimed descent from Bahrām Gūr (r. 420-438) while in Bal’ami’s “translation” of Ṭabarī, the Sāmānīds were shown as

⁴⁴ Meisami, “History as Literature.” p. 7

⁴⁵ Meisami, “Rulers and the Writing of History.” p. 76

⁴⁶ Lazard, “CHIranIV.” p. 608

⁴⁷ Meisami, “Rulers and the Writing of History.” p. 74 and 76-77

⁴⁸ Comparable to post-Soviet Tajik and Uzbek adoptions and appropriations of Ismail Samani and Timur respectively

descended from Bahrām Chūbīn (r. 590-591), the Sasanian commander from the princely house of Mihran—the rulers of Rayy. This city was at centre of the conflict between the two houses.⁴⁹ Meisami observed that “history went hand in hand with genealogical claims to provide legitimization for ruling houses and for aristocratic princes with aspirations to local power” and that the Sāmānid claims of descent from Bahrām Chūbīn established themselves as chronologically prior to the Buyids with “territorial implications.” According to Luke Treadwell, the Buyid claim was contested by contemporary observers, yet, that of the Sāmānids was widely accepted since “they fulfilled some of the common expectations of Iranian dynasts.”⁵⁰ Bahrām Chūbīn, construed as a usurper in Sasanian history was now portrayed as “eschatological hero, often identified with the “King from the East” whose appearance would restore justice to the earth, as well as Persian religion and Persian rule, and would herald the advent of the End of Days.”⁵¹ Daniel concurred that the “use of Persian staked out a separate and independent identity for the Sāmānids that differentiated them from the Buyids, whose high culture continued to be composed almost exclusively in Arabic, and it emphasised the new nature of the Sāmānid relationship with the caliphate.” Meisami has argued, however, that not only the Buyid claims but the Muḥtājīd (fl 933-953/321-354) ruler Abū Maṣṣūr Ṭūsī’s commission to his *wazīr* Abū Maṣṣūr Ma’marī to compile a prose *Shāhnāma* using authoritative Persian sources to “bolster his claims to rule of Tus (and perhaps of Khurasan)” may have been the impetus for Sāmānid patronage of writing in Persian.⁵² These processes were underway with the “decision in 963 by Mansur b. Nuh (reg. 961–76) to commission a translation by his minister Abu-Ali Bal’ami (sic) of the famous Arabic chronicle

⁴⁹ *Rulers and the Writing of History* pp 76-7; W Luke Treadwell, “The Political History of the Sāmānid State,” (PhD diss., Oxford University, 1991). p. 68

⁵⁰ *Sāmānid State* pp 68-9 and 75

⁵¹ Meisami, “Rulers and the Writing of History.” p. 77

⁵² *Rulers and the Writing of History* p. 75

by Abu-Ja'far (sic) Mohammad b. Jarir Ṭabarī (d. 923), the *Ta'rikh-al-rosol va'l-moluk*” into Persian,⁵³ Bal'amī also had Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr* of the Qur'an “translated” into Persian.⁵⁴ These processes had begun earlier when the Ismaili poet Rūdakī (d. after 950-1/339) was called on to render the *Kalīla wa Dimna* into Persian verse from a prose translation by Abū'l-Faḍl Muḥammad Bal'amī (d. 940).⁵⁵ Narshakhī's (d. 959/348) history of Bukhara, dedicated to Nūḥ I (r. 943-54/331-343), though written in Arabic, is also linked to the Sāmānīd legitimacy project.⁵⁶ Nūḥ II (r. 976-997/365-387) after his ascension commissioned Daqīqī to write a *Shāhnāma* (Book of Kings) in verse which was left unfinished since the poet was murdered the following year. The turn to Iranian traditions reached a great height with the completion of the *Shāhnāma* by Firdawsī (d. 1020/411) in 1010/400; however, after the demise of the Sāmānīds, the poet sought patronage from the Ghaznavids (fl. 977-1186/366-582).

3. PATRONAGE OF PERSIANATE TRADITIONS

Patronage is the third theme postulated to explain the resurgence of Iranian traditions. According to Lazard, *parsi-dari* originating in the Sasanid court culture had become the dominant dialect in Khurāsān and *Mā warā' al-nahr* (Transoxiana) after the regions were integrated by the Arab conquerors into their empire. This appears to have been a function of

⁵³ Daniel, “Rise and Development of Persian Historiography.” p. 103 although Meisami has found a prior commission, see: Meisami, “Rulers and the Writing of History.” p. 75 In 346/957 Abu Maṣṣur commissioned his vizier, Abu Maṣṣur Ma'mari, to compile a prose *Shāhnāma* in Persian from authoritative Persian sources, presumably to bolster his claims to rule of Tus (and perhaps of Khurāsān).

⁵⁴ “constituted an effort to propagate a state-sanctioned, ‘official’ ideology and dogma, presumably in defence of the Sāmānīd regime. The popularity of Bal'amī's work throughout the eastern Muslim world, and the extent to which it served for centuries as the definitive representation of early Islamic history, suggests how successfully this design was implemented.” Elton Daniel, “Manuscripts and Editions of Bal'amī's *Tarjamah-i Tārikh-i Ṭabarī*,” *JRAS* 122 (1990). p. 286 and Meisami, “Rulers and the Writing of History.” p. 8

⁵⁵ *Rulers and the Writing of History* p. 74; Encyclopædia Iranica (Online), Ehsan Yarshater, ed. London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982—. Dagmar Riedel “*Kalila wa Dimna*”

⁵⁶ Meisami, “Rulers and the Writing of History.” p. 74

the eastward migration of Persian nobility and the *dihqāns* (land owning classes) as the Arabs pushed into Iran in the 8th/1st century—a pattern observed in the other direction as the Mongols invaded the Islamicate realms five centuries later as well as the westward movements of Byzantine scholars as the Ottomans closed in on Constantinople in the 15th/9th century. Once these migrant populations stabilised and began to serve their new masters, they were able to secure patronage and themselves patronise works in their own language. Melville wrote that this society

was predominantly rural, pastoral and illiterate, with widely scattered urban centers of cultural and economic activity, dominated by princely courts and their bureaucratic personnel. Provincial and imperial courts alike were controlled by autocratic rulers and their military forces. It was on such patrons that the historians chiefly depended, and with their activities that they chiefly occupied themselves.⁵⁷

Not only were the Sāmānid amirs patrons of the literary production but so also their nobles.

Abū'l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. 'Ubaydallāh Bal'amī (d. 940/329) *wazīr* of Naṣr II b. Aḥmad (r. 301-31/913-42) and the former's son Abū 'Alī Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Bal'amī (d. between 382/992 and 387/997) *wazīr* of 'Abd al-Malik b. Nūḥ (343-50/954-61) and retained the office under his successor, Maṣṣūr b. Nūḥ (350-65/961-76)—both were important patrons of learning. Clifford Bosworth wrote that “Bal'amī [Bal'amī-yi Buzurg—the elder] was clearly, together with Jayhānī [Abū 'Alī Muḥammad who succeeded to the *wazīrate* in 938/327], the driving force during what seems to have been the reign of a weak and impressionable ruler.”⁵⁸ He is further praised, e.g., by Sam'ānī, as a *maecenas* and encourager of poets and scholars, including of the poet Rūdakī, and public buildings erected by him at Marv and Bukhara are mentioned.”⁵⁹ The younger Bal'amī is famed for his “translation” of Ṭabarī as well as for his patronage of poets and writers. This patronage of Persianate literature was, in part, intended to provide access to classics of Arabic scholarship to illiterate or semi-literate Persian speakers.

⁵⁷ Melville, p. xxxiii

⁵⁸ This is a comment on Naṣr b. Aḥmad's adoption of Ismailism—representing both Bosworth's bias and that of his sources.

⁵⁹ Elr. Clifford Bosworth: “Bal'amī, Abu'l-Faḍl Moḥammad”

4. ACCESS TO ARABIC SCHOLARSHIP FOR NON-ARABIC SPEAKERS

One of the major themes in explaining the re-emergence of Persian traditions is noted by Lazard as “a need was felt to render into Persian a part of the knowledge accumulated by Arabic-speaking authors. The translators were aware of the reasons for their work and often explained them”.⁶⁰ The Arabic *khuṭba* to Bal‘amī's *Ta'rikhnāma-yi Ṭabarī* is illustrative of this:

قد كان الله تعالى جعل الامير السيد الملك المظفر ابي صالح منصور بن نوح بن احمد بن اسماعيل بن احمد بن سامان بن ساسك بن بهرام الشوبينه الرازي الاصفهيد المرزبان رضى الله عنهم اجمعين اقام على إدمان النظر فى هذا الكتاب و ثابر على الاستعارة منه حتى اجتمعت له المناهج المجتمعة فيه و خرج امره العالى و لا زالت كذلك على لسان امينه و خاصته ابي الحسن الفائق الخاصة التى امر فى سنة اثنين و خمسين و ثلثمائة بترجمة هذا الكتاب المنسوب الى محمد بن جرير الطبرى صاحب التفسير المنعوت بكتاب التاريخ المشتمل علم الأولين [و] اخبار الماضين بالاختصار فيه على متون الاخبار دون الاسانيد و تهذيبها عما فى هذا الكتاب من الاعادات و التطويل فى سياقة قصّة كل نبى و ملك و حبر كل خبر على وجهه و رسمه و بعد ذلك فقد ترجمته بلغة الفارسيّة الدريّة ليشترك فى قراءته و معرفته علم الرعيّة و السلطان و يسهل على من ينظر فيه و قال الله عزّ و جل : وَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ،⁶¹ فجعل لكل قوم من رسولهم بلسانهم و على لغتهم⁶²

⁶⁰ Lazard, “CHIranIV.” p. 630

⁶¹ Q14:4

⁶² Abū'l-Faḍl Muḥammad Bal‘amī. *Tārīkh-nāma-i Ṭabarī*, Edited by Muḥammad Rawshan. (Tehran: Soroush, 1999). vol 1 p. 2. translated in Daniel, “Bal‘amī's *Tarjamah-i Tārīkh-i Ṭabarī*.” pp 104-5 [fn9 is in error!]:

TRANSLATION: Almighty God had caused al-Amir al-Sayyid al-Malek al-Mozaffar Aba-Sâleh Mansur b. [Nūḥ b.] Ahmad b. Esma‘il b. Sâman b. Sasek b. Bahrâm al-Shubine [sic] al-Râzi, the Esfahbad, the Marzbân (God be pleased with them all), to be one of the foremost in zealously reading this book and persistent in using it until its contents were clear to him. In the year 352 [963], he dispatched the command, via his secretary (*amin*) and major-domo (*khâss*) Abi'l-Hasan Fâ'eḳ al-Khâsse: “Translate this book ascribed to Mohammad b. Jarir al-Tabari, author of *al-Tafsir al-kabir*, entitled *Ketâb-al-ta'rikh* and containing information about the ancients and narratives about those of the past. Abridge the reports (*akhbâr*) so that they do not have the chains of authorities (*esnâds*) and rectify what is in this book in repetitiveness and spreading out the sequence of the story of every prophet and king and event of every time in the proper way and order.” After that, I translated it into Dari Persian so that the reading of it and its information could be shared by subject and ruler (*al-ra'âye va'l-soltân*) and to make it easier for whoever examined it. God, be He exalted, said, ‘We have not sent any prophet except in the language of his people,’ (Q14:4) and He established prophets for all people in their own tongue and language.

Bal'amī translated the work “into Dari Persian so that the reading of it and its information could be shared by subject and ruler (*al-ra'āye va'l-soltān*) and to make it easier for whoever examined it”. Daniel argued that “the concept of history itself as exemplified in Ṭabarī was not one shared by the Sāmānids, and they thus wanted to remould it according to their understanding of what a history should be” and further that a “‘translation,’ *tarjome*, might better be called a ‘transformation’ of the work culturally as well as linguistically—edited, abridged, expanded, annotated, or reshaped according to the interests of the translator and the expectations of his audience.”⁶³ However, Lazard read the amīr’s persistence in using the text until its contents were clear to him as “finding it difficult to read, [and thus he] took steps to have it translated into Persian.”⁶⁴ Daniel rejected this “notion that a work like Bal'amī’s history was produced to offer a simplified version of high scholarship in Arabic to the Persephone masses and semi-literate rulers is not very convincing. For one thing, the Arabic preface makes very clear that the Amir, far from being “not very familiar” with Arabic, had actually taken a diligent interest in the Arabic text.” While the amir may have been able to study the work in the original Arabic, his nobles and subjects were a different matter. Daniel instead argued that the conscious promotion of Persian by the Sāmānids provided a unifying bond for their multi-ethnic domain and that social cohesion was as significant as the political dynamics of society in the insistence on language.⁶⁵ Meisami focusing on a period two centuries later stated that many of the Saljuq rulers

were illiterate (meaning that they could not read nor write in any language), although ‘illiteracy’ does not count for much in a predominantly oral culture. Nevertheless, they were obliged to issue commands and to engage in correspondence, usually in several languages; for this, they relied on their literate, Arabic - and Persian - speaking officials. Increasingly, the actual intended audience for historical works, as well as for other compositions in both prose and poetry, was such officials.⁶⁶

⁶³ Bal'amī’s *Tarjamah-i Tārīkh-i Ṭabarī* pp 107-108

⁶⁴ Lazard, “CHIranIV.” 630

⁶⁵ Daniel, “Bal'amī’s *Tarjamah-i Tārīkh-i Ṭabarī*.” pp 108-9

⁶⁶ Meisami, “History as Literature.” p. 20

Similarly, according to Melville, the Ilkhanid era author Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī (d. 1349/749) mentioned the motivation for composing his geographic survey the *Nuzhat al-qulūb* (*The Heart's Delight*)

was that almost all previous literature about the Creation in general and Iran in particular was contained in works written in Arabic (e.g. by Abu-Zeyd Balkhi and Ebn-Khordādbēh). 'His friends' urged him to put together all the information he had acquired in Persian (*be-zabān-e fārsi*), both from reading and from the experience of his own travels (in Tabriz, Baghdad, Isfahan, Shiraz, and elsewhere), and from reliable informants, which he modestly agreed to do.⁶⁷

It is clear from the writings spanning several centuries—from the time of Sāmānids and Ghaznavids to the Saljuqs and Ilkhans—that the “translator”-authors saw themselves as conduits of learning to the non-Arabic speakers and they were able to obtain patronage to be able to pursue such efforts. Despite this impetus, the production in Persian historiography amounts to a meagre twenty or so surviving texts until the Mongol invasions.⁶⁸

5. THE ISMAILI CONNECTION

One of the more controversial explanations, especially pertinent to this research, for the rise of Persian literary traditions in the Sāmānid domains is the connection with Ismailism. Several scholars have suggested that the spread of the Ismaili *da'wa* into this region catalysed the use of Persian. Most have, within the span of a couple paragraphs, proposed the contradictory position that the Sāmānids promoted Persian in reaction to the perceived threat of the Ismailis, to shore up the so-called Sunni “orthodoxy”. A few examples will illustrate the incongruities. Meisami, explained that Naṣr II b. Aḥmad's interest

in Persian traditions was undoubtedly linked to his conversion, and that of many important members of his court, to Isma'ilism. More broadly, this interest was closely tied to the issue of legitimation of rule, a major concern of both patrons and writers of history seen in both Persian and Arabic works of the period.

⁶⁷ Charles Melville, “The Mongol and Timurid Periods, 1250-1500,” in *Persian Historiography*, ed. Charles Melville (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012). Charles Melville p. 165

⁶⁸ C. A. Storey, and Yu. È Bregel. *Persidskaia Literatura, Bio-Bibliograficheskiĭ Obzor: V 3-Kh Ch*, (Moscow: Nauka, 1972). pp 699ff; Daniel, “Rise and Development of Persian Historiography.” p. 101; Spuler, “Evolution of Persian Historiography.” 1; Melville, “Mongol and Timurid Periods.” p. 155

On the next page, writing about the “translations” of Ṭabarī’s history and Qur’an commentary

she stated that both commissions

were made on the ruler’s [Nūḥ b. Naṣr] command, and were conveyed by his Turkish chamberlain Fā’iq. Both were probably carried out simultaneously; and both were linked with the Sāmānids’ efforts to legitimate their rule in the East and with their desire to present an ideologically “correct” version of Islamic history and doctrine intended to counter the teachings of various heterodox (sic) and sectarian groups active in both Khurasan and Transoxania.⁶⁹

Luke Treadwell in the chapter entitled “The Ismaili Interlude” in his doctoral dissertation

concluded that the Sāmānids’

adoption of the Ismā’īlī heresy (sic) may have been an attempt to find a new legitimacy formula at a time when the authority of caliphal legitimation was becoming debased. The efflorescence of Persian poetry at Naṣr’s court is a sign that the court had already begun to draw on its local environment for its cultural symbols which had hitherto been drawn exclusively from a “pan-Islamic” inventory fostered by the caliph. While it would be unwise to argue from our imperfect understanding of Naṣr’s reign at present that the literary “renaissance” and the spread of Ismā’īlism were causally connected, it cannot have been a coincidence that the two developments emerged during the same reign.

Ignoring his own caution, in the concluding footnote of the chapter he projected the connection further back in time: “Given the evidence for the Ismā’īlī sympathies of Rūdakī and some of his patrons, it is possible that the literary “renaissance” was more closely connected with the emergence of Ismā’īlism in Bukhara from the start.”⁷⁰ Treadwell detailed a rivalry within the Sāmānid elite between those who championed Persian as the official language, and immigrants or other non-Persian speakers, who preferred Arabic.⁷¹ During Aḥmad b. Ismail’s reign (r. 907-914/295-301) the scholarly class prevailed upon the amīr to use Arabic in official contexts. Treadwell speculated that under Aḥmad’s successor Naṣr II b. Aḥmad II the scholarly class was compelled to “accept the use of Persian in the discipline closest to their hearts, that of religious scholarship.” In a list of a number of commissioned translations from Arabic and

⁶⁹ Meisami, “Rulers and the Writing of History.” pp 75-76

⁷⁰ “Sāmānid State.” p. 210. Muzaffar Alam. *The Languages of Political Islam: India, 1200-1800*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). pp 115ff. Discussing the rise of Persian in India, Alam wrote without further elaboration: “Towards the end of the tenth century the presence of Persian in Sind, Multan and Punjab was strengthened in the wake of growing importance of the Ismā’īlī presence there.” pp 115-116

⁷¹ Daniel, “Rise and Development of Persian Historiography.” 109 and “Sāmānid State.” pp 173-180

original works in Persian written in the 10th century, Treadwell included, without comment: “Nūḥ ibn Maṣṣūr [r. 976-997/365-387], commissioned the translation of the Ḥanafī creed, *Al-Sawād al-a‘ẓam*” (*The Great Majority*).⁷² He had previously mentioned this work as the amīr “Ismā‘īl [r. 892-907/279-295] himself commissioned the writing of the Hanafī creed *Al-sawād al-a‘ẓam* by the Samarqandī Qāḍī Abū’l-Qāsim Ishāq ibn Muḥammad for the purpose of countering heresies in Transoxania.”⁷³ Following Lazard, Said Arjomand, in his article launching the *Journal of Persianate Studies*, did not miss this connection overlooked by Treadwell, writing that the Sāmānid ruler, Nūḥ b. Maṣṣūr

set up a college of learned religious scholars who produced an interlinear translation of the Koran and the Persian rendition of the Koran commentary by Tabari. It should be noted that this was done partly to combat the Esmā‘īlī heresy (sic) among his subjects. New Persian was not confined to the court circles but was snatched by radical (sic) religious sects, most notably the Esmā‘īlis, who used it as an instrument of proselytization. The rulers of the vernacular polities were, however, quick to react. The same ruler ordered a short creed by Abū’l-Qāsem Samarqandī for the same purpose and so that the orthodox (sic) knowledge of the elite be made available to the masses. The sponsorship of Persianate Islam by the Sāmānids and other Persian dynasties thus resulted in its blending with the Iranian historical tradition and political culture.⁷⁴

Arjomand neglected to explain how the Ismailis “snatched” and used New Persian “as an instrument of proselytization”. His loaded contradistinction of “heresy” with “orthodoxy” and “Persianate Islam” is simply ironic given that in the very next paragraph he proceeded to point out the “deep-seated Orientalist prejudice” of Hamilton Gibb, Patricia Crone and others. Do the terms used by him suggest persistences of equally egregious pre-commitments?⁷⁵ On the other hand, Andrew Peacock in his study of Bal‘amī’s *Tārīkh-nāma* did not find Ismailism to be the primary catalyst for this same endeavour; he wrote:

it is difficult to use *al-Sawād al-A‘ẓam* to support the contention that Ismā‘īlism was a pressing threat to the state and the orthodox (sic); rather, it demonstrates the opposite. For sure, ‘Bāṭinīs’ do get a few mentions, but they are only one of Samarqandī’s many targets. Far more attention

⁷² *Sāmānid State* pp 180-181

⁷³ *Sāmānid State* p. 100

⁷⁴ Lazard, “CHIranIV.” p. 629; Said Amir Arjomand, “Unity of the Persianate World Under Turko-Mongolian Domination and Divergent Development of Imperial Autocracies in the Sixteenth Century,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 1 (2008). p. 9

⁷⁵ He followed Meisami in the critique of Gibb without attribution--he even copied Meisami’s construction: “pristine Islam”, Meisami. *Persian Historiography*. p. 2

is given to other groups such as the Mu'tazila, the Rāfiḍites and the Karrāmiyya. This confirms the evidence cited above that Ismā'īlism was not a major concern for the Sāmānid state in the second half of the fourth/tenth century. Rather, *al-Sawād al-A'zam* illustrates the conservative, piety-minded mentality of fourth/tenth century Transoxiana, with its emphasis on the path of Sunnī traditionalism.⁷⁶

He argued that the influence of Ismailism had declined since the *dā'ī* Nasafī (d. 943/332) who was famed both in Ismaili and non-Ismaili circles whereas little is known about his purported successor al-Sijistānī (d. after 975/365), not even his birth and death dates. This was a function of *taqiyya* (precautionary dissimulation). As the movement went underground it was constructed as a more sinister threat and to be behind every anti-establishmentarian activity.

Lutz Richter-Bernburg noted that for three centuries “Arabic had been *the* Muslim language”⁷⁷ and writing in another language warranted “express justification”; he quoted the translator of the *Al-sawād al-a'zam*⁷⁸ that it had been

translated into Persian because it had been accessible as yet only to the *khāṣṣ*: *tā čonānke khāṣṣrā būd 'āmm-rā nīz bovad va-manfā'at konad*.⁷⁹ If the knowledge of Arabic is taken as a criterion, however, a large segment of people that might otherwise be counted among the *khāṣṣ*, namely the rulers and their entourage, belonged to the *'āmm* as well.⁸⁰

Daniel agreed that “Hanafī and Shafī'ī Islam” favoured by the elite was threatened by movements such as the Ismailis. In a time when caliphal power had diminished and its vassals verged on dynastic instability, he suggested that “[a]pocalyptic speculations about the imminent end of the world were widespread at the time, and it is likely that these anxieties helped fuel interest in esoteric religious doctrines such as those being propagated by the

⁷⁶ A.C.S. Peacock, *Mediaeval Islamic Historiography and Political Legitimacy: Bal'ami's Tārīkh-nāmah*, Routledge, (2007). p. 46

⁷⁷ Emphasis in the original.

⁷⁸ Samarqandī, Ishāq b. Muḥammad. *Tarjuma-yi al-Sawād al-a'zam*, Edited by 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī Qandahārī. (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Īrān, 1969).

⁷⁹ translates to: “as it has been for the elite (*khāṣṣ*) it should also benefit the commonality (*'āmm*)”

⁸⁰ Lutz Richter-Bernburg, “Linguistic Shu'ūbiya and Early Neo-Persian Prose,” *JAOS* 94, no. 1 (1974). p. 56 emphasis in the original; This suggest that the new elite after the pogroms against the Ismailis may have consisted of the Arabicised learned classes and that others may have been wiped out or at least, significantly marginalised.

Ismailis.” He perceived that Bal‘amī’s “translation” of Ṭabarī sought to “debunk the idea that anyone, even a Prophet or Imam, had any genuine knowledge about these matters” and that Bal‘amī’s correctives in the “translations” particularly sought to suppress any eschatological expectations found in Ṭabarī’s work to promulgate a “uniform, official version of history” to unite the populace behind a Sunni vision of the world.⁸¹

B. Explanations of the Resurgence

This small set of remarks from some leading scholars in the field illustrates that there is little cogent consistency in the analyses of the resurgence of Persianate literary traditions and specifically historiography. No single reason is adequately explanatory; however, the themes detailed above and similar postulates have been supported by a range of, sometimes self-contradictory, explanations. Assertions are made without support and often contradicted by the same author a few paragraphs later. Julie Meisami, for example, has written prolifically and in-depth on Persian historiography and as the above survey makes it apparent, she has articulated different positions on each of the themes of explanation even in the same article or chapter. The first issue with this is that phenomena resulting from a multitude of factors, extending over several tumultuous reigns and decades of time are usually encapsulated in a few sentences and these are then extracted shorn from the wider context of the author’s examination as in analyses such as this one. The second issue is a much more complex one in which examinations of use and promotion of language are equated with ethno-national⁸² identities and religious ideologies. The conflation of the modes of communication with identities—which in themselves are “complex, variable, elastic and subject to

⁸¹ Daniel, “Rise and Development of Persian Historiography.” pp 108-110

⁸² Whatever that meant in pre-modern times

manipulation”⁸³—to place the proponents and their societies into matrices of creedal standpoints has been inconclusive in understanding the nature of language, socio-linguistic identities and religious affiliations. The third and paramount issue is that modern scholarship has focused on the role of the ruling elites in their attempts to socially engineer their societies through patronage of certain scholars and specific types of scholarship. While the ruling elite and scholars actively exercised their agency in the production of knowledge, the greater agency and influence for transformations ultimately rested with the consumers of this knowledge. Given the establishment of Arabic—even in the *mashriq* (eastern reaches of the ‘Abbāsīd realm) and especially among the bureaucratic classes, those within reach of the written text would have fared equally well whether the texts were written in Arabic or Persian. Among the wider masses and the ruling classes, however, where the reception would most likely have been through audition,⁸⁴ it was the *lingua franca* of Persian that would have been the most efficient means of communication. The resurgence of Persian, far from being a revolution, needs to be reassessed in terms of demographics and re-stabilisation of the *a’yān-amīr* system⁸⁵ after the Arab invasions and not just within the patterns of military and bureaucratic patronage.⁸⁶

Hodgson observed that the “advent of Islam broke the agrarian power from Nile to Oxus; that is, broke the hold of the agrarian gentry as it was expressed primarily through the Sasanian

⁸³ Yasir. Suleiman. *The Arabic Language and National Identity: A Study in Ideology*, (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003). p. 4

⁸⁴ Melville, s. pp 19ff literary works are written products in a largely illiterate milieu; Hirschler, “Arabic and Persian Traditions.” p. 280 “these works had been transmitted by way of reading sessions in which a given book was read aloud by the author or a scholar who had acquired the authorization to teach this book. All those present acquired after the completion of the session the authorization to transmit the book themselves.”

⁸⁵ Hodgson. *Venture II*. pp 64ff and 91ff - esp 91-93; Woods. *Aqquyunlu*. p. 19

⁸⁶ Roy P. Mottahedeh. *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985). pp 21-22.

monarchy (to the extent that they still represented agrarian interests more than any other interests). For a time, Arab interests of an originally mercantile cast were as dominant in the new caliphal state as any; but soon a monarchy was reconstituted in which agrarian interests had the greatest role.”⁸⁷ From the battle of Qādisiyya (636/15) followed by a hundred years of encroachment eastward to the edges of *Īrān zamīn* reached during the battle of Ṭalās (751/134), the Arabs “broke” the structure of Sasanian society. By the 10th century the *a’yān* were reconstituted within the Islamicate framework and patronising works in Persian. Roy Mottahedeh wrote that privileged Iranians among the landlords and clerks “shared a pride in their Iranian past and resented the derogation of this past. They did so partly because such derogation also called into question their claim to be men who ranked in the upper levels of this hierarchy.” He further noted that the ruling classes with Arabic origins reconciled with those of Iranian origins and that this assimilation came about eventually as “both classes accepted a mixed territorial and genealogical self-definition” and as the centralising thrust of the caliphate fizzled out “the Arab and non-Arab ruling classes in Iran became one” as they were “united by a community of language (and its shared literature) which was distinct from the community of Arabs.”⁸⁸ Persian cultural traditions and historical writing (re)-emerged in the amalgam of these conditions. The phenomena should not be attributed only to the production of such materials—their reception in the wider Persianate societies was pivotal. The next section examines layers of such audiences within the *a’yān-amīr* system schematised by Hodgson.

⁸⁷ Hodgson. *Venture II*. p. 65

⁸⁸ Roy P. Mottahedeh, “The Shu’ubiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7 (1976). p. 181-2

III. *A'yān-Amīr* System and Historiography

Marshall Hodgson's analysis of the social authority in Islamicate societies, especially as developed by John Woods, divides communities into a hierarchy of two classes: the rulers and the ruled which are sub-divided further into several distinct groups.⁸⁹ The rulers consisted of the military elite and the *a'yān*. The military elite was made up of the ruler at the apex, his family, the *amirs* allied under him, the chief administrative bureaucrats and the religious-judicial officials. From the time of the Umayyad invasions through the first century and a half of 'Abbāsīd rule, the eastern provinces were controlled by Arab governors appointed from Damascus and then Baghdad.⁹⁰ The ruling elites also were from the west and attuned to Arabic cultural and linguistic norms. This changed with the establishment of the Sāmānids who claimed Persianate descent and then drastically with the Ghazanavids and the Saljuqs. Both of these dynasties were of Turkic origin and like their Sāmānid predecessors, favoured Persian as their administrative language and promoted its cultural efflorescence. Similar shifts in the cultural origins and orientations of the *a'yān* must also be considered over time.

The *a'yān* were made up of the heads of the patrician families; the bureaucrats; the Sunni '*ulamā*' (scholars sing.: *ālim*); the inter-regional traders and the patricians of the non-Muslims. The individuals among the *a'yān* were inter-related and in some cases the groups intersected. Stability in the community was achieved through balance in this class. The *a'yān*, predominantly with local origins, collectively served as intermediaries between the ruling elites—whether they were Arabs or Turks—and the lower classes. While the ruling elites exercised control through threat and violence; the *a'yān* extended their reach through

⁸⁹ John Woods, *Islamic History and Society* – 2, 1000-1700 Winter Quarter 2015 Lecture: "Society in the Middle Period Powerpoint Slide 46". This entire section owes much to the thinking of both these scholars.

⁹⁰ Hodgson. *Venture II*. pp 64ff and 91ff; 108-112;

influence and exploitation of every advantage. Tended toward conservatism, they attempted to tamp down recalcitrant factionalism of the populace and or pressured the military class to act against any threats to the interests of their coalitions. To this effect Hodgson wrote that “the *a’yān-amīr* system functioned by way of such things as: the *Shari‘ah* law; at the base of power, a free peasantry under military *iqṭā’s* [tax farms]; the patronage of the *a’yān* (notables) of the towns; succession by appointment or by contest; the slave household; and, at the centre of power, the *amīrs*’ garrison courts; and all these pre-supposed and supported each other.”⁹¹

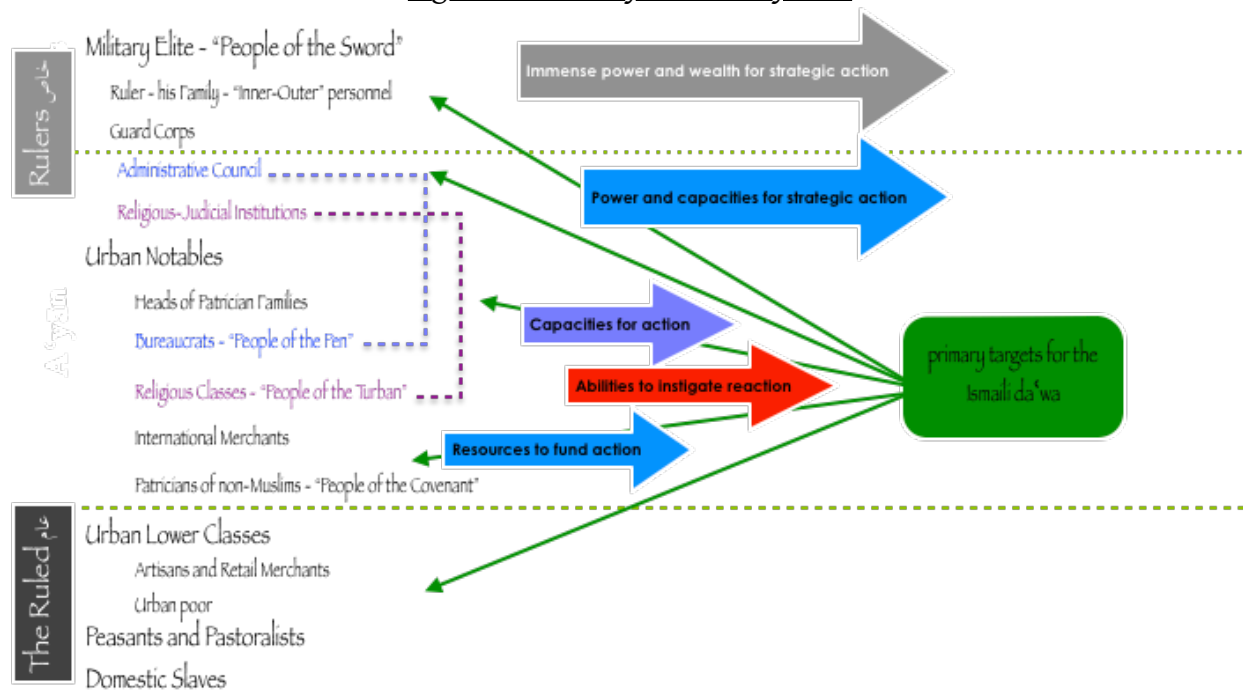
At the bottom of the scale were the urban and rural lower classes. In the towns and cities the artisans; local merchants; urban poor; marginalised communities of non-Muslims (especially after Muslims became a majority through conversion); and the domestic slaves—all survived through their trades and services to the upper classes. Outside of their occupations, if any, they were loosely organised by quarter, trade or *madhhab* (creed) and came to be noted in the chronicles only when involved in civil strife⁹² or subject to rapacious treatment by the military. The chart below shows a hierarchical schematisation of the different classes of people in a given city or community and their inter-relationships. Their modes of action and response to situation and events is indicated by coloured arrows.⁹³

⁹¹ *Venture II* pp 64-65

⁹² In these contexts often mentioned as militias, mobs, scum riffraff and hooligans.

⁹³ This schematisation developed by John Woods has been modified here.

Figure 1a: The A'yān-Amīr System



Original schematic developed by John Woods elaborating Marshall Hodgson's concept of A'yān-Amīr System

The largest segments of pre-modern society consisting of the rural poor, peasants and pastoralists—subsisting at the margins both of their societies and life itself—rarely registered mention in historiography unless they coalesced around revolts against the established order.⁹⁴ Women were very rarely mentioned. The disparities between the rulers and the ruled were enormous.

The rulers had absolute and arbitrary capacities to act whether with lethal brutality or most generous endowments and were ultimately challenged only by the most powerful internal

⁹⁴ Hirschler, "Arabic and Persian Traditions." pp 279-280 "Popular protest and discontent had now their place in the narratives, popular culture became worthy of commentary, and 'minor' politics below the level of the highest military and political elites made its appearance. To some extent, this popularization of history was linked to the above-described rise of local historical writing that allowed more scope for information of this kind, and that was produced by authors who were more inclined to report events from their hometown's everyday life." and p 280 "This popularization of history was a two-way development where popular epics became more historical (and recorded in written form) while chronicles became more interested in the popular sections of the urban centres and adopted some of the language of popular epics."

opposition or external threats. Next to them, their *amirs* were able to extract and amass large amounts of resources and power and were capable of deploying these to advance their positions and standing. Equally powerful were the top bureaucrats; the *wazīrs* in many major Islamicate dynasties are known for their lavish patronage of learning, art and architecture. Like the *amirs*, the *wazīrs* served at the pleasure of the ruler—court intrigue and the ruler’s displeasure often put a swift end to a career and, many times, a life. Despite having limitless resources, the ruling elites came and went with the transience of power. It is the *a’yān* in any given city or region that maintained stability in their societies over longer periods of time.

Individual nobles, from time to time, were able to muster resources to patronise great works. However, for the most part, the religious classes—“people of the turban”—possessed the ability to instigate action; the wealthy inter-regional traders possessed the resources to bank-roll such action; and the more talented among the bureaucrats—“people of the pen”—had the capacities to produce works of learning and securing patronage to put their quills to paper. This schematisation of the sources of patronage and production of works of learning is complemented by that of the same groups responding to perceived threats.

The ruler and the military elite, susceptible to political and especially military threat were almost impervious to challenges, especially doctrinal ones, until a critical mass of their opponents galvanised around such movements. More immediate reactions to purveyors of alternate doctrines and religious interpretations were instigated by the religious classes among the nobles and gaining support from the *wazīr* and *qāḍī*, the *‘ulamā’* and the bureaucrats would engage in providing the ideological responses to such perceived threats.⁹⁵ The wealthy traders, notables and the ruling elite patronised ideological efforts while lobbying the military

⁹⁵ See Chapter 6 case study 2: Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ at Mayyafariqin.

classes to take action. Conversely the proselytisers directed their call to the masses and also to the traders and bureaucrats and ultimately, the ruling elites and winning over the ruler was a major coup. The ‘*ulamā*’ were side-stepped for their ideological opposition. It is important to note that the adage that the populace followed the faith of the prince hardly ever applied in Islamicate contexts and especially in *Īrān zamīn*, the reverse was often the case.

Historical writing generally was intended to educate and entertain; the contents of the writings indicate that they were often targeted to exhort the ruling classes to be just.⁹⁶ However, the bureaucrats and court officials writing these chronicles, in practice, “were writing principally for each other, in what could perhaps be mutual support and solidarity.”⁹⁷

IV. Language and Religious Identity

What were Ismaili connections in the orientation towards Iranian traditions and in the use of Persian as the language of culture and learning? The 9-10th/3rd-4th century *dā’īs* in Khurāsān and *Mā warā’ al-nahr* (Transoxiana) may well have espoused Iranian notions of society, rulership and eschatology in the messages of their *da’wa* and might even have used Persian as a language of communication.⁹⁸ During the time of Naṣr II b. Aḥmad II they achieved great successes in “converting” the elite in Bukhara and elsewhere.⁹⁹ After the amīr’s abdication and putsch

⁹⁶ Melville, “Mongol and Timurid Periods.” 202

⁹⁷ *Mongol and Timurid Periods* 207 Meisami, “Rulers and the Writing of History.” pp 91-92

⁹⁸ Ḥakīm Abū Mu’īn Nāṣir-i Khusraw, “Between Reason and Revelation: Twin Wisdoms Reconciled: An Annotated English translation of Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s Kitāb-i Jāmi’ al-ḥikmatayn,” (2012). pp 35-40 The Qaṣīda of Aḥmad b. Ḥasan al-Jurjānī is the earliest known Persian text of Ismaili origins. Lazard, “CHIranIV.” p. 631 “This effort [of using Persianate technical terms rather than simply adopting Arabic ones] is particularly apparent in Ismā’īlī literature, firstly in the anonymous commentary on the *qaṣīda* of Abu’l-Haitham and later in the works of Nāṣir-i Khusrau; it can be observed also in the *Dānīsh-nāma* of Avicenna”

⁹⁹ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 112-113; Niẓām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*. pp 212-218

against his designated heir Ismāʿīl, the latter's brother Nūḥ wrested power¹⁰⁰ and along with his coalition of instigators patronised writing in Persian to counteract vestiges of Ismaili influences persisting after the executions, massacres and pogroms during the troubled succession. Marilyn Waldman observed that the "Sāmānids and Ghaznavids actively sought to attract the lights of Muslim intellectual life to their courts, to encourage the development of Persian, especially Persian poetry, and thus to add to the revitalization of Sunni intellectual life at a time when Shi'ism was spreading."¹⁰¹ However, it is critical to note that the Ismaili *dāʿī* Aḥmad al-Nasafī executed in 943/332 during the purges against the Ismailis under Nūḥ b. Naṣr and the former's successor, and the *dāʿī* Abū Yaʿqūb Sijistānī also executed after 975/365 and others like them wrote in Arabic.¹⁰² In fact their predecessor, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 934/322) complained about the inadequacy and imprecision of Persian terminology as compared to Arabic.¹⁰³ Al-Rāzī, "himself an Iranian by birth and of Persian tongue"¹⁰⁴ according to Jamal Ali was an opponent of the *Shuʿūbiyya* and had argued the superiority of Arabic over Persian.¹⁰⁵

Meisami found that issues of language were also at play in the successor state to the Sāmānids; the Ghaznawid "court historians" and panegyrists constructed Maḥmūd (r 998-1030/388-421)

¹⁰⁰ "Sāmānid State." pp 198-99

¹⁰¹ Waldman. *Theory of Historical Narrative*. p. 35 "Sāmānid State." pp 191-192 "philo-Alidism of the Sāmānids"

¹⁰² Paul E Walker. *Early Philosophical Shiism: The Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). pp 3-66

¹⁰³ Lazard, "CHIranIV." p. 597 Birūnī had the same opinion

¹⁰⁴ Richter-Bernburg, "Linguistic Shuʿūbiya." p. 62; Lazard is incorrect in calling him an "Arab author"

¹⁰⁵ Jamal Ali. *Language and Heresy in Ismaili Thought: the Kitāb al-zīna of Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī*, (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2008). pp 34ff; the *Shuʿūbiyya*, literary and socio-political movements beginning in the 9-10th centuries which claimed equality or even superiority of their own group with the Arabs. Mottahedeh notes that in the Iranian context both the *Shuʿūbis* and their opponents were themselves, for the most part Iranian. Mottahedeh, "The Shuʿūbiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran."

as the “*sulṭān-i ghāzī*,¹⁰⁶ dedicated to extirpating heresy (sic) and unbelief, and as supreme and unequalled ruler of the East”; however the shifting cultural and linguistic policies of this ruler of Turkic origins show oscillations between Persian and Arabic. In 1013-14/404 Maḥmūd replaced his *wazīr*—upon assuming power the new *wazīr* “restored Arabic as the language of the chancery; the change of viziers also coincided with attempts towards closer relations with the [‘Abbāsīd] caliphate.”¹⁰⁷ Later in the century, the Saljuq *wazīr* Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 1092/485) in his *Siyāsatnāma*, also known as *Siyar al-mulūk* (*Book of Government*) held Maḥmūd up as an exemplary ruler for his policies and military actions and advised his patron Malikshāh to employ Khurāsānīs rather than Iraqis or Daylamīs¹⁰⁸ associating geography and language with creedal identity. Commenting on the Ilkhanid era history of Nāṣir al-Dīn Bayḍawī¹⁰⁹ written at the end of the thirteenth century, Melville remarked that Bayḍawī emphasised his native Fārs as the centre of the Persian Empire and the notion of *Īrānzamīn* as extending from the “Arab lands to the borders of Khojand (Tajikistan)”; and that the author “drew attention to the choice of Persian rather than Arabic for his work, thus implicitly linking language to identity.”¹¹⁰ These trends indicate consciousness and constructions of language, geography and even adherence to Sunnism as inter-related strands of identity. Mottahedeh in his study of the

Shu‘ūbī controversy surmised that whether the Iranians

in the early Islamic period—that is, the period from the seventh to the twelfth century—were in Burke's sense a “people” is a question that the cautious scholar would be eager to disregard and loath to handle. After all, those specialists on early Islamic Iran who have, directly or indirectly, expressed opinions on this subject have all too often projected events from the life of their own nation and times back to these earlier centuries.

¹⁰⁶ Translates to: “Holy Warrior Sultan”

¹⁰⁷ Meisami, “Rulers and the Writing of History.” pp 78-9

¹⁰⁸ Niẓām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*. pp 159ff

¹⁰⁹ Elr. Etan Kohlberg: “Bayḍawī, Nāṣer-al-Dīn” Vol. IV, Fasc. 1, pp. 15-17; he died sometime between 1286-1316 - consensus is around the later date

¹¹⁰ Melville, “Mongol and Timurid Periods.” p. 163

Perhaps Lazard's observation is most apt—he wrote that “linguistic nationalism is a modern invention and did not exist in those days, as is best proved by the fact that the arguments of the Shu‘ubites were all conducted in Arabic.”¹¹¹

Language of revolt and ethno-national conflict has featured in several analyses of the relations between the Ismailis and the Saljuqs;¹¹² and particularly with regard to the linguistic turn to Persian among the Nizaris in Iran. The first is based on a couple of phrases attributed to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ.¹¹³ (Cf. Part One:6-I and V). The second reason is seen in the use of Persian for religious expression and possibly even prayers by the Nizaris in Iran. The third is evidenced by the literature of the Nizaris of Iran and Central Asia which, with few exceptions,¹¹⁴ was written in Persian. There is little evidence, as Daftary states, that any texts produced in Iran were translated into Arabic for the Syrian Nizaris even though some of the leading *dā'īs* were sent there from Iran and there is no evidence of translations of Arabic writings in Syria into Persian.¹¹⁵ The *dā'īs* or *pīrs* sent to India preached Nizari Ismailism by means of an admixtures

¹¹¹ Lazard, “CHIranIV.” p. 603

¹¹² JT. *dībācha* p. 11; Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Faṣlī az Jāmi' al-tawārīkh: Sarguzasht-i Ḥasan Ṣabbāḥ wa jānishīnān-i ū yā Tārīkh-i firqa-yi Rafīqān wa Ismā'īliyān-i Alamūt. pīshguftār* p. 3; Peter Willey. *The Castles of the Assassins*, (London: G. G. Harrap, 1963). p. 208; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 316; David Durand-Guédy. *Iranian Elites and Turkish Rulers A History of Isfahan in the Saljuq Period*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2010). p. 163; also see chapter 6 below.

¹¹³ JT. p. 112 “Oh alas! if I had two men of the same mind and purpose with me I would give an answer to that Turk and this peasant.”

¹¹⁴ *Dastūr al-munajjimīn*. Bernard Lewis, “Ismā'īlī Notes,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 12, no. 3 (1948).; F. W. Zimmermann, “Dastūr al-munajjimīn of MS. Paris, BN Ar. no. 5968,” *First International Symposium for the History of Arabic Science - University of Aleppo* (1976).; Muḥammad Karīmī Zanjānī Aṣl. *Tārīkh-i wa ta'wīl bi riwāyati Dastūr al-munajjimīn (Die Geschichte und ihre Interpretation zufolge dem Dastūr al-munajjimīn)*, (Bonn: Goethe & Hafis Buchhandlung und Verlag, 2013).

¹¹⁵ Farhad Daftary. *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliography of Sources and Studies*, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004). pp 46-59 especially p. 50

of Indic vernacular languages with infusions of Perso-Arabic, manifest in the corpus of *ginanic* literature.¹¹⁶

When the Sāmānid Maṣṣūr b. Nūḥ (r. 997-999/387-389) ordered Ṭabarī's commentary on the Qur'ān to be translated into Persian, because he was unable to read it in Arabic, a *fatwā* (legal opinion) on the permissibility of the undertaking was sought from the 'ulamā'; Richter-Bernburg wrote

it was obviously considered daring to render Qur'ānic exegesis into another language. But not only did the jurisconsults come out in favor of it, they did not even imply a theoretical preference for Arabic in the study of the Koran and its exegesis. Very shrewdly, one is tempted to say, they based their opinion on the verse of the Qur'ān: *mā arsalnā min rasūlin illā bi-lisāni qaumihi*, and made their reasoning very clear by translating ... *magar be-zabān-e qowm-e ū va-ān zabān ke īshān dānestand*. If Muḥammad was thus to be prophet not only to the Arabs, but to all mankind, it was not just permissible, but necessary, to translate his message into different tongues.¹¹⁷

These uses of language were functions of local reception and not governed solely or even primarily by the designs of production.¹¹⁸ The use of Persian as a language of culture and learning not only by the Ismailis in Iran but the entire Persianate domains is reflected in Maysari's statement: "Here, in this region, the language is Persian, and the kings of this realm

¹¹⁶ Azim. Nanji. *The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent*, (Delmar, N.Y.: Caravan Books, 1978).; Ali S. Asani. *Ecstasy and Enlightenment: The Ismaili Devotional Literature of South Asia*, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002).; Zawahir Moir, Tazim R Kassam, and Françoise Mallison. *Gināns: Texts and Contexts: Essays on Ismaili Hymns From South Asia in Honour of Zawahir Moir*, (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010).; Christopher Shackle, and Zawahir Moir. *Ismaili Hymns From South Asia: An Introduction to the Ginans*, (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1992).

¹¹⁷ Richter-Bernburg, "Linguistic Shu'ūbiya." p. 62. Reference to Q14:4

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ فَيُضِلَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِيَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

And We have sent no Messenger save with the tongue of his people, that he might make all clear to them; then God leads astray whomsoever He will, and He guides whomsoever He will; and He is the All-mighty, the All-wise.

¹¹⁸ Consequently the understanding of community did not revolve around adoption of "Arab" and "Arabic" norms and values.

are Persian kings.”¹¹⁹ Modern scholarship looks mostly to the second element of the quote—these back projections imply social engineering efforts by the rulers and others and often belie notions of language as a marker of “Islamic” versus “heretical”. However, it is the first element—the Persian speaking populace—that should be looked to for the reason of the resurgence of the language and Persianate intellectual and cultural traditions.

V. Forms and Functions of Persian Historiography

After the 10th/4th century resurgence of historiography in Persian spread from the east to all parts of Iran, principally through the patronage by the Ghaznavids and the Saljuqs (fl 1040-1194/431-590). Two distinct narrative structures resulted in Islamicate historiography based on the language of writing. *Ta’rikh* in Arabic continued to be organised on annalistic periodisation with a concern to place events precisely within the year and even month and date.¹²⁰ Histories in Persian were divided by dynasty and individual rulers. They tended towards lengthy and more unified thematic narratives with less attention to chronological order of discrete events. Over the next two centuries, a second major difference in this bifurcation developed—the Persian texts “came to display more ambitious literary qualities” while “most learned authors of Arabic historical works, such as Ibn al-Athir, al-Maqrizi, and Ibn Taghribirdi, tended to use a plain and easily accessible language.” The third distinction was that while both sets of writers endeavoured to frame their histories in alignment with their interpretations of the Qur’ānic revelation, *ta’rikh* in Persian also drew heavily on Sasanian paradigms and narrative patterns.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Meisami, “History as Literature.” p. 8 fn26; Quoted in Richter-Bernburg, “Linguistic Shu’ūbiya.” p. 57.

¹²⁰ Cahen, “History and Historians.” pp 196-7

¹²¹ Hirschler, “Arabic and Persian Traditions.” pp 268-269; EI2. Humphries: “*Ta’rikh*”

The division of the dynastic chronicles by the reigns of individual rulers, readily led into the mode of “great man history”. Such regnal accounts would include portraits of the ruler, key officers and opponents and selections of exploits, battles and events in the ruler’s lifetime. The account would conclude with death of the ruler, brief eulogic paragraphs and some would include a listing of officials and the deaths of notables in the reign.¹²² Stylistically, the authors sought to lionise the ruler (or another such patron) and often set-up heroic figures in the past whose qualities ought to be emulated. This type of hortatory historical writing came to define the genre of “mirrors for princes”, particularly, during the reign of the Saljuqs.¹²³ The powerful were called to act as benevolent and just rulers by drawing on a synthesis of Qur’ānic notions, heroic exemplars and the pre-Islamic Iranian concepts such as the “circle of justice” (*dāi’rah-i ‘adālat*) often attributed to Ardashīr (r. 224-242 CE), the founder of the Sasanian Empire.¹²⁴ Imputing notions of sacral kingship,¹²⁵ the individual ruler was cautioned of loss of divine favour¹²⁶ for the entire dynasty should he fail to act in a righteous manner in “commanding the

¹²² Nīshāpūrī. *Seljuq Turks*. for example.

¹²³ Abdel Hakim Dawood, “A Comparative Study of Arabic and Persian Mirrors for Princes From the Second to the Sixth Century A.h.,” (1965).; Neguin Yavari, “Mirrors for Princes or a Hall of Mirrors? Nizām al-Mulk’s *Siyar al-mulūk* Reconsidered,” *al-Masaq*, 20 (2008).; Meisami, “Rulers and the Writing of History.”¹⁸ “Most of the sultans were illiterate; even Sanjar, whose court attracted poets and men of letters, and who showed an interest in other arts and in building, could neither read nor write. While Buyid and Ghaznavid historians charted the upward rise and the achievements of the dawlat they served, Saljūq historians tended to focus on themes opposed to dawlat, in its sense of stable and prosperous rule: the ever-present *fitna*, “civil strife,” and *fatra/futūr*, “slackening,” the weakening of authority which leads to discord, violence, and injustice.”

¹²⁴ The concept is found in Abū’l-Qāsim Firdawsī. *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings*, Translated by Dick Davis. (New York: Viking, 2006). pp 564-569; see also Aziz Al-Azmeh. *Muslim Kingship: Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian and Pagan Politics*, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001). p. 78 “the ruler’s power can only be sustained by his people, the people wealth, wealth by prosperity and prosperity by justice.” Linda Darling suggests that the concept of the Circle of Justice originates in Mesopotamia. Linda T. Darling. *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East: The Circle of Justice From Mesopotamia to Globalization*, (New York: Routledge, 2013). pp 33ff

¹²⁵ Woods. *Aqquyunlu*. pp 4ff

¹²⁶ Yarshater, s. p. 345

good and forbidding evil”.¹²⁷ Society was to be led by the ruler legitimised by divine grace symbolised by kingly fortune (*farr*)¹²⁸ which assured his success, encapsulated in the Qur’ānic verse:

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكَ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ
إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ¹²⁹

In the Middle Periods, as local dynasties arose independent of the weakening ‘Abbāsid caliphate, the notion of *dawla*—originally meaning the rotation of the stars or turn of good fortune—became politically important and acquired connotations of regnal dynasties.¹³⁰

Ta’rikh construed not only as a record of the past but as didactic content to guide the actions of the ruler of their local dynasty. Set-pieces of Islamic history such as the destruction of the family of Barmakid *wazīrs* at the hands of the ‘Abbāsid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786-809/170-193) and the killing of the Ghaznawid *wazīr* Abū ‘Alī Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abbās better known as Ḥasanak by Mas‘ūd b. Maḥmūd of Ghazna became the tools for such lessons. As a key element of maintaining a stable society the rulers were called to counter and stamp out dissenters and heretics.¹³¹ Tropes derived from Firdawsī’s account of Mazdak (d. c. 528) in his versified epic history, the *Shāhnamā*, served these purposes.¹³² The heresiarch Mazdak was able to beguile the ruler Qubād I (r. 488-531) and gained power to corrupt society. As a result, all the norms and pillars of civilisation were reduced to debauchery of communism of property

¹²⁷ Q3:110

¹²⁸ *CHIranIII*; Abū’l-Qāsim Firdawsī. *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings*. “The Story of Īraj” pp 36ff; Woods. *Aqquyunlu*. pp 5-6, 20 and 140

¹²⁹ Q3:26 “Say: ‘O God, Master of the Kingdom, You bestow kingdom to whom you will, and seize kingdom from whom you will, You exalt whom you will, and you abase whom you will; in your hand is the good; you are powerful over everything.’”

¹³⁰ Meisami, “Rulers and the Writing of History.” p. 74 fn3

¹³¹ Barmakids were accused of ‘Alid connections and Ḥasanak of being a Qarmaṭī

¹³² Abū’l-Qāsim Firdawsī. *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings*. pp 679-685

and men sleeping with their mothers and daughters. It is only through the vigilance and doctrinal steadfastness of the prince and later king Khūsraw I Anushirwān the Just (r. 531-579) and his reliance on trusted religious scholars that Mazdak's true aims to destroy society were unmasked and the heresy defeated. In the end Mazdak's followers were planted in the ground head-first and he was strung up with his feet in the air and shot full of arrows. The ruler and ruling classes were called upon to be vigilant against the threats of "heresy" and to rely on trusted "orthodox" religious scholars for the prosperity of society and their rule.¹³³

Many authors of *ta'rikh* characterised various Ismaili movements as such threats, grouping them under various names, especially *bāṭiniyya* (esoterists); *malāhida* (heretics) and *Qarāmiṭa* (Qarmatīs). The Saljuq *wazīr*, Nizām al-Mulk's (d. 1092/485) *Siyāsatnāma* (Book of Government) completed in 1091/484—revered both as a manual of governance and a famed "mirror for princes"—is a principal example of this type of construction of the "other".¹³⁴ Though not a *ta'rikh* text, *per se*, the *Siyāsatnāma* is a unique source of early Ismaili history in Central Asia.¹³⁵ While the information, not found elsewhere, has been "mined" by scholars, the consequences and dross of the Nizām's fabrications interwoven around the historically viable and useful nuggets have rarely been analysed. In addition to these constructions of Ismailis as antinomian religious deviants, the histories framed them in the contexts of several Qarmatī uprisings, their attack on the Ka'ba, the removal and desecration of the black stone (*al-ḥajar al-aswad*) and their polity in Bahrain. Heresiographies detailed the origins, motivations and beliefs of the Ismaili movement—mostly for the purposes of refuting them. Scholarly works endeavoured to engage with the ideas of various Ismaili thinkers—again predominantly for the purposes of

¹³³ Nizām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*. pp 190-206

¹³⁴ *Book of Government*; I have argued elsewhere that this screed against the Shi'a and particularly the Ismailis should be considered in the category of *radd* literature. Shiraz Hajiani, "Enemies of the State: Constructions of the Ismā'īlīs in the *Siyāsat-Nāma* of Nizām al-Mulk," (M.A. diss., The University of Chicago, 2008).

¹³⁵ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 209; "Sāmānid State."; "Enemies of the State."

refutation. The origins and history of the Fatimids and their religious, socio-political and military challenge were the cause of significant alarm. Histories of the Saljuq, Ayyūbid and Mamlūk realms included mention of confrontations with the Ismailis and the accounts of the Mongols discussed the fall of the Nizari Ismaili polity. The lives of several Ismaili rulers and scholars were included in biographical dictionaries and geographic surveys documented areas controlled or populated by Ismailis.

In this chapter I have examined the evolution of Islamicate historiography and highlighted the shortcomings in the scholarly explanations of the resurgence of Persianate literary and historiographic traditions particularly with regard to Ismailism. I have proposed that rather than focussing on the production of this literature as a result of patronage and for legitimations, especially of Sunni authority structures, more useful and productive avenues of inquiry into this phenomenon may lie in its reception by the readerly classes and the wider society among whom this intellectual production was promulgated. Islamicate historical writing begun after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad developed distinct patterns and norms. In the next chapter I demonstrate that an inordinate amount of this writing about the Ismailis was misinformed, misinforming and lacked any direct knowledge of their history and doctrines. For this research it is essential to identify the persistence and evolution of these patterns and norms into the thirteenth-fourteenth/seventh-eighth centuries to allow the retrieval of Nizari *da'wa* literature that survives embedded in the writings of Ilkhanid era chronicles.

2. Epistemologies: Ismailis in *firaq* and *radd* texts

ISMAILIS BEGAN TO BE WRITTEN ABOUT IN THE 10th/3-4th CENTURY as several Ismailitic movements endeavoured to establish themselves in different regions of the Islamicate domains. Their successes in founding polities at the margins of the ‘Abbāsid realm, in Yemen, India and North Africa along with the vigour of the intellectual output of individuals associated with their *da‘was* crystallised notions of challenges to the weakening centralised hold of the empire. The devastations and ferocity of the various Qarmaṭī incursions were recorded in reverberations of alarm and repudiation. Often treating all the different Ismailitic groups as a single stereotyped monolith, the authors attacked the legitimacy and genealogy of the Ismaili imams, adduced the foundations of Ismailism as disguised heathen attacks on Islam, and accused the Ismailis of heresy and engaging in antinomian socio-political disruption. In the eleventh century as the Fatimid caliphate was firmly established, the tenor of writing intensified. This brief survey demonstrates the perspectives adopted by the authors in their doxographies or heresiographies and refutations of the Ismailis.¹

In this chapter I analyse a selection of texts placed in sometimes overlapping categories of doxographies/heresiographies (*firaq*) and refutations (*radd*) in their writings about the Ismailis dating back to the tenth/fourth century. What constructions of the Ismailis were deployed by these Islamicate historian-authors? What patterns and similarities of approaches can be identified in the contents and structures of the texts written over several centuries? Do

¹ Such surveys have been undertaken by several scholars; however, I have made an effort to demonstrate the nature of writing through textual analysis and stemmatic relationships rather than presenting only the findings of such analyses. Examples of studies which incorporated surveys of writing about the Ismailis include: Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā‘īlism*. pp 47ff; Bernard Lewis. *The Origins of Ismā‘īlism: A Study of the Historical Background of the Fāṭimid Caliphate*, (Cambridge, [Eng.]: W. Heffer, 1940). pp 2-15; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 4-10; Alnoor Jehangir Merchant, “Types and Uses of Argument in Anti-Isma‘īli Polemics,” diss., McGill University, 1991).

typologies of narrative tropes and repetition of motifs illustrate deeper epistemological commitments beyond modes of transmission of earlier texts by later authors? Second, in a brief synthesis of concepts from theories of literary analysis, narratology, hermeneutics and the study of prejudice, I develop a set of frameworks for the understanding of the nature of constructions of the Ismailis, in particular, and also the wider constructions of the threatening “other” in literature.

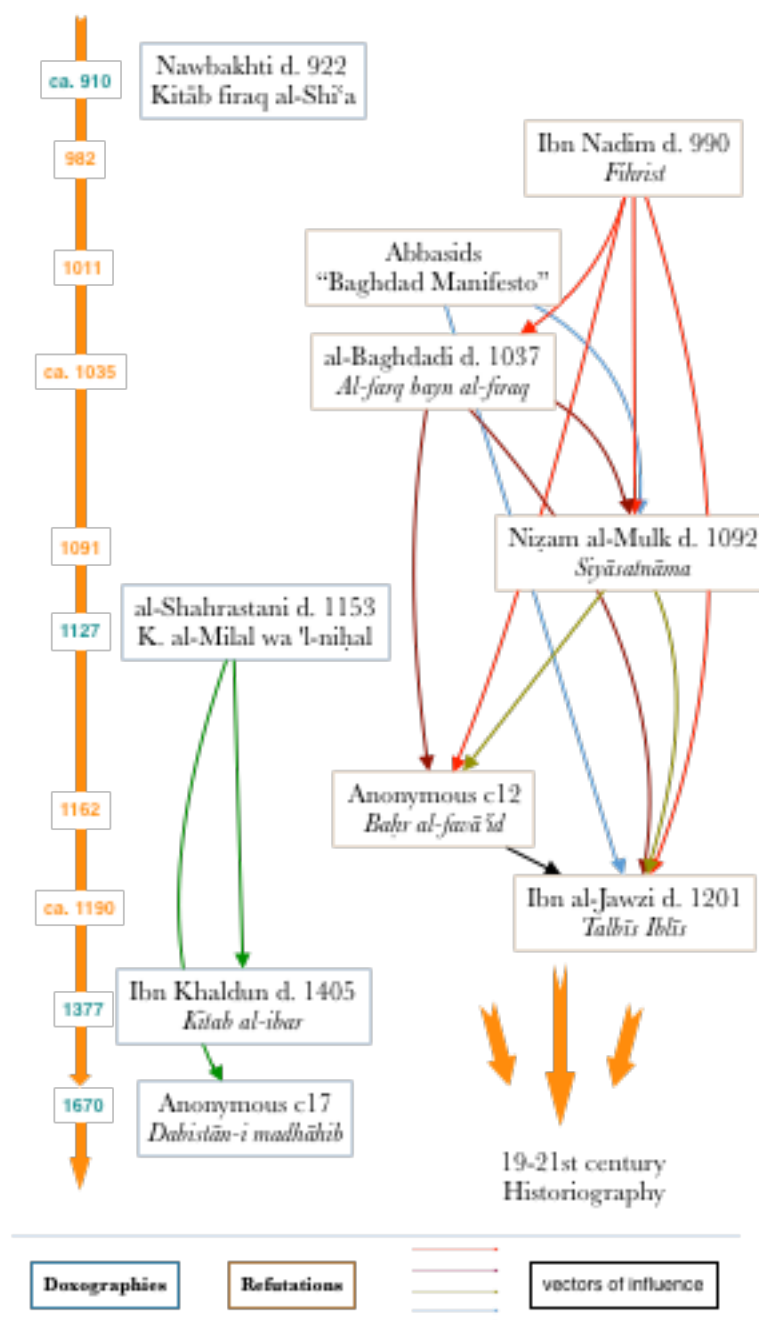
I. Survey of Doxographies (*firaq*) and Refutations (*radd*)

The texts dealing with the beliefs of various Muslim communities of interpretations are frequently grounded in the extensive heresiographical tradition based on the *ḥadīth* of the seventy-two erring sects. The authors catalogued and imputed beliefs and characteristics upon seventy-two erring sects and explicated their own as the one saved sect. These authors repeated patterns of re-tellings and their writings became part of the structures by beliefs about groups of people were portrayed and passed down from generation to generation resulting in a form of collective memory and historic consciousness. (Cf. Part One :1-IV). The term “doxography” has broadly been applied to the texts referenced in this survey; however, with the exception of Nawbakhtī’s *K. Firaq al-Shī‘a*, al-Shahrastānī’s *K. al-mihal wa’l-niḥal*, Ibn Khaldun’s *K. al-‘ibar*² and the anonymous *Dabistān-i madhāhib*, the categorisation of refutation (*radd*) is more appropriate for the treatment of the Ismailis in the remaining texts. From the texts surveyed a typology can be developed in three key areas with each subdivided into several tropes: 1) as philologists, the authors associated and defined different-often pejorative-appellations for the Ismailis; 2) they imputed non-Islamic origins of the Ismaili leaders and insinuated their motives against Islam along with antinomian tendencies and practices; and 3) they detailed elements of Ismaili doctrines—often misrepresented for the purposes of

² Included here because, in the section of the *Muqaddima*, the author described notions of Shi‘i authority.

refutation. The writing about the Ismailis in these texts was almost always polemically charged and demarcated the Ismailis beyond the pale.

Figure 2a: Timeline of Sources and their inter-relations



A. Constructions and tropes about the Ismailis in Doxologies and Refutations

The tables below show the constructions and tropes deployed in the writings about Ismailis in the selection of 10-17th/4-11th century *firaq* and *radd* texts. The tabulations in the seven tables detail information about the author-historians and their texts, their disposition towards the Ismailis, their appellations for the Ismailis, characterisations of the Ismailis and their doctrines, period of Ismaili history referred by the text and finally the nature of account of the Ismailis in the texts.

Table 2a. Author-historian and Text Details

Author:	Nbkht	Ndm	BM	Bghd	NM	Shrstn	? c12	Jawzi	Khldn	? c17
Death date	922	990		1037	1092	1153	1162>	1201	1405	1680>
Text completion date	910?	982	1011	1035?	1091	1127	1162	1190?	1377	1670
Length (pages approx.)	12	11	2	50	24	7	14	15	2	53
Language = Persian					✓		✓			✓
Edited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Translated	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Genre = doxography	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Content = Refutation		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		

Nbkht = Nawbakhtī; Ndm = Ibn al-Nadīm; BM = Baghdad Manifesto; Bghd = al-Baghdādī; NM = Nizām al-Mulk; Shrstn = Shahrastānī; ? c12 = Anonymous: *Bahr al-favā'id*; Jawzi = Ibn al-Jawzī; Khldn = Ibn Khaldūn; ? c17 = Anonymous: *Dabistān-i madhāhib*. See references and detailed content and discourse analyses below.

Table 2b. Author-historian's disposition towards the Ismailis

Author:	Nbkht	Ndm	BM	Bghd	NM	Shrstn	? c12	Jawzi	Khldn	? c17
Positive						✓				✓
Neutral	✓					✓			✓	✓
Negative		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Denouncing		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Curses the Ismailis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		

Table 2d. Characterisation of the Ismailis in the Text

Author:	Nbkht	Ndm	BM	Bghd	NM	Shrstn	? c12	Jawzi	Khldn	? c17
Qaddahid plot	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		
Non-Muslim plot		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Qarmaṭī + violent	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Antinomian		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Accusations of incest				✓	✓		✓	✓		

Table 2c. Appellations for the Ismailis in the Text

Author:	Nbkht	Ndm	BM	Bghd	NM	Shrstn	? c12	Jawzi	Khldn	? c17
<i>Bābakīyya</i>		✓			✓			✓		
<i>Bāṭinīyya</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Faṭhīyya</i>	✓									
<i>Ismā'īlīyya</i>	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Khaṭṭābiyya</i>	✓	✓								
<i>Khurramīyya</i>		✓			✓		✓	✓		
<i>Hashishiyun</i>							✓			
<i>Mubārakiyya</i>	✓				✓					
<i>Muḥammira</i>					✓			✓		
<i>Mulhidiyya</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
<i>Mazdakiyya</i>					✓	✓	✓			
<i>Qarāmiṭa</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		
<i>Sab'īyya</i>							✓	✓		
<i>Ta'limiyya</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Table 2e. Characterisation of the Ismaili Doctrines in the Text

Author:	Nbkht	Ndm	BM	Bghd	NM	Shrstn	? c12	Jawzi	Khldn	? c17
Doctrines discussed	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ismā'īl pre-deceased Ja'far		✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
Succession of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq: = Aaron-Moses	✓					✓			✓	✓
Attributeless God						✓				✓
Revere 3 caliphs				✓						
Deify 'Alī		✓		✓						
Secrecy - oath				✓						
Stress <i>bāṭin</i> of <i>sharī'a</i>						✓	✓	✓		✓
Eternity of the Universe				✓						
Cycles: <i>nāṭiq-asās-imām</i>	✓					✓				✓
Neoplatonic cosmology	✓	✓		✓		✓				✓
<i>Da'wa</i> hierarchy	✓	✓			✓	✓				
<i>Ta'lim</i>						✓	✓	✓		
<i>Qiyāma</i> discussed	✓					✓				✓
<i>Qā'im</i> = expected				✓	✓					
<i>Qā'im</i> = line of imams						✓				✓

Table 2f. Period of Ismaili history in the Text

Author:	Nbkht	Ndm	BM	Bghd	NM	Shrstn	? c12	Jawzi	Khldn	? c17
pre-Fatimid		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fatimid		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
pre-Fatimid Iran		✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
Nizari						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 2g. Nature of historical Writing about the Ismailis in the Text

Author:	Nbkht	Ndm	BM	Bghd	NM	Shrstn	? c12	Jawzi	Khldn	? c17
Nizari-Dynastic History							✓	✓		✓
Content = Biographic		✓					✓	✓		✓
Content = Geographic		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Content = Historic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

In the next section, the content and discourse analyses map the approaches used by the authors and to determine stemmatical relations and epistemological continuities in the writing about the Ismailis.

II. Content and Discourse Analyses the Ismailis in *Firaq* and *Radd* Texts

The discourse and content in nine texts are referenced in this survey ranging from the 10th/4th century Ithnā‘asharī heresiographer Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā Nawbakhtī to anti-Fatimid Baghdad Manifesto and the twelfth century account of the Nizaris in the *K. milal wa’l-nihal* of Tāj al-Dīn Abū’l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī. This textual analysis demonstrates the repetition of constructions and tropes in historical writing about Ismailis spanning several centuries as well as a few exceptional accounts where the authors have departed from the inherited historic consciousness.

A. Nawbakhtī

The Ithnā‘asharī heresiographer Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā Nawbakhtī (d. ca 922/310) writing during the lesser occultation (*ghaybat al-ṣuḡhrā*) of the twelfth imam of that line, discussed Ismailitic groups and their characteristics under the section header: “Divergences

after the Death of Ja‘far al-Sadiq”.³ He listed the groups: the Ismā‘īliyya—who believed that Ismail b. Ja‘far did not die and was the Mahdī; the Mubārakiyya—who believed that Ismail predeceased his father and the imamate passed on to his son Muḥammad; the Khaṭṭābiyya—followers of a certain Abū’l-Khaṭṭāb who accepted the notions of succession of the Mubārakiyya however, Abū’l-Khaṭṭāb claimed prophethood and supernatural powers for himself;⁴ after his death, this group like several others Nawbakhtī labelled *ghulat* (exaggerators) (sic) eventually aligned themselves with the descendants of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl; lastly, the lengthiest account was that of the Qarāmiṭa—“they claimed that Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl did not die and that he is in the land of the Romans, saying that he is al-Qā‘im al-Mahdī”; they counted him among the seven *ūlu’l-‘azm* (prophets with resolution namely: Ādam, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ‘Īsā, Muḥammad, and Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl) and believed he would abrogate the Prophet Muḥammad’s *shari‘a*.⁵ (Cf. Part Two:Prologue).

Nawbakhtī reserved curses for those groups which claimed Abū al-Khaṭṭāb—as a prophet after Muḥammad. He called groups of Ismailis polytheists and liars for intimating symbolic

³ al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī. *Kitab firaq al-Shi‘a (Shi‘a Sects)*, Translated by Abbas K. Kadhīm. (London: ICAS Press, 2007). pp 122-140. Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 98ff. The lesser occultation is counted from the death of the eleventh imam Ḥasan al-Askari (r. 868-874/254-260) when the twelfth imam withdrew into concealment but remained in touch with his adherents through four successive *safirs* (ambassadors) to seventy years later in 941/329, at the death of the last one, the Hidden Imam cut off the last link with the community to return in God’s time at the end of days. Heinz Halm. *Shi‘ism*, Translated by J. Watson. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991). pp 33-38

⁴ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 103ff; Wladimir Ivanow. *The Alleged Founder of Ismailism*, (Bombay: Pub. for the Ismaili Society by Thacker, 1946). pp 131-141; Lewis. *Origins*. pp. 47–50, 53–54, 65–67

⁵ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 97; 131; 226 The reference to these prophets is taken from the Qur’ān (46:35). The verse, however, does not specify these prophets by their names; in some instances Adam is not counted among these and others ‘Alī is included.

correspondences between the *da'wa* hierarchy of *ḥujja-dā'i-yad* and allusions to the Christian Trinity.⁶ He said that they claimed:

the world is made of twelve islands, each one has a witness (*ḥujja*) and each one of the twelve witnesses has a delegate (*dā'iya*) (sic) and each delegate has a helping hand (*yad*), who is a man armed with proofs and signs in his favor. They call the witness a “father,” the delegate a “mother,” and the helping hand a “son,” in the same way the believers in the Trinity argue that Allah is one of three and He is the “Father”—He is certainly above that—and the Messiah, peace be upon him, is the “Son” and his mother is Maryam, peace be upon her. They claimed that the Grand Witness is God and that he is the father; and the delegate is the mother; and the helping hand is the son—there is no doubt that those polytheists are liars, misguided, and losers.⁷

Beyond this, Nawbakhtī did not manifest negativity or impute calumny towards the Ismailis. In his time, the number of Qarāmiṭa, he said, “is large, but they have no clout or power. Most of them are in the vicinity of Kūfa and in Yemen, where their real count might reach approximately hundred thousand.”⁸ He wrote before there was widespread wariness in Iraq of the nascent Fatimid Empire (est 909/297) which he did not mention at all.

B. Ibn al-Nadīm

The Baghdadī bookseller and bibliographer, Muḥammad b. Ishāq Ibn al-Nadīm (d 990/380), in his *Fihrist* (*Bibliography*), written in 987/377, extensively quoted the refutation of the Ismailis of Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Rizām (fl early 10th/4th century)⁹ but prefaced the quote with a disclaimer: “[w]hat Abu 'Abd Allāh ibn Rizām said in his book in which he refuted the Ismā'īliyah and exposed their schools of thought, I am presenting in Abū 'Abd Allāh's own words, so that I can be free from responsibility for the truth and falsehood of the matter.”¹⁰

⁶ Possibly meaning *mā'dhūn* (initiate)—this could have been a local variant usage at the time.

⁷ al-Nawbakhtī. *K. firaq al-Shi'a*. p. 129; This may portray an eastern notion of the Trinity in place God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost or more likely the Gnostic conceptions of *Sophia* as the feminine principle...

⁸ *K. firaq al-Shi'a* pp 122-140.

⁹ Hereafter: Ibn Rizām

¹⁰ Muḥammad b. Ishāq Ibn al-Nadīm. *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm; A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture.*, Translated by Bayard Dodge. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970). pp 462-473; Lewis. *Origins*. pp 2-15; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 4-10

Ibn Rizām's account places 'Abd Allāh ibn Maymūn al-Qaddāh at the foundation of Ismailism. In this account 'Abd Allāh and his father were followers of Ibn Daysān who was regarded as a heretic by early Muslims.¹¹ 'Abd Allāh began his operation in Ahwāz, then 'Askar-Mukram from where he was chased out and ended up via Basra at Salamīyah in Syria. In 874/261 he won over Ḥamdān ibn al-Ash'ath, nicknamed Qarmaṭ and 'Abdān who propagated the *da'wa* in Kalwādhī south of Baghdad and the Sawād of Kūfa. "After leaving al-Baṣrah, 'Abd Allāh and his sons continued to press the claim that they were descended from 'Aqil [b. Abī Ṭalib - the brother of the Imam 'Alī] and had determined the genealogy [of his descendants] at al-Baṣrah. Due to the sons of 'Abd Allāh the propaganda spread throughout the land, as the agents went to al-Rayy, Ṭabaristān, Khurāsān, al-Yaman, al-Aḥsā', al-Qaṭīf and Fāris."

He pointed to a succession dispute when 'Abd Allāh's son Muḥammad died; some followed the latter's brother Aḥmad and others "his son also named Aḥmad but nicknamed Abu al-Shalaghlagh (al-Shala'la)".¹² Eventually, Sa'īd ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh took the name 'Ubayd Allāh, claiming that he was a descendant of 'Alī and Fāṭima, and established rule in the Maghrib. Ibn Rizām is quoted: "When he ['Ubayd Allāh] saw that the descendant for whom he laid claim was not accepted, he caused to appear a young man who was a newcomer and whom he asserted to be a descendant of Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl. This was al-Ḥasan Abū al-Qāsim, who was al-Qā'im bi-al-'Amr, following 'Ubayd Allāh." He mentioned four successors of the first Fatimid Imam-caliph 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī bi'llāh;¹³ as such, Ibn Rizām's account may be dated between the commencement of this last ruler, al-'Azīz bi'llāh's (r. 975-996/365-386) reign and

¹¹ Wladimir Ivanow. *Ibn al-Qaddah (the Alleged Founder of Ismailism)*, (Bombay: Ismaili Society, 1957). pp. 83-103; EI2. A. Abel, "Daysāniyya"

¹² Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 99ff. Abu al-Shalaghlagh in turn, tried to place his own sons—one after the other—into the line of succession however, each one died. This suggests that there was no fixity in the theories of imamate and succession at this time.

¹³ In Sunni historiography he was almost always called by the diminutive 'Ubayd Allāh

Ibn al-Nadīm's completion of the *Fihrist* in 987/377. His chronology and explanation of pre-Fatimid to the dynastic genealogy is corrupted; however, even Fatimid sources illustrate these complexities—the first imam-caliph al-Mahdī in a letter preserved from memory by the eminent *dā'ī* Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman (d. 957/346) purportedly stated that the Fatimids were descended not from Ismail but his older brother 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.¹⁴

Some of the historical details in the account shed light on an obscure period when the claimants to the imamate were concealed and the Ismailitic *da'wa* activities were clandestine; however, a thick layer of errors and misinformation has to be excavated before useable information is reached. For example, Ivanow has identified Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ and his son 'Abd Allāh as *mawla* (client) of the imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and the former and his son were revolutionaries to whom Ismail b. Ja'far was linked against the newly establishing 'Abbāsids.¹⁵

The second account quoted by Ibn al-Nadīm details the Ismaili *da'wa* in the east, namely Azarbaijan, Iran and Transoxiana. In it, the Ismailis were cast into an assemblage of out-groups such as Qaddāḥids, Qarmāṭis, Khurramīs, dualists (*zindīq* pl. *zanādiqa*), and associated with Abū Muslim and a certain Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn, nicknamed Daydān (or Daysān) who was a

¹⁴ *Ismailis* p. 101; Husayn F. al-Hamdani. *On the Genealogy of Fatimid Caliphs; Statement on Mahdī's Communication to the Yemen on the Real and Esoteric Names of His Hidden Predecessors.*, (Cairo: 1958).; Abbas Hamdani, and François de Blois, "A Re-Examination of al-Mahdī's Letter to the Yemenites on the Genealogy of the Fatimid Caliphs," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1983).

¹⁵ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 103; Ivanow. *Alleged Founder*. pp. 28-82; Wladimir Ivanow. *Ismaili Tradition Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids*, (London, New York,: Published for the Islamic Research Association by Oxford University Press, 1942). pp 127ff; 140-156.

Shu'ūbī trained in philosophy and astrology.¹⁶ “He believed with certainty in the Universal Soul (*al-Nafs*), the Intelligence (*al-ʿAql*), Time (*al-Zamān*), Space (*al-Makān*), and Matter (*al-Hayūla*).”

Ibn al-Nadīm added that

In speaking about him, a reliable person told me that he believed he had discovered in the astral determinations that there would be a transition from the Islamic regime to the government of the Persians and to their religion, called the Majūsiyah. [This would take place] at the time of the eighth conjunction, as a movement in the Muthallathah from the sign of Scorpio, indicating the Faith [of Islām], to the sign of Sagittarius, indicating the Persian religion. He also [470] said that he [Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn] used to exclaim, "Would that I might be the cause of this!"

This Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn may in fact have been the *daʿī* al-Nasafī who introduced Neoplatonic frameworks into Ismaili thought and who flourished at the Sāmānid court in

Bukhara.¹⁷ Ibn al-Nadīm noted that during

the past twenty years the movement has lost momentum and its propaganda agents have become fewer, so that I no longer see books compiled about it. At the beginning of the period of Muʿizz al-Dawlah, however, it was in evidence, accepted and divulged, with propagandists sought after in every region and district. This is what I have learned in this country [al-ʿIrāq], but it is possible that the movement is continuing in the regions of al-Jabal and Khurāsān.¹⁸

In Egypt the situation is obscure, for from the head of the movement ruling the region nothing appears, which explains what is being said about him and his forefathers. The matter is different [from what he claims]. *Al-salām*.

The decline in availability of books and overt proselytic activity noted by Ibn al-Nadīm was in part an after-effect of the massacres of Ismailis in the middle of the tenth century in the Sāmānid domains beginning with the execution of al-Nasafī in 943/332. (Cf. Part One:1-II-A5 and B). On the other hand, the concentration of Fatimid efforts into the fourth and successful campaign to capture Egypt under the imam-caliph al-Muʿizz and his re-alignment of doctrine together with centralisation of the *daʿwa* and the gradual disintegration of the Qarmaṭī

¹⁶ Abū Muslim (d. 755/137) was the leader of the ʿAbbāsīd revolt and was executed by the ʿAbbāsīds soon after the success of the revolt—the text reads that he “favoured and worked for Ismaili cause but was cut off before any effect”—there is little evidence of this connection. Abū Muslim’s legend reverberates among revolutionary and esoteric traditions even to the present day among the Bektashi Sufis of Anatolia. EIr. J. Ḥ. Yūsufī, “Abu Moslem Khorasani,”

¹⁷ Walker. *EPS*. pp 15ff; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 113ff; 225ff

¹⁸ Muʿizz al-Dawlah refers to Aḥmad b. Būya, Abuʾl-Ḥusayn Muʿizz al-Dawla (r. 936/324-967/356) the eponymous founder of the Buyids. Clifford Edmund Bosworth. *The New Islamic Dynasties: A Chronological and Genealogical Manual*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). p. 155

movement after their declaration of the “false Mahdī” in 931/319 factored into this apparent loss of momentum.¹⁹

Bayard Dodge, who translated the *Fihrist* claimed that Ibn al-Nadīm was neutral on the question of the authenticity of Fatimid genealogy presumably because of the disclaimer which distanced the bibliographer from his sources. He disclaimed responsibility for the “truth and error” of the sources but still quoted them to build his case. The Fatimids did not officially promulgate nor substantiate their genealogy and the Ismaili doctrines were to be kept secret amongst adherents. As a result, Ibn Rizām’s account and the two other anonymous sources quoted by Ibn al-Nadīm became the basis for many subsequent writings on the Ismailis and demonstrate his actual lack of neutrality.²⁰

C. The “*Baghdad Manifesto*”

A few decades later, in the reign of the imam-caliph al-Ḥākim (r. 996-1021/386-411), the hundred year old Fatimid Empire’s active efforts to expand the Ismaili *da‘wa*’s reach further into the ‘Abbāsīd territories prompted hostile polemical responses. Fatimid influence was extended into northern Syria as the successors of the Shi‘i Ḥamdānīd dynasty (fl. 906/293-1004/394) in Aleppo became their vassals. The deep penetration of the *da‘wa* into the ‘Abbāsīd domains manifested, for example, when during riots in Baghdad in the year 1003/384,

¹⁹ Wilferd Madelung, “Das Imamāt in der frühen ismailitischen Lehre,” *Der Islam* 37 (1961). pp 86ff; Wilferd Madelung, “The Fatimids and the Qarmāṭīs of Baḥrayn,” in *Mediaeval Isma‘īlī History and Thought*, ed. Farhad Daftary (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Wilferd Madelung; Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā‘īlism*. pp 205ff; Walker. *EPS*. pp 15ff

²⁰ Ibn al-Nadīm. *Fihrist*. p. 46 fn61

the populace chanted the Fatimid imam-caliph's name: "Yā Ḥākim, Yā Maṣṣūr".²¹ In addition to trying to win over the local peoples, a number of Fatimid *da'is* operating in Syria, Iran and Iraq focussed their proselytisation towards the rulers and Arab tribal chiefs.²² The most eminent of *da'is*, Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. after 1021/411) wrote a major treatise on the imamate purportedly to win over Abū Ghālib Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Khalaf, Fakhr al-Mulk (fl. 1010/401-1016/407) who was the wazīr of the Buyid amīr Bahā' al-Dawla (r. 989/379-1012/403).²³ Similar overtures were more successful in 1010-11/401 in winning over the 'Uqaylid ruler Qirwāsh b. al-Muqallad of Mawṣil, Kūfa and Madā'in, and the tribal ruler of the districts around Ḥilla, 'Alī al-Asadī of the Banū Asad. For a few short months, the *khuṭba* was recited in their lands, within easy reach of the 'Abbāsīd capital, Baghdad, in the name of Fatimid imam-caliph.²⁴ Later in that same year, threats of force, political inducements and swift military action were able to turn these allegiances back to the 'Abbāsīds.²⁵ Al-Ḥākim's

²¹ Joel L. Kraemer. *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival During the Buyid Age*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986).p. 72; Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, "Master of the Age: An Islamic Treatise On the Necessity of the Imamate: A Critical Edition of the Arabic Text and English Translation of Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Kirmānī's *Al-Maṣābiḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*," *Ismaili texts and translations series*; 9 (2007). p. 7

²² Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 183; Paul E. Walker. *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021*, (Cairo; New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2009). pp 119-121

²³ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 184; Walker. *Caliph of Cairo*. pp 192; Master of the Age. p. 14. Several decades later, the *da'i* al-Mu'ayyad fī'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 1087/470) reported in his *Sīra* that upon succeeding his father, he could conduct his religious activities openly because the Buyid wazīr had held his father in high esteem and was known for his open attitude and friendship towards the Shi'a in general; al-Mu'ayyad himself, with some success, tried to win over the Buyid amir Abū Kālījār (r. 1024/415-1048/439) to Ismailism. See Verena Klemm. *Memoirs of A Mission the Ismaili Scholar, Statesman and Poet al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī*, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003). pp 3-4

²⁴ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 183-185; Walker. *Caliph of Cairo*. pp 119-121 and 220-223; TJG. pp 173-177; HWC. pp 658-660

²⁵ EI2. Bosworth, C. E.: "Bahā' al-Dawla wa-ḍiyā' al-Milla , Abū Naṣr Fīrūz Kḥārshādh b. 'Aḍud al-Dawla Fanā-Kḥusraw. "... the new governor for Bahā' al-Dawla in Bagḥdād after 401/1010, Fakhr al-Mulk Muḥammad b. 'Alī, defeated the 'Uqaylids, drove off the Kḥafād ja and managed to make peace with the Kurds, who in fact ceased to be such a threat to the Būyid position in 'Irāq..." This questions the extent to which al-Kirmānī was successful in converting Fakhr al-Mulk and the account of al-Mu'ayyad with regard to his father's relations with the Buyid wazīr.

dā'īs even attempted, in 1012–1013/403, without success, to obtain the allegiance of Maḥmūd of Ghazna who two years earlier had massacred the Ismailis of Multān.²⁶

The shifting allegiances may be principally attributable to the attraction of the local rulers to the Ismaili *da'wa* coinciding with continued fragmentation of the 'Abbāsīd realm during the Buyid overlordship; however, the shift of the popular sentiment and especially the absorption of the sizeable rump populations of the Qarmaṭī movement into Fatimid spheres of influence must have caused great fears among the 'Abbāsīd establishment. In 1011/402, responding to the events in Iraq, the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Qādir (r. 991/381–1031/422) instigated the publication of the “Baghdad manifesto” which was signed by the leading Sunni and Ithnā'asharī scholars and jurists attacking the beliefs and origins of the Fatimids.²⁷ The manifesto was read in the mosques throughout the 'Abbāsīd realm. Juwayni reproduced the full Arabic text of the manifesto which suggests that a century and a half after the events, the document continued to have potency and was available to Juwayni—who, in turn, copied it and made it available to generations of his readers and the scholars who would reference his work. The text in Juwayni closely matches Ibn al-Jawzī's (d. 1201/597) report of its contents and publication. The manifesto ends in a crescendo of denunciations of al-Ḥākim and the Ismailis. The comparison below of the last paragraph in the two sources demonstrates the near-complete correspondence between the two sources.

²⁶ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 185; Walker. *Caliph of Cairo*. p. 226. Eric J. Hanne. *Putting the Caliph in His Place : Power, Authority, and the Late Abbasid Caliphate*, (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007). p. 68; Walker. *Caliph of Cairo*. pp. 224–225. Ibn al-Jawzī reported that Mahmud sent the letter requesting him to establish the *khutba* in al-Hakim's name to the 'Abbāsīd caliph, al-Qādir. He had spat upon the letter and partially destroyed it before sending it to al-Qādir in a show of loyalty. It should be noted that Multan implies not just the city but significant portions of present-day Indian and Pakistani Punjab.

²⁷ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 101 fn73, 103, 185; Lewis. *Origins*. pp. 8, 60–61. Walker. *Caliph of Cairo*. pp. 224–225; Sources and scholarship acknowledge that the signatories were subject to coercion. TJG. pp. 174–177; HWC. pp. 658–660

Table 2g: “Baghdad Manifesto” recorded by Ibn al-Jawzī²⁸ and Juwayni²⁹

Ibn al-Jawzī	Juwayni
This person who appeared in Egypt, he and his ancestors are unbelieving, iniquitous, shameless heretics, atheists and agnostics who reject Islam and uphold the doctrines of the Dualists and Manicheans, who do not observe the law, who permit fornication, consider licit wine and the shedding of blood, who revile the prophets, curse the Companions, and assert a claim of their own divinity.	... this upstart in Egypt, he and his ancestor, are unbelievers (<i>kāfir</i>), libertines (<i>fāsiq</i>), atheists (<i>zindīq</i>), materialists (<i>mu‘aṭṭil</i>), heretics (<i>mulḥid</i>), denying Islam, holding the creed of Dualism and Magism, having broken all bounds, sanctioned whoredom, legalized wine-drinking, shed blood, insulted the prophets and laid claim to divinity.

Paul Walker commented that the “manifesto”, although it was not the first rejection of Fatimid genealogy, nor by any means the last, this one was odd in its blunt use of the scattershot rhetoric of all inclusive denunciation often employed against suspected heresies, such as a claim that the heretics permit unlawful fornication and the drinking of wine. Neither makes obvious sense in this instance. As but one example, al-Hakim’s campaign against alcoholic beverages was certainly already widely recognized. Better was the assertion that he advocated the cursing of the Companions, except that, again, by 1011, he had annulled that edict and no longer allowed the practice. On balance, most particularly in its attempt to trace Fatimid lineage to Daysan, a connection quite far-fetched, this Baghdad Manifesto likely fooled few. Those who signed it, as later historians admit, probably felt compelled to do so.³⁰

He further noted that the many other examples of refutations of al-Ḥākīm and the Ismailis penned by Sunnis and even Shi’a (Ithnā’asharī and Zaydī) were, “perhaps a direct response to, the growing fame or infamy of al-Hakim during this period” and the spread of the Ismaili *da’wa*. Several of the topoi used in the manifesto have been used by dominant elites to demarcate their own traditions from those of the threatening others in many different religious contexts—such out-groups are cast as heretics and social disrupters.

²⁸ Walker. *Caliph of Cairo*. pp 224-225

²⁹ TJG. pp 176-177; HWC. pp 659-660

³⁰ Walker. *Caliph of Cairo*. p. 225

D. al-Baghdādī

Writing around the time of the manifesto's publication, the Shafī'ī scholar Abū Manṣūr 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 1037/429) in his heresiography *Al-farq bayn al-firaq*³¹ began his lengthy repudiation of the Ismailis by estimating the damage done by the Bāṭiniyya (Esoterists) to the Muslims:

the damage caused by the Bāṭiniyya to the Muslim sects is greater than the damage caused them by the Jews, Christians and Magians; nay, graver than the injury inflicted on them by the Materialists and other non-believing sects; nay, graver than the injury resulting to them from the Antichrist who will appear at the end of time, for those who, as a result of the missionary activities of the Bāṭiniyya, have been led astray ever since the inception of the mission up to the present time are more numerous than those who will be led astray by the Antichrist when he appears, since the duration of the sedition of the Antichrist will not exceed forty days. But the vices of the Bāṭiniyya are more numerous than the sand-grains or the raindrops.³²

Al-Baghdādī's lengthy chapter entitled "Concerning the Bāṭiniyya and the Reason for their Exclusion from all the Sects of Islam" follows the pattern of Ibn Rizām's account and melds a vehement refutation with historical information found in few other sources along with fantastical anecdotes.

He stated that the

historians tell that those who laid the foundation of the cult of the Bāṭiniyya were descendants of the Magians who were still attached to the religion of their ancestors, but did not dare to make a public avowal of it, dreading the Muslim swords. The ignorant among them used to appoint an Asās, who was entrusted by them with the teachings of their faith and who secretly preferred the precepts of the Magians. They interpreted the verses of the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet allegorically in accordance with their fundamentals.³³

E. Nizām al-Mulk

Just over a half a century later, in face of the success of the Ismaili *da'wa* in the major cities of Iran which at that time was under Saljuq overlordship and at the outset of what would become the Nizari polity, the *wazīr*, Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Ishāq al-Ṭūsī, Nizām al-Mulk (d.

³¹ Abū Manṣūr 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī. *Al-farq bayn al-firaq (Moslem Schisms and Sects)*, Edited by M. Badr (1910). Translated by Abraham S. Halkin. (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1978). pp 107-157

³² *Al-farq bayn al-firaq (Moslem Schisms and Sects)* p. 107

³³ *Al-farq bayn al-firaq (Moslem Schisms and Sects)* p. 115

1092/485) added eleven chapters to his *Siyāsat-nāma* (*Book of Government*) primarily to refute the Ismailis.³⁴ Writing a year before his assassination,³⁵ he raised the alarm about the penetration of the Ismailis into the heart of the Saljuq domain and perhaps the court as well; the Nizām wrote:

certain persons who on this very day hold privileged positions in this empire and who, having removed their heads from the collar of the Shi'a, are members of this [Ismaili] faction and secretly do its business, assist its policies and preach its doctrines. They try to persuade the Master of the World [Saljuq Sultan Malikshāh] to overthrow the house of the 'Abbāsids, and if I were to lift the lid from the top of that pot - Oh! the disgraceful things that would be revealed!

This is suggestive of high-level successes of the Fatimid *da'wa* and perhaps, an Eastern Policy to try to win over the populace and rulers to their cause. (Cf Part Two:1-II-C). Sultan Malikshāh on his last trip to Baghdad actually did seek to depose the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Muqtadī (r. 1075/467-1094/487) in favour the latter's son, the grandson of the Turkic Sultan. Nizām al-Mulk was assassinated on the return journey into Iran and Malikshāh died in highly suspicious circumstances shortly thereafter so the deposition did not come to pass. The sources suggest that *wazīr* Tāj al-Mulk (d. 1093/486), the Nizām's vehement opponent, may have been allied with the Ismailis and might even have adopted their creed.³⁶ Nizām al-Mulk's frantic warnings against the Ismailis are styled upon and use the content and structures of Ibn Rizām and al-

³⁴ Nizām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*. pp 193-245; "Enemies of the State."; Ann K. S. Lambton, "The Dilemma of Government in Islamic Persia: The *Siyāsat-Nāma* of Nizām al-Mulk," *Iran* 22 (1984).. Scott Cameron. Levi, and Ron. Sela. *Islamic Central Asia: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010). pp 89-94

³⁵ Omid Safi. *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). p. 75 Although for centuries the assassination has been laid to the hands of the Nizari *fidā'īs*. The Nizari writings even take credit for it; based on a re-reading of contemporary sources, Omid Safi argued: "It is my thesis that Nizām al-Mulk's murder is not simply an act of the Ismā'īlīs but was engineered by Malik-Shāh over his desire to do away with the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate, a plan that was sternly opposed by Nizām al-Mulk. The Saljūqīd Sultan was assisted in this plot by Tarkān Khātūn and Tāj al-Mulk."

³⁶ *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry* pp 69-70; EI2. C. E. Bosworth, "Ibn Dārūst, Tādī al-Mulk Abū'l-Ghanā'im Marzubān b. Khusraw-Firūz Shīrāzī (438-86/1046-93)"

Baghdādī. Echoing the “Baghdad manifesto” about the origins of the first Fatimid imam-caliph, he wrote:

Abu Tahir [an Ismaili *dā'ī*] sent some gifts to Abu Sa'īd [Nizām al-Mulk refers here to the first Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mahdī] in the West, who was a Jewish boy; one of the sons of 'Abd Allah ibn Maimun al-Qaddah called Ahmad had married his mother, and brought up the boy; he taught him the liberal arts, provided him with splendid adornments and made him his heir; he instructed him in his propaganda and gave him certain signs. Abu Sa'īd arose and went to the West and stayed in the city of Sijilmas; (sic) there his affairs prospered and he forced his religion on the necks of the people by the sword. He claimed that he was the Mahdī and of the family of 'Alī; he imposed heavy taxes, made wine lawful, and permitted [commerce with] mothers, sisters and daughters; he openly cursed the Marwanids and 'Abbāsids, and if we were to tell of all the innocent blood which he spilt and the wicked practices which he introduced, it would take too long and would not suit this abbreviated account. It is reported in the history books that the present occupant of the throne of Egypt [the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanşir] is descended from him.³⁷

The Ismailis (later the Nizaris), posed an immediate and imminent socio-political and military threat to the Saljuqs in Iraq and Iran. Nizām al-Mulk's account sandwiched his chapters on the origins of the Ismailitic movements between the one on Mazdak and those on the rising of the Khurramdīnīs in Isfahan and the revolt of Bābak in Āzarbāijan. The array of tropes levelled at the Ismailis are modelled on those against Mazdak found in Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma*. Thus the Nizām's juxtapositions and constructions of the Ismailis as heretics is equated to the followers of Mazdak as heathens and both fall into a continuum of social disrupters and enemies of the state.³⁸ He wrote:

This much has been related so that the Master of the World [Malikshāh] (may Allah perpetuate his reign) may know what the religion of these Batinis is (may Allah forsake them), why their words and oaths are not to be trusted, what crimes and evil works they have done against the Muslims and the lands of Islam whenever they have had the opportunity, what wicked people they are and what enemies of Islam and of the state.³⁹

F. Refutations of the Nizari Ismailis

Al-Ghazālī and *al-Hidāya al-Āmīriya*—In the first half of the twelfth/sixth century more layers were added to the array of recurrent themes of refutation of the Ismailis in doxographic literature; the Nizaris were written about as the *Ta'limiyya* for the Shi'i notion of authoritative

³⁷ Nizām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*. p. 187; Sijilmas is in error should be Salamiyya

³⁸ “Enemies of the State.”

³⁹ Nizām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*. p. 237

teaching of the imam espoused by the *da'wa* centred in Isfahan and later attributed to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. Questions of legitimacy and theological polemics were written from multiple directions: the Ash'arī Sunni scholar al-Ghazālī (d. 1111/505) wrote several tracts against the Nizaris on behalf and at the behest of the 'Abbāsīd caliph; the *al-Hidāya al-Āmīriya* written in 1122/516 records the official statement of the Fatimid government during the reign of the Musta'lian Ismaili imam-caliph al-Āmir (d. 1130/524) which defended the rights of succession of his father, al-Musta'li (d. 1101/494) and denied the legitimacy of the claims on behalf of his uncle Nizār. (Cf. Part Two:2-II-A).

G. Anonymous: Baḥr al-favā'id

The thrust of polemics already mapped above were elaborated in the *Baḥr al-favā'id* (*Sea of Precious Virtues*), an anonymous Persian treatise with a homiletic tone composed in the mid-twelfth century.⁴⁰ Meisami suggests that the text was begun in Aleppo no earlier than 1159/554 and completed in 1162/557.⁴¹ In line with al-Baghdādī, Niẓām al-Mulk and Ghazālī, the author in the section entitled “Book of the Refutation of Heretics” wrote about the “Ismailis: their Appellations”; “the Iniquities of the Heretics”; “their History and Missions; their Questions”; “on Judgments concerning their Killing and Repentance.” Like his predecessors, he gave many names for the Ismailis and glossed each one—three of these: Ta'limīs, Mazdakīs and Khurramīs are excerpted here:

Know that the heretics have seven appellations: They are (called) apostates, Bāṭinis, Ismā'īlis, Ta'limīs, Seveners, Mazdakīs, and Khurramīs. ...

They are called *Ta'limīs* because they claim that truth can be known from falsehood through teaching (*ta'līm*) and a teacher; that without an Immaculate Imam you cannot know God; and that truth can be known from falsehood, (but) not by reason and reflection. ...

⁴⁰ Anonymous, “The Sea of Precious Virtues (*Baḥr al-favā'id*): A Medieval Islamic Mirror for Princes,” (1991). pp 238-252 Persian Text pp 343ff

⁴¹ *Baḥr al-Favā'id* pp vii-xix

They are called *Mazdakīs* in Iraq and Qazwīn, *Assassins* (*Ḥashīshī*) in Syria, and *Gabr* in Azarbaijan; and all these are the same. They hold all things to be lawful, consider it lawful to lie with their mothers and sisters, and say, “All wealth is permitted, and (all) women are permitted to men.”

Mazdak was a man who appeared in the time of Nūshīrvān; he made such claims, [345] and Nūshīrvān crucified him.

They are called *Khurramīs* because they consider lawful every fundamental thing that the Law deems unlawful, and consider the blood of their opponents lawful.⁴²

This is another example of the negatively stereotyped assemblage of out-groups; however, the author provided one of the earliest known biographical sketches of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and his activities—elements of which are found in the Ilkhanid chronicles:

Their base is at Alamūt, *may God destroy it!* Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad al-Ṣabbāḥ was a native of Rayy; he had studied philosophy, spells, and magic, and had gone to Egypt and accepted their preaching. He had been apprentice to a broker, and for many years was notorious throughout the world. He bought that fortress from a Muslim ‘Alid, then ordered that the man be killed, and took back his gold; he commanded the deaths of (many) people. He used to say, “I support the Prophet’s family.” If the heretics and novices had discovered his unbelief they would have killed him with their own hands; but he pretended to be a Muslim outwardly, while within him was all unbelief and heresy.

That heretic said, “For seventeen years I traveled over the world. No one accepted my mission except some people from Damāvand and the villages of Rayy and Ṭabaristān; they accepted.” He spent his life in fraud and shame. He commanded that his own son be killed; and each night he would say to his people, “We will rebel, seize the cities, and divide them among you.” He died, perished, and could take no city. “*He maketh them promises, and insinuateth into them vain desires: yet Satan maketh them only deceitful promises*” (4:119). The heretic dog perished.⁴³

Resonating with Nizām al-Mulk’s warnings, in the manner of the “mirrors for princes” genre he explained:

Such heretics become strong through the negligence of sultans and kings who have abandoned holy war and busy themselves with wine and music, buffoonery, and worldly desires. Therefore of a surety they have become strong, “*for if Rūm is not attacked it will attack*.” The kings of the past were concerned for the Muslim faith and sacrificed this world for religion; therefore they were strengthened and given victory. But these people are concerned with treasures and with assembling armies, and have sacrificed religion to this world; and so they become more diminished and abased each day. May God reward vigilance, “*by His gifts and generosity*.”⁴⁴

His solution was to confront and kill the Ismailis:

⁴² *Baḥr al-Favā'id* pp 238-239 Per-text pp 343-345. This is the earliest Persian text calling the Nizaris “*ḥashīshī*”—the first such usage occurs in the *al-Hidāya al-Āmīriya* (see chapter 7 below). Also cf. Nizām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*. p. 238

⁴³ *Baḥr al-Favā'id*. 241-242 Per-text pp 348. It is also noteworthy that the author had access to many details of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s biography. There more details about Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ in this text; however, Shahrastānī could have been a source.

⁴⁴ *Baḥr al-Favā'id* p. 242 Per-text pp 348

Know that killing them is more lawful than rainwater; sultans and kings are required to suppress and kill them, and cleanse the earth's back of their pollution and evil. One should not befriend or associate with them. It is better to shed the blood of a heretic than to kill seventy Greek infidels; their blood is licit, for three reasons.⁴⁵

These reasons were that the Ismailis “consider the blood and property of Muslims allowed to them”; that they consider Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl as the prophet of the End of Days and that he would abrogate the law of the Prophet Muḥammad; and finally, that they do not believe in the Resurrection or the torment of the grave and Judgment and that the Hereafter for them is the unveiling in essence of the laws of the prophets. Like al-Baghdādī, he suggested that “their disciples do not know the true depths of their doctrine, or they would have killed them with their own hands.” Like the call of the other Saljuq era authors, the repentance of the Nizaris is not be accepted without diligent scrutiny due to their propensity for dissimulation; in sum his prescription is the elimination of the Ismailis:

The judgment in their case is the same as for apostates (*murtaddān*): their children should be taken as prisoners of war or booty, and they should be given the choice of the sword or Islam. Muslim kings should not be deceived by their oaths, for these are all fraudulent and false. There is nothing but the sword between them and Muslims.

Throughout the earth's seven climes, in every place reached by Muslims and by members of the Prophet's community and by those who believe in these seven Imams, there is (universal) agreement that the heretics' belief is false, that their oaths are false, and that killing them is allowed.⁴⁶

May God cleanse the back of the earth of all heretics and opponents of the true faith! “Lord, leave not any families of the unbelievers on the earth” (71:27); “And the end of their prayer shall be, Praise be unto God, the Lord of all creatures”(10:11)! The book is finished, with the aid of the Beneficent Sovereign.⁴⁷

The constant drum beat of this type of call for annihilation by the historian-authors when combined with the legal opinions of like minded ‘*ulamā*’ frequently breached the *shari‘a* and resulted in the un-Islamic practice of not giving quarter to a defeated and surrendering enemy. (Cf. Part One:6-III).

⁴⁵ *Baḥr al-Favā'id* pp 251 Per-text pp 361ff

⁴⁶ It is unclear if he seems to separate those he calls heretics from other believers of the seven imams (usually a term for the Ismailis) as acceptable.

⁴⁷ *Baḥr al-Favā'id* p. 252 Per-text pp 362ff

H. Ibn al-Jawzī

The prolific Sunni author Abū'l-Faraj 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1201/597) in his *Talbīs Iblīs (The Devil's Deceptions)*⁴⁸ described the Ismailis as those deceived by the devil "from our Ummah" listing their names as: *al-Bāṭiniyya* (the Esoterists); *al-Ismā'īliyya*; *al-Sab'iyyah* (the Seveners); *al-Bābakīyya* (followers of Bābak); *al-Muḥammira* (the wearers of red); *al-Qarāmiṭa*; *al-Khurramīyyah*; and the eighth name for them was *al-Ta'līmiyya* (those who follow the authoritative teaching of the imam) as they were "given this title because their doctrine was to invalidate the use of intellect and to call for the following of the faultless Imām because knowledge was only attained through being taught (and not using one's intellect)."⁴⁹

Like the other authors in this section, after glossing the different appellations for the Ismailis Ibn al-Jawzī divided his account into five sections: why the *Bāṭiniyya* entered into misguidance; their plots to corrupt the Muslims; their beliefs; the history of emergence of the Ismailis and the Nizaris and the objectives of these enemies of Islam. He referenced al-Ghazālī's assessment that the *Bāṭiniyya* profess Islam though both in belief and practice they are beyond the pale. Their cosmology resulted in dualism and teleologically, their associated esoteric notions of ultimate return to pre-creative origin denied bodily resurrection, thus the Ismailis fell outside of the circle of Islam.⁵⁰ Ibn al-Jawzī wrote, that the Ismailis permitted all forbidden things to those they initiated, since according to them, the knowledge of the hidden meanings (*bāṭin*) of

⁴⁸ Abū'l-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī, and D. S. Margoliouth, "The Devil's Delusion of Ibn al-Jawzī, a Translation of his 'Talbis iblis'," *Islamic Culture* 4 (1935).; Abū al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī. *The Devil's Deceptions: being a Translation of his Masterpiece 'Talbis iblis'*, Translated by Haitham Hamdan. (Birmingham: Dār as-Sunnah Publishers, 2014). pp 185-197

⁴⁹ *The Devil's Deceptions: being a Translation of his Masterpiece 'Talbis iblis'* pp 182-187

⁵⁰ Introduced into Ismaili thought by al-Nasafī

the prescriptions of the *sharia*‘ (ẓāhir) released them from their literal conformity and practice;

he explained that

Being unable to divert people from the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, they diverted them from their meanings to fictions of their own devising: had they openly rejected them, they would have been executed. So they say the meaning of uncleanness is premature divulging of the mystery to a neophyte: of ablution renewal of the covenant to a person who has done this: of adultery communicating the seed of esoteric knowledge to one who has not previously entered into the covenant: of fasting abstaining from revealing the mystery. The Ka’bah is the Prophet (sas): the Door is ‘Alī; the Deluge is the deluge of knowledge wherein the adherent to fallacy is drowned; the Ship is an amulet which protects him who responds to their call. The Fire of Ibrāhīm (‘alayhis-salām) is an expression for the wrath of Nimrod, nor for any actual fire; the Sacrifice of Ishāq (‘alayhis-salām) means taking the covenant: the staff of Mūsā (‘alayhis-salām) means his argument; Yajūj and Majūj are the literalists.⁵¹

Ibn al-Jawzī used sources such as Ẓāhir al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī’s *Saljūqnāma* and several of his vignettes, in turn, are to be found in the accounts of Ibn al-Athīr and even Marco Polo.⁵²

There is no historical evidence of antinomianism described by Ibn al-Jawzī or the other texts surveyed so far to warrant the scale of refutations and their successive repetition of such charges—these constructions of the Ismailis form a literary narrative paradigm.

I. Shahrastānī

While these patterns of dogmatic repudiation based on and intermingled with spurious historical constructions continued to elaborate what Samuel Stern and Farhad Daftary have called the “black legends”, in the mid-twelfth/sixth century a very different paradigm emerged in the writing of Tāj al-Dīn Abu’l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153/548).⁵³ Having taught at the Nizāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad for three years, in 1120/514 he went to Sanjar b. Malikshāh’s (d. 1157/552) court at Marw where he was appointed to the

⁵¹ *The Devil’s Deceptions: being a Translation of his Masterpiece ‘Talbīs iblīs’* p. 191

⁵² Daftary. *Assassin Legends*.; Nīshāpūrī. *Saljūqnāma*.; Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*.

⁵³ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 10ff and 99; Daftary. *Assassin Legends*. pp 15ff especially 27 and 36; Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā‘īlism*. p. 206 and 298

chancellery and became a close friend and confidant of the sultan.⁵⁴ His *K. al-milal wa-'l-niḥal* (*The Book of Religious Communities and Sects*) was completed during this time in the year 1127-8/521 and according to Daniel Gimaret, was a monumental work which “aspired to present ‘the doctrinal opinions of all the world’s people’, i.e. to reveal the entirety of religions and philosophies, past or present.”⁵⁵ The text is divided into two parts; according to Shahrastānī’s schema the first part covers religions (*al-diyānāt wa-'l-milal*)—specifically the Muslims, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and dualists, since they each acknowledge a deity and claim to possess a revelation. The second covers the Ṣābians, philosophers, pre-Islamic Arabs and Indians (*ahl al-ahwā' wa-'l-niḥal*) since they emerge from human reason and reflection. The section on the Muslims is sub-divided to cover the Mu‘tazila, Jabriya, Ṣifātīya, Khārījīs, Murjī‘ya, Shi‘a and the Ismailis. He claimed:

I impose upon myself the obligation to present the view of each sect as I find them in their works without favour or prejudice, without declaring which are correct and which are incorrect, which are true and which are false. Surely the glimpses of truth and the odour of falsehood will not go undetected by minds versed in intellectual matters.⁵⁶

The section on the Ismailis detailed the doctrines and history of the various early Ismailitic groups; he wrote that the “message of the Ismā‘īliya differed from one age to another, and their doctrine varied from person to person. We shall first mention their early doctrines, and

⁵⁴ EI2. Monnot, G. “al-Shahrastānī.”

⁵⁵ Shahrastānī. *K. Milal wa-'l-Niḥal*. pp 226-235; Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm Shahrastānī. *Muslim Sects and Divisions: the Section on Muslim Sects in Kitāb al-milal wa-'l-niḥal*, Translated by A.K. Kazi and J.G. Flynn. (London; Boston: Kegan Paul International, 1984). pp 163-170; EI2. Gimaret D. “*al-miḥal wa-'l-niḥal*”; Ivanow. *IL2*. p. 14 has an interesting note: “It would be not out of place to mention here that, having examined scores of heresiological works referring to the Ismailis. I found only one exception in apparently a unique copy of the “*Kitāb at-Tawārīkh wa-'l-Milal*”, composed in 552/1157, and, as is stated on its title page, said to be the work of “al-Imām Ḥujjat al-Islām Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī”. As the famous al-Ghazālī died in 505/1111, it is possible that the author was a descendant of his. The copy in the Astana library in Meshhed is dated 793/1391. It devotes to the Bāṭiniyya, or Ismailis, some one hundred big pages, and contains a unique feature,—it cites original and genuine Ismaili works under their true titles, and mentions the correct names of their authors.” Ivanow may have come across a mislabeled MSS of Shahrastānī’s text.

⁵⁶ Shahrastānī. *Muslim Sects*. p. 12

afterwards those of the one who propounded a New Summons (*ṣāhib al-da‘wat al-jadīda* meaning Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ).” He began by establishing the legitimacies claimed for Ismā‘īl’s succession of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq by two groups. One group maintained that Ismail died in his father’s lifetime; however, “the imāmate passed after him to his sons exclusively in the same way Moses appointed Aaron who too, died during the life of his brother, and the only advantage of his designation was that the imāmate passed to his sons, as designation cannot be retracted. It is impossible, moreover, to believe in a change of [God’s] mind, *badā’*.” The others claimed “that Ismā‘īl did not die, but he was reported to have died for the purpose of concealment, and to be out of reach of those who might seek to kill him. Several reasons are given for believing this.”⁵⁷ After him, the heptad of imams was completed in his son

Muḥammad and he was followed by the hidden imams. The Ismailis believed that the world can never be without an *imām* who is alive and a *qā‘im*, either visible and manifest, or hidden and concealed. When the *imām* is manifest it is possible for his *ḥujja* (proof) to be hidden, but if the *imām* is hidden it is necessary for his *ḥujja* and emissaries to be manifest. According to them the *imāms* are always in series of seven, like the days of the week, or the seven heavens, or the seven planets, but the *Nuqabā* (chiefs) are always in series of twelves. In this matter the Imāmiya, who believe in a definite number of *imāms*, fell into confusion and determined the number of *imāms* in accordance with the number of *nuqabā*. At the end of the series of hidden Imams, al-Mahdi manifested himself, followed by al-Qā‘im, followed in turn by their descendants who designated one another in succession to the imāmate.⁵⁸

One of their foundational beliefs, he stated was that “whoever dies in ignorance of the *imām* of his time dies a pagan; so also does anyone who dies without allegiance to an imam.”⁵⁹ As in other doxographies, Shahrastānī listed the different names given to the Ismailis, namely: Bāṭiniya, Qarmaṭīs, Mazdakīs, Ta‘limiya and heretics; however, without embellishing a gloss on

⁵⁷ The episodes in the text suggest that Ismā‘īl did not actually die—this is evidenced on two occasions: once by his younger half-brother Muḥammad who claimed that his “dead” brother’s eyes were open and another, in the city of Basra, where Ismā‘īl cured a sick person—the ‘Abbāsīd caliph sought explanation of this from Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq. He presented the contrived death certificate to put the matter to a rest.

⁵⁸ *Muslim Sects* p. 165

⁵⁹ JT. p. 98; ZT. p. 121; Ishāq b. Aḥmad Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī. *Kashf al-mahjūb* (*Le dévoilement des choses cachées*); *traité Ismaélien du IV^{me} siècle de l’hégire*, Edited by Henry Corbin. (Tehran: Institut Franco-Iranien, 1949). p. 22 and p 60 fn18

these he adds: “[t]hey themselves say, ‘We are Ismā‘īliya, because we differ from other Shi‘ite sects by this name and on account of this person [from whom the name is derived].”

Again, quoting Ismaili sources he elaborated their theology and doctrines of the eternal yet atemporal nature of God who is beyond all attributes and their explanations using philosophical terminology of the creation from the Universal Intellect (*‘aql-i kull*) down to the minerals, vegetables, animals and humans of the material realm. He mapped their cosmology in which there is an accord between the celestial and material realms in that the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul (*naḥs-i kull*) correspond to the *nāṭiq* (the revealer), who was the prophet and the *asās* (first principle) who was the prophet’s *waṣī* (legatee meaning ‘Alī b. Abi Ṭālib).⁶⁰ He intimated the heptadic cycles of *nāṭiq-asās-sāmit imams* repeating until the Great

Resurrection (*Qiyāmat al-qiyāmāt*):

Just as the heavenly bodies and elements move by motion received from the Soul and the Intelligence, so, too, souls and individuals are moved by religious laws under an impulse received from the Prophet and the *waṣī* [legatee] of every age. These are always in a series of sevens till the last phase is reached and the time of the resurrection has come, when obligations shall cease and sunna and laws disappear. These movement: of the heavens and religious laws are intended as a means for the Soul to reach its state of perfection, which lies in its reaching the level of Intelligence, becoming one with it and attaining the same actuality. This is the Great Resurrection. The moment the whole firmament is destroyed, all the elements and other things composite will be dissolved. Heaven will be split asunder; the planets will be scattered; the earth will be transformed and the sky shall be rolled up just as a scroll is rolled for the written book. On that day men will be called to their account, the good will be separated from the evil, the obedient from the disobedient: particular manifestations of evil will be united with the Devil, the seducer and liar. From the moment of movement up to the moment of rest is the beginning; from the moment of rest to infinity is perfection.⁶¹

Shahrastānī explained the Ismaili emphases on the *bāṭin* as the ordinances of the *shari‘a* are accorded more profound esoteric correspondences and functions. “Every [Divine] letter has its counterpart in the world, with its own individual nature through which it influences minds. It

⁶⁰ Neoplatonic thought of al-Nasafī onwards. Note here that al-Kirmānī’s Aristotelian Universe does not survive rather the Ismailis of the East reverted to the Neoplatonic ideas.

⁶¹ Shahrastānī. *Muslim Sects*. p. 166. This passage includes, perhaps, the earliest surviving Nizari Ismaili discussion of the Great Resurrection. *Muslim Sects*’s view of this Resurrection was apocalyptic. (Cf Part Two:3).

is in this way that knowledge acquired from words of instruction becomes food for the mind, just as food obtained from created things becomes nourishment for the body. God has decreed that every existing thing should have its sustenance from that out of which it was created.” The *da‘wa* in every age summoned people to the imam who possessed the hermeneutic capacity to light the path to salvation.

He ended the section with biographic information about Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and his teaching of *ta‘līm* (authoritative teaching of the imam). Shahrastānī’s translation into Arabic of Ḥasan’s four precepts often called the *al-Fuṣūl al-arba‘a* (*Four Chapters*) is one of the most important extant fragmentary texts attributed to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, the founder of Nizari Ismailism.⁶² (Cf.

Part Two:2-II). He wrote:

The leaders of the New Summons, however, abandoned this path (*ṭarīqa*) [the Ismaili teaching of earlier times] when Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ṣabbāḥ proclaimed his mission and confined himself to presenting compelling arguments (*ilzāmāt*)⁶³ to his opponents.

He obtained support, and secured himself in fortresses. He first went up to the fortress of Alamūt in the month of *Sha‘bān* in the year AH 483, after first having gone to the region where the *imām* dwelt, and learning from him how to preach the message to his contemporaries. On his return he began calling upon people to designate for every age an *imām* who is a true *imām* and *qā‘im*; and to distinguish the sect which will obtain salvation by this mark, namely, that it has an *imām* while the others do not. This is the substance of what he has said, with much repetition, in Arabic and Persian.⁶⁴

Shahrastānī’s account of the Ismailis and particularly of the Nizaris for whom he created a neologism: *al-da‘wa al-jadīda* (the New Summons) is unique in its content and tenor for its notable absence of defamatory language and negative predisposition.

⁶² Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 339ff

⁶³ The term *ilzām*, in the Nizari contexts, seems to have been a technical term representing compelling evidence or arguments—akin to the solution of a *kōan* in the Buddhist traditions. The term is found similarly purposed in the *Sargudhasht-i Sayyid-nā* see: JT. p. 98

⁶⁴ Shahrastānī. *Muslim Sects*. pp 167-168

The direct quotes from Ismaili texts indicate his thorough familiarity and access to the sources of early Ismaili history and doctrines as well as intimate knowledge of Nizari history and thought. Recent scholarship has made a strong case that Shahrastānī, himself, was a Nizari Ismaili although this finding has not been universally accepted. In his autobiography, the *Sayr wa sulūk*,⁶⁵ Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī referred to Shahrastānī as the *dā'ī al-du'āt* or the chief *dā'ī*:

my father, a man of the world who had heard the opinions of different kinds of people and had [received] his education from his maternal uncle, who was one of the attendants and students of the chief *dā'ī* (*dā'ī al-du'āt*), Tāj al-Dīn Shahrastānī, was less enthusiastic about following these [exoteric] regulations. He used to encourage me to study [all] the branches of knowledge, and to listen to the opinions of the followers of [various] sects and doctrines.⁶⁶

Madelung observed that although Shahrastānī is renowned as an outstanding Ash'arī theologian he was suspected of secretly inclining to Nizari Ismailism and to spread its message.

He added that Shahrastānī himself wrote in his Qur'ānic commentary

in which he employed specific Isma'ili terminology and methods of interpretation how his teacher in exegesis had revealed to him certain “noble words of the Family of the Prophet and their followers” which “pointed to hidden mysteries and solid foundation of Qur'ānic sciences.” He searched then for the “truthful ones” (*al-ṣādiqīn*) and found “a righteous servant of God” (*'abd min 'ibād Allāh al-ṣāliḥīn*) who taught him the true principles of Qur'ānic exegesis. This latter teacher, whose name al-Shahrastānī does not mention, was probably an Isma'ili. Though nothing more is known about his concrete relations with Alamūt, several of his extant works attest that he espoused Isma'ili views during all of his mature life. In one of his still unpublished works, entitled *The Wrestling Match* (*al-Muṣāra'a*), he undertook to refute the metaphysics of Ibn

⁶⁵ *Contemplation and Action*. pp 1-2; p. 20 fn4

⁶⁶ *Contemplation and Action* p. 3 Tr. p. 23. the term *dā'ī al-du'āt* is not commonly used in the Nizari texts. I have found it in Per-MS 32:36 *Risāla-yi Ta'līmīyya* attributed to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (Cf. Part Two:2-II-B); it is possible that Ṭūsī was demonstrating a familiarity with Fatimid usages in his *curriculum vitae*.

Sina on the basis of what he termed the Norm of Prophethood (*mi'yār al-nubuwwa*). In substance, his own position agreed fully with traditional Isma'ili theology.⁶⁷

Several other studies, especially the work of Diana Steigerwald, have affirmed the analyses of Muḥammad Riḍā Jalālī Nā'inī and Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh in 1964/1384 and 1967-8/1387 of Shahrastānī's affiliation to Nizari Ismailism.⁶⁸

Adam Gaiser compared Shahrastānī's *K. al-milal wa'l-niḥal* with two other extant doxographies written by Ismailis; namely: Abū Tammām's *Bāb al-Shayṭān* (*Chapter on Satan*), from the *K. al-Shajara* and heresiographical portion of Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī's *K. al-Zīna* (*The Book of Beauty*).⁶⁹

Neither of these authors espouse particularly Ismaili stances in their heresiographies and

Gaiser suggested that Shahrastānī had access to these two texts. He noted that this trend of avoidance of Isma'ili opinions in the body of the work can be viewed as an eastern Isma'ili literary convention common to heresiographical writing at the time.

The extensive quotation and paraphrasing of earlier (non-Isma'ili) sources by our heresiographical authors would further mitigate against the introduction of Isma'ili polemic into the 'body' of a given heresiographical text, leaving the 'frame'—the introduction and conclusion of the text—as the place where Isma'ili sentiment would properly be expressed.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, ed. *Isma'ili Contributions to Islamic Culture* (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1977). pp 59-60. Shahrastānī's Qur'ānic commentary and philosophical tract have since been published: Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm Shahrastānī, "Struggling with the Philosopher: a Refutation of Avicenna's Metaphysics: a new Arabic edition and English translation of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm b. Aḥmad al-Shahrastānī's Kitāb al-Muṣāra'a," (2001).; Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm Shahrastānī. *Keys to the Arcana: Shahrastānī's esoteric commentary on the Qur'an: a translation of the commentary on Sūrat al-Fātiḥa from Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī's Mafātīḥ al-asrār wa maṣābiḥ al-abrār*, Edited by M.A. Adharshab. Translated by Toby Mayer. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).; Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm Shahrastānī. *Majlis: discours sur l'ordre et la création*, Translated by Diane Steigerwald. (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1998).; Diane Steigerwald, "The Divine Word (Kalima) in Shahrastānī's Majlis," *Studies in Religion-Sciences Religieuses* 25 (1996).; EI2. Monnot, G. "al-Shahrastānī."

⁶⁸ Steigerwald, "The Divine Word (Kalima) in Shahrastānī's Majlis."

⁶⁹ Yūsuf b. Muḥammad Abū Tammām, "An Ismaili Heresiography: the "Bāb al-shayṭān" from Abū Tammām's Kitāb al-shajara," *Islamic history and civilization*. v. 23 (1998).; Ali. *Language and Heresy in Ismaili Thought*.

⁷⁰ Adam Gaiser, "Satan's Seven Specious Arguments: al-Shahrastānī's Kitāb al-milal wa-l-niḥal in an Isma'ili Context," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 19 (2008).

It is this feature as well as the confessional ambiguity in which the author participated that rendered Shahrastānī's doxography into an authoritative and oft-referenced source. Gaiser argued that "the 'body' of Isma'ili [doxographic] texts is the wrong place to look for specifically Isma'ili influences."

While his Ismailism is muted in the *K. al-milal* and he continues to be counted as an Ash'arī, the structure and location of the section on the Ismailis in the text is semiotically noteworthy.⁷¹ As mentioned above, the *bāb* (section) on the Muslim communities of interpretations is subdivided into six subsections (*faṣl* plural = *fuṣūl*) covering the Mu'tazilla, Jabriya, Ṣifātīya, Khārijīs, Murji'ya, Shi'a; his treatment of the Ismailis has typically been viewed as part of the *faṣl* on the Shi'a. This seems to be an editorial choice. At the end of each of the *bābs*, Shahrastānī enumerates the leaders of that community of interpretation—Kazi and Flynn in their translation have even placed a header "Conclusion" above each such enumerations.⁷² The *faṣl* on the Shi'a is divided into subdivisions: Kaisānīya, Zaidīya, Imāmīya and the Ghālīya (sic)—each of these is further divided into constitutive subgroups. The concluding enumeration of the leaders in the *faṣl* on the Shi'a occurs after the eleventh subgroup of the so called Ghālīya, namely the Nūṣairīya and the Ishāqīya and just before the discussion of the Ismailis. In view of this pattern, the *faṣl* on the Shi'a should be considered terminated after the enumeration of the leaders of the Shi'a and the writing about the Ismailis should be considered to be an independent *faṣl*. This is not to say that the Ismailis do not count among the Shi'a.

Shahrastānī's organising principle followed the famous ḥadīth of the seventy-two erring sects and the one saved one in the *Ummah* of Muḥammad. The *K. al-milal* lists a total of seventy-three

⁷¹ Shahrastānī. *Muslim Sects*, p. 3 his "orthodoxy (sic) was beyond doubt".

⁷² There is no such "*khātima*" in the Arabic edition used for this study.

communities of interpretation: Mu'tazilla (12); Jabriya (3); Şifātīya (3); Khārijīs (22); Murjī'ya (6); Shi'a (25); and the Ismailis and Nizaris. The essential point here is that Shahrastānī structured his writing about the seventy-three Muslim communities of interpretation into a heptad and Nizari Ismailism occurs at the culmination.

The narrative content of the account on the Ismailis as described here, itself, is also illustrative of his perspectives. Shahrastānī did not mention any of the negative constructions of the Ismailis found in other doxographies and his focalisation was on their theology, cosmology, eschatology and role of the imam in guidance towards salvation. The lengthiest section focussed on Nizari Ismailism and conveyed Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's teachings on the authoritative teaching of the imam. In this last section, he said of Hasan's summons that "[o]n his return [from Egypt and the Fatimid court] he began calling upon people to designate for every age an *imām* who is a true *imām* and *qā'im*; and to distinguish the sect which will obtain salvation by this mark, namely, that it has an *imām* while the others do not." Do the author's heuristic choices, here, indicate a statement of his own pre-commitments? Shahrastānī ended his account of the Muslim communities of interpretation:

وكم قد ناظرت القوم على المقدمات المذكورة فلم يتخطوا عن قولهم: أ فحتاج إليك؟ أو نسمع هذا منك؟ أو نتعلم عنك؟. وكم قد ساهلت القوم في الاحتياج، وقلت: أين المحتاج إليه؟ وأي شيء يقرره لي في الإلهيات؟ وما ذا يرسم لي في المعقولات؟ إذ المعلم لا يعني لعينه، وإنما يعني ليعلم. وقد سددم باب العلم، وفتحتم باب التسليم والتقليد، وليس يرضى عاقل بأن يعتقد مذهبا على غير بصيرة، وأن يسلك طريقا من غير بينة.

وإن كانت مبادئ الكلام تحكيما، وعواقبها تسليما فلا وربك لا يؤمنون حتى يحكموك فيما شجر بينهم ثم لا يجدوا في أنفسهم حرجا مما قضيت ويسلموا تسليما⁷³

⁷³ Shahrastānī. *K. Milāl wa'l-Niḥāl*. pp 234-235; Shahrastānī. *Muslim Sects*. p. 170.

TRANSLATION: I have had many a debate with these people about the aforementioned premises, but they only say, 'Do we need you? Shall we take any notice of what you say? Must we learn from you?' I have sometimes granted the need for an *imām*, and asked them:

Where is the needed one? What would he decide for me in metaphysics? What would he

While he invokes the criticism of the likes of al-Ghazālī against the Nizari Ismailis of abandoning reasoning and “opening the gate of submission and unquestioning obedience” (*bāb al-taslīm wa’l-taqlīd*) of the imam,⁷⁴ in his concluding remark of the *faṣl* on the Ismailis and the *bāb* on Muslim communities of interpretation, he balances this with a quote from the Qur’ān: Nevertheless, it is true that in dispute one should begin by recourse to a judge and end by accepting his judgment: ‘No, by thy Lord! They cannot be true believers until they make thee a judge in their disputes, and feel in themselves no resistance to your decisions, but submit to them whole-heartedly.’⁷⁵

Prima facie this seems to be a condemnation; however, the closer more careful reading renders this ambiguity as an affirmation of Nizari Ismailism. In this hermeneutic, God vows: “No, by thy Lord!” (*falā wa rabbika*) and speaking of the hypocrites says that they cannot have faith until (*lā yu’minūna ḥattā*) they resort to the prophet in their disagreements as the judge and accept that judge’s judgment in the same manner that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s doctrine calls for the acceptance of the *mu’allim al-ṣādiq* (truthful teacher) and his authoritative teaching (*ta’līm*) for the distinction of truth from error.⁷⁶ Furthermore, the Qur’ānic verse inverts the blind faith (*taqlīd*) of the accusers into the preferred whole-hearted submission (*yusallimū taslīman*)—anything else then is unbelief.⁷⁷

1. SHAHRASTĀNĪ’S APPROACH

lay down for me in matters intellectual? For a teacher is not sought for his own sake but in order to teach. You have in reality closed the gate of knowledge and opened the door of unquestioning submission and blind obedience.

No rational person would accept a doctrine without understanding it, or follow a path unless it has been clearly proven to be the right one. Nevertheless, it is true that in dispute one should begin by recourse to a judge and end by accepting his judgment: ‘No, by thy Lord! They cannot be true believers until they make thee a judge in their disputes, and feel in themselves no resistance to your decisions, but submit to them whole-heartedly.’ (Q 4:65)

⁷⁴ Note: Kazi and Flynn’s translation of this phrase inserts “unquestioning” before *taslīm* (submission) to fit their reading from a Sunni perspective of Shahrastānī.

⁷⁵ Q4:65; Shahrastānī. *K. Milal wa’l-Niḥal*. p. 235; Shahrastānī. *Muslim Sects*. p. 170.

⁷⁶ Implicitly Shahrastānī’s text equates those who do not accept the imam to hypocrites.

⁷⁷ The word *taqlīd* does not occur in the Qur’ān

Shahrastānī's account became an import paradigm for the writing about the Ismailis. For instance, Abū Zayd 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn's (d. 1406/808) discussion of authority and the tenets of imamate in Shi'ism written a century and half later drew upon and summarised this work and referred the reader back to Shahrastānī's detailed account:

There are many divergences within each of these Shi'ah persuasions. However, the sects mentioned are the most prominent ones. For an exhaustive study of Shi'ah sects, one should consult the books on religions and sects (*al-milal wa-n-niḥal*) by Ibn Hazm, ash-Shahrastani, and others. They contain additional information.

It is noteworthy that while Ibn Khaldūn referred the readers to both Ibn Ḥazm whose writing amounts to an anti-Shi'i screed and Shahrastānī—Ibn Khaldūn, himself, modelled his section on the Shi'a on the latter's account.⁷⁸

Many author-historians, including those studied for this research, were tied to one of the two major strands of writing about the Ismailis—either the vitriolic writing against them collected by Ibn al-Nadīm and then amplified by the likes of al-Baghdādī and Niẓām al-Mulk or the much less polemical account of al-Shahrastānī. The trend-lines of writing about the Ismailis described in this survey were heightened in the discourses associated with the Nizaris as their *da'wa* expanded into the realm of the Saljuqs and the Nizaris consolidated their castellan polity. Several centuries after the destruction of this Nizari polity when their political threat had long-waned, the *Dabistān-i madhāhib* (*The School of Religions*) completed in 1670 drew upon the paradigm set-up by Shahrastānī. The anonymous Pārsī author of this doxography supplemented his study of the Nizaris with material from Rashid al-Din's JT yielding a neutral and informed account of early Nizari Ismailism. Meanwhile nineteenth and twentieth century

⁷⁸ I Friedlaender, "The Heterodoxies of the Shiites in the Presentation of ibn Ḥazm," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 28 (1907). particularly pp 36-37; Ibn Khaldūn, 'Abd al-Raḥmān. *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, Translated by Franz Rosenthal, and N. J. Dawood. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969). pp 265-270. It is also worth noting that in the abridged editions of Rosenthal's translation the editor, N.J Dawood, did not see it fit to include Ibn Khaldun's discussion of Shi'i tenets of authority.

Western scholars based their approaches on the earlier prejudiced paradigms and their intensifications by Juwayni and others following him. Consequently, in the twenty-first century, the University of Chicago Library and other libraries following the system of categorisation of the Library of Congress still maintain a subject category “Assassins (Ismailites)” for Nizari Ismailism.⁷⁹ To this effect, the teaching of the Ismaili interpretations of Islam in countless university classrooms is a travesty that reflects the continued adoptions of the false notions of “orthodoxy and heresy” and the privileged institutionalisation of Sunni narratives.

III. Theories and Practices of Prejudice

The repetitions of narrative structures demonstrated in this survey of a handful of works and their continuities in different categories of texts indicates that these heresiographic constructions were part of the training for legists and bureaucrats. Muzaffar Alam wrote that it is clear that

a creative tension existed from the very start of Islamic history, concerning those views and practices that could or could not be accommodated within the framework of that which was considered properly ‘Islamic’. The traditions of the Prophet (*ḥadīṣ*) (sic) to the effect that ‘disagreements in my community (*ikhtilāf-u ummatī*) are a blessing’, may have initially lent legitimacy to the view that a certain plurality of opinions was natural and even desirable in this context. However, it became clear soon enough that this notion of ‘pluralism’ was largely confined to the legal sphere, while dogmatics were to be excluded from this flexible definition. Hence, ‘heresiographies’ came to be written in order to define what was beyond the pale, of which a particularly comprehensive example comes from the mid-eleventh century, in the form of Shahrastānī’s noted *Kitāb al-milal wa’l niḥal* (Book of Religions and Sects). In the world where works such as this were read and written, it was evident that a sphere existed of ‘heretics and renegades’ (*zindīq and mulḥid*), who would never be integrated into the mainstream of Islamic thought.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ [https://catalog.lib.uchicago.edu/vufind/alphabrowse/home?source=topic&from=Assassins%20\(Ismailites\)+--+Historiography—retrieved May 2016](https://catalog.lib.uchicago.edu/vufind/alphabrowse/home?source=topic&from=Assassins%20(Ismailites)+--+Historiography—retrieved May 2016); [https://catalog.loc.gov/vwebv/search?searchArg=Assassins%20\(Ismailites\)—Historiography.&searchCode=SUBJ%2B&searchType=1&recCount=25—retrieved May 2016](https://catalog.loc.gov/vwebv/search?searchArg=Assassins%20(Ismailites)—Historiography.&searchCode=SUBJ%2B&searchType=1&recCount=25—retrieved May 2016)

⁸⁰ Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India, 1200-1800*. p. 190. Ironically, the study details how Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* commissioned by the Ismaili ruler of Quhistān was adopted as a foundational text of ethics and government by Indo-Islamic Sunni rulers.

The transmission of these notions preserved and amplified Sunni prejudices across social networks spanning generations. Gordon Allport quoted a definition of prejudice as:
a pattern of hostility in interpersonal relations which is directed against an entire group, or against its individual members; it fulfills a specific irrational function for its bearer.⁸¹

While prejudice is often a “matter of blind conformity with prevailing folkways” and rarely acted upon, he identified a typology of five stages of acting out of prejudice: 1) anti-locution or relatively mild verbalisation of antipathies towards the out-group; 2) avoidance; 3) discrimination; 4) physical attack; and 5) extermination. Given similar shifts and close parallels in the treatment of the Ismailis, it is worth quoting Allport’s explanations of transition from

verbal rejection to physical attack and extermination in his post World War II study:

Violence is always an outgrowth of milder states of mind. Although most barking (anti-locution) does not lead to biting, yet there is never a bite without previous barking. Fully seventy years of political anti-Semitism of the verbal order preceded the discriminatory Nürnberg Laws passed by the Hitler regime. Soon after these Laws were passed the violent program of extermination began. Here we see the not infrequent progression: anti-locution → discrimination → physical violence. Verbal attacks in the time of Bismark were relatively mild. Under Hitler they had become ferocious: the Jews were loudly and officially blamed for every conceivable crime from sex perversion to world conspiracy.

But even the sponsors of verbal aggression in Germany were apparently astonished at the final consequences of their campaign. At the Nürnberg trials both Rosenberg and Streicher (the philosophers and publicists of the Nazi movement) disclaimed responsibility for the extermination of two and a half million Jews at Auschwitz because they “had no idea” that their preachment could issue into such action. Yet the Nazi officer in charge of the mass murders at Auschwitz, Colonel Hoess, made it clear that it was precisely this incessant verbal indoctrination that convinced him and his fellow executioners that the Jews were in fact to blame for everything and that they ought to be exterminated. It is apparent, therefore, that under certain circumstances there will be stepwise progression from verbal aggression to violence, from rumor to riot, from gossip to genocide.⁸²

The antipathy of centuries of construction of the Ismailis as the threatening other engendered avoidance and discrimination. In such contexts, a negative act or false rumour could easily incite and trigger physical violence and extermination. Would the pre-modern authors referenced in this survey have the same misgivings about the enactments of their calls against

⁸¹ Gordon W. Allport. *The Nature of Prejudice*, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958). p. 12. from W. Ackerman and Marie Jahoda. *Anti-Semitism and Emotional Disorder*. New York: Harper 1950 p. 4.

⁸² *Prejudice* pp 56-57. It is particularly chilling to read this at a time when the US political discourse has highlighted endemic ignorance and xenophobias of the populace—orchestrated by demagoguery and extremism.

the Ismailis or to annihilate the “heretics” when those labelled as such were massacred? This leads to the question: what were the functions of heresiographic and refutation literature in their contexts?

The nature and content of this *firaq* and particularly the *radd* literature is unlikely to have dissuaded someone who was accepting of the Ismaili *da‘wa*. Rather the tenor and the texts were designed to demarcate and solidify walls of separation between the in-group and the out-group—in Allport’s terms to cause avoidance and discrimination. The primary audiences were the readerly classes such as the ‘*ulamā*’, bureaucrats and the rulers. Functionally, the tropes related to social mores, rituals, and intellectual ideas provided their readers coding of usages and vocabularies of watchwords to uncloak and call out those they would mark as beyond the pale. Extrinsically, the Ismailis did not differ from their co-religionist and others in their societies, so nefarious associations and fictive fabrications were woven into their origin narratives and they were placed in assemblages of out-groups and tied to their negative stereotypes. Following Patricia Crone, her student Bella Tendler Krieger has argued that “heresiographical accounts can often preserve actual sectarian customs that were merely misunderstood or misrepresented by the orthodox (sic) establishment”.⁸³ Different rituals and practices would have been the primary foci of their identifications; however, very little evidence of these survives in the historical records. Ibn al-Athīr drawing upon Ibn al-Jawzī reported:

The earliest anything was known about them, I mean, about this latest movement, which has become notorious as the Bāṭinīs or Ismā‘īlīs, was in the reign of Sultan Malikshāh. Eighteen of them gathered and prayed at the time of the Feast in Sāveh. The city prefect got to hear of them and put them in prison under arrest. Later, after enquiries about them, they were released. This is the first gathering they had.

⁸³ Bella Tendler Krieger, “New Evidence for the Survival of Sexually Libertine Rites Among Some Nuṣayrī ‘Alawīs of the Nineteenth Century,” in *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone*, ed. Patricia Crone, et al. (2015). Bella Tendler Krieger p. 565

They preached their message to a muezzin, a man from Sāveh, who was living in Isfahan but he did not respond to their call. Fearing that he might report them, they killed him. He was their first victim. Suspicion [of involvement] fell on a carpenter, called Ṭāhir. He was killed as a warning to the public and dragged by a leg through the markets. He was their first ‘martyr’. His father was a preacher who came to Baghdad with Sultan Barkyāruq in the year 486 [1093] and rose in his favour. He later went to Basra and acted as *cadi* there. Subsequently he went on a mission to Kirmān, where the populace killed him in a riot that took place there. They claimed that he was a Bāṭinī.⁸⁴

In this case, the eighteen may have participated in a separate ritual as Lewis suggested or rather they overtly prayed with the congregation as Shi‘is—holding their hands to their sides rather than crossed in front during the *namāz-i ‘id* (festival prayer) and this, it seems, caused them to be taken to the *muḥtasib*. Patricia Crone examined several tropes directed at out-groups such as the Ismailis and has endeavoured to detail the use of these tropes within and outside of Islamic contexts as well as attempted to correlate them with actual cultural norms and practices that would have been construed as extreme in the heresiographer’s writing.⁸⁵ These tropes may have certain useful information but the analyses demand extreme caution. In this regard Stern concluded

Needless to say, most of these accusations are based, as usual, on the anti-Isma‘īlī “black legend” rather than facts. It is, however, very likely that there is a small residuum of fact: the Isma‘īlī idea of the Mahdī or Qā‘im had a certain antinomian tendency, as he was considered a prophet who would abrogate the Law of the Prophet Muḥammad, and it would have been logical for people who thought they participated in the eschatological epoch of the appearance of the Mahdī to convert into reality eschatological expectations.⁸⁶

The authors of the refutations may have been responding to specific sets of circumstances—for example, the negative characterisations of the Ismailis by Niẓām al-Mulk in face of what he perceived as an infiltration of the Saljuq realm and court by the opponents of his Shafī‘ī Sunnism—shorn of their context, in the course of time, such negative constructions become reified. Hans-Georg Gadamer has argued that if “we fail to transpose ourselves into the historical horizon from which the traditionary text speaks, we will misunderstand the

⁸⁴ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. Sub anno 494/1100-1101 p. 40; Ibn al-Jawzī, and D. S. Margoliouth, “Devil’s Delusion.”; Lewis. *Assassins*, p. 35

⁸⁵ Patricia Crone. *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran*, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). for example pp 266ff

⁸⁶ Stern. *Studies in Early Isma‘īlism*. p. 206

significance of what it has to say to us.”⁸⁷ In subsequent generations, with historical distance from the phenomena, the author-historian already effected by the history because it—in the words of Gadamer—“determines in advance both what seems to us worth inquiring about and what will appear as an object of investigation, and we more or less forget half of what is really there—in fact, we miss the whole truth of the phenomenon—when we take its immediate appearance as the whole truth.”⁸⁸ This new “whole truth” then is the reification of the negative constructions of the previous generation’s writing. As this survey has shown the narratives became more pernicious in time. Allport found that those who exhibited patterns of hostility and bigotry in the absence of sound understandings of the other, even when exposed to better information and understandings were able, perhaps, to change their beliefs but not their attitudes.⁸⁹

IV. Historic Consciousness or Hermeneutic Trap

Over time repeated patterns of re-tellings and writings become part of the structures by which societies hand down beliefs about groups of people from generation to generation resulting in a semblance of collective memory and historic consciousness. Historic consciousness demarcating the boundaries of interactions and behaviour between in-groups and out-groups, which solidifies into impenetrable barriers at moments of conflict to the detriment of the out-groups. This process of memory “‘reincarnates’, ‘resurrects’ and ‘re-cycles,’ and makes the past ‘reappear’ and live again in the present, it cannot perform historically, since it refuses to keep the past in the past”—especially when the imputations upon the out-groups are fancifully

⁸⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer. *Truth and Method*, Translated by Joel Weinsheimer, and Donald G. Marshall. (London; New York: Continuum, 2004). p. 302

⁸⁸ *Truth and Method* p. 300

⁸⁹ Allport. *Prejudice*. pp 12-14

pernicious and morally repugnant.⁹⁰ This development of ideology, which is the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence, perpetuates and reinforces conscious and unconscious patterns of thought, behaviour and practices towards the other. Analyses of the writing about the Ismailis demonstrate that the attitudes formulated in the heresiographies and refutations not only informed but underpinned the outlooks in other literary genres as diverse as biographical dictionaries, theological tracts, and especially, the annalistic and dynastic chronicles. The trend-lines over time indicate intensification of antipathies; the 13th/7th-14th/8th century author-historians may have accommodated the extinguished Fatimid empire among the *duwal*; nonetheless, their hostilities towards the Nizari Ismailis were amplified in their *ta'rikh* texts.

The patterns of uses of sources and historical writing about the Nizari Ismailis which demonstrates intellectual continuities with the prejudices of the refutations can be usefully situated using the concept of the hermeneutic circle, originally developed by theologian and biblical scholar Friedrich Schleiermacher, in which the interpreter's understanding of a text is a vital precursor to interpreting it. Such interpretations involve repeated circular movements between understanding the whole to apprehend the parts and understanding parts of the text to apprehend the whole. As Schleiermacher put it, the "vocabulary and the history of an author's age together form a whole from which his writings must be understood as a part."⁹¹ Narrowed down to the textual level, "we cannot understand the meaning of the whole text apart from understanding the meaning of the individual sentences, and even words, in the text. On the other hand, we cannot properly understand the individual parts apart from some

⁹⁰ G. M. Spiege, "Memory and History: Liturgical Time and Historical Time," *History and Theory* 41 (2002).

⁹¹ Friedrich Schleiermacher. *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, Translated by Heinz Kimmerle. (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for the American Academy of Religion, 1977). p. 113

grasp of the whole.”⁹² This implies a static circularity which in Gadamer’s elaboration rendered the concept into a spiral—though he continued to call it a circle.⁹³ In this, the understanding of the parts is achieved through an explanation of the whole and appropriation of this new information leads to further/newer understanding of the parts; similarly, the understanding of the whole is achieved through an explanation of the parts and appropriation of this new information leads to further/newer understanding of the whole. In this sense, the world-views adopted by an author-historian or even a generation of such scholars are formed by repeated circular movements between their constructions and understanding of themselves as the in-group and others as the out-groups (parts) and apprehensions of their totalising world-views (whole). The author-historians derived both the view of the parts and the whole—their views of the pernicious “heretics” and their entire society—from such semblances of collective memory and historic consciousness. The author-historians, then, were both the producers and products of the generalised collective memory and historic consciousness. Their exposure to, adoption and recycling of the constructions of the dichotomies of the “in” versus “out” groups in their own genres of writing stemming from the *firaq* (heresiological/doxological) and *radd* (refutation) literature defined the bounds and norms of their society. As Daftary concluded “the ‘black legend’ invented by the chief anti-Isma‘ili polemicists of the tenth century came to be accepted as an accurate description by successive generations of the mediaeval Muslim writers and by Muslim society at large; Muslims were now prepared to apply any term of abuse to the Isma‘ilis, even before Nizari Isma‘ilis themselves became targets for particular defamations.”⁹⁴ These self-perpetuating spirals of (mis)-understandings then become the

⁹² Dan R. Stiver. *The Philosophy of Religious Language: Sign, Symbol, and Story*, (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996). p. 79

⁹³ Gadamer. *Truth and Method*. pp 267ff

⁹⁴ Daftary. *Assassin Legends*. p. 27

hermeneutic trap which cages the “other” between prejudice defined as the “blind conformity with prevailing folkways” of antipathy and the sword.

As a result of his confessional ambiguity of having one foot in Ash‘arī Sunnism and the other foot in Nizari Ismailism, Shahrastānī was able to step out of the trap and create a different hermeneutic spiral. Shahrastānī’s construal of the Ismailis became paradigmatic for some writers with the distance of time and once the Ismailis long-ceased to be religious and socio-political threats to the establishing order. His near-contemporaries and immediate successors, the Ilkhanid author-historians, for the most part, adhered to previous paradigms of harsher treatment of the Ismailis. This analyses of the content and the structure of Shahrastānī’s *K. milal wa’l-niḥal* has revealed a new layer of evidence supporting his purported affiliations with Nizari Ismailism.

In this chapter I have surveyed *firaq* and *radd* literature which formed a bedrock that informed Sunni scholarly world-views and have identified frameworks for understanding its epistemologies, approaches which created and perpetuated norms of historic consciousness and collective memory for generations of Islamicate—particularly Sunni—scholars and bureaucrats. Their historical horizons of collective memory were derived not just from the evidence the authors of these polemics had at hand, but rather from conscious and unconscious choices they made between real, reference and representation. Their epistemological visions determined in advance what constituted relevant data. For centuries their paradigms of collective memory and historic consciousness came to construe the equilibrium of society in the dispensations of rulers (*duwal* sing: *dawla*) who, in the ideal, conformed to and promoted conformance among their populace to norms of piety and belief

and averred against heresies. For them, the Ismailis were construed and constructed as a paramount heretical threat. These authors being both consumers and purveyors of such information, reified and perpetuated the notions of their inherited historic consciousness in their narrative constructions and writing. The Ilkhanid chroniclers also reflected and amplified such epistemologies of story-type and mythos in their writing within the *ta'rikh* genre of the 13-14th/7-8th centuries. The prevailing structure of Persian historical writing became the dynastic chronicle. Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and Qashani construed the eight rulers of the Nizari polity in this manner as an Islamicate dynasty. In the next chapter I analyse how the Ilkhanid author-historians, immersed or even caged in this collective memory and subject to the prejudices described here, incorporated into their chronicles the Ismaili *da'wa* literature that fell into their hands and how these fragments should be excavated.

3. Nizari Intellectual Traditions and Ilkhanid Historiography

AFTER THE MONGOL CAPTURE OF ALAMUT, the Ilkhanid historians made use of the Nizari *da'wa* literature that fell into their hands in writing Ismaili history. The Nizari texts used by Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and Qashani are not known to independently exist. What was the nature and function of this Nizari *da'wa* literature? Are there discernible continuities and disjunctures with Ismaili literature before the establishment of the Nizari polity in Iran and after its destruction? How can the traces of past actuality be extracted from this “*da'wa* literature” embedded in Ilkhanid historiography? To understand and analyse the nature, structures and functions of the Nizari texts embedded in Ilkhanid historical writing, I begin this chapter with an examination of the nature of the broader Ismaili *da'wa* literature. I demonstrate by an analysis of some 1300 titles that the Ismailis did not write history in the *ta'rikh* genre until the fifteenth/ninth century. Placing the Nizari intellectual traditions within the continuum of Ismaili *da'wa* literature and its multiple *raisons d'être*, I postulate that *sīra* (biography) and *manāqib* (excellences and virtues) genres predominate in Ismaili historiography and most importantly that historical data is only incidentally embedded in the doctrinal writing.

In this chapter I also explore how the biographies and contexts of the Ilkhanid author-historians influenced what and how they wrote. How did their relative proximities—both geographic and temporal to the Nizaris and the events surrounding their polity—inform and influence both their predispositions and their chronicles? How should the materials used by the Ilkhanid chroniclers be extracted being sensitive to the norms and uses of their genre and subsequently to those of the sources they embedded? In the snapshots of the lives of three Ilkhanid authors, Rashid al-Din is found to be a rare exception in his more balanced treatment of the Ismailis. Since Quatremère's conclusions of 1830/1246, this *wazīr* has been regarded as

being of Jewish origins and from Hamadan. In this examination I have pieced together evidence that he grew up in a Nizari fortress and may have been born there—a formative experience which clearly influenced his assessments and attitudes towards the Nizaris. In the following section I examine the nature of Ismaili *da‘wa* literature and place Nizari texts within these wider traditions.

I. Nizari Intellectual Traditions

The assessment of the intellectual output of the Alamut era by recent scholarship has been framed both in relation to and as a continuation of that of the Fatimid Empire. According to Daftary, the Ismailis made “significant contributions to Islamic culture during their Fāṭimid “golden age” (sic) particularly, during the so-called classical Fāṭimid period (297-487/909-1094) when Ismā‘īlī thought and literature attained their summit” when the *dā‘īs* produced many works on theology, philosophy, jurisprudence and a number of other subjects. Such a construal of a golden age inherently implies that all other ages decline to a diminished status and accordingly he explained:

preoccupied with their survival in an extremely hostile milieu, the Persian Nizārīs who attained a generally limited level of literacy did not produce any substantial volume of literature during the Alamūt period. Indeed, the Nizārī community did not produce outstanding theologians comparable to the learned *dā‘ī*-authors of the Fāṭimid period and the later *dā‘ī-muṭlaqs* of the Musta‘lī-Ṭayyibī community in Yaman. By contrast, the Persian Nizārī community, which was often involved in long-drawn military entanglements, produced capable military personalities who also acted as commandants of the major strongholds and conducted limited *da‘wa* activities as *dā‘īs*.¹

The Ilkhanid chronicles paint a different picture. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, who founded the Nizari polity in Iran, is famed for his military and strategic prowess, however, it is noteworthy that the chronicles do not report his extensive participation in any military encounters beyond,

¹ Farhad Daftary, “Persian Historiography of the Early Nizārī Ismā‘īlī’s,” *Iran* 30 (1992). Very similar language is found in other studies: Daftary. *IL-B*. p. 46; Farhad Daftary, “The Medieval Ismā‘īlīs of the Iranian Lands,” in *The Sultan’s Turret: Studies in Persian and Turkish Culture*, ed. Carole Hillenbrand, and Clifford Edmund Bosworth (Leiden: Brill, 2000). Farhad Daftary pp 43-81; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 302.

perhaps, the defences of the fortress of Alamut and implicitly, in instructing his military commanders. He, himself, is not known to have taken to the field of battle. The JT rhetorically records that from the time Hasan ascended to the fortress, to his death thirty-five years later, “he never descended from the castle and he did not come out of the residence (*sarāy*) in which he lived more than twice” and further that this time “he passed inside his residence, which was a sanctum for devotion² and a home—reading books, establishing the works of the *da‘wa* and busied in administering the affairs of the polity and in unending abstinence, temperance and piety.”³ Similarly, the *muḥtashams* or Nizari governors of Quhistān, Shihāb al-Dīn⁴ (d. after 1246/644) and one of his successors Nāṣir al-Dīn (d. 1257/655) were learned men of such great stature that the young poly-math, Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī wrote to the former seeking his input on various philosophical questions and after adopting Ismailism came under the tutelage of the latter and dedicated his *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* (*Nasirean Ethics*) to him.⁵

Ivanow, writing in the mid-twentieth century, also implied a higher point achieved during the Fatimid era. He wrote that the “Nizari-Musta‘lian split was the catastrophe from which

² The function may also have been for communal ritual practices and learning. There is no information on where such activities took place at Alamut other than this brief reference; the prayer ground where the Qiyāma was declared by Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihī’l-salām and the building of mosques in the time of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan.

³ TJG. pp 215-216; HWC. p. 683; JT. pp 133-134; ZT p. 154.

⁴ Jūzjānī wrote of him: “I [Jūzjānī] found him a person of infinite learning, with wisdom, science, and philosophy, in such wise, that a philosopher and sage like unto him there was not in the territory of Khurāsān. He used greatly to cherish poor strangers and travellers; and such Musalmans of Khurāsān as had come into proximity with him he was wont to take under his guardianship and protection. On this account his assemblies contained some of the most distinguished of the ‘Ulama of Khurāsān, such as that Imām of the Age, Afḍal-ud-Dīn, the Bamiānī, and Imām Shams-ud-Dīn, Khusrau-Shāhī, and other ‘Ulama of Khurāsān, who had come to him; and he had treated all of them with honour and reverence, and showed them much kindness.” Jūzjānī. *Ṭabaqāt*. p. 183 Jūzjānī. *Ṭabaqāt-Tr.* p. 1197

⁵ Naṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ṭūsī. *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, Edited by Muḥtabā Mīnuvī, and ‘Alī Riḏā Haydari. (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Khwārazmī, 1978).; Naṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ṭūsī. *The Nasirean Ethics (Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī)*, Translated by G. M. Wickens. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964).

Ismailism has never recovered. While the followers of Musta'lian persuasion found refuge in the Yaman, and thence shifted to India, the rest of the Ismaili world, rejecting the usurpers (sic), remained stunned for over seventy years before the first Nizari works began to appear.”⁶ Hodgson, too, noted that the sources “to understand the world where the Nizaris rose and struggled are far less ample than for the West in the same period. No archives, few letters or documents; few original manuscripts in general.” He continued:

The attempt to give the Nizaris their due depend largely on the texts retained among the Nizaris themselves. These are, however, meagre, especially in point of history. Ivanow says that even for modern Nizari writers—whose rare productions are not generally available—early Nizari history must be based on the usual Sunni tradition. The few early texts we have serve to clarify what their enemies can tell, rather than to develop a story on their own. If the Nizaris are no longer so rigidly secretive as once, it seems they have little to secrete. Even for doctrine, there was evidently no canon of authoritative Nizari writings which would be preserved with special care. The voluminous writings of the Alamut imams are mostly lost; what we possess, either in Arabic or Persian, is very miscellaneous, and often of unknown authorship. Yet we can place at least some materials in almost every period.⁷

Prima facie, the lustre of the Fatimid intellectual output may appear to be greater; however, quantitative and qualitative analyses suggest that such assumptions warrant re-assessment. The first chapter of Poonawala’s *Biobibliography* covering the “Pre-Fāṭimids and Fāṭimids from ca. Middle of third/ninth century to 524/1130” lists 51 authors and ascribes 302 texts to them.⁸ While this number of texts is substantial, many of the *dā’ī*-authors functioned outside of Fatimid domains, patronage, control and inspiration; they hailed from and for the most part lived in Iran and Iraq. Some of the leading thinkers had only short-lived associations with the Empire—Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī was in Cairo for approximately five years (1014-1019/405-410);⁹ Nāṣir-i Khusraw for seven years (1046-1052/437-444)—their most productive works were carried out at a distance from the Fatimid Empire. A number of

⁶ Ivanow. *IL2*. p. 9

⁷ Hodgson. *OA*. pp 28-30 [MGSH’s dissertation was completed in 1951 and was published as *OA* four years later]

⁸ Poonawala. *BBB*. pp 31-132 and 316-320

⁹ Paul E. Walker. *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Ḥākim*, (London;New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999). p 9 and 24

important *dā'īs* espoused Qarmatī notions of imamate which expected the return of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl as the *Qā'im* and therefore were opposed to the Fatimid imamate—namely: Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, al-Nasafī¹⁰ and even al-Sijistānī who adopted the Fatimid cause late in life.¹¹ The six authors at the end of the chronological list wrote their eleven texts during the so-called “Alamut period”. The table below shows that the production of these four categories of *dā'ī*-authors accounts for over one third of the most important writings of Ismaili thought and literature; excluding these four categories, the total count of Fatimid treatises goes down from 325 to 182.

A. All that glitters is not gold!

The purpose here is not hair-splitting iconoclasm nor a parochial defence of Nizari thought and literature but to assert that the construction of the Fatimid era as a golden age and the thought and literature of that age as an epitome is arbitrary and cannot be taken as a monolithic output of a centralised or coordinated endeavour. Rather, that its contributors espoused variant theological and intellectual perspectives working individually or as part of different *da'wa* structures and even conformed to conflicting interpretations of Ismailism. That is to say that the thought and literature was not always patronised by the Fatimids nor was all of it in favour of them—even if at later stages some of these contrary texts were adopted into what may be termed a Fatimid “canon”.

Table 3a: Fatimid Era Authors and their Works

Category	pre-Fatimid	Qarmatī	Fatimid	Alamut era	Other
Texts	15	13 + 29	140	11	94 + 23

¹⁰ He was executed for keeping the proceeds of *qisās* (reparations) for himself rather than forwarding them to the (Fatimid?) imam. On this basis, perhaps al-Nasafi ought to be counted as a Fatimid rather than a Qarmatī *dā'ī*? Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā'īlism*. p. 224; “Sāmānid State.” pp 205ff;

¹¹ Walker. *EPS.*; Paul E. Walker, “Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī and the Development of Ismaili Neoplatonism,” diss., University of Chicago, 1974).

This table disaggregates the 325 works listed collectively as “Pre-Fatimid and Fatimid from the middle of the third/ninth century to 524/1130” and anonymous Fatimid works listed by Poonawala into four categories: i) pre-Fatimid, ii) Qarmatī, iii) Fatimid, iv) Alamut era.¹²

The 29 texts tabulated under Qarmatī pertain to Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī whose later works were written in favour of the Fatimids; however, for a greater part of his life he did not recognise the Fatimid line of imams. The category “Other” lists 23 anonymous texts presumed to be written during the “classical Fatimid period”. The other 94 texts are attributed to the Fatimid era *dā’īs* al-Kirmānī (34), al-Shīrāzī (29) and Nāṣir-i Khusraw (41). While these *dā’īs* were loyal to the Fatimid cause, their works were written at a distance from the Fatimid court and independent of its influence and in some cases even at variance with each other. As a result the Fatimid era output can be counted as 140 + 94 (of the three *dā’īs*) + 29 (al-Sijistānī)—a total of 263 major and minor works. Simply, this body of literature was produced during a time period, some 190 years, labeled the “classical Fatimid period” from 909/297 to the Nizari-Musta‘lian schism beginning in 1095/487.¹³ Comparable assessments of the thought and literature after this schism—labeled the “Alamut period” (1090/483-1256/654)—should include, for consistency, the works of all Ismaili *dā’ī*-authors both, Nizari and Musta‘lian. This yields almost 250 treatises over the 166 year period written by some 28 authors not counting anonymous or still to be identified texts in various collections.¹⁴

Table 3b: Ismaili Texts produced during the Alamut era

Fatimid	Nizari - Iran	Nizari - Syria	Nizari - India	Musta‘lian	Total

¹² Poonawala. *BBB*. pp 31-132; 316-320

¹³ Does this indicate MY pre-commitment and that of a bulk of scholarship which has privileged the Nizari?

¹⁴ The turning points of 1094 or more correctly 1095/487 and 1090/483 refer to the Nizari-Musta‘lian succession dispute at the death of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s control of Alamut respectively.

11	26	19	120 ginans	91	267

In addition to this quantitative comparison, if consistent qualitative measures were to be devised and applied to the entire corpus, perhaps the constructions of a “golden age” would prove the yard stick to, in fact, be pyrite and that the more precise assessments might look to the functions of the individual texts in their contexts.

Husayn al-Hamdani wrote that the Ismaili literature in the Yemen differed from that of the Fatimid times in that it had

lost its widespread political and revolutionary character and its principal task has become the preservation of the intellectual and religious treasures of the old *Da‘wat*, a duty and a privilege which to-day assists in cementing the bonds of union between the small communities of the Isma‘ilis of the Yemen and of India, and which ensures a permanent monument to all those who fought and struggled for the continued existence of their religious independence.¹⁵

Further he noted that the venerable al-Mu‘ayyad fī’l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 1078/470), the *Dā‘ī al-Du‘āt* (chief *dā‘ī*) of the Fatimid Imam-caliph al-Mustaṣṣir bi-Allāh, was “the spiritual father of the *Da‘wat* of the Yemen,” and that “he left in his works a legacy for the *Da‘wat* in the Yemen.”¹⁶

This statement implies an active bequest, however, the process, rather, was that of adoption

and preservation. Tahera Qutbuddin in her study of al-Mu‘ayyad’s poetry stated that a role

similar to that played by al-Mu‘ayyad in the Ṭayyibī *da‘wa* was played in the Nizārī one by Nāṣir-i Khusrau, a Fatimid *da‘ī* who refers in his poetry to his “teacher” (*ustad*) al-Mu‘ayyad Nāṣir died c. 481/1088, six years before al-Mustaṣṣir (d. 487/1094), and therefore could not have taken sides in the Musta‘lī-Nizār schism that occurred upon al-Mustaṣṣir’s death. However, since Nāṣir had composed a great many theological works in Persian, he played a more important role in the Nizārī *da‘wa* than the Musta‘lian-Ṭayyibī *da‘wa*, since the majority of Nizār’s followers were in Persian speaking lands.

The Persian poetry of Nāṣir-i Khusrau is similar to al-Mu‘ayyad’s in its ideological content. It is considered by Edward Browne to be “unique” in its sincerity. simplicity of language. freedom

¹⁵ Husayn F. al-Hamdani, “The History of the Ismā‘īlī *Da‘wat* and its Literature During the Last Phase of the Fāṭimid Empire,” *JRAS* 64, no. 1 (1932).

¹⁶ *Da‘wat and its Literature*

from verbal conceits, contempt for flattery, complete devotion to the Esoteric Doctrines ... these features are also observable in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry.¹⁷

Nāṣir's works which preserved older Ismaili teachings, became paramount for the Nizaris, particularly, in later centuries and especially in the Badakhshan region; however, the JT and ZT record that at the time of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, "Nasir-i Khusraw¹⁸ the *ḥujja*¹⁹ of Khurāsān, was not able to accomplish much."²⁰ (Cf. Part One:6-II). The careful preservation of the early Ismaili and Fatimid era works by the Ṭayyibī tradition, over time, developed this corpus into a canon of texts. As noted by Hodgson, no definitive equivalent canon of Nizari texts reaching back to the common inheritance of early Ismaili and Fatimid era works can be mapped even-though the *dā'īs* in Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's time and later were steeped in the literary traditions and Islamic sciences.

B. Extant Texts from the Nizari Ismaili Polity in Iran

The scholarly assessments of Nizari texts also concede that given the contextual circumstances, the early Nizaris did, in fact, produce an eminent body of works. Daftary wrote that 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." He noted that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, himself a "learned theologian", established a library of repute at Alamut and subsequently, centres of learning were created at

¹⁷ Tahera Qutbuddin, "Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī: Founder of A New Tradition of Fatimid Da'wa Poetry," diss., Harvard University, 1999). p 6 Tahera Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad al-Shīrāzī and Fatimid Da'wa Poetry: A Case of Commitment in Classical Arabic Literature*, (Boston: Brill, 2005). p 301-2 fn 7. The study of these divided Fatimid inheritances is highly warranted.

¹⁸ Alice C. Hunsberger. *Nasir Khusraw, the Ruby of Badakhshan: A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher*, (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2000).; Between Reason and Revelation: Twin Wisdoms Reconciled: An Annotated English translation of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Kitāb-i Jāmi' al-ḥikmatayn. pp 1-15

¹⁹ lit: proof; a title in the hierarchy of the *da'wa* and is second to the *imam* see part two below

²⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. JT.. p. 97; ZT p 120 does not mention Nāṣir-i Khusraw as *ḥujjat* in the corresponding passage.

other Nizari fortresses in Iran and Syria where sizeable and important collections of books, documents and scientific instruments were gathered for the learned—only a handful of these works have survived directly from that period.²¹ Seven Iranian Nizari authors who wrote in the Alamut era are listed in Poonawala’s *Biobibliography* with twenty-six texts ascribed to them—one-third of these are presently known only through their mentions in other texts. Poonawala also listed a further twenty-three anonymous and undated individual texts and three collections (*majmū‘āt*) of some 36 Nizari texts—three additional texts from this set are identifiable as belonging to the period under study. Daftary shows four of the seven authors with twelve of their works as edited and published and a further two texts (*Haft bāb-i Bābā Sayyid-nā* and *Maṭlūb’l-mu‘minīn*) are listed under “Collective Ismaili Works”.²²

Table 3c: Alamut Era Nizari Authors: their Works

The table below shows Alamut era Nizari authors and their works listed by Poonawala (MSS) and Daftary (published texts).²³ The catalogue and hand-list of Persian manuscripts at Institute of Ismaili Studies prepared by Parvin Peerwani²⁴ and Karim Javan,²⁵ respectively, identify some

²¹ Daftary, “PH-Nizari.” and Daftary. *IL-B*. p 46; and verbatim in several other works.

²² *IL-B* pp 106-159 and 161-166; Bosworth. *nID*.

²³ Poonawala. *BBB*. pp 251-263; Daftary. *IL-B*. a pp 114-116, b: pp 150-151. c: *IL-B* pp 111. *Ta’rīkh-i Ra’īs Ḥasan* was used by JT and ZT (Cf. Part One:4-I): Wladimir Ivanow, “An Ismaili Poem in Praise of Fidawis,” *JBBRAS* 14 (1938); Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā’imīyyāt*. e: Daftary. *IL-B*. pp 157-159. f: Contemplation and Action. This is Jalal Badakhchani’s translation; the title literally translates to “Walks and Travels”. g: The *Bandi az Khwāja-yi Tūsī ba-fārsī ba-rawish-i Ismā’īlī* (Collection of Tusi’s Ismaili Works) and *Maṭlūb al-mu‘minīn* are works listed under Nasir al-Din Tusi. h: Poonawala. *BBB*. pp 351-355. i: Bosworth. *nID*. The *Haft Bāb-i Bābā Sayyid-nā* was translated in Hodgson. *OA*. pp. 279-324; A new edition and translation by Syed Jalal Badakhchani based on recently discovered MSS has been published: HB. I have transcribed the text from IIS Per MS 32 which JB used as a principle witness since it contains all seven chapters. During my research in the Pamirs in 2018, I have obtained through the kindness of Khalifa Mirjon in Zong, Badakhshan, Tajikistan a scan of the Haft Bāb which purported dates over three hundred years and is complete. While this acquisition is too late for this research, I hope to make use of this resource in a future study of Haft Bāb literature.

²⁴ Parvin Peerwani. *Catalogue of Ismā’īlī Devotional Literature in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Brushaski Languages in the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies*, (London: Institute of Ismaili Studies, 1987). Apparently the project did not continue beyond “Volume One”. This catalogue is unpublished even though it is listed in the OCLC and WorldCat databases.

twenty additional treatises as possibly belonging to the Alamut period. The MSS or copies were acquired by the Institute from Iran, greater Badakhshan and particularly inherited from the archives of the Ismaili Society—a collection, in great part, assembled by Wladimir Ivanow.²⁶

Author (MSS texts listed by Poonawala and published texts listed by Daftary = bold font)	MSS	Pub
Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (d. 1124/518) Sar-guzasht-i Sayyidnā (Biography of Our Master); Al-fuṣūl al-arbaʿa (Four Treatises); <i>Fuṣūl-i mubārak (The Blessed Treatises); Munājāt (Intimate Works); Jawāb-i Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ ba-ruqʿat-yi Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Malikshāh-i Saljūqī (Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's Response to the Letter of Sulṭān Malikshāh Saljūqī)</i>	5	3 ^a
Shahrastānī (d. 1153/548) Mafātīḥ al-asrār (Keys to the Mysteries); Majlis-i maktūb-i Shahrastānī munʿaqid dar Khwārazm (Discourse on Order and Creation); <i>Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf (Commentary on [the Qurʾānic] Chapter of Joseph); Qiṣṣa-yi Mūsā wa Khidr (The Story of Moses and Khidr); Kitāb al-mubdaʾ wa-l-maʿād (Book of Origin and Return); Kitāb al-Muṣāraʿa (Wrestling with the Philosopher)</i>	6	3 ^b
Ḥasan ʿalā dhikrihi'l-salām° (d. 1166/561) <i>Fuṣūl-i mubārak (The Blessed Treatises); Khuṭba (Sermon); Kitāb al-āthār (Book of Vestiges); Bustān al-madhāhib (Garden of Creeds); Rawḍat al-ṣafāʾ (Garden of Purity)</i>	5	0
Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan ʿalā dhikrihi'l-salām (d. 1210/607) <i>Fuṣūl (Treatises); Risāla dar naṣīhat (Chapter of Advices)</i>	2	0
Raʾīs Ḥasan b. Ṣalāḥ Munshī Bīrjandī (d. 13 th /6 th century) <i>Taʾrikh-i Raʾīs Ḥasan (History of Raʾīs Ḥasan);^c Ashʿār (Poems)^d</i>	2	1
Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274/672) Rawḍat al-taslīm aw taṣṣawurāt (Paradise of Submission or Contemplations); Maṭlūb al-muʾminīn (Desideratum of the Faithful); Sayr wa Sulūk (Contemplation and Action);^e Risāla dar Tawallā wa tabarrā (Solidarity and Dissociation); <i>Bandī az Khwāja-yi Ṭūsī ba-rawish-i Ismāʿilī (Collection of Ismaili Works of Ṭūsī)</i>	5	5
Qāsim Shūstarī (or Tustarī) (d. 13 th /6 th century) <i>Ashʿār (Poems)</i>	1	0
Anonymous/undated ^g Bandī az Khwāja-yi Ṭūsī ba-fārsī ba-rawish-i Ismāʿilī; Hikāyat-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw; Sarguzasht-i Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ; Maṭlūb al-muʾminīn; Haft Bāb-i Bābā Sayyidnā	3 ^h	1 ⁱ
Totals	29	13

²⁵ Karim Javan. *Catalogue of Ismaili Persian Manuscripts, the Collection of the Institute of Ismaili Studies (Unpublished)*, (London: Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2012).

²⁶ Daftary. *IL-B*. pp 95ff; Farhad Daftary, ed. *Fifty Years in the East: The Memoirs of Wladimir Ivanow* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015).

The Institute's collection of MSS and copies is much more extensive than the 150 or so treatises listed in these two lists.²⁷ Publication of complete and systematic bibliographies of the Institute's collection and studies on these works will be of immense value to intersections of the endeavours represented in Islamicate, Persianate, Shi'i and Ismaili studies. Texts preserved by individual Ismailis as well as institutional holdings in Iran, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Northern Pakistan will add many as yet unknown treatises to these listings. The *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyāt* of Ra'īs Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī-yi Bīrjandī was published after Daftary's bibliography came out; and the *Dustūr al-munajjimīn*—a rare Ismaili text written in Arabic in Iran—is being prepared for publication.²⁸ In total, some 50 treatises, ranging from single page tracts to extensive volumes, produced by writers during the 166 years of the Nizari polity in Iran are currently known to be extant.²⁹ This number will significantly increase as the Institute and other collections in Iran, Central and South Asia make all their archives available and scholarship is able to work on these texts. Many of the treatises exist in copied manuscripts missing colophons and information about authorship, copyists, titles, dating and details of provenance. Ultimately the scholar must resort to content analysis, source and historical criticism and even conjecture to place the texts in their contexts.

²⁷ This author was kindly allowed digital scans of several MSS in microfiche format not listed in the two catalogues.

²⁸ Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā'imīyyāt*. M. J. de Goeje. *Mémoire sur les Carmathes du Bahraïn et les Fatimides*, (Leide: E. J. Brill, 1886). p. 203; Lewis, "Ismā'īlī Notes." p. 66 and 73; *Ismā'īlī Notes*; Zimmerman, "Dastūr al-munajjimīn of MS. Paris, BN Ar. no. 5968."; Karīmī Zanjānī Aṣl. *Dastūr al-munajjimīn*.

A number works—especially in Arabic—by Shahrastānī, Ṭūsī (eg: *Akhḫāq-i Muḥtashamī*) and the Sufi, 'Azīz al-Nasafī reckoned to be a crypto-Ismaili, have not previously been counted among the Ismaili *da'wa* literature.

²⁹ Poonawala. *BBB*. lists 5 Syrian authors with 17 treatises attributed to them and 9 anonymous/undated works are listed some of these may also date to the Alamut era. The works of Nizari Pīrs in India have not been sufficiently catalogued to allow complete analyses.

C. Historical Writing by Ismailis

The modes and patterns of Islamicate historical writing, and specifically *ta'rikh*, described in the previous chapter and in the literature on Islamicate historiography are not found in the writings by the Ismailis. Until almost the end of the Middle Periods, Ismailis did not write history *qua* history in the *ta'rikh* genre. There is no tradition of annalistic or dynastic histories among the Ismailis. Explaining the absence of a robust historiographic tradition among the

Ismailis, Daftary in his numerous publications³⁰ has repeatedly argued that

Isma'ili *dā'is*, who were at the same time the scholars and authors of their community, often operated in hostile territories and were obliged to observe utter secrecy in their activities. These *dā'i*-authors were, moreover, normally trained as theologians and as such, they were not interested in compiling annalistic or other types of historical accounts. The general lack of Isma'ili interest in historiography is well attested by the fact that only a few works of historical nature have been found in the rich corpus of Isma'ili literature recovered in modern times, which comprises mainly of theological works, with a substantial number of treatises related to the so-called esoteric, or *ḥaqā'eq*, subjects, as well as numerous titles utilizing the methodology of esoteric interpretation (*ta'wil*), the hallmark of Isma'ili thought.³¹

For several centuries, as already mentioned, Islamicate historical writing was carried out predominantly by such scholars of religion or theologians to use Daftary's term. Many of the Ismaili *dā'i*-authors adopted Ismailism late in life and would have been educated and trained along with their Ithnā'asharī and Sunni school fellows. The purpose of Islamicate education, according to Hodgson, was "to pass on the cultural heritage from one generation to the next. In an atmosphere of conservatism, this purpose was taken seriously".³² Entry into Ismailism did not automatically disengage their training and mode of historical writing in the *ta'rikh* genre; the explanation of why there was a general lack of Isma'ili interest in historiography does not suffice.

The first component of Daftary's argument is that the Ismaili *da'is* lived under *taqiyya*, the Shi'i principle of precautionary dissimulation, and were not inclined to write history which would

³⁰ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 4-7; 303-310; Daftary. *IL-B*. pp 46-59; Daftary, "PH-Nizari."

³¹ Elr. Daftary: Ismailism ii. Isma'ili Historiography. Daftary has also made the same argument in several other studies.

³² Hodgson. *Venture II*. p. 438

endanger the secret activities of the *da'wa* and communities of Ismailis living in hostile conditions. This argument is undermined by his contrast of the lack of historical writing with the “rich corpus of Isma‘ili literature recovered in modern times, which comprises mainly of theological works”. It is precisely the mis-construal of the nature and the contents of this corpus of doctrinal texts, not any histories, that resulted in putting Ismailis beyond the pale and in many cases to the sword. It is worth re-stating that the Ismailis did not write history *qua* history in the *ta'rīkh* genre.

D. Absence of Ḥadīth literature and traditions of ʿIlm al-rijāl

The prolific Fatimid jurist and theologian Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān b. Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr b. Aḥmad b. Ḥayyūn al-Tamīmī, known as Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (d. 974/363) assembled a 3000 folio collection of *aḥadīth* in his *Kitāb al-īḍāḥ* (*Book of Elucidation*) on the authority of the family of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*). Only a small part of this text survives although sections of it survive in shorter abridgements. His many works laid down the basis for Ismaili law and like the *Da'ā'im al-Islām* (*The Pillars of Islam*), composed at the request and with intimate involvement in the writing process of the Imam-caliph al-Mu'izz (r. 953-975/341-365), became legal standards—still in use after a millennium by the Ṭayyibī Ismailis. Due to the notions of theoretical access to the charismatic authority of the present and living imam (*ḥāḍir imām*)—directly or remotely, through the officials of the *da'wa* particularly when the imams are concealed (*satr*)—the Ismailis did not elaborate extensive traditions of *ḥadīth* collection. Poonawalla postulated that

the reason for the absence of *zāhirī* sciences of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* in Ismaili literature

could be explained by the fact that, after the establishment of the Fatimid dynasty, the imamate as conceived by Isma‘ili doctrine, unlike what happened in the case of the Imāmis (i.e., the Twelver Shi'ites), became a living institution. It implied that as long as the Imam (i.e., the Fatimid caliph-imam), who represented the living *sonna* of the Prophet was accessible, there was no need for the compilation of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr*. The traditions needed for clarification of the *ṣarī'a* and handed down by the Imams, were collected by Qāḍi No'mān in his *Da'ā'im al-eslām*, hence there was no further need for them. As for the external philological meaning of the Qur'ān, any *tafsīr* could be used. Its inner true meaning, however, could be obtained only through the *ta'wīl* derived from the rightful Imam. For this reason, the Imam, the repository of

true knowledge and the authoritative interpreter of the Qur'ān, is often called “the speaking Qur'ān” (*Qor'ān-e nāteq*), while the Qur'ān, since it needs an interpreter, is called “the silent Qur'ān” (*Qor'ān-e šāmet*).³³

As a result of the stature of the reports collected by Qāḍī al-Nu'mān sourced from the family of the Prophet, they did not accord jurisprudential authority to further textual collections of the Prophet's actions and sayings which are paramount in importance in the Sunni and post-*ghayba* Ithnā'asharī contexts. Consequently, the related historical practices of *‘ilm al-rijāl* (biography, lit: *science of men*) and *ṭabaqāt* (*stories of the generations*) to verify the reliability of the chains of transmitters were also unnecessary and not developed.³⁴

A survey of Ismail Poonawala's extensive *Biobibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature*³⁵ which lists some 1300 titles reveals that there are very few treatises that can be categorised in the *ta'rikh* genre of Islamicate historiography.

The table shows the number of possible historical texts by selected periods-regions specified by Poonawala along with the type of text. This analysis of titles and brief descriptions in Poonawala's work shows that prior to the 15th/9th century, the Ismailis effectively did not write history *qua ta'rikh*; after this date 16 “historical” works are recorded, some even with the word *ta'rikh* in the title.

³³ Elr. Poonawala: “Ismā'īlī Literature in Persian and Arabic”.

³⁴ Abū Ḥanīfa al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān. *The Pillars of Islam: Da'ā'im al-Islām of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān*, Translated by Asaf Ali Asghar Fyzee, and Ismail K. Poonawala. (Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).; Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī. *Al-uṣūl min al-kāfī*, Edited by 'Alī Akbar al-Ghaffārī. (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, 1968). Distinctly Shi'i collections of *ḥadīth* date back to Kulaynī and Qāḍī al-Nu'mān sourced on the authority of the imams; the *al-Kāfī* of Kulaynī was contemporary to the *Da'ā'im al-Islām* of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān. The Ithnā'asharīs developed extensive studies of *ḥadīth* collections and *‘ilm al-rijāl* since the imam was occulted.

³⁵ Also consulted: Ivanow. *IL2*.; Daftary. *IL-B*.; Ismā'il b. 'Abd al-Rasūl, and 'Alī Naqī Munzavī. *Fahrasat al-kutub wa-al-rasā'il wa-li-man hiya min al-'ulamā' wa-al-'immaḥ wa-al-ḥudūd al-afādīl*, (Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Dānishgāh, 1966).; A. E. Bertel's, and Mamadvafo Bakoev. *Alfavitnyĭ Katalog Rukopiseĭ, Obnaruzhennykh V Gorno-Badakhshanskoĭ Avtonomnoĭ Oblasti*, (Moscow: Nauka, 1967).

Table 3d: Survey of Possible Ta'rikh Texts in Ismaili Literature

Period	Total	Historical?	Nature of Historical Works
Pre-Fatimid and Fatimid	302	22	10 auto/biographies; 1 <i>ta'rikh</i> text; 1 travelogue; 2 refutations; 8 “historical works” of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān
Musta'lian	117	5	1 <i>tadhkirah</i> ; 1 biography; 3 c15 <i>ta'rikh</i> texts
Nizari-Iran	100	8	1 auto/biography; 1 <i>ta'rikh</i> ; 1 travelogue; 5 <i>ta'rikh</i> texts (3 c16; 1 c19; 1 c20)
Nizari-Syria	36	0	
Nizari-India	466	6	6 <i>ta'rikh</i> (1 c16; 4 c17; 1 c19)
Anonymous	287	5	3 biographies; 2 histories?
Total	1308	46	15 auto/biographies; 2 travelogues; 2 refutations; 4 pre-c15 <i>ta'rikh</i> texts; 1 <i>tadhkirah</i> ; 6 <i>manāqib-fadha'il</i> texts; 16 c15+later <i>ta'rikh</i> texts

[NB: The corpus of texts produced after 1539/946 in India by the Tayyibī communities has not been included in this survey. The total number of texts is 1308 because the numbers of *ginans* listed for each author (Poonawala did not provide further information on titles and content) are counted here as individual texts; Poonawala did not list the number of *ginans* composed by Pīr Sadr al-Dīn—over 200 *ginans* and 18 *granth*s (collections) are attributed to him.]

Qāḍī al-Nu'mān is credited with some 62 works of which 8 are subcategorised as history by Poonawala. Six of these conform more to the *manāqib* and *faḍā'il* (virtues and excellences) categories of literature. These six texts detail the signs of the Mahdī and the virtues and excellences of the imams and individually the Fatimid imam-caliphs al-Qā'im (r. 934-946/322-344), al-Manṣūr (r. 946-953/334-351) and al-Mu'izz.³⁶ The seventh text, *Kitāb al-maghāzī* (*Book of the Battles*) is known only through a mention by another author. The last is the *Iftitāḥ al-da'wa wa-l-ibtidā' al-dawlah* (*The Commencement of the Da'wa and Founding of the [Fatimid] State*)³⁷ which contains a biographical account of the adoption of Ismailism and mission of the dā'ī Ibn Ḥawshab known as Manṣūr al-Yaman (d. 914/302), who was responsible for establishing the Ismaili mission in Yemen and sending out dā'īs to North Africa. The book details the founding of the Fatimid state in North Africa and addresses the problematic

³⁶ Poonawala. *BBB*. pp 58-62.

³⁷ Abū Ḥanīfa al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, “Founding the Fatimid State: The Rise of an Early Islamic Empire,” 1 (2006). Ironically p. 3 fn4 The Translator points out that the title *Iftitāḥ al-da'wa* (*Commencement of the Da'wa*) was found in all but one of the MSS he consulted where the longer title *Iftitāḥ al-da'wa wa-l-ibtidā' al-dawlah* is found; yet the translation is titled “Founding of the Fatimid State”!

execution of its founder, the *dā'ī* Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Shī'ī (d. 911/298), purportedly, on the orders of the Imam-caliph al-Mahdī (r. 910-934/297-322). In essence, the *Iftitāḥ* promulgated the official legitimacy narrative to set the record straight for a troubled past of the transition from a messianic revolution to the dynastic phase of the Fatimid movement which must still have had divisive resonances at the time of writing (957/346).³⁸ The translator of the *Iftitāḥ*, Hamid Haji in his introduction wrote that “Al-Nu'mān is also rightly regarded as the founder of Fatimid historiography”; in view of this analysis, caution must be exercised with classification and use of Ismaili *da'wa* literature for historical analyses.³⁹

E. Sīra and Manāqib - the Dominant Paradigm of Ismaili Historiography

The conclusion that Ismailis did not write *ta'rikh* is an important conceptual consideration for the analysis of historical writing by Ismailis and histories which made use of them. Generic classification is a retrospective process; however, writing within the bounds of a genre's norms and structures is a contemporary process. In analysing the sources, it is essential to be aware of the norms and structures that the original authors would have operated in. The predominant form of historical writing by Ismailis was *sīra* (pl: *siyar* biography, in Persian: *sarguzasht*) and *manāqib* (sing: *manqabat* virtues, glories).⁴⁰ The structures of several texts of this type also include first person conversion narratives.

The purpose of these multi-faceted texts was not primarily for recording past actuality; rather ritual, homiletic, proselytic, didactic, legitimacy and most importantly, hortative functions are discernibly paramount.

³⁸ *Founding the Fatimid State: The Rise of an Early Islamic Empire* p 13

³⁹ *Founding the Fatimid State: The Rise of an Early Islamic Empire* p 3; Elr. Poonawala: “Isma'ili Literature in Persian and Arabic” explains the reason for the dearth Ismaili historical texts is their cyclical heptadic view of hierohistory.

⁴⁰ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 5-6

Table 3e: Auto/Pseudo-Biographies in Ismaili Literature

Treatise	Century	Subject of (auto/pseudo)biography	Type of Account
<i>K. iftitāḥ al-daʿwa</i>	10	Ibn Ḥawshab	biographical
<i>K. al-munazārāt</i>	10	Ibn al-Ḥaytham	autobiographical
<i>Sīrat Jaʿfar al-Ḥājib</i>	10	Jaʿfar al-Ḥājib	auto
<i>Sīrat Ustādh Jawdhar</i>	10	Ustādh Jawdhar	auto
<i>Sīrat al-Muʿayyad</i>	11	al-Muʿayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī	auto
<i>Safarnāma & Dīwān</i>	11	Nāṣir-i Khusraw	auto
<i>Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā</i>	12	Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ	auto/bio
<i>K. sayr wa sulūk</i>	13	Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī	auto
<i>Kalām-i pīr</i>	post 15	Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ/Nāṣir-i Khusraw?	pseudo-auto

Throughout the modern study of Islam, such texts have been scoured for what they say about specific events, individuals or groups and these nuggets have been picked up, polished and shaped to suit the investigator's purposes. While there has been merit to this approach, Marilyn Waldman and others after her,⁴¹ have called on scholars to explore not just what the text says but why and how the original authors had structured their narratives; or to use Gérard Genette's terminology, the story needs to be distinguished from the discourse.⁴²

Secondly, as already proposed, foci of the examination of the resurgence of Persianate traditions need to shift from the social engineering intent of patrons and their scholars for hire to the utility of the intellectual production by its multiple audiences.⁴³ (Cf. Part One:1-II). The sacrality attached to the *Daʿā'im* may very well be due to the venerable stature of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān and the imprimatur of Imam-caliph al-Mu'izz, however, the continuous use of the text

⁴¹ Waldman. *Theory of Historical Narrative*.

⁴² Alun Munslow. *Narrative and History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). p. 4-5; Gérard Genette. *Figures of Literary Discourse*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982). p. 258

⁴³ The patronage need not be monetary payment. Hodgson. *Venture I*. pp 444ff;

is because it has been meaningful to those who have and still continue to use it. While it is not possible in most cases to determine with conclusivity—considerations of how the texts were used in their contexts must be part of the analyses.⁴⁴

II. Characteristics of Nizari Literature

Ismaili and Nizari texts, in particular, exhibit strong continuities with features of pre-Islamic Persian literature described by Yarshater, of making “no distinction between the factual, the legendary, and the mythical” and having a “strong religious bias”.⁴⁵ (Cf. Part One:1-II). In addition, the Nizari texts express immense veneration for the Prophet Muḥammad, and to the line of ‘Alid, Ismaili, Fatimid and the Nizari imams. They also are hagiographic in treatment of certain individuals in the *da‘wa*— for example, Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ is invariably addressed as *Sayyid-nā* (our master). Astonishing feats, mysterious super-human capacities and miracles are attached to charismatic individuals; and yet their most human foibles are incidentally or discreetly woven into the narratives. The texts appear not to have been written only for solitary reading, rather their structures and contents suggest that they were primarily performance texts. Meisami observed that the actual intended audiences for general Islamicate historiography and other compositions of prose and poetry from the 11th/6th century onwards were the authors’ fellow bureaucrats at the courts. (Cf. Part One:1-II). The parallel here is that

⁴⁴ Ismail K Poonawala, “The Evolution of al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān’s Theory of Ismaili Jurisprudence as Reflected in the Chronology of His Works on Jurisprudence,” in *The Study of Shi‘i Islam: History, Theology and Law*, ed. Farhad Daftary, and Gurdofarid Miskinzoda (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014). Ismail K Poonawala; Hamdani, Sumaiya Abbas. “From Da‘wa to Dawla: Qadi al-Nu‘mān’s Zāhirī Construction of Fatimid Legitimacy,” diss., Princeton University, 1995; There is a tinge of Roland Barthes’ post-modern notions of “the author is dead” and Marshall McLuhan in that “the meaning of the message is irrespective of its content”. The ultimate meaning is derived not through projection from the author to reader or even through a process of osmotic conveyance but the meaning is governed ultimately by the apprehension in the processes of reception.

⁴⁵ Yarshater, s. p. 3.1:367. See discussion of “Islamicate Historiography in Persian” in the previous chapter.

the Ismaili texts were produced for the inspiration, training and usage by fellow functionaries within the *da'wa*. The simplicity and accessibility of the language of numerous texts suggests that some of these were also produced for popular appeal. A few examples will illustrate the purposes, commissions and audiences for a selection of such texts.

Many texts contain substantial amounts of dialogue—including first person accounts of conversations. James Morris in his analysis of the dialogue in Ja'far B. Manṣūr Al-Yaman's *K. al-ʿālim wa'l-ghulām* explained that

the essence of the dramatic dialogue form is to entice and simultaneously *oblige* the properly prepared and motivated reader into an increasingly deeper inner, necessarily 'personalised' exploration of the particular issues (whether ethical, political, epistemological or metaphysical) dramatised through the conflicting viewpoints of the various 'actors' participating in each drama. Thus the lasting effectiveness of that literary form depends above all on the author's ability to capture and articulate genuinely archetypal perspectives and issues which are rooted in recurrent human situations and possibilities, in what Ja'far here calls the *bāṭin al-bāṭin*, the 'innermost reality' of things. Rather than expressing 'doctrines' or 'ideas' which could otherwise be formulated in a simpler, more prosaic and accessible form, the spiritually operative dimension of this dramatic dialogue is rooted in the author's quintessentially Qur'anic awareness that each appropriately prepared reader already participates unavoidably in the same recurrent metaphysical dramas, and therefore must necessarily discover his or her own answers to these fundamental challenges and dilemmas.⁴⁶

The eleventh century Fatimid *dā'ī al-duāt*, al-Mu'ayyad fī'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, in one of his sermons instructed that the prophet and the imams addressed people according to their capacities and when "they find their audience intelligent and receptive they talk of philosophy which is the essence of religion." He quoted the imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq to the effect that failure to pitch to the listener's understanding would result in their "abuse of God and His Prophet" and curses upon the speaker. Al-Shīrāzī's sermons record his teachings which were used to train his subordinates and also addressed to the Fatimid elite.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, "The Master and the Disciple: an Early Islamic Spiritual Dialogue: Arabic edition and English translation of Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman's *Kitāb al-ʿālim wa'l-ghulām*," (2001). p. 27-28

⁴⁷ al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn Hibat Allāh al-Shīrāzī, "Life and Lectures of the Grand Missionary al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī," (1950). Sermon 4

The tenth/fourth century Fatimid chamberlain Ja‘far al-Ḥājib was commissioned by the imam-caliph al-Mu‘izz; in Ja‘far’s words: “the Imam, desired (to know) about all that happened to his slave (i.e. Ja‘far, the author of these memoirs), and about the events which took place in the days of his ancestors, the holy Imams,—may God sanctify their spirits, and bless them all!” The author sought pardon for his errors as, according to him, the imam “himself knows better all about the matters which he has ordered his humble servant and slave to write, preserving their memory more correctly and more completely.”⁴⁸

The autobiography of the thirteenth century Nizari thinker, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, on the other hand, reads as a veritable *curriculum vitae* replete with pages of doctrinal and philosophical discourse of a young and ambitious scholar. He wrote that for some time

this most humble servant, Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, has been wishing to submit a description of his religious beliefs and a short account of the story of his life to the truth revealing opinion of the exalted presence of [Muẓaffar b. Muḥammad] the chief of *da‘is* and ministers (*sultān al-du‘āt wa al-wuzarā*)—may he remain lofty—so that this supreme presence, who is the source of instruction for the secrets of wisdom (*ḥikmat*) and the manifestation of the lights of compassion, may bestow the honour of admonitory guidance about right and wrong, truthfulness and deviation, in accordance with the aptitude of this humble servant, indicating that which is required for his welfare in religious and worldly matters.

In subsequent paragraphs he noted that his initial intent was to make his case in person but delayed in so doing, he feared that if the appointed hour were to suddenly arrive, this would leave his “most important religious [duties] left undone, then his death would be the death of the ignorant”. He noted down his “innermost secrets of thoughts” and sent them to his patron Muẓaffar b. Muḥammad “so that when the opportunity presented itself he could bring it to the notice of that noble presence [the imam] with the addition of whatever he might deem to be advantageous in the two worlds to me.”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ivanow. *Rise of the Fatimids*. pp 184-185

⁴⁹ Contemplation and Action. pp 23-24

Some authors took it upon themselves to write doctrinal tracts for the benefit of their fellow Ismailis and others. One of the most important treatises on the imamate was written by the eleventh century *dā'ī* Ḥamid al-Dīn al-Kirmānī purportedly to convince the Buyid *wazīr* Fakhr al-Mulk (fl 1010-1016/401-407) to support the Fatimids. Whilst blatantly disparaging the 'Abbāsid caliph al-Qādir (r. 991-1031/381-422), he placated the *wazīr*'s “evident Shī'ism and fond regard for the family of the Prophet [which] made him a suitable subject for the proof of the imamate he intended to offer.”⁵⁰ Responding, perhaps, to the publication of the anti-Fatimid “Baghdad Manifesto” and its consequences, this leading *dā'ī* in Iraq expressed his deep concern for

the faith and the truth of fully convinced devotion, a judgment regarding what, in the matter of God, I ascribe to as being true belief, and the determination of what *jihād* God has imposed on me in order to follow His way, has provoked me to establish firmly the necessity of the imamate, and to demonstrate truthfully its being located among the imams—may God grant them benediction and peace—in the family of Ṭāhā and Yaṣīn, and most especially the correctness of the imamate of the one among them who occupies it in our own time, our master, the Commander of the Faithful, the Servant of God and His friend, al-Manṣūr Abū 'Alī al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh—may God keep him and all the imams. The obligation to obey and adhere to him is a consequence of the slight measure of their radiance that has been communicated to me. Accordingly, I will produce brilliant proofs for it that defy refutation, based on evidence that withstands subversion. All this I now put into a book in order to make him [Fakhr al-Mulk] understand and apprehend through it the correctness of that most noble doctrine and belief, so that there be conceived in him an inclination in favour of the people of obedience to the extent that the bounty of God provides them support.⁵¹

There is no evidence of the tract being presented to the *wazīr* nor its influence on his thinking; however, al-Kirmānī's stature was elevated such that shortly after he was called to Cairo to shore up the Fatimid *da'wa* in face of the nascent schismatic movement of the Druze.⁵²

Ḥasan Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī in the *Haft Bāb-i Bābā Sayyid-nā*, written at the end of the twelfth century, stated that these “few words have been written on the purpose which was intended in the composition of this blessed *dīwān* [collection of poems] of praise and eulogy to Mawlā-nā [our

⁵⁰ Master of the Age. pp 14-15

⁵¹ Master of the Age pp 38-39

⁵² Walker. *Ḥamid al-Dīn al-Kirmānī*. pp 16ff; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 178ff.

lord] (may his power be glorified). But what business has this least of slaves in saying these few words of prose? The purpose is this, that readers be informed by these seven chapters, and not lose the advantage in them, if God Almighty will.”⁵³ Several centuries later, Abū Ishāq in his *Haft Bāb* recorded that with Divine assistance and guidance he had dissociated from the “company of the depraved and erring” and joined the followers of the imams and “saw it necessary to offer his praise and gratitude to God, and however imperfectly, tell about his experience, and all that he learned about the Path of the truth worshippers of the present times. This would be of much help to the less advanced converts (*ḍu‘afā-yi mustajībān*), who may also mention the humble author in their prayers of thanksgiving, imploring the Lord of the inhabitants of the world, and the Creator of [hu]man[s] and jinns,—may His might be extolled and His Word become revered,—for His help and guidance.”⁵⁴ The anonymous author of the *Kalām-i pīr* using identical phraseology stated that he “explains here—in an unskilled way—all that he has learnt about the ways of the righteous men (*muhiqqān*) of his day. Let this book be a help to the community of the faithful, to the beginners, and the newly initiated (*mustajībān*), in their progress!” On “many occasions brothers and friends, the followers of the right guiding religion (*da‘wat-i hādiya*) asked this humble slave of the pure imams (i.e. the compiler of this treatise) to write a book on religion”.⁵⁵

Ṭūsī, in his works, indicated that his writing was prompted by specific individuals and in one instance alludes to a commission by the imam. The *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* (Nasirean Ethics) completed

⁵³ Hodgson. OA. p. 281

⁵⁴ Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm Quhistānī, “Haft bāb, or Seven Chapters,” (1959). p 2

⁵⁵ Anonymous (attributed to Khayrkhawāh-i Harātī), “Kalāmi pīr: a Treatise on Ismaili Doctrine, also (wrongly) called Haft-bāb-i Shāh Sayyid Nāṣir,” Islamic Research Association series; no. 4 (1935). pp 2-3

in 1235/633 was inspired by *Muḥtasham* Nāṣir al-Dīn, the Ismaili governor in Quhistān,⁵⁶ who encouraged him to translate Ibn Miskawayh's (d. 1030/421) *Tahḍīb al-akhlāq wa-taṭhīr al-a'rāq* (*Refinement of Morals and Cleansing of Ethics*) a manual of philosophy and ethics. He wrote: "[t]o the writer of these pages the Governor signified that this precious book should be revived by changing its verbal attire and rendering it from Arabic into Persian; for if the people of this age, who are for the most part devoid of the ornament of polish, will deck themselves with the embellishment of virtue by perusing the bejewelled ideas of such a composition, it will be a revival of goodness in the fullest measure." Instead of a translation, Ṭūsī decided to develop Miskawayh's ideas in his own work and added sections on domestic economy and politics. After the Mongol conquest when he had switched allegiance to Hūlāgū and even after the excision of the introduction containing the dedication to the Nizari governor, copies of the text still maintained the reason for its naming and Ṭūsī's hope that should the imam and the Nizari dignitaries (those noble ones) come upon the text that they should overlook his errors.

He wrote that the reason

for its composition was my master's extempore observation and behest, I called the book *The Nasirean Ethics*. (Trusting) in the universal generosity and the massive grace of those noble ones to whose notice this compendium may come, we hope that should they observe a slip or a blunder, they will confer upon it the honour of correction and receive with the favour of acceptance the proffer of our excuse—if God Almighty so will!⁵⁷

Similarly, his treatise *Tawallā wa tabarrā* (*Solidarity and Dissociation*) was prompted by a certain otherwise unknown Najīb al-Dīn Ḥasan who asked him to “compose a few words for him from the sayings of the leaders of religion (*pīshwāyān-i dīn*) and instructors of the people of certainty (*mu'allimān-i ahl-i yaqīn*), especially the present instructor (*mu'allim-i waqt*), sovereign of the

⁵⁶ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 378-379, 393

⁵⁷ Ṭūsī. *The Nasirean Ethics* (*Akhlāq-i Nāṣiri*). p 24-25. Also see: <http://www.textmanuscripts.com/medieval/arabic-nasirean-ethics-60614> accessed May 2016—details the sale of a manuscript copied in Maragha in 1264/663 during Ṭūsī's lifetime—the introduction page is missing from the codex. EIr. C. Bosworth: “Meskavayh, Abu 'Alī Aḥmad”. This is another example of a commission to translate a classical Arabic text to Persian where the Patron wished for the original to be available wider Persian-speaking-readership. (Cf. Part One:1-III, IV, V)

learned, helper of world and religion, the master of Iran, ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. Abī Maṣṣūr—may God exalt his sovereignty and protect his blessed existence.”⁵⁸ The *Āghāz wa anjām* (*Origin and Destination*) was requested by an anonymous friend “to record a short account of what has been witnessed of the ultimate end of creation by travellers on the path to the Hereafter (*sālikān-i rāh-i ākhirat*), similar to what is written in the Divine Book (*shabīh bi ānchi dar kitāb-i ilāhī mastūr ast*) and has been uttered on the tongue of the prophets and the imams (*awliyā’*), peace be upon all of them, concerning the Resurrection, Paradise, Hell and so forth—not as described by scholars (*ahl-i dānish*), but as witnessed by men of insight (*ahl-i bīnish*).”⁵⁹ The *Rawḍa-yi taslīm* (*Paradise of Submission*) was written for the benefit of a certain Badr al-Dīn Ḥusayn; in it Ṭūsī recorded “conceptions concerning the origin and return (*mabda’ wa ma’ād*), ethics and human relations (*mu’āmalāt*) which have been established in the mind of this most humble servant of the *Da’wat* in proportion to his deficient understanding and comprehension. Because any oral discourse when rendered in writing will be better placed in the imagination, from the imagination it will better reach the critical comprehension, whence it is better consolidated in the memory, thus it is better preserved”.⁶⁰

Once again the recipient was a highly placed dignitary and Ṭūsī wrote “should [his work] be quoted in the assemblies of the eminent in faith and the gatherings of the people of certainty and be honoured by their consideration, the hope of this humble [servant], who in this world is proud of their affection and likewise covets salvation in the hereafter through the same means, is that, if they notice a slip or error in either expression or meaning, they will correct the defect, not letting any lapse escape, thus earning heavenly rewards, God, the Mighty,

⁵⁸ *Shi’i Interpretations*. p. 25 tr. p. 5 modified

⁵⁹ *Shi’i Interpretations* p 47-48

⁶⁰ *Paradise of Submission*. p. 15

willing.”⁶¹ Ṭūsī alludes that the very short treatise *Maṭlūb al-mu’minīn* (*Desideratum of the Faithful*) was commissioned possibly by the imam for the edification of the Nizari adherents.⁶² Ṭūsī did not “consider himself competent to talk about knowledge [of religion], but since the august position (*ḥaḍrat ‘ulyā*)⁶³—may its command be obeyed at all times—has indicated that for faithful seekers, a compilation of what I have read in the *Fuṣūl-i mubārak*, books of adherents of the religion (*kutūb-i ahl-i dīn*), and have heard from the instructors (*mu’allimān*), should be composed, a selection from the *Fuṣūl-i mubārak* and books of the leaders of religion (*kutub-i pīshwāyān-i dīn*) is therefore compiled in a manner that its understanding may not be difficult for the seekers of the true path (*rāh-i ḥaqq*).”⁶⁴

Ostensibly, the *da‘wa* literature was composed at the *dā‘ī*-authors’ own initiative and at the behest of patrons including the imams as well as in response to various supplicants. It is evident that the *dā‘ī*-authors sought recognition and elevation of their status by means of their writings; however, fundamentally their travails were viewed as acts of piety for the instruction, illumination and salvation of their fellow believers. Given the standing of these authors within the *da‘wa* and the esoteric content of teachings of theology, cosmology, ethics and salvation, such audiences also imbued the texts with immense sacrality. The language of the texts produced in Iran by Nizari authors, with, perhaps, a handful of exceptional tracts, is Persian. The use of Persian was not a revolutionary break from conformance to Arabic definitions of Islam nor a resistance against the Turkic speaking Saljuqs. It is worth re-stating here that uses of language were functions of local reception of the texts and not governed

⁶¹ *Paradise of Submission* p. 15

⁶² *Shi‘i Interpretations*. p. 16; 35; The Marshall Hodgson papers at the University of Chicago include a translation of this treatise which has not been published. I plan to publish a synoptic comparison of the Hodgson, Badakhchani and my translations in the future.

⁶³ Namely, the imam ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad.

⁶⁴ *Shi‘i Interpretations* p 35

solely or even primarily by the designs of production.⁶⁵ (Cf. PartOne:2-I-D). The people in the areas targeted by the Nizari *da'wa* predominantly were conversant in Persian and thus the intellectual production was in this language.

As already proposed, the palpable fissures should be seen in the absence of any separate and specifically Nizari collections of *ḥadīth* and related commentary traditions. The consecration of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's codification of what has been called the "Ismaili *madhhab*" (legal creed) in the Fatimid era⁶⁶ and particularly in the Ṭayyibī communities, reflects the timing of his endeavour when some of the more substantive debates in jurisprudence were settled among the disparate legal ideologies within the Ummah.⁶⁷ His collections of *ḥadīth* and systemisation of legal systems was a sufficient basis of Ismaili Law since the imams who were present (*ḥāḍir*) and living (*mawjūd*) were considered the ultimate arbiters in place of the Prophet in all such matters. Robert Gleave argued that in Shi'i Islam,

[t]he doctrine of the Imamate, then, reduced the need for legal theory. This at least partially explains why the Shi'a were tardy in producing works of *uṣūl al-fiqh* (legal theory) when compared to those developed by Sunnis. However, as the Shi'a began to fissure internally, the doctrinal paths taken by Shi'i groupings led to varying levels of theoretical need. ...The Ismā'īlī tradition—both under the Fatimids and later amongst the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs—presents the most dedicated adherence to this doctrine. There may have been a need for the law to be collected, as it was in al-Qāḍī-Nu'mān's (d. 303/974) *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, but there was little need for a general theory when the Imam was present.⁶⁸ This lack of interest in legal theory eventually resulted in a lack of interest in the law generally, and the Ismā'īlī Shi'i tradition after Qāḍī Nu'mān produced few significant legal works.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Consequently the understanding of community did not revolve around adoption of "Arab" and "Arabic" norms and values—this Islam was not for Arabs only cf Hodgson, *Venture* vol 1 pp 171 ff

⁶⁶ Poonawala, "The Evolution of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Theory of Ismaili Jurisprudence as Reflected in the Chronology of His Works on Jurisprudence."

⁶⁷ End of the *miḥna*; establishment of the four Sunni schools of law; 6 "canonical collections" of Sunni *ḥadīth*; al-Kāfi of Kulaynī; post-ghayba Ithnā'asharī theologies; ...

⁶⁸ Fn 2 Al-Qāḍī-Nu'mān's *Ikhtilāf uṣūl al-madhāhib* shows the author's great interest in legal theory, but is ultimately a rejection of the need for a discipline of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. For a debate on this, see "Alta Discussion", pp. 419–420.

⁶⁹ Robert Gleave. *Scripturalist Islam : The History and Doctrines of the Akhbārī Shī'ī School*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007). pp. xv-xvi

Nizari relinquishment of Fatimid legal norms and usages was presaged by the Nizari-Musta'lian schism; however, more importantly, the direct governance by leading functionaries of the *da'wa* of the small and insular communities that formed the nuclei of the Nizari polity did not necessitate systemisation of law nor its systematic elaboration. This is not to say that the *dā'īs* were unfamiliar with or did not engage in legal discourse—even their harsh critics acknowledged the *dā'īs* for their scrupulous adherence to the *shari'a*. Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ was an adept in the modes of *kalām* disputation; his successor Buzurg Ummīd engaged in legal and theological disputation with the Sunni 'ulamā'.⁷⁰ (Cf. Part One:6-V-A). Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's works also demonstrate a mastery of the *ḥadīth* tradition.⁷¹ The paramount feature of the breach, apparent in the Nizari texts, is the reflection of the total kerygmatic re-orientation of Nizari society based on the theology and spirituality centred on the *ḥujja* in the absence (*satr* meaning concealment) of the imam and the imam when his presence was manifest.

Consequently, Nizari conceptions of chronology were not a function of passage of years nor an alteration of the *duwal* of dynasties; rather an alternation of eras of occultation and manifestation (*dawr al-satr* and *dawr al-kashf* respectively).⁷² Until the middle of the 12th/7th century the manifestation of the imam was destined and imminent. After the 15 August 1164 CE/17 *Ramaḍān* 559 a new era was commenced. These perspectives of chronology relating to

⁷⁰ JT. pp 99-10, pp 127ff.

⁷¹ Ṭūsī. *The Nasirean Ethics (Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī)*; Ṭūsī. *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*; Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ṭūsī. *Tajrīd al-'aqā'id*, Edited by 'Abbās Sulaymān. (Alexandria Egypt: Dār al-Ma'rifah al-Jāmi'iyah, 1994); Contemplation and Action; Paradise of Submission; Shi'i Interpretations.

⁷² Paul E Walker, "Eternal Cosmos and the Womb of History: Time in Early Ismaili Thought," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 9 (1978).; John Andrew Boyle, "Rashid al-Din: The First World Historian," *Iran* 9 (1971).; Abbas Hamdani, "Time According to the Brethren of Purity," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 9, The Questions of Time/Ishkaliyat al-Zaman (1989).; Edward Granville Browne. *A Literary History of Persia Vol. 3—the Tartar Dominion (1265-1502)*, (Bethesda, Md.: Iranbooks, 1997). pp 89ff for a description of Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwinī's duration of the world; also see below chapters 3,4,5

eschatology which will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters are encapsulated by Alun Munslow's statement that "history narrative is at once a memorial and a remembrance, but it is also anticipatory and emancipatory. All histories have very practical present, and future-orientated dimensions are always situated in its mode of its expression."⁷³

A. Unpublished Treatises Used in this Research

Edited and translated for this research:

- *Namāh ba 'ulamā'-yi Qazwīn* (Letter to the Scholars of Qazwīn) - attributed to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ
- *Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw* (Story of Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw)
- *Dawr-i Kashf wa Dawr-i Satr* (The Era of Disclosure and the Era of Concealment)

Used in this research and to be edited and published separately:

- *Rāh-i Ma'rifat* (Path of Knowledge) - attributed to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ
- *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* (Biography of Our Master [Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ])
- *Ḥikāyatī az 'Alā Dhikrihi'l-Salām* (A Story from 'Alā Dhikrihi'l-Salam)

Only two of these: *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* and *Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw* are mentioned in Poonawala. The *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* and *Farmān-i Mawlānā 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad* were not listed by Peerwani or Javan. Of these seven, only the *Rāh-i Ma'rifat* (though not under that name)⁷⁴ and *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* have previously been studied.⁷⁵

⁷³ Munslow. NH. p. 25

⁷⁴ Seyyed Jalal Badakhchani, "Shahrastānī's Account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's Doctrine of Ta'lim," in *Islam: Identité et Altérité: Hommage À Guy Monnot, O.p.*, ed. Guy Monnot, and Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013). Seyyed Jalal Badakhchani

⁷⁵ Delia Cortese, "Lost and found: the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyid-nā*. Facts and fiction of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's travel to Egypt vis-à-vis the political and intellectual life of 5th/11th century Fāṭimid Cairo," in *Science in the City of Fortune: The Dustūr al-Munajjimīn and its World*, ed. Eva Orthmann, and Petra G. Schmidl (Berlin: EBVerlag, 2017). Delia Cortese I am grateful to Dr. Delia Cortese for allowing me a copy of her unpublished paper and for her enthusiastic support of this research.

These treatises and other extant texts provide understandings of the doctrines of the Nizari Ismailis. The Nizaris, like other Ismailis, did not write history in the *ta'rikh* genre, yet their *da'wa* literature encapsulated in the Ilkhanid chronicles represents the most substantial sources for the interpretations of past actuality and thought of early Nizari Ismailism. Given the antipathy of the Ilkhanid authors towards the Nizaris, how should their writings be approached within the spectrum of writing about the Ismailis? In the next section the nature of Ilkhanid historiography and the biographies of Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and Qashani will be examined to facilitate the challenges of re-reading their accounts to provide new information and to excavate traces of Nizari *da'wa* literature embedded with them.

III. Historiography in the Ilkhānid Era

Patterns of writing about the Ismailis developed in the Classical Period and crystallised in the early Middle Periods continued to be norms until the Mongol invasion. However, after the surrender of the fortress of Alamut and Juwayni's access to texts from its renowned library, the nature of writing about the Ismailis changed. Perhaps for the first time, writing about the Nizaris was based on their own texts. Decades after Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and Qashani used the texts acquired by him; moreover, they may have used additional documents and were quite possibly also informed by Nizari contacts since their writings contain details not found in Juwayni's account. The theological repudiations, the historical vilifications or in the rare case of Rashid al-Din's section in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*—a somewhat balanced treatment of the Nizaris—now drew from materials from the Nizari texts. The accounts of Juwayni and Rashid al-Din, and to a lesser extent Qashani, became paradigms that were followed for several hundred years of Persian historical writing about the Ismailis.⁷⁶ The reliance on these paradigms has continued to the present-day; and the greater dependency on one or the other

⁷⁶ Daftary. *IL-B*. p. 49

of the first two models by modern scholars often illustrates the particular optique of their historical analyses.

A. The Ilkhānid Chroniclers

An examination of the lives of these three authors and their writings is useful in locating their works in the continuum of writings on the Nizari Ismailis.

1. ‘ALĀ’ AL-DĪN ‘AṬĀ-MALIK JUWAYNĪ (1226-1283/623-681)

‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā-Malik b. Muḥammad Juwaynī (Juwayni) began writing his history in 1252-3/550 while in Mongolia at the age of twenty-six and is believed to have completed it eight years later since no events beyond 1260/658 are recorded.⁷⁷ His great-grandfather and grandfather had served the Khwārazmshāhs (fl. 1097-1231/490-628); the latter fled with Sultan Muḥammad (r. 1200-1220/596-617) as Chingiz Khān’s forces attacked Balkh in 1220/617 and he also went on to serve the next Khwārazmshāh as *ṣāhib dīwān* (minister of finance).⁷⁸ Juwayni’s father, Bahā’ al-Dīn, was captured among a group of Nishāpurī nobles by the Mongols at Ṭus in 1232-3/630; he was treated well and was appointed *ṣāhib dīwān* under three Mongol governors of Khurāsān. In 1235-6/633 he travelled to Mongolia and received a *pāiza* (tablet of authority) and a *yarlīgh* (royal decree) from the Great Khān, Ögedei b. Chingiz Khān (r. 1229-1241/626-639) confirming his appointment. Several times he was entrusted as viceroy with absolute rule of Mongol territories in the west while his overlord, the governor, Arghūn Aqā travelled to the Great Khān’s *ordu* (encampment/headquarters) in Mongolia to safeguard his own post.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ HWC. vol 1 p. 96; EI2. Barthold-Boyle “DJuwaynī”

⁷⁸ David Morgan, and Anthony Reid, eds. *The New Cambridge History of Islam—the Eastern Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). p. 134

⁷⁹ NCHI3: *Eastern Islamic World* pp 140-141

Juwayni joined the *dīwān* in his youth and at the age of twenty-three accompanied Arghūn Aqā to Mongolia. It was during his second trip there in 1251-3/649-51 that he began to write what would be called the *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā* (*History of the World-Conqueror*). He returned from this journey accompanying Hūlāgū in his westward march of conquest.

The *Ta'rikh* contains a history of the life of Chingiz Khān and an account of his ancestors and successors; a second part covered the Khwārazmshāhs and Mongol governors of Khurāsān to the year 1258/656; and the third section was on Ismaili history to the death of the imam Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh (d. 1257/655), the last ruler of the Nizari polity. Some manuscripts of the history also contain a chapter on Hūlāgū's conquest of Baghdad in 1258/656 which Qazwīnī believed was a supplement (*dhayl*) written by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274/672).⁸⁰ Browne noted that some "MSS. contain an Appendix describing the sack of Baghdād, [which took place in 1258/656] but this is probably an addition by a later hand."⁸¹ Juwayni's account contains unique first-hand observations of his travels to Mongolia and are coloured by his considerable involvement in the events he recorded.⁸² E. Denison Ross commented that the third volume of the *Ta'rikh* "includes not only a first-hand account of Hūlāgū's march into Persia and his capture of Alamūt, but also a very detailed account of the history and doctrines of the Persian Isma'ilīs (sic) from their first appearance down to their destruction in A.H. 655."⁸³ Similarly,

Browne wrote that the

history of the Assassins (sic) in particular is discussed with singular fulness and authority, for the author accompanied Hūlāgū Khān (in his capacity of secretary) on the expedition against their chief strongholds, and was able to examine and note the contents of many rare books in their well-stocked libraries, which were immediately afterwards committed to the flames. Thus it happens that this work contains many particulars concerning the history and doctrines of this

⁸⁰ ZT. p. lxiii

⁸¹ Browne. *LHP3*. vol 3 p. 66

⁸² EI2. Barthold-Boyle "DJuwaynī"; Vasily Vladimirovich Bartold. *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, Translated by Clifford Edmund Bosworth. (London: Luzac, 1968). p. xx

⁸³ Juwaynī. *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā of Juwayni, Vol. III: Being a Facsimile of a Manuscript Dated A. H. 690 Belonging to Wahīd-ul-Mulk*. p. i

interesting sect which are not to be found elsewhere, as well as much matter throwing light on the social and literary history of the period.⁸⁴

A century later, Melville observed that Juwayni's explanation of the Mongol attacks "was very much an attempt to explain the conquests as God's will. The author was heavily involved in the history he narrates, which has other consequences for his work, but he was perhaps too near to events to accommodate them into a new vision of Persian history." He noted that Juwayni wrote from a Mongol perspective, referring to Hūlāgū's conquest as an expedition "to the western lands".⁸⁵

Near the end of Ābāqā b. Hūlāgū's (r. 1265-1282/663-680) reign,⁸⁶ Juwayni and his brother Shams al-Dīn, who was the *ṣāhib dīwān*, fell victim to intrigue as the members of the *Altan Uruq* (the Golden Family), the *noyans* (commanders of 1000 and 10,000), amīrs and high level bureaucrats vied for power. In *Ramaḍān* 680/December 1281 Juwayni was accused of embezzling two and a half million *dinars* from the treasury by his opponents. Intervention on his behalf from the Ilkhan's family secured his release; however, he was re-arrested for being in contact with the enemies of the Ilkhans, namely, the Mamlūks (fl 1250-1517/648-923) of Egypt. Aḥmad Takūdar b. Hūlāgū (r. 1282-1284/680-683), who had converted to Islam, after his ascension to the throne released and reinstated Juwayni in his post as governor of Baghdad. Aḥmad, a convert to Islam, had made overtures to the Mamlūks and the Golden Horde (fl 1227-1502/624-907) in a pivot away from the alignment with European powers; these efforts were reversed after his death. Meanwhile Arghūn b. Ābāqā (r. 1284-1291/683-690) raised the embezzlement charges against Juwayni once again; he had been arresting and torturing

⁸⁴ Edward Granville Browne, "Note on the Contents of the Ta'rikh-i-Jahan-Gusha: Or History of the World-Conqueror, Changiz Khan, by 'Ata Malik Juwayni," *JRAS* 36 (1904). pp 27-43.

⁸⁵ Melville, "Mongol and Timurid Periods." p. 164.

⁸⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, Translated by John Andrew Boyle. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971). p. 14 and 347

Juwayni's representatives in Baghdad. On hearing this news in Arran, Juwayni had a stroke and died aged 57 on 4 *Dhū'l-ḥijja* 681/12 March 1283. His brother Shams was executed a few months later.⁸⁷ In his earlier service to the Mongols, Juwayni was rewarded with high positions and power. Under the Ilkhanids, "for twenty years as governor of 'Iraq-i 'Arab and Khuzistan, ... he did much to improve the lot of the peasantry"; he spent 10,000 dinars of gold to have a canal dug from Anbar on the Euphrates to Kūfa and Najaf founding 150 villages on its banks.⁸⁸

Juwayni has been villified for his enthusiastic support for the non-Muslim Mongols and for his vitriolic invective against the Ismailis.⁸⁹ It is essential to bear in mind that he was writing in established modes of historical writing. Born five years after the Chingizid invasions of 1219-1221/616-618, as a child he had seen his family of illustrious officials go from being hunted down to serving and thriving once again under their new Mongol masters. Educated in this tumultuous time, he most likely was exposed to zealous doctrinaire teachings and perspectives of religion, of time and society. Before the age of twenty he was already working in the *diwān*⁹⁰ and having only experienced the Mongol polity, like countless other Muslims, had accommodated himself to the new realities of Mongol rule.⁹¹ He construed the caliphal realm as debased by corruption and political intrigue—after all Sultan Muḥammad

⁸⁷ NCHIMorgan, and Reid, s. p. 149

⁸⁸ EI2. Barthold-Boyle "DJuwaynī"

⁸⁹ Nadia Eboo-Jamal. *Surviving the Mongols: Nizārī Qūhistānī and the Continuity of Ismaili Tradition in Persia*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002). p. 40 and 50, ...; Shafique N. Virani, "The Eagle Returns. Evidence of Continued Ismaili Activity At Alamut and the South Caspian Region Following the Mongol Conquests.," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 123, no. 2 (2003).;

⁹⁰ HWC. vol 1 p. 9; TJG. vol 1 p. 6

⁹¹ Peter Jackson, "Mongol Khans and Religious Allegiance: The Problems Confronting A Minister-Historian in Ilkhanid Iran," *Iran* 47 (2009). p. 110 "he recognised the necessity to accept what had transpired. One early passage is nothing less than an unabashed plea for political quiescence in the face of Mongol might, a plea supported by Qur'anic quotations ("And cast not yourselves by your own hands into destruction"; "And if they incline to peace, do thou incline to it")."

Khawārazm-Shāh was prevented only by a harsh winter and trouble on his eastern front from overthrowing Caliph al-Naṣīr.⁹² He perceived the “heresy” of the Nizaris growing in territory and imagined their *da‘wa* and “assassins” having a reach into distant lands. He may even have imagined his patrons, the Mongols, as God-sent to set the world back on its proper course. As an observer and participant in the processes that lead to immense devastation and cataclysmic depopulation where the Mongol horses had trodden, how was this young Sunni Muslim official to make sense in his narrative, of the brutality of warfare; the mandate and the humanity of his masters along with the plight of his society?⁹³ The *Ta’rīkh-i jahān-gushā*, was completed almost immediately after the twin decapitations of the Nizari polity and ‘Abbāsid caliphate when Juwayni was a mere 34 years old. Melville noted the challenge

facing a new generation of Persian historians was how to record and explain these transformations, how to come to terms with alien, pagan, even brutish new rulers, how to draw appropriate lessons from the traumas inflicted on their land and people, how to preserve some continuity with the recent pre-conquest past, and how to respond to or encourage court patronage.⁹⁴

For its content and especially for its ornate style, the *Ta’rīkh* was recognised as a high standard worthy of emulation. His accounts of the Nizari polity became one of the key paradigms that has informed writing about the Nizari Ismailis for three quarters of a millennium.

2. RASHĪD AL-DĪN FAḌL ALLĀH (c. 1247-1318/c. 645-718)

Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Ṭabīb al-Hamadāni (Rashid al-Din), most modern historians suggest, hailed from a Jewish family originating in Hamadan. His father was an apothecary and himself

⁹² Beatrice Forbes Manz, “The Rule of the Infidels: The Mongols and the Islamic World,” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam — the Eastern Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. David Morgan, and Anthony Reid (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Beatrice Forbes Manz pp 128-168; EI2. C.E. Bosworth: “Khawārazmshāhs”

⁹³ Hirschler, “Arabic and Persian Traditions.” 278 “Dynasties that came to power by conquest from the outside, such as the Mongols and the Mamluks, both posed in this regard considerable challenges for the authors of historical works.”; Melville, “Mongol and Timurid Periods.” 160-161; Jackson, “Mongol Khans and Religious Allegiance: The Problems Confronting A Minister-Historian in Ilkhanid Iran.” p. 110

⁹⁴ Melville, “Mongol and Timurid Periods.” 156

was known as *Ṭabīb* because of his training as a physician and the capacity in which he entered the service of the Ilkhans under Ābāqā.⁹⁵ After 1298/697 he became co-*wazīr* in the reign of Ghāzān b. Arghūn (r. 1295-1304/694-703) and despite various tribulations remained in that powerful position until in the reign of Abū Saʿīd b. Ūljāytū (r. 1316-1335/716-736). Through the immense wealth he acquired, he built suburbs which were named after himself in Sulṭāniyya, the Ilkhanid royal city built by Ūljāytū and Tabriz the political and commercial centre. These projects included the constructions of mosques, hospitals, madrasas, and thousands of houses. Browne remarked that this illustrious author was “as eminent a physician, a statesman, a historian and a public benefactor.” The wealth bestowed on him by the Ilkhans was used for “pious and public utility”⁹⁶ and patronage of learning—several historians counted themselves as proteges of Rashid al-Din. He was the architect of Ghāzān’s reforms which sought to restructure and transform the Ilkhanid government from a nomadic xenocracy into modes of Perso-Islamic rule reforming systems of economic extraction and emphasising justice.⁹⁷

In the reign of Abū Saʿīd, his longstanding enmity with his co-*wazīr* Tāj al-Dīn ‘Alī Shāh⁹⁸ and the shifting alliances at the court brought an accusation that Rashid al-Din had poisoned the Ilkhan’s predecessor and father, Ūljāytū b. Arghūn (r. 1304-1316/703-716) for which he was deposed and in 1318/718 was executed along with his sixteen year-old son, Ibrāhīm, who was

⁹⁵ Dorothea Krawulsky. *The Mongol Īlkhāns and Their Vizier Rashīd al-Dīn*, (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2011). pp 119-127

⁹⁶ Browne. *LHP3*. pp 68-70

⁹⁷ Ann K S Ann K. S. Lambton, “Changing Concepts of Justice and Injustice From the 5th/11th Century to the 8th/14th Century in Persia: The Saljuq Empire and the Ilkhanate,” *Studia Islamica* 68 (1988). pp 56-58; Denise Aigle, “Iran Under Mongol Domination: The Effectiveness and Failings of A Dual Administrative System,” *Bulletin d’études orientales* 6 (2008). p. 74; Morgan, and Reid, s. pp 151-152; Stefan T. Kamola, “Rashīd al-Dīn and the Making of History in Mongol Iran,” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2013). Abstract

⁹⁸ the only Ilkhanid *wazīr* to die of natural causes; Browne. *LHP3*. p. 71

accused of actually administering the poison.⁹⁹ Browne wrote that his property was confiscated,

his relatives were persecuted and despoiled, his pious foundations [*awqāf*] were robbed of their endowments, and the Rab'-i-Rashīdī, the suburb [in Tabriz] which he had founded, was given over to rapine. He was buried in the mausoleum which he had prepared for his last resting-place, but his body was not suffered to rest there in peace, for about a century later Mīrānshāh the son of Tīmūr-i-Lang, in one of his fits of insane brutality, caused it to be exhumed and buried in the Jews' cemetery.¹⁰⁰

Several scholars have questioned Rashid al-Din's Jewish origin—Étienne Quatremère considered it impossible;¹⁰¹ Browne wrote that “he was asserted by his enemies to have been of Jewish Origin”;¹⁰² among others. Walter Fischel has argued that based on several later Arabic sources that the *wazīr* came from a Jewish family from Hamadan, where there was a large Jewish population, and he must have been educated in the *yeshiva* there—demonstrated by his knowledge of Hebrew and intricate understanding of Jewish scriptures and laws.¹⁰³ He asserted without any supporting evidence that Rashid al-Din “until his conversion to Islam at the age of

⁹⁹ Boyle, “Rashid al-Din: The First World Historian.” pp 19–26; Morgan, and Reid, s. pp 148–151 and 153; EI2. David Morgan: “Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb

¹⁰⁰ Browne. *LHP3*. p. 71 his son Ghiyath al-Dīn was appointed as *wazīr* however.

¹⁰¹ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh, “Histoire des Mongols De la Perse,” (1836). p. vi

¹⁰² Browne. *LHP3*. p. 69

¹⁰³ Walter J Fischel, “Azarbaijan in Jewish History,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 22 (1953). pp 15–16; Boyle, Boyle, “Rashid al-Din: The First World Historian.” p. 20:

“In 1312 his colleague Sa'd al-Din fell from grace and was put to death; and for a brief while Rashid al-Din was in danger of sharing his fate. A letter in the Hebrew script purporting to be written by Rashid was discovered and laid before Öljeitü. In it the writer urged his correspondent, a Jewish protégé of one of the Mongol emirs, to administer poison to the Il-Khan. Rashid al-Din was able to prove the letter a forgery and continued to enjoy Öljeitü's favour and confidence for the remainder of his reign. A rift, however, soon developed with his new colleague, Taj al-Din 'Ali Shāh, and the Il-Khan sought to remedy matters by dividing his empire into two administrative spheres, Rashid al-Din being responsible for Central and Southern Iran while 'Ali-Shāh was placed in charge of North-Western Iran, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. The antagonism between the two viziers persisted despite this segregation of their duties, and in 1317, in the reign of Öljeitü's son Abū Sa'īd (1316–35), 'Ali Shāh succeeded by his intrigues in securing his rival's dismissal”

thirty was a loyal member of his Jewish community.”¹⁰⁴ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 1449/852)

mentioned him as

a Jewish apothecary’s son turned Muslim who rose in the service of the Il-Khans to the rank of vizier; who championed and protected the followers of his adopted faith; who built fine public buildings in Tabriz; who, while merciless to his enemies, was generous in the extreme to the learned and the pious; and who wrote a rationalistic commentary on the Qur’an for which he was accused of *ilhād*, i.e. of belonging to the outcast sect of the Isma‘ilis or Assassins (sic).¹⁰⁵

This accusation of “heresy” (*ilhād*) and belonging to the Ismailis indicates the level of opposition against the powerful *wazīr* and the factionalism of the Ilkhanid court at the time. David Morgan postulated that Rashid al-Din’s Jewish religious background was “a potential embarrassment, and the demonstration of his Islamic orthodoxy (sic) and respectability may well have been his principal motive for writing a number of somewhat derivative works on Islamic theology.”¹⁰⁶ Rashid al-Din’s conversion as already mentioned may have taken place when he was thirty; the circumstances and motivations are variously reported. Stephan Kamola has suggested that as a matter of self-preservation, “a Muslim Rashīd al-Dīn to have survived the relatively haphazard purges of 1284-89 is far more likely than for a Jewish Rashīd al-Dawla¹⁰⁷ to have survived the violent persecution of Jews subsequent to the death of Sa‘d al-Dawla and Arghūn Khan.”¹⁰⁸

After almost two centuries of western academic interest in his work, Rashid al-Din’s biography still remains unsettled. Dorothea Krawulsky explained that the purpose of her brief biographic sketch of the *wazīr* was “to correct erroneous biographical data responsible for the wrong

¹⁰⁴ Fischel, “Azarbaijan in Jewish History.” p. 16; Boyle, “Rashid al-Din: The First World Historian.” p. 19

¹⁰⁵ *Al-durar al-kāmina fī a’yān al-mī‘at al-thāmina*, Vol. III (Hyderabad, 1349/1930-I), pp 232-3; translated in *Rashid al-Din: The First World Historian* p. 20

¹⁰⁶ David Morgan: “Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb” EI2.

¹⁰⁷ Kamola postulated that “al-Dawla” is a *laqab* (epithet) given to non-Muslims as “al-Dīn” connoted “Muslim”.

¹⁰⁸ “Rashīd al-Dīn.” p. 118 Sa‘d al-Dawla was a powerful Jewish *wazīr*

image of the Vizier's life and character, and so repeatedly recorded in many studies on the Vizier."¹⁰⁹ Pointing to Morgan's article, her footnote states that the "record of the Vizier's birthplace, conversion, upbringing, etc. in the secondary sources needs to be corrected". She suggested that these issues may be finally resolved when the yet to be edited and published massive collection *al-Majmū'a al-Rashīdiyya* is fully examined for the autobiographical notices scattered throughout. Recent studies of his work are showing that while there were accusations against Rashid al-Din of insincere conversion or being partial towards Jews,¹¹⁰ it is his theological output that may have been one of the principal causes of opposition. These theological works include *Kitāb al-tauḍīhāt* (Book of Clarifications); *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr* (Key to Commentaries); *Kitāb al-sulṭāniya* (Book of the Sulṭānate); *Laṭā'if al-ḥaqā'iq* (Subtle Truths); *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* (Account of Truths) and *As'ila wa ajwiba* (Questions and Answers) written between 1304/704 and 1310/710.¹¹¹ Far from being derivative works of theology to demonstrate his "Islamic orthodoxy", Kamola has suggested that in the face of attacks and over time, Rashid al-Din began to display "heightened confidence in his own authority as a theologian".¹¹² His self-representation in the *Laṭā'if al-ḥaqā'iq* begins:

Master of the Worlds, Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction (*ṣāḥib qirān*), Great Minister, Manager of Affairs of the World, Trustee of the Interests of the Race of Adam, Servant of the Men of the Sword and of the Pen, adorned with the thrones of the vizierate, arrayed with the pillars of state . . . Ṣulṭān of Viziers and of Doctors and of the 'Ulamā of Creation, Rashīd al-Ḥaqq wa al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh son of the Maula the Grand Lord the Fortunate Ṣulṭān of Philosophers and of Princes of the Age, 'Imād al-Daula wa al-Dīn Abu'l-Khayr son of the Maula the Late Lord Muvaffaq al-Daula Eli the medical practitioner [*al-mutaṭṭabīb*] from Hamadan, the one known as Rashīd the Doctor [*al-rashīd al-ṭabīb*].¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Krawulsky. *Mongol Ilkhāns*. p. 119 for the biographical sketch see pp 119-134

¹¹⁰ this contradicted by Qashani

¹¹¹ "Rashīd al-Dīn." p. 205

¹¹² *Rashīd al-Dīn* p. 214; Browne. *LHP3*. pp 76ff

¹¹³ "Rashīd al-Dīn." p. 102; translation of Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Laṭā'if al-ḥaqā'iq*, Edited by Ghulāmriżā Ṭāhir. (Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Tihrān, 1976). p. ii.2. Note, Kamola chooses the transcription Eli vs 'Alī indicating his reading of Rashid al-Din's grandfather as Jewish

Beyond claiming the lofty positions of *ṣāhib qirān* and *mujaddid* (centennial renewer),¹¹⁴ according to Kamola, in his syntheses, Rashid al-Din criticised the Mu'tazila and the literalist Sunnis, especially the Shafī'īs in their approaches to reason and revelation.¹¹⁵ He favoured the Ash'arīs and the Shi'ism of Ḥasan b. Yūsuf al-Ḥillī (d. 1325/725)¹¹⁶ known as 'Allāma al-Ḥillī and a student of Ṭūsī. Rashid al-Din, a proponent of the capacities of reason and reflection on the revelation to attain salvation, he “consciously harnessed the Illuminationist philosophical tradition,¹¹⁷ along with a sympathetic tradition of political ethics from Kubrāvī Sufism,¹¹⁸ to promote an image of his patron [Ghāzān] as an ideal ruler.”¹¹⁹ An intimate of the Ilkhan's, Rashid al-Din not only was present at the birth of Ūljāytū as physician but as *wazīr*, theologian, advisor and trusted mentor, he also was “midwife” to the conversions of both Ghāzān and Ūljāytū.¹²⁰

Turning to the *Jāmi' al-tawārikh* (*Compendium of Histories*), initially commissioned as a history of the Mongols by Ghāzān, it was expanded under the patronage of Ūljāytū to include the histories of the peoples and polities that came into contact with the Mongols. Regarded as one the earliest universal world histories, for its magnitude and perspectives of different world civilisations, the JT was completed in 1310/710¹²¹ although the section on the Fatimids and

¹¹⁴ “Rashīd al-Dīn.” p. 212; this is a predominantly Sunni concept where figures such as al-Ghazālī and Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī were proclaimed to be renewers of the faith in their century

¹¹⁵ Cf Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and Buzurg Ummīd's attacks on these groups: JT. p. 99-100 (contra Shafī'īs), and pp 127ff (Mu'tazila, Qadiris and others)

¹¹⁶ “Rashīd al-Dīn.” p. 209 and fn107. This *risāla* is discussed in Felix Klein-Franke, “Rashīd al-Dīn's Treatise ‘on Free Will and Predestination.’ an Attempt to Overcome Inner-Islamic Differences,” *Le Muséon* 117, no. 3-4 (2004).

¹¹⁷ EI2. Hossein Ziai: “al-Suhrawardī”; R. Arnaldez: “Ishrākiyyūn”

¹¹⁸ EI2 Hamid Algar: “Kubrā”

¹¹⁹ “Rashīd al-Dīn.” pp 173ff esp 174

¹²⁰ *Rashīd al-Dīn* p. 213

¹²¹ Bartold. *Turkestan*. p. 45; Daftary. *IL-B*. p. 192

Nizaris gives 1314/714¹²² as the date of completion. While Rashid al-Din is considered the author, it is very likely that this prolific *wazīr* had a team of scholars collaborating on this monumental project.¹²³

The JT in its final form was structured into four tomes (*mujallad*):¹²⁴

- The first tome consists of accounts of the Turkic and Mongol peoples from their mythic ancestors; the histories of Chingiz Khan and his successors including the Ilkhans to the death of Ghāzān.
- The second tome is divided into two parts (*bāb*).
 - The first part, namely, the history of Ūljāytū, has not yet been discovered.
 - The second part is divided into two sections (*qism*);
 - The first following patterns of Islamicate historiography, contains accounts of the prophets beginning with Adam; pre-Islamic rulers; the Sunni caliphate; Persianate dynasties of the Sāmānids, Buyids, Ghaznavids, Saljuqs, Khwārazmshāhs and the Salghūrids. The supplement on the Fatimid and Nizari Ismailis is added here.
 - The second section has a “detailed history of every nation of the inhabited quarter of the earth” meaning histories of the Chinese, Jews, Frankish emperors and the popes and the Indians.
- The third tome, the *Shu‘ab-i panjgāna* (*The Five Genealogies*) is made up of genealogical tables based on the narratives of the JT.¹²⁵

¹²² JT. p. 195

¹²³ EI2.David Morgan: “Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb Qashani claimed authorship—see below

¹²⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jamī‘u’t-Tawarikh-Tr.* pp ix-xi --Thackston has tabulated the editions and translations of the text; Browne. *LHP3*. pp 73ff

¹²⁵ İlker Evrim Binbaş, “Structure and Function of the Genealogical Tree in Islamic Historiography (1200-1500),” in *Horizons of the World: Festschrift for İsenbike Togan*, ed. Evrim Binbaş, and Nurten Kiliç-Schubel (Istanbul: Ithaki, 2011).İlker Evrim Binbaş

- The fourth tome, the *Šuwar al-aqālīm* a geographical compendium describing the *haft iqlīm* (the Seven Climes) and the information about the Mongol highways, milestones and postal stages all on maps designed by Rashid al-Din have also yet to be discovered.

The section on the Nizari Ismailis in the JT follows the structure in Juwayni's work and much content is copied from it verbatim; however, the JT is much more elaborate in content and drastically less hostile in perspective. In the case studies below it will be demonstrated that Rashid al-Din's team drew upon sources such as Ibn al-Athīr's *Al-kāmil fī'l-ta'rikh*,¹²⁶ Ḥāhīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī's *Saljūq-nāma*; Ibn Qalānisi's *Dhayl ta'rikh Dimashq*; among others. (Cf. Part One:6-III). The divergences from Juwayni's work are not limited to the less vitriolic language; in many sections, the JT's different and more detailed information suggests independent access to the Nizari sources and perhaps even personal contacts with Nizari informants. Amongst the writings of a number of Ilkhanid era authors, including ones patronised by Rashid al-Din and included later in this study, the JT is unique in its more balanced treatment of the Ismailis. Melville attributed this to the *wazīr*'s conversion in "that he was comfortable approaching Islamic history from a different perspective than was usual; this is certainly reflected in his work."¹²⁷

Evrin Binbaş in his study of genealogical trees in Islamicate historiography examined one included as an appendix to the *K. al-sulṭānīya*, which he has called the "*Shu'ab-i anbiyā*" (*Genealogies of the Prophets*). In this text dating from 1310/710, Rashid al-Din tabulated the "Prophet's companions, the Umayyad, 'Abbāsīd, and Fāṭimid caliphs, and the followers of the companions (*tābi'ūn*)" and then he provided the "same information in the format of a tree (*mushajjar*) so that those who wanted to use this information could find it easily". Binbaş wrote that after the Prophet Muḥammad,

¹²⁶ EIr. Charles Melville: "Jāme' al-tawārik"

¹²⁷ EIr Charles Melville: "Jāme' al-tawārik"

Rashīd al-Dīn divides the subsequent pages into three parts. On the left are found the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs, and on the right the Umayyad caliphs, and at the center there are the Fāṭimid caliphs starting with Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet and the wife of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. The caption below the name of the Prophet explains Rashīd al-Dīn’s intention at least partially: “ ... the caliphs (*khulafā*) of the Prophet are the descendants of Fāṭima, who are the People of the House (*ahl al-bayt*), and the ‘Abbāsīd and the Umayyad caliphs.” ...

Binbaş continues

Therefore, it would not be a grave mistake to suggest that this last genealogical tree of Rashīd al-Dīn has a peculiar ‘Alīd tone. One can even argue that it has an apparent Fāṭimid bias, as among the many branches of Shī‘ism, only the Fāṭimid branch is emphasized properly.¹²⁸

Unlike Binbaş’ counting error where his text reads “the second caliph Abū Bakr (d. 13/634)”¹²⁹ there is a definite intentionality in Rashīd al-Dīn’s design. Any graphic designer, including this author, would agree that position and size are key to the syntax of visual representation and much thought often goes into both the apparent and semiotic or to put it more relevant terms, the *ẓāhir* (exoteric) and *bāṭin* (esoteric) meanings of the image. Rashīd al-Dīn did not explain why he composed “a separate genealogical tree for the *ahl-i bayt* and the Fāṭimids” (sic); Binbaş proposed that the “preoccupation with ‘Alīd genealogies during the Ilkhan Öljeitü’s reign should not be unrelated to that ruler’s conversion to Shī‘ī Islam in 709/1309.”¹³⁰ The genealogical tree showing the Ithnā‘asharī and Ismaili lines of imams as *khulafā* of the Prophet appended to the book whose title invokes power and authority is highly significant.

The “‘Alīd tone” and “Fatimid bias” may also be notable factors in the way Rashīd al-Dīn treated the subject of the Ismailis and the Nizaris in particular. To explain this, based on Browne’s report that Rashīd al-Dīn’s grandfather Muwaffaq al-Dawla ‘Alī was given refuge at

¹²⁸ Binbaş, “Genealogical Tree.” pp 35-36

¹²⁹ *Genealogical Tree* p. 36 this is not a Shī‘ī bias but an oversight. Elsewhere he uses terms such as the “rightly guided caliphs” (p41) and without comment in a passage quoted from Chase Robinson (p 69); as noted below he distinguishes: “*ahl-i bayt* and the Fatimids” (p37)

¹³⁰ The Fatimids are considered *ahl-i bayt* by the Ismailis in as much as the twelve imams are in the Ithnā‘asharī interpretation of Islam! *Genealogical Tree* p. 37

Alamut until the time of its surrender,¹³¹ Farhad Daftary has intimated that the latter “might have come into possession of some Ismā‘īlī books, in addition to developing friendly relations with the Nizaris”¹³² which then would have been at Rashid al-Din’s disposal. Krawulsky has taken the matter of these linkages even further in her analysis; she rejects the idea proposed by Quatremère, and followed by scholarship since 1830/1245, that Rashid al-Din was born and grew up in Hamadan. She proposed instead that he was born in the Nizari fortress of Maymūdīz.¹³³ Her argument is that the *nisba* al-Ḥamdānī does not represent a place of birth but is simply a marker of origin attached to the family. Her support for the asserted birthplace is rather clumsy however, since her only source is a reference to a translation of a 17th/11th century prince from Transoxiana, Abū’l-Ghāzī Bahādur Khān’s (d. 1663/1074)¹³⁴ text which states that Rashid al-Din came from Qazwīn.¹³⁵ Quatremère after a lengthy examination of Rashid al-Din’s origins ended his discussion by rejecting the Shaybānīd historian’s assertion “*Abou’lgazi-Behadur prétend que Raschid-eldin était natif de Kazwin, mais cette assertion ne mérite pas d’être discutée.*”¹³⁶

Kamola does not go as far as ascribing a specific location for the future *wazīr*’s birth; however, he wrote that given the devastation
of the early Mongol invasion, one branch of which chased Khwārazmshāh Muḥammad across
the Jibāl, it is entirely possible that Rashīd al-Dīn’s family left Hamadan for the safety of

¹³¹ Browne. *LHP3*. III:69;

¹³² Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 306

¹³³ Krawulsky. *Mongol Ilkhāns*. p. 120.

¹³⁴ *Encyclopaedia Islamica (Brill Online)*, Edited by Wilferd Madelung, Farhad Daftary, and Kazem Musavi Bojnurdi. (London: Brill, 2008—). *Dianat, Ali Akbar; Bernjian, Farhoud. “Abū al-Ghāzī Bahādur Khān”;*

¹³⁵ Abū’l-Ghāzī Bahādur Khān. *Histoire généalogique des Tatars (Shajara-i Turk)*, Translated by Bentick of Leiden. (Leiden: A. Kallewier, 1762). p. 77; Abū’l-Ghāzī Bahādur Khān, “Histoire des Mogols et des Tatares par Abū’l-Ghāzī Bahādur Khān, publié, traduite et annoté par le Baron Desmaisons,” (1871). p. 35

¹³⁶ *Mongols De la Perse*. p. iv. “Abū’l-Ghāzī Bahādur claims that Rashīd al-Dīn was a native of Qazwīn but this assertion does not deserve to be discussed”.

Maymūndiz before his birth. By comparison, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī came under Ismāʿilī patronage some time in or shortly after 1224; perhaps the same is true of the doctors of Hamadan, ʿImād al-Dawla Abu'l Khayr and his father, Muwaffaq al-Dawla Eli.¹³⁷

In the JT, Rashid al-Din stated

Mawlana Saʿid Khwaja Nasiruddin Ṭūsī, the most learned and most intelligent man in the world, and a group of great physicians like Raʿisuddawla, Muwaffaquddawla, and their sons, who were trapped involuntarily in that land, when they saw how erratic Khwarshah's behavior was and that aggression and tyranny were part of the very fibre of his being and his madness was quite apparent, not only had wearied of but actually began to detest serving the Heretics (sic) and were desirous of helping Hūlāgū Khan.¹³⁸

They encouraged Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh to capitulate and descend from Maymūndiz as Hūlāgū had demanded and descended from Maymūndiz with him on 26 November 1256 CE/29 Shawwāl

654. They were accorded privileged treatment since the allegiance of

Khwaja Nasiruddin Ṭūsī and the sons of Raʿisuddawla and Muwaffaquddawla, who were great and influential physicians originally from Hamadan, was patent and tested, he rewarded them all and gave them pack horses so that they could get all their family, dependents, relatives, and retinue, along with all their servants and followers, and move them to the court. Until now they and their offspring have always been and still are attendants and confidants at the court of Hūlāgū Khan and his illustrious offspring.¹³⁹

Raʿis al-Dawla and Muwaffaq al-Dawla were brothers¹⁴⁰ and the latter's son, ʿImād al-Dawla b. Muwaffaq al-Dawla and his nine year-old grandson, the future author of the JT were presumably part of this retinue exiting the Nizari fortress. Rashid al-Din's personal familiarity with the Nizaris and his connections with their milieu, above all, explains the content and tenor of his writing on the Ismailis. The *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* section on the Nizaris can be counted

¹³⁷ "Rashīd al-Dīn." p. 106

¹³⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jamiʿu't-Tawarikh-Tr.* p. 483 this does not resonate at all with the tenor and content of Rashid al-Din's characterisation in the account of Hūlāgū's conquest. This passage has more to do with Rashid al-Din's status. Also cf fn 202.

¹³⁹ *Jamiʿu't-Tawarikh-Tr* pp 485-486. It is significant to note that the two mentions of Rashid al-Din's grandfather are in tandem with mentions of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī. And that reference to his own father is only in terms of "sons of Muwaffaq al-Dawla. The *laqab* al-Dawla is associated with non-Muslims with high position especially as functionaries in the government or royal household

¹⁴⁰ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 306

as a unique paradigm for writing on the Ismailis in Persian historiography over the past seven hundred years.¹⁴¹

3. ABŪ AL-QĀSIM QĀSHĀNĪ (D. AFTER 1337/738)

Abū al-Qāsim Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭāhir Qāshānī (Qashani), who also referred to himself with the *laqabs* (epithets) *al-mu’arrikh* (historian, chronicler) and *al-ḥāsib* (mathematician) implying government service under the Ilkhans during the reigns of Ūljāytū and Abū Sa’īd. He belonged to the Abū Ṭāhir family famed for their expertise in ceramics.¹⁴² He was patronised by the Ilkhanid *wazīr* Rashid al-Din and seems to have switched allegiance to the latter’s bitter enemy and co-*wazīr* Tāj al-Dīn ‘Alī Shāh a few years after the latter came to power in 1312/711.¹⁴³

Three of his works are known: ‘*Arā’is al-jawāhir wa nafā’is al-aṭā’ib*’ is a study of gems, minerals and perfumes. Priscilla Soucek observed that he derived his content from a treatise by Ṭūsī who drew on the work of Bīrūnī (d. 1048/440) and in turn this work completed in 1300-01/700 may have been a source for Rashid al-Din’s *al-Āthār wa’l-aḥyā’* (Works and the Living) which is only partially extant.¹⁴⁴ She noted his mention of “gold mines in Dāmḡān and Kermān, silver mines in Anatolia, and copper mines in Azerbaijan (pp. 215-16, 224, 229). These last provided metal for Ḡāzān Khan’s coins. A short appendix on ceramic production provides valuable insight into the materials and techniques of Iranian potters.” The second text, the *Ta’rīkh-i Ūljāytū*, begun in 1303/703 completed in 1318/718, in the main part is organised as a daily

¹⁴¹ I have prepared an annotated translation of this section which will be published in the near future.

¹⁴² *Elism*. “Abu Tahir”

¹⁴³ Which perhaps is also reflected in the complaints of plagiarism.

¹⁴⁴ EIr. P. Soucek: “Abu’l-Qāsem ‘Abdallāh Kāshānī”; Karl Jahn, “The Still Missing Works of Rashīd al-Dīn,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 9 (1964). p. 118

chronicle.¹⁴⁵ In two places in this text, Qashani accused Rashid al-Din of usurping his effort and presenting the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* as his own. He complained:

روز یکشنبه پنجم شوال موافق ششم اچونچ آی وصول اردوقیا از جانب خراسان، و آدینه دهم دستور ایران خواجه رشید الدین کتاب جامع التواریخ که تألیف و تصنیف این بیچاره بود، به دست جهودان مردود بر رای پادشاه عرضه کرد و جایزه آن پنجاه تومان مال از املاک و دیه و ضیاع بستد و هر سال از محصول مستدرکات و ربوع ارتفاعات آنجا بیست تومان نقد عفو صفا به وی می‌رسد و با وجود وعده بتصنیف یک درم به مؤلف و مصنف آن نداد که سعی بلیغ و جهد نخیج نموده بود و به سالها جمع کرده: رنج من بردم ولی مخدوم من | آن به نام خویشان بر کار کرد و فراوان نواخت و سیور غامیشی یافت.¹⁴⁶

And again while stating that he wrote the continuation of the *Jāmi'* he protested:

لطیفه دیگر: ذیل کتاب جامع التواریخ که تألیف این ضعیف بود و به نام مبارکش تمام کرده، خواجه رشید الدوله برو عرض کرد. در حق او چندان سیور غامیشی و عاطفت و اصطناع فرمود که هرگز هیچ پادشاه [را] در حق هیچ وزیر آنچنان موهبت و احسان و عطیت و اکرام و انعام معهود و معتاد نبوده، و درجه او عالی کرد و سرش به آسمان رسانید، و پنجاه تومان مال بر سبیل موجب و ادرار در حق او انعام و احسان فرمود. در هر ناحیتی دویاره دیه معظم و قریه معمور معتبر که مجموع آن را به مبلغ بیست تومان هر ساله به ضمان است، و همچنین دیگر کرامات و انواع تشریفات و انعامات که از عهد آدم علیه السلام تا اکنون هیچ پادشاهی به جایزه لوح محفوظ نیافته باشد. و با آنکه به مصنف شرط کرده بود دانگی از آن به مؤلف و جامع و مصنف آن کتاب نداد. بلی به واسطه آن دو سه نفر جهود جحد را تربیت کرد و مشاهره و ادرار رسید و این ابیات می‌خواند: ز آفتاب این مکرم هرگز کجا بیند هلال | وز سحاب این عاطفت هرگز کجا یابد جمال

¹⁴⁵ Daftary: "Kashani" Elsl; P. Soucek: "Abu'l-Qāsem 'Abdallāh Kāšānī" Elr; Bartold. *Turkestan*. p. 46

¹⁴⁶ Jamāl al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh b. 'Alī Qāshānī. *Tārīkh-i Ūljāytū: tārīkh-i pādīshāh-i Sa'īd Ghiyath al-dunyā wa'l-dīn Ūljāytū Sulṭān Muḥammad Ṭayyib Allāh Marqadahū*, Edited by Mahīn Hambalī. (Tehran: Bungah-i Tarjumah wa Nashr-i Kitāb, 1969). pp 54-55.

Partial translation: On Sunday, 5th *Shawwāl* which equals the 6th *Uchūnch* [706 A.H. 17 April, 1307] upon arrival at *Ūrdūqiyā* near *Khurāsān*. On Friday according to Iranian reckoning, *Khawāja* Rashīd al-Dīn presented the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* which was written and assembled by this unfortunate, by the hands of reprobate Jews to the king. [it is not clear why the *wazīr* would need interlocutors to present the text to the ruler nor who this refers to]. He was awarded 50 *tuman* from the state coffers and villages and property. Every year he was to receive 20 *tuman* from these. Despite his promise, he did not give a single dirham to the author and compiler for his many years of toil. Cf also Charles Melville, "The Chinese-Uighur Animal Calendar in Persian Historiography of the Mongol Period," *Iran* 32 (1994).

کز عطای دست شاهنشاه عالم دید و یافت | این ضعیف نیکخواه و چاکر مدحت سگال

تم الكتاب بحمد الله و حسن توفيقه و الصلوة على نبيه محمد و آله اجمعين تحريرا في سلخ ربيع الآخر
سنة اثنين و خمس و سبعماية، على يد العبد الضعيف المحتاج الى رحمة الله تعالى احمد بن الحسين بن
ساتاق عفا الله عنهم حامدا لله تعالى و مصليا و مسلما و السالم.¹⁴⁷

While this has been seen by most scholars as an effort to take advantage of the demise of his former patron or even just to get credit for his own hard work; Qashani did not attain any benefit.¹⁴⁸ Despite the bitter laments, this may very well have been a strategy of survival by distancing himself from the discredited *wazir*.

Qashani's third work, *Zubdat al-tawārikh* (*Epitome of Histories*) is a general Islamic history up to the fall of the 'Abbāsids. The text is divided into two parts; one details the pre-Islamic Persianate empires and the second covers rulers from the time of the Prophet onwards. The *Zubdat* includes a section on the history of the Fatimids and the Nizaris. Qashani's writing on the Nizaris follows the structures of the *Tarikh-i jahān-gushā* and the *Jāmi' al-tawārikh*; however, the content is similar if not more detailed than the *Jāmi'* but the tenor is closer to that of Juwayni's treatment of the Nizaris.

B. Ilkhānid Historiography

¹⁴⁷ Qāshānī. *T. Ūljāytū*. pp 240-241; *Elslm*. "Kashani"—scholars argue that this is an admission that Qashani did not write the *Jāmi'*. Here, Qashani repeats the lament of the previous quote.

¹⁴⁸ *Elslm* "Kashani"; Charles Melville, "Between Firdausī and Rashīd al-Dīn: Persian Verse Chronicles of the Mongol Period," *Studia Islamica* (2007).: "It is also worth recalling in this context the old and long-debated assertion by Abū l-Qāsim Kāshānī, author of the *Zubdat al-tawārikh* and a History of Ōljeitū, that his work was appropriated by Rashīd al-Dīn, without sufficient credit and acknowledgement. One of the issues this raises is the extent to which Rashīd al-Dīn used or was surrounded by an entourage of research assistants and compilers, among whom may have been Abū l-Qāsim, and perhaps his fellow townsman, Shams al-Dīn, too. It must be borne in mind, that Shams al-Dīn does not actually say this is how it worked in practice: one has the impression that he is translating a completed text."

A surge in Persian historiography took place after the Mongol conquests.¹⁴⁹ In the previous era, particularly under the Saljuqs this writing was carried out by scholars of religion who also participated in the clerical classes and had increasingly received training in the *madrassa* system catalysed by the Niẓāmiyyah model set up by the *wazīr* Niẓām al-Mulk. Two centuries later, much of the historical writing was penned by bureaucrats attached to the court.¹⁵⁰ Patronage by the military classes and Persianate bureaucrats played a crucial role both before and after Mongol control of Iran; however, the relationships were different and complicated.

The Saljuqs and before them, the Ghaznavids, were, for the most part, nominally Ḥanafī Sunnis and under their rule Sunni institutions prospered. To a great measure the resultant crystallisations of Sunni Islam countered and undermined the spread of Ithnā‘asharī Shī‘ī communities and institutions set up during the Buyid era as well as the Ismaili proliferation and influences—particularly those emanating from the Fatimids in Egypt. By the Mongol era, the so-called “Shī‘ī centuries” were eclipsed. After the decapitation of the Nizari polity and the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate, Ithnā‘asharī Shī‘ism which had suffered since the overthrow of the Buyids, recovered from marginalisation during the Saljuq “captivity”.¹⁵¹ Immediately after the conquest of Baghdad, Hūlāgū appointed Ṭūsī in charge of the administration of religious

¹⁴⁹ Bartold. *Turkestan*. pp 37ff; Browne. *LHP3*. pp 62ff; Storey, and Bregel. *Persidskaia Literatura, Bio-Bibliograficheskii Obzor: V 3-Kh Ch.* pp 759ff; Melville, s. pp xxv–ff; Judith Pfeiffer, “The Canonization of Cultural Memory: Ghazan Khan, Rashid al-Din, and the Construction of the Mongol Past,” in *Rashid al-Din, Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchanges in Ilkhanid Iran*, ed. Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett, and Ronit Yoeli-Tialim (London: The Warburg Institute, 2014). Judith Pfeiffer

¹⁵⁰ Hirschler, “Arabic and Persian Traditions.” 276–277

¹⁵¹ Reflecting Sunni bias, scholarship only tends to label the Buyid period as a “captivity”

institutions. He used the income from various pious foundations (*awqāf*) to patronise numerous Ithnā‘asharī establishments, scholars and communities.¹⁵²

Historical writers particularly of Iranian origins had long harmonised pre-Islamic Persianate dynasties with Islamicate prophets; after the Mongol invasion, the non-Muslims who had now come to rule had to be reconciled.¹⁵³ Previously, whether the authors had construed the flow of time and history as a decline from the golden moment in the career of the Prophet and his four successors¹⁵⁴ or one of the unravelling of God’s plan in which the just ruler maintained balance in society¹⁵⁵ by countering heresies, chaos and disorder;¹⁵⁶ now, the Mongol era writers had to account for the conquest and rulers they often considered impious infidels. These histories were written within established modes of narrative structures and codes whilst adding

¹⁵² Contemplation and Action. pp 4-8: SJB argues that Ṭūsī continued to exhibit his attachment to Nizari Ismailism even after he entered Mongol service.

¹⁵³ Hirschler, “Arabic and Persian Traditions.” 278; Jackson, “Mongol Khans and Religious Allegiance: The Problems Confronting A Minister-Historian in Ilkhanid Iran.”

¹⁵⁴ EI2. W. Madelung: “*imāma*” the Sunni notion of “*rashīdun*” or the four rightly guided caliphs was settled upon universally only in the 10th century.

¹⁵⁵ For example Nizām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*. p. 60. “The most important thing which a king needs is sound faith because kingship and religion are like two brothers; whenever disturbances break out in the country religion suffers too; heretics and evil-doers appear; and whenever religious affairs are in disorder, there is confusion in the country; evil-doers gain power and render the king impotent and despondent; heresy grows rife and rebels make themselves felt.”

¹⁵⁶ The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition (Brill Online), Kate Fleet, *et al.*, eds. Leiden: Brill, 2007—. Louise Marlow: “Advice and advice literature”.

elaborate styles of the chancellories and integrating new religious world-views¹⁵⁷—reflecting the full time occupations of the authors and the contexts of their primary audiences.¹⁵⁸

Confessional ambiguity¹⁵⁹ was nominally facilitated by the Mongol policy which harkened back to the founder of the dynasty himself. Juwayni recorded that

[b]eing the adherent of no religion and the follower of no creed, he [Chingis Khan] eschewed bigotry, and the preference of one faith to another, and the placing of some above others; rather he honoured and respected the learned and pious of every sect, recognizing such conduct as the way to the Court of God. And as he viewed the Moslems with the eye of respect, so also did he hold the Christians and idolaters in high esteem.¹⁶⁰

It should be noted that Juwayni's remarks incorrectly disavow Chingis Khan's affiliations to shamanism and the Turco-Mongol adherences to the Tengri, the Sky-God.¹⁶¹ Drawing on Juwayni, Peter Jackson wrote that the Mongol "conquerors were hostile to no religion and, in accordance with their general policy towards the various subject communities, had exempted the Muslim "religious class" and Islamic pious foundations (*awqāf*, sing, *waqf*) from taxation."¹⁶²

It has already been noted that the Juwayni brothers suffered at the behest of Arghūn b. Ābāqāwho espoused Buddhism and imposed adherence to it in Iran. Their demise may have been a direct result of their support of Arghūn's uncle Aḥmad in whose time Muslims fared better but Jews and Christians were persecuted. Aḥmad's conversion to Islam has been seen as

¹⁵⁷ Judith Pfeiffer, "Conversion Versions: Sultan Oljeytu's Conversion to Shi'ism (709/1309) in Muslim Narrative Sources," *Mongolian Studies* 22 (1999).; E. A. Poliakova, "The Development of A Literary Canon in Medieval Persian Chronicles: The Triumph of Etiquette," *Iranian Studies* XVII (1984).; Meisami, "History as Literature."

¹⁵⁸ Jackson, "Mongol Khans and Religious Allegiance: The Problems Confronting A Minister-Historian in Ilkhanid Iran."; Hirschler, "Arabic and Persian Traditions." pp 271ff; Meisami, "History as Literature."

¹⁵⁹ Woods. *Aqquyunlu*. p. 4.

¹⁶⁰ Juwaynī. *Jahān-gushā*. I:26;

¹⁶¹ Anonymous. *The Secret History of the Mongols: the Life and Times of Chinggis Khan*, Translated by Urgunge Onon. (London; New York: Routledge Curzon Press, 2001). p 36, 39, 45, 71, ...; Anonymous. *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, Edited by John C. Street. Translated by Igor de Rachewiltz. (Madison, WI: Cedarbooks, 2015). pp xvi-xvii, 1, 4, 8, 18, ...

¹⁶² Jackson, "Mongol Khans and Religious Allegiance: The Problems Confronting A Minister-Historian in Ilkhanid Iran." p. 110 esp fn 14

a personal choice, whereas, Ghāzān's conversion in 1295/694 is regarded as a turning point reflecting the adoption of Islam by the Mongols in Iran and an eradication of Buddhism.¹⁶³ In regard to his successor, Ūljāytū's conversion, Judith Pfeiffer wrote that "he literally re-enacted all the stages of conversion his Mongol predecessors had gone through: born into a traditionally shamanist culture, he was baptized a Nestorian Christian at the age of eight, and subsequently turned towards Buddhism, Hanafism, Shafī'ism, Twelver Shi'ism, and finally, according to some sources, reverted to Sunnism again."¹⁶⁴ According to Sheila Blair, his name, Ūljāytū Muḥammad Khudābanda, reflects the fusion of three prevalent principles of authority—Mongol, Muslim and Iranian respectively. *Khudābanda* is the literal Persian translation of the Arabic 'Abd Allāh (Servant of God).¹⁶⁵ With and behind each conversion of the Ilkhans and especially those of Ūljāytū there were coalitions of amirs in the Mongol military elite as well as powerful bureaucrats and ultimately, segments of the populace. While in theory, Mongol policies on religion have been construed to be liberal and benignly impartial; in practice religion played a polarising role in the Ilkhanid domains as the ruler's choices, hostilities and related pendulous shifts—often reflecting the beliefs of their subjects—were tumultuous and perilous for their opponents.

C. Ilkhānid Era Historical Writing about the Nizāris

¹⁶³ Pfeiffer, "Conversion Versions: Sultan Oljeitu's Conversion to Shi'ism (709/1309) in Muslim Narrative Sources."; Jackson, "Mongol Khans and Religious Allegiance: The Problems Confronting A Minister-Historian in Ilkhanid Iran.". Though many amirs revolted at his imposition of conversions.

¹⁶⁴ Pfeiffer, "Conversion Versions: Sultan Oljeitu's Conversion to Shi'ism (709/1309) in Muslim Narrative Sources." p. 37: "The Great Khans and the Ilkhans were enveloped in Shamanistic practices and the religion of the Sky God, Tengri. Hūlāgū adopted Christianity; Arghūn was Buddhist; Ahmad Tagudar and Gazan were Sunni."

¹⁶⁵ Sheila Blair, "The Epigraphic Program of the Tomb of Uljaytu At Sultaniyya: Meaning in Mongol Architecture," *Islamic Art II* 39 (1987). p. 73.

Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and Qashani were at the centre of the tumultuous religio-political contexts of Ilkhanid rule; in fact the last two were commissioned to write official histories by the Ilkhans.¹⁶⁶ The notions of *dawla* (in the sense of rule of the dynasty) and *fitna* (civil strife) were integral to their writing. They even endeavoured to construct the Mongols within monotheistic and even Islamicate frameworks. Melville remarked that for Juwayni

the first purpose of writing was to preserve the chronicles and annals of the reign of Mongke Qa'an, and the reasons for doing so were to achieve both spiritual and temporal advantage. Contemplation of the contents of the book would lead to spiritual awareness that nothing happens in the world without God's decree, and that among the hidden benefits of the Mongol devastations was the spread of Islam to new regions; while the practical benefit was to realize that in view of the power and success of the Mongol army, it was "necessary on the grounds of reason ... to yield and submit and desist from rebellion."¹⁶⁷

In common with pre-Mongol historiography, they conceived the main cause of discord and instability in society to be heresy. The Ismailis were construed as such a heretical group and threat to society. Writing about the destruction of the Nizari fortresses, Juwayni declared:

چون هر دولتی را غایتی و هر کاری را نهایتی است که حق تعالی بکمال علم و قدرت خویش حدّ و وقت آن در ازل آزال مقدّر کردست و تا بدان سبب نرسد با کثرت قوّت و آلت و عدّت البتّه میسر نگردد و دلیل بر آن آنست که فتح این قلاع و استیصال این بقاع بظهور دولت پادشاه جهان منکوقاتان منوط بود و بقوّت و شوکت و حرکت برادر او پادشاه گیتی هولاکو مضبوط که بحقیقت تمامت اماکن و رباع ایشان را اصلاً و رأساً در هفته زیر و بال کرد و حکم جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا¹⁶⁸ گرفت چنانکه شرح آن بر عقب می آید.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Hirschler, "Arabic and Persian Traditions." p. 271;

¹⁶⁷ Melville, "Mongol and Timurid Periods." p. 199

¹⁶⁸ Q11:82

¹⁶⁹ TJG. pp 212-213; HWC. p. 681:

TRANSLATION: Now to every fortune there is a limit and to every cause a term, which has been fixed by God Almighty in His perfect knowledge and power at the beginning of time, and until the appointed hour is come abundant strength and gear and equipment will accomplish nothing. And the proof of this is that the conquest of these castles and the destruction thereof was dependent on the rising of the fortune of the World-Emperor Mengü Qa'an and was executed by the power, majesty and action of his brother, the World-King Hülegü, who in one week utterly and finally overthrew the whole of their abodes and dwelling places, and they became like [those cities which] 'We turned upside down', as shall be hereinafter described.

Symbolised in the Qur'anic quote and referencing the ending of the Persianate narrative of Mazdak, the agency of Hūlāgū's forces turned the Nizaris from highest to the lowest in accord with the Providential decree. Not only had the limited term of fortune of the Nizari polity run out, but the Mongols were more powerful than the Saljuqs because Hūlāgū took down the polity in one week where the Saljuqs had no such success at all. (Cf. Part Two:4). Implicitly also, the Mongols had their own limited term of fortune that was ticking away.

As already mentioned, Juwayni's section on the Ismailis in the *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā* contains the earliest and most complete account of the Nizaris. His constructions of the Nizaris as the heretical menace, while in continuity with previous historical writing, was exceptional in that he made selective use of the trove of texts from the Nizari library at Alamut for his narrative. In his discussion of the historical sources for the study of the Fatimid Empire, Paul Walker highlighted Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. al-Maqrīzī's (d. 1442/846) works as most valuable. His advantage was, access to works now lost but of inestimable value and his proximity to the era, language and facts in his sources that Maqrīzī "understood better than any modern scholar"; yet Walker commented that "he knew little about genuine Ismaili literature, either doctrinal or historical".¹⁷⁰ Juwayni's import for the study of the Nizari polity in Iran is comparable with two major differences: he had access to "genuine Ismaili literature" and unlike Maqrīzī's favourable perspectives of the Fatimids, Juwayni was vehemently ill-disposed towards the Ismailis.

Rashid al-Din and Qashani followed the structure of his text in their analogous sections. Styled as dynastic chronicles, each of the three historians provided accounts of the eight rulers of the Nizari polity. Because of the differences in their accounts, (Cf. Part One:5-1) it appears, each

¹⁷⁰ Walker. *Exploring an Islamic Empire*. pp 152-153

had independent access to the Nizari texts and doctrinal works—few of which are, presently, known to exist. Rashid al-Din and Qashani also supplemented these materials with excerpts and distillations from a number of other sources as will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapters. They may even have consulted Nizari Ismailis in writing their histories.

These chronicles, compiled after the destruction of the Nizari Ismaili polity and later historical writings based on them, exhibit authorial hostility towards the Ismailis. Yet the section on the Nizaris in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* of Rashid al-Din is extraordinary and peerless. There is significant correspondence in content of Rashid al-Din's text and that of Qashani; however, the antipathy towards the Ismailis in the former is either toned down and in places, totally absent. A partial explanation for this is Rashid al-Din's age, maturity and status in society when he undertook his project. Juwayni, the young Sunni official had concluded his history at age of thirty-four and only two years after his "heathen" masters had wiped away his central notion of religious authority, namely, the 'Abbāsid caliphate. He was writing his history while he observed, at first hand, unimaginable amounts of carnage. In comparison, Rashid al-Din, a purported convert from Judaism to Islam, began his magisterial study when he was over fifty years old having had four decades to make sense, if that is ever possible, of the brutal Mongol onslaught under Hūlāgū. He had transitioned from a childhood in a privileged family of refugees among the Nizaris to being ushered into and maturing in the retinue of the most powerful rulers on earth at that time. The different levels of engagement and distances of both time and location from cataclysmic events; length of time to process post-traumatic stress; age and status—all indicate the different psychological outlooks and world-views of the two authors as they wrote their histories. These factors seem to have played significant roles in how they handled their subjects and channeled their hostilities.

The second consideration proposed above, which needs further analysis and affirmation, is the precise nature of Rashid al-Din's relationship to the Nizaris. If, as it has been proposed in this study, that Rashid al-Din's entire family was given refuge by the Nizaris in the 1220-30s and that he was born and grew up under their care, it is highly likely that these formative experiences and the gratitude of a descendant of *panāh-jūyān* (refugees) tempered—because of his personal interactions—his construction of the Nizaris as the malevolent “other” and his general attitudes towards them.

Rashid al-Din's epistemological outlook for his history demonstrates the maturity of his endeavour—even though he employed research assistants to collect and collate portions of the *Jāmi'*. In the introduction to the section on the Jews, he wrote:

پیشتر می‌گوییم که [در ابتدای] این تاریخ که موسوم است به جامع التواریخ و به چند جای دیگر یاد کرده‌ایم و گفته که شرط مورّخ آن است که تاریخ هر قومی به زعم ایشان نویسد و به رای خود در آن زیادت و نقصان نکند، اگر حق باشد و اگر باطل بر همان موجب که دعوی و زعم هر طایفه‌ای باشد نقل کند تا عهده زیادت و نقصان و حق و باطل آن بر ایشان باشد نه بر مورّخ؛ [و] این جایگاه نیز همان معنی یاد می‌کند تا هرچه نامعقول و بی‌وجه نماید، این ضعیف را [بدان] مؤاخذت ننمایند، و زبان طعن در او دراز نکنند، و او را در آن معنی معذور دارند، ان شاء الله وحده العزیز.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh: Tārīkh-i Banī Isrā'īl*, Edited by Muḥammad Rawshan. (Tehran: Mīrās-i Maktūb (HII-etext), 2007). pp 1-2

TRANSLATION: “We have said before [at the beginning] of this history designated the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* and repeated and said in a few other places that the premise of the historian (*sharṭ-i muwarrikh*) is to write about every community based in their own terms (*za'm-i īshān*) and not to add or diminish according to the historian's opinion. Truth and falsehood ought be written in the manner of the claims and thought of each faction (*da'wī wa za'm-i har ṭāifa*) such that the responsibility of increase or diminution, truth and falsity is theirs and not of the historian. This position has the implication that whatever is unreasonable and inappropriate does not reflect on the author who should not be reproached and in this matter should be forgiven. God willing. The only Friend.”

This is a remarkable awareness of authorial biases and a sense of containing pre-commitments—qualities often lacking even in modern-day historiography! In antithesis, Bernard Lewis observed that Juwayni “seems to follow his [Nizari Ismaili] sources closely, taking care only to invert praise and blame, and to add pious imprecations appropriate to an orthodox (sic) historian of a heterodox (sic) sect.”¹⁷² This tenor of the JT is also a strong argument against the “authorship” claims of Qashani.

In sum, the three chronicles are closely inter-related and this study affirms the filial relationship between Juwayni and Rashid al-Din; in fact, Qashani is to be favoured in many places for being more detailed and sometimes a more precise source than Rashid al-Din based on thoroughness and *lexio difficile* of parts of the Qashani text. Most later historians have followed the paradigms of Juwayni and Rashid al-Din. Comparable sections in histories, including, Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī (d. 1339/740): *Tārīkh-i Guzīda* (*Select History*), Hāfiz Abrū (d. 1430/833): *Majmaʿ al-tawārīkh al-sultāniyya* (*Collection of Histories of the Sultanate*), Muḥammad b. Khwāndshāh Mīr Khwānd (d. 1498/903): *Rawḍat al-ṣafāʾ* (*Garden of Purity*), and Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad Khwāndamīr (d. 1535/942): *Ḥabīb al-Siyar* (*The Beloved of Biographies*) and many others were styled based on the content and even the structure of Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and in few cases Qashani’s texts—to the extent that complete sections were copied from these earlier sources.

In previous chapters I have examined the development of Persian historiographic traditions, and the epistemologies of historic consciousness and the hermeneutic trap in which the predominantly Sunni doxographies (*firaq*) and refutational (*radd*) works were written—especially about the Ismailis. In this chapter I explored the nature of Nizari *daʿwa* literature

¹⁷² Bernard Lewis. *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*, (New York: Basic Books, 2003). p. 146

and proposed that Ismailis did not write history *qua* history in the *ta'rikh* genre—their writings categorised as *sīra* (biographies) and *manāqib* (virtues) were the predominant modes in which historical information was recorded. Ilkhanid historiography and the biographies of Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and Qashani were analysed and these author-historians were located within the continuities of the development of Persian historiographic traditions. I established that Rashid al-Din was nurtured, as a child, in the care of the Nizaris in one of their fortresses. This level of familiarity with the Nizaris may have been the reason why the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* is peerless in its constructions and treatment of the Ismailis.

In the next chapter, I analyse the sources used by the Ilkhanid chroniclers in their accounts of the rulers of the Nizari polity in Iran. Using methods of digital humanities, I analyse the length of each regnal account and identify the focalisations within these accounts at the levels of lexical usages. I compare and correlate the frequently occurring terms within and across the accounts to illustrate the authorial pre-commitments in the building blocks of their narratives. Using these novel data analyses approaches, I analyse the accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ in Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and Qashani.

4. Structure and Content of Ilkhanid Histories of Nizari Ismailism

JUWAYNI USED THE TEXTS HE ACQUIRED FROM THE LIBRARY AT ALAMUT to write the dynastic history of the Nizari polity divided into accounts of the eight individual reigns. Rashid al-Din and Qashani followed this pattern and so did numerous later author-historians. While Juwayni's *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā* is limited to the history of the Mongols, Khwārazmshāh's and the Ismailis; other authors included the Ismailis among the histories of Islamicate or Persianate dynasties. The accounts of the Ismailis are divided in two sections, namely, the Fatimid imam-caliphs and the rulers of the Nizari polity. The Nizaris were also discussed in sections on the Saljuqs and the Ilkhanids, particularly in the account of Hūlāgū's invasion of the Islamicate realms. The specific sections on the history of the Nizaris in the three Ilkhanid chronicles share significant similarities in structure and content. All three appear to have had access to and used the sources Juwayni plundered from Alamut. The later chroniclers had access to their predecessor's work; however, certain disparities between their accounts suggest their reliance also on other sources.

In this chapter several layers of the structure and content of the Ilkhanid chronicles are examined. What sources did the chroniclers use in their writing of Nizari history? What does the length of regnal accounts (total word count) indicate about authorial focalisation? What do lexical patterns and frequencies of word usages explain about the syntactic and semantic structure, themes and overall pre-commitments of the accounts? How did the chroniclers emplot events and distinct narrative segments into their story-space? How can these deep structural analyses be used to investigate complexes of past actuality obscured by the chronicler's story and discourse? In these analyses I identify, perhaps, the earliest Ismaili text with the word *ta'rikh* in its title and which may have been the earliest "history" written in the *ta'rikh* genre. (Cf. Part One:4-I-A-3).

The three Ilkhanid chronicle accounts are analysed at the structure and content levels to apprehend embedded attitudes and values as well as to examine what the author-historian's choices and representations contribute to our interpretations of their histories. This chapter is divided into three sections: Section I: "Sources of the Sources and Focalisations in Regnal Accounts" details the sources used by the Ilkhanid chroniclers and relates the lengths of individual regnal accounts and their polemical thrusts and thematic foci. Section II: "Lexical Analyses of the Accounts of the Nizaris" examines the building blocks of the chronicle accounts at the word level: i) 140 most frequently occurring terms in the aggregate of the three chronicles are analysed, ii) 15 top terms in each chronicle are compared, iii) the top terms occurring in each regnal account are parsed and iv) the most frequently occurring terms in the account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ are analysed to open windows into the building blocks and epistemological underlays which govern the story and discourse of the accounts. Section III: "Narrative Analyses of Ilkhanid Accounts of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ" breaks down the plots in the accounts of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ into events and narrative segments which convey distinct information. From this data a correlative analysis of assassinations, sieges and battles is presented to illustrate the deep level of information that can be derived through the methodologies used in this research.

The TAMS Analyzer software developed by Matthew Weinstein at Kent University has been used for the qualitative analysis in this research.¹ The methodology and workflow used in this research is detailed in the appendix: "Digital Humanities at the End of the World: Methodology and Workflows in the Study of Islamic History and Eschatology" (Cf. Appendix 4a).

¹ TAMS Analyzer software developed by Matthew Weinstein. Available at <http://tamsys.sourceforge.net>

I. Sources of the Sources and Focalisations in Regnal Accounts

A. Sources of the Sources

Pre-modern texts do not always indicate or cite their sources even when sizeable sections and sometimes, complete texts are copied from previous authors. The establishment of linkages between texts then is often the result of chance identification or on the other hand, the researcher's familiarity of a large corpus of sources. The principal organisation of the three Ilkhanid accounts of the Nizari Polity is in the form of dynastic chronicles divided into reigns of each successive ruler. Juwayni only referred to the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* (*Biography of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ*), while Rashid al-Dīn and Qashani specified four different Nizari sources. None of these source texts are known to be independently extant.

Table 4a: Nizari Sources in the Ilkhanid Chronicles

Ruler	Dates	Source	Begin Ref	End Ref
Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ	1090-1124	<i>Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā</i>	TJG p. 187	
			JT p. 97	JT p. 134
			ZT p. 120	ZT p. 154
Buzurg Ummīd	1124-1138	<i>K. Buzurg Ummīd</i>		JT p. 144
				ZT p. 167
M. b. Buzurg Ummīd	1138-1162	<i>Eyewitness Account of 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Ali</i>	JT p. 144	JT p. 161
			ZT p. 167	ZT p. 181
Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām	1162-1166	<i>Ta'riḫ-i Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ</i>		JT p. 173
Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad	1166-1210	?		
Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan	1210-1221	?		
'Alā al-Dīn Muḥammad	1221-1255	?		
Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh	1255-1256	?		JT p. 195
				ZT p. 215

TJG = *Ta'riḫ-i jahān-gushā*; JT = *Jāmi' al-tawāriḫ*; ZT = *Zubdat al-tawāriḫ*

1. ḤASAN-I ŠABBĀḤ (R. 1090-1124/483-518)

All three texts indicate their source is the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*. TJG does not mention any other source beyond this for the entire account of the Nizari Ismailis, nor does it indicate where the references from the *Sarguzasht* end. JT and ZT indicate at the end of the reign of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ that account from the *Sarguzasht* is completed. The list of assassinations attributed to the Nizaris during the reign of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ follow this statement in both chronicles suggest that these ‘hit-lists’ may not have been part of the *Sarguzasht*.

2. KIYĀ BUZURG UMMĪD (R. 1124-1138/518-532)

At the end of the account of Buzurg Ummīd’s reign, the JT and ZT indicate that the section “up to this point has been from the text (*imlā’* which can also mean dictation) of *Kitāb-i Buzurg Ummīd*.”² Again the citation of the source precedes the list of assassinations suggesting that the ‘hit-lists’ may have been separately maintained.

3. MUḤAMMAD B. KIYĀ BUZURG UMMĪD (R. 1138-1162/532-557)

At the end of the previous account, both JT and ZT indicate that the following account was drawn from the narration (*riwāyat*) of ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Alī who was an eyewitness.³ This narration must have been captured in a Nizari textual source and the Ilkhanid authors drew from this text since the original narrator would have been long dead by the 8th/14th century.

At the end of the present account, the Dānīshpazhūh and Rawshan editions of the JT state that “these narrations and stories were copied from the history of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ-i Munshī (*riwāyāt wa hikāyāt az Ta’rīkh-i Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ-i Munshī naql uftād*) which was written in the time of

² JT. p. 144 ; ZT. p. 167

³ JT. p. 144 ; ZT. p. 167 calls him Dihkhuda

Muḥtasham Shihāb”.⁴ Dabīr Siyāqī preferred “Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī”; however, he footnoted the alternative reading of “Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ” from another manuscript stating that the text was deductively corrected.⁵ Similarly the ZT stated that “this narration was copied from the history of Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ Munshī (*riwāyāt wa hikāyāt az Ta’rīkh-i Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī naql uftād*) which was written in the time of Muḥtasham Shihāb”.⁶ The entire paragraph found at the end of the list of assassinations attributed to the Nizaris during the reign of Muḥammad b. Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd reads:

This group was killed in the time of Kiyā Muḥammad son of Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd. This narrative and account is copied from the *History of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ-i Munshī* which was written in the time of Muḥtasham Shihāb. The accountability is on the narrator. The account of Kiyā Muḥammad is completed. With God is all power.

It seems that “Munshī” was an interpolation and the reading found in the British Library MS 7628 folio 301r “was copied from the *History of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ* (*in riwāyat az Ta’rīkh-i Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ naql uftād*) which was written in the time of Muḥtasham Shihāb” makes more sense. This *History of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ* may well have been written by Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī—hence the transposition. The Muḥtasham Shihāb, for whom Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ was a secretary (*munshī*), was the Ismaili governor in Quhistān. He was removed from that office by the imam ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad in 1225/622.⁷ According to Minhāj al-Sirāj Jūzjānī, as this imam pivoted away from

⁴ JT. p. 161; Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jāmī’ al-tawārīkh: Tārīkh-i Ismā’īliyyān*. p. 158; ZT. p. 181.

⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Faṣlī az Jāmī’ al-tawārīkh: Sarguzasht-i Ḥasan Ṣabbāḥ wa jānishīnān-i ū yā Tārīkh-i firqa-yi Rafīqān wa Ismā’īliyyān-i Alamūt*. p. 88 and fn 7 He glossed: متن تصحيح قياسي است

⁶ ZT. p. 181; ZT. p. 198 MS Tehran University 9067 folio 42r. Note: the translations in both *Contemplation and Action*. p. 5, 57, etc. and Jūzjānī. *Ṭabaqāt-Tr.* pp 1211-1261 misspell *muḥtasham* (august—a title used for the Ismaili governors in Quhistān) as *muḥtashim* (bashful).

⁷ *Contemplation and Action*. p. 67 fn 16; SJB claims 630/1232 see Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā’imiyyāt*. p. 12

his father and predecessor's proclamation of Sunnism back to the doctrines of the *Qiyāma*, Shihāb was displaced.⁸

Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ, also known as Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, was an accomplished poet with several texts attributed to him, including the *Dīwan-i Qā'imīyyat*⁹ and *Haft Bābi Bābā Sayyidnā*¹⁰ and collaborated with Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī on the *Rawḍat al-taslīm*.¹¹ The *History of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ* is the principle source for the information about the life of Muḥammad b. Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd and, possibly, his successors. It was written almost a half century after the birth of the latter, hence the sections on the reign of Muḥammad b. Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd include constructions of Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām's genealogy within the Nizari line. This is the earliest known Ismaili text with the word "*ta'riḥ*" in the title.

Furthermore, as detailed above, the closing paragraphs which denoted the sources for the regnal accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and Buzurg Ummīd preceded the lists of assassination attributed to those reigns; in this regnal account, the JT places the sourcing after the "hit-list". If the compilers of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīḥ* were consistent, it is quite possible that the *History of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ* contained a listing of all the 73 (JT) or 74 (ZT) assassinations and the Ilkhanid chroniclers divided the list to fit into the regnal framework of their accounts.¹² The Nizari writer, after a remove of almost half a century, may well have been attempting to memorialise

⁸ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 383 and fn 198 on p. 638. Jūzjānī. *Ṭabaqāt*. vol. 2, pp. 182–185, 186–188; Jūzjānī. *Ṭabaqāt-Tr*. vol. 2, pp. 1197–1205, 1212–1214. See also Bosworth, *History of the Saffarids*, pp. 399ff., 408–409. Shihāb may have been gearing up to oppose the Mongols whereas the imam was seeking to renew the alliance with them?

⁹ Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā'imīyyāt*.

¹⁰ Two early Ismaili treatises: *Haft bāb-i Bābā Sayyid-nā* and *Maṭlūb al-mu'minīn*.; Hodgson. OA. pp 279–324; HB.

¹¹ Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā'imīyyāt*.; Contemplation and Action. p. 67 fn 16; HB. p. 3, 4, 41; Paradise of Submission. pp 5–6 and 170.

¹² JT. p 161; Qashani placed "*in riwāyat az Ta'riḥ-i Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ naql uftād ...*" before the list of assassinations in his text! ZT. p. 181–182

the past and systematically record historical information. Until such an urtext surfaces, this conjectural thread has to be tied with *wa-llāhu ā'lam!*

4. ḤASAN 'ALĀ DHIKRIHI'L-SALĀM (R. 1162-1166/557-561)

Other than the notation mentioned above, the texts do not specifically mention their sources for the short reign of Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām and the important doctrinal developments in this period. The so-called *History of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ* may have continued to be the source.

5. NŪR AL-DĪN MUḤAMMAD B. AL-ḤASAN (R. 1166 - 1210/561-607)

At the end of the account of this reign, the JT states: “Muḥammad died on 10 *Rabī' al-awwal* 607/8 September 1210 CE; some narrate that he was poisoned. Whatever this feeble one learnt from accounts, news and history of predecessors is this [that which has been accounted]; responsibility remains with the narrator.”¹³ This “feeble one” must be the Nizari author breaking through the screen of the Sunni historical writing. Rashid al-Din's team would not have cared about the possible negative connotations of the imam being poisoned. Juwayni reported this as the “un-praiseworthy Muḥammad, the reprobate leader died on the 10th of Rabī' I, 607/8 September 1210 CE.; and some say that he was poisoned.”¹⁴ Qashani simply stated that “Muḥammad died on 10 *Rabī' al-awwal* 607/8 September 1210 CE.”¹⁵ The Nizari author, on the other hand, reporting that the previous imam was possibly poisoned by those close to and perhaps at the behest of the next imam, had to deal with connotations of patricide, regicide, rebellion and even the bounds of infidelity—hence the disclaimer.

¹³ JT. p. 173

¹⁴ TJG. p. 242; HWC. p 699

¹⁵ ZT. p 197

6-7. JALĀL AL-DĪN ḤASAN (R. 1210-1221/607-618) AND ‘ALĀ’ AL-DĪN MUḤAMMAD (R. 1221-1255/618-653)

None of the three texts specifically mention any sources for these two regnal accounts.

8. RUKN AL-DĪN KHŪRSHĀH (R. 1255 - 1257/653-655)

JT concludes the account of Rukn al-Dīn’s reign: “This is that which this feeble one has read in the books of the ancients and heard reported in the words of esteemed and trustworthy narrators.”¹⁶ “This feeble one”, again, must refer to the Nizari author. If so, who was he? When was the text written and concluded? How did the Ilkhanid chroniclers acquire this text? Is it possible that this author was part of Rashid al-Din’s team and in this sentence the voice of the Nizari witness persists? The *khatama* of the entire section on Ismaili history in the JT specifically mentions the “narrator” as Rashīd al-Dīn:

The history of the Ismailis and Nizaris composed by the great master, the just sultan of *wazīrs* in the world, *Rashīd al-Ḥaqq wa’l-Dūniya wa’l-Dīn ‘Imād al-Islām wa’l-Muslimīn* (the Rightly Guided of Truth, the World and Faith, Pillar of Islam and the Muslims); God glorify those who help his realm, is completed with the aid of God, cherished is His Name (*‘azza ismu-hu*) at the end of *Jumādā al-ākhira* 714/19 October, 1314¹⁷ in the writing (*ba-khaṭ*) of al-‘Abd al-Nakābī al-Hāfidh, praise to his Guardian (*al-ḥamd li-walī-hu*)¹⁸ and prayers and peace upon Prophet Muḥammad and all his family—the good and virtuous.¹⁹

This analysis has mapped the sources of the regnal accounts referenced by the three chroniclers and highlighted a few instances where the embedded Nizari author’s voice is perceptible. The *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* which was the primary source for the reign of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ with its two narratives of Ḥasan’s early life and extensive political and doctrinal content, in a few places becomes hagiographic in representation. The biography, as it comes through the screen of Ilkhanid historiography, portrays Ḥasan as a valiant political leader who

¹⁶ JT. p. 195

¹⁷ This completion date of the account of the Nizaris suggests that the entire JT believed to be completed in 1310/710 may have been finalised in 1314/714.

¹⁸ This could refer to God or Rashid al-Din as the guardian of the scribe!

¹⁹ JT P. 195 this *khatama* does not appear in the British Library MS 7628 folio 306v.

is at the same time a deep religious thinker; yet the role of the *ḥujja*—the highest dignitary in the *da'wa* after the imam—is not explicitly apparent. Later Nizari texts associate great authority and sacrality to his teachings. The *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*, no doubt became a model for later Nizari writing; so-much-so that the *Ta'riḫ-i Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ* referenced for the account of Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām and perhaps his successors is named after Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. While this may be the first Ismaili text to adopt *ta'riḫ* in the title; however, it is highly unlikely that its content and structure conformed to that of dynastic chronicles of the *ta'riḫ* genre prevalent at the time in Persian historical writing.

The Ilkhanid chronicles written within the 13th/7th and early 14th/8th century Persian historiographic tradition, moulded their Nizari and other sources to conform to norms of the *ta'riḫ* genre of their day. These Nizari texts—written within a continuum of the modes of Ismaili *da'wa* literature—unwrapped out of the Ilkhanid chronicles require unravelling, metaphorically, in view of their different structures, norms, functions and meaning within the *da'wa*. Towards this end, the following subsections continue these analyses of the Ilkhanid accounts by examining the account-lengths for each reign; lexematic usages within them and the narrative plots and make-up of the accounts.

B. Lengths of Accounts Compared to Lengths of Reigns

The three chronicles for which the Nizari Ismaili texts were direct sources exist in accounts of different sizes and foci. The table and chart below show the length by the number of words used in the accounts of the eight individual rulers of the Nizari polity. The data indicates that the JT account of the entire Nizari polity is 1.35 times longer than TJG; ZT is similarly 1.45 times longer than TJG while ZT (28983 words) 15% longer than JT (24850 words).

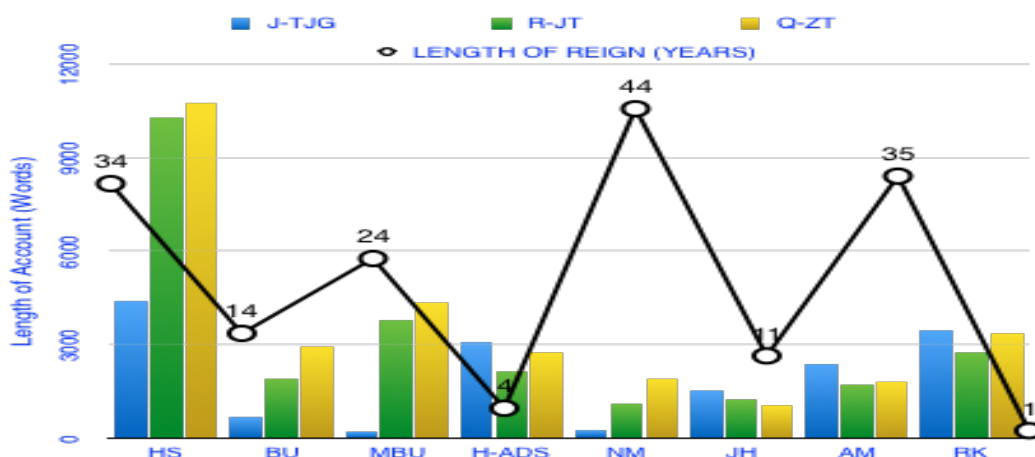
Table 4b: Word Length of Regnal Accounts vs. Reigns of Nizari Rulers

	Dā'īs			Imāms					
Ruler	HS	BU	MBU	H-ADS	NM	JH	AM	RK	Total
Reign-begin	1090	1124	1138	1162	1166	1210	1221	1256	1090
Reign-end	1124	1138	1162	1166	1210	1221	1256	1257	1257
Reign (years)	34	14	24	4	44	11	35	1	167
TJG	4373	704	202	3072	279	1508	2371	3456	15965
JT	10272	1911	3763	2117	1082	1247	1731	2727	24850
ZT	10761	2934	4327	2764	1918	1074	1826	3379	28983

Rows: TJG = Juwayni: *Ta'rīkh-i jahān-gushā*; JT = Rashid al-Dīn: *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*; ZT = Qashani: *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*;

Columns: HS = Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ; BU = Buzurg Ummīd; MBU = Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd; ADS = Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām; NM = Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad; JH = Jalāl al-Dīn; AM = 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad; RK = Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh

Figure 4a: Account Length (Words) vs. Reigns (Years) of Nizari Rulers



All three accounts treat the 34-year reign of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ extensively; the last ruler of the polity, Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, has also been accorded inordinately lengthy coverage for the single year of his reign. Beginnings and endings are always momentous for the historian. Juwayni's treatment of the last three rulers is relatively longer than the other two Ilkhanid authors—reflecting the observations of someone who was not only contemporary but participant to the events of the times.

The J-TGJ account of the *dā'ī* Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd's reign is disproportionately short compared to that of his successor Ḥasan who was claimed as the imam in the line of Nizār b. al-Mustanşir. The chroniclers dealt with the genealogical issue in the account of Ḥasan's reign; they associated deception and depravity with Ḥasan's birth and childhood which resulted in the substitution of the lines of *dā'īs* with the imams and Ḥasan's "heretical innovations".²⁰

Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām's declaration of the *Qiyāmat-i Buzurg* (the Great Resurrection) in 1164/559, midway in his four-year reign, was a complete theological and religio-political realignment of the Nizari religious world-views. (Cf. Part Two:3) This epochal moment, comparable to some of the most drastic shifts in any religious community in human history, was doctrinally elaborated by and under Ḥasan's successor, Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad. His long reign of 44 years is represented by the shortest accounts in two of the three chronicles. The Ilkhanid author-historians were primarily focussed on the military-political history of the Nizaris; their internal doctrinal shifts did not matter. The *Fuṣūl-i mubārak* (*The Blessed Treatises*) attributed to Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ and the *Fuṣūl-i muqaddas* (*The Sacred Treatises*) containing the teachings of the imam Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām, the writings of Ṭūsī and other texts of the *Qiyāma*, if available to the authors, were not substantively used.²¹ From this it can be concluded that—even despite Rashid al-Dīn's balanced perspectives toward the Nizaris—the *ta'rīkh* texts focussed on theological matters at the points of discourse and particularly conflict between the Nizaris and the Sunni establishments or in describing the "innovation" (*bid'at*) of the Ismailis.

²⁰ TJG. pp 229ff; HWC. pp 690ff; JT. pp 166-168; ZT. pp 183ff

²¹ Given Ṭūsī's stature at court, it may be possible that his works may not have been viewed among the Nizari corpus of doctrinal materials at this time. The *Fuṣūl-i mubārak* and *Fuṣūl-i muqaddas* are interchangeably used in places and attributed to Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ and Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām. The copies at Alamut may have been consigned to the fire by Juwayni.

The above table and chart provide a visual representation of the effort and space the author-historians allocated to account for each reign. Mapping this data to the themes covered in the texts and the manner in which the themes are elaborated allow structural understandings of the authorial epistemological outlooks; ideological perspectives and notions of history. The following subsection will analyse lexematic usages—word choices and frequencies which reflect the author’s building blocks to construct the larger story space.

II. Lexical Analyses of the Accounts of the Nizaris

Word usage is a window into the syntactic and semantic structure of a text—most authors expend inordinate amounts of focus and energy in choosing words to construct and convey meanings. The patterns and frequencies of usage of particular words and terms by each of the three chronicles is presented in this section. The TAMS Analyzer software has a function which counts the frequency of words in a text. The output was edited to eliminate hundreds of non-substantive terms (*wa, dar, rā, būd, etc ...*) and the word frequencies in the resultant database were analysed in the total set of all three chronicles; in each of the three chronicles; and in the individual regnal accounts. The data is tabulated below with commentary on selected terms to explain the results.

While this is not an exact science since the TAMS Analyzer software does not distinguish, for example, between the name علی (‘Alī), the preposition علی (‘*alā* = upon) or the intensifier adjective علی (‘*alīy* = superior, high, tall, elevated); the software treats words with prefixes, infixes and suffixes and enclitic particles attached as different from the base word for example: مذهب - مذاحب (*madhḥab* pl: *madhāḥib* = creed), کشتند میکشتند (*kushtand, mikushtand* = from the verb to kill)—these types of issues have been smoothed out manually to the extent possible. Despite

many such issues, the resultant data is useful in determining the most frequently occurring substantive terms and names in the three Ilkhanid chronicles to demonstrate trends, tendencies and the changing foci across the chronicle accounts and within these accounts across the eight rulers of the Nizari polity. Four layers of word frequencies analyses are presented in the subsections below:

1. Analyses of 140 Terms in the Combination of 3 Ilkhanid Chronicles
2. Comparative Analyses of 15 Top Terms in Each of the Three Chronicles
3. Analyses of Terms Across Regnal Accounts in the Chronicles
4. Word Frequencies Comparison in the Chronicle Accounts of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ

The analyses of these terms, names of places and people open the window into authorial focalisations and structure of the texts at the lexical level.²²

A. Analyses of 140 Terms in the Combination of the Three Ilkhanid Chronicles

The eight regnal accounts in each of the three Ilkhanid chronicles mapped in the sections above total 69,798 words and over 7,000 unique words. The most frequently occurring word , (wa = and) is found 7890 times. While this is an interesting datum, such words are of little useful analytical value. The data sets for each of the chronicles have therefore been compacted to eliminate non-substantive words. The most frequently occurring substantive words, terms and names in the three accounts, combined, have been tabulated below. In this analysis 140 of the most frequently occurring²³ of these terms are divided into five categories: 1) **Terms of Religious Discourse**; 2) **Terms of Territory and Place**; 3) Terms and Names of People (**Ismailis**;

²² This type of structural analysis has rarely been done in the field. Perhaps the concordances in study of scripture are a key example. The facility with which this is now possible because the availabilities or abilities to digitise texts, qualitative and quantitative analysis software means that 21st century philologists [I grudgingly admit to the pathology! ;)] may be able to look at their source texts at these deep structural levels.

²³ The initial data set was 150 terms however 10 were combined with their plural forms, etc.

Opponents of Nizaris; Either Group); 4) **Terms of Conflict**; and 5) Terms of Governance. In some instances, the categorisations may overlap—for example *shaykh* placed in the “**Terms of Religious Discourse**” can also be placed in the “Terms and Names of People” category; however, the choices are sufficient for the demonstrative purposes of this analysis. Digital web-based presentation of this data facilitates the concordance and reference to the terms as they occur in the texts; this text based write-up is comparatively insufficient due limitations of space and absences of linkages. Here, these 140 key terms which occur 8285 times in the total of 69,798 words (12%) are presented to illustrate the main building blocks used by the Ilkhanid historian-authors to construct their narrative accounts of the Nizari polity. Some of these terms are further analysed in the textual comparisons in section II of this chapter. The tables show the term, transcription and number of occurrences in the three chronicles.

Table 4c: Terms of Religious Discourse (34)

دعوت	da‘wat	159	خرد	khirad	41	امور	umūr	25	شیخ	shaykh	20
امام	imām	123	ظاهر	zāhir	38	رسوم	rusūm	25	کافر	kāfir	19
الله	Allāh	113	رسول	rasūl	35	مسلمانی	musalmānī	25	تعالی	ta‘ālā	18
مذهب	madhhab	90	الحاد	ilhād	33	مصاف	muṣāf	25	خلق	khalq	18
عهد	‘ahd	63	خدای	khudā-ī	32	منبر	minbar	25	مناظره	munāzara	18
اسلام	Islām	62	خطبه	khuṭba	32	قیامت	qiyāmat	24			
حق	ḥaqq	58	امامت	imāmat	31	پیغمبر	paigambar	23			
مسلمانان	musalmānān	45	نظر	naẓar	31	دعوی	da‘wā	23			
دین	dīn	43	خدا	khudā	28	اعتقاد	i‘tiqād	21			
ملاحده	malāḥida	41	تعلیم	ta‘līm	27	قاعده	qā‘ida	21			

These thirty-four terms are found in the discussions of Ismaili and Nizari beliefs. While several of these are descriptive and technical terms found in formulations of the Nizari doctrines, a

number (*malāḥida*, *musalmānān*, *ilhād*, *musalmānī* and *kāfir*) are clearly used for refutation or demarcation of the Ismailis as beyond the pale of Islam. *Malāḥida* for this table includes the singular and other variants in the text (*mulḥid*; *mulḥidānī*, *malāḥida*, *malāḥida-yi*, *malāḥidīgī*); the simple plural *malāḥida* (heretics) and *ilhād* (heresy) are found in all three chronicles:

Table 4c-i: Correlation of *malāḥida* (heretics) and *ilhād* (heresy).

ملاحده	HS	BU	MBU	ADS	NM	JH	AM	RK	Σ	الحداد	HS	BU	MBU	ADS	NM	JH	AM	RK	Σ
TJG	3	1	1	4	0	2	1	0	12	TJG	1	0	0	2	3	6	1	3	16
JT	1	1	1	1	1	0	3	0	8	JT	2	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	8
ZT	3	7	0	0	3	1	6	1	21	ZT	1	1	0	0	2	3	1	1	9
Σ	7	9	2	5	4	3	10	1	41	Σ	4	2	0	3	7	10	3	4	33

Rows: TJG = Juwayni: *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā*; JT = Rashid al-Din: *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*; ZT = Qashani: *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*;

Columns: HS = Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ; BU = Buzurg Ummīd; MBU = Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd; ADS = Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām; NM = Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad; JH = Jalāl al-Dīn; AM = 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad; RK = Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh; Σ = Total

The correlated tabulation of the terms *malāḥida* and *ilhād* show that Juwayni and Qashani discussed the Nizaris as heretics beginning with the reign of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ (HS), after the declaration of the *Qiyāma* in the reign of Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām (ADS) and again in the transition between the reigns of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan (JH) and 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (AM) when the latter re-instituted the teachings and practices of the *Qiyāma*, after the former's brief "adoption" of Sunnism. Comparatively Juwayni and Qashani use the terms *malāḥida* and *ilhād* twice as much as Rashid al-Din (a sum of 28, 30 and 16 times respectively); given that the Juwayni account is half the length of the other two, this usage highlights its greater polemical valence.

The frequency of usage by the Ilkhanid chroniclers of these two terms compared to their usage in a much larger corpus of some 278 histories and volumes which are part the History of Islamic Iran (HII) database with an estimated word-count of 60,000,000 words illustrates

greater authorial focalisation of the Ismailis as heretics in structure of the texts at the lexical level.

Term	n-Ilkhanid	n/69798	n-HII	n/60M
ملاحده	41	0.0004728	433	0.0000072
الحاد	33	0.0005874	784	0.0000131

In the larger corpus of histories of Iran in Persian and translated to Persian the two terms occur a factor of five hundred times (ملاحده) and fifty times (الحاد) less—meaning that the Ilkhanid chronicles focussed a lot more ink on the constructions of “heresy”. While this methodology is far from precise, the comparative is highly illustrative of the analyses and future possibilities for digital philology.²⁴ (Cf. Table 4g-i below).

Table 4d: Terms of Territory and Place (24)

الموت	Alamūt	250	كوه	kūh	57	خراسان	Khurāsān	30	شهر	shahr	21
قلعه	qal‘a	208	قلاع	qalā‘	52	مصر	Miṣr	30	اطراف	iṭrāf	20
قزوین	Qazwīn	124	لمسر	Lamasar	47	قهبستان	Quhistān	29	دامغان	Dāmagān	20
دژ	diz	92	عراق	‘Irāq	46	بغداد	Baghdād	28	میمون	Maimūn	20
ری	Rayy	70	رودبار	Rūdbār	33	گردکوه	Girdkūh	22	شام	Shām	19
اصفهان	Iṣfahān	63	عالم	‘ālam	31	مملکت	Mamlakat	22	طالقان	Ṭāliqān	19

This list of twenty-four terms and place names maps the primary loci of events recorded by the three chronicles. Several of the Nizari fortresses are naturally in the list (Alamūt, Lamasar, Girdkūh, Maimūn Diz); as are terms related to their castellan polity (*qal‘a*, *diz*, *kūh*). The regions where the Nizaris were able to establish themselves (Rūdbār, Quhistān, Khurāsān) are

²⁴ The terms and related compounds and derivatives have been counted together to include all possible semantic occurrences of the term. HII consists of 278 titles amongst which are a large number of multi-volume histories. The 60,000,000 word total is an estimate. For future refinement of this methodology, more defined corpus of specific types of texts with precise total word count will yield better results. This exercise has not been repeated for every term here; however, the possibilities of these types of quantitative analyses of texts are vast.

frequently mentioned; the towns and cities (Qazwīn, Dāmaghān, Ṭāliqān) they attempted to bring under their control as well as those (Rayy, Iṣfahān, Baghdād) to which they carried their asymmetric warfare against their opponents, especially the Saljuqs, are central to the narratives. Parsing the terms across the regnal accounts reveals interesting patterns:

Table 4d-i: Correlation of Rūdbār and Rayy.

رودبار	HS	BU	MBU	ADS	NM	JH	AM	RK	Σ	ری	HS	BU	MBU	ADS	NM	JH	AM	RK	Σ
TJG	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	7	TJG	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
JT	5	1	4	0	1	0	0	4	15	JT	14	3	12	1	0	0	1	2	33
ZT	3	1	3	0	1	0	0	3	11	ZT	16	1	14	0	0	0	3	2	36
Σ	11	2	7	0	3	0	0	10	33	Σ	31	4	26	1	0	0	4	4	70

The correlation of Rūdbār and Rayy reflect the territorial focus in the first three reigns (HS, NU and MBU) as the Nizaris were establishing themselves and expanding their territorial reach in face of Saljuq attacks. The narratives reverted to the territorial discourse in the last two reigns (AM, RK) as the Mongols appeared on the scene. In the case of Rayy the frequencies are significantly higher in the first three reigns in JT and ZT compared to TJG; beyond mentioning that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was born in Rayy, Juwayni did not again mention the city. The other two differed on this one datum as will be examined in Section II. Both chronicled many events in this city which was an important Saljuq administrative centre even as Isfahan became their “capital”. Many attacks were made on scholars, bureaucrats and military officers in this the largest city near Nizari territory. Many Nizaris also originated in this city where, historically, the Ismaili *da‘wa* was based in Buyid times—until it too was relocated to Isfahan which was the headquarters of the movement under the *Dā‘ī* ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh. During the reign of Sultan Sanjar and under the *Dā‘ī* Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd, the Nizaris attempted to bring Rayy into their sphere of control. The JT reports that on

21 *Rabī al-ākhirā*/22 December, [1139] CE, the Rafīqān²⁵ went to the citadel (Qaṣrān) of Rayy and captured ‘Abd al-Malik Qaṣrānī with his son. He was the chief (*ra’īs*) there and along with his brothers was in enmity with the Rafīqān. There was another group who lived in hypocrisy and subterfuge; they captured all of them and killed them after they had admitted their crimes and offences.

In *Shawwāl* 534/June 1140 they killed Sultan Sanjar’s eunuch (*khādim*) Jawhar who was referred to (*mulaqqab*) as the Honoured One (*muqarrib*). When this news reached ‘Abbās, the military governor (*shaḥna*) of Rayy where Jawhar was from, [149] he, along with the entire army of Rayy, went into rebellion against the Sultan. In Rayy and the areas around it, they killed people in the name of the Rafīqān.

On the 16 *Muḥarram* 535/8 September 1140 CE, Dihkhudā Abū Yūsuf with a force of Rafīqān of Khurāsān and Khūsāb... [lacuna] came to Rayy; they killed some 100 men and returned with much booty and beasts.²⁶

These daring and relatively long-range Nizari military successes did not fit in with Juwayni’s narrative thrust so these events were not included in his reports. More importantly, Rashid al-Din’s team used a much broader set of sources such as Ibn al-Athīr’s annalistic chronicle *al-Kāmil fī l-ta’rīkh* for such reports.

Table 4e: Miscellaneous Terms (3).

زن	zan	49	تاریخ	ta’rīkh	28	نصب	naṣb	27

These three terms are important to note: women are only rarely spoken of in these chronicles and then in terms of wives of the protagonists and minor actors in a few narrative vignettes; *ta’rīkh* occurs in reference to the sources used by the chroniclers and *naṣb* (*naṣb kardan* = to appoint) refers to the appointment of officers in positions of command or within the *da’wa*.

Table 4f: Terms and Names of People (51): i: Ismailis (26).

حسن	Ḥasan	302	امید	Ummīd	110	صبح	Ṣabbāḥ	40	بالله	bi-llāh	23
رفیقان	Rafīqān	226	رئیس	Ra’īs	99	مولانا	Mawlānā	40	اسمعیل	Ismā’īl	21
سیدنا	Sayyidnā	204	علاء	‘Alā’	92	مظفر	Muẓaffar	39	خواجه	Khwāja	21
علی	‘Alī/‘Alā	174	السلام	al-Salām	90	مستنصر	Mustanṣir	30	اسمعیلیان	Ismā’īliyān	18

²⁵ *Rafīq* has the meaning of friend, colleague, comrade and JT and QZT use the plural *Rafīqān* for the Nizari Ismailis—a usage adopted from the Nizari *da’wa* literature

²⁶ JT. pp 148-149

بزرگ	Buzurg	144	جلال	Jalāl	87	خورشاه	Khūrshāh	26	امیرداد	Amīrdād	18
کیا	Kiyā	141	داعیان	Dā'iyān	65	نزار	Nizār	25	دماوندی	Damāwandī	18
رکن	Rukn	125	نزاریان	Nizāriyān	47						

This list contains components of the names of the Nizari *dā'īs* (Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd, Ra'īs Muẓaffar, ...); the names of imams: Ismā'īl (b. Ja'far), Fatimids (al-Mustaṣṣir, Nizār) and Nizaris (Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām, Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan, 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad, Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, ...); titles and honourifics (Mawlānā, Sayyidnā, Ra'īs, Khwāja, ...); group identifiers (Rafīqān, Dā'iyān, Nizāriyān, Ismā'īliyān, ...). The frequent occurrence of the *nišba* Damāwandī is a reflection of the number of *dā'īs* and military operatives who originated in Damāwand. Amīrdād (Ḥabashī b. Altūntāq) (d. 1100/493) the Saljuq amir allied with Sultan Bark-yāruq is mentioned in relation to the Nizari acquisition of the fortress of Girdkūh. JT states that “[Ra'īs Muẓaffar] brought Amīrdād to his side; [the latter] matured in the shelter of his care and the Ra'īs adopted him—such that in his own work he sought the Ra'īs' help.”²⁷ There is an implication here that Amīrdād may even have accepted Ismailism; at least he was closely allied with them—he fielded a reported force of 5000 Nizaris in the service of the Sultan.²⁸ When Amīrdād was killed by one of Sultan Muḥammad b. Malikshāh's amirs, his trusted governor of Girdkūh, Ra'īs Muẓaffar, turned the fortress over to the Nizari *da'wa* and ruled it for 40 years under Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ.²⁹

Table 4f-ii: Either (7) iii: Opponents of Nizaris (18)

محمد	Muḥammad	277	سلطان	sulṭān	294	ملکشاه	Malikshāh	45	مغول	Mughūl	22
مردم	mardum	95	پادشاه	pādishāh	170	وزیر	wazīr	41	دانشمند	dānishmand	21
قوم	qawm	64	الملک	al-Mulk	96	مسعود	Mas'ūd	38	عوام	'awām	20
احمد	Aḥmad	41	امیر	amīr	92	محمود	Maḥmūd	30	خوارزمشاه	Khwārazamshāh	19

²⁷ JT p 116-118

²⁸ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p 321

²⁹ JT. p 116-118

حسین	Husayn	37	نظام	Niẓām	78	ایلچیان	ilchīyān	26			
قاضی	Qāḍī	35	سنجر	Sanjar	62	امرا	umarā	23			
ابراهیم	Ibrāhīm	26	علوی	‘Alawī	46	خلیفه	khalīfa	22			

The names and terms categorised as “Either” are common to both the Ismailis and their opponents. In the second list are found: names of Saljuq sultans (Malikshāh, Sanjar, Maḥmūd) and the *wazīr* Niẓām al-Mulk; titles of office (*sulṭān*, *amīr*, *umarā wazīr*, *khalīfa*, and in reference to the Mongols: *pādishāh* and *ilchīyān*). These terms are amongst the most frequently occurring in the three chronicles evidencing their predominant focus on military and political history.

Table 4g: Terms of Conflict (16).

قتل	qatala	227	خصمان	khuṣmān	51	کارد	kārd	28	سپاه	sipāh	20
کشت	kusht	172	قصد	qaṣd	51	جنگ	jang	26	گرفتند	giraftand	20
لشکر	lashkar	121	خون	khūn	34	خراب	kharāb	26	منهزم	munhazim	19
فدائیان	fidā’iyān	67	مال	māl	34	خلاف	khalāf	21	محافظت	muḥāfazat	18

The “Terms of Conflict” category includes an inordinate number of the most frequently occurring terms emphasising the equally inordinate role of wars and conflict in human history. *Qatala* is high in the list of the most frequently occurring terms in the three chronicle accounts of the Nizari polity. The first three regnal accounts include a listing of 73 (JT) or 74 (ZT) assassinations attributed to the Nizaris and the verbs *qatala* and *kushtan* are used to enumerate these. Juwayni did not include any such lists. Correlation of the terms of killing with the agents of killing, for example *qatala* and *fidā’iyān* allows further analysis. The JT for the reign of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ has 50 instances of *qatala* and 16 of *fidā’iyān* (include the singular *fidā’ī*); since many of the assassinations are recorded in the narrative and found in the appended hit-lists resulting in a duplication in the count of occurrences of *qatala*. As a result at

least some 18 additional killings not linked to the *fidā'īs* would be expected in the text. The Nizaris did not, of course, have a monopoly in killings!

Table 4g-i: Correlation of *qatala* and *fidā'iyān*

قتل	HS	BU	MBU	ADS	NM	JH	AM	RK	Σ	فدائيان	HS	B U	MBU	ADS	NM	JH	AM	RK	Σ
TJG	4	0	2	1	5	1	0	6	19	TJG	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
JT	50	25	16	1	2	1	0	3	98	JT	16	5	2	0	0	0	3	2	28
ZT	51	13	16	0	2	1	0	27	110	ZT	16	1	4	0	0	0	8	6	35
Σ	105	38	34	2	54	40	0	36	227	Σ	36	6	6	0	0	0	11	8	67

The frequency of usage by the Ilkhanid chroniclers of these two terms compared to their usage in a much larger corpus of History of Islamic Iran (HII) database with an estimated word-count of 60,000,000 words illustrates the authorial focalisation of the Nizaris as assassins by their lexical usage of the terms *qatala* and *fidā'iyān*.

Term	n-Ilkhanid	n/69798	n-HII	n/60M
قتل	227	0.00325	23627	0.000394
فدائيان	67	0.00096	433	0.0000072

Qatala and several of its derivatives and compounds occurred 23627 times in HII—historians spill more ink on the subject of spilling blood than any other! These terms were found to occur a factor of ten times more in the Ilkhanid chronicles. Similarly the term *fidā'iyān* occurred a factor of almost 1000 times more in the Ilkhanid chronicles than the HII corpus. This is perhaps to be expected since the Nizaris epitomised concept of self-sacrifice in the histories of the age. An interesting correlation to note is that the frequency of *fidā'iyān* is the same as that for *malāḥida*. This indicates that in the HII texts there was equal focalisation on these two concepts and more than likely the discussions labeled the *fidā'īs* as *malāḥida*. (Cf. Table 4c-i above).

The usage of the term *khuṣmān* (enemies) by Rashid al-Din and Qashani is noteworthy—every occurrence of this term relates to the enemies of the Nizaris.

Table 4g-ii: Occurrence of *khuṣmān* (opponents)

خصمان	HS	BU	MBU	ADS	NM	JH	AM	RK	Σ
TJG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
JT	9	2	7	0	0	0	0	1	19
ZT	17	5	8	0	0	0	1	1	32
Σ	26	7	15	0	0	0	1	2	51

It is intriguing that Rashid al-Din and even Qashani carried over the Nizari constructions of their opponents as “enemies” into their writing!

Table 4h: Terms of Governance (12)

حضرت	ḥaḍrat	69	ملک	mulk	43	بندگی	bandagī	29	حکم	ḥukm	24
دولت	dawlat	50	خدمت	khidmat	42	والی	wālī	27	حاکم	ḥākīm	23
فرمان	farmān	43	ولایت	wilāyat	42	دینار	dīnār	25	پیغام	paigām	20

This set of terms relates to three different systems of rule, namely, the Saljuqs, the Nizari Ismailis and the Mongols. While some of these terms are commonly used across the three contexts (*dawlat*, *mulk*, *wilāyat*, *wālī*, *ḥukm*, *ḥākīm*); others are reserved by the historian-authors to particular realms. The term *bandagī* is used in these accounts only in relation to the Mongol demands—such as for the Nizari ruler, Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, to pay homage to Hūlāgū in person. The tabulation below correlates the term *khidmat* (presence [in front of majesty]) and *ḥaḍrat* (majesty). *Khidmat* is associated with Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s journey to the presence of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustaṣṣir and then the term pertains to presence at Hūlāgū’s *ordu*.

Similarly, *ḥaḍrat* occurs in relation to the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir in the account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and then associated with the Nizari imams and even the ‘Abbāsīd caliph and finally all three chronicles refer to Hūlāgū as his majesty.

Table 4h-i: Correlation of *khidmat* and *ḥaḍrat*

حضرت	HS	BU	MBU	ADS	NM	JH	AM	RK	Σ	خدمت	HS	BU	MBU	ADS	NM	JH	AM	RK	Σ
TJG	1	2	0	1	3	1	0	16	24	TJG	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	4	8
JT	8	0	0	1	2	1	2	14	28	JT	9	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	18
ZT	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	12	17	ZT	7	0	1	0	0	0	4	4	16
Σ	11	2	0	3	6	2	3	42	69	Σ	17	1	1	0	1	1	9	12	42

These brief analyses of the examples from the 140 most frequently occurring substantive terms and names within a total of 69,798 words of the three Ilkhanid chronicles illustrate the lexematic building blocks with which the author-historians constructed their narratives. This set of 140 terms occurring 8285 times is central to more than three-quarters of the information in the three accounts. In the next segment of this section, the 15 most frequently occurring terms in each individual chronicle account are parsed to illustrate the trends and differing foci within each of the three historian-authors’ writing about the Nizari polity.

B. Comparative Analyses of 15 Top Terms in Each Chronicle

The 15 most frequently occurring terms listed under the five categories of the previous subsection are here parsed according to the frequency in each of the three Ilkhanid chronicles, individually. The table below shows these substantive terms ranked in frequency of occurrences in four columns: 1) all three chronicles combined, 2) TJG, 3) JT and 4) ZT. The colour coding for the individual words is maintained from the previous subsection. For the

purposes of this write-up, the number of terms is limited to a small sampling to illustrate the key characters, places and activities each author prioritised to emplot their narratives.

The relative positions of the terms across the three chronicles illustrate differing foci and perspective of their accounts. The term *qatala* as analysed in the previous subsection, here is shown as the fifth most frequent term in the combined three accounts and third and sixth in JT and ZT respectively while it does not appear in this listing for TJG. Similarly, the honorific Sayyidnā for Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ—the seventh most frequent term in the combined accounts—is not found in TJG column but is the fifth (JT) and fourth (ZT) most common term in the other two texts.

The different positions of *sulṭān* and *pādishāh* which refer to the Saljuq and Mongol rulers illustrate the differential foci of the narrative; Juwayni who lived and thrived in the era of Hūlāgū's westward invasion mentions the title of the Mongol rulers and Hūlāgū, founder of the Ilkhanid dynasty 57 times versus 52 mentions of the Saljuq *sulṭāns*; the other two texts reverse the priority: JT has *sulṭān* 122 times and *pādishāh* 60 times while ZT has *sulṭān* 120 times and *pādishāh* 53 times. These occurrences are disproportionate considering that the Nizari-Saljuqs interaction lasted almost over a century and a half and Nizari-Mongol interactions did not exceed three decades; however, it is natural that the historian-authors would have focussed more on the events proximal to their own time.

Table 4i: 15 Most Frequently Occurring Terms (descending order) in the Ilkhanid Chronicles

	ALL 3		F	TJG		F	JT		F	ZT		F
1	حسن	Ḥasan	302	حسن	Ḥasan	116	سلطان	sulṭān	122	محمد	Muḥammad	127
2	سلطان	sulṭān	294	پادشاه	pādishāh	57	محمد	Muḥammad	107	سلطان	sulṭān	120
3	الموت	Alamūt	250	الموت	Alamūt	56	قتل	qatala	98	علی	‘Alī/‘Alā	115
4	محمد	Muḥammad	238	رکن	Rukn	54	حسن	Ḥasan	89	سیدنا	Sayyidnā	115
5	قتل	qatala	227	سلطان	sulṭān	52	سیدنا	Sayyidnā	89	الموت	Alamūt	113
6	قلعه	qal‘a	208	قلعه	qal‘a	42	قلعه	qal‘a	87	قتل	qatala	110
7	سیدنا	Sayyidnā	204	دعوت	da‘wat	42	رفیقان	Rafīqān	82	رفیقان	Rafīqān	101
8	رفیقان	Rafīqān	184	علاء	‘Alā’	40	الموت	Alamūt	81	حسن	Ḥasan	97
9	علی	‘Alī/‘alā	174	صباح	Ṣabbāḥ	39	پادشاه	pādishāh	60	قلعه	qal‘a	79
10	پادشاه	pādishāh	170	محمد	Muḥammad	37	کیا	Kiyā	60	کیا	Kiyā	79
11	دعوت	da‘wat	159	امام	imām	32	الله	Allāh	57	السلام	al-Salām	74
12	بزرگ	Buzurg	144	جلال	Jalāl	32	علی	‘Alī/‘Alā	56	قزوین	Qazwīn	70
13	کیا	Kiyā	141	بزرگ	Buzurg	30	بزرگ	Buzurg	56	دعوت	da‘wat	62
14	قزوین	Qazwīn	124	اسلام	Islām	26	دعوت	da‘wat	55	بزرگ	Buzurg	58
15	امام	imām	123	امید	Ummīd	25	قزوین	Qazwīn	47	پادشاه	pādishāh	53

Columns: ALL 3 = all three chronicles combined; F = number of occurrences; TJG = Juwayni: *Ta’rikh-i jahān-gushā*; JT = Rashid al-Din: *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*; ZT = Qashani: *Zubdat al-Tawārīkh*.

Colours Codes: Terms of Religious Discourse; Places; Names and Terms related to People: Ismailis, Either, Opponents of Nizaris; Terms of Conflict; Terms of Governance

C. Analyses of Terms Across Regnal Accounts within the Chronicles

In the previous subsection, the comparative frequency of certain terms has revealed the patterning in each individual Ilkhanid chronicle. In this subsection the analysis is taken further to demonstrate the shifting focus from regnal account to regnal account within each chronicle, again by mapping a very small sample (10 terms) from the core data-set of 140 most frequently occurring terms in the three accounts of the Nizari polity.

Figure 4b-i: Ten Most Frequently Occurring Terms in Juwayni
(Ḥasan; pādishāh; Alamūt; Rukn; sulṭān; qal'a; da'wat; 'Alā; Şabbāḥ; Muḥammad)

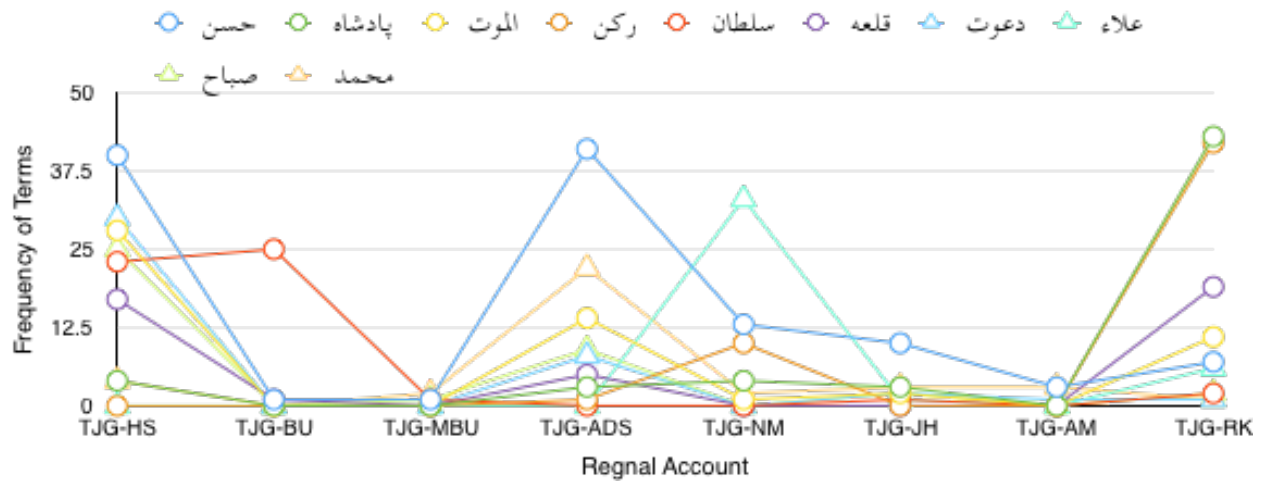


Figure 4b-ii: Ten Most Frequently Occurring Terms in Rashid al-Dīn
(Sulṭān; Muḥammad; qatala; Ḥasan; Sayyidnā; qal'a; Rafīqān; Alamūt; pādishāh; Kiyā)

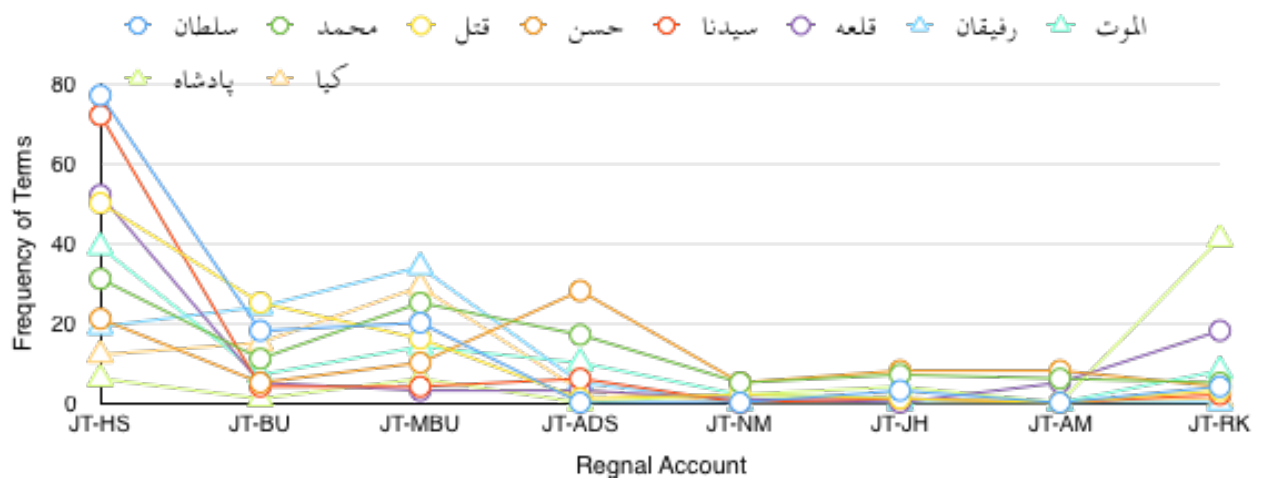
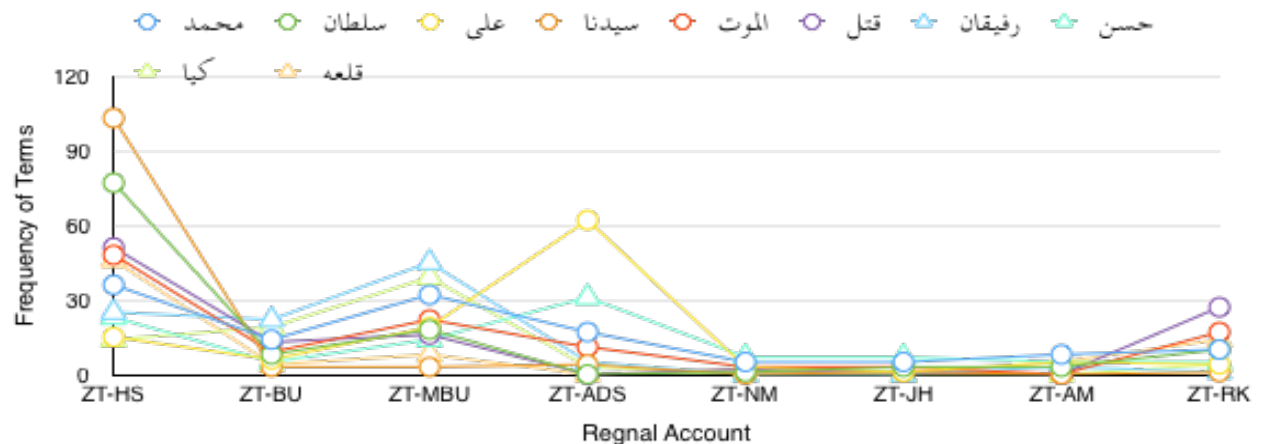


Figure 4b-iii: Ten Most Frequently Occurring Terms in Qashani
(Muḥammad; sulṭān; 'Alī/'Alā; Sayyidnā; Alamūt; qatala; Rafīqān; Ḥasan; qal'a; Kiyā)



The graphs show the top ten terms from each chronicle and how their frequencies vary by regnal account. The varying frequencies of the terms in different regnal accounts indicate shifts in the narrative structure and content and therefore the meanings and foci of the texts. A correlation of Alamūt and *daʿwat* indicates that the narrative accounts shift away from the establishment of the *daʿwa* focussed around Alamut in the reign of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. In later reigns the occurrence of both terms is significantly less. Juwayni mentions Alamut again in the reigns of Ḥasan *ʿalā dhikrihiʿl-salām* and Rukn al-Din Khūrshāh—namely with regard to the events of the declaration of the Qiyāma at the fortress and finally with the Mongol attacks. Similar patterns are observable in the other two chronicles as well.

Table 4j: Correlation of *daʿwat* and Alamūt

الموت	HS	BU	MBU	ADS	NM	JH	AM	RK	Σ	دعوت	HS	BU	M B U	ADS	NM	JH	AM	RK	Σ
TJG	28	0	0	14	1	2	0	11	56	TJG	30	0	0	8	0	2	1	1	42
JT	39	7	14	10	2	1	0	8	81	JT	36	4	6	6	0	1	2	0	55
ZT	48	9	22	11	3	3	0	17	113	ZT	33	7	7	8	0	0	6	1	62
Σ	115	16	36	35	6	6	0	36	250	Σ	99	11	13	22	0	3	9	2	159

The table below shows the 15 most frequently occurring terms (in descending order) solely in the JT. The first column shows the 15 most frequently occurring terms in the combined three Ilkhanid chronicles (All-3); the next column shows the terms in JT account of the Nizaris; subsequent columns show the 15 most frequently occurring terms in each reign.

Table 4k: Most Frequent Terms by Regnal Account in the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*

All-3	JT	JT-HS	JT-BU	JT-MBU	JT-ADS	JT-NM	JT-JH	JT-AM	JT-RK
69798	24850	10272	1911	3763	2117	1731	1247	1082	2727
<i>qatala</i>	<i>sultān</i>	<i>sultān</i>	<i>Rafīqān</i>	<i>Rafīqān</i>	<i>Ḥasan</i>	<i>‘Alā’</i>	<i>Jalāl</i>	<i>Mawlānā</i>	<i>pādishāh</i>
<i>Ḥasan</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sayyidnā</i>	<i>qatala</i>	<i>Kiyā</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Rukn</i>	<i>Islām</i>	<i>imām</i>	<i>Rukn</i>
<i>sultān</i>	<i>qatala</i>	<i>qal’a</i>	<i>sultān</i>	<i>lashkar</i>	<i>imām</i>	<i>mulk</i>	<i>Ḥasan</i>	<i>Ḥasan</i>	<i>qal’a</i>
<i>M</i>	<i>Ḥasan</i>	<i>qatala</i>	<i>Kiyā</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Buzurg</i>	<i>dawlat</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>ḥaḍrat</i>
<i>Alamūt</i>	<i>Sayyidnā</i>	<i>Alamūt</i>	<i>Buzurg</i>	<i>kusht</i>	<i>Alamūt</i>	<i>shaykh</i>	<i>lashkar</i>	<i>qal’a</i>	<i>bandagī</i>
<i>Rafīqān</i>	<i>qal’a</i>	<i>al-Mulk</i>	<i>Ummīd</i>	<i>sultān</i>	<i>Ummīd</i>	<i>Ḥasan</i>	<i>‘Irāq</i>	<i>Allāh</i>	<i>ilchīyān</i>
<i>qal’a</i>	<i>Rafīqān</i>	<i>da‘wat</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>‘Alī/‘Alā</i>	<i>khutba</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>musalmānān</i>	<i>khidmat</i>	<i>Alamūt</i>
<i>Sayyidnā</i>	<i>Alamūt</i>	<i>kusht</i>	<i>kusht</i>	<i>Buzurg</i>	<i>qiyāmat</i>	<i>kusht</i>	<i>pādishāh</i>	<i>fidā‘iyān</i>	<i>lashkar</i>
<i>‘Alī/‘Alā</i>	<i>pādishāh</i>	<i>Ra‘īs</i>	<i>diz</i>	<i>Qazwīn</i>	<i>Sayyidnā</i>	<i>dīn</i>	<i>Allāh</i>	<i>malāḥida</i>	<i>Allāh</i>
<i>kusht</i>	<i>Kiyā</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Alamūt</i>	<i>qatala</i>	<i>da‘wat</i>	<i>khūn</i>	<i>sultān</i>	<i>‘awāmm</i>	<i>farmān</i>
<i>pādishāh</i>	<i>Allāh</i>	<i>Nizām</i>	<i>lashkar</i>	<i>Alamūt</i>	<i>al-Salām</i>	<i>Qazwīn</i>	<i>Qazwīn</i>	<i>‘Alī/‘Alā</i>	<i>diz</i>
<i>da‘wat</i>	<i>‘Alī/‘Alā</i>	<i>Allāh</i>	<i>Iṣfahān</i>	<i>Amīr</i>	<i>Nizār</i>	<i>imām</i>	<i>‘Alā’</i>	<i>kusht</i>	<i>qalā’</i>
<i>Buzurg</i>	<i>Buzurg</i>	<i>Rafīqān</i>	<i>‘Alī/‘Alā</i>	<i>Rayy</i>	<i>minbar</i>	<i>qawm</i>	<i>qawm</i>	<i>da‘wat</i>	<i>Lamasar</i>
<i>Kiyā</i>	<i>da‘wat</i>	<i>Ḥasan</i>	<i>Qazwīn</i>	<i>Ḥasan</i>	<i>Rafīqān</i>	<i>qasḍ</i>	<i>Muḥaffar</i>	<i>Jalāl</i>	<i>Mughūl</i>
<i>Rukn</i>	<i>Qazwīn</i>	<i>mardum</i>	<i>Dā‘iyān</i>	<i>Allāh</i>	<i>qawm</i>	<i>qatala</i>	<i>rasūl</i>	<i>ḥaḍrat</i>	<i>Maimūn</i>

M = Muḥammad

Columns: ALL = Entire account of Nizaris in JT; HS = Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ; BU = Buzurg Ummīd; MBU = Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd; ADS = Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām; NM = Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad; JH = Jalāl al-Dīn; AM = ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad; RK = Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh

Second row = word count

Colours Codes: *Terms of Religious Discourse*; *Places*; Names and Terms related to People: *Ismailis*, *Either*, *Opponents of Nizaris*; *Terms of Conflict*; Terms of Governance

The table shows that the term: *sultān* which occurs most frequently in the JT account of the Nizaris, is the first, third and sixth most frequent in the first three regnal accounts; after that, the term does not appear among the top-most terms since the military struggle with Saljuqs diminishes in the narratives in subsequent reigns. The term *qatala* which appears in the first three reigns because of the lists of assassinations at the end of each of these accounts, does not appear as frequently in the following five reigns.

It is significant to note that the term *atābik* (preceptor lit.: father prince) appears in the top ten terms for the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan because of his alliance with the Saljuq *atābik* of Āzarbaijān along with whom he took the battle field. This is also indicative of the loss of power

of the Great Saljuqs after the death of the last independently powerful ruler of the line, Sultan Sanjar in 1157/552 and the rise of the local *atābik* dynasties.³⁰ The mention of the ‘Abbāsīd court (*dār al-khilāfa*) in the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan signifies not only the Nizari imam’s declared adoption of Sunni Islam and alliance with the long-standing enemy of the Ismailis but also the resurgence of the caliphate under al-Nāṣir (r. 1180/575-1225/622) at a time of heightened Saljuq warlordism and absence of a single powerful sultan.

In the reign of Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, the terms related to the Mongol conquerors (*pādishāh*; *ḥaḍrat*; *bandagī*; *īlchīyān* and *farmān*) eclipse the other political terms. Also Alamūt, *qal‘ā* and *diz* reappear after several regnal accounts indicative of the shift in the narrative from the revolutionary-territorial to the heretical (*malāḥida*) constructions of the Nizaris in the writings about the *Qiyāma* and back to the territorial conflict now with the Mongols. A similar shift is also perceptible in that the proper names of the *dā‘īs* are displaced by those of the imams after Ḥasan ‘*alā dhikrihi*’*l-salām*’s declaration of the *Qiyāma* and his recognition as imam. The terms *imām*; *qiyāmat*; *khuṭba*, *da‘wat* and Islam accordingly register in the ten most frequently occurring terms in the account of this reign signifying the shift from the realm of the *ḥujjas*/*dā‘īs* to that of the imams.

The graphs and tabulations in this subsection indicate that the frequency of terms changed from one regnal account to another as the chroniclers changed the topical foci in their arc of writing about the Nizari dynasty. The next subsection analyses the comparative word frequencies in the three Ilkhanid account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ to highlight the topical foci in this regnal account.

³⁰ Bosworth. *nID*, pp 185ff; C. Bosworth. "The Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World (A.D. 1000–1217)" in John Andrew Boyle, ed. *The Cambridge History of Iran Vol. 5: The Saljuq and Mongol Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968). pp 167ff

D. Word Frequencies Comparison in the Chronicle Accounts of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ

The chart below shows thirty of the most frequently occurring terms in the three Ilkhanid accounts of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. The total number of words across the three chronicles were tallied and sorted in descending order of frequency for the chart—as such, سيدنا (Sayyidnā) which occurs only once in TJG is listed second because across the three texts, it was the second most frequently occurring term, found 176 times out of a total of 25416 words in the three accounts.

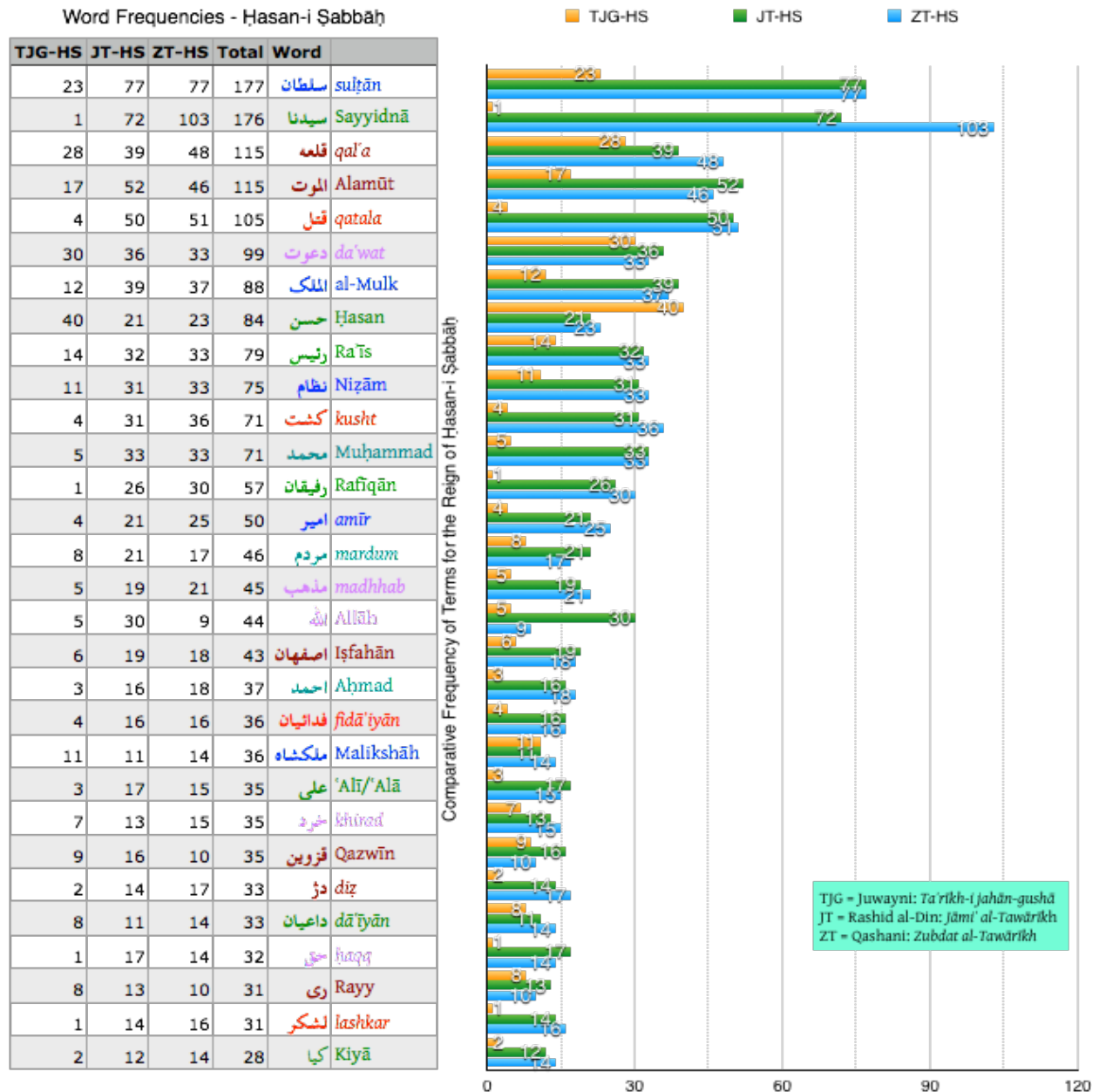
This comparison of the relative word frequencies between the three chronicles reveals the topical foci of the three chroniclers. The data shows near equivalence in frequency of words used between the JT and ZT. The majority of the words and terms in the table can be placed into three categories:

Religious: دعوت؛ مذهب؛ الله؛ خرد؛ حق؛ (da‘wat, madhhab, Allāh, khirad, ḥaqq) are the terms that occur most frequently and indicate the areas of foci in the texts involving conceptions of God, creed, the da‘wa, intellect and Truth.

Places: الموت؛ قلعه؛ اصفهان؛ قزوین؛ دژ؛ ری (Alamūt, qal‘a, Iṣfahān, Qazwīn, diz, Rayy) the key events in the texts are centred around fortresses, particularly Alamut and the cities of Qazwīn, Rayy and Isfahan—note the disparity between Juwayni who did not report on events in Rayy and Isfahan and the other two authors.

People: سيدنا؛ سلطان؛ الملك؛ رئیس؛ حسن؛ نظام؛ محمد؛ امیر؛ رفیقان؛ احمد؛ ملکشاہ؛ علی؛ کیا (Sayyidnā, sulṭān, al-Mulk, ra‘īs, Ḥasan, Niẓām, Muḥammad, amīr, Rafīqān, Aḥmad, Malikshāh, ‘Alī, Kiyā) this list shows the major actors in the three narratives.

Table 4l: 30 Most Frequently occurring Terms in the Ilkhanid Accounts of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ



1. ANALYSES OF INDIVIDUAL WORDS AND TERMS

Sayyidnā (سیدنا) occurs only once in TJG while ZT uses it 103 times and JT 72 times. As Bowen noted, Juwayni could not bring himself to apply the sacred honorific *Sayyidnā* (our Master) for Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ whom he considered to be the arch-heretic.³¹ In TJG the frequency of Ḥasan

³¹ Harold Bowen, "The *Sar-gudhasht-i Sayyidnā*, the "Tale of the Three Schoolfellows" and the wasaya of the Nizām al-Mulk," *JRAS* 4 (1931).

(40) and Şabbāḥ (25)³² is greater than in JT (17; 5) and ZT (21; 4) respectively—in several instances Ḥasan refers to other individuals so named and Şabbāḥ with few exceptions is found as Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ.

Juwayni did not use رفیقان (*Rafīqān*) for the Nizari Ismailis preferring pejoratives such as ملأحده (*malāḥida* = heretics). After Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ, the most frequently referenced individuals are the Saljuq Sultans, particularly Malikshāh and the *wazīr* Nizām al-Mulk and as well as the Saljuq amirs. On the Nizari side, Ra'īs Muẓaffar and Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd are important.

A significant number of the episodes in the account of Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ are centred on specific locations دژ، اصفهان، ری، قلعه، قزوین، الموت، Alamūt, Rayy, Iṣfahān, Qazwīn, *qal'a* and *diz* both meaning castle/fortress) emphasising the territorial construal of early Nizari Ismailism in the chronicles and the modes of its engagement with the Saljuq-Abbāsīd establishment. The absence of Isfahan in TJG suggests that the account of the *dā'ī* Aḥmad Ibn 'Aṭṭāsh and the Ismailis in Isfahan recorded by the other two histories may not have been derived from the *Sarguzasht*. Juwayni seems to have only used the Nizari sources and did not synthesise accounts from other histories. As has already been mentioned, unlike the other two chroniclers, Juwayni did not refer to the histories of Ibn al-Athīr and Ṣāḥib al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī for his section on Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ. (Cf. Part One:6-III).

In this section four layers of the Ilkhanid chronicle accounts of the Nizari polity have been examined to reveal the structural and rhetorical patterning through lexical usages. By looking

³² Note: 40-25=15: references to Ḥasan without the Şabbāḥ as well as other people named Ḥasan in the TJG; similarly for the other two texts...

at the most frequently occurring terms, authorial foci have been demonstrated for the aggregate of the three Ilkhanid chronicles; in the second stage, the focus was narrowed to compare the terms used in each of the three chronicle accounts; at the third stage, the relative priority of key terms across the eight individual regnal accounts in the chronicles were mapped and lastly, the analyses were narrowed to the key terms within each of the three accounts of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. The accompanying commentary explained the significances of the findings. These analyses of the lexical building blocks in the chronicles now allow the narrative analyses of the accounts.

III. Narrative Analyses of Ilkhanid Accounts of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ

The analyses in this subsection continue to examine the authorial representations and perspectives through the emplotment of events at the narrative level in the accounts of the reign of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. As already indicated above, the account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ is the longest in each of the three chronicles and as the table shows the TJG account is less than half the length (number of words) of JT and ZT.

Account	TJG	JT	ZT	Begin	End	Reign (yrs)
Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ	4373	10272	10761	1090	1124	43
Nizaris - Aggregate Account	15965	24850	28983	1090	1256	167
Percentage of Total	27%	41%	37%			20%

The account of the founder of the Nizari Ismailism in each of the three Ilkhanid chronicles follows a common outline from the birth to the death of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. The early part of Ḥasan's life and career until the assassination of Niẓām al-Mulk in 1092/485 is presented in two narratives.

A. The Chronological Narrative

The first narrative common to all three accounts covers Ḥasan's origins; his acceptance of Ismailism (Cf. Part One:6-I) and involvement in the *da'wa*; his journey to Cairo (Cf. Part One:6-II) and encounters in Egypt; his return to Iran and *da'wa* activities culminating in acquisition of the fortress Alamut; his doctrine of *ta'līm*; propagation of the *da'wa* in the Rūdbār region south of the Caspian Sea and in Quhistān region of Khurāsān; conflict with the Saljuqs and the assassination of Nizām al-Mulk. In this story-line there are several disparities among the three accounts; Juwayni did not include a number of events and anecdotes in Ḥasan's adoption of Ismailism nor details of the route of his journey to Egypt found in the two other accounts. For this analysis, the three accounts have been divided into individual events and episodes (21 in TJG; 27 in JT and ZT). These episodes were further divided into narrative segments where each one of the segments (tabulated as "NarBlock") conveys a complete set of information. (Cf. Appendix 4b).

B. The "Three School Fellows Story"

The second narrative reverts to Ḥasan's childhood beginning with the "three school fellows story". (Cf. Part One:6-I). At the end of this story, Ḥasan who had fallen afoul of his childhood friend, the powerful *wazīr*, Nizām al-Mulk, escaped the Saljuq court and went off to join the Ismailis. He sought refuge with a certain Ra'īs Abū al-Faḍl and one day he exclaimed: if only he had two like-minded individuals with him, he would bring down the Saljuq Empire! The Ra'īs thought him mentally affected and began to treat him for melancholia. Ḥasan realising this departed and eventually went off to Egypt. After his return to Iran and he commenced his revolt. Juwayni did not include this story; however, he placed the Ra'īs Abū al-Faḍl incident at the time of Ḥasan's return from Egypt. Again, Bowen has noted that the episode did not fit into Juwayni's chronology. Perhaps he did not wish to elevate Ḥasan by associating him with the

famed Niẓām al-Mulk and ‘Umar Khayyām³³ mentioned in the story. After detailing the Ra’īs Abū al-Faḍl incident Juwayni reverted to Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s return journey from Egypt and recorded his exploits in Iran suggesting that the three chronicles were accessing a common source. All three narratives mention of the killing of Niẓām al-Mulk again and allude to suspicious circumstances around the death of Malikshāh a month later to conclude this second narrative.

Table 4m: Number of Narrative Segments in the Three Ilkhanid Account of Ḥasan-i Šabbah

Code	TJG	R_JT	ZT	Explanation of Codes
Total Word Count	4372	10272	10761	Number of Words in Account
NarBlock	90	177	184	Complete sets of Information

C. Outline of the Account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ

The graphic below shows Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s biography is divided in two parts. The first part from his childhood to the death of Niẓām al-Mulk consists of the two narratives. The second part follows a near-linear chronology in Juwayni’s account (TJG) whilst in the other two longer accounts (JT & ZT) the chronology is discontinuous indicated by the blue arrows.

³³ *Sar-gudhasht*

Figure 4c: Narrative Mapping of TJG Account of Ḥasan-i Sabbāḥ

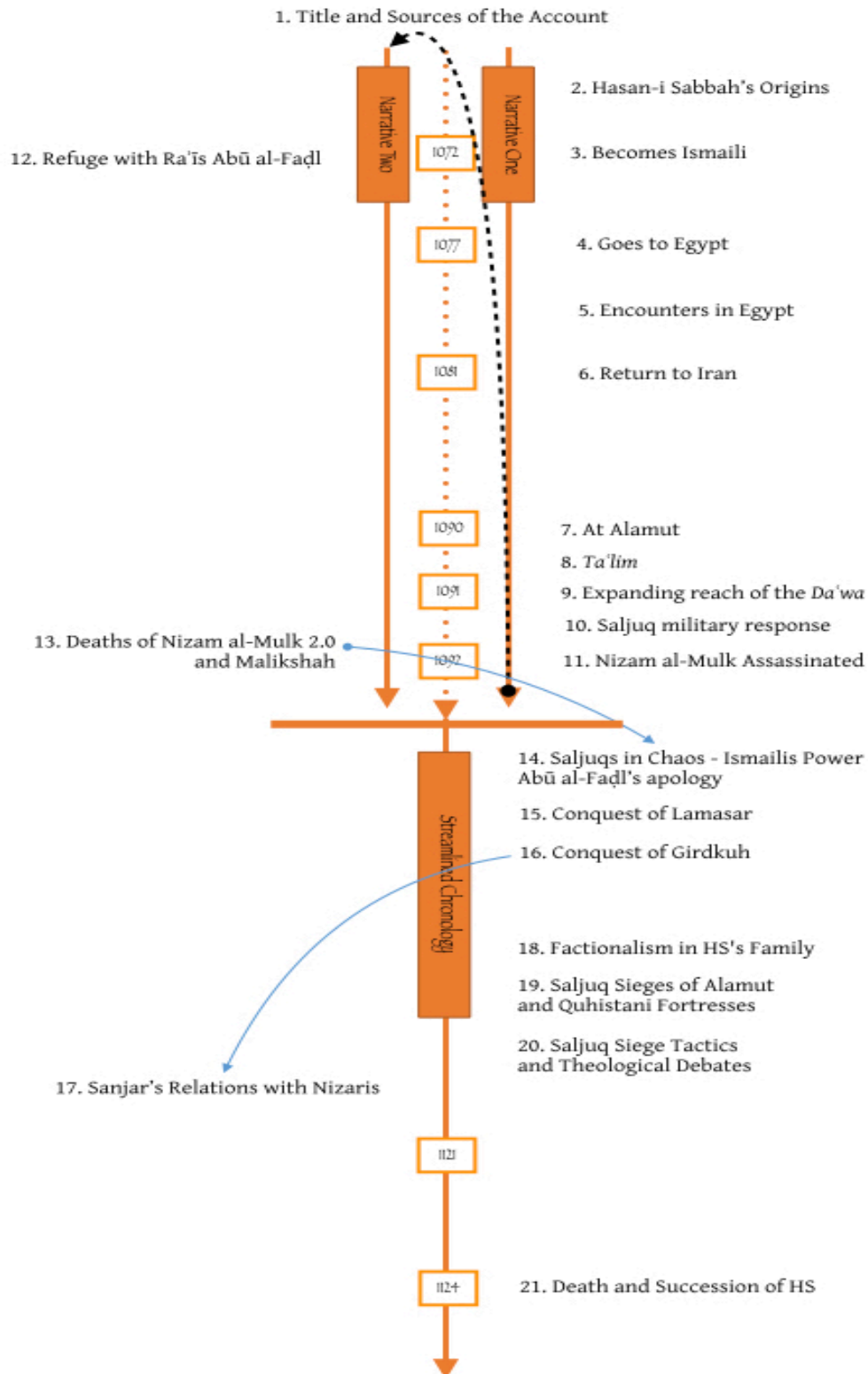
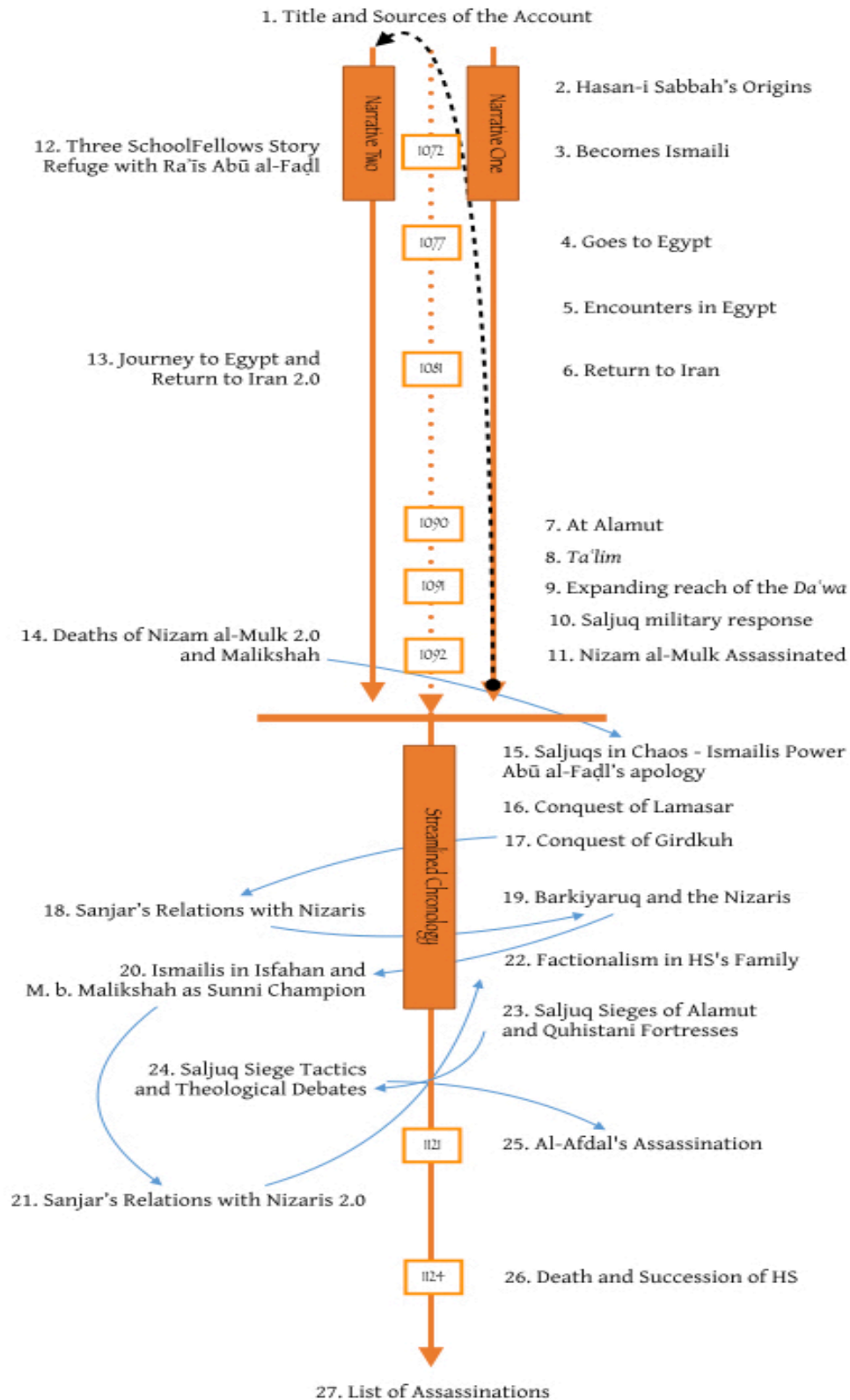


Figure 4c-i: Narrative Mapping of JT and ZT Accounts of Ḥasan-i Sabbāḥ



The second part in all three accounts, from the killing of Nizām al-Mulk to Ḥasan's death, focuses on the territorial expansion of the Nizari polity, its *da'wa* and conflicts with the Saljuqs. The internecine warfare between Malikshāh's sons and their factions took place in this period and the Nizari Ismailis while taking advantage to expand their domains were also integrally involved in regional religio-political and military developments. The accounts record Nizari acquisitions of the fortresses of Lamasar and Girdkūh; their relations with Sultan Bark-yāruq; their seizure and eviction from the fortress of Shāhdiz just a few miles outside of the Saljuq royal city of Isfahan during the reign of Muḥammad b. Malikshāh; (Cf. Part One:6-III) and the relations with Sanjar when he became the Saljuq overlord.³⁴ The chronicles also allude to intra-Nizari factionalism. The first is indicated in the different levels of support for Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ as compared to Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh in Isfahan, the son of the leading Ismaili *dā'ī* in Iran. The second manifests in the challenges to Ḥasan's authority from his sons. (Cf. Part One:6-IV). The accounts conclude with the death and succession of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ.

In the second part of the time sequences of the plot become haphazard tending to towards thematic rather than chronological presentation. As an example, JT and ZT record the following order of events: a) the Nizari acquisition of Girdkūh; b) Sanjar's relations with the Nizari commander Ra'īs Muẓaffar at Girdkūh; c) then Bark-yāruq's relations with them; d) massacre of Ismailis in Isfahan; and e) the capture of Shāhdiz outside of Isfahan by Muḥammad b. Malikshāh. These events are dated: a) 1096/489; b) ca 1105/498; c) earlier part of the reign of Bark-yāruq 1094-1104/487-498; d) ca 1100-1101/494; and e) 1107/500.³⁵ Juwayni maintained his chronological flow by not mentioning Bark-yāruq and the events at Isfahan. In addition to avoiding anachrony, Juwayni's reporting avoided any questions of Saljuq disinclinations

³⁴ Nizari relations with the three sons of Malikshāh will be examined further in case study 5 in Chapter 6 below.

³⁵ JT. pp 116ff; ZT. pp 139ff

toward Sunnism. (Cf. Part One:6-V). A second observation is that the Nizari sources used by Rashid al-Din and Qashani appear to have recorded the relations of Bark-yāruq and Sanjar with the Nizaris particularly in regard to fortress of Girdkūh. Bark-yāruq bestowed the regions around Dāmagān to his amir Amīrdād Ḥabashī b. Altūntāsh³⁶ as an *iqṭāʿ* (tax farm) in return for his loyal service. The latter placed his trusted mentor Raʿīs Muʿayyad al-Dīn Muẓaffar, who had previously accepted Ismailism, in charge of the castle; the Raʿīs turned the castle over to the Nizaris and ruled it under orders from Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ.³⁷ Sanjar managed to get his sway over the region; when he was passing through the area, the Raʿīs had arranged a banquet for the prince and his entourage. The amirs vied for the *iqṭāʿ* which had been given to Amīrdād; however, the aged Raʿīs made a strong declaration of loyalty to the prince in counter to their claims. Sanjar in return affirmed the lands on Raʿīs Muẓaffar.³⁸ It is possible that the two chroniclers used Nizari source for the account of Raʿīs Muẓaffar and Girdkūh which may not have been part of the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*. Rashid al-Din and Qashani then revert back to the narrative of Bark-yāruq, the massacre of Ismailis at Isfahan and culminate in the recapture of Shāhdiz. These events were sourced from texts such as Ibn al-Athīr's *al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rikh* (*The Complete History*) and Ṣāḥib al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī's *Saljūqnāma* (*History of the Saljuqs*). (Cf. Part One:6-III).

D. Narrative Block Level Analyses of Ilkhanid Accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ

Using the TAMS Analyzer program, the three Ilkhanid chronicles along with others derived from them have been analysed at the narrative segment level. The segments—explained in the table—demonstrate authorial focalisation at the story emplotment level.

³⁶ Boyle, s. p 141ff; JT. p 117

³⁷ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. I:30-31 sub anno 493/1099-1100; JT. p 118

³⁸ JT p 119-120

Table 4n: Analyses of Narrative Components in the Ilkhanid Era Accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ

Code	1260 TJG	1314 R_JT	1316 ZT	1275 Bdw	1312 Wssf	1317 Bnkt	1330 Q-TG	Explanation of Codes
Type of History	Dyn	Dyn	Dyn	Dyn	Dyn	Dyn	Dyn	Dyn = Dynastic History
Total Word Count	4372	10265	10767	272	511	797	1119	
NarBlock	106	108	169	15	32	53	76	Number of Narrative Blocks in the account
ID_Person	319	718	1079	14	35	24	97	Number of times PERSON(s) referenced
ID_Place	179	373	519	4	14	16	43	Number of times PLACE(S) referenced
ID_Date	63	98	186	4	6	12	12	Number of times DATES(S) referenced
Doctrinal	33	60	70	7	8	9	9	Doctrinal Content
QuoteDa'i	6	24	31	0	0	2	4	Quote attributable to a Da'i
QuoteImam	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	Quote attributable to an IMAM
TextQur'an	8	13	16	0	0	0	0	Quote from the Qur'an
TextHadith	4	6	5	0	0	0	0	Quote from the Hadith
PiousInvocation	8	24	18	0	1	0	0	Pious Invocation
Poetry	4	2	3	0	0	0	0	Quotation of Poetry
Curses	5	1	3	0	1	0	1	Curses
ErrorInText	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	Error(s) in the Text
Assassination	6	56	63	0	0	0	0	Mention of Assassination
Battle	7	20	24	0	1	0	2	Mention of Battles
Killing_Execution	3	8	11	0	0	0	0	Mention of Killings or Executions
Massacre	1	2	5	0	0	0	0	Mention of Massacres
Siege	7	13	12	0	0	0	3	Mention of Sieges
TextNizDa'waText	4	4	4	0	1	0	0	Mention of a Da'wa Text
TextOtherChronicles	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	Quote or Mention of Other Chronicles

TJG = Juwayni: *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā*; JT = Rashid al-Din: *Jāmi' al-tawārikh*; ZT = Qashani: *Zubdat al-tawārikh*; BDW = Baiḍawī: *Nizām al-tawārikh*; WSSF = Waṣṣāf: *Tahrīr ta'rikh-i Waṣṣāf*; BNKT = *Ta'rikh-i Banakatī*; Q-TG: Qazwīnī: *Ta'rikh-i guzida*

From this mapping, it is possible to determine how much of each account was focused on a specific theme. This focalisation, for example, on assassinations, battles, sieges and doctrinal issues for the reign of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ in the three major Ilkhanid chronicles yields.

Table 4o: Focalisation (doctrines and warfare) in the Ilkhanid Chronicles

Code	TJG		RJT		ZT	
Total Word Count	4372	%	10265	%	10767	%
Doctrinal	1148	26.3	2409	23.5	1888	17.5
Assassinations	175	4.0	966	9.4	962	8.9
Battles	263	6.0	721	7.0	1002	9.3
Sieges	547	12.5	934	9.1	935	8.7

Between 17.5% and 26.3% of each account was focussed on doctrinal issues and similarly an average of 18% of the each account was focussed on battles and sieges. In these battles and sieges, often hundreds of Nizaris were killed. The Saljuqs frequently burnt crops or destroyed their opponents' harvests resulting in starvation, famine and all the diseases and death that accompany lack of adequate sustenance among the besieged. Nearly a tenth of the JT and ZT accounts of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ detail assassinations attributed to the Nizaris. Together with the accounts of battles and sieges, the focalisation on war and killing consumes a third of each of these accounts. These chronicles and recent studies have suggested that several of the assassinations, particularly, the high profile killings of Niẓām al-Mulk and the 'Abbāsīd caliphs (al-Mustarshīd and al-Rāshīd), while claimed by the Nizaris, were actually attributable to the Saljuqs themselves. Even the death of Malikshāh is attributed to the 'Abbāsīd caliph.³⁹ Scholarship even in recent decades continues to associate the Nizaris with assassinations and killings—to what extent are such conclusions warranted? Quantitative analyses of the narratives segments of assassinations when correlated with those of sieges and battles yield thought-provoking findings.

³⁹ Safi. *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry*. p. 80.

E. Assassinations During the Rule of the Dā'īs

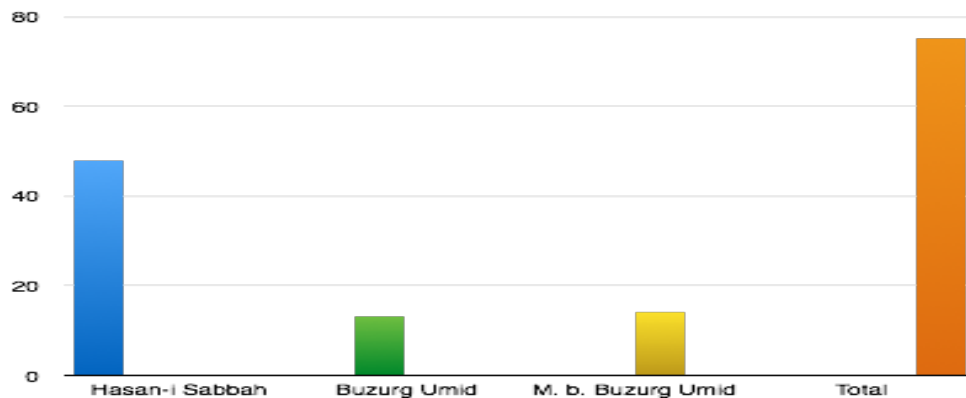
JT and ZT appended lists of assassinations attributed to the Nizaris *fidā'is* (devotees who volunteer or risk their lives in perilous service) during the reigns of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, Buzurg Ummīd and Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd. This data, probably from “hit-lists” maintained at Alamut, is tabulated and charted below.

1. NUMBER OF ASSASSINATIONS PER REIGN

Table 4p: Number of Assassination by Reign

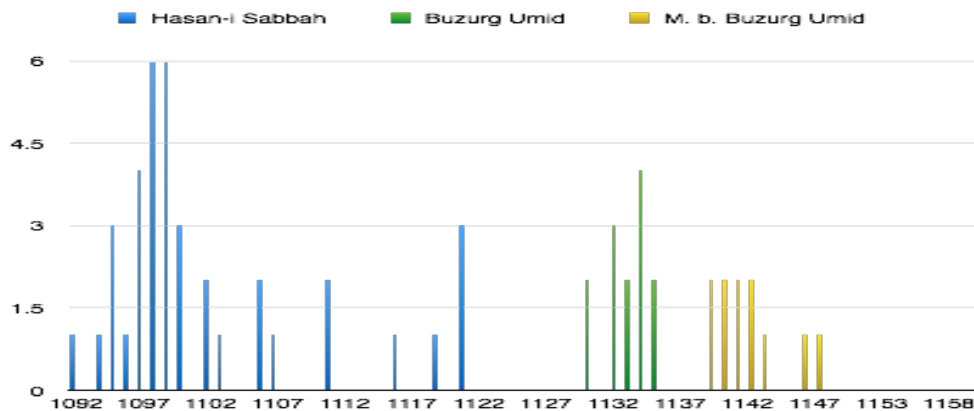
Ruler	1090-1124	1124-1138	1138-1162	72 Years
Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ	48			
Buzurg Ummīd		12		
M. b. Buzurg Ummīd			14	
Total				74
Killings per Year	1.4	0.86	0.58	1.03

Figure 4d-i: Assassinations by Reign



The Nizari Ismailis were labelled “assassins” for pursuing their strategies of asymmetric warfare in which they targeted and killed key opponents in high and influential positions—rulers, *wazīrs*, amirs and members of the ‘*ulamā*’ who agitated against the Nizaris or in a few cases denigrated the Imam-caliph ‘Alī.

Figure 4d-ii: Assassinations by Year
 Ranges: killings (0 to 6) by Year (1090 to 1160)



Total = 64; an additional 10 killings have no dates listed. (See Appendix 4c)

The data in the table and chart show that rate of killings amounted to an average of 1 person per year. Then why has this reputation been attached to the Nizaris even into the 21st century?⁴⁰ Was this simply because the attacks were carried out by *fidā'is* who often sacrificed themselves in their missions which often took place in urban locations rather than active battlefields? The reputations of the *fidā'is* reach and their high level of skill and daring spread fear among their enemies.⁴¹ In contrast how many Nizaris were killed in battle, during sieges or massacres?

2. SEASON OF ASSASSINATIONS

The table below shows the 41 assassinations for which months are listed. Assassinations were carried out year-round with a marked increase on the warmer-weather months of May through September.

⁴⁰ Library of Congress and academic libraries continue to use “Assassins (Ismailites)” in their classifications not to mention the countless of syllabi and classes that perpetuate this construction of the Nizaris as “Assassins”.

⁴¹ Modern scholarship has questioned the attribution of several of the assassination to the Nizaris; including the first one on the list of Nizām al-Mulk. Deborah Tor, “A Tale of Two Murders: Power Relations Between Caliph and Sultan in the Twelfth Century,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (ZDMG) 159 (2009).; Safi. *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry*. pp 74-75

Table 4q: Assassinations by Month

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Assassinations	4		3		5	2	6	4	9	3	2	3

The wheat harvests in Iran and particularly the Caspian region take place between May and August. The spike in *fidā'i* activities suggests links to the protection of crops and defence against predatory sieges and military operations that would seek to destroy the harvests.⁴²

3. SIEGES, BATTLES AND ASSASSINATIONS IN THE ACCOUNTS OF ḤASAN-I ŠABBĀḤ

Correlating the data-sets of assassinations with those of battles and sieges yields patterns in the account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ that Ismailis facing overwhelming forces resorted to asymmetric warfare against the Saljuq establishment. In 1091-1092/484-485 the Saljuqs carried two successive sieges of the Rūdbār and beleaguered Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's meagre under-resourced and malnourished forces. Yūrontāsh who held the Rūdbār as an *iqṭā'* was unable to dislodge the Nizaris who had taken over the fortress of Alamut.⁴³ In early 1092/485, Malikshāh sent the amir Arslān Tāsh to besiege the Rūdbār.⁴⁴ The chronicles report that the defenders were reduced to a walnut and handful of bread as their daily rations. The *dā'i* Bū 'Alī Ardīstānī came to Ḥasan's rescue when 300 men from around Qazwīn and defeated the Saljuqs in surprise night attack. Malikshāh also sent his trusted amir Qizil Sārigh with forces joined by the armies of Khurāsān to destroy the Ismailis in Quhistān.⁴⁵ In the midst of these twin sieges, the Ismailis may have assassinated Niẓām al-Mulk; a month later Malikshāh himself was dead in dubious circumstances. The siege in Quhistān was lifted at the news of the latter's death and there was respite for the Nizaris until the next fighting season.

⁴² See [Appendix Part One:4c: Lists and Mapping of Assassinations](#). The hijri dates in the lists are converted to Gregorian dates as precise equivalence to the tropical calendar is important here.

⁴³ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p 318

⁴⁴ *Ismailis* p 319

⁴⁵ *Ismailis* p 319

Siege of Quhistan
Qizil Sarigh
fierce fighting - massacres

Siege of Alamut
Arslan Tash
starvation

Siege of Alamut
Yuruntash
siege - massacres

Battle of Alamut
Mufti Zafrani of Rayy
fierce fighting

Bu Ali Ardistani +300
attack and defeat
Saljuq besiegers

10K attackers
6K killed
Nizari victory

siege lifted on news
of Malikshah's death

1090

1092

1093

1094

Sultan Malikshah

HS at Alamut

Battles to subdue
the Region

Rafiqan attack
and take Anjarud

Assassination of
Nizam al-Mulk

Assassination of
Malikshah

'Abbasid caliph?

q Military Offensive

Nizari Military Action

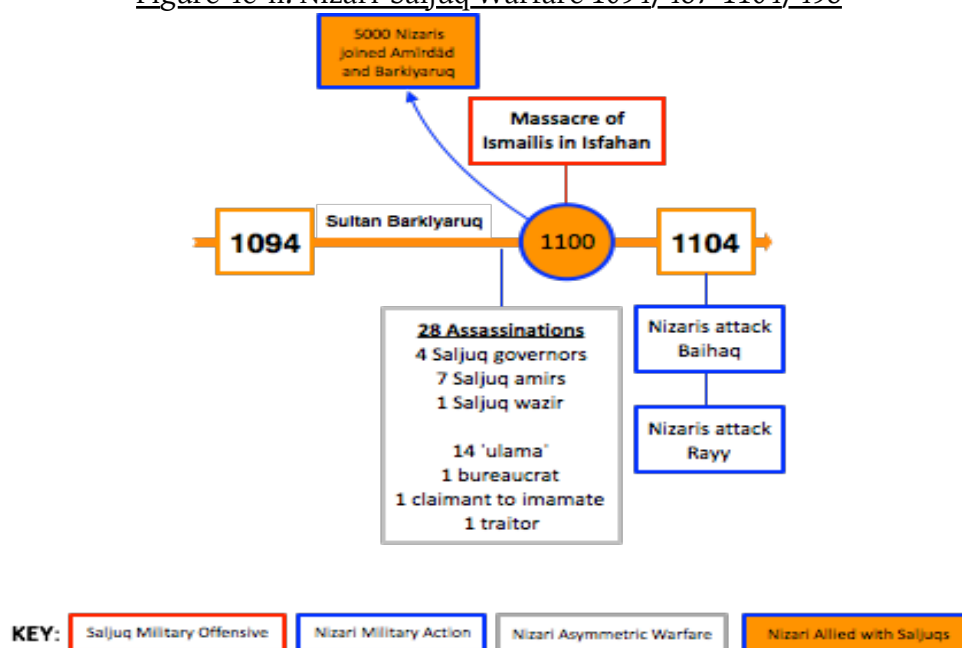
Nizari Asymmetric Warfare

Nizari Allied with Saljuqs

While the Nizaris assassinated 14 scholars of religion who posed doctrinal opposition to their belief, the assassinations of 12 Saljuq officials may have been in coordination with the Sultan. In 1097/490 a Nizari *dā'ī* openly preaching at the Sultan's court was killed on the orders of the *wazīr* Abū'l-Fath Dardānāi-yi Dihistānī who was then assassinated in retaliation.⁴⁶ Three years later, 5000 Nizaris under the command of Amīrdād Ḥabashī took the field on the side of the Sultan. The following year, Ḥazhīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, Ibn al-Athīr and others recorded a massacre of Ismailis in Isfahan questionably attributed to Bark-yāruq with the cooperation of Sanjar.

230

Figure 4e-ii: Nizari-Saljuq Warfare 1094/487-1104/498

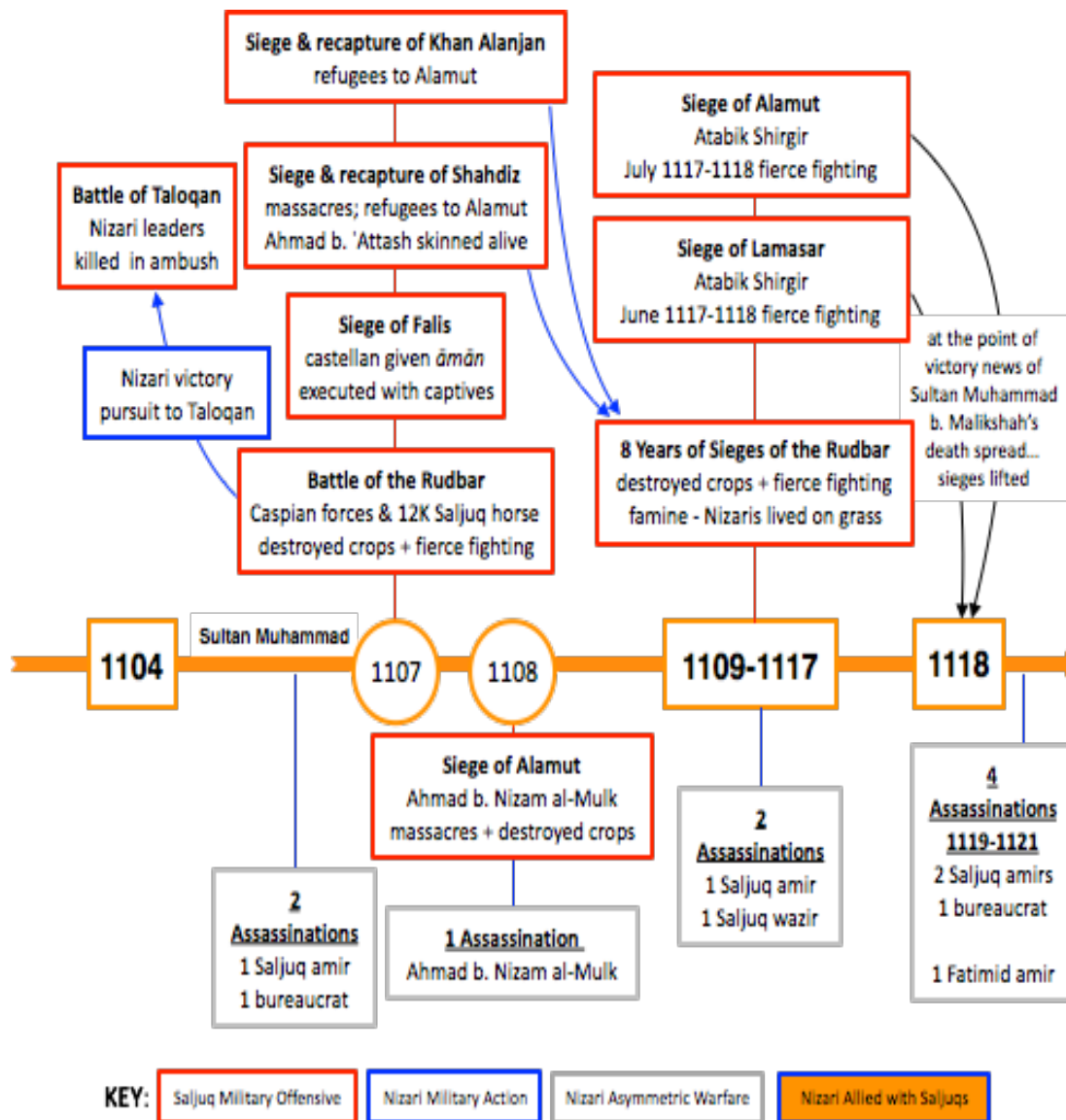


By all accounts, at the time, the city was under the control of their brother Muḥammad!⁴⁷ (Cf. Part One:6-III and V). In the year that Bark-yāruq died (1105/498), the Nizaris of Quhistān attacked Baihaq and even reached Rayy although they were unable to hold the territory.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, pp 168ff

⁴⁸ JT, p. 122

Figure 4e-iii: Nizari-Saljuq Warfare 1104/498-1118/511



The pattern of sieges and battles followed by assassinations was repeated again as Sultan Muḥammad b. Malikshāh consolidated his power. In 1107/500 to eradicate opposition at his doorstep, he besieged the fortresses of Shāhdiz and Khānalanjān. (Cf. Part One:6-II). For eight years between 1109-1118/503-512, the Nizaris endured repeated assaults and sieges such that there was famine in the fortresses. News of the death of the sultan, once again brought respite.

The juxtaposition of the two sets of data derived for the analyses in this chapter, namely the records of assassinations attributed to the Nizaris and the battles and sieges against them, present intricate correlations between Saljuq attacks countered by Nizari asymmetric warfare. While the horrors of state terror and violence have always been excused in constructions of rules of engagement and oxymoronic theories of just war, societies throughout history have been horrified by and scandalised the disproportionately marginal attacks of asymmetric warfare conducted by revolutionary movements. Perhaps because such attacks targeted the elite or their interests, pre-modern chroniclers recorded alarmist essentialisms and modern historians have echoed these conclusions. The narrative analyses in this research yield a complex image of attack and response. These patterns sifted out of the three Ilkhanid *ta'rikh* accounts will be examined in subsequent chapters as the Nizari-Saljuq conflicts and relations are explored further.

Sieges, Battles and Assassinations in the Accounts of Hasan-i Sabbah 1090-1124/483-518

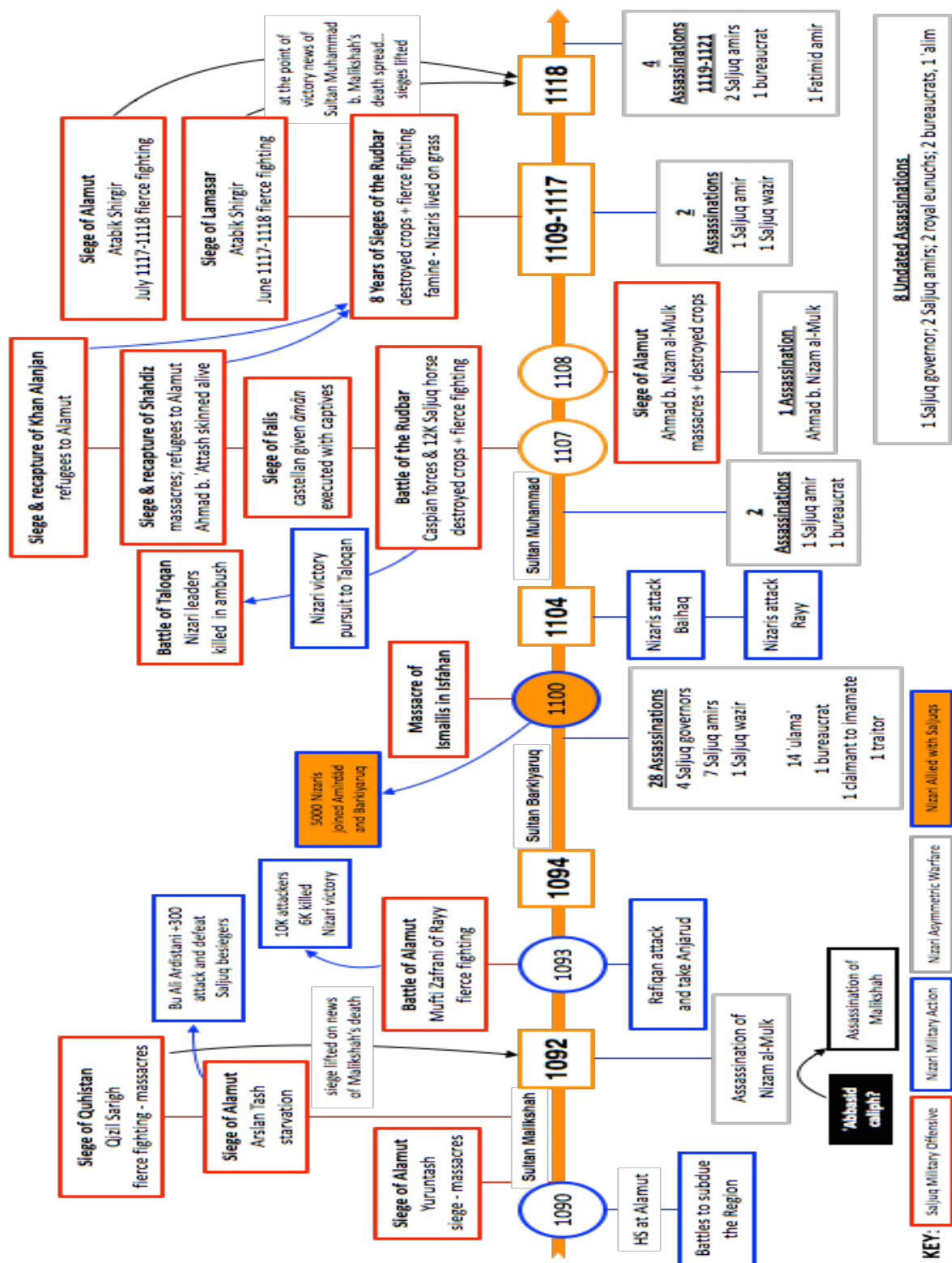


Figure 4e-iv: Nizari-Saljuq Warfare 1090/483-1118/511

IV. Philology for the 21st Century

The charting of frequencies of terms at various levels (aggregate of TJG, JT and ZT accounts of the Nizaris; in each chronicle individually; across regnal accounts; in the account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ) demonstrated the different focalisation in usages of names, places and terms of religious discourse, governance and conflict. The analyses and tabulations illustrated that the frequency of certain key terms changed from one regnal account to another as the chroniclers changed the topical foci in their arc of writing about the Nizari dynasty. The layers and patterning revealed in the chronicle accounts through the analyses of the small set of most frequently occurring substantive terms—in section I of this chapter—effectively equates to reading the accounts as un-vowelled texts! While the samples in this write-up were limited, the lexical analyses developed for this research illustrate potential methodologies of philology in the digital age.

The lexical analyses in this chapter introduce a novel methodology to burrow beneath the superstructures of the *ta'riḫ* genre by examining patterns and frequencies of usage of particular words and terms to understand how the authors carefully used these semantic building blocks. This edifice has been standing for a very long time; however, its forms have been obscured by its exterior and internal framework. The analyses of the basic building blocks reveals its functions and the ideological contours of the literary paradigms and the historical horizons of the author-historians locked in a hermeneutic trap. (Cf. Part One:2-I-III)

The excavation of these layers makes it possible to analyse the different genre of Nizari *da'wa* literature, the sources of the sources, that endure only as fragments in the *ta'riḫ* texts. (Cf. Part One:Prologue). In the next chapter, I analyse the stemmatic relations between the accounts of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ based on Ilkhanid paradigms the dynastic chronicle and survey sources independent of these paradigms.

5. Genealogies of Texts: Ilkhanid Accounts of Ḥasan-i Šabbāh

IN 1974 HAYDEN WHITE PROCLAIMED THAT HISTORICAL WRITING IS A FICTIVE PROCESS no different from that of fictional writing and that the author-historian emplots the sequences of events in such a way as to convey meaning to the readers with whom s/he shares certain preconceptions. He stated that how “a given historical situation is to be configured depends on the historian’s subtlety in matching up a specific plot-structure with the set of historical events which he wishes to endow with a meaning of a particular kind. This is essentially a literary, that is to say fiction making, operation.” The historical narrative is not simply a sequence of events but also a pointer

toward the story-type or mythos which the historian has chosen to serve as the icon of the structure of the events. The narrative itself is not the icon; what it does is describe events in the historical record in such a way as to inform the reader what to take as an icon of the events so as to render them “familiar” to him. The historical narrative thus mediates between the events reported in it on the one side and pre-generic plot-structures conventionally used in our culture to endow unfamiliar events and situation with meanings.¹

The story written by the historian can be differentiated from that of the fiction writer since the historian’s representations are based on interpretations of past actuality and the fiction writer’s are purely imaginal. Vincent Cornell, working on North African hagiographies, suggested that the historical narrative should be analysed in terms of typification, not simply tropes, since typification “deals with experience more than rhetoric and conveys a similar sense of the ‘sedimentation of meaning’ without the negative connotation of fiction or falsehood.”² In other words, the structure of the text is as central as the content in grasping the meaning. Munslow has argued that it is “never possible to empty ‘history’ of the author-historian and/or his or her theories, attitudes, values, arguments, ideologies and so forth” as a

¹ Hayden White, “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact,” *Clio* 3 (1974). White cautions however that we “are always able to see the “fictive” element in those historians with whose interpretations of a given set of events we disagree; we seldom perceive that element in our own prose.” This idea was already present in kernel in Clifford Geertz. *Interpretation of Cultures*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973). p. 15

² John Renard. *Friends of God: Islamic Images of Piety, Commitment, and Servanthood*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). pp 252-3

result “how a history is told is as important as what is being told.”³ Gerard Genette called for a distinction of the story from discourse.⁴ The former, the emplotment and sequential ordering of selected individual events around key protagonists, when distinguished from the latter, namely, the manner of presentation of the narrative, yields insights into the meaning of the text based on the author's intentions. Through this second layer, the meanings conveyed by the author, the narrative and narration, that is “what” is recorded and “how” it is conveyed in the structure, as well as the content and manner of narration of the text, the author’s pre-commitments, vantage points, motivations and objectives can be accessed. The author-historian’s choices are conscious, representative and often ideological.

The Ilkhanid chronicles reflected such epistemologies of the story-type of mythos of the *ta’rikh* genre of writing prevailing in the 13-14th/7-8th centuries. What were the major foci in their emplotments of sequences of events in their accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ? How did the norms of the *ta’rikh* genre and the author’s epistemological pre-commitments determine how the story was constructed? How did the chroniclers mould their sources (Nizari *da’wa* literature) into their accounts? How did later histories reformulate the accounts from the Ilkhanid chronicles? Why? In this chapter I examine the three Ilkhanid chronicle accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ at the content and discourse levels to elucidate the arguments and ideologies in their interpretations of past actuality. The analyses of a selection of narrative segments demonstrate the similarities between the accounts and highlight their disparities. In the first section, I compare and analyse synoptic narrative passages from the account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ in the three chronicles. In the second section, stemmatic correspondences of accounts derived from the Ilkhanid chronicles—particularly based on Juwayni and Rashid al-Din—are mapped.

³ Munslow. *NH*. p. 3-4

⁴ Gérard Genette. *Figures, Essais*, (Paris: ed. du Seuil, 1966). p. 258

In the third section, I examine accounts written by author-historians who had direct interaction with the Nizaris or did not directly use the Ilkhanid accounts. This mapping illustrates the paradigms used by the author-historians to construct their accounts of the Nizari polity in Iran.

I. Comparison of Ilkhanid Account Narratives of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ

In this section the accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ in the three texts: Juwayni's *Ta'riḫ-i jahān-gushā* (TJG = brown font); Rashid al-Din's *Jāmi' al-tawāriḫ* (JT = blue font) and Qashani's *Zubdat al-tawāriḫ* (ZT = dark blue font) are compared. The text in red font highlights specific portions of a passage discussed in the commentary. The title in each subsection is correlated to the sequence number (Seq.) of the particular narrative in Appendix 4b "Narrative Segments in the Account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ" in which the corresponding narrative segments are tabulated. Boyle's translation of Juwayni has been used with modifications; the page references to his translation—designated HWC—have been provided. These selected comparisons demonstrate continuities and disjunctures in both narrative and narration in the three accounts.

In the analyses, sequence numbers (Seq. Xn) refer to the tabulation of synoptic narrative episodes in the accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ in the three chronicles. These segments have been aligned using the JT as the base. The entire account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ in the three chronicles has been broken down into 27 sections (A thru ZA); the segments are shown sequentially. The order of sequence in each of the three chronicles is tabulated numerically in the respective columns (Seq-TJG; Seq-JT; Seq-ZT). Gaps in the texts have been shaded. ([Cf. Appendix 4b](#)).

A. Title of the Account (Seq. A1.)

The different authorial pre-commitments and dispositions towards the Nizari Ismailis are apparent right at the beginning of the text in the titles of the chapters:

ذکر حسن صباح و تجدید او و دعوت ملاحده که آنرا دعوة جدیده خوانند لا جددها الله تعالى. TJG p. 186 Account of Ḥasan-i-Ṣabbāḥ and his innovations (<i>tajdīd</i>) and the propaganda of the heretics (<i>malāḥidah</i>) which they call ‘the new propaganda’—may God, the Mighty, not renew it (<i>lā jaddad-hā</i>)! HWC p. 666
در تاریخ طائفة نزاریان و داعیان ایشان که ساکنان قلعه کهنستان بودند، و مقدم ایشان «سیدنا» و آنهم مقدمه‌ای و هشت جلوس است. JT p. 97 The history of the faction (<i>tāʾifah</i>) of the Nizaris and their <i>Dāʾīs</i> (summoners) who resided in the castle of Quhistān whose leader was “Sayyid-nā”. It consists of an introduction and [the account of] eight reigns.
در ذکر [نزاریان و] بدایت به «علی ذکره السلام» و بعد از آن ملاحده و باطنیه مقدمشان «سیدنا حسن صباح»، و آن مقدمه ایست و مقاله‌ای مبنی بر هشت جلوس. ZT p. 120 Account [of the Nizaris] from the beginning (<i>bidāyat</i>) to ‘Alā dhikrihi’l-salām and after him the heretics (<i>malāḥida</i>) and esoterists (<i>bāṭiniyya</i>) whose leader was “Sayyid-nā Ḥasan-i-Ṣabbāḥ”. It consists of an introduction and the account is composed of eight reigns.

Juwayni referred to the Nizari creed as innovation (*tajdīd*) and the *daʿwa* of the heretics (*malāḥida*) and added the invocation that “may God not renew it (*lā jaddad-hā*)!” Stylistically, he made repetitive use of the root جدد (*jaddada* = to innovate, renew, ...): innovations (*tajdīd*), the new *daʿwa* (*daʿwat-i jadīda*) and not to renew it (*lā jaddad-hā*) to emphasise his charge of innovation—a usage intended to imply departure from the norms of the author’s sectarian affiliation and this heresy. His use of *daʿwa* in the constructions *daʿwat-i malāḥida* and *daʿwat-i jadīda* similarly calls attention to his charge of heresy. On the other hand, Rashid al-Din used the term faction (*tāʾifa*) for the Nizaris in his generally neutral title. Qashani’s use of *bidāyat* (commencement, beginning) invokes Juwayni’s use of *tajdīd*. He distinguished two phases of the Nizari polity, namely: from its commencement to ‘Alā dhikrihi’l-salām and thereafter the “Heretics and Esoterists” (*malāḥida wa bāṭiniyya*). Compared to Rashid al-Din, both Juwayni and

Qashani indicate ill-disposition towards the Nizaris from the outset in the titles of their accounts.⁵

B. Juwayni's plunder and torching of the Library at Alamut (Seq. A2.)

Juwayni mentioned permission given him by Hūlāgū to plunder the Alamut library as mentioned in the Prologue to Part One of this text —there is no mention of this in the other two chronicles. Waṣṣāf's (d. 1330/730) account, however, records that once “the fortress of the heretics was captured, the master ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Juwaynī was ordered to inspect their library. He discovered a volume containing the wayward beliefs of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ [325] which they call the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*.” Waṣṣāf's short account of the rulers of the Nizari polity is entirely abridged from Juwayni.⁶

C. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's Name (Seq. B3.)

The three chronicles differ even in the name of the main protagonist:

نام او الحسن بن علی بن محمد بن جعفر بن الحسین بن محمد [بن] الصَّبَّاحِ الحِمِیَرِیِّ علیه لعنة الله و الملائكة و الناس اجمین . TJG p 188 His name was Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far b. Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad, [b.] Ṣabbāḥ the Ḥimyarī—<i>upon him be the curse of God, and the angels, and all mankind!</i> HWC p. 667
و او الحسن بن علی بن محمد بن جعفر بن الحسین بن محمد بن الصباح حمیری یمنی است . JT p. 97 He is al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Ṣabbāḥ Ḥimyarī Yamani
او حسن بن علی بن محمد بن جعفر بن حسین بن جعفر بن حسین بن محمد [بن] صباح است که اعتزا و انتساب او بقبیلة حمیر میرود و پادشاهان یمن بودند . ZT p. 120 He is al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far b. al-Ḥusayn b. Ja‘far b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Ṣabbāḥ; he claimed relation and descent from Ḥimyarī tribe, the rulers of Yemen.

⁵ This perspectival difference between JT and ZT is evidence against Qashani's claim of authorship of the JT discussed above. He may of course have contributed to the JT however there is a signature difference between the text authored by him and the one he claims as his own.

⁶ ‘Abd Allāh b. Faḍl Allāh Waṣṣāf al-Ḥaḍrat. *Tahrīr-i tārikh-i Waṣṣāf*, Edited by ‘Abd al-Muḥammad Āyatī. (Tehran: Pazhūhishgāh-i ‘Ulūm-i Insānī wa Muṭāla‘āt-i Farhangī, 2004). pp 324ff

Juwayni and Rashid al-Din were in complete agreement barring the curses invoked by the former; however, the Qashani text repeats “Ja‘far b. Ḥusayn”. This may have been a scribal error. Dānishpazhūh in his second edition of the Qashani text included the facsimile of the Tehran University MS 9067 dated February 1581/*Muḥarram* 989 which has the name exactly as given in the edited text.⁷ Qashani’s version of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s name is attested in *Ta’rīkh-i Banākatī* completed in 1317/717:

و هو حسن بن علی بن محمد بن جعفر بن الحسین بن جعفر بن الحسین بن محمد الصباح الحمیری
He is Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far b. al-Ḥusayn b. Ja‘far b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Ḥimyari. *T. Banākatī* p. 240

Barring scribal error or inappropriate interpolation, the correspondence with the name in the *Zubdat al-tawārīkh* would suggest that Fakhr al-Dīn Banākatī (d. 1330/730) may have consulted the ZT which was completed a year before his writing or used the same sources as Qashani. Banākatī’s account of the Ḥasan’s doctrines is identical with JT except that the accounts of the imams ‘Alā’ al-Dīn and Rukn al-Dīn are comparable to the JT account of Hūlāgū and not drawn from the section on the Nizaris.⁸

D. Origins and place of birth (Seq. B5)

The three chronicles also disagree as to where Ḥasan was born:

نسبت او بقبیله حمیر انما کرده است. پدر او از یمن بکوفه آمد و از کوفه بقوم و از قم بری، آنجا متوطن گشت و حسن صباح آنجا در وجود آمد. TJG p 187
He traced his descent to the Ḥimyar tribe. His father came from Yemen to Kūfa, from Kūfa to Qūmm and from Qūmm to Rayy; he became resident there and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was born there. HWC p. 667

پدرش از کوفه بقم آمد، و آنجا متوطن گشت. و حسن صباح آنجا در وجود آمد. JT p. 97
His father came from Kūfa to Qūm; he became resident there and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was born there.

⁷ Qāshānī. ZT.

⁸ . Fakhr al-Dīn Abū-Sulaimān Dāwūd al-Banākatī. *Tārīkh-i Banākatī: rawḍat ul-l-albāb fī ma’rifat al-tawārīkh wa’l-ansāb*, Edited by Ja‘far Shī‘ār. (Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār-i Millī, 1969). pp 240ff

و حکایت سرگذشت او چنان است که پدرش از سواد کوفه بشهر قم آمد و آنجا مدتی متوطن شد و

حسن آنجا در وجود آمد. ZT p. 120

It is related in his biography that his father came from the Sawād of Kūfa to the city of Qūm; he became resident there for a while and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was born there.

Juwayni places Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's birth at Rayy while the other two texts show Qūmm. This may have simply been an error in JT carried forward into the ZT.

E. Qashani's Attempt to Harmonise the Two Narratives (Seq. D2-6.)

The chroniclers were at pains to line up the two narratives of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's biography leading up to the assassination of Nizām al-Mulk. The three school fellows story has been rejected as spurious due to its anachrony; however, it continues to be quoted in writing of Nizari history after almost a millennium. Below I have proposed an analysis of its functions to move beyond the chronological objections of the philologists. (Cf. Part One:6-1). Here is an example of how the Ilkhanid author-historian Qashani endeavoured to align and harmonise the two narrative threads.

و در رمضان سنهٔ اربع و ستين و اربعمائه عبد الملك عطاش که در آن هنگام داعی عراق بود بری آمد،
مرا بپسندید و نیابت دعوت بمن فرمود، و گفت: ترا بحضرت [خلیفه] باید شد، و خلیفهٔ آن زمان
المستنصر بالله بود. پس شیخ بتاریخ سنهٔ سبع و ستين و اربعمائه از ری انتقال کرد و بمحروسة اصفهان
[رفت]. و در سنهٔ تسع و ستين [و اربعمائه] بعد از استنابت شیخ عبد الملك عطاش عزم مصر
مصمم کرد، و از اصفهان براه آذربایجان بعد از مشاهدۀ اخطار و خوف و استشعار بمیافارقین رسید.

JT p. 99

In Ramaḍān 464/May-June 1072 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh, who at the time was the Dā'ī of Iraq, came to Rayy. He was pleased with me and deputised (*niyābat*) me in the *da'wa*. He said: "You must go to his majesty [the caliph]"; the caliph at that time was al-Mustaṣhir bi'llāh. Then in the year 467/1075 the Shaykh left Rayy for the city of Isfahan. In the year 469/1077, after the deputisation, Shaykh 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh determined [that I should] go to Egypt. From Isfahan on the road to Āzarbāyjān after experiencing many dangers, fear and apprehensions [Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ] arrived at Mayyāfariqīn.

در رمضان اربع و ستين و خمسمائه عبد الملك عطاش که در آن عهد داعی عراق بود بشهری آمد، و مرا پسندید، و بنیابت دعوت فرمود، و اشارت کرد بمصر رفتن و امام زمان را در یافتن، و خلیفه زمان مستنصر بود. در آن وقت میان سیدنا و نظام الملك بادره وحشتی صادر گشته بود، نظام الملك در قصد او مبالغه میکرد. و شیخ بتاريخ ۴۶۷ باصفهان انتقال کرد، و در ۴۶۹ سیدنا بعد از استنابت عبد الملك عطاش عزم مصر مصمم کرد، و از بیم نظام الملك همواره مختفی بودی، نظام الملك با او بد بود و تفحص احوال او کردی، جاسوسان بر انگیزته. سیدنا از ری باصفهان آمد، و از آنجا براه آذربایجان بعد از مشاهده اخطار خصمان بشهر میافارقین رسید. ZT p. 122

In *Ramaḍān* 464/May-June 1072 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh, who at the time was the *Dā'ī* of Iraq, came to Rayy. He was pleased with me and deputised (*niyābat*) me in the *da'wa*. He instructed that I must go to Egypt and meet the Imām of the Time (*imām-i zamān*); the caliph at that time was Mustanṣir. At that time a quarrelsome fear had settled between Sayyidnā and Nizām al-Mulk; Nizām al-Mulk went to great pains to pursue him. In the year 1075/467 Shaykh ['Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh] moved to Isfahan and in 1077/469 after the deputisation (*istinābat*), 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh determined [that I should] go to Egypt. Out of apprehension of Nizām al-Mulk, he was always fearful; Nizām al-Mulk was on bad terms with him and was always looking for him and had set up spies [to search for him]. Sayyidnā arrived from Rayy to Iṣfahān and from there, by way of Āzarbāyjān after having faced danger of enemies, he arrived at the city of Mayyāfariqīn.

In JT 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh deputised Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and instructed him to go to the court of the Fatimid imam-caliph. Ḥasan took the perilous journey to Cairo and after his return orchestrated the *da'wa* in Iran. This attracted Nizām al-Mulk's attention. All three chroniclers wrote that Nizām al-Mulk had ordered the governor of Rayy, [A]bū Muslim Rāzī, to be on the look out for Ḥasan who after his return from Egypt had been sending *dā'īs* to various parts and was winning converts to his cause.⁹ Bū Muslim had made such a great efforts that Ḥasan was fearful and skirted Rayy on his way to Daylamān. The JT records:

The *wazīr* Nizām al-Mulk had ordered Abū Muslim Rāzī to arrest Sayyidnā and was going to great lengths in search of him. [Sayyidnā had come to know of this, so he kept his guard and took care not to suddenly fall into their hands]. From there he came to Sārī and wanted to go on the road to Damāvand which is on the road to Āstar. That night they got off the road and camped at Dar-i dihi and in the morning by Qāḍī Road they reached the caravanserai (*sham*) at Damāvand. They

⁹. What were the dangers and fears Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ faced? Were they simply due to travel or politico-religious? There is change of voice from first to third person narration at Mayyāfariqīn in JT in Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's biography. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh is referred to as "*Shaykh*" although in British Library-MS 7628 he is called *dā'ī* of Isfahan and Azarbaijan. This might be a reflection of his high standing in Isfahani learned circles and perhaps his Arabic origins. Given that Nāṣir-i Khusraw and others of that stature were referred to as *ḥujjat*, 'Aṭṭāsh is not accorded this high rank. The Ilkhanid chroniclers reflect the Nizari narrations in which Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was paramount.

were told that Abū Muslim Rāzī who was looking for Sayyidnā and that evening by chance was on that very road. From there he reached Khvār in the area of Rayy and from there arrived at Qazwīn avoiding the environs of Rayy. He stayed several days in Qazwīn. He separately sent groups of those who were with him to Alamut then he too came to Alamut.¹⁰

Qashani on the other hand has interpolated the report of Nizām al-Mulk tasking Abū Muslim to be on the look out for Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāh into the events of his deputation in the *da'wa* and before the journey to Egypt. At this early stage Ḥasan was an inconsequential operative of the *da'wa* and highly unlikely to have drawn the ire of the powerful *wazīr*. The function of the interpolation appears to be an attempt by Qashani to align the chronology of the two narratives—in the three school fellows story, the Nizām was on bad terms with Ḥasan before he joined the *da'wa* and before he went to Egypt. (Cf. Part One:6-I). It is noteworthy, in passing, given his antipathy that Qashani's report refers to the Fatimid Imam-caliph as *imām-i zamān* (Imam of the Age). Qashani has Nizām al-Mulk's spies looking for Ḥasan before he left Rayy and eventually journeyed to Egypt—lining up the more chronologically viable first story of Ḥasan's life.

Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī writing within a few years of Qashani places this dating issue in the first paragraph of his account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāh:

His lineage is Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ja'far b. Husayn b. Muḥammad al-Ṣabbāh descended (lit: from the seed of) Yūsuf Ḥimyārī the ruler of Yemen. Originally he was an Ithnā'asharī Shī'a and chamberlain of the Saljuq Sultan Alp-Arslān; later he became a sevenser Shī'a (Ismaili) by the preaching (lit: word of) 'Abd al-Malik 'Aṭṭash. Between him and the *wazīr* Nizām al-Mulk, as already mentioned, there was enmity due to matters of state accounts (*ḥisāb-i mamālik*). He fell away from Sultan Alp-Arslān and went back to his native Rayy in the year 464/1072. Since out of fear of the Sultan and Nizām al-Mulk he was insecure; in the year 471/1079 he went to Syria and preached the *da'wa* in favour of Nizār b. Mustanṣir and remained there for some years. Nizār b. Mustanṣir gave him one of his sons; Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāh brought that child to Iran and nurtured him.¹¹

¹⁰ JT. p. 104

¹¹ Qazwīnī. *Guzīda*. p. 518. Note the variance in dates from the three earlier chronicles. Qazwīnī introduces variants in the narratives which suggests a) he was looking at alternate sources, b) he had informants whose oral narrations were not precise or c) that he was making up and filling gaps where he lacked data.

In JT and ZT there is a shift in the narrative voice when Ḥasan began his journey to Egypt—the autobiographical voice shifts to the third person narrator. As already mentioned, Juwayni maintained the first person narration until after Ḥasan’s return from Egypt. The shift in JT and ZT may have resulted from the attempt to align the two narratives by Rashid al-Din’s team—Qashani among them—such shifts in the narrative voice are far more prevalent in his account. The first, more chronological account of the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* must have been in the autobiographic first person voice and the anachronistic three school fellows story was a third person account. Juwayni rejected this second account for the most part, while Rashid al-Din and Qashani endeavoured to harmonise the two accounts tending towards the second narrative’s timeline after Ḥasan fell out with Nizām al-Mulk—in this passage Qashani left a trace of this very effort!

F. Badr al-Jamālī and al-Mustaʿlī and the Second Naṣṣ (Seq. E5.)

The chronicles record that while he was in Egypt, Ḥasan fell victim to Badr al-Jamālī’s opposition due to Ḥasan’s support for Nizār. Nizār’s brother, later placed on the throne when the imam-caliph al-Mustaṣṣir died in 1095/487, is construed as Badr’s co-conspirator.

و امیر الجیوش امیر لشکر او که مسلط بود و حاکم مطلق صہر پسر خردتر مستعلی بود کہ مستنصر
اورا بنص دوم ولی عهد کردہ بود، و من بر قاعدۂ اصول مذہب [۱۹۱] خویش دعوت با نزار می کردم،

TJG p 190-191. و تقریر آن رفتہ است، بدین سبب امیر الجیوش با من بد بود بقصد من میان بریست .
Now Amīr-al-Juyūsh, his (al-Mustaṣṣir’s) Commander-in-Chief who was an absolute and all-powerful ruler, was the father-in-law of his (al-Mustaṣṣir’s) younger son, Mustaʿlī, **whom by a second designation he had made his heir. Now I, in accordance with the principles of my religion, conducted propaganda on behalf of Nizar.** (This has been previously mentioned.) On this account Amīr-al-Juyūsh was ill-disposed towards me and girded himself to attack me .
HWC p. 668

امیر الجیوش بدر که مسلط و حاکم مطلق بود، و مستعلی که المستنصر بالله اورا نص دوم و ولی عهد [خود بعد از نزار] کرده بود اندیشید [ند] که مبادا المستنصر اورا بر روی ایشان برکشد، از آنکه بی‌رضای بدر هیچ کاری نمی‌توانست بود. و سیدنا بر قاعده اصول دعوت خویش دعوت با نزار میکرد.

بدین سبب امیر الجیوش بدر با او بغایت بد بود. JT p. 101.

The commander of the army Badr who was governor and absolute ruler and Must'alī, on whom al-Mustanshir bi'llāh had bestowed the second designation (*naṣṣ-i dūwum*) and declared him his heir (*walī 'ahd*) after Nizār, feared that al-Mustanshir might prefer him above them. Without Badr's consent nothing could happen. Sayyidnā began to base his own preaching in favour of Nizār. Because of this the commander of the army, Badr, was on extremely bad terms with him.

امیر الجیوش بدر سرور لشکر که مسلط و حاکم بود و صهر پسر کهنتر مستعلی که مستنصر اورا ولی عهد دوم کرده بود، میانیشید که مبادا که مستنصر اورا برگزیند و بر روی ایشان کشد از برای آنکه بی مشاورت او کاری نمیکرد. و سیدنا بر قاعده اصول مذهب خویش دعوت با نزاریه میکرد، بدین

سبب امیر الجیوش بدر با او بی عنایت بود. ZT p. 124.

The commander of the army Badr, chief of the army was governor and ruler—related by marriage (*ṣihar*) to the younger son Must'alī, whom al-Mustanshir bi'llah had declared the second heir apparent (*walī 'ahd-i dūwum*)—feared that al-Mustanshir might prefer him (Ḥasan) above them. Because without his consent nothing could happen. Sayyidnā based on his own faith began preaching to the Nizāris. Because of this the commander of the army, Badr, was on extremely bad terms with him.

Ḥasan's stay in Cairo extended from 5 September 1078 CE/18 Ṣafar 471 to January 1080/Rajab 472; at the beginning of this time al-Must'alī was less than six months old and could hardly have been involved.¹² However, TJG and JT speak of al-Mustanshir as having given the second *naṣṣ* (designation) and declared al-Must'alī his heir apparent (*walī 'ahd*). These reports are intriguing since such a second *naṣṣ* is highly problematic in Ismaili theories of imamate. From the debates around the death and succession of the imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (fl. 732-765/114-148), the notion of change in the designation of an imam's successor was unacceptable. Since the imam was considered inerrant, a designation that was retracted or nullified would render such an imam unworthy of the imamate. (Cf. Part Two:Prologue). The Ismailis countered Mūsā b. Ja'far's (d. 799/183) claim to succession by asserting the impossibility of change God's mind

¹² Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 241ff; Hodgson. OA. pp 46-47;

with regard to the imamate¹³ and that Ja‘far being a legitimate imam could not have retracted his designation of Ismā‘īl as his successor. (Cf. Part Two:Prologue-I-D-IV; Part Two:1-I and Part Two:2-II).

These reports in TJG and JT based on Nizari sources illuminate a drastic departure and a possible *post facto* accommodations with the actuality of the non-Nizari line of imam-caliphs ruling in Cairo and the Ṭayyibī line of imams in *satr* (concealment) and their community led by *dā‘īs*. At this time, was this other line of imams classified as temporary custodians of the imamate (*mustawada‘*) and the Nizari imams as the holders of the true line (*mustaqarr*)?¹⁴ Later Nizari texts such as the *Kalām-i Pīr* accommodate the role of Mūsā b. Ja‘far and even his descendants as *mustawada‘* imams¹⁵ charged with the exoteric whereas the *mustaqarr* Ismaili imams govern the esoteric realm. It is noteworthy that Qashani does not mention *naṣṣ*—the key phrase he reports as: “al-Mustanṣir bi’llāh had declared [Must‘alī] the second heir apparent (*walī ‘ahd-i dūwum*)” and that Ḥasan began preaching to the Nizāris. (Cf. Part Two:2-I-A).

¹³ EI2. Ignaz Goldziher and A.S. Trittin: “*Badā‘*”; Madelung, “Das Imamat.” p 44-45; Ivanow. *Rise of the Fatimids*. p. 81 and tr. p. 276. The notion of change of the imam’s *naṣṣ* (designation of his successor) was problematic in Ismaili thought. Bernard Lewis, “Al-Hidayatu’l-Amiriya, being an epistle of the tenth Fatimid Caliph al-Āmir bi-Aḥkāmi’l-lāh, and an appendix Iqa‘ Ṣawa‘ Iqī’l-Irgham. Edited with an introduction and notes by Asaf A. A. Fyzee. Published for the Islamic Research Association by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1938,” BSOAS 10, no. 1 (1940); *Al-Hidayatu’l-Amiriya, being an epistle of the tenth Fatimid Caliph al-Āmir bi-Aḥkāmi’l-lāh, and an appendix Iqa‘ Ṣawa‘ Iqī’l-Irgham. Edited with an introduction and notes by Asaf A. A. Fyzee. Published for the Islamic Research Association by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1938* p. 257. Paul Walker has analysed ten cases of succession during the Fatimid period and has determined that the imam-caliphs did change their designation of successor over time. Walker, Paul E. “Succession to Rule in the Shiite Caliphate.” *Journal of the American Research Center In Egypt* 32 (1995): 239–64.

¹⁴ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 97 and 106-107

¹⁵ KP. pp 53ff; Shahrastānī. *Muslim Sects*. pp 163ff

G. Hasan as Teacher of Saljuq Amīr Yūruntāsh's Son (Seq. F13.)

This report in Qashani's account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ being employed by the Turkish amir to teach his children is not found in the other two chronicles.

و در آن وقت امیری یورنتاش نام از امراء سلطان ملکشاه بود که نواجی الموت اقطاع و علفخوار چهارپایان او بوده، و سیدنا بتعلیم خلائق مشهور، او فرزندان خود را برای تعلیم بسیدنا سپرد، و او مدتی ایشان را بتعلیم ارشاد میکرد، دانشمندی قزوینی بیورنتاش رسید، او پسران برای امتحان پیش او آورد، و دانشمند از لغت و صرف و نحو و اعراب هرچه می پرسید جواب نیکو توجیه می شنود، دانشمند گفت: اینها تحصیل نه بقدر مدت و حد و اندازه خود دارند، همانا که استاد ایشان مردی دانشمند و بزرگ است. یورنتاش سیدنا را حاضر کرد، و هرچه دانشمند از او می پرسید برفور بی فکر و اندیشه جواب میداد، دانشمند بر طبع او آفرین کرد، سیدنا گفت: اگر ما را بحال خود گذاشتندی، و محتاجان بخواندن و نوشتن مکتوبات مشغول نکردندی، هرآینه دو چندین تحصیل داشتندی. یورنتاش گفت چرا بالای قلعه نیروی که خانه ها خالی و مردم لابلالی بسیارند. ZT p. 126

At that time an amir named Yūruntāsh from among the amirs of Malikshāh had the region of Alamūt as his *iqṭāʿ* and pastureland. He sent his sons to Sayyidnā who was well known as a teacher; and for a time he taught them. When a Qazwīnī scholar came to Yūruntāsh, he brought his sons to be examined by him. Whatever the scholar asked of language (*luḡhat*), morphology (*ṣarf*), grammar (*naḥw*), syntax (*iʿrāb*), he received good explanatory responses. He said: "They are not accomplished of time, limit and measure by themselves, certainly their teacher must be a scholar and a great man!" Yūruntāsh presented Sayyidnā; whatever the scholar asked of him, he replied immediately without [need for] thought or reflection. The scholar applauded his genius (*ṭabʿ*). Sayyidnā said: "If you had let us be and not hindered those wanting to study reading and writing, certainly there would be twice as many educated people." Yūruntāsh said: "Why don't you descend from the castle where there is need for you [lit: the homes are empty] and there are many heedless people?"

Beyond the mention that Yūruntāsh held the Rūdbār region as an *iqṭāʿ* from Malikshāh, no element of this report is found in TJG or JT. The JT actually records that

Yūruntāsh an amir of Malikshāh held the area of Alamut as an *iqṭāʿ* (tax farm). He repeatedly attacked the foot of Alamut and used to massacre those who had [accepted and] submitted to the *daʿwa* of Sayyidnā and laid waste to the area. Since the stores at Alamut had not yet been provisioned [the residents there] were reduced to desperation and hopelessness and resolved to give up [Alamut] to some unattached individual and themselves to depart to the environs. Sayyidnā declared that a message from the court in Cairo had been received from Imam al-Mustanṣir billāh that "our adherents should not move from that place and that good fortune awaited them there." Such that the people determined to endure and remain at Alamut; on account of these words they named it *Baldat al-iqbāl* [the Province of Good Fortune].¹⁶

¹⁶ JT. p. 108

The content of the Qashani report does not betray any animus between Ḥasan and the Turkish amir; in fact, significant admiration for Ḥasan on the part of the Turkish amir is apparent and Ḥasan's willingness to teach the latter's children and to engage with the Qazwīnī scholar suggests a reciprocal relationship. In the tone of the text, it could also be assumed that Ḥasan's affiliation to another creed was known to the others—the Qazwīnī scholar, a Sunni of repute, was called upon to pass judgement on Ḥasan's skill and character. On the other hand, as indicated in the first chapter, here is an example of the Ismaili *dā'ī* attempting to carry his *da'wa* to the ruling class—both the *a'yān* and the *amīrs*. (Cf. Part One:1-III).

H. Ḥasan Attracts Followers (Seq. G5.)

This also is a unique report in Qashani's account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. Ḥasan gives refuge to outlaws and then encourages them to bring their confrères to the Ismaili cause.

و عادت سیدنا چنین بودی که روز آدینه که تعطیل کودکان بودی از دژ فرود آمدی و بر کنار رود بار
سیران کردی و فکر در مؤاخذت قلعه. روزی بر کنار آب دو قزوینی را می بیند نشسته و سفره گشاده
و نان و پنیر میخورند آشفته و پریشان، چه در قزوین خون کرده بودند گریخته، سیدنا از فراست
بکیفیت احوال ایشان اطلاع یافت، هر دورا بالا آورد، و بطعام ماحضری ضیافت کرد. و بگرمابه
فرستاد تا نظافتی کردند و جامه‌های نو پوشانیدند، و سه روز چنانکه عادت میزبان نیک باشد تعهد
نمود. بعد از سه روز اجازت، سفر خواستند، گفت: من میدانم که شما واقعه زده‌اید یکچند با ما
درویشی بسازید، همه ما یحتاج ضروری از طعمه و لقمه و جامه همه مهیا و آماده‌است، و من
میزبان [و] شما میهمانان شادمان، و اگر چنانکه یاران دیگر دارید همه را بیارید تا با هم توجیه ایام
بی وفا کنیم. ایشان برفتند و از برنابیشگان و رنود اجلاف قزوین شصت کس را دعوت کردند و به
تربیت و تعهد سیدنا امیدوار، و همه را بیای الموت آوردند. سیدنا ایشان را بتفاریق و دو دو و سه سه
بتدریج بالا آورد و بدلخوشی فرود آورد. ZT p. 127

It was Sayyidnā's habit on Fridays, when the children had a day off, to descend from the castle and walk along the river bank and think about the repair of the castle. One day he saw two Qazwīnīs seated at the edge of the water eating bread and cheese. They were agitated and troubled since they had committed a murder in Qazwīn and had escaped. Sayyidnā tactfully became informed of their situation; he brought both of them up to the castle and gave them a quickly prepared feast. He sent them to the baths to clean up and they put on new clothes. He extended three days of good hospitality to them; after three days, they asked permission to be on their way. He said: "I can see that you have gone through a lot; stay with us a while. We all need necessities of food (*tu'ma*) and morsels (*luqma*) and clothes (*jāma*)—all is prepared and ready. I will be the host and you the happy guests. If you have friends, bring them all so that we may talk about these fickle days (*āyām-bi-wafā*). From among the unaffiliated ruffians and wretches of Qazwīn, they called upon sixty persons willing to be instructed and pledged to Sayyidnā; they brought all of them to the foot of Alamut. Sayyidnā, separately in twos and threes gradually brought them up and freely allowed them to descend.

The report suggests that Ḥasan recruited rejects and ruffians to his cause. However, it also sheds light on several other aspects: Ḥasan's role as teacher; norms of hospitality; the extent and capacities at Alamut to accommodate and sustain an influx of people; the need for additional human resources; the relative absence of hierarchy; Ḥasan's early concerns to repair the fortress; ... This report contradicts the trope reported in every account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ—including Qashani's—that in the thirty-five years that Ḥasan spent at Alamut, he only descended the fortress twice.

I. Ḥasan evicted opponents from Alamut (Seq. G8.)

This is the third report in Qashani's not found in the other two chronicles.

بعد از آن سیدنا پسران آلتونتاش و هر که مخالف او بود از قلعه بزیر کرد و بر دژ مستولی شد.

ZT p. 128

After that [gaining control of Alamut], Sayyidnā evicted the sons of Āltūntāsh and whoever was opposed to him (Ḥasan) and subdued the castle.

Given the references in the series relating to the amir Yūruntāsh [here the chronicle has Āltūntāsh]¹⁷ who held Alamūt area as an *iqṭā'* from Malikshāh and Ḥasan's acquisition of the castle, this series of reports may have been part of a continuous narrative—from the *Sarguzasht* or possibly from a related source—that the other two chroniclers ignored. Qashani indicated that Ḥasan eliminated all opposition from the castle. While this statement is straight-forward,

¹⁷ ZT. p. 128 and Qazwīnī. *Guzīda*. p. 520 both name the amir Āltūntāsh

its logistics are not. How would the opposition be determined? Were the opponents opposed to the beliefs of the Ismailis? How would such a litmus test have been applied? It would be safer to conclude that the opposition that was evicted out was overt and most likely political—which is not exclusive of doctrinal opposition. Eviction of doctrinal opponents would have been much more complex such that all the chronicles would have recorded the hysteria and alarm of such an undertaking. In this brief report there is an indication that the castellan polity under Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was not exclusively Ismaili and that others were permitted to remain.

J. Juwayni's Counter to Ḥasan's Doctrine of Ta'lim (Seq. H7-9.)

Rashid al-Din¹⁸ and Qashani¹⁹ detailed Ḥasan's doctrine of *ta'lim* (authoritative teaching of the imam); however, while taking several paragraphs from Juwayni, they did not follow his example of countering Ḥasan's doctrine. (Cf. Part Two:2-II). Rashid al-Din summed up this section: "Sayyidnā, with these weak analogies and proofs of revelation preached to the people and went to great efforts to liberate Alamut and the surrounding regions."²⁰ Qashani simply continued to the next topic. However, in these paragraphs Juwayni attempted to refute *ta'lim*:

و نیز موقوف گردانیدن تعلیم بر شخصی مُعَيَّن محتاج دلیل باشد و دلیل او مجرد قول اوست که می گوید چون اثبات تعلیم کردم و غیر من قایل نیست بتعلیم پس تعیین معلّم بقول من باشد، و این سخن ظاهر الفسادست و بمثابت آنست که کسی گوید من می گویم امام فلان کس است و برهان برین آنست که این سخن من می گویم، اگر گوید اجماع حقّ است پس اگر قول من صحیح نباشد و قول دیگران باطل کرده ام پس امّت بر باطل مجتمع شده باشد جوابش اینست که اجماع بنزدیک جمهور حقّ است بسبب قرآن و خبر و بنزدیک تو نه چنین است پس بنای مذّهب تو بر اجماع بنابر قول خصم تو باشد و ترا مفید نباشد، و او را بیرون این هیچ حجّت دیگر نیست بر تعیین امام.

¹⁸ JT. pp 105-107

¹⁹ ZT. p. 129

²⁰ JT. p. 107 and ZT. pp 129

آنچه گفته [۱۹۸] است پیغامبر علیه السلام می‌گید اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اُقَايِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَقُولُوا لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ یعنی که گفتن لا اله الا الله از من می‌باید گرفت و این تعلیم است. بجواب گویند این معارضیت بحکایت پیرزن که چون او را از خدا پرسیدند اشارت بآسمان کرد پیغامبر علیه السلام گفت دَعَوْهَا فَإِنَّهَا مُؤْمِنَةٌ، و گفت عَلَيْكُمْ بِدِينِ الْعَجَائِزِ، و نگوفت پیرزن را که تو خدا شناسی از من نگوفته مؤمن نیستی، و اعرابی گفت ایست الزمان حقا پیغامبر علیه السلام گفت دعوه فقد فقه، و امثال این زیادت از آنست که بر توان شمرد و چون این کتاب نه جای ابطال مذاحب باطل و اثبات مذهب حق است برین قدر اختصار اولی دید، این نوع خرافاتی که ظاهر آن حبابیل نلیس و باطن آن غوایل [۱۹۹] ابلیس و مقصود از آن منع از نظر عقل و تحصیل علم داشت تقریر می‌کرد، خَتَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَ عَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَ عَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ. TJG pp 197-199

As for his statement that instruction (*ta'lim*) is restricted to one specified person (*shakhṣi-yi mu'aiyan*) it requires proof and the only proof he [Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ] provides are his words when he says: 'I have proved [the necessity for] *ta'lim* and since there is no other than I who speaks of *ta'lim*, therefore the determination of *ta'lim* is by my words.' This speech is the manifestation of depravity (*ẓāhir al-fasād*) and the proof of this is that if someone were to say: 'I say that so-and-so is the imām, and the proof of it is that I say so.' If he says: 'The consensus of opinion (*ijmā'*) is right; therefore, if my words are not true and I have refuted the words of others, then the community is agreed upon what is false (*ummat bar bāṭil mujtama' shuda bāshad*)'—the reply to this argument is that "*ijmā'*—as practiced by the community (*ba-nazdik-i jumhūr* lit: proximal to the community i.e. the Sunnis)—is right on account of the Qur'ān and *khavar* (reports of sayings and actions of Prophet Muḥammad), and that is not the case with you. Therefore, for you to base your doctrine upon the *ijmā'* is to base it upon the words of your opponents and is of no profit to you."²¹ And apart from this he adduces no evidence for the designation of the imām.

Again, he has said that when the Prophet (upon whom be peace!) said: 'I was commanded to fight the people until they said: "There is no god but God,"' he meant that 'they had to learn from me to say: "There is no god but God"'— which is [the doctrine of] *ta'lim*. The reply to this is that it is inconsistent with the story of the old woman who, when they asked her about God, pointed to the sky. And the Prophet (upon whom be peace!) said: 'Let her be, for she is a believer.' And he said also: 'Do ye adopt the religion of old women.' He did not say to the old woman: 'You did not learn the knowledge of God from me; You art not a believer.' And again a Bedouin said: 'Is not Time God?' And the Prophet (upon whom be peace!) said: 'Let him be, for he has said well.' And there are further similar instances that could be adduced. However this book is not the place to refute false doctrines and uphold the True Faith; I therefore thought it best to restrict myself to the above. Such then was the nonsense which he expounded; whereof the outward form were snares of deceit and the inner meaning the wiles of [199] Iblis and the purpose of which was to prevent the use of reason (*naẓar-i 'aql*) and the acquisition of knowledge (*taḥṣīl-i 'ilm*). 'Their hearts and their ears God has sealed up; and over their eyes is a covering. For them, a severe chastisement!'²²

²¹ Boyle changed the second person to the impersonal third! I have significantly departed from his translation of this passage.

²² Q2:7; HWC pp 672-673

Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ argued that due to the insufficiencies of the reason, knowledge of God and Truth can only be attained through *ta'līm* (the authoritative teaching of the imam). He used the *kalām* mode of logical disputation which Juwayni labeled as “several concise sentences which he used as the decoy for the snares of his deceit; and these he called *ilzām*.”²³ He considered Ḥasan’s restriction of the source of Truth to the person of the imam as preposterous and called it a manifestation of depravity (*ẓāhir al-fasād*).

Ḥasan’s primary target of attack was *ijmāʿ* (consensus) which is the third source of authority after the Qurʾān and *Sunna* in Sunni jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and is commonly rejected by the Shiʿa.²⁴ He argued that since every human possesses reason and as a result consensus is impossible, then a single source of authority is necessary for Truth. He substantiated this by stating that if he, Ḥasan, were to espouse a valid opinion different from those (Sunni scholars) in consensus, *ijmāʿ* could not be achieved due to his difference and the so-called consensus of the community was invalid. Juwayni declared that the Sunni practice is right because it is based on the Qurʾān and *Sunna* whereas Ḥasan’s argument, without any justification, was invalid because he did not have the same Qurʾānic and *Sunna* basis and there was no profit in using his opponents’ principles against them! Juwayni, in keeping with Sunni practice, saw *ijmāʿ* as consensus of the majority—reflecting this Sunni bias, Boyle translated *ijmāʿ ba-nazdīk-i jumhūr* as “consensus of opinion in the case of the majority” rather than “as practiced by the

²³ TJG. p. 196 HWC. p. 672. This may not be Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s own doctrine... (from Rashid al-Din) Amīra Ḍarrāb had made it an *ilzām* for Ḥasan to consider the teachings at night (before his “conversion”). Francis Joseph Steingass, “A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary.” (1892): <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/steingass/>. الزام *ilzām* (v.n. 4 of لزِم), Rendering necessary, compelling; conviction, proof, confutation; reproof, censure, blame; imputation, accusation, incrimination; invective, calumny, libel. *Ilzām* appears to be a technical term for the Nizaris.

²⁴ EI2. M. Bernand: “*idjmāʿ*”

community”²⁵—which for practical purposes, over time, devolved from consensus of all Muslims to that of the scholars of religion and then to such scholars of a particular jurisprudential school and finally, to those scholars of such a school in a particular locality. The Shi‘i rejection denies corporate sovereignty of the community (*jumhūr*) at all levels in favour of the ideal of sacral authority of the imam.

Juwayni went on to attack Ḥasan’s exegesis of the *ḥadīth* ‘I was commanded to fight the people until they said: “There is no god but God.”’²⁶ Logically, if the prophet killed those who did not say “There is no god but God”, they would never after be able to say it; Ḥasan argued that the “prophet’s fight” was metaphorically for him to teach the people to say “There is no god but God”. Juwayni drawing on reports from the prophet’s time countered Ḥasan’s central argument that the “specified person (*shakhṣi-yi mu‘aiyan*)”—the prophet and after him, the imam—was the sole source for the knowledge of God. Juwayni’s own examples demonstrate that the prophet gave the authoritative affirmation to the knowledge of the old woman and the bedouin. It is safe to conclude that these are not water-tight refutations and that in a debate (*munāẓara*) the chronicler would have easily been bested—nonetheless this demonstrates the nature and purpose of the text. Rashid al-Din did not see merit in this refutation and the Ithnā‘asharī Qashani would have agreed with Ḥasan’s lines of argument, though his source of unimpeachable authority would have been the awaited occulted imam, as such Juwayni’s refutation was not carried forward into ZT. Juwayni saw the need to refute the Nizari doctrine both due to his aversion for their interpretation of Islam but also because the adherents of Nizari Ismailism and their beliefs still posed a threat at the time of his writing. Half a century later they were no longer a threatening a force.

²⁵ HWC. p. 197

²⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim Book 1 (K. al-imān) aḥadīth 29-33; Bukhārī 2:25, 8:387,*

K. Death of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and completion of the Sarguzasht (Seq. 77-10, 7A1.)

The three chronicles have some interesting overlaps and difference at the end of the account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ.

و حسن شب چهارشنبه ششم ربیع الآخر سنه ثمان عشر [ة] و خمسمائة الى نار الله و سقره شتافت،
و حسن صبح از آن روز که بر قلعه الموت شد چنانکه ذکر رفت تا مدت سی و پنج سال که از دنیا
برفت هیچ وقت از آن قلعه بزیر نیامد و از آن سرای که مقامگاه او بود دو نوبت پیش بیرون نیامد و دو
نوبت بر بام [۲۱۶] سرای شد
و باقی اوقات در آن سرای معتکف بود و بمطالعه کتب و تقریر سخن بدعت خویش و تدبیر امور
مملکت مشغول.

TJG pp 215-216

And on Tuesday evening the 6 *Rabī al-ākhirā*, 518 [Friday, 30 of May, 1124 CE], he hastened off 'to the fire of God and His hell'. As has been previously mentioned, from the day Ḥasan first went up into the castle of Alamut until he departed this world, that is to say, for a period of 35 years, he never descended therefrom and he only twice came out of the house (*sarāi*) in which he lived. On these two occasions he went up on the roof. The rest of his time he passed inside his house, fasting and praying, reading books, committing the doctrines of his innovation (*bid'at*) to writing and administering the affairs of his kingdom. HWC pp 682-683

و او شب چهارشنبه ششم ماه ربیع الآخر سنه ثمان عشر و خمسمائه از دنیا انتقال کرد. و حسن
چنانکه بسابقه مذکور است: از آن روز باز که بقلعه الموت شد تا مدت سی و هشت سال که از دنیا
برفت، او هیچ وقت از قلعه بزیر نیامد، و از سرائی که مقام گاه او بود دو نوبت بیشتر بیرون نیامده
بود، و دو بار بر بام سرای شده. و آنچه این ضعیف یاد میکند بزعم واضع تاریخ [۱۳۴] ایشانست. و
العهد علی الراوی. و باقی [تا وقت] وفات او در سرائی که معتکف و متوطن بود بمطالعه کتب و تقریر
سخن دعوت و تدبیر امور مملکت مشغول و در زهد و ورع و تقوی بغایت بود. تمام شد سرگذشت

سیدنا. و بالله التوفیق. JT pp 133-134

On Tuesday evening the 6 *Rabī al-ākhirā*, 518/[actually Friday, 30 May, 1124 CE], he left this world. As has been previously mentioned, from the day Ḥasan first went up into the castle of Alamut until he departed this world, that is to say, for a period of 38 years, he never descended from the castle and he did not come out of the house (*sarāi*) in which he lived more than twice. On these two occasions he went up on the roof. Whatever this author (*ḡha'if* = feeble one) relates is from the assertions established in their history. The accountability is on the narrator (*wa'l-'ahdat 'alā al-rāwī*). The rest of his time [until his death] he passed inside his palace which was a sanctum for devotion (*mu'takaf*) and a residence—reading books, establishing the works of the *da'wa* (*taqrīr-i suḡhan-i da'wat*) and busied in administering the affairs of the polity and in unending abstinence, temperance and piety. The *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* is completed. To God belongs all power.

و سیدنا شب چهارشنبه بیست و سیم ربیع الآخر ثمان عشر و خمسمائه از دنیا ارتحال نمود، و از آن روز باز که بقلعه الموت شد تا سی و هشت سال از قلعه فرود نیامد، و از سرایی که مقام او بود دو نوبت [بیشتر] بیرون نیامد مگر بحمام، و باقی اوقات در آن سرای معتکف صائم الدهر قائم اللیل و در مطالعه کتب و تدبیر امور مملکت مشغول و شبها بر طاعت مقصور. تمام شد تاریخ سیدنا و احوال خیر و شرّ او.

و جماعتی که زمان او کشته شدند اگرچه تقریر آن تطویل بلاطایل باشد. اما جماعتی از مشهوران

اطراف یاد کنیم برین تفضیل، و الله اعلم. ZT pp 153-154

On Tuesday evening 23 *Rabī' al-ākhira* 518/[actually Monday] 16 June 1124 CE, Sayyidnā passed from this world. From the day he ascended the castle of Alamut till 38 years later he did not descend the castle. He did not come out of the house (*sarāi*) in which he lived more than twice other than to go to the bathhouse. The rest of the time he spent in that house of devotion, continually fasting (*ṣā'imū'l-dahr*); awake at night (*qā'im al-layl*) reading books; busied in administering the affairs of the polity; and at night bowed in worship. The account of Sayyidnā and his affairs—good or bad—is completed.

Although the listing of the group of people killed during his time is extremely long; however, the group of notables from the region are remembered in this order. God knows best!

All three texts end with an elegiac paragraph about the protagonist which by the 13th/7th century had become *de rigueur* in *ta'rikh* accounts of the time whether they were annalistic, dynastic or biographical texts.²⁷ Juwayni, however, injected a curse “he [Ḥasan] hastened off ‘to the fire of God and His hell’” and suggested that Ḥasan spent his time “committing the doctrines of his innovation (*bid'at*) to writing”. Aside from this continuity and disparity there are three temporal differences: Juwayni counted Ḥasan’s stay at and rule of Alamut as 35 years (1090-1124/483-518); the other two chronicles give 38 years. Second, the Qashani text gives Ḥasan’s death date as 23 *Rabī' al-ākhira* 518/16 June 1124 CE, whereas the other two give 6 *Rabī' al-ākhira*, 518/30 May, 1124 CE.²⁸ Third, none of the dates align with the stated day of death—

²⁷ Boyle used the Julian era yielding a conversion to 23rd May, 1124. HWC p. 682 Boyle mistranslates this as Wednesday night, actually شب چهارشنبه = Tuesday evening... note he also has the Gregorian-Julian error see p. 104. The error in the day may be because the chronicler was alluding to a miraculous event that Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ died on the same day he entered the castle—in both cases شب چهارشنبه. TJG. p. 215 give this as 35 years which is correct! 1090-1124 or 483-518 not 38 years.

²⁸ Boyle translated the term as “Heresy”

shab-i chahārshanba which is Tuesday evening since the day commences at sunset in the *Hijrī* calendar. The 6th of *Rabīʿ al-ākhirā* equates to Thursday evening and the 23rd to Sunday evening. Historical writing often has a mismatch between the day and date; however, the dates are noted with greater care and precision. The three-year disparity in reporting the length of Ḥasan's stay at Alamut and the differing dates of his death are inexplicable. Does this indicate that the chroniclers may have relied on different written and oral sources?

This comparison of narrative segments from the accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ illustrates that while the three author-historians used the same sources, their particular focalisation combined with ideological pre-commitments resulted in substantially different polemical accounts. The tone and tenor of Qashani is closer to Juwayni than Rashid al-Din; the former two shared the same prejudices and antipathies. Qashani, in his slightly lengthier account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, provided unique information not found in the other two accounts; barring such sections and with few exceptions, his account closely followed Rashid al-Din's emplotment of events in the story. The next section maps the stemmatic reliance of later derivative histories on these early accounts.

II. Stemmatic Genealogies of Historical Accounts of the Nizaris

Juwayni's account embedded with the Nizari texts he acquired in the library at Alamut became the first paradigm of historical writing about the Nizari Ismailis and within a few years many authors of derivative accounts began to copy sections from and model his account.

A. Bar Habraeus: *Chronography*

One of the earliest to use the TJG as a paradigm was the *Maphrian* (chief bishop) of the Jacobite Church, Gregory Bar Habraeus also known as Abū'l-Faraj al-'Ibrī (d. 1286/685), who wrote of Juwayni as

exceedingly skilled in doctrines (or learned subjects), and he had an adequate knowledge of the poetic art. He composed a marvellous work in Persian on the chronology of the kingdoms of the Saljuks, and Khawarazmians, and Ishmaelites, and Mongols; what we have introduced into our work on these matters we have derived from his book.²⁹

Written just over a decade after TJG, Bar Habraeus' *Chronography* originally in Syriac contains a number of passages which mention the history of the Nizaris. The Nizaris appear in the reports of several assassinations; the death of Rashīd al-Dīn Sinān (d. 1193/589) the Nizari dā'ī in Syria; the death reports of the Nizari imams Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan, 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad and Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh; he also reported the presence of Nizari Ismaili emissaries at the *qūriltāi* (political and military assembly) to enthrone the Mongol emperor Gūyūk (r. 1246-1248/644-646) and how they were turned away; and lastly, he detailed the end of the Nizari polity with Hūlāgū's invasion. (Cf. Part Two:4). Bar Habraeus focussed primarily on events such as enthronements, battles, killings and deaths of key individuals for this political history and these details he derived from TJG.³⁰

B. Bayḍāwī: *Niẓām al-tawārīkh*

The next author to use this source was the Shafī'ī jurist, Ash'arī theologian and Qur'ān commentator, Nāṣir al-Dīn Abū'l-Khayr Bayḍāwī (d. ca 1310/710), who in his *Niẓām al-tawārīkh*

²⁹ Bar Hebraeus. *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj, the Son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician, Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus*, Translated by E. A. Wallis Budge. (London: Oxford University Press, 1932). p. 473

³⁰ *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj, the Son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician, Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus* p. 343; ...translator's preface *The Chronography* was translated into Arabic by the author as *Mukhtaṣar fī ta'rikh al-duwal* (*Abridgement of the History of the Dynasties*) a month before his death.

(*Ordering of Histories*) written as a world history in 1275-76/674³¹ abridged the account of the

Nizaris from TJG. The account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ amounts to one paragraph:

Outwardly he possessed an epitome of virtue and abstinence and always guarded the principles of the *sharia*. He followed the limits and laws with such diligence that he killed his own son for consumption of alcohol. He was a follower (*shi'a*) of Ismā'il b. Ja'far [al-]Šādiq and called people to his [Ismā'il b. Ja'far al-Šādiq's] descendants; his belief was that of the people of *ta'lim* (authoritative teaching). His cause was declared at Alamut and most of the people of that area were seduced by his words and accepted his *da'wa*. They made him their ruler and from there set upon other fortresses and lands; they were successful in Quhistān. From Egypt, Mustanşir Ismā'īl³² sent him an investiture of deputisation (*niyābat*) and rule (*wilāyat*). He ruled for 35 years and died in *Rabī' al-ākhira* 518/June 1124.

The sentence regarding an investiture sent from Egypt by the Fatimid Imam-caliph al-Mustanşir to Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ is not found in Juwayni and may have been inserted to conform to the Sunni norm that the caliph is the legitimate ruler and all who hold power do so through deputisations by the caliph.³³ The other rulers of the polity were written about in a few sentences each; essentially dating the beginnings and ends of their reigns. The entire account of the 166 years of the Nizari polity in Iran was compressed into three pages.³⁴

C. Waṣṣāf: *Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*

The chronicler and court poet Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh b. 'Izz al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Shīrāzī (d. Ca 1330/730), better known as Waṣṣāf al-Ḥaḍra (court panegyrist) is the third author to have used TJG as his source. He presented his *Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, a history of the Ilkhans and a continuation

³¹ EIr. Etan Kohlberg: "Bayzāwī, Nāṣer-al-Dīn". His death is placed between 1286/685 and 1316/716—Etan Kohlberg has argued for the later date. Also cf *The History of India, as told by its own Historians: the Muhammadan Period*, Edited by H. M. Elliot, and John Dowson. (London: Trübner and Co, 1867-77). p. II:253

³² The text reads Mustanşir Ismā'īl - clearly meant to be the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanşir.

³³ Cf. 'Ali b. Muḥammad Al-Māwardī. *The Ordinances of Government: a Translation of al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya wa'l-wilāyāt al-dīniyya*, Translated by Wafaa H. Wahba. (Reading: Garnet, 1996).

³⁴ Nāṣir al-Dīn Abū'l-Khayr 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar Bayḍāwī. *Nizām al-tawārīkh*, Edited by Hāshim Muḥaddes. (Tehran: Bunyad-i Muwqafat-i Dr. Mahmud Afshar, 2003). pp 115-118

of TJG,³⁵ to Ūljāyṭū in 1312/712 under the patronage of the *wazīr* Rashīd al-Dīn. Waṣṣāf not only abridged the TJG section on the Nizaris but also espoused Juwayni's rhetorical perspectives; he began his section on the Nizaris:

Once the fortress of the heretics was captured, the master 'Alā' al-Dīn Juwaynī was ordered to inspect their library. He discovered a volume containing the wayward beliefs of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ which they call the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*.

Waṣṣāf's account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ excludes his early life and conversion to Ismailism; rather,

he delves immediately into doctrinal discourse:

Al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ja'far b. al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Ḥimyarī, curses on him, outwardly he adhered to the creed of the *Ithnā'asharī Shī'a, peace be upon them* (*madhhab-i 'ū ba zāhir mutāba'at-i Shī'a-yi Ithnā'asharī būd, 'alayhim al-salām*). Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ asserted the esoteric (*bāṭin*) to the exoteric of the *sharī'a* (*zāhir-i sharī'at*) and engaged in allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the commands of the Qur'ān. Meaning that if someone adheres to the *bāṭin* of the *sharī'a* even though this would breach portions of the *zāhir*, it is not offensive. The knowledge of God (*ma'rifat-i rubūbiyat* lit: knowledge of Lordship) is dependent on the manifestation of the infallible imam and intellect alone is not sufficient for guidance. Now Alamut means "eagle's nest". On Tuesday night (*shab-i chahārshanba*) 6 Rajab 483/9 September 1090 CE, Ḥasan went up to the fortress and by a strange coincidence the letters *ālūh āmūt* (اله اموت) according to the *abjad* system (*ḥisāb-i jummal*) equal the date [year] of his ascent. This image too is laden with useless fantasies.

The last sentence, subtly, renders the doctrines mentioned earlier in the paragraph as "laden

with useless fantasies". Further on in the text, on the killing of Nizām al-Mulk, he wrote that

Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ deceived an assassin (*kārdzanī* lit: knife thruster) that on the night of Friday, 12 *Ramaḍān*, 485/22nd October, 1092, he stabbed Nizām al-Mulk, who was the epitome of *wazīrs*, at Marv. A little while later, his sons, Aḥmad and Fakhr al-Mulk were also stabbed at Baghdad and Nishāpūr. This became their *modus operandus* and the security and peace among the Muslims ceased to be.³⁶

³⁵ Waṣṣāf al-Ḥaḍrat. *Tahrīr-i tārikh-i Waṣṣāf*. pp. 324ff. The *Tahrīr-i tārikh-i Waṣṣāf* is an abridgement of Waṣṣāf's history fully titled: *Tajziyat al-amṣār wa-tazjiyat al-a'sār* "The allocation of cities and the propulsion of epochs" 'Abd Allāh b. Faḍl Allāh Waṣṣāf al-Ḥaḍrat. *Tārikh-i Waṣṣāf*, Edited by Muḥammad Mahdī Arbāb Isfahānī. (Bombay: 1852). pp 589-591. I am grateful to John Woods for a scan of this text. Having compared the text of the original and the abridgement, I have continued to use the digitally available abridgement which closely conforms to the original.

³⁶ *ibid* p 324-325.

چون قلاع ملاحدہ فتح شد، صاحب علاء الدین جوینی را فرمان شد کہ کتبخانہ ایشان را تفتیش کند. او مجلدی یافت مشتمل بر معتقدات گمراہ کنندہ حسن صباح کہ آنرا سرگذشت سیدنا خوانند.

الحسن بن علی بن محمد بن جعفر بن الحسن بن محمد الصباح الحمیری علیہ اللعنه، مذهب او بہ

Peter Jackson assessed that “Waṣṣāf did not merely emulate Djuwaynī’s florid and bombastic style but perpetrated even greater excesses, which were in turn to provide a model for subsequent Persian historiography” and that Ūljāytū “was unable to understand a word of the passage which Waṣṣāf read to him” and lamented that “modern historians have often shared the Ilkhan’s incomprehension.”³⁷ Waṣṣāf’s less than four-page account of the Nizaris while maintaining the somewhat “florid and bombastic style”, is not incomprehensible and there is little evidence that this section of his history became a model for later writers; however, his pattern of abridgement of TJG was followed by some later author-historians who relied on both the content and tenor of the TJG. The account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ extends to six short paragraphs; three subsequent rulers of the polity were written about in two lines each; Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām and the Qiyāmat-i buzurḡ (the Great Resurrection) were written about in two paragraphs:

After Muḥammad [b. Buzurg Ummīd], Ḥasan took his place. He combined the words of his predecessors and those of Greek philosophy and the Sufis. The people thought him to be an exalted imam and accomplished scholar. Ḥasan openly forbade the ordinances of the *shari‘a* and on the 17 *Ramaḡān*, 559/15 August 1164, at the foot of Alamut he set up a pulpit (*minbar*), raised four coloured flags and mounted the pulpit. After completing praise and prayer he declared the good news that the gates of mercy (*ābwāb-i raḡmat*) towards the keys of guidance (*ba mafātiḡ-i hidāyat*) have opened and the promised Resurrection is at hand. Ḥasan b. Muḥammad is the true imam (*imām-i ḡaqq*) and the supreme caliph (*khalifa-yi muṡlaq*); he has delivered them [the people] to God and has lifted all sorts of obligations [of the *shari‘a*] (*anwā‘-i takliḡ*).

ظاهر متابعت شیعه اثنا عشر بود علیهم السلام. حسن صباح برای ظاهر شریعت باطنی قائل بود و احکام قرآن را تأویل می کرد. یعنی اگر کسی بر باطن شریعت دست یابد اگر در اجزاء ظواهر خللی رخ دهد مضر نیفتند. و معرفت ربوبیت به وجود امام معصوم منوط است و مجرد عقل در هدایت کافی نه. اما الموت به معنی آشیانه عقاب است. حسن در شب چهارشنبه ششم رجب سال 483 بر آن قلعه رفت و از غرائب اتفاقات آنکه حروف اله اموت به حساب جمل موافق تاریخ صعود او است و این صورت نیز موجب توهمات بی فایده گردیده است. ...

حسن صباح کاردزنی را فریب داد تا در شب آدینه دوازدهم رمضان سال 485 نظام الملک را که خاتم وزرا بود در مرو کارد زد و به اندک مدتی پسران او احمد و فخر الملک را در بغداد و نیشابور نیز کارد زدند و این سنت رواج یافت و امن و امان از میان مسلمانان رخت بریست.

³⁷ Peter Jackson: “Waṣṣāf” EI2

When he came down from the pulpit, he spread a feast and broke the fast and busied with drinking alcohol (*khamr* = grape wine) and merriment. This Ḥasan was called 'Alā dhikrihi'l-salām (On Whose Mention be Peace). On Sunday 6 Rabi' al-awwal 561/17 January 1166 CE, he was stabbed at Lamasar.³⁸

Following Juwayni's model, the last three rulers had slightly lengthier treatment of two or three paragraphs each. The account of Rukn al-Dīn and the end of the Nizari polity reads:

After he succeeded his father, he sent out the forces that his father had assembled to attack Shāl rūd in the region of Khalkhāl and captured that fortress with killing and plunder (*qatl wa tārāj*). He became friendly with the nobles of Gīlān and other surrounding kingdoms and declared Islam (*aẓhār-i musalmānī kard*). He was captured by Hūlāgū Khān.

Hūlāgū, according to his (Rukn al-Dīn's) own request sent him to Mangū Qa'ān. Mangū Qa'ān stipulated that the *yāsā* (lore of edicts) of Chingiz Khān and Ögedei Qā'ān was that none of the

³⁸ Waṣṣāf al-Ḥaḍrat. *Tahrīr-i tārikh-i Waṣṣāf*. p. 326.

بعد از محمد، حسن به جای او نشست. او گفتار پیشینیان خود را با نکات حکمای یونان و تصوف بیامیخت. قوم او، او را امامی برتر و عالمی مبرز پنداشتند. حسن به ظاهر، منع احکام شریعت کرد و در هفدهم رمضان سال در پای قلعه الموت منبری نصب کرد و چهار علم رنگین برافراشت و بر منبر شد. چون از حمد و ثنا فارغ شد مؤده داد که ابواب رحمت به مفاتیح هدایت گشاده است و قیامت موعود نقد حاضر است و حسن بن محمد امام بحق و خلیفه مطلق است و ایشان را به خدای رسانید و انواع تکلیف برداشت. چون از منبر فرود آمد سفره عید بگسترد و روزه بگشود و به شرب خمر و لهو مشغول شد و این حسن را علی ذکرة السلام می گفتند. در روز یکشنبه ششم ربیع الاول سال در گسر او را کارد زدند

heretics should be left alive.³⁹ By his order he (Rukn al-Dīn) was killed in the year 655/1257. By his death the torch of the Ṣabbāhī fortune was extinguished.⁴⁰

Waṣṣāf's text follows the pattern and invokes the generic tropes of describing the establishment and loss of good fortune through departure from adherence to the faith and the ultimate extinction of the dispensation.

D. Rashid al-Din: Jāmi' al-tawārikh; Qashani: Zubdat al-tawārikh

The *Jāmi' al-tawārikh* of Rashid al-Din, and the *Zubdat al-tawārikh* of Qashani—as already detailed in previous chapters and demonstrated in the earlier sections of this chapter—structurally follow the pattern set by Juwayni even though both accounts were more comprehensive and substantively differed in their levels of antagonism towards the Nizaris. Significant sections in the three chronicles have verbatim correspondences suggesting that Rashid al-Din's team and Qashani used Juwayni's writing for their accounts and that all three chronicles were derived

³⁹ This is a trope invented by Juwayni or Waṣṣāf. Others, including modern scholars misunderstood the term *yasa*. For example, see Shafique N. Virani. *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, A Search for Salvation*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). p. 3, ...; For analyses of the *yāsā* see: Denise Aigle, "Le grand jasaq de Gengis-Khan, l'empire, la culture mongole et la shari'a," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 47, no. 1 (2004).; Denise Aigle, "Loi mongole vs loi islamique: Entre mythe et réalité," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 59 (2004).; David Ayalon, "The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān: A Reexamination (Part C2). Al-Maqrīzī's Passage on the Yāsa Under the Mamluks," *Studia Islamica* 38 (1973).1971, pp. 97-140; 34, 1971, pp. 151-80; 36, 1972, pp. 113-58; 38, 1973, pp. 107-56; David Morgan, "The 'Great Yāsā of Chingiz Khān' and Mongol Law in the Ilkhānate," *BSOAS* 49 (1986).; Idem, "The 'Great Yasa of Chinggis Khan' revisited," in Reuven Amitai, and Michal Biran, eds. *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World* (Leiden: Brill, 2005). pp. 291-308; Igor de Rachewiltz, "Some Reflections on Činggis Qan's Jasaγ," in *The History of Mongolia*, ed. David Sneath, and Kaplonski, Christopher (2010).Igor de Rachewiltz; EI2. Clifford Bosworth and David O Morgan: "Yāsā,"; Elr. Peter Jackson: "Yāsā".

⁴⁰ Waṣṣāf al-Ḥaḍrat. *Tahrīr-i tāriḥ-i Waṣṣāf*. p. 328.

بعد از پدر جانشین او شد لشکری را که پدرش بقصد شالرود از ناحیت خلخال نامزد کرده بود
بفرستاد و آن قلعه را بتصرف آورد. و قتل و تاراج کرد و با اعیان گیلان و دیگر ملوک اطراف در دوستی
زد و اظهار مسلمانی کرد. گرفتار هلاکو خان گردید. هلاکو او را به خواهش خودش نزد منکوقاآن
فرستاد. منکوقاآن گفت یاسای چنگیز خان و اوکتای قاآن آن است که از ملاحده یک تن زنده
نگذارند. به حکم فرمان در سال او را بقتل رساندند. و با مرگ او مشعله اقبال صباحی خاموش شد.

from common sources. The two later writers had access to the Nizari sources obtained by Juwayni and perhaps also consulted Nizari witnesses. Many later author-historians styled their accounts on the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*; although few fully espoused the relatively neutral perspectives in parts of Rashid al-Din's text, it became the second paradigm, after Juwayni's account, of historical writing about the Nizaris.

E. Banākatī: Ta'riḥ-i Banākatī

The scholar Fakhr al-Dīn Banākatī (d. 1329-30/730) and chief poet (*malik al-shu'arā'*) at the court of Ghāzān Khān (r. 1295-1304/694-703) completed his chronicle *Tārīkh-i Banākatī* one year after ZT.⁴¹ It has already been mentioned in the previous section of this chapter that Banākatī may have consulted ZT or that both he and Qashani accessed the same sources since both agreed precisely on the name of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. Mohsen Ahmadi and Farzin Neghaban stated that “a greater part of Banākatī's *History*, as the author himself states (p. 1), is an abridgement of Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, which Banākatī rearranged to suit his purpose”;⁴² Jackson has also noted that “the work is for the most part an abridgement of the *Jāme' al-tawārīkh*, the vast historical encyclopedia of Rašīd-al-Dīn, whom Banākatī admits he was attempting to emulate.”⁴³

While he differed with TJG and JT on Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's name, Banākatī stated that “his father came from Yemen to Kūfa and from Kūfa [241] to Qumm and from Qumm to Rayy and became resident there. Ḥasan was born there.” This lines up with Juwayni not JT; on the other hand, he wrote that Ḥasan “was a Shi'a (partisan, follower) of Ismā'il b. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, may peace be on

⁴¹ al-Banākatī. *Tārīkh-i Banākatī: rawḍat ūlī'l-albāb fī ma'rifat al-tawārīkh wa'l-ansāb*.

⁴² *Elism.*, Ahmadi, Mohsen; Neghaban, Farzin: “Banākatī.”

⁴³ . Elr. Peter Jackson, “Banākatī”.

upon him.⁴⁴ He was a man of pious abstinence and espoused the belief of the people of *ta'lim*.” These sentiments reflect the general attitude of the JT account. Banākatī incorporated excerpts from TJG and JT as well as their ideological rhetoric “to suit his purpose”. Two examples will demonstrate his sourcing. Passages of Banākatī’s account of the doctrine of *ta'lim*, resemble text from JT, however, the report of Ḥasan’s construction of *ilzām* (compelling argument) show closer correspondences between the three chronicles:

کلمه چند موجز را ملواح حبایل خدیعت خود ساخت و آنرا الزام نام نهاد، جهال و عوام پنداشتند که در تحت آن لفظ مختصر معانی بسیارست . TJG p 196 And he fashioned several concise sentences which he used as the decoy for the snares of his deceit; and these he called <i>ilzām</i>. The foolish and the vulgar thought these terse expressions were full of meaning. HWC p. 672
و چند کلمه موجز را ملواح الزام خلق ساخت. JT p. 97 He constructed several concise sentences as decoys of compulsion (<i>milwāḥ-i ilzām</i>) of the people.
در کلمه ای چند موجز را حبایل خدیعت خود ساخت و آن را الزام نام نهاد . و جهال و عوام پنداشتند که در تحت آن لفظ مختصر معانی بسیار است Banākatī p. 241 He constructed several concise sentences as his snares of deception (<i>ḥabā'īl-i khadī'at</i>) and called these <i>ilzām</i> (compulsion). The ignorant and communality believed that beneath this word lay a great epitome of meaning.

The first sentence is common to all three texts. The JT does not have the second sentence which is identical in the other two chronicles showing that Banākatī copied this directly from Juwayni. This pattern is repeated many times in Banākatī’s chronicle. This is apparent in the following lengthy section where the chronicles analyse Ḥasan’s argument that reason by itself is insufficient to know God and that knowledge of God can be attained only through *ta'lim* (the authoritative teaching) of the truthful teacher, namely the imam.

⁴⁴ This is highly unusual—that there is a benediction called upon Ismail—although it could well be intended for Ja‘far or even Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. The ambiguity is noteworthy.

TJG (Tr: Boyle - mod)	JT	Banākati
[1] ... [Ḥasan would challenge] his opponents whether reason was enough or not enough; because if [the reply was given that] reason sufficed for the knowledge of God, [this implied that] everyone being possessed of reason no one could object to anyone; and if his opponent said that reason was not sufficient and that in addition to the use of reason (<i>naẓar-i-ʿaql</i>) one also needed a teacher, this was simply his own doctrine.	[1] ... [Ḥasan] refuted the opponents of his own faith saying: “In knowing [God] (<i>maʿrifat</i>) is reason (<i>khirad</i>) sufficient or not?” That is, if reason is sufficient then no opponent could object to one who is possessed of reason. If the opponent says: “Reason and intellectual reflection (<i>naẓar-i-ʿaql</i>) are insufficient” then surely a teacher is needed. [107] [This is the [manner] of his necessity of proof]. Whether it was said: “Reason is sufficient or not” [he implied] his doctrine was necessary proof of this.	[1] ... [Ḥasan] asked the opponents of his own faith: “Is reason (<i>khirad</i>) sufficient or not?” Meaning that if reason is sufficient to know God (<i>maʿrifat</i>) then no opponent could object to one who is possessed of reason. If the opponent says: “Reason and intellectual reflection (<i>naẓar-i-ʿaql</i>) are insufficient”; then surely a teacher remains [essential to] his creed. Then whether it was said: “Reason is sufficient or not” the objective of this question was the proof that <i>taʿlīm</i> (authoritative teaching) and reason, together, are obligatory.
[2] Now in putting that question, viz. whether reason was enough or not enough, he implied that his own doctrine, which he was trying to affirm, was that instruction (<i>taʿlīm</i>) was necessary in conjunction with reason, and that the doctrine of his opponents was that instruction was not necessary in conjunction with reason. Now if instruction is not necessary it may be permissive (<i>jāʿiz</i>) and assist the function of reason (<i>khirad rā muʿīn bāshad bar naẓar</i>), or else it may not be permissive and reason have to be used alone	[2] The fact of these words is that <i>taʿlīm</i> (authoritative teaching) and reason, together, are obligatory and that the doctrine of his opponents is that <i>taʿlīm</i> and reason together are not obligatory. While it is not obligatory, <i>taʿlīm</i> is permissible (<i>jāʿiz</i>) and reason assists the function of reflection, and reason alone is necessary then knowledge of God would not be attainable. These are the two divisions; he did not object to counter the second.	[2] That the doctrine of his opponents is that <i>taʿlīm</i> and reason together are not obligatory. While they [together] might not be obligatory, <i>taʿlīm</i> is obligatory. Reason assists the function of reflection, and reason alone is necessary then knowledge of God would not be attainable. These are the two divisions; he busied to counter the second. He said: “I have invalidated their creed and it is not thus.”
[3] for the belief of the generality of mankind (<i>jumhūr-i āhl-i ʿālam</i> meaning the Sunnis) is that the existence of reason alone is not enough but reason must be employed in a special way, and instruction and guidance are of assistance to some of those possessed of reason, while others have no need thereof, though if instruction and guidance are available, there is no objection thereto. It is clear then that he has done nothing towards refuting the belief of the majority (Sunnis).	[3] The doctrine of the community and people of the world (<i>jumhūr wa āhl-i ʿālam</i> meaning the Sunnis) is that the existence of reason alone is not sufficient but reason must be employed under special circumstances, and <i>taʿlīm</i> and guidance (<i>hidāyat</i>) are supportive, that is to those possessed of reason, while others have no need thereof, even-though if [<i>taʿlīm</i> and guidance] existed, there is no impediment.	[3] The doctrine of the generality of humanity (<i>jumhūr-i āhl-i ʿālam</i> meaning the Sunnis) is that the existence of reason alone is not sufficient but reason must be employed under special circumstances, and <i>taʿlīm</i> and guidance (<i>hidāyat</i>) are complementary.

[4] As for his statement that instruction is restricted to one specified person it requires proof and the only proof he provides are his words when he says: 'I have proved [the necessity for] instruction and since there is no other than I who speaks for instruction, [p. 673] therefore the determination of the instruction is by my words.' Now this is palpably false: it is as though someone were to say: 'I say that such-and-such a person is Imam, and the proof thereof is that I say so.' If he says: 'The consensus of Moslem opinion (<i>ijmā'</i>) is right; therefore, if my words be not true and I have refuted the words of others, then the Moslems are agreed upon what is false' - the reply to this argument is that the consensus of opinion in the case of the majority is right because of [its dependence upon] the Koran and the Traditions, and that in his case this is not so. Therefore for him to base his doctrine upon the consensus of opinion is to base it upon the words of his opponents and is of no profit to him. And apart from this he adduces no evidence for the designation of the Imam.		[4] It became apparent that he did not negate the creed of the community nor did he prove the necessity of <i>ta'lim</i> for the individual. His argument (<i>dalīl</i>) in essential terms (<i>ba-mujarrad-i qawl</i>) is that he says: "I have proven [the necessity of] <i>ta'lim</i> and aside from me no-one is capable of <i>ta'lim</i> and thus the teacher (<i>muta'lim</i>) is the one who I say." These words are sheer depravity (<i>ẓāhir al-fasād</i>). The evidence of this is that anyone who says that I say: "The imam is that person and the proof is that I say so." If he says: "<i>Ijmā'</i> (consensus) is valid (<i>ḥaqq</i>)," then [242] if what I say is sound (<i>ṣaḥīḥ</i>) then I have negated (<i>bāṭil kardah-ām</i>) what others say. Thus consensus is based on error (<i>bar bāṭil mujtama' shud</i>). The response is that consensus with the community (<i>ba-nazdīk-i jumhūr</i>) is valid based on the Qur'ān and the reports of the Prophet's sayings and doings (<i>khabār</i>); and not with you as such. Then your creed based on your words is not sufficient for you. Aside from this he has no other proof (<i>ḥujjat</i>). Banākatī pp 241-24
[5] Again, he has said [198] that when the Prophet (upon whom be peace!) said: 'I was commanded to fight the people until they said: "There is no god but God,"' he meant that they had to learn from him to say: 'There is no god but God' - which is [the doctrine of] instruction. TJG pp 196-197; HWC pp 672-673	[5] [In the same way] he said that the Prophet, may peace be upon him, said: "I was commanded to fight against the people until they said 'There is no god except God.'" Meaning that until they embraced "There is no god except God." That is [the doctrine of] <i>ta'lim</i>. JT pp 106-107	

These passages demonstrate that Rashid al-Din copied substantial amounts (paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5) of Juwayni's text, without carrying forward Juwayni's doctrinal invective against the Ismailis. In contrast, Banākatī also copied Juwayni's refutation of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's precepts of

ta'lim (paragraph 4). His reliance on Juwayni's text—in the two examples analysed here and throughout his account—is affirmed first, by the correspondence of respective passages and second, because such passages are not found in JT or any other prior Ilkhanid text. Mohsen Ahmadi, Farzin Neghaban, Peter Jackson and Muḥammad Rawshan⁴⁵ are correct in stating that Banākatī based his account on JT but only to the extent that passages common to both Banākatī and JT are sourced from TJG. It is more precise to observe, at least in the account of the Nizaris, that Banākatī's account abridged and modelled Juwayni's *Ta'rikh-i jahāngushā*. The observations of the scholars named above, it appears, are based on comparisons only of Banākatī and corresponding sections in JT rather than the more broader approach of this research in mapping the stemmatic genealogies of a larger corpus of accounts of the Nizaris.

Overall Banākatī's text follows the mode of other abridgements in that the entire history of the Nizari polity amounts to a little more than two pages of text and the account of the founder Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāh takes up the bulk of that space. His report contains a few interesting details: 1) the first biographic paragraph, in common with Bayḍawī's account mentioned above, stated that Ḥasan was a follower of Ismail b. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and made a pious invocation upon him which is extremely rare in Sunni and Ithnā'asharī texts. 2) Next he stated that Ḥasan went up to Alamut in the year 477/1085—the date given for Ḥasan's ascent in other texts is 1090/483 and the coincidence of chronogram of the old name *ālūh āmūt* (الأموت) abjad values: $1+30+5+1+40+6+400=483$) for Alamut is mentioned. Banākatī stated that a chronogram of this date is derived from the name *Ālamūt* (الاموت)—according to the *abjad* conversion these letter values ($1+30+40+6+400$) do add up to 477. Perhaps he forgot the back story of the building of

⁴⁵ See above. *EIslm.*, Ahmadi, Mohsen; Neghaban, Farzin: “Banākatī”; EIr.Peter Jackson, “Banākatī”.

Alamut but remembered that a chronogram matched the name of the castle and creatively calculated the date? 3) Banākatī may have consulted Bayḍawī's abridgement because the first paragraphs in both are very similar. Banākatī also stated that the Ismaili imam sent a decree of appointment for Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ; he wrote: "al-Muṣṭafā li-Dīn Allāh Nizār, the master of Ismaili *da'wa* sent him a decree of deputisation (*'ahd-i niyābat*) and rule (*wilāyat*)." While Bayḍawī stated that the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanšir had sent the decree, Banākatī curiously posits the imam-caliph Nizār.⁴⁶

F. Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī: Ta'riḫ-i guzīda

The most prominent of the later Ilkhanid chroniclers, Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī (d. ca. 1344/744) wrote about the Nizaris in three of his major works: *Ta'riḫ-i guzīda* (*The Select History*) completed in 1330/730; the *Ẓafarnāma* (*Book of Victory*) concluded after fifteen years of effort in 1334/735 and the *Nuzhat al-qulūb* (*Ornamentation of the Hearts*) finished around 1340/741. The geographic section of this last text briefly mentions the Nizaris and their associations with several locales. The *Ẓafarnāma*, contains references to the Nizaris in sections on the Fatimids,⁴⁷ the 'Abbāsids, the Saljuqs and an account on the Nizari polity.⁴⁸ Melville noted that Qazwīnī published the *Ta'riḫ-i guzīda* as a summary of this monumental work while he was writing the versified chronicle of 75000 verses in the style of Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma* (*Book*

⁴⁶ al-Banākatī, *Tārīḫ-i Banākatī: rawḍat ūlī'l-albāb fī ma'rīfat al-tawārīḫ wa'l-ansāb*, p. 241. المصطفى لدين الله نزار صاحب دعوت اسماعيليان او را عهد نيابت و ولايت فرستاد. Nizar was proclaimed imam-caliph by his supporters—could Banākatī have consulted Nizaris? Or was he himself influenced by Nizari Ismailism?

⁴⁷ Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, and Abū al-Qāsim Firdawsī. *Ẓafarnāma-yi Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī: bi inẓimām-i Shāhnāmah-i Abū al-Qāsim Firdawsī (bi taṣḥīḥ-i Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī)*, Edited by Naṣr Allāh Pūrjavādī, and Nuṣrat Allāh Rastgār. (Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānishgāhī-i Īrān, 1999). pp iii:237-241;

⁴⁸ *Ẓafarnāmah* pp vi:241ff

of Kings).⁴⁹ The *Ta'rikh-i guzīda* itself has a dynastic account of the Nizaris which closely matches the versified section of the *Ẓafarnāma*. The structure correlates in outline to Juwayni's text but the content is mainly drawn from Rashid al-Din. Like several of the other abridgements, the account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ is longest; his two successors are accorded a short paragraph each; in the account of Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām, Qazwīnī detailed the issues with the latter's genealogy, his declaration of the *Qiyāma* and its doctrines. The accounts of the last three rulers are longer resonating the structure of Juwayni's account. The Nizaris are referred to as heretics (*mulḥidān*).

Qazwīnī's account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ begins with him as the chamberlain at the court of the Saljuq sultan Alp-Arslān (r. 1063-1073/455-465) where he fell out with Niẓām al-Mulk. He "went back to his native Rayy in the year 464/1072. Since out of fear of the Sultan and Niẓām al-Mulk he was insecure, in the year 471/1079 he went to Syria and preached the *da'wa* in favour of Nizār b. Mustanṣir and remained there for some years. Nizār b. Mustanṣir gave him one of his sons; Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ brought that child to Iran and nurtured him."⁵⁰

At this point Qazwīnī inserted the episode at Ra'īs Abū al-Faḍl Lanbanī's house in Isfahan where the latter started treating Ḥasan for melancholia when he exclaimed that he would bring down the Saljuq empire if only he had two like-minded individuals to help him. Realising this, Ḥasan departed and went on to expand his *da'wa* from Khurāsān to the regions south of

⁴⁹ Eir., Charles Melville: "Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi"; Charles Melville, "Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfi's *Ẓafarnāmah* and the historiography of the late Ilkhanid period," in Iraj Afshar, and Kambiz Eslami, eds. *Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in Honor of Iraj Afshar* (Princeton, NJ: Zagros, 1998). pp. 1-12.

⁵⁰ Qazwīnī. *Guzīda*. p. 518 به ری رفت که مسقط رأس او بود، در سنه اربع و ستین و اربعمائه و چون از بیم سلطان و نظام الملك ایمن نبود، در سنه احدی و سبعین بشام رفت و جهت نزار بن مستنصر دعوت کرد و چند سال آنجا بود. نزار بن مستنصر کودکی را از فرزندان خود بدو داد. حسن صباح آن کودک را بایران آورد و پرورش کرد.

the Caspian Sea. He himself ascended to Alamut and acquired it by a shrewd trick. At that time

the fortress of Alamut was governed by 'Alawī Mahdī on behalf of Sultan Malikshāh

Ḥasan said to 'Alawī Mahdī: "Since I do not have any property in this castle, I cannot see it permissible (*jā'iz na-mi-binam*) for me to be in obedience here. If, for the greater good (*maṣlaḥat*), you would sell me some land, the size of a cowhide, then upon my ownership I could be in obedience and not be a sinner to God the Mighty." Mahdī sold him that amount of land. He (Ḥasan) cut the hide into strips and laid them around the castle and said: "The entire fortress is mine." Mahdī 'Alawī did not have the power to resist. He handed over the fortress to him (Ḥasan) and the latter wrote a draft for 3000 dinars for the price of the fortress upon Ra'īs Muẓaffar, the commander of Girdkūh.⁵¹

Qazwīnī continued with the narrative structure of the earlier Ilkhanid chronicles by linking episodes of Sultan Malikshāh's failed attempts to contain the Nizari revolt; the assassination of Niẓām al-Mulk; the expansion of the *da'wa* during the power struggle between Malikshāh's sons; Muḥammad b. Malikshāh's redoubling of efforts to capture territory controlled by the Nizaris and his 8-year long sieges of the Rūdbār and Quhistānī fortresses; and his successor,

Sanjar—Qazwīnī wrote—made accommodations with the Nizaris when

Sultan Sanjar mounted the throne, he too was diligently after Ḥasan. Ḥasan-i Šabbāh's wife seduced one of the royal concubines, (*zan-i Ḥasan-i Šabbāh zanī-rā āz khwāš-i sulṭān ba-firift*) to strike a dagger into the ground, one night, in the sultan's bedroom. Ḥasan-i Šabbāh sent a message to the sultan that: "If the love for the sultan was not in my heart, the dagger that was stuck hard in the ground would easily have been in the soft breast [and belly] [of the sultan]. Although at this instance, that which is pleasing to you is praiseworthy to me." The sultan was fearful of this message and did not oppose them anymore and established a tribute for them. Ḥasan's endeavour reached its apex.⁵²

⁵¹ *Guzīda* p. 519. —Qazwīnī, it appears, relates a story probably prevalent among the Qazwīnīs about the trickery of Ḥasan-i Šabbāh.

حسن صباح علوی مهدی را گفت چون بر این قلعه مرا ملکی نیست، برینجا طاعت کردن جایز نمی‌بینم. اگر مصلحت بینی چندان زمین که در گاو پوستی آید، درین قلعه بمن فروش تا بر ملک خود طاعت کنم و خدای تعالی را بزه کار نباشم. مهدی آن مقدار زمین بدو فروخت. او پوست را بدوال برید و در گرد قلعه کشید و گفت تمامت قلعه مراست. مهدی علوی را مجال منع نبود. قلعه با او گذاشت و او سه هزار دینار سرخ در بهای قلعه بر رئیس مظفر حاکم گرده کوه نوشت.

⁵² *Guzīda* p. 520.

چون سلطان سنجر بیادشاهی نشست، او نیز در طلب حسن سعی نمود. زن حسن صباح زنی را از خواص سلطان بفریفت. تا شبی در [خوابگاه سلطان] کاردی بر زمین فرو برد و حسن صباح بسلطان پیغام فرستاد که اگر نه حب سلطان در دلم بودی، آن کارد که در زمین سخت فرو بردند، در سینه [و

Finally he wrote that “Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ went to the fires of God and hell on Tuesday (*shab-i chahārshanba*) 6 *Rabi‘ al-ākhirā* 518/30 May 1124 CE [day converts to Friday]. He appointed Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd as his successor (*walī ‘ahd*) and Dihdār Abū ‘Alī, Ḥasan Ādam Qaṣṣrānī and Kiyā [A]bū Ja‘far to support him in the *da‘wa*.”⁵³

There are many notable issues in this account. 1) Qazwīnī preferred the second (three school fellows) narrative of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s life; he mostly ignored the chronologically viable first narrative. 2) In doing this, he also reduced Ḥasan’s conversion from an intellectual-spiritual quest to political expediency. (Cf. Part One:6-1). 3) Qazwīnī introduced a story of deception in the acquisition of Alamut by Ḥasan. 4) Curiously, in this account, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ journeyed not to the Fatimid court in Egypt but to Syria where, anachronistically, he carried out *da‘wa* activities in favour of Nizār while his father al-Mustaṣṣir was still the imam-caliph and 5) when he returned to Iran he brought back the son of Nizār b. al-Mustaṣṣir. In the account of

Ḥasan ‘*alā dhikrihi*’-*l-salām* Qazwīnī continued this thread that after his father

Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd was charged with effort of governance. He claimed the imamate (*da‘wat-i imāmat kard*) [on the basis that] Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ had brought a son of Nizār b. Mustaṣṣir, the Egyptian, named Ismā‘īl to this realm. When this child became a man, he had a son. This son who is the grandson of Nizār b. Mustaṣṣir, it is related, had intercourse (*mubāsharat kard*) with the wife of Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd and Ḥasan was born. According to the belief of the Ismailis, whatever the imām does which is forbidden (*manhiyyāt*) is

شکم] نرم آسانتر بودی. من اگر چه برین سنگم، هر که شما را محرمند مرا همدمند. سلطان ازین پیغام بترسید و دیگر قصد او نکرد [و باجات بنام او] مسلم داشت. کار حسن عروج تمام یافت.

⁵³ *Guzīda* p. 521.

حسن صباح در شب چهارشنبه سادس ربیع الاخر سنه ثمان عشر و خمس مایه [الی نار الله و سقره پیوست]. کیا بزرگ امید را ولی عهد کرد تا باتفاق دهدار ابو علی و حسن آدم قصرانی و کیا بو جعفر دعوت معتقد او کنند.

permissible (ḥalāl) and lawful (mubāḥ) to him. This blemish was not upon him, rather the aberration was with the auguries⁵⁴ (ū rā āz ān girāftī na-būd, balki nuqṣān-i pīsh-dānanda bāshad).

According to another account, it is related that Ḥasan himself was the grandson of Nizār—Ḥasan's mother placed him in the house of Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd and swapped him with the latter's son so that rulership would come to the son of the imām (pādīshāhī ba imām-zādah rasad). Both accounts are weak. In short, he claimed the imāmate and traced his ancestry to Mustanṣir in this manner: Al-Qāhir bi-Qūwat Allāh al-Ḥasan b. al-Muhtadī b. Hādī b. Nizār b. Mustanṣir.⁵⁵

6) Another curiosity is that while the other chroniclers highlighted that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ sent his womenfolk to a safer fortress during periods of war—implying a marginalisation of their women;⁵⁶ Qazwīnī stated that Ḥasan's wife was instrumental in the episode which resulted in Sanjar's cooperation with the Nizaris. This may also be a reflection of the regard of the people of Qazwīn towards the Nizaris who may have persisted in the region. 7) Qazwīnī's account only briefly discusses doctrinal issues; in the case of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, this is limited to the elegiac

paragraph at the end where he stated that Ḥasan spent his time at Alamut

in solitude and ordered [the polity] and constructed the allegorical interpretations (ta'wīlāt) of the roots and branches (uṣūl wa furū') of the Muḥammadan doctrine (madhhab-i millat-i Muḥammadi). He turned the exoteric (ẓāhir) of the shari'ā into the esoteric (bāṭin) and the

⁵⁴ Qazwīnī, and (Tr.), "Histoire des Seldjoukides et des Ismaéliens ou Assassins de l'Iran." pp 126-127. Defrémery also was not sure of the exact meaning of the last phrase. He translated: "et il n'y a pas de péché de sa part à les commettre. Bien plus, il est savant malgré l'imperfection même de ses connaissances."

⁵⁵ Qazwīnī. *Guzīda*. p. 522.

حسن بن محمد ابن بزرگ امید بعد از پدر کار حکومت بدو تعلق گرفت و او دعوت امامت کرد. بنابر آنکه حسن صباح پسری از آن نزار بن مستنصر مصری، اسماعیل نام، بدین ملک آورده بود، چون آن پسر بمردی رسید، او را پسری شده. این پسر که نبیره نزار بن مستنصرست، بروایتی گفتند با زن محمد بن بزرگ امید مباشرت کرد و حسن بزاد و بمعتقد اسماعیلیان، هر چه از منهیات امام کند او را حلال و مباح باشد و او را از آن گرفتگی نبود بلکه نقصان پیش داننده باشد و بروایتی دیگر گفتند حسن خود پسر نبیره نزار بود. مادر حسن بچه خود را در خانه محمد بزرگ امید برد و بیسر او بدل کرد تا پادشاهی به امام زاده رسد و هر دو روایت سست است.

فی الجملة بدین نسبت دعوی امامت کرد و نسب خود بدین صورت به مستنصر رسانید: القاهرة بقوة
الله الحسن بن المهتدي بن هادي بن نزار بن مستنصر

⁵⁶ JT. p. 124.

esoteric further into the esoteric (*ẓāhir-i shari'at-rā bāṭinī guft wa bāṭin-ra bāz bāṭinī*)—it can therefore be said that the name “*Bāṭinī*” was given to that people.⁵⁷

Many of these departures from the accounts of Juwayni and Rashid al-Din, for the most part, were due to the process of abridgement; however, Qazwīnī's account of the Nizaris is sufficiently different in emphases from other Ilkhanid era abridgements described above. Especially given that in several instances he recorded information not found in earlier chronicles, it is possible that Qazwīnī had access to different sources. Living in Qazwīn—some forty miles from Alamut—he may have been in touch with Nizaris, their opponents and others who might have provided him with variant information. The narrative analyses of Qazwīnī's accounts suggest that he privileged his oral sources over the written accounts of Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and others; and if he himself did not erroneously recall these oral reports, then he recorded the variant accounts he heard from his sources. Several nuances of narrative structure and material content introduced by him became central to later accounts on the Nizaris. The *Ta'riḫ-i guzīda* written in the reign of the last independent Ilkhanid ruler Abū Sa'īd b. Ūljāytū (r. 1316-1335/716-736) became—after TJG and JT—the third and perhaps the most important paradigm for subsequent historical writing about the Nizari polity.

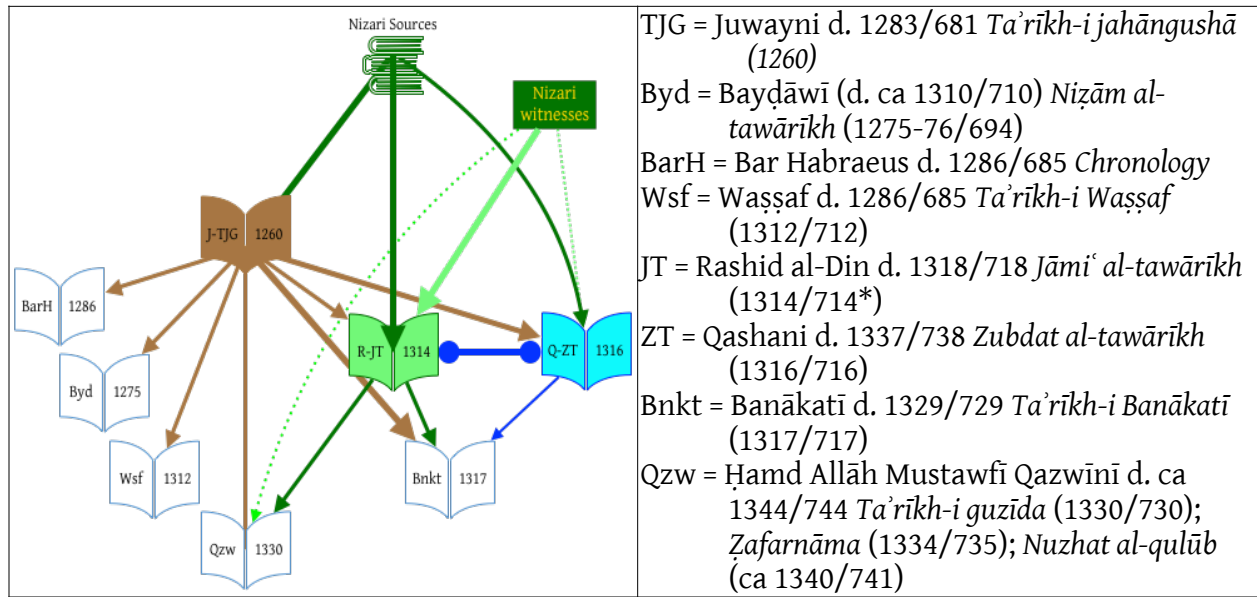
G. Histories based on Ilkhanid Paradigms

Juwayni's *Ta'riḫ-i jahāngushā* was the principle paradigm for historical writing on the Nizari Ismailis. As this survey has demonstrated, this pattern of the eight rulers of the Nizari polity became a standard for later dynastic histories in Persian historical writing.

⁵⁷ Qazwīnī. *Guzīda*. p. 522.

مضمون آن معانی اصول و فروع مذاهب ملت محمدی را تأویلات کرد. ظاهر شریعت را باطنی گفت و باطن را باز باطنی. چندانکه توان گفت بدین سبب نام باطنی بر آن قوم افتاد.

Figure 5a: Ilkhanid Era Historical Writing on the Nizaris



The arrows and thicknesses indicate dependencies and the vectors of sources. The graphic represents the dependencies of later Ilkhanid chronicles on Juwayni's *Ta'rikh-i jahāngushā* and Rashid al-Din's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*.

Over time, Rashid al-Din's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* increasingly influenced the content and tenor of later writing. The content from the different Nizari *da'wa* texts at the disposal of Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and Qashani was moulded into the teleological linearities of discourses and narratives of their dynastic chronicles. Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī in his *Ta'rikh-i guzīda* written at the end of the Ilkhanid era began his account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ with the second narrative of the earlier chronicles. Many subsequent chroniclers followed this pattern of leading with the “three-school-fellows” story such that the chronological history of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's life was overshadowed by the legendary anachronistic account. Centuries after the demise of the Nizari polity, the biography of its founder continued to be a charged issue and was subject to multiple reformulations. (Cf. Part One:6-I-II)

The Tīmūrid historian Muḥammad b. Khwāndshāh b. Maḥmūd Mīrkhwānd (d. 1498/837), in his *Rawḍat al-ṣafā' fī sīrat al-anbiyā' wa'l-mulūk wa'l-khulafā'* (*Garden of Purity Containing the Biographies*

of *Prophets, Kings and Caliphs* usually shortened to as the *Rawḍat al-ṣafā'*) written in the time of Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bāyqarā (r. 1469-1470; 1470-1506/873-875; 875-911) in Herat, included an account of the Fatimids and the Nizaris.⁵⁸ This most polemical reformulation of the account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ begins with a refutation of Ḥasan's ancestry and origins based on the so-called "*Waṣāyā*" (*Testament*) of Niẓām al-Mulk. As Bowen noted, this narrative, perhaps based on oral traditions going back to the 11-12/5th century "shows Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ as ungrateful for the Niẓām's kindness, and as attempting to oust him."⁵⁹ Mīrkhwānd stated that some historians related that Ḥasan was descended from Muḥammad b. Ṣabbāḥ Ḥimyarī; however, this opinion was refuted by Niẓām al-Mulk. The account continued in the first-person voice of Niẓām al-Mulk; who told of joining the *madrasah* of the imam Muwaffaq in Nīshāpūr where he encountered 'Umar al-Khayyām and Ḥasan. The latter's father, while known for his austerities and piety, espoused perverse beliefs (*ba-madhhab-i khabīṣ al-'aqīdah*) and had constantly endeavoured, with lying words and false oaths, to exonerate himself in the eyes of Abū-Muṣlīm the governor of Rayy. To escape the grasp of the governor, he enlisted his son in the *madrasah* of the renowned Sunni scholar at Nīshāpūr and himself entered a spiritual retreat (*zāwiyah*). As his declarations of schism and heresy were reported and he was accused of unbelief and impiety (*kufr wa zandaqa* = lit. unbelief and dualism), he claimed Arab descent stating that "I am descended from Ṣabbāḥ Ḥimyarī; my father came from Kūfa to Qumm and from Qumm to Rayy." The people of Khurāsān, especially of Ṭūs rejected this and said: "his forefathers came from the villages of this region." In the Ilkhanid chronicles, it was Ḥasan—not his father—who claimed Ṣabbāḥid Ḥimyarī descent and that his family had come from Kūfa to Rayy via Qumm.

⁵⁸ Mīrkhwānd. *Rawḍat al-ṣafā'*. Volume IV: Dynasties contemporary with the 'Abbāsids; EI2. Beveridge, A. and Manz, Beatrice Forbes, "Mīrkhwānd"; Edward Granville Browne. *A Literary History of Persia Vol. 2—From Firdawsī to Sa'dī (1000-1290)*, (Bethesda, Md.: Iranbooks, 1997). II: 191-192, 212

⁵⁹ Bowen, "Sar-gudhasht.": He suggested that these may trace back to oral sayings of Niẓām al-Mulk.

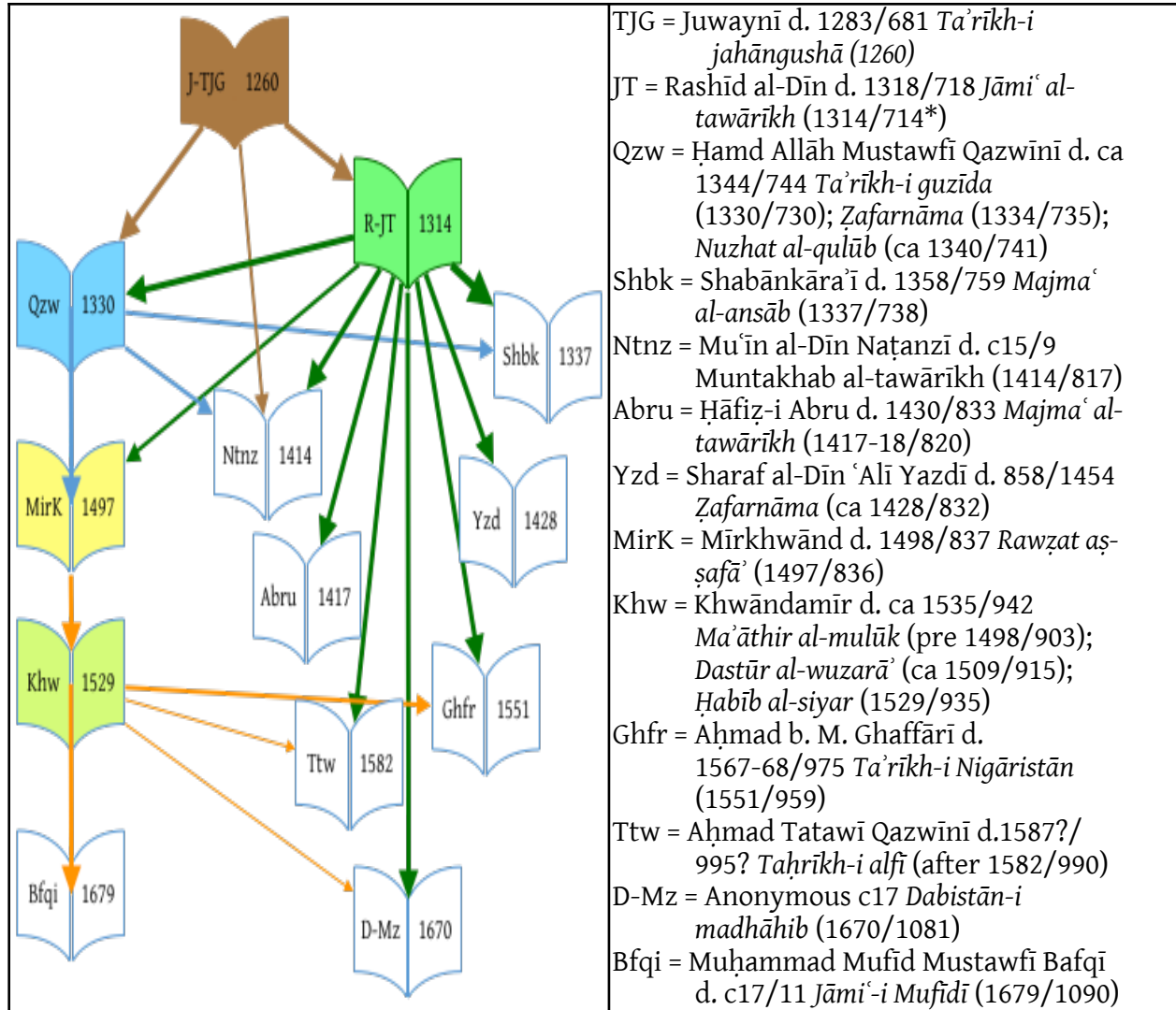
Mirkhwānd's grandson, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Khwāndamīr (d. 1535/942)⁶⁰ wrote about the Nizaris in three of his texts. The earliest was the *Ma'āthir al-mulūk* (*Impediments to the Rulers*) completed in 1498/903 which is a collection of political maxims and contains very brief biographic sketches of the rulers of the Nizari polity. In his *Dastūr al-wuzarā'* (*The Illustrious Wazīrs*) completed in 915/1509 and dedicated to Khwāja Kamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd, wazīr to Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqarā, he collected biographies of famous ministers and included that of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ derived from Mirkhwānd's *Rawḍat al-ṣafā'*. His most important work is the *Ḥabīb al-siyar* (*Beloved Biographies*), a general history from the earliest times to the end of the life of the founder of the Safawid Empire, Shāh Ismā'īl I (d. 1524/930)—the last entry was recorded in 1529/935. Khwāndamīr included an account of the Fatimids and the rulers of the Nizari polity which bears great similarity to the account found in *Rawḍat al-ṣafā'* particularly in the reformulations of the account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ.

These narratives add another layer to the “three-school-fellows” story and yet another spurious episode to Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's life. Later histories on the Nizaris emulated Mirkhwānd and Khwāndamīr's accounts—sometimes even displacing of the Ilkhanid chronicles of Juwayni, Rashid al-Dīn and Qazwīnī. There is no indication that any author-historians after Juwayni, Rashid al-Dīn and Qashani used or had access to the original Nizari *da'wa* texts plundered by Juwayni from Alamut. The embellishments of the “three-school-fellows” and other narratives

⁶⁰ EI2. Helen Beveridge and J.T.P. de Bruijn: “Khwāndamīr”. Curiously states that “The historian Mirkhwānd [q.v.] was his maternal uncle and took an important part in his primary education.” Contradicting EI2 Anne Beveridge and Beatrice Forbes Manz: “Mīrkhwānd”: “The seventh volume was written after Mīrkhwānd's death by his daughter's son Khwāndamīr [q.v.], who also completed the *khātima*, finished apparently after 907/1502.”

were invented by author-historians as part of their engagements in the religio-political discourses of their times. (Cf. Part One:6-I).

Figure 5b: Paradigms of Persian Historical Writing on the Nizaris



The arrows and thicknesses indicate dependencies and the vectors of sources. TJG, JT, Qazwīnī's *Ta'rikh-i guzīda* and Mīrkhwānd's *Rawzat al-ṣafā'* became paradigms emulated by later dynastic histories of the Nizari polity.

Figure 5b shows, Shabānkārā'ī, Naṭanzī, Ḥāfiz-i Abru, Aḥmad Tatawī Qazwīnī and the author of the *Dabistān-i madhāhib* closely followed Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārikh*. The *Majmā' al-ansāb* of Muḥammad b. 'Alī Shabānkārā'ī (d. 1358/759), in its initial redaction dedicated to the son of Rashīd al-Dīn, Ghiyāth al-Dīn (d. 1336/736)—the *wazīr* during the reign of the last Ilkhanid ruler

Abū Saʿīd Bahādur Khān (r 1316-1335/716-735), was lost when the *wazīr* was killed and his house destroyed in the tumult of Ilkhanid succession. His second and third redactions dated 1337/738 and 1343/743 survive. The account of the Nizaris in the *Majmāʿ* is an abridgement of the JT; however, the narration is made dramatic with dialogue not found in JT and the author-historian's antipathy towards the Nizaris is blatant in the text.⁶¹

Muʿīn-al-Dīn Naṭanzī (fl. 15th/9th century) in the *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh Muʿīnī* began his account of the Nizaris with the “three-school-fellows” story from Qazwīnī and subsequently closely followed Rashid al-Dīn's text. The text by this Ithnāʿasharī Shiʿī author consists of seven and half folios including a tabulation of the eight reigns. The table contains details such as: the personal name of the ruler; *laqab* (regnal title); father's name; names of their sons; length of reign; age; reason of death; location of burial; *dāʿīs* they sent around—reflecting a trend of tabulated data in historical writing which had become popular by the Tīmūrid era.⁶²

Table 5a: Tabulation of Rulers in Naṭanzī's Account of the Nizari Polity

Ruler:	Dāʿī 1	Dāʿī 2	Dāʿī 3	Imām 1	Imām 2	Imām 3	Imām 4	Imām 5
Laqab	Ṣabbāḥ	Sayyidnā	Kiyā	Amīr ʿAbd Allāh	ʿAlā al-Dawla	Amīr Jalāl al-Dīn	ʿAlā al-Dīn	Rukn al-Dīn
Name	Ḥasan	Buzurg Ummīd	Muḥammad	Ḥasan	Muḥammad	Ḥasan	Muḥammad	Khūrshāh
Burial	Alamūt	Ṭārim	Alamūt	Qūhistān	Alamūt	Qūhistān	Alamūt	Kāshgar

This excerpt from the table shows the curious presentation of information: Buzurg Ummīd's *laqab* is Sayyidnā which is an appellation applied to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ; the fourth ruler's *laqab* is given as Amīr ʿAbd Allāh whereas he was well known as Ḥasan ʿalā dhikrihi'l-salām; the burial sites not found in the Ikhanid chronicles seem to have been surmised by Naṭanzī from the

⁶¹ EI2, C Bosworth and Peter Jackson: “*Shabānkārāʿī*”; Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Shabānkārāʿī. *Majmāʿ al-ansāb*, Edited by Mīr Hāshim Muḥaddith. (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 2002). pp 125-133

⁶² Binbaş, “Genealogical Tree.”—note: The Fatimid *dāʿī*, al-Kirmānī several centuries earlier used tables to claim that the imam-caliph al-Ḥakīm was the true vicegerent of the Prophet. Cf. Master of the Age. pp 139ff

accounts and possibly sourced from biographical dictionaries or oral reports. Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh's purported burial at Kāshgar is assumed by Naṭanzī since according to earlier chronicle reports he was killed in 1257/656 as the party crossed the Jayhūn (Jaxartes or Syr) River on the orders of Great Khan Möngke who had turned the imam away from the court without granting him an audience.⁶³ Following Ilkhanid paradigms, Naṭanzī also reports on the Nizaris in the context of the conquest of Alamut. In the regnal account of Hūlāgū, following Juwayni and Qazwīnī, he refers to the Nizaris as *malāḥida* (heretics).⁶⁴ (Cf. Part Two:4).

The prodigious Tīmūrid chronicler, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abru's account is the lengthiest post-Ilkhanid account of the Nizaris. In the *Majma' al-tawārīkh* (*Collection of Histories*), the author effectively copied the entire account of the Nizaris from the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* of Rashid al-Dīn. The *Majma'* written in Herat in 1426/830 for the prince Bāysunqur b. Shāhrukh b. Tīmūr (d. 1433/837) is an important source for the reigns of the patron's father and grandfather; however, the account of the Nizaris—aside from a few word changes—is identical with its source.⁶⁵

The Mughal chronicle, *Tārīkh-i alfī*, commissioned in 1582/990 by Akbar (r 1556-1605/963-1014) to be a history of the first *Hijri* millennium. A group of scholars headed by the Shi'i scholar

⁶³ JT. p. 194

⁶⁴ I am grateful to Professor John Woods for a scan of the Paris BnF MS Supplément Persan 1631. The section on the Nizaris folios 231a-265a was not included in the edition of the text Naṭanzī Mu'īn al-Dīn. *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh-i Mu'īnī*, Edited by Parvīn Istakhrī ((original edition by Jean Aubin 1957). (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Asāṭir (HII-etext), 2004).. I have transcribed the section and will published it along with an annotated translation.

⁶⁵ Daftary. *IL-B*. p. 378; EIr. Maria Eva Subtelny and Charles Melville: "Ḥāfeẓ-e Abru"; Rieu, pp. 16-17, no. 27; ed. Zanjāni, pp. 9-1; the *Ẓafarnāma* was written by Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī (d. 1454/858) for Bāysunqur's brother Ibrāhīm Sulṭān b. Shāhrukh b. Tīmūr (d. 1435/838) governor of Fars mentions Ismailis in the context of Hūlāgū's conquest of Nizari territory and Tīmūr's attack on Nizaris in Anjudān. Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī. *Ẓafarnāma*, Edited by Sa'īd Mīr Muḥammad Ṣādiq, and 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Navā'ī. (Tehran: Kitābkhānah Mūzih wa Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, 2008). pp 183ff and 722 respectively.

Aḥmad b. Naṣr Allāh Tatawī, drew on earlier historical writing to compile the history from the death of the prophet Muḥammad to the time of Chinggis Khan. The account of the Nizari polity drawn mainly from the *Rawḍat al-ṣafā* is dispersed in this annalistic history with reports of events stretching over many years reported under singular years. While this arrangement in itself is fraught with generic misreckoning, the historian-authors have introduced many additional errors. For example, under the years 1082-1084/475-476, it is recorded that:

در این سال، کار حسن صباح حمیری، که از جمله دعاة نزار بن المستنصر بالله علوی بود و قبل از این

سال در تاریخ چهار صد و هفتاد و پنجم هجری بر قلعه الموت مستولی گشته بود، بالا گرفت⁶⁶

In this year, the effort of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ Ḥimyarī—one of the *dā'īs* of Nizār b. Al-Mustanşir billāh 'Alawī, who earlier in the year 1082/475 had taken control of the castle of Alamut—gained momentum.

The Ilkhanid chronicles give that date for Ḥasan's acquisition of Alamut as 1090/483. These types of dating errors occurred since the chroniclers attempted break-up the dynastic accounts and mould their contents into annular episodes. In this instance the account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ is shifted by some seven years and his control of Alamut is placed at the point where his activities in Iran began in earnest upon his return from Egypt, rather than after several intense years of *da'wa* in many parts of Iran. It is also incorrectly stated that many of Ḥasan's descendants were raised up to power in Iraq and he counted himself among the rulers of factions (*mulūk-i ṭawā'if*).⁶⁷

The compilers were cognisant of the biases of their Sunni sources; they decry that every trace of

the account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and his beliefs in the manner written about in the books of the Sunnis is objectionable (*irād namūda shawad*) and from the related embellishment (*hilya-yi munāsabat*) reproach cannot be levelled (*'āra-yi na-khwāhad būd*).

However, the different narratives (*nuqūl-i mukhtalif*) can not be relied upon since their opposition is based on their false beliefs about him (*mukhālif-i har ā'inah banābar-i i'tiqādī ki bar*

⁶⁶ Aḥmad Tattawī, and Āṣaf Khān Qazwīnī. *Tārīkh-i alfī: tārīkh-i hazārsālah-i Islām*, Edited by Ghulām Riẓā Ṭabāṭabā'ī Majd. (Tehran: Intishārāt-i 'Ilmī wa Farhangī (HII-etext), 2003). p. 2531

⁶⁷ *Tārīkh-i alfī: tārīkh-i hazārsālah-i Islām* p. 2531

buṭlān-i way dārad); they attribute perverse doctrines (*i'tiqādāt-i fāsida*) and frivolous propositions (*masā'il-i maẓḥaka*) without any information to the reality of his circumstances.⁶⁸

The compilers proceed to detail how the Ithnā'asharīs were denigrated and the imams slandered in these texts. In such circumstances the Ithnā'asharīs had concluded that it was permissible for prophets and imams to dissimulate (*taqiyya*) whilst they that stated the Ismailis opposed this. Since the writings of this community (*tā'ifa*) were not available to the authors, they had to be content with the writing of their opponents. With this discussion, the compilers of the *Tārīkh-i alfī* turned to the account of the Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ in the *Rawzat al-ṣafā'* and included sizeable sections from the rest of Mirkhwānd's account of the Nizaris under several annular sections of their chronicle.

Numerous other historian-authors also participated in these genealogies of texts drawing on paradigms developed since the Mongol destruction of the Nizari polity; all such historical writing telescoped back to the accounts of Rashid al-Din and ultimately, of Juwayni.

III. Sources Independent of Ilkhanid Paradigms

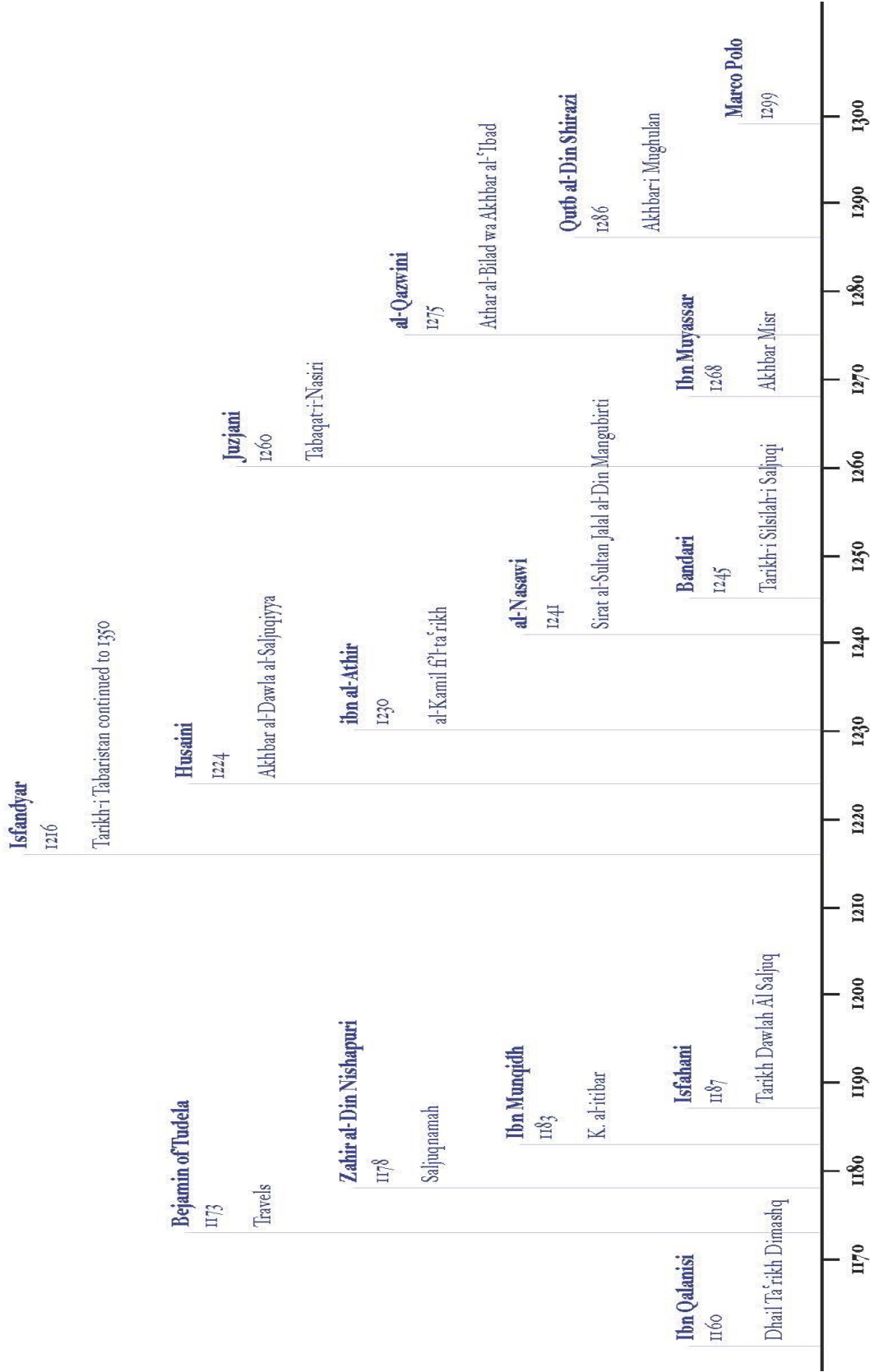
In addition to the chronicles dependant on Ilkhanid historical writing there are a number of sources which provide independent reports of events.

⁶⁸ *Tārīkh-i alfī: tārīkh-i hazārsālah-i Islām* p. 2531

اگر شمه‌ای از احوال حسن صباح و معتقدات او بر وجهی که در کتب اهل سنت نقل نموده‌اند، ایراد نموده شود، هرآینه از حلیه مناسبت عاری نخواهد بود.

اگرچه نقول مختلف اعتماد را نشاید؛ چه، اکثر آن است که مخالف هرآینه بنابر اعتقادی که بر بطلان وی دارد از اعتقادات فاسده و مسائل مضحکه آنچه توانند بی اطلاع بر حقیقت احوال ایشان نسبت می نمایند.

Figure 5c: Sources Independent of Ilkhanid Paradigms



Several of the text listed in the chart preceded the Mongol destruction of the Nizari polity and therefore the information was gathered by their authors through other means. The travellers, merchants or diplomats (Benjamin of Tudela, Usāma ibn Munqidh, al-Nasawī, Jūzjānī, Marco Polo,...) either had direct contact with Nizaris and their reports included personal observations or their information was derived from local interlocutors. The information is often unique and adds to the general understanding despite being skewed by the author's pre-commitments and prejudices or particularly those of their informants. For example, the Jewish scholar Benjamin of Tudela who travelled through Iran in 1160-1163/554-558 recorded in his travelogue written in 1173/568

It is three days hence to Rudbar, which contains twenty thousand Jews, among whom are many scholars and rich men, but they generally live under great oppression. Two days hence bring us to the river Holwaul [alternate reading = Nihāwand] near which you find the abodes of about four thousand Jews. Four days to the district of *Mulehet* [for *malāhida* = heretics], possessed by a sect who do not believe in the tenets of Mohammed, but live on the summit of high mountains, and pay obedience to the commands of the Old Man in the country of the Assassins. Four congregations of Jews dwell among them, and combine with them in their wars. They do not acknowledge the authority of the kings of Persia, but live on their mountains, whence they occasionally descend to make booty and to take spoil, with which they retire to their mountain fortresses, beyond the reach of their assailants. Some of the Jews who live in this country are excellent scholars, and all acknowledge the authority of the prince of the captivity, who resides at Bagdad in Babylonia.⁶⁹

While his numbers may be exaggerated estimates, his report of Jewish villages in the region and their alliance with the Nizaris is of great interest since this alludes to the social organisation of the Nizari polity and the presence and participation of kindred others in their

⁶⁹ Charles F. Horne. *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East, With Historical Surveys on the Chief Writings of Each Nation*, (New York, London: Parke, Austin and Lipscomb, Inc., 1917). Vol. 4. Medieval Hebrew p. 416; Benjamin of Tudela, "The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela," (1907). pp 53-54. The Adlers replaced River Holwaul with Nihawand.

This passage raises the issue of "state-subject" relationships with regard to a community other than the Ismailis within the 'Abbāsid-Saljuq domains. Tudela noted that the Jews of this region acknowledged the authority of the Exilarch resident in Baghdad (رأس الجالوت = Rā'is al-Gālūt from the Heb.: head of the exile); they may also have been under authority of the Fatimid and then the Nizari imam of the Nizari polity as well as the Saljuq-Abbasid authority due their wider claim to rule the region.

ventures. The identification of the Nizaris as *mulehet* and the mis-construal of their beliefs indicates the sourcing of Benjamin's information.

Both Nasawī and Jūzjānī describe their interaction with the Nizaris and journeys into their territories as emissaries. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasawī completed the *Sīrat al-Sultān Jalāl al-Dīn Mankabirtī*, his biography of sultan Jalāl al-Dīn (d. 1231/628), the last Khwārazmshāh, in 1241-1242/638-639 in which he recorded three encounters with the Nizaris. First, he recorded the killing of a predatory amir by the Nizaris and a subsequent uncloaking of Nizari infiltration of the Khwārazmī forces.⁷⁰ Second, around 1227/625 the Nizaris sent nine *fidā'īs* to ally with the Khwārazmshāh asking for a list of his enemies to be eliminated. Cautious against an obligation and a double-cross, he turned down the alliance and said to them: "You are not ignorant of who are our enemies and our allies, our competitors and our friends. If you want to do what you say, nothing prevents you from acting and we need not give you indications. As for us, if God wills, we will not impose such an obligation on you; our sharp sabres and our valiant warriors dispense us from having recourse to the dagger and the hand of the Ismailis."⁷¹

In the last instance, Nasawī was sent as an emissary to Alamut in 1228-29/626 since the Nizaris had not only refused to hand over the Khwārazmshāh's rebellious brother Ghiyāth al-Dīn but had supplied with him horses and material to continue his effort. Nasawī was to demean his host, re-establish the *khuṭba* in the name of the Khwārazmshāh and extract a 100,000 dinar

⁷⁰ al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Sīrat-i Jalāl al-Dīn Minkubirnī*, Edited by Mujtabā Mīnuwī. (Tehran: Scientific Cultural Publishers, 2005). pp 164-166; ; al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Histoire du sultan Djelal ed-Din Mankobirti*, Translated by Octave Houdas. (Paris: E. Leroux, 1891). pp 219-223

⁷¹ al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Sīrat-i Jalāl al-Dīn Minkubirnī*. p. 177; al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Histoire du sultan Djelal ed-Din Mankobirti*. pp 241-242

tribute. He ended up having a surprisingly positive encounter with the young imam ‘Alā’ al-Dīn and came away with a mountain of gifts including a contribution of 400 head of sheep for his “convent”. The sultan’s *wazīr* intercepted a letter to the Mongols from the Nizari emissary who accompanied Nasawī asking the Mongols to hasten in their direction. The Khwārazmshāh hastily decamped from Tabriz since the Mongols chasing him were near.⁷²

Minhāj al-Dīn ‘Uthmān b. Sirāj al-Dīn al-Jūzjānī in his history the *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī* written in India and completed in 1260/658 reports several events related to the Nizaris in which he was personally involved. In 1224/621, he met and liked the Nizari commander (*Muḥtasham*) of Quhistān Shihāb-i Manṣūr, Abū’l-Faḥ; he said about him

I [the author] found him a person of infinite learning, with wisdom, science, and philosophy, in such wise, that a philosopher and sage like unto him there was not in the territory of Khurāsān. He used greatly to cherish poor strangers and travellers; and such Muslims of Khurāsān as had come into proximity with him he was wont to take under his guardianship and protection. On this account his assemblies contained some of the most distinguished of the ‘*ulamā*’ of Khurāsān,⁷³

He relates that Muḥtasham Shihāb was displaced on orders from Alamut since he was accused of depleting the coffers by expending too much wealth on Sunni refugees fleeing the Mongols. His replacement was a man of military bearing and Jūzjānī reported an attempt on his life by an old recluse who had secretly looked after the previous Muḥtasham’s interest at the court of Sultan Muḥammad Khwārazamshāh. Having seen his patron removed, he sought a private audience with Muḥtasham Shams and stabbed him. The latter was saved from the “old recluse’s” attack by the thick winter clothing he wore. While his information gives precious

⁷² al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Sīrat-i Jalāl al-Dīn Minkubirnī*. pp 229-233; al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Histoire du sultan Djelal ed-Din Mankobirti*. pp 353-360

⁷³ Jūzjānī, Minhāj Sirāj. *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, (Tehran: Dunyā-yi Kitāb, 1984). pp. 180-185; Jūzjānī. *Ṭabaqāt-Tr.* pp 1201-1211. NB. Raverty and Badakhchani have incorrectly translated as Muḥtashim per Steingass محشم *muḥtasham*, Powerful, great, attended by many followers or clients;--*muḥtashim*, Bashful.

details, his attitude of antipathy towards the Nizaris permeates the text.⁷⁴ He wrote about

Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ as duplicitous

Having brought there a pregnant female slave of his own, he represented to people, saying: “She is pregnant by Mustanšir, the Egyptian [*Mustanšir-i Miṣrī*—meaning the Fatimid imam-caliph], and, flying from enemies, I have brought her to this place, because the *Imām-i-Zamān* (imam of the age) and the Mahdī will arise from her. Accompanied with vain and impotent words, the like of which no sensible person would allow to pass in his imagination, or enter his heart—God curse him!—he bought that castle (Alamut) and built the fort of Lamasar spending unlimited resources to build and provision it.”⁷⁵

Despite his high regard for the Muḥtasham Shihāb and the general success of his trade and diplomatic interests, Jūzjānī construed the Nizaris as beyond the pale and termed them *malāḥida* (heretics).

IV. History of the Nizari Polity in *Taʾrīkh* Literature

Regional histories and major chronicles such as Ibn al-Athīr’s *al-Kāmil fīl-taʾrīkh* exhibit patterns of assimilating previous writing available to the authors with the information from their local informants while maintaining highly prejudicial stances against the Nizaris. The genealogies of texts mapped in this study demonstrate that the author-historians—to return to the architecture metaphor—laid their foundations upon the contours of the *taʾrīkh* genre where each dynast and the events related to his lifetime were construed within the arc of dynasty. The dynasty endured while each ruler remained in God’s good grace. Their lexical usages and narrative turns formed the building blocks with which they constructed the framework of emplotments and narrative structures. While cognisant of previous accounts, they reformulated emplotments adding “new information” in their own accounts of the Nizaris which rarely constituted genuine or fresh data. The successive reformulations and

⁷⁴ Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt*. pp. 186-188; Tr. pp 1212-1213

⁷⁵ Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt*. p. 180; Tr. p. 1189

shifting accentuations of pre-existing narratives impute changing religio-political discourses in the author-historian's own time.⁷⁶

The analyses in this chapter echo the conclusions from previous chapters that the repetitions of unfavourable constructions of the Ismailis ensue from the common early training of Sunni legists and bureaucrats. Reflecting modes of transmission of learning, the authors of the *ta'rikh* genre—who from the 13th/7th century onwards were predominantly court officials—shared the same prejudices and antipathies noted among the authors of earlier Sunni *firaq* and *radd* literature studied in the previous chapter. These chroniclers emplot sequences of events in their accounts not only to convey meaning to readers with whom they shared preconceptions of society but to intensify and perpetuate their prejudices against out-groups such as the Nizaris. The historians as much as the religious ideologues were engaged in the processes of demarcating people of different interpretations of Islam as beyond the pale based on their beliefs, practices and most importantly, for their alternate authority structures. Munslow's assertion that "... what happens to history in terms of its explanatory value is less determined by its mode of expression than the initial epistemological decision, ..." is precisely operative.⁷⁷

The analysis of the account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ at the narrative level opened up windows into how episodes in his life were emplotted by the chroniclers in their narrations. The data indicate that the accounts of the reigns of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and Buzurg Ummīd were focussed on territorial conflict coupled with religious discourse. While Ilkhanid chroniclers detailed

⁷⁶ This is contrary to Munslow's statement "No historian, for example, comes to the data cold without some knowledge of a pre-existing narrative in their minds. All historians start with the texts of other historians. They can, and they often do, come across fresh data, but it is always processed within a pre-existing narrative understanding (just as the eventual history is)—though the data may indeed suggest there are alternative stories to be created." Munslow. *NH*. p. 24

⁷⁷ *NH* p. 4-5;

Nizari doctrines, this seldom exceeded beyond doctrinal disputations. The understanding of Nizari beliefs in these texts are recorded primarily in relation to conflicts with their Sunni religio-political opponents. The correlation of the data on assassinations and battles and sieges in the reign of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ clearly illustrates the cycles of Saljuq attacks responded to by Nizari asymmetric warfare. The emplotments in the Ilkhanid chronicles do not simply obscure these patterns, rather they convey the opposite meaning. The reigns subsequent to Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and Buzurg Ummīd are given much less significance in content and length. The foci of the accounts also shift from territorial conflict to constructions of heresy (*ilhād*)—particularly after the declaration of the *Qiyāma* in the reign of Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām. The narrative thrusts return to territorial conflict once again in the last two reigns as the Hūlāgū’s Mongol armies made their appearance.

Gordon Allport in his studies of 20th century prejudice and racism and Judeophobia in America found that those who exhibited patterns of hostility and bigotry in the absence of sound understandings of the “other,” even when exposed to better information and understandings of these “others” were able, perhaps, to change their beliefs but not their attitudes.⁷⁸ Any such changes in beliefs in American society—the events in the second decade of the 21st century illustrate—did not eliminate the patterns of hostility and bigotry he had studied. The analyses of this chapter have also validated this finding by Allport. (Cf. Part One:2-II and III). The bulk of the writing about the Ismailis prior to the Mongol capture of Alamut was misinformed and misinforming about them. In 1256/654, Juwayni acquired a wealth of Ismaili *da‘wa* literature not previously available to Sunni authors. These texts were incorporated by the three Ilkhanid chroniclers into their accounts. Comparisons of these accounts and those derived from them illustrates that, for the most part, the author-historians were immersed or even caged in and

⁷⁸ Allport. *Prejudice*. pp 12-14

subject to the prejudices collective memory—despite their access to and use of original Nizari sources. They wrote within their inherited literary paradigm of constructing the Ismailis and the Nizaris as heretical. (Cf. Part One:2-III). Unlike generations of chronicles who relied on Ilkhanid accounts, Jūzjānī had direct knowledge and positive contacts with the Nizaris; however, his eyewitness account is full of vituperative comments. His contemporary, Nasawī, who had an unexpectedly positive reception at the Nizari court, while positive in his descriptions of those who he came into contact, he construed the Nizaris as beyond the pale and labeled them as heretics. It is notable that even the Iberian Jewish traveller, Benjamin of Tudela, who echoing his Sunni sources, referred to the Nizaris as heretics. This survey of the genealogies of textual accounts of the Nizaris demonstrates that the author-historians continued to reincarnate, resurrect and recycle inherited narratives of historic consciousness—functioning within the hermeneutic cycle or trap.

Turning to the interior of the edifices structured in the chronicles, this research has identified one of the embedded Nizari sources used by JT and ZT as the *Ta'rikh-i Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ*—perhaps the earliest Ismaili text to include the word *ta'rikh* in the title. Despite this nomenclature, it is likely to be in keeping with the predominant form of Ismaili historical writing of *sīra* and *manāqib*. In this chapter I have demonstrated how similar Ismaili *da'wa* literature texts were moulded into the dynastic chronicles. In the next chapter I will focus on excavating the story and discourse from the Nizari sources embedded in the Ilkhanid chronicles. Different aspects of the sedimentation of meaning will be unearthed in five case-studies. In these case studies, elements of the 13-14th century dynastic chronicles—the predominant form of the Persian *ta'rikh* genre—will be peeled back to explore the story and discourse of the underlying Nizari *da'wa* literature.

6. Re-assembling Fragments: Five Case Studies

THE METHODOLOGIES OF DOUBLE NARRATIVE ANALYSES developed in the previous five chapters to re-read traces of past actuality by unwrapping the Ilkhanid chronicles and unfolding the fragments of Nizari *da'wa* literature embedded within them are demonstrated here in five case studies. In this chapter, applying these double narrative analyses (DNA) methodologies, the history and doctrines of early Nizari Ismailism in the accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ are read anew by separating story and discourse to understand what was recorded and how and possibly why it was so recorded by Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and Qashani. This operation is then repeated to access and apprehend the story and discourse emploted in the embedded Nizari texts. These source texts used by the Ilkhanid chroniclers, I have argued, were not written in the *ta'rikh* genre and therefore the analyses to read these embedded fragments must be sensitive to their form and where possible, their original functions. Of course, you, the reader, ultimately, will be responsible for a third layer of such distinctions between the story and discourse of my heuristic choices and writing.

The following five case studies examine the account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ in the Ilkhanid accounts and endeavour to excavate the Nizari fragments sourced by the chroniclers:

- a. The Narratives of Conversion of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ
- b. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's Debates at Mayyafariqin
- c. Saljuq Capture of Shāhdiz from the Ismailis
- d. The Executions of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's Two Sons
- e. Nizari Relations with the Saljuqs.

These case studies demonstrate how fragments of Nizari *da'wa* literature can be accessed through the screen of Ilkhanid era *ta'rikh*. The findings in these case studies open up new perspectives of understanding the period of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's reign.

I. Two Life-Histories and Three “Conversion” Narratives

The three Ilkhanid era chronicles recorded two distinct stories of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s early life—a chronological and a legendary biography—which intersected at the report of the assassination of Nizām al-Mulk in 1092/485. (Cf. Part one:4-III). The first account was drawn from a first and third person biographical sketch of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s life. The second account is the basis of the “three school-fellows” story that has universally been rejected as ahistorical by modern scholarship. Farhad Daftary has concluded that “on account of the discrepancies in age of its protagonists [Nizām al-Mulk, ‘Umar Khayyām and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ], who were also raised in different towns in their youth, most modern scholars have dismissed this story as a fable.”¹ Both accounts may eventually have been compiled into the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* (*Biography of our Master*) although their contents suggest that the original stories were distinct from each other and had different audiences and functions. Neither can be classified as a *ta’rīkh* text; what then were the forms and functions of each of these accounts?

This case study examines the three different “conversion” narratives of how Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ came to Ismailism. In the standard narrative, the conversion was the result of Ḥasan’s encounter with Ismaili *dā’īs* and he was administered the oath of allegiance to the Ismaili imam after persistent supplication. The second narrative is nested in the first and implies Ḥasan’s conversion mediated by Divine agency. In the third Ḥasan fled from the Saljuq court and defected to the Ismaili cause—a shift in religious affiliation as a result of a betrayal by Nizām al-Mulk of a childhood promise. These narratives illustrate the construals of intra-religious “conversion”. They evidence Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s perception—or that of the *dā’ī*-author who

¹ Daftary. *Ismailis*, p. 312

compiled the narratives—it is also noteworthy that the Ilkhanid chroniclers embedded these fragments in their accounts. What does the inclusion of these narratives indicate about the manner in which they used the Nizari sources at their disposal? What was the original function of these narratives in the Nizari contexts?

The “conversion” narratives framed within the (auto)biography of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ closely fit into the “hero’s journey” schema of Joseph Campbell as does the larger “quest narrative” of Ḥasan’s biography.² The three narratives are detailed below and in their analyses, their form, purposes and functions will be proposed and a date for the “three school fellows” narrative conjectured.

A. The Standard Narrative of Ḥasan’s “Conversion”

Juwayni recorded a single narrative of Ḥasan’s conversion to Ismailism. In a first person account, Ḥasan related that he followed his father’s Ithnā‘asharī Shi‘ism until in his home town of Rayy he encountered an Ismaili *dā‘ī* named Amīra Ḍarrāb who used to speak in favour of the Fatimids. Amīra engaged him in disputations and challenged his beliefs. Some time after he was separated from Amīra, Ḥasan fell seriously ill; the chronicle recorded:

Meanwhile I was overcome with a very dreadful illness and I thought to myself: “That is the true religion and because of my fanaticism I would not admit it. If, which Heaven forbid, my appointed hour should come, I shall have perished without attaining the truth.” It so happened that I recovered from that illness.³

² Joseph Campbell. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

³ TJG. p. 188; HWC. p. 667:

در اثنای آن بیماری مخوف صعب روی نمود با خویش آندیشه کردم که آن مذهب حقست و از غایت تعصب
تصدیق آن نکردم اگر هیاذاً بالله اجل موعود در رسد بحق نارسیده هالک باشم، از آن مرض خود شفا یافتم،

JT. pp 97-98; ZT. pp 121-122

Upon his recovery he found another Ismaili named Bū Najm Sarrāj who explained the hidden secrets of the faith to him. Ḥasan then sought after another *dā'ī*, named Mu'min, to administer the oath of allegiance to him. The latter averred as Ḥasan reported:

“I asked him to administer the oath of allegiance. He replied: ‘Thy rank, since thou art Ḥasan [good], is higher than mine since I am but Mu'min [believer]. How then shall I administer the oath to thee? That is, how shall I ask thee to swear fealty to the Imam?’”⁴

Despite this hesitation—apparently a trope and a play on words which, in the text, has the effect of elevating the new convert to a station higher than that of a high level religious functionary administering the oath—Ḥasan was accepted into the fold.⁵

B. Miraculous Narrative of Ḥasan's “Conversion”

Rashid al-Din and Qashani presented a much more detailed account also derived from the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*. They recorded that Ḥasan, from the age of seven—typically the age at which children, especially boys, would be enrolled with a teacher or in a *madrasa*—loved learning of all sorts and wanted to become a religious scholar. Until the age of seventeen he was searching here and there when he came in contact with Amīra Ḍarrāb.

⁴ TJG. p. 189; HWC. p. 667:

از و عهد بیعت خواستم او گوشت مرتبه تو حسن از من که مؤمنم بیشترست من چگونه عهد بر تو گیرم
یعنی بیعت امام چگونه از تو ستانم، بعد از الحاح عهد بر من گرفت،

JT. pp 97-98; ZT. pp 121-122

⁵ Farhad Daftary. *Mediaeval Isma'ili History and Thought*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). pp 91-116

At this point Rashid al-Din's narrative adds a few sentences that suggest that Amīra was a more successful *dā'ī* than Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. ca 1088/481)⁶—who the text reads, was the *Ḥujjat* of Khurāsān.⁷ There is also mention of the spread of Ismailism under the Abū 'Alī Sīmjur⁸ governor of Khurāsān and under Naṣr II b. Aḥmad II Sāmānī (r. 914-943/301-331)⁹ who along with the notables of Bukhara had accepted this belief:

Before him, Nāṣir-i Khusraw the *ḥujjat* of Khurāsān, was not able accomplish much. In the reign of Sultān Maḥmūd, Abū 'Alī Sīmjur and a large group took up that path. Naṣr b. Aḥmad Sāmānī and a large number of the notables of Bukhara had accepted this belief.¹⁰

After this, both texts are generally in accord barring a few word changes. They recorded a strand of dialogue between the *dā'ī* and the potential convert in which Ḥasan claimed that he never doubted that Truth was only to be found in Islam (*musalmānī*)—the faith of the communality (*awāmm*)—especially the Shi'a.¹¹ Since in it there is the belief in “God, Living, Omnipotent, All-Hearing, All-Seeing, a prophet, and an *imam*, and the lawful and forbidden, and heaven and hell, and enjoining and forbidding.”¹² He considered “the Ismaili *madhhab* (creed) a philosophy and the ruler of Egypt [the Fatimid imam-caliph] a philosopher.”¹³ He

⁶ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 205-207

⁷ cf *Ismailis* p 117-119; *Ḥujjat*, literally meaning “proof” was a high rank in the *da'wa* hierarchy (*ḥudud al-dīn*). The Fatimids divided the world into 12 regions (*jazā'ir*), each governed by a *ḥujjat*. The valence of this term changes in Nizari thought. (Cf. Part One:6-II) and my forthcoming: “Second Fiddle: an examination of the chronology of biographies of Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and its later inversion in the legitimations of authority in Nizari Ismailism”

⁸ Possibly refers to Abu 'Alī Muẓaffar (d. 997/387) See. Bosworth. *nID*. p. 175; Luke Treadwell. “Simjurids” *EIr*.

⁹ *nID* p. 170-171; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 112-113; Niẓām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*. p. 236

¹⁰ JT. p. 97

پیش از او ناصر خسرو حجت خراسان اگر چه اورا چیزی میسر نشد. و در عهد سلطان محمود ابو علی
سیمجور و جماعتی انبوه آن راه گرفته بودند. و نصر بن احمد سامانی و جماعتی بزرگان حضرت بخارا این
عقیدت قبول کرده بودند.

¹¹ Interesting to note the differentiation between Shi'a and Ismailiyya

¹² Q3:110

¹³ This is a major critique and pejorative - Ismaili = philosopher = un-Islamic

would not countenance the words of the Ismailis since they were beyond the pale. He argued: “Whoever dies in that belief, people always say: “there goes the funeral of a heretic (*mulhid*).”¹⁴ The narrative intimates Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s pre-conversion perspective of the Ismailis and the aversion he felt towards them at the time. This is a literary device which conveys to the reader-listener the profundity of Ḥasan’s acceptance of Ismailism and hortative for the believer and enticing model for a potential convert.

Then there is an interesting divergence between the two texts which illustrates that the Qashani text is often more polished and precise:

و من گروهی نزاریه می دیدم متقی و عابد و پرهیزگار و بشراب مشغول و من از شراب هراسان که در خبر می آید که: جماع الخبائث ام الذنوب¹⁵

JT: I saw a group of pious, devout and austere Nizaris busy with drink [alcohol]. I was fearful of alcohol which in the prophetic reports (*akhbār*) is considered the “embodiment of all vice and mother of sins”.

Compare:

و از طایفه اسمعیلیه گروهی میدیدم غیر پارسا و پرهیزگار و بشراب و مناهی مشغول، و من بروفق معتقد خود از شرب شراب و محرّمات متحرز و نفور، که در اخبار نبوت می آید که «جماع الخبائث و امّ اذنوب»¹⁶

ZT: From the faction of the Ismailis I saw a group—impious, un-devout and busy with drink [alcohol] and that which is forbidden. I, in accordance with my belief, was wary and abhorred drinking of alcohol and forbidden things which in the prophetic reports (*akhbār*) are considered the “embodiment of all vice and mother of sins”.

Marshall Hodgson’s translation of this passage from Rashid al-Din: “I saw that a Nizari group was God-fearing, pious, abstinent, and anxious about drink...” is forced.¹⁷ He translated *ba sharāb mashghūl* as “anxious about drink”. While the Steingass dictionary has the meaning “preoccupied” for *mashghūl* its connotation seems to be that of being “busy with”.¹⁸ Dihkhudā

¹⁴ JT p.97-8 and ZT. p. 121. This seems to be a response to the ḥadīth that the Ismailis would claim that whoever dies without knowing the imam of his time dies the death of an infidel

¹⁵ JT. p. 98

¹⁶ ZT. p. 121

¹⁷ Hodgson. OA. p. 44

¹⁸ Steingass, “Steingass.”

and Muʿīn dictionaries also do not allow the notion of “anxious with/about” for *mashgūl*.¹⁹ (Cf. Part One:6-IV). It would appear that Hodgson expanded the semantic field of the word to fit this syntactic incongruity in Rashid al-Din’s text.

The passage started with “Amīra Ḍarrāb was a man of good ethics”²⁰, at this point a contrast is presented to this unethical group which had formerly repulsed Ḥasan from all Ismailis. The absence of *ghair* in Rashid al-Din renders the group of Ismailis he saw as normative whereas in Qashani this group is exceptional. Further, Rashid al-Din identified the group as Nizaris whereas Qashani more precisely spoke of them as Ismailis since the Nizari-Mustalian schism occurred after 1095/487 whilst these events took place before Ḥasan’s conversion at least more than two decades earlier. While this type of accuracy is expected in present-day historical writing, Qashani’s precision is noteworthy.

Amīra’s challenges began to undermine Ḥasan’s certainty and unsettle his mind; the former pressed further saying “At night, when you are thinking in bed, you will realise what I have been telling you is compelling (*ilzām*)!”²¹ Shortly thereafter, the two became separated, however Ḥasan continued reading. He recounted in their books

¹⁹ ‘Alī Akbar Dihkhudā, and Muḥammad Muʿīn, “Lughat-Nāma.” <http://www.vajehyab.com/>.

²⁰ امیره ضراب مردی نیکو اخلاق بود

²¹ JT. p 98; ZT. p 121 is *ilzām* a technical term for the Ismailis.

Steingass: A *الـزام* *ilzām* (v.n. 4 of *لـزم*), Rendering necessary, compelling; conviction, proof, confutation; reproof, censure, blame; imputation, accusation, incrimination; invective, calumny, libel.

I found a lot of proof in the imamate of Ismāʿīl; another time, when I got to the concealed imams, I was at a loss. I said: “This imamate is dependent on *naṣṣ* (divine designation) and constraint (*tawfiq*) and I do not know who they are.”²²

Hodgson’s translation: “[t]his imamate depends upon a *naṣṣ* and upon instructions; and I do not know what these are” is inaccurate. In his translation, *inān* (they) refers to *naṣṣ* and instruction rather than the subject of the sentence—the concealed imams.²³

There is no indication of what books Ḥasan was reading. Several decades earlier, Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. after 1021/411) claimed that he had written his *Al-maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma* (*The Lights to Illuminate the Proof of the Imamate*) purportedly to win over Abū Ghālib Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Khalaf, Fakhr al-Mulk (fl. 1010/401-1016/407) the *wazīr* of the Buyid *amīr* Bahā’ al-Dawla (r. 989-1012/379-403)²⁴ suggesting that suitable literature was not available for the purpose in Iraq. This may be explained by the clandestine nature of the *da‘wa* in hostile ‘Abbāsīd territories. The *Maṣābīḥ* makes a distinct case for the Fatimid imamate and specifically that of caliph al-Ḥākim (r. 996-1021/386-411). The point here is that the Fatimid *da‘wa* had clearly attempted to promulgate legitimacy of its imamate. Ḥasan’s statement: “when I got to the hidden imams, I was at a loss. I said: “This imamate is dependent on *naṣṣ* (divine designation) and constraint (*tawfiq*) and I do not know who they are”” is intriguing. Given that the *Sarguzasht* has already indicated that the *dā‘īs* in the region propagated in favour of the Fatimid ruler in Ḥasan’s time, al-Mustanṣir (d. 1095/487), how should this great perplexity about the hidden imams be read? Beyond the *prima facie* reading that this is a reference to the imams of

²² JT. p 98; ZT. p 121-122

و در کتب ایشان در امامت اسمعیل حجت بسیار می‌یافتم، و دیگر بار با ائمه مستورین می‌رسیدم فرو می‌ماندم، می‌گفتم: این امامت بنص و توقیف تعلق دارد، و من نمیدانم که اینان کیستند.

²³ Hodgson. OA. p. 45

²⁴ Bosworth. *nID*. pp. 154-155 Master of the Age. p. 14

the period of *satr* (concealment)²⁵ between Ismail b. Ja'far (d. after 753/135) and the first Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mahdī (d. 934/322);²⁶ instead, could this be read as an allusion to the notions accepted by eastern Ismaili cosmological thought where even the Fatimids were mere *khulafā'* of the Qā'im—whether this was the person of Muḥammad b. Ismail or a descendant in the line from him. While there is little other evidence to affirm such a reading, it is worthy of note. Wilferd Madelung has detailed how variant beliefs existed among the eastern Ismailis and that imam-caliph al-Mu'izz (d. 975/365) made accommodations to incorporate these in his reforms of Fatimid doctrine.²⁷ (Cf. Part Two:Prologue).

In this state of perplexity and in the absence of his teacher, Ḥasan fell seriously ill as described in the Juwayni's account; however, Rashid al-Din and Qashani included a few very significant additional lines from the first person account of the *Sarguzasht*:

At that time a severe and fearful sickness came upon me. God wished to turn my flesh and skin to something else. "God will replace his flesh with better flesh and his blood with better blood". I thought to myself: "Surely this faith is true but out of extreme fear I did not accept it." I said: "When the appointed hour (death) arrives, I will perish not having attained Truth. Finally I was cured of that severe illness."²⁸

The sickness is seen as transformative and the agent of transformation is God. Ḥasan said "God wished to turn my flesh and hide into something else."

²⁵ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 96ff

²⁶ *Ismailis* pp 137ff

²⁷ Madelung, "Das Imamāt." pp 87ff Wilferd Madelung, "The Imamate in Early Ismaili Doctrine," *Shii Studies Review* 2 (2018). pp 103ff

²⁸ JT. p 98; ZT. p 122

در اثنای آن بیماری صعب و مخوف روی نمود، خدای خواسته بود که گوشت و پوست من چیزی دیگر شود
«أُبَدِّلَ لَهُ لَحْمًا خَيْرًا مِنْ لَحْمِهِ وَدَمًا خَيْرًا مِنْ دَمِهِ» با خویشتن اندیشیدم که همانا این مذهب حق است، و از
غایت ترس تصدیق آن نمیکردم. گفتم [که چون] اجل معدود در رسد بحق نارسیده هالک باشم. بعاقبت از
آن مرض صعب شفا یافتم.

this a *ḥadīth* see below

The Arabic phrase *لَهُ أُبْدِلَ لَهُ حَمًا خَيْرًا مِنْ حَمِهِ وَ دَمًا خَيْرًا مِنْ دَمِهِ* is found in a *du‘ā* attributed to Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq

(d. 765/148) recited at the time of sacrifice during the ‘*aqīqah*’ ritual when a child receives the

first haircut.²⁹ This seems to be derived from a ḥadīth:

Yahya related to me from Malik from Zayd ibn Aslam from Ata ibn Yasar that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “When the slave is ill, God, the Mighty sends two angels to him.” He said, “They look at what he says to his visitors. If he praises God and lauds Him, when they come to him, they take that up to God, the Mighty, the Majestic, and He knows best, and He says, ‘If I make my slave die, I will make him enter the Garden. If I heal him, I will replace his flesh with better flesh and his blood with better blood and I will efface his evil actions.’”³⁰

Ḥasan saw a danger that with this sickness he would perish not having attained Truth. Did he come to his conclusion about Truth as a result of Amīra’s *ilzām*? Was it because of the evidence he had found in the books? Did the fear of death bring him to this realisation? How was this Truth to be attained? Was it a matter of intellectual acceptance or was an explicit declaration of allegiance to the imam necessary? The former was at his own command but the latter required formal oath and acceptance of him into Ismailism.³¹ He was finally cured of that illness. Qashani related:

عاقبت ازین بیماری خلاص یافتم و غوامض آن معرفت یافتم³²

When finally I was cured of this illness, I attained the intricacies of Divine knowledge.”

²⁹ retrieved from: <http://www.duas.org/aqiqa.htm>; <http://www.darululoomtt.net/dua-slaughtering-animal-aqeeqah/>; <http://www.islamiccentre.org/tarbiyaat/duas/aqika.pdf>; see also Branon Wheeler “Collecting the Dead Body of the Prophet Muhammad” in Christiane J. Gruber, and Avinoam Shalem. *The Image of the Prophet Between Ideal and Ideology: A Scholarly Investigation*, 2014). p. 47ff

³⁰ Malik’s *Muwatṭā’* Book 50:1718; Tr: 50:3.5

حَدَّثَنِي عَنْ مَالِكٍ، عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَسْلَمَ، عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " إِذَا مَرَضَ الْعَبْدُ بَعَثَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى إِلَيْهِ مَلَكَينِ فَقَالَ انْظُرَا مَاذَا يَقُولُ لِعُودِهِ . فَإِنْ هُوَ - إِذَا جَاءُوهُ - حَمِدَ اللَّهَ وَأَثْنَى عَلَيْهِ رَفَعَا ذَلِكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ - وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ - فَيَقُولُ لِعَبْدِي عَلَى إِنْ تَوَفَّيْتُهُ أَنْ أُدْخِلَهُ الْجَنَّةَ وَإِنْ أَنَا شَفَّيْتُهُ أَنْ أُبْدِلَ لَهُ حَمًا خَيْرًا مِنْ حَمِهِ وَ دَمًا خَيْرًا مِنْ دَمِهِ وَأَنْ أَكْفَرَ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ "

³¹ Heinz Halm. “The Isma‘ili oath of allegiance (*‘ahd*) and the ‘sessions of wisdom’ (*majālis al-hikma*) in Fatimid times” in Daftary. *MIHT*. pp 91-116

³² ZT. p. 122

Thus through this trial of sickness, Ḥasan attained the intricacies of Divine wisdom (*maʿrifat*); and as with the *ḥadīth*, when God chooses to heal a worthy slave, all his evil actions are effaced.

All three sources proceed to mention the incidents of the final administration of the oath by the *dāʿī* Muʿmin who had been authorised by ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAṭṭāsh. In *Ramaḍān* 464/May-June 1072 ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAṭṭāsh, referred to as *shaykh*³³ in JT, who at the time apparently was the chief *dāʿī* of Iraq, came to Rayy and deputed (*niyābat-i daʿwat*) Ḥasan in the *daʿwa*; he instructed Ḥasan to go to the Fatimid court. In 1075/467 ʿAṭṭāsh returned to Isfahan, the headquarters of the *daʿwa* in the region. Presumably Ḥasan accompanied him and two years later journeyed to Egypt.³⁴ He returned to Iran arriving at Isfahan in 1081/474 and organised the *daʿwa* in the regions of Iran and in 1090/483 succeeded in acquiring Alamut.

C. Political Defection Narrative of Ḥasan's "Conversion"

The third conversion narrative is alluded to in the “three school fellows” story. By far one of the longest segments in the account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, it is found about a third of the way in—after the episode of the assassination of Niẓām al-Mulk on 22 October 1092 CE/12 *Ramaḍān*, 485. Up until this juncture the chronicles have drawn on the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*. The first and third person account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's life and role in the *daʿwa*³⁵ details his journey from childhood in Rayy³⁶ to Isfahan as a *dāʿī*; thence to Egypt at the court of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanšir; his return to Iran and efforts to spread the *daʿwa*; the acquisition of the fortress of Alamut; the struggle to survive the Saljuq attacks and sieges and then the tumult created by

³³ Not in the *daʿwa* hierarchy and very rarely applied to any Ismailis—must be an appellation carried over from his standing in the wider community

³⁴ Durand-Guédy. *Iranian Elites*. pp. 143-144 — he escaped from Isfahan due to persecution.

³⁵ JT and ZT shift from the first person voice much earlier than TJG suggesting that the original text of the *Sarguzasht* placed much of the account in the words of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ.

³⁶ TJG. p. 187 HWC. p. 667 states that Ḥasan was born in Rayy whereas JT. p. 97 and ZT. p. 120 record that he was born in Qumm.

the assassination of the *wazīr*. Ḥasan said that “the killing of this devil was the first happiness”.³⁷

At this juncture the plot in both R-TJ and ZT reverts back to Ḥasan’s childhood. They recount a second completely different life history and set of exploits as an explanation of the enduring enmity between the Nizām and Ḥasan:

The hatred and the fear amongst them was for the reason: Sayyidnā, ‘Umar Khayyam and Nizām al-Mulk were at school together in Nishāpūr. They indulged in habits of the years of childhood and ways of children based on friendship, sincere equality and code of behaviour to the extent that they drank each other’s blood and swore: “From amongst us, whoever attains greatness or high status would patronise and support the others.”³⁸

Later in life both ‘Umar Khayyām (d. 1131/526)³⁹ and Ḥasan went to the famed and successful *wazīr* Nizām al-Mulk to ask for fulfilment of the childhood promise. To the first he granted the rule and riches of the city of Nishāpūr. ‘Umar declined these asking instead for a stipend; the Nizām duly ordered “a stipend of 10 000 dinars from the province of Nishāpūr, year by year, without division or diminution.”⁴⁰

When Ḥasan went to the Nizām, he was offered the choice between the city of Rayy or Isfahan. It is, of course, highly unlikely that the *wazīr* could assign any city let alone the administrative

³⁷ JT. p. 109; ZT. p. 132 قتل هذا الشيطان اول السعادة

³⁸ JT. 110-111:

عداوت و وحشت را میان ایشان سبب آن بود که: سیدنا و عمر خیام و نظام الملک به نیشابور در کتاب بودند، چنانکه عادت ایام صبی و رسم کودکان باشد قاعده مصادقت و مصافات ممهد و مسلوک میداشتند، تا غایتی که خون (۱۱۱) یکدیگر بخور[د]ند و عهد کردند که از ما هر کدام که بدرجه بزرگ و مرتبه عالی رسد دیگرانرا تربیت و تقویت کند.

³⁹ EI2. de Fouchécour, Ch. and Rosenfeld, B.A.: “Umar Khayyam”

⁴⁰ JT. p. 110-111; ZT. p. 133.

نظام الملک اورا ده هزار دینار ادرار کرد از محروسه نیشابور که سال بسال بی تبعیض و تنقیص مضی و مجری دارند.

capital or the principal city of the realm off to one of his affiliates! Ḥasan declined these expecting a larger share; he instead agreed to enter into the service of the sultan. Very quickly Niẓām al-Mulk perceived Ḥasan as a threat to his own position. After a few years, the sultan became fearful of his *wazīr* and suspecting corruption allowed by the latter, sought an accounting from him. The *wazīr* vacillated and sought an extensive delay to prepare the report due to the effort required. Ḥasan indicated he could produce the accounts in two weeks. The sultan ordered him to undertake the task and he was able to complete it. Meanwhile Niẓām al-Mulk had devised other plans. On the promised day he sent

the book of accounts to Sulṭān Malikshāh's palace. The slave of Niẓām al-Mulk and the slave of Sayyidnā were intimate and powerful friends. Niẓām al-Mulk had instructed his slave that: "At the time of the presentation of the accounts go along with Sayyidnā's slave, corner him and get him to drop the register and scatter the pages and I will delay him for a moment with amusement. Then I will free you and grant you 1000 dinars." On the day of the audience, the slave in the manner of the conversation and connivance of his master scattered and mutilated the register. At the time of the audience, however much Sayyidnā wanted to, it was not possible to put the register in any order or arrangement, all was incomplete. The sulṭān was vexed and questioned the reason for the delay and disturbance.⁴¹

In Qashani's account, in addition to freedom and a thousand dinars, Niẓām al-Mulk even promised the slave the hand of one of his daughters.⁴² His stratagem worked—the papers were scattered and the register mutilated. At the court, Ḥasan was confounded and unable to present the report frustrating and angering the sultan. Niẓām al-Mulk chimed in: "I have said earlier, that his nature has been diminished by inconsistency and sadness; his words cannot be

⁴¹ JT. p. 111-112; ZT. p. 133.

و روز موعود که کتاب محاسبه بمحل عرض سلطان ملکشاه می‌رسانیدند، غلام نظام الملک را با غلام سیدنا قاعده دوستی و اتحاد مهاد و مؤکد بود. نظام الملک غلام خود را آموخت که بوقت عرض محاسبه با غلام سیدنا بگوشه‌ای روید، و تدبیری کن که دفتر او را از هم فرو ریزی و اوراق آنرا مبتور و متفرق گردانی، و من لحظه‌ای او را بمطل و تعلل میدارم، تا ترا آزاد کنم و هزار دینار ببخشم. روز عرفی غلام بموجب مشافهه و مواضعه خواه آن دفتر را پریشان و مبتور کرد. و بوقت عرض چندانکه سیدنا میخواست که آنرا منظم و مرتب گرداند میسر نمی‌شد، آنرا مبتور بر هم می‌زد. سلطان ملول شد، موجب تعلل واضطراب پرسید.

⁴² ZT p. 133. Marriage is used here as a form of alliance and "diplomacy".

credibly accepted.”⁴³ Both chronicles report that Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ left the court of the sultan wounded. As a result of Nizām al-Mulk’s plotting against him, they became enemies—Rashid al-Din’s account states that Ḥasan went over to this [Ismaili] *da’wa* and became what he became (*dar pay-i in da’wat uftād wa rasīd bad-īnjā ki rasīd*). He fled to Rayy and from there went on to Isfahan.⁴⁴

In Isfahan, all three chronicles recorded, he took refuge with a certain Ra’īs Abū al-Faḍl. His host had accepted his *da’wa* and was generally in agreement with what Ḥasan had to say. One day while lamenting his circumstances and his mistreatment by the sultan and the *wazīr*, the chronicles report:

Sayyidnā let out a sigh and said: “Oh alas! if I had two men of the same mind and direction with me I would give an answer to that Turk and this peasant.”⁴⁵

The Ra’īs was perplexed:

Ra’īs Abū al-Faḍl thought that Ḥasan from much thought, worship, nightly devotions, perpetual fasting, undertaking journeys and experiencing dangers has manifested melancholia. How could two people in agreement and united at heart overthrow the realm of this king whose *khuṭba* is recited and coins are struck from Egypt to Kāshgar, and so many thousand soldiers on horse and foot under his banner?⁴⁶

⁴³ JT. p. 112; ZT. p. 134

نظام الملک گفت بنده پیشتر عرضه داشته‌است که طبیعت او برطیش و حزن مقصوراست، و سخنهای او را اعتبار نباشد.

⁴⁴ The story assumes he was in Nīshāpūr; although Rayy and Isfahan were administrative centres early in Malikshāh’s reign.

⁴⁵ TJG. p. 205 Tr. HWC. p. 677; JT. p. 112; ZT. p. 134

روزی در اثنای شکایت روزگار و حکایت تعصب سلطان و ارکان دولت [و قصه وزیر] آهی از جان سیدنا برآمد و گفت: «ای دریغا اگر دوکس چنانکه باید با من یکدل و یکجهت بودندی من جواب آن ترک و این روستانی بگفتمی»

⁴⁶ TJG. p. 205 Tr. HWC. p. 677; JT. p. 113; ZT. p. 134

رئیس ابو الفضل می‌پنداشت که حسن را از کثرت اذکار و عبادت و طاعت شبها وصیام مدام و مباشرت اسفار و تکمیل اخطار مالیخولیا پدید آمده‌است، و الا پادشاهی را که از مصر تا کاشغر جهان بخطبه و سکه او مزین است، و چندین هزار سوار و پیاده در زیر رایت او، چگونه بدو دل متفق و متحد

He did not consider Ḥasan to be vain or boastful and believed he might be suffering from a breakdown and melancholia; so he secretly started treating him with perfumed drinks and saffronated foods “to fortify the constitution and moisten the brain”. Ḥasan uncovered this and departed. He went to Egypt,⁴⁷ returned and settled at Alamut and then “He ordered Nizām al-Mulk to be killed by the hand of the *fidā’īs*. After forty days, Sulṭān Malikshāh was poisoned and died on the evening of Saturday 18 *Shawwāl*, 485/27 November, 1092 CE.”⁴⁸ The narrative concludes:

“Ra’īs Abū al-Faḍl sought an opportunity and went to Alamut [in the presence of Sayyidnā] and enrolled amongst his followers. One day Sayyidnā asked him: “Oh Ra’īs was it me or you who had the melancholia? Were the perfumed and tintured [seasoned with saffron] drinks necessary for me or you? You saw that as soon as I found my two helpers how I kept my word.” Ra’īs fell at his feet and asked for forgiveness.”⁴⁹

D. Re-reading the “Conversions” of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ

The interlocking parts found across the three chronicles suggest that both the chronological and the legendary biographies of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ originated from Nizari sources—perhaps were even assembled together into the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*. While the more chronological plausible account of Ḥasan’s life and mission has been construed to be valid by modern scholarship, the other has almost universally been rejected as inauthentic. Yet the “three

ملک اورا بر ہم [زنند].

⁴⁷ TJG. p. 206 HWC. p. 678. “It is said that he went to Kirmān. Upon his return from thence he established himself in Alamut and caused Nizām-al-Mulk to be slain by his *fidā’īs*. 40 days later Sultan Malik-Shah himself died also, and the affairs of the realm were thrown into confusion and there was chaos in the provinces.”

⁴⁸ Malikshāh was poisoned it is believed at the instigation of his son-in-law the ‘Abbāsīd caliph whom he had given a year’s leave to abdicate in favour of his son and grandson of the Turkic Sultan.

⁴⁹ JT. p. 113; ZT. p.134

رئیس ابو الفضل فرصتی طلبید و بالموت [پیش سیدنا] رفت و در زمره اصحاب منخرط شد. سیدنا روزی از او پرسید که: ای رئیس مالخولیا مرا بود یا ترا، آش معطر و مزعفر مرا میبایست یا ترا، دیدی که چون دو یار مساعد یافتم چگونه بسخن خود وفا نمودم. رئیس در پای او افتاد و استغفار کرد. و استعفا طلبید.

school-fellows” story has repeatedly been quoted in historical writing about Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and the Nizaris for some 800 years—both in Nizari Ismaili texts and those of others. So why is it dismissed? Scholars anchored in philological approaches have stopped at source criticism and not moved beyond the glaring anachronisms. Marilyn Waldman’s cautions against simply harvesting nuggets of historical information without regard for the factors of authorial intent and functions of the text in its context become vital here.⁵⁰ Can the use of historical critical approaches, instead, suggest the functions of both accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s early life? Who were these accounts intended to appeal to and why?

All three “conversion” narratives in the two accounts glorify Ḥasan. The “standard conversion narrative” shows Ḥasan to be a precocious and intelligent child and a young man who in his intellectual explorations went to the edge of his circle of faith. His search for “Truth” took him to Ismailism and through his own discipline, rectitude and effort rose up within the ranks to the leadership of the *da’wa*. His transformation was initiated and facilitated through the agency of the Ismaili *dā’īs*. The *dā’ī* who conferred the oath on him demurred that Ḥasan’s status was higher than his own. In 1072/464, he was deputised by the chief *dā’ī* in Iran, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh and directed to Cairo. He arrived in Cairo in 1078/471 and spent a tumultuous three years there. Without ever having met the imam-caliph he returned to Isfahan in 1081/473 and busied with the *da’wa*. Nine years later he acquired Alamut. After the death of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir in 1095/487, he remained loyal to Nizār and was, eventually, recognised as the paramount leader of the Nizari polity.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Waldman. *Theory of Historical Narrative*. pp 3ff

⁵¹ JT. pp 99-103

The second narrative—the “miraculous conversion”—is subtly embedded in the first narrative. The moment of Ḥasan’s sickness and what transpired during this time are critical shifts in his psychological orientation to religious self-understanding. In this heretofore unnoticed second conversion narrative, Ḥasan’s account alludes to his sickness as a liminal state where Divine agency mediates his “rebirth” into Ismailism. It is important to note that both Juwayni and Rashid al-Din ascribed Ḥasan’s attainment of the intricacies of the faith to his interactions with another Ismaili, a certain Bū Najm Sarrāj who was not mentioned by Qashani. Drawing on the same Nizari sources, he instead quotes reported speech that when Ḥasan was cured, he attained the intricacies of Divine knowledge (*‘āqibat āz-în bīmārī khalāṣ yāftam wa ghawāmiḡ-i ān ma’rifat yāftam*). The idiom here is of symbolic personal sacrifice, purification, rebirth and unction.⁵² This brief and almost inconsequential passage nested in the larger narrative has enormous hagiographic connotations and raises the stature of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ from that of a mere human adopting a new set of beliefs to the cosmological consecration of the *ḥujjat* (proof—the second highest rank after imam) cleansed and transformed by the act of God. The connection between these two conversion narratives parallels the dialectic of the Prophet’s receipt of the serial Qur’anic revelation over his 23-year-career versus his instantaneous enlightenment in that moment of *iqrā’* in the cave. The language of this narrative even resonates with the cleansing of the black drop from the young Muḥammad’s heart.⁵³

⁵² Arthur Julius Nelson, “The Nature and Significance of the Ceremony of Sacrifice, According to Hubert and Mauss (Continued),” *The Open Court* (1926): Iss. 1, Article 3. Available at: <http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/oj/vol1926/iss1/3>

OED: the action of anointing someone with oil or ointment as a religious rite or as a symbol of investiture as a monarch.

⁵³ Ibn Ishāq, Muḥammad, and Ibn Hishām. *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*. pp ??? Some of the apostle’s companions asked him to tell them about himself. He said: I am what Abraham my father prayed for and the good news of Jesus. When my mother was carrying me she saw a light proceeding from her which showed her the castles of Syria. I was suckled among the Banu Sa’d ibn Bakr, and while I was with a foster-brother of mine behind our tents shepherding the lambs, two men in white raiment came to me with a gold basin full of snow. Then they seized me and opened up my belly, extracted my heart and split it; they extracted a black drop from it

The third narrative—the “politically motivated conversion”—in Rashid al-Din and Qashani’s accounts suggests that Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ joined the Ismaili *da‘wa* as a result of Niẓām al-Mulk’s plotting against him. In addition to being a very weak “conversion” narrative, it is further problematised by Juwayni’s account which excludes the “three school fellows” story and places the episode at Ra’īs Abū al-Faḍl’s house after Ḥasan’s return from Egypt. In the other two accounts, after the affair at the sultan’s court, Ḥasan fled to Rayy and then took refuge with Ra’īs Abū al-Faḍl in Isfahan when Niẓām al-Mulk’s associates escalated their pursuit of him. He was able to win his host over to his *da‘wa*—there is no explanation of how Ḥasan, the defector, went on to become the proselytiser.⁵⁴ Ḥasan’s lament that if he had two like minded people with him, he would give an answer to that Turk and this peasant (*jawāb-i ān turk wa īn rūstānī bi-guftamī*)—namely the Saljuq sultan Malikshāh and his *wazīr* Niẓām al-Mulk—made his host think that he had lost control of his senses.⁵⁵ Ra’īs Abū al-Faḍl started treating him for melancholia. Subsequently he departed on his journey to Egypt. What is the purpose of this third “conversion” narrative—especially if it—as the sourcing suggests—was promulgated by the Nizaris? To whom does it speak? How did it function over time?

1. “CONVERSIONS” OF ḤASAN-I ŠABBĀḤ

and threw it away; then they washed my heart and my belly with that snow until they had thoroughly cleaned them. One said to the other, “Weigh him against ten of his people.” They did so and I outweighed them. Then they weighed me against a hundred and then a thousand, and I outweighed them. He said, “Leave him alone, for by God, if you weighed him against all his people he would outweigh them.”

⁵⁴ It is quite likely that Ra’īs Abū al-Faḍl was already an established member of the *da‘wa* and was providing a safe house for Ḥasan.

⁵⁵ JT. p. 112 This one line is the ONLY anti-Turkic pronouncement in the account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ; yet several scholars have attributed an anti-Turkic revolt to him. These scholars in projecting 20th century ethno-nationalisms have conveniently neglected the second subject of the clause!

Conversion is defined as an individual's "comprehensive personal change of religious worldview and identity, based on both self-report and attribution by others."⁵⁶ While spectacular instantaneous changes are reported, their occurrences are rare. Recent scholarship has tended to view conversion as a gradual process⁵⁷ through which the converts "literally reconstruct their lives, giving new meanings to old events, and putting different emphases in the big "plot" of their life story."⁵⁸ The converts tend to overly abase their pre-conversion faith and selves and elevate their newly adopted faith and position. Henri Gooren has divided this "affiliative process" into five conceptual components (emphatically not stages): predisposing factors, attraction, incipient involvement, active involvement, and commitment".⁵⁹ While the dissatisfaction with the original faith tradition and attachment to the new signals an instability at the personal level of the convert, Richard Bulliet has suggested that the two religious communities should also be viewed as unstable and changing—the destination faith is different from when the early adopters joined to when later converts enlist.

He has argued that

studies of conversion often assume that the religious identities of individuals and groups are clear cut and that change from one identity to another is as unambiguous as turning an electric switch on or off. Yet there is ample evidence that some people waver between religions, adopting one identity in one situation or at one moment in time and another when the situation

⁵⁶ Henri Paul Pierre Gooren. *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation : Tracing Patterns of Change in Faith Practices*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). p. 3; Lewis R. Rambo. *Understanding Religious Conversion*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). p. 17 "conversion and deconversion stories are both essentially self-narratives: individual life histories shaped by personal experience and sociocultural context"

⁵⁷ Gooren. *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation : Tracing Patterns of Change in Faith Practices*. p. 4 and 43ff uses the term "conversion career"

⁵⁸ *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation : Tracing Patterns of Change in Faith Practices* p. 17 Henri Gooren's argument that conversion stories became important after the Reformation and revivals in the 17th century is unaware of the importances of conversion narratives in Islam—the Ismaili *da'wa* literature as already mentioned includes numerous conversion narratives dating back to the 10th century.

⁵⁹ *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation : Tracing Patterns of Change in Faith Practices* p. 28; JT p. 97-98 Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's conversion narrative neatly divides into these five conceptual components.

changes. And it is similarly apparent that there are halfway houses between religions in which beliefs from more than one tradition mix together.⁶⁰

Bulliet in his classic study of conversion to Islam has also emphasised a social process of conversion. He asserted that converts faced a rupture with their former faith community as they joined their newly adopted one since religious identity tended to be one of the primary individual markers of identifications.⁶¹ Lewis Rambo stated that “every conversion is in context, a context that is multifaceted, embracing the political, social, economic and religious domain in which a person is living at the time of his or her conversion. Thus whatever the meaning of conversion, it never takes place outside a cultural context.”⁶²

Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s affiliation and “conversion” took place some two centuries after maximal points of Bulliet’s groundbreaking bell-curve and S-curve. According to this study, in the middle of the 9th/3rd century, conversions to Islam in Iranian societies had peaked—that is more than fifty percent of the population was already Muslim.⁶³ Ḥasan’s “conversion”, then, is better understood as “re-affiliation” since his adoption of Ismailism took place in a context where he and a majority of Iranians were already Muslim.

The Ismaili *da‘wa*—as modern scholarship on conversion proposes—operated within social networks to attract and recruit acolytes. The conversion process frequently began with a challenge by an advocate, in this case by a *dā‘ī*, who sought to persuade the subject of a much

⁶⁰ Richard Bulliet. “Conversion to Islam” in Morgan, and Reid, s. p. 530

⁶¹ Ibid pp 33ff

⁶² Rambo. *Understanding Religious Conversion*. p. 20

⁶³ Richard W. Bulliet. *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period : An Essay in Quantitative History*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979). pp 23 (pp 16ff); Richard Bulliet. “Conversion to Islam” in Morgan, and Reid, s. p. 530-531

more profound and vast view of the cosmos and their place in it.⁶⁴ After conversion, they would be incorporated in the community's activities and their behaviours shaped by the newly adopted religious code. The more fervent adopters of the new religious beliefs would themselves engage in high level participation and espouse proselytic roles towards others around them.⁶⁵ Rambo noted that

social scientists like James Richardson have begun to view people as active agents in the creation of meaning and the selection of religious options. Converts are seekers who actively construct and manage their own conversions, sometimes religious seekers are engaged in "creative bumbling." Their path to transformation is not always clear and direct, but they are able to seek out beliefs, groups, and organizations that serve their perceived needs.⁶⁶

A central element of these processes is biographical reconstruction of the personal life story of the convert in their new context. Initially such a quest narrative of coming to the truth in the new belief would serve the individual's psychological need to relocate themselves in their new community. Richard Travisano observed that conversion involves a "complete disruption" of the previous identity and "ubiquitous utilization" of the new identity, that is the new identity becomes "central to almost all interactions".⁶⁷ John Renard in his study of Sufi piety noted that with "the exception of the most eccentric among them, Friends of God are generally depicted as models of proper demeanour (*adab*) in their relationships with God and their fellow human beings."⁶⁸ In the case of prominent individuals, their narratives become exemplary paradigms to be emulated by new affiliates. In due course, as the community grows, the function of the

⁶⁴ Luther P. Gerlach, and Virginia H. Hine. *People, Power, Change; Movements of Social Transformation*, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970).

⁶⁵ Gooren. *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation : Tracing Patterns of Change in Faith Practices*. pp 47-49; Rambo. *Understanding Religious Conversion*. pp 29ff

⁶⁶ *Understanding Religious Conversion* p. 56. His observation that "most scholars of conversion agree that few conversions take place in areas with well-organized, literate religions supported by the economic, political, and cultural powers of the region. (p. 47)" Has no valence in the context of this study!

⁶⁷ Richard V Travisano, "Alternation and Conversion as Qualitatively Different Transformations," in *Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction*, ed. Gregory Prentice Stone, and Harvey A. Farberman (Waltham, MA: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970). Richard V Travisano p. 605; Gooren. *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation : Tracing Patterns of Change in Faith Practices*. p. 24

⁶⁸ Renard. *Friends of God: Islamic Images of Piety, Commitment, and Servanthood*. p. 145

narratives changes to memorialise the sacral memory of the foundational narratives. Renard elaborated that

Islamic conversion narratives typically fall into two large categories. Some accounts describe the principal character's spiritual awakening as a gradual unfolding, through evaluation of ordinary experience via ever-deeper introspection. Others show more of a flare for the dramatic, depicting the Friend's transformation as a sudden and unexpected turnabout. ... Two general types of sources supply the vast majority of conversion stories. First-person accounts, cast in the form of autobiographical recollections, provide an important insight into the use of more or less standard, perhaps even formulaic, themes. ... Far more numerous than such "autobiographies"—and more important for present purposes—are the third-person hagiographical narratives that prominently feature spiritual turning points in the lives of their subjects.⁶⁹

Over time as inter-communal discourses develop, such narratives of the prominent paradigmatic convert become semiotic signs signifying the doctrinal complexes where the historical individual has little resonance with trans-historic narrativisations. The three narratives of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's adoption of Ismailism clearly represent these stages and in common with the conversion narratives found in several other texts of the Ismaili *da'wa* literature, the narratives from the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* might have served such purposes.

Gooren described five levels of "increasing religious participation: preaffiliation, affiliation, conversion, confession, and finally disaffiliation" to gauge what conversion means and "to analyze the interplay of factors between the individual actor, the religious organization, and the wider social and cultural context".⁷⁰ These levels have been adapted here to schematise the three "conversion" narratives of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. In each of the three schema, conversion is a liminal stage from the previous instability (searching youth profoundly challenged by Ismaili

⁶⁹ *Friends of God: Islamic Images of Piety, Commitment, and Servanthood* pp 44-46

⁷⁰ Gooren, *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation : Tracing Patterns of Change in Faith Practices*. p. 3-4 "The term affiliation denotes formal membership of a religious group that is not a central aspect of one's identity. Confession is a term from theology for a core member identity, involving a high level of participation inside the new religious group and a strong missionary attitude toward nonmembers of the group. Finally, disaffiliation refers to (the process of) detaching one's involvement in an organized religious group." He uses these levels in subsequent chapters to demonstrate his findings.

thought/sickness and impurity of ignorance/entanglement with corruption and treachery) to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's stable final state (pledged to the Ismaili community after his oath was accepted/attained Divine knowledge/escaped to the Ismailis).

Table 6a: Three “Conversion” Narratives of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ Mapped to Theoretical Stages

Stages	Standard Narrative	Miraculous Narrative	Political Narrative
Pre-affiliation	=>Ithnā' sharī family =>In search of a path =>Exposed to Ismaili intellectual challenge	<= same	=>Blood brothers: HS, Nizām al-Mulk and 'Umar Khayyām; promise to help each other later in life =>HS asked the Nizām for a share in rulership =>Sultan demanded accounting of =>Nizām's financial irregularities =>Ḥasan offered an expedited report
Affiliation (disaffiliation from previous faith)	=>Rejected challenge but deeply effected - <i>ilzām</i> =>Read convincing evidence on Ismaili imamate		=>Nizām out-played HS =>HS felt betrayed at court
Conversion	=>HS fell deathly sick =>Realised “T”ruth lay with Ismailism =>Sought out nuanced understandings	HS fell deathly sick =>God wished to cure =>changed HS's being	HS went off to join the Ismailis
Confession	Sought conferral of oath		
Proselytiser	Appointed as <i>na'ib</i> in <i>da'wa</i>		Ra'īs Abū al-Faḍl thought HS was “mad”
Religious authority	=>HS to Cairo and returned =>Led revolutionary <i>da'wa</i>	=>“Reborn” =>Attained <i>ma'rifa</i>	Ra'īs Abū al-Faḍl fell to HS' feet acknowledging his authority

According to Arnold van Gennep, the liminal period is characteristically “ambiguous, paradoxical, and anomalous. As a result, things associated with it are often considered unclean, polluting, and dangerous.”⁷¹ Victor Turner remarked that “transitional beings are particularly polluting, since they are neither one thing nor another; or may be both; or neither here nor

⁷¹ Loring M. Danforth, and Alexander. Tsiaras. *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982). p.37

there; or may even be nowhere... liminal *personae* nearly always and everywhere are regarded as polluting to those who have never been, so to speak, “inoculated”⁷² against them...”⁷³

In the standard narrative the operative crisis was Ḥasan’s fear that he would die not having accepted the truthful imamate. In the second conversion narrative, identified for the first time in this study, the crisis was Ḥasan’s deathly sickness and the transition from this liminality was through Divine action. The political defection narrative placed Ḥasan in the crucible of the Saljuq court and the treachery and connivance of Niẓām al-Mulk was escaped only when he escaped to the Ismailis. The first two narratives might have been used internally as paradigms for emulation and then in ritual commemorations attaching sacrality to Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s memory. The political defection narrative in the form of a third person account depicting Ḥasan as a hero and the famed Niẓām al-Mulk as the villain would have had greater valence outside the nascent Nizari community.

2. DATING THE “THREE SCHOOL FELLOWS” STORY

The content of the “three school fellows” story adds very little of actual value to Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s biography—this is as obvious today as it must have been when the story was written.⁷⁴ Then what was the purpose of the text? When might it have been written? To open

⁷² An example of the “inoculated” are the funeral directors, priests, ... who are used to dealing with people in transitional states – themselves having directly or indirectly experienced the transitions and being used to cushioning and guiding others... in the Ismaili context this role is played by the members of the Ghusal and Maiyyat Committees who handle the ritual washing of the body and other funeral related ceremonies.

⁷³ Victor W. Turner. *The Forest of Symbols; Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967). p.97

⁷⁴ In his study of the narratives related to the conversion of Özbek Khan, Devin DeWeese noted: “it would not be entirely inappropriate to seek some “historical core” his [Ötemish Ḥājjī’s] account of Özbek Khan’s conversion; it is, however, less relevant for our purposes, since what we are concerned with is not the extent to which certain narratives reflect “historical reality” but the way in which those narratives were constructed and transmitted, building upon earlier accounts and inspiring later narrative transformations.” Devin A. DeWeese. *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde : Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition*, (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994). p. 160. This

new pathways of analyses, a conjectural proposition is being made here that the purpose of the text was to win favour of Sultan Bark-yāruq and to cause a breach between him and the Nizāmiyya (the sons and entourage of Nizām al-Mulk) who initially supported him; and that it was promulgated between about 1094/487 and 1101/494. The story functions in several ways: 1) it elevated Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ to have associated with the famous poet and *wazīr* from childhood, and characterised him as honest and steadfast; 2) it implicated Nizām al-Mulk of obfuscating financial transparency to the sultan and of being a power hungry devious manipulator; 3) it showed Ḥasan to be more daring than a respected Isfahani Ismaili could ever imagine. The explicit attack was on what Nizām al-Mulk stood for; however, there was also an implicit insinuation against the highly successful Ismaili *dā'ī* Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh at Isfahan.

After the assassination of Nizām al-Mulk in October 1092/*Ramaḍān* 485 and the death of Sultan Malikshāh some thirty-four days later, the Saljuq realm descended into chaos. On and off for two years, the *khuṭba* was recited in the name of Maḥmūd the infant son of Malikshāh's powerful wife, Tarkan Khātūn. The Nizāmiyya, according to Ibn al-Athīr were "inclined towards Bark-yāruq by nothing other than their hatred of Tāj al-Mulk, because he was Nizām al-Mulk's enemy and was suspected of bringing about his death."⁷⁵ The support for 13 year-old contender, Sultan Bark-yāruq, proved to be unreliable in the midst of shifting alliances of the *a'yān* and amīrs. Whilst several sons of Nizām al-Mulk served as Bark-yāruq's *wazīrs*, his relationship with Mu'ayyad al-Mulk is of significant importance. The latter became Bark-

observation and DeWeese's approaches are very much relevant to this case study in that the "historical core" in the TSF story is less relevant than the purpose and structure of the narrative as well as its transmissions

⁷⁵ Ibn al-Athīr. *Annals of the Saljuq Turks*. Tr p. 263 Tāj al-Mulk was Nizām al-Mulk's co-wazīr and opponent; he was killed by the Nizāmiyya in *Muḥarram* 486/February 1093

yāruq's *wazīr* when the prince's infant half-brother Maḥmūd died on 17 November, 1094/29

Shawwāl 487. He was dismissed six months later; according to Ibn al-Athīr:

During this year [1095/488] Barkyāruq dismissed his vizier, Mu'ayyad al-Mulk, son of Nizām al-Mulk, and appointed his brother, Fakhr al-Mulk. The reason for this was that when Barkyāruq had defeated and killed his uncle Tutush, he sent a eunuch servant to bring his mother, the Lady Zubayda, from Isfahan. Mu'ayyad al-Mulk in common cause with several emirs advised Barkyāruq to abandon her, to which he replied, 'Only for her and if she can be with me do I want the kingdom.' When she had come and learnt the situation, she showed hostility to Mu'ayyad al-Mulk. Majd al-Mulk Abu'l-Fadl al-Balasani (sic) had accompanied her on her journey, and he realised that he would achieve no position of influence with Mu'ayyad al-Mulk. Now there was a difference between Mu'ayyad al-Mulk and his brother Fakhr al-Mulk on account of some jewels that their father Nizām al-Mulk had left. When Fakhr al-Mulk learnt of the sultan's mother's hostility towards his brother, Mu'ayyad al-Mulk, he offered large sums of money for the vizierate, his wish was granted, his brother removed and he himself appointed.⁷⁶

The troublesome former *wazīr* encouraged the Sultan's younger half brother Muḥammad to

rebel and agitated amongst the amīrs to switch their allegiances. Ibn al-Athīr wrote:

We have already mentioned before this the changes of fortune of Mu'ayyad al-Mulk 'Ubayd Allah, son of Nizām al-Mulk, how he was with Emir Unur and encouraged him to rebel against Sultan Barkiyaruq. When Unur was killed, Mu'ayyad al-Mulk went to Prince Muḥammad and advised him to break with his brother and strive to win the sultanate, which he did. He stopped the *khuṭbah* in Bark-yāruq's name throughout his lands and had the prayers said for himself as sultan, having appointed Mu'ayyad al-Mulk as his vizier.⁷⁷

In April 1101/*Jumādā'l-ākhira* 494 Bark-yāruq, himself, slew Mu'ayyad al-Mulk for having killed his mother two years earlier when she was captured at Isfahan as Muḥammad b. Malikshāh's forces chased the Sultan out of the Saljuq capital. Ibn al-Athīr reported that the Sultan had found a note extorting 5000 dinars from his mother signed by Mu'ayyad al-Mulk.

The reason for the enmity of the amīrs against Lady Zubayda is not apparent in the sources; however, Majd al-Mulk Abū'l- Faḍl al-Balāsānī who looked after her interests was accused of association with the Ismailis. Ibn al-Athīr reported that in 1098-99/492 Bark-yāruq's amīr Unur had demanded that the sultan surrender al-Balāsānī to him else he would revolt. He had

⁷⁶ *Annals of the Saljuq Turks* p. 284

⁷⁷ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. p. 20

marched from Isfahan to Rayy with a cavalry 10000; however, before the armies approached each other, he was assassinated while breaking his fast and in the tumult his army dispersed.⁷⁸

Ibn al-Athīr reported that when Bark-yāruq had established himself, his affairs were managed by al-Balāsānī who took Tikrīt from the amīr Ghawharāʾīn and gave the *iqṭāʿ* to Kayqubād Hazārasb al-Daylamī. When Bark-yāruq died, Muḥammad b. Malikshāh gave the *iqṭāʿ* to his amīr Āqsunqur al-Bursuqī and after a seven-month siege Kayqubād yielded the city over to the amīr Ṣadaqa b. Mazyad. Ibn al-Athīr noted that Kayqubād died eight days later and was “said to be associated with the Bāṭinīs”. He added that his “death was fortunate for Ṣadaqa, for, had Kayqubād remained in his service, Ṣadaqa would have been exposed to people’s suspicions about his beliefs and his religious orientation.”⁷⁹ Ibn al-Athīr claimed that al-Balāsānī was accused of inciting the assassinations by the Nizaris of amīrs opposed to Bark-yāruq. The killing of the amīr Bursuq resulted in his sons Zankī and Āqbūrī and other amīrs to suspect al-Balāsānī. When Muḥammad b. Malikshāh revolted at Muʾayyad al-Mulk’s instigation, the emboldened amīrs demanded that sultan Bark-yāruq surrender of al-Balāsānī promising to spare his life. However, he was killed by the troops and his head was delivered to Muʾayyad al-Mulk b. Nizām al-Mulk. Ibn al-Athīr noted that he had Shīʿi sympathies⁸⁰ and that his architect hired to repair the dome of the tomb of Ḥasan b. ʿAlī and al-ʿAbbās was also killed despite being given a guarantee of security (*amān*).⁸¹

⁷⁸ IA p. 21; JT. p. 134 Lists an assassination: “Amīr and commander (amīr sipahdār, both terms mean commander in Arabic and Persian respectively) Unur Malikshāhī by Ḥusayn Khwārazmī in *Muḥarram* 489/January 1096”

⁷⁹ Ibn al-Athīr. IA. tr I:109-110

⁸⁰ IA tr I:24-25

⁸¹ IA tr I:65

Some years earlier, in 1096/489, Bark-yāruq assigned Girdkūh to Amīrdād Ḥabashī b. Altūntāq over the complaints of Malikshāh's retainer who had possessed the fortress and lands. Amīrdād deputised Ra'īs Muẓaffar, an Ismaili, to govern the castle for him.⁸² While protecting his territories in the name of the sultan, Amīrdād fielded armies with large contingents of Ismailis. During the internecine battles with his brother Muḥammad, the Ismailis killed a number of *amīrs* and notables loyal to Muḥammad. Ibn al-Athīr recorded that "the enemies of Barkyāruq attributed these deeds to him and suspected him of sympathy towards the Bāṭinīs"⁸³. On the battlefields, Bark-yāruq's soldiers were taunted as *Bāṭinīs* (esoterists) by Muḥammad's forces.⁸⁴ There are a number of such correlates during Bark-yāruq's 'reign' when mapped together yield picture of the sultan's acquiescence if not collusion with the Ismailis.

Following Ibn al-Athīr, Rashid al-Din indicated that as Nizari military power increased, their numbers multiplied—these two changes are complementary, of course,—and as their scope of military operations increased, the enmity of those opposed to them was exacerbated. For some time the Nizari creed was allowed to be openly preached and practiced. Rashid al-Din stated that

Bark-yāruq was well disposed to the *Raḥīqān* and did not deny their belief (*Bark-yāruq dustdār-i Raḥīqān būdī, wa 'aqīdat īshān-rā munkarna*). From among the *Raḥīqān*, Kiyā Fakharāvar Asadābādī came to his presence and [openly] preached the *da'wa* to the people (*bā mardum sukhan-i da'wat*

⁸² JT. 117-118: On the 5 *Rajab*/15 July he assembled an army and took it there. The castellan came to know of the death of his lord and also not having provisions came to peace. In the middle of Sha'bān/August, Amīrdād having won it [the castle] over, established a deputy there and himself came to Dāmaghān. Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 321ff

⁸³ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. tr I:45 Lit: esoterists - due to their focus on the *bāṭin*

⁸⁴ *IA* tr I:40-41 and 45-47;

gufti). Wazīr Dihistānī⁸⁵ ordered, without permission of the sultan, that he should be killed. Sayyidnā sent an attendant (*ghulām*), who at the gates of Isfahan to put an end to his evil.⁸⁶

David Duran Guédy's translation: "Berk Yaruq showed friendship to the Ismaili lieutenants and did not refute their beliefs"⁸⁷ is not precise enough. According to Rashid al-Din's text, Bark-yāruq may even have accepted Ismailism for a time.

3. SHĀHDIZ

One of the main ties between Bark-yāruq and the Ismailis had to do with the fortress of Shāhdiz some eight miles south of Isfahan, the Saljuq administrative capital. Rashid al-Din and Qashani wrote about the Ismaili control of Shāhdiz drawing on the *Saljūqnāma* (History of the Saljuqs) of Ṣāḥib al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī⁸⁸ and the *al-Kāmil fī'l-tārīkh* (The Complete History) of the chronicler 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr.⁸⁹ The *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* apparently was silent on this entire episode—evidenced also by no mention of the events in Juwayni. This points to internal factionalism among the Ismailis since in the "three school fellows" story there are also implicit insinuations against the Ismaili *dā'ī* Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh at Isfahan (Cf. Part One:6-III).

⁸⁵ *IA* tr i:55-56

⁸⁶ *JT*. p. 120; Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. tr i:55: 12 *Ṣafar* 495/13 December, 1101. Bark-yāruq's wazīr, al-A'azz Abū'l-Maḥāsīn 'Abd al-Jalīl b. Muḥammad al-al-Dihistānī, was killed on 12 *Ṣafar* this year [195] [6 December 1101 = actually 13 December 1101] at Isfahan, while he was besieging it with Bark-yāruq. Per Ibn al-Athīr: "On that day he rode from his tent to wait upon the sultan and a fair-haired youth came to him. It is said that he was a page of Abu Sa'īd al-Ḥaddād, whom the vizier had put to death in the past year. He seized the opportunity to attack. It is also said that he was a Baṭīnī. He wounded him in several places. The vizier's men scattered and ran away. They came back and the man who came closest to him was severely wounded. The attacker returned to the vizier and left him at the last gasp of life."

⁸⁷ Durand-Guédy. *Iranian Elites*. p. 167

⁸⁸ Nīshāpūrī. *Saljūqnāma*. pp 48-50; Nīshāpūrī. *Seljuq Turks*. pp 74-77

⁸⁹ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. Vol 1 Year 494 [1100-1101] pp. 39-48 and Year 500 [1106-1107] pp. 117-119.

From the time of Malikshāh's refortification of Shāhdiz, whenever the Sultan was away from his administrative capital,⁹⁰ Isfahan, the fortress was used to house and provide sanctuary for the young royal pages and slave girls, and presumably the young princes and princesses. In these times, the treasury and armoury were also moved from the citadel to the fort, high up on the 2200 metre Shāhkūh peak. A trusted guard of Daylāmī troops was positioned on the mountain for protection. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh befriended the castellan, converted the troops and took control of Shāhdiz around 1095/488.⁹¹ Bark-yāruq either actively or passively acquiesced to these developments. He had been unable to maintain control of his father's capital and may have yielded control of Shāhdiz to the Ismailis to keep his opponents in check. Durand Guédy asserted that the

great [Khurāsānī 'ulamā'] families installed by the Saljūqs could hardly fail to see that under Berk Yaruq's rule the Ismailis had never ceased to press their advantage. In 492/1099, alarming news arrived from Rayy. The most important representatives of the Saljūq state in the city had been assassinated, including the Ra'īs Abū Muslim al-Rāzī, the mufti Abū Ja'far and the emir Abū l-Faraj Qara-Tegin. It appears certain that the accusation that Berk Yaruq openly supported Ismailism had not yet been raised at this point. On the other hand, his close association with Majd al-Mulk al-Balāsānī, a Shi'i of Qumm who had been an ally of Tāj al-Mulk Abū'l-Ghanā'im, could only provoke the Khurasani networks that dominated Isfahan.⁹² Majd al-Mulk's responsibility for the loss of the citadel of Takrīt, and his equivocal stance during the wave of assassinations that struck the Turkish emirs from 490/1097 on, had led to accusations that he was an Ismaili. He had in the end been assassinated near Rayy, but the odour of iniquity still clung to Berk Yaruq, who had protected him until the last.⁹³

The tabulation of selected events during the career of Bark-yāruq shows an increasing amount of pressure he faced from the amīrs in his quest for the sultanate and in many instances simply to survive. From 1095/487, the instigator of opposition was Mu'ayyad al-Mulk b. Niẓām al-Mulk.

⁹⁰ Durand-Guédy. *Iranian Elites*. pp ???— these absences were lengthy and frequent

⁹¹ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. year 1107 – 12 = 1095; Durand-Guédy. *Iranian Elites*. p. 160

⁹² Majd al-Mulk was revenue accountant (*mustawfī*) during the successive vizierates of 'Izz al-Mulk b. Niẓām al-Mulk (486/1093-487/1094), Mu'ayyid al-Mulk b. Niẓām al-Mulk (487/1094-488/1095) and Fakhr al-Mulk b. Niẓām al-Mulk (488/1095-492/1099). As regards the last-mentioned, Anūshirwān b. Khālīd says that all power lay in the hands of Majd al-Mulk (see Bundārī: 86, lines 14-15)

⁹³ *Iranian Elites* p. 164. The "odour of iniquity" in the passage is remarkable.

During this fractious period when Mu'ayyad al-Mulk b. Niẓām al-Mulk was inciting the amīrs against the sultan and had them demand the life of the sultan's trusted minister Majd al-Mulk al-Balāsāni, the promulgation and the tarnish in the "three school fellows" story on Niẓām al-Mulk's character as a power hungry devious manipulator focused on accumulating his own wealth would easily have besmirched the latter's son. The Sultan's ears would have been receptive to the message of the story given his dire financial circumstances and fleeting support from the shifting alliances of his amīrs. The Ismailis made common cause with him and played significant roles over his career in various parts of his domains. Did Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's supporters reformulate and aggrandise his biography to promote their alliance with the struggling sultan?

The next case study examines Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's route from Iran to Egypt and the religious disputation he engaged in at Mayyāfāriqīn in Anatolia. Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ followed Naṣīr-i Khusraw's route until he turned back from Mayyāfāriqīn and added hundreds of miles to his journey. Why did he take this longer route to Cairo? Why did he turn back from Mayyāfāriqīn? Is it valid to suggest that he went to Cairo for training given that in the disputation at Mayyāfāriqīn he already expounded the concepts central to the doctrine of *ta'līm* associated with him?

Table 6b: Timeline of Events in Bark-yāruq's Career Related to the Ismailis

Year	M	Event	Year	M	Event
1092	12	Niẓāmiyya + amirs support Bark-yāruq out of hatred for Tāj al-Mulk	1099	11	al-Balāsānī, Shi'i wazīr of Bark-yāruq killed by amīrs
1093	9	Bark-yāruq in Baghdad	1099	11	Amīr Unūr assassinated
1093	11	Bark-yāruq kills Amīr Yalbard for cursing his mother	1099	11	<i>khutba</i> for Muḥammad b. Malikshāh
1094	2	<i>khutba</i> in Bark-yāruq's name	1100	1	Amīrdād killed by Muḥammad's amīr Bazgash
1094	2	caliph al-Muqtadi—possibly poisoned; quietly buried!	1100	1	Ra'is Muẓaffar hosted Sanjar
1094	2	Oath of Bark-yāruq to caliph al-Mustaẓhir	1100	1	Ra'is Muẓaffar argued Nizaris subject of Sanjar
1094	2	Public oath to new Caliph	1101	4	Bark-yāruq killed Mu'ayyad al-Mulk
1094	11	d. Maḥmūd b. Malikshāh	1101	6	Massacre of Ismailis in Isfahan
1095	5	Mu'ayyad al-Mulk dismissed as wazīr	1101	6	Bark-yāruq ordered massacre of Ismailis in Isfahan?
1096	1	Amīrdād reached Girdkūh	1101	12	Bark-yāruq acted against caliph
1096	7	Amīrdād acquired Girdkūh	1101	12	Bark-yāruq's wazīr Dihistānī assassinated by Nizaris
1096	11	Ra'is Muẓaffar deputised for Amīrdād at Girdkūh	1102	10	Bark-yāruq denied entry into Isfahan
1096	11	Nizaris capture Lamasar	1104	7	Death of Bark-yāruq
1098	1	Bāṭinīs prospered as Amīr Unūr was away from Isfahan	1107	4	Saljuqs besieged and took Shāhdiz
1099	9	Mu'ayyad al-Mulk killed Bark-yāruq's mother	1107	5	Nizari debate & Ibn 'Aṭṭāsh's <i>fatwā</i> in Isfahan
1099	10	Amīr Unūr besieged Shāhdiz???	1107	7	Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh executed
1099	11	Mu'ayyad al-Mulk rallied amīrs against Bark-yāruq			

II. Path to the Imam: Debates at Mayyāfāriqīn

In 1072/464 ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh deputised (*niyābat*⁹⁴) Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ to a position in the *da‘wa*. Some point thereafter, he instructed that Ḥasan should go to the Fatimid court, which at the time was ruled by the imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir bi’llāh (r. 1036-1095/427-487). Five years after his deputisation, Ḥasan set off on the journey from Isfahan in the direction of Āzarbāyjān and arrived at Mayyāfāriqīn. Here, Ḥasan’s actions drew the attention of the local establishment. Rashid al-Din and Qashani record that from “among the notaries of the city (*‘udūl-i shahr*) a man had gone to see him and entered into a debate and argument with him over the matter on *ijtihād* (intellectual reasoning/opinion).”⁹⁵ It would seem that Ḥasan drew a crowd—perhaps calling them to Ismailism—and the local jurist who came to challenge and debate him was bested. When he reported this to the *qāḍī* (magistrate), the latter said:

هرچه زودتر او را اخراج باید کرد که اگر این سخن بامیر و مردم شهر برسد [بس] مارا زیان دارد.

“As quickly as possible he (Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ) must be banished. If this discussion gets to the *amīr* (commander - here, the governor of the city) or the people of the city it will be to our detriment.”⁹⁶

Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s overall route to Egypt was circuitous and long. Heading northwards from Isfahan through Āzarbāyjān to Mayyāfāriqīn⁹⁷ in the Lake Van region, after this debate, he turned southeast to Mosul and from there to Damascus, Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, Acre, Caesarea, and by sea to Tinnis, Maqs and finally Cairo. This route calculates to over 2500 present day

⁹⁴ An office among Ithnā‘asharīs. Hodgson. OA. p. 45;

⁹⁵ ‘Allama Hilli quoted in Elr.: “Ejtehad” defined as “expending of one’s utmost effort in the inquiry into legal questions admitting of only probable answers”. JT. p. 99

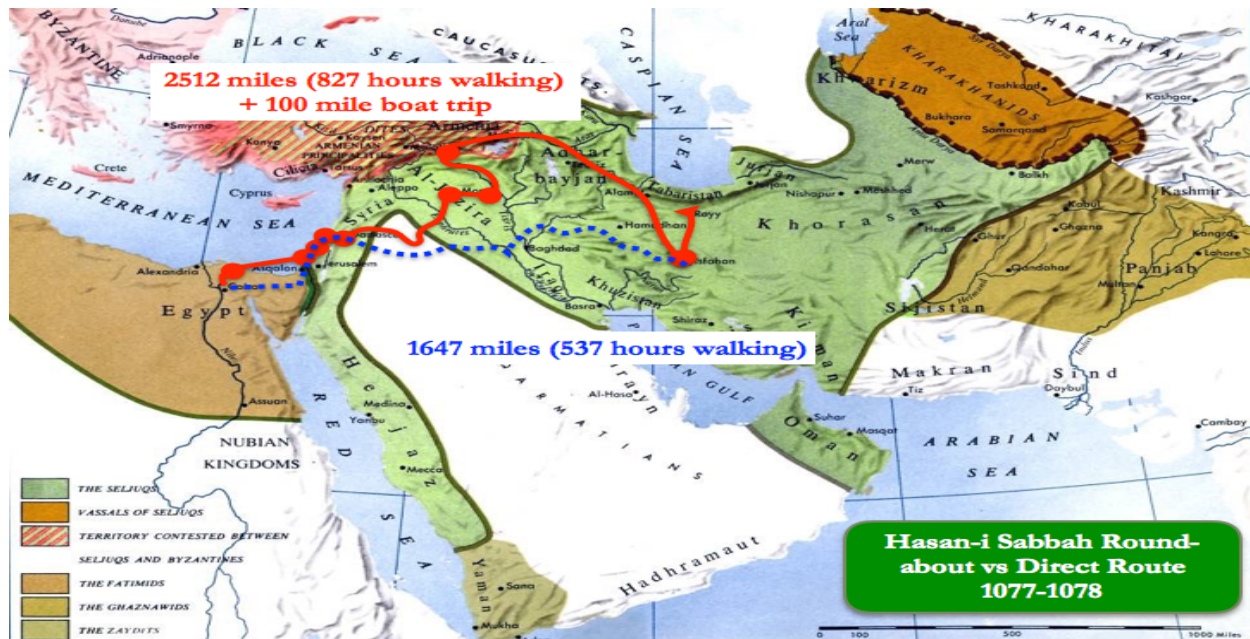
از عدول شهر شخصی بدیدن او رفته بود با او در حدیث اجتهاد ایراد و مناظره می رفت

⁹⁶ This incident is not reported in Juwaynī. TJG.. p. 99-100; ZT. p. 122-123; How would have Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s biographer come to know this?

⁹⁷ The Encyclopaedia of Islam, First Edition, M. Th. Houtsma, *et al.*, eds. Leiden; London: Brill, 1913-1936. Minorsky, V. “Maiyāfāriqīn.” H. F. Amedroz, “The Marwanid Dynasty At Mayyafariqin in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries Ad,” JRAS (1903).; Vladimir Minorsky, “Caucasica in the History of Mayyafariqin,” BSOAS 13, no. 1 (1949).

road miles.⁹⁸ The more direct route: Isfahan westward to Baghdad to Damascus and on to Cairo is 1647 present day road miles.

Figure 6a: Comparison of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's Route to Cairo versus Shortest Route



Some three decades earlier Nāṣir-i Khusraw had taken the same northern trade route passing through Āzarbāyjān and Armenia;⁹⁹ he arrived in Mayyāfāriqīn on 4 December, 1046/26 *Jumādā'l-āwwal*, 438.¹⁰⁰

Explanations are not available for either route and none of the modern studies have commented on this issue. Could it be that the Ismaili *da'wa* was cultivating followings at the

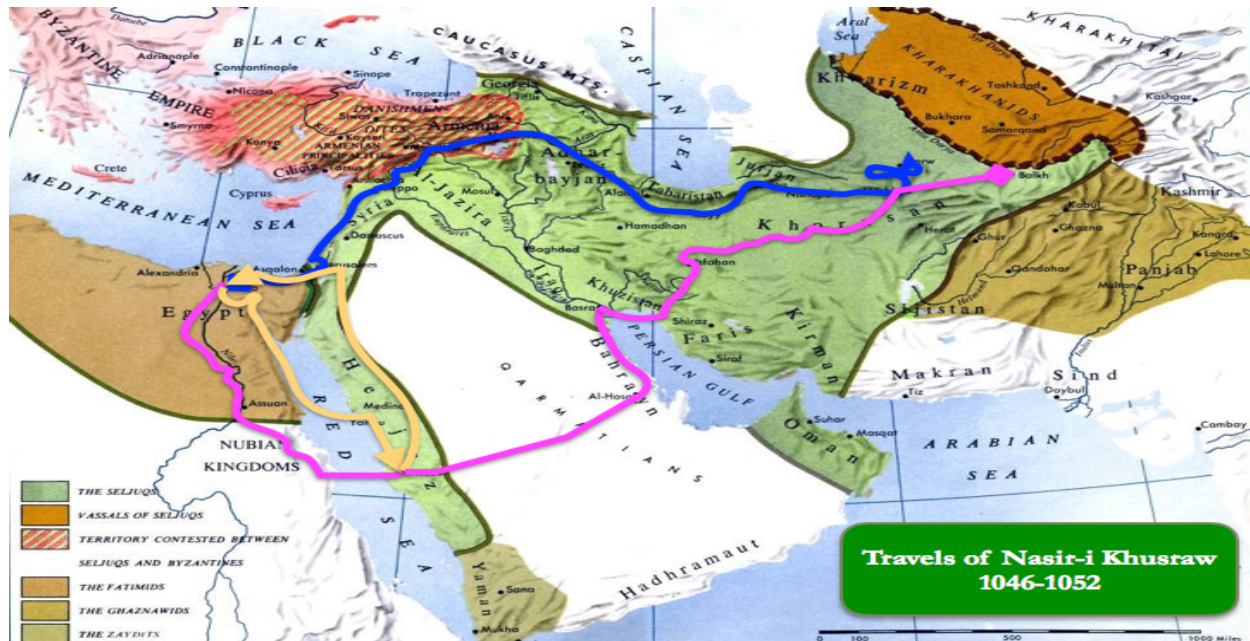
⁹⁸ Calculated over Google maps at <https://www.google.com/maps> ... 2512 miles [827 hours walking] + 100 mile journey by boat

⁹⁹ Available at: <http://nasirhusraw.iis.ac.uk/journey>

¹⁰⁰ Ḥakīm Abū Mu'īn Nāṣir-i Khusraw. *Naser-e Khosraw's Book of Travels*, Translated by Wheeler M. Thackston. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1986). p 9 (Thackston has the date as November 28, 1046)

margins and out of reach of the Abbasid-Saljuq power? Was this the cause of the interest in Mayyāfāriqīn and the Diyar Bakr region?¹⁰¹

Figure 6b: Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Route to Cairo



Wladimir Ivanow has suggested that Nāṣir-i Khusraw may have been collecting dues for the Fatimid imam-caliph from the Ismaili communities and this may have been the reason for his route.¹⁰² Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's route to Cairo suggests that he was closely tracking Nāṣir-i Khusraw's route and perhaps, the Saljuq *ghazā* activities in Anatolia, namely the Battles of Manzikert (1071/463) and Nicea (1077/469) may have broken existing networks and caused him to turn back to Mosul and follow a different route adding several hundred miles to his journey.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ It is noteworthy that in this region further into Anatolia several groups in later centuries espouse strong inclinations to 'Alid loyalism. Are there any connections here?

¹⁰² KP, p xvii

¹⁰³ As a result of these battles, the Byzantine ruler sent a message to the Pope seeking aid which resulted in the Crusades.

On this, Hodgson wrote: “Ḥasan set off from Iṣfahan for Egypt, going a bit roundabout. First he went north into Adharbāyjān (still within [the *dāʿī*] ‘Abd al-Malik’s territory¹⁰⁴); thence to Mayyāfāriqīn; whence he was chased out by the Qāḍī for publicly disputing the right of individuals—that is, other than the imām—to interpret religion as did the Sunnī legists.”¹⁰⁵ Similarly Bernard Lewis wrote: “[H]e travelled northward to Azerbaijan, and thence to Mayyāfāriqīn, where he was driven out of town by the Qadi for asserting the exclusive right of the Imam to interpret religion, and thus denying the authority of the Sunni Ulema.”¹⁰⁶ Demonstrating a stemmatic relationship with both his predecessors, Daftary wrote: “First he travelled north to Ādharbayjān and thence to Mayyāfāriqīn. There, he held religious disputations, refuting the authority of the Sunnī ‘*ulamā*’ and asserting the exclusive right of the imam to interpret religion. He was expelled by the town’s Sunnī *qāḍī*.”¹⁰⁷

In addition to this geographic question, modern scholarship, as can be seen from the above quotes, does not expand on the doctrinal import of this episode. Using language common to post-*ghayba* Ithnā‘asharī Shi‘ism in refuting legal probability in the exercise of *ijtihād*, Ḥasan asserted certitude of the Ismaili—at this time the Fatimid—imam as Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī had several decades earlier.¹⁰⁸ Ḥasan used *kalām* mode of disputation to attack the plurality in the *ijtihād* of the *mujtahids*. In the four propositions of the syllogism (translated below), he arrived at a proof that no one—not the *faqīh* (jurisprudent) because he knows that one *mujtahid*’s preference and authority is no better than another’s, nor the commoner who does not have the capacity for such discernment of the validity of a creed—no one, should prefer and

¹⁰⁴ MGSJ provided no citation for this claim...

¹⁰⁵ Hodgson. OA. p. 46

¹⁰⁶ Daftary. *Assassin Legends*. p. 40

¹⁰⁷ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 312-313

¹⁰⁸ Master of the Age.

therefore practice the Shafīʿī creed and by extension any faith without an authoritative and trustworthy teacher (*muʿallim-i ṣādiq*). He argued:

می‌گفت: که اجتهاد فقیهی بر اجتهاد فقیهی اولی نیست، پس فقیه‌را نشاید که مذهب شافعی [اولی] دارد، که این نیز مجتهد است و او نیز، و عامی‌را نشاید که مذهب ترجیح نهد، که مجتهد نباشد. چون فقیه‌را نشاید که مذهب شافعی [اولی] دارد، که پس اجتهاد کار کرده باشد، و عامی‌را نشاید که مذهب شافعی [اولی] دارد، که مذهبی بر مذهبی [اولی] کرده باشد و او مجتهد نیست. پس مذهب شافعی گرامی باید دانستن.

He [Ḥasan] said: “The *ijtihād* of one *faqīh* (jurisprudent) is not better than the *ijtihād* than another. Then it is not appropriate for a *faqīh* to prefer the Shafīʿī *madhhab* (school of interpretation) because he is a *mujtahid* (one authorised to engage in intellectual reasoning) and so is the other. It is not appropriate for the common person to give preference to a *madhhab* because he is not a *mujtahid*. Since it is not appropriate for a *faqīh* to prefer the Shafīʿī *madhhab* after having practised *ijtihād*; and it is not appropriate for the common person to uphold Shafīʿī *madhhab* when he compares one *madhhab* above another while he is not a *mujtahid*. Then why should the Shafīʿī *madhhab* be preferred?”

The record of the debate only gives Ḥasan’s arguments which are based in the discourse of Shīʿī theological rejections of *ijtihād*.¹⁰⁹ These four steps are an extension of the syllogism on *taʿlīm* attributed to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and found in the so-called *al-Fuṣūl al-arbaʿa*¹¹⁰ (*Four Treatises*).

About these Daftary wrote that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s major theological treatise, *al-Fuṣūl al-arbaʿa*, written originally in Persian, has not survived directly, but it has been preserved fragmentarily by Ḥasan’s contemporary al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), in his heresiographical work written around 521/1127. This treatise was also seen and paraphrased by a number of Persian historians who had access to Nizārī Ismaili sources of the Alamūt period which have not survived. In the *Fuṣūl*, Ḥasan restated the Shīʿī doctrine of *taʿlīm*, establishing a logical basis in four propositions for the necessity of an authoritative and trustworthy teacher (*muʿallim-i ṣādiq*) as the spiritual guide of mankind, who would be none other than the Ismaili imam of the time.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Halm. *Shīʿism*, pp. 67-71, 94-111. Elr.: “Ejtehad”

¹¹⁰ Shahrastānī. *K. Milal waʾl-Niḥal*, pp 232-235; Shahrastānī. *Muslim Sects*, pp 168-170 & Hodgson. OA. pp 325ff

¹¹¹ Daftary. *IL-B*.

Daftary mentioned that the three Ilkhanid chroniclers had seen the *Fuṣūl* and gave references to their paraphrase of the doctrine;¹¹² however, both Hodgson and Daftary in their discussion of the doctrine of *taʿlīm* do not connect Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's disputation at Mayyāfāriqīn.¹¹³

These premises reported here closely match the doctrines in the short tract, *Rāh-i maʿrifat* (*Path to Knowledge of God*) attributed to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. Jalal Badakhchani although he did not give this title, recently published an edition of this text from a manuscript dated 1243/640 suggesting that it is a *unicum*. However, the text prepared for this research from IIS Persian MS 32:21 copied in the early 20th/14th century and is identical barring a few words to Badakhchani's edition.¹¹⁴ Like *al-Fuṣūl al-arbaʿa*, this text also emphasises the imam's authoritative teaching; it

begins that the path to *knowledge of God* (*rāh-i maʿrifat*)

is teaching (*taʿlīm*). Every heart into which teaching finds a path obtains a portion of divine light; the more it accepts teaching the more enlightenment increases, until knowledge of God is obtained. Once someone has attained gnosis, he has reached God (*bi khudāy rasīd*). Once he has reached God, knowledge and gnosis have no path there, because knowledge becomes a veil for gnosis, and gnosis a veil for the rightful person (*muḥiqq*). Both knowledge and gnosis must be abandoned.¹¹⁵

Only the trustworthy teacher (*muʿallim-i ṣādiq*) is capable of providing this *taʿlīm* with the Divine light which is the Word of Unity (*kalima-yi tawḥīd*); while everything else is refutable the teaching of this teacher, the words of the people of Truth are eternally beyond reproach. This teacher is one and through him his followers are one, although his disciples and novices (*mustajibān*) are numerically individual,

¹¹² TJG. pp. 195-199; HWC. vol. 2, pp. 671-673; JT. pp. 105-107, Rueben Levy, "The Account of the Ismaʿīlī Doctrines in the 'Jami' al-Tawarikh' of Rashid al-Din," *JRAS* (1930). pp. 532-536, and ZT. pp. 142-143.

¹¹³ Hodgson. OA. pp 53-58; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 339-342.

¹¹⁴ Badakhchani, "Shahrastānī's Account." Badakhchani's translation is used here with minor modifications. I have preferred "knowledge of God" rather than "gnosis" in SJB's translation which has connotations of "knowledge of mysteries"; "teaching" rather than "instruction"; and "trustworthy teacher" in place of "veracious or legitimate teacher"

¹¹⁵ IIS Per-MS 32:21

they are all one, because in reality and meaning they belong to Him and are all to be considered as one. Meaning and reality (*ma'nī wa ḥaqīqat*), we have said, is the light of Unity (*nūr-i tawḥīd*), which enlightens their hearts with the same knowledge of God; they will recognize only one person who is the teacher, the caller (*dā'ī*) and the guide (*dalīl*), from whom they have acquired knowledge of God and understanding. Therefore, through him they are one, through him they have faith and believe; through him they recognize and worship God—not through each other or anyone else.¹¹⁶

Beyond this unity are the idol worshippers in perdition. Commenting on the mode of selection of the Sunni caliph, as opposed the designation (*naṣṣ*) of the imam, the author states that choosing someone “through one’s own inclination [saying]: ‘this is a faithful brother’ and then worshipping him. This idol-worshipping is like literalism. In this manner no one can reach himself, let alone reaching the Lord.”¹¹⁷ The access to knowledge of the Divine from the

trustworthy teacher becomes manifest in the believer and radiates to others; the text states

The path to God is knowledge of God, and the path to knowledge of God is teaching. The faithful person (*mu'min*) can be recognized through the light of God, which is this very ‘Word of Unity’. The faithful person is alive with the light of God, and the light radiates from him to the heart of other weak[er] believers.¹¹⁸

The *al-Fuṣūl al-arba'a* from Shahrastānī’s (d. 1153) *al-Milal wa'l-niḥal*¹¹⁹ suggests that the latter may have had access to a text such as the *Rāh-i ma'rifat*

Then [after elaborating the four propositions] he went on to chapters establishing his doctrine, wether supporting or refuting [other] doctrines. Most of them were refutation and disproof; demonstrating error by variety of opinion, and truth by agreement. Among them was the chapter of truth and error, and the small and the great. He notes that there is truth and error in the world. Then he notes that the sign of truth is unity, and the sign of error is multiplicity; and unity comes with *ta'līm*, and multiplicity with reflection. ...

Moreover he prevented ordinary persons from delving into knowledge; and likewise the elite from investigating former books, except those who knew the circumstances of each book and the rank of the authors in every field. With his partisans, in theology he did go beyond saying, Our god is the god of Mohammed. He said, Here we stand [?]; but you say, Our god is the god of our reasons, whatever the reason of every rational man leads to. ...¹²⁰

In eastern Ismaili thought, the imam was remotely present; while the elite within the *da'wa* had freedom of action in the name of the imam through whom they legitimised their own

¹¹⁶ IIS Per-MS 32:21

¹¹⁷ IIS Per-MS 32:21

¹¹⁸ Hodgson. OA; Badakhchani, “Shahrastānī’s Account.” pp 45-48 translation modified

¹¹⁹ Hodgson. OA. pp 325-328

¹²⁰ OA pp 326-327

standing. In practice what was the nature of the channelling of the imam's authority? Do the contentions in the narratives of Iranian and Central Asian *dā'īs* with the bureaucracy in Cairo reflect regional polarisations in the understanding of the role the imam? The report of the disputation at Mayyāfāriqīn demonstrates that Ḥasan was already—on the way to Egypt—an exponent of this central doctrine of *ta'lim* later associated with him. He seemed not to be in the need of any training, what then was the purpose of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's journey to Cairo? *Ta'lim* as presented in the *Fuṣūl al-arba'a* does not amount to a major doctrinal tract; rather it is a set of rhetorical positions for disarming an opponent and to argue for the authority of imam. In this it follows the pattern of the initial arguments to unsettle the potential acolyte in the *K. 'ālim wa'l-ghulam* and other texts.¹²¹ What then was the original nature and function of the prominently recorded the events at Mayyāfāriqīn, amongst those for whom the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* was created? Why did the Ilkhanid chroniclers also record the debates as they did?

The next case study examines the capture of Shāhdiz by Muḥammad b. Malikshāh in 1107/500. The events related to Shāhdiz were not recorded by Juwayni and the mapping of sources shows that Rashid al-Din's team and Qashani used the texts of Ibn al-Athīr, Ṣāḥib al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī and others to compile this account suggesting that the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* was silent on these important events. The accounts allude to possible factional competition between Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and the son of his patron and a possible rival, Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh. The accounts also highlight the level of coexistence between the Saljuqs and the Ismailis and secondly, that already in the second decade of their existence, the Nizaris were willing, at least nominally during times of crisis, to yield the universalist claims of their *da'wa*.

¹²¹ . Master and Disciple.

III. Saljuq Recapture of Shāhdiz Castle

The recapture of Shāhdiz castle from the Ismailis represents an attempt to consolidate and reassert power by the Sultan Muḥammad b. Malikshāh (r. 1105-1118/498-511). This fortress had fallen into the hands of the Nizari Ismailis during the chaos and conflicts of succession to the sultanate after the *wazīr* Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 1092/485) was assassinated and the suspicious death of Sultan Malikshāh (r. 1073-1092/465-485) just a month later.¹²² The Nizaris took advantage of the turmoil of internecine strife and expanded the reach of their *da'wa*. During this time, each of Malikshāh's four sons successively vied for supremacy through warfare and a multitude of shifting alliances.¹²³ After the death of Bark-yāruq b. Malikshāh (r. 1094-1105/487-498), his brother Muḥammad attained uncontested control of the sultanate and sought to undermine the Nizari challenge and eradicate their positions of strength—the chronicles construct him as the champion of Sunnism. For the Nizari Ismailis, these events mark a significant turning point in the rapid evolution of their multi-local polity.¹²⁴

A. A Tale in Three Chronicles

The story of this event is unravelled out of three texts: *Saljūqnāma* (*History of the Saljuqs*) of Ḥaḥīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī completed in the 1170s/560s,¹²⁵ *al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rikh* (*The Complete History*) of Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233/630) completed in the 1230/627¹²⁶ and the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* (*The Compendium of Histories*) of Rashid al-Dīn. Ḥaḥīr al-Dīn's dynastic chronicle of the *Saljuqs* may have been the source for Ibn al-Athīr's annalistic history *al-Kāmil* and both were utilised by Rashid al-Dīn's team in compiling the dynastic chronicle of the Nizaris. Each had different

¹²² Safi. *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry*. pp 74-79; JT. p. 121

¹²³ Bosworth. *nID*. pp 185ff

¹²⁴ The sources do not conclusively indicate whether the Ismaili *da'wa* was head-quartered at Alamut or Isfahan during this early period.

¹²⁵ Nīshāpūrī. *Saljūqnāma*. pp 48-50; Nīshāpūrī. *Saljuq Turks*. pp 74-77

¹²⁶ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. Vol 1 Year 494 [1100-1101] pp. 39-48 and Year 500 [1106-1107] pp. 117-119.

audiences and authorial objectives. This analysis details the subtle inter-relations amongst the numerous actors, maps the narrative shifts in successive sources and elucidates the contextual motivations for these shifts in the reporting of the events of the recapture of Shāhdiz by the Saljuqs in 1106-1107/500. Seven narrative segments relating to the Ismailis in Isfahan from the three sources are synoptically examined for convergences and continuities between the three texts.

1. *SALJŪQNĀMA*

Dated to the reign of the last Saljuq sultan Ṭughril b. Alp Arslān (r. 1176-1194/571-590), the *Saljūqnāma* was completed according to A. H. Morton in 1178/573 while C. Edmund Bosworth suggests 1175/570.¹²⁷ This dynastic chronicle of the Saljuqs lacks accuracy especially about the early rulers;¹²⁸ however, it is one of the key sources from which later historians drew their information about the Saljuqs. In 2004/1425 Morton published a critical edition of the text based on a single manuscript he believed to be Ṣahīr al-Dīn's original text. The unique provenance of this short treatise can be explained by the fact that later historians incorporated the entire *Saljūqnāma* with small changes into their own histories rendering the copying of the original text redundant. To this point, the posthumous publication of Kenneth Luther's translation of the Persian text in 2001/1422 is based on the *Saljūqnāma* incorporated in the *Jāmi' al-tawārikh* of Rashid al-Din Fadl Allah. This text is indicated by the *siglum* Z.

¹²⁷ Nīshāpūrī. *Seljuq Turks.*; Nīshāpūrī. *Saljūqnāma*.

¹²⁸ The chapter on Tughrul Beg, the first Saljuq sultan, is very short and lacks detail. The seminal battle between the Saljuqs and the Ghaznavids at Dandānqān is incorrectly dated in 1038 instead of the commonly held date of 1040.

2. *AL-KĀMIL FĪ L-TA'RĪKH*

As already mentioned *al-Kāmil* is an annalistic universal history ending in 1230/627 and covering events as far away as the Iberian Peninsula to Central Asia and India.¹²⁹ (Cf. Part One: 5-III). Ibn al-Athīr emanated from Mosul and was educated there and in Baghdad. He worked mainly in Mosul and Aleppo under Zangid (fl. 1127-1250/521-648) patronage. It is not clear whether he was able to directly access Persian sources, nonetheless, as D. S. Richards suggested, Ibn al-Athīr “gives the most complete and continuous account available” about the Great Saljuqs.¹³⁰ Ibn al-Athīr deviated from the strict annalistic style to elaborate on particular issues which extended over several years. A clear example of this is found in his coverage of the events related to the Nizari Ismailis in the section on the year 1100-1101/494. This text is indicated by the *siglum* iA.

3. *JĀMI' AL-TAWĀRĪKH*

The JT initially commissioned as a history of the Mongols by the Ilkhanid ruler Ghāzān Khān (d. 1304/703), was expanded under the patronage of his brother and successor Ūljāytū (d. 1316/716) to include the histories of the peoples and polities that Mongols came into contact with. As such, it has a section on the Fatimid Ismailis and the Nizaris.¹³¹ (Cf. Part One:3-III-A). My translation of the section on the Nizari Ismailis in the *Jāmi'* is used, indicated by the *siglum* JT.

B. Ismailis at Isfahan

The *Jāmi'* records that Isfahan had been the head-quarters of the Fatimid *da'wa* in 'Abbāsīd domains. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh, called the “*Dā'ī of Iraq*” was at the apex of the hierarchy in the region. In 1072/464 he had travelled from Isfahan to Rayy where he affirmed Ḥasan-i

¹²⁹ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*.

¹³⁰ EIr. D. S. Richards: “EBN AL-AṬṬĪR, 'EZZ-AL-DĪN ABU'L-ḤASAN 'ALĪ”.

¹³¹ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *JT*.

Şabbāh's acceptance of Ismailism and appointed him as a high level subordinate (*niyābat-i da'wat*). It may be no coincidence that this year marked the death of the Saljuq Sultan Alp Aslān and the ascendancy of Nizām al-Mulk. In 1075/467 when the former returned to Isfahan, it would appear, Ḥasan accompanied him and two years later journeyed to Cairo to the court of the Fatimid *imam-caliph*.¹³² (Cf. Part Two:1-III).

1. BARK-YĀRUQ AND THE NIZARI ISMAILIS

All three sources state that the Nizari strength in Isfahan and in Iran, generally, came about due to the turmoil after the deaths of Nizām al-Mulk and Malikshāh and the subsequent struggles between Bark-yāruq and Muḥammad. The texts read:

ZN: In the days of Bark-yāruq's weakness and the mutual hostility and open enmity over the kingdom, the affairs of the wretched deviationists gained strength, and their propagandists were spread out in every city.
iA: The Baṭinī position prospered through the dispute existing between the two sultans, Barkyāruq and Muḥammad.
JT: During the rebellion between the brothers: Barkyāruq and Muḥammad, they [the Nizaris] provisioned the castle and increased its treasuries.

The most detailed account is Ibn al-Athīr's. He added that as Nizari military power increased, their numbers multiplied—these two changes are complementary, of course—and as their scope of military operations increased, the enmity of those opposed to them was exacerbated. He wrote that they killed a number of *amīrs* and notables loyal to Muḥammad; “the enemies of Barkyāruq attributed these deeds to him and suspected him of sympathy towards the Bāṭinīs”. On the battlefields, Bark-yāruq's soldiers were taunted as *Bāṭinīs* (esoterists) and “*malāḥida*” (heretics) by Muḥammad's forces. For some time the Nizari creed was openly preached and practiced in Bark-yāruq's domains. Rashid al-Din wrote:

¹³² JT p. 99 Due to his hasty departure from Isfahan, ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh may well have been the Ismaili character in the “Three School Fellows” story.

Bark-yāruq was well disposed to the *Raḥīqān* and did not deny their belief.¹³³ From among the *Raḥīqān*, Kiyā Fakharāvar Asadābādī came to his presence and preached the *da'wa* to the people. Wazīr Dihistānī ordered, without permission of the sultan, that he should be killed. Sayyidnā (Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ) sent a *ghulām* (servant), who at the gates of Isfahan to put an end to his evil.¹³⁴

The sultan's advisors including the *wazīr* Abū'l-Maḥāsīn asked him for permission to wear chain-mail in the royal presence fearing attack by the Nizaris at court. They advised action against the growing Nizari threat before he became "incapable of repairing the situation".

In 1101/494 Bark-yāruq purportedly carried out two massacres of the Ismailis; one was supposedly in coordination with his younger half-brother Sanjar who had previously battled with the sultan championing his own full brother Muḥammad. Highly placed officers in Bark-yāruq's camp were accused of association with the Nizari creed and were exterminated in the pogroms in Isfahan, Baghdad, the Caspian region and Quhistān. The ruler of Yazd, the governor of Tikrīt, a Saljuq emissary and even a scholar at the Nizāmiyya *madrassa* were suspected of being Ismailis. The trusted emissary, Abū Ibrāhīm al-Asadābādī was also accused, he had been sent to Baghdad to mulct household and seize the property for the Sultan of the *wazīr* Mu'ayyad al-Mulk b. Nizām al-Mulk who having supported Muḥammad b. Malikshāh and opposed the Sultan and had been killed by him. Ibn al-Athīr noted that: "When they were about to execute him (al-Asadābādī), he said, 'Suppose you kill me, can you kill all in the castles and towns?' He was put to death and no funeral prayers were said over him. He was thrown outside the city wall." Ibn al-Athīr understatedly concluded that: "several innocent

¹³³ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. I:40-41 and 45-47; It is noteworthy that Bark-yāruq was in power between 1095-1105 --the precise time frame in which al-Ghazālī had his nervous breakdown and disappeared from Baghdad...

¹³⁴ JT. p. 120. The text uses *dustdār* to describe the relationship of the Sultan to the Nizaris.

و برکیارق دوستدار رفیقان بودی، و عقیدت ایشان را منکر نه. از رفیقان در خدمت [او] کیا فخرآور اسدآبادی که با مردم سخن دعوت گفتی، وزیر دهستانی بفرمود تا بی اجازت سلطان او را بکشتند. سیدنا غلامی را بفرستاد تا بدر اصفهان شرا و کفایت کرد.

persons were killed who were not of them but who had been falsely accused by their enemies.”¹³⁵

Durand Guédy has argued that it was the Khurasani *a'yān*—mainly the Sunni '*ulamā*' that orchestrated the massacres of the Ismailis. This analysis, refines how the sources have reported the events in 1101/494 and thus the construal by Hodgson, Daftary and others that it was Bark-yāruq who in alliance with his half-brother Sanjar acted against the Ismailis authorised the massacre in 1101/494. The reported joint action may have been a construct of later Sunni historians—Sanjar's amīr, Bazghāsh, during these campaigns in Khurāsān, was paid off by the Ismailis in Ṭabas in Quhistān and did not attack them, however, he succeeded in killing Bark-yāruq's pro-Ismaili commander in the region—Amīrdād Ḥabashī.¹³⁶ The evidence suggests that Bark-yāruq lost out as a result of these pogroms and may not have been involved in these massacres.

Despite these massacres, the Nizaris were able to maintain a significant military reach; in this time, they were even able to take over Shāhdiz. How is it possible that the Nizaris were able to take control of this fortress and hold it—given its strategic importance? How and why did the Nizari *da'wa* gain strength in Isfahan and the Saljuq domains? Since Malikshāh's refortification of Shāhdiz, whenever the Sultan was away from the administrative capital,¹³⁷ Isfahan, the fortress was used to house and provide sanctuary for the young royal pages and slave girls, and presumably the young princes and princess. In these times, the treasury and armoury were also moved from the citadel to the fort, high up on the 2200 metre Shāhkūh peak. A trusted

¹³⁵ . Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. pp 39-48

¹³⁶ JT. 118; Hodgson. *OA*. p. 88-9; Lewis. *Assassins*. p. 52; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 329-330; Durand-Guédy. *Iranian Elites*. p. 169;

¹³⁷ *Iranian Elites* pp 319ff—these absences were lengthy!

guard of Daylāmī troops was positioned on the mountain for protection. The Nizari Ismaili *dā'ī* Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh (d. 1107/500) befriended the castellan, converted the troops and took control of Shāhdiz between 1095/488¹³⁸ and 1100/493. The sources suggest that his *da'wa* efforts in Isfahan were so successful that 30000 inhabitants came over to the Ismaili cause.¹³⁹ Even if the number is exaggerated, a large following of the revolutionary movement and their strategic control of parts of the capital must have been untenable. How could this situation have come about and why was it allowed to persist?

2. A "NIZARI HOUSE" IN ISFAHAN

In speaking of the Ismailis at Isfahan, all three sources mention the discovery of a 'kidnapping ring' and a brutal massacre of Ismailis as a result. Farhad Daftary dates this event to the year 1093/486¹⁴⁰ and calls the report dubious. Ṣahīr al-Dīn conjured a scenario where in a section of Isfahan, a blind old man named 'Alawī Madanī,¹⁴¹ in the evenings, would call out for someone to help him get home. Once there, the helper would be snatched into the house and thrown down a well with one yard opening and almost ten yards deep. Similarly, Ibn al-Athīr wrote: "A blind man stood at the entrance to a quarter there. When someone came by he would ask him to lead him a few steps to the quarter's gate. The man would do this and as he entered he would be seized and killed." He describes a panic among the people:

... if a man was later than his normal time for coming home, people were sure he had been killed and sat to receive condolences. People became cautious and would not go out alone. One day a *muezzin* was taken. A Bāṭinī neighbour of his seized him. As his family started to bewail his loss, the Bāṭinīs took him on to the roof of his house and showed him how his family were beating their faces and weeping. He was unable to say a word as he was so terrified of them.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. I:119. The tribulations caused by Ibn 'Aṭṭāsh lasted a period of twelve years. = 1107 - 12 = 1095

¹³⁹ Nīshāpūrī. *Seljuq Turks*. p. 74; Nīshāpūrī. *Saljūqnāma*. p. 40.

¹⁴⁰ Ibn al-Athīr. *Annals of the Saljuq Turks*. There is no mention of this in the years 485-86/1092-93... mention occurs in the excursus under year 494/1100-01

¹⁴¹ translates to the 'Alid from Medina

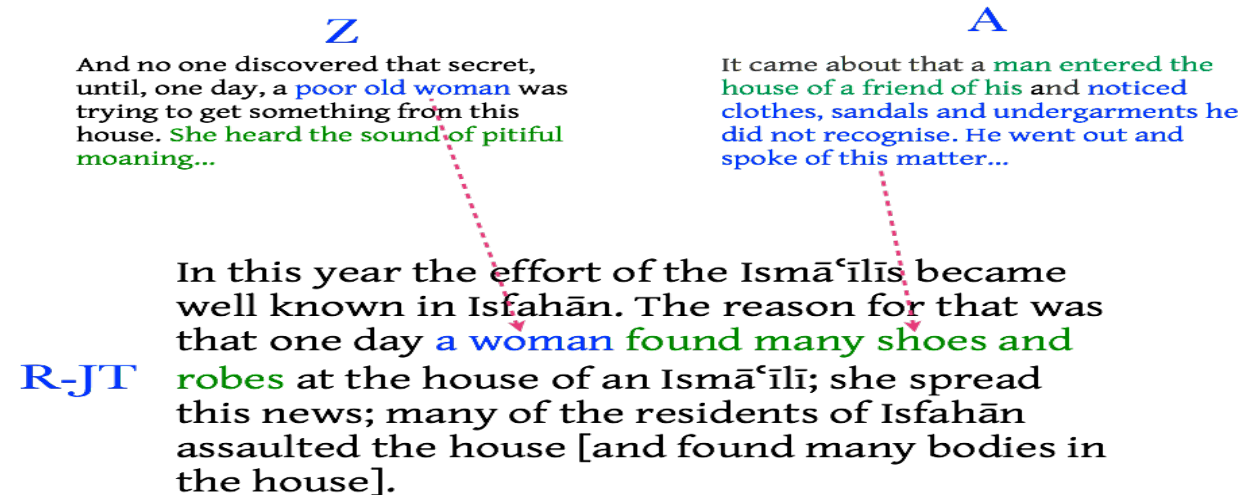
¹⁴² Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. I:41ff

Ẓahīr al-Dīn stated that when the Isfahanis investigated the happenings at ‘Alawī Madanī’s house, they discovered a subterranean chamber with three to four hundred men, women and children of their missing ones—many were dead and several were hanging nailed to the walls. The ‘ulamā instigated mobs, many Nizaris were rounded up and were thrown into the fires lit for the purpose in the Army Bazaar. The texts read:

ZN: And no one discovered that secret, until, one day, a poor old woman was trying to get something from this house. She heard the sound of pitiful moaning. The woman called down blessings, “May God Most High cure your sick ones!” The people of the house were afraid that the woman might have become aware of their ruse. They sought to pull her into the house on the pretext of giving her bread. The woman became suspicious. She was frightened and she fled. At the gate of the lane she said to a group of people, “I heard a mysterious moaning sound from such-and-such a house, and some people tried to do me evil.” ... A clamour began in the city. Crowds of people headed for that house. Each person was looking for kinsfolk, offspring and brothers. Weeping and wailing broke out in the city of Isfahan. They seized ‘Alawī Madanī and his wife and they sought his companions in the course of that upheaval. They burned them in the middle of the Army Bazaar.
iA: It came about that a man entered the house of a friend of his and noticed clothes, sandals and undergarments he did not recognise. He went out and spoke of this matter, which people then investigated and learnt that they belonged to men who had been killed. The citizens rose in anger, investigating who had been killed and making enquiries. They seized control of the quarters where the Bāṭinīs were. The latter, whenever a man passed by them, would forcibly take him into one of their houses, kill him and then throw him down a pit in the house that had been prepared for that. ... The Shafī‘ī lawyer Abū’l-Qasim Mas‘ūd ibn Muḥammad al-Khujandī devoted himself to taking revenge. He assembled a sizeable mob with weapons and ordered them to dig trenches and light fires in them. The common people commenced to bring Bāṭinīs, singly and in droves, and throw them into the flames. They put a man in charge of the fire pits and called him Mālīk. A great multitude of them were massacred.
JT: In this year the effort of the Ismā‘īlīs became well known in Isfahān. The reason for that was that one day a woman found many shoes and robes at the house of an Ismā‘īlī; she spread this news; many of the residents of Isfahān assaulted the house [and found many bodies in the house].

All three texts speak of a spate of kidnappings and killings and link these to the Ismailis without any reasonable explanation of why they would engage in such acts. Ẓahīr al-Dīn’s account suggests an achievement in engineering. ‘Alawī Madanī’s house would require a

subterranean space of over a thousand square feet to provide a cramped dungeon for four hundred people; to be liveable a space of several thousand square feet would have had to have been carved out!¹⁴³



This episode clearly illustrates the genealogy of texts; several components of the tale are found in each of the three. The ‘kidnapping’ ring was discovered by a woman in Ṣahīr al-Dīn and Rashid al-Dīn; the means of discovery were the extra shoes and robes observed by the visitor to the house in Ibn al-Athīr and Rashid al-Dīn. Looking at the narrative components it seems that Ibn al-Athīr had the *Saljūqnāma* or its derivative at his disposal. He embellishes his telling with the scene of the *muʿaḍḍin* on the rooftop—how would that have been reported if the victims were abducted and killed? Perhaps the lucky *muʿaḍḍin* was one of the rescued and lived to tell the tale? The above four line quote from Rashid al-Dīn is the complete account of this episode in the section on the Nizaris. It indicates clearly that the editors of the *Jāmiʿ* used Ṣahīr al-Dīn’s *Saljūqnāma*—found almost in its entirety elsewhere in the *Jāmiʿ*—and Ibn al-Athīr’s *al-Kāmil* to arrive at the formulation that the discovery of the shoes and robes (from Ibn al-Athīr) was made by a woman (from Ṣahīr al-Dīn).

¹⁴³ Could this have been a qanat? Also in Islamic tradition Mālik is the archangel who guards hell and supervises God’s punishment of its inhabitants. Q43:74-77

Does the narrative shift tell us that Ibn al-Athīr was trying to make his narrative more plausible? That an unattached woman going about an unfamiliar neighbourhood seemed less plausible than a man visiting his acquaintance and discovering something untoward? As a respected *qāḍī* (magistrate), was he perhaps thinking of the legal validity of witness of a woman versus a man?¹⁴⁴ Can we conjecture a better understanding by keeping Ibn al-Khaldūn's admonition about exaggeration of numbers in mind?¹⁴⁵ Could it be that the visitor came upon a large gathering at his friend's house and they were engaged in Ismaili rituals? Ibn al-Athīr had already mentioned the first gathering of Ismailis in the time of Malikshāh—eighteen men came together for the festival prayer in the city Savah, they were reported to the city prefect who imprisoned and later released them. As in the case of the Isfahani gathering, could their practices have been at variance from the local customs and have raised suspicions? Can it be conjectured that the accusation of kidnappings may have been a cover story for those caught amongst the Ismailis? A sacrifice of a few for the lives of the many?¹⁴⁶

Be that as it may, in comparison to the accounts of concurrent Shafī'ī-Hanafi-Hanbali conflicts, mob violence and riots in Baghdad and Isfahan—reported in Ibn al-Athīr, both the late Saljuq era and the Zangid chroniclers are at pains to embellish their narration of the Nizaris Ismailis with fanciful calumnies. Ibn al-Athīr specifically names the Shafī'ī 'ālim Abū'l-Qāsim Maṣ'ūd b. Muḥammad al-Khujandī as instigating the mob and lighting the fires.¹⁴⁷ (Cf. Part One:2).

¹⁴⁴ IA p. 41

¹⁴⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, 'Abd Al-Raḥmān. *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, Translated by Franz Rosenthal, and N. J. Dawood. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969. pp 11ff

¹⁴⁶ This does not resolve the issue of the number of dead bodies in the anecdote—might an exaggeration in the number of victims be part of the negative constructions of the Ismailis?

¹⁴⁷ IA p. 41; Durand-Guédy. *Iranian Elites*. pp 230ff

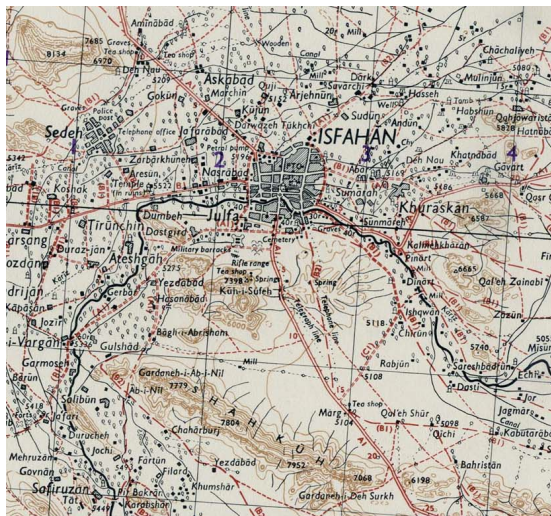
On the one hand the Sunni writers went to great lengths to explain the attraction of the *da'wa*—30000 were drawn to Ismailism in Isfahan—yet in this episode, at the centre, the movement is cast as sinister and murderous. There is incongruity and inconsistency here that renders the report of the past actuality dubious, nonetheless the textual analysis allows an establishment of the genealogical connections between these texts. In the sources, the Nizaris are accused of targeted assassinations and at the same time of wanton mass killings. None of the Ilkhanid historians link Nizari battle victories to massacres. Ṣahīr al-Dīn and Ibn al-Athīr seem to be resorting to a trope when they describe irrational killings by the ‘heretics’. In both their times the Nizaris and their polity remained a major threat. On the other hand, all our sources report mass killings of Ismailis when their opponents were victorious. Beyond the tropes of sinister and mass killings by the Ismailis, a final solution is resolvable in the responses of the Sunni ‘*ulamā*’ in Isfahan to the Nizari threat. The tacit implication is that there should be a total dissociation from the so-called heretics. If the Ismailis do not kill anyone one who would fall in their midst, the Sunnis would kill and burn them as heretics! (Cf. Part One:2-II and III).

The reports of this pogrom in the last decade of the eleventh century is linked in all three sources to the seizure of Shāhdiz by Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh and its recapture by Muḥammad b. Malikshāh in 1107/500. The textual analyses demonstrate that the author-historians wrote within the historical consciousness and hermeneutic trap discussed in previous chapters. (Cf. Part One:2-II and III).

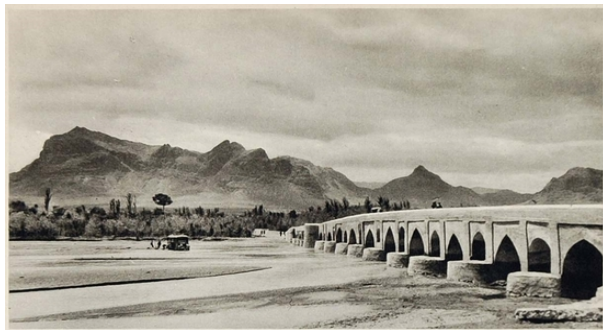
3. AḤMAD B. ‘ABD AL-MALIK B. ‘AṬṬĀSH’S SEIZURE OF SHĀHDIZ

Aḥmad the son of the most senior Ismaili *dā’ī* in the Saljuq domains, ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh, according to Ṣahīr al-Dīn, started out as a cheap cloth vendor. The father, a respected and

learned man was attacked and chased out of Isfahan by the Sunni ‘*ulamā*’ possibly for his Ismaili affiliations in 1072/464 when he went to Rayy and stayed there for three years.¹⁴⁸ At that time, Aḥmad disavowed his father’s belief; however, after the death of Malikshāh, he befriended the castellan at Shāhdiz and upon the latter’s death, having converted many at the fortress to Ismailism and eliminated any opponents, he took possession of the castle together with the treasury, armoury and pages and slave girls of the royal household. Ibn al-Athīr detailed these events in his excursus on the Ismailis under the year 1100-1101/494 and then again in the year of its recapture 1106-1107/500. From this position of power outside the Saljuq capital, the Nizaris began to raid the surrounding areas and brought them under their control.



Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/isfahan_iran_1942.jpg



Southward view from Isfahan of Shāhkūh 1937/1355
Source: <http://www.iranmap.com/2009/03/29/an-archaeological-tour-of-iran>

¹⁴⁸ JT. p 99

This map of Isfahan from 1942/1361 shows the strategic import of Shāhdiz perched on Shāhkūh peak some 2200 metres (over 7000 feet) above sea level. From this vantage point, the Nizaris could effectively and easily control the arc between the two arms of the Zāyandah River as it passed through the city. When the river flow diminished and fording became easy, they would have been able to control not just the southern approaches to the city but also the western and eastern. This Nizari socio-economic and military stranglehold on the Saljuq administrative capital must have been extremely intolerable.

The texts read:

ZN: Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Malik made a place for himself there as teacher of the pages and slaves. From time to time he would go to the city and buy clothes and coifs and whatever they were supposed to have. And he had private meetings with the Daylāmīs, until all accepted his propaganda. He became the ruler of the castle, and all the custodians became his followers. After that near the city, near the Plain of the Onagers, he set up a mission house. Every night a group of people would come from the city and accept the propaganda, and he so arranged things with them, that each company spread the propaganda to a group of people in their own quarter. He spread the seed of error and ignorance within their breasts and took them to the mission house, until nearly thirty thousand men favoured his teachings. And they abducted Muslims and killed them.
iA-Y500: This castle had been built by Malikshāh, after whose death, Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh had taken control of it. The reason for this is that he had associated with a castellan there and when he died, Aḥmad took it over. The Bāṭinīs in Isfahan had already given him a crown and collected money for him. ... Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh acquired numerous support[s] and great strength. His position in the castle flourished.
JT: Shaykh Aḥmad [ibn] ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh seized [the castle of] Shāhdiz which Sultan Malikshāh had built in the outskirts of Isfahān. Sultān Muḥammad brought him down the mountain under oath and killed him. The reason for that was that Aḥmad was intimate with the master of the castle. When the castellan died, Aḥmad was appointed in his place. He took possession of everything; he seized the treasury, slave girls and slaves who by custom of the Sultan’s <i>ḥarīm</i> (household) had been there and killed some. The Bāṭinīs considered him their leader in Isfahān and they attacked the property and lands of the people.

As detailed above, according to Ṣaḥīr al-Dīn, Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh, a seller of cheap cloth denied his father’s Ismaili beliefs, went on to be a teacher and then seized Shāhdiz. He was the arch heretic—at once a highly successful Nizari propagandist who won over 30000 converts and a military commander who secretly had the ear of the sultan’s *wazīr*. When his downfall came

and he was paraded around disgraced with dung and ashes thrown at him. An interlocutor questioned his astrological skill since he had not foreseen his predicament. It is likely that this capable *dā'ī* was all these things, however, the narrative portrays a typical profile of an anti-establishment enemy of the state.

Ibn al-Athīr reported that the Ismailis had given a crown to Aḥmad, “collected money for him and made him their leader despite lack of learning”. He was able to insinuate himself into Shāhdiz as an administrator and took control of the fortress after the castellan died. In contrast to his learned and eloquent father who possessed a “good calligraphic hand, capable of swift extempore composition, and virtuous, but he was unfortunate to become devoted to this sect”—Aḥmad was cast as an “ignoramus who knew nothing”.

Rashid al-Din’s use of the honorific “shaykh” for Aḥmad is noteworthy and it is possible that the source may have been a Nizari text, as does his construction that the *dā'ī* was brought “down the mountain under oath and killed”

For all three sources, Aḥmad’s activities, namely: the huge following he was able to amass as well as his economic and military reach through “protection rackets” and raiding of the environs of Isfahan were the leading causes of Saljuq military action against him. These offensives were, however, couched in religious polemics.

4. SULTAN MUḤAMMAD’S PRIME OBJECTIVE

After the death of Bark-yāruq, when Muḥammad’s position was uncontested the three chronicles state that he had a singular resolve to deal with the Nizaris. The texts read:

ZN: When Sultan Muḥammad came to Isfahan from Baghdad, the affairs of that group [the Nizaris] had prospered, and they had taken much in the way of provisions up to the castle. For seven years he was occupied in that affair with much effort and exertion. It took the Sultan himself, military equipment, provisions and the help of the common people of the city and the province, until they took that castle by making peace.
iA: This year Sultan Muḥammad conquered the castle which the Batinīs had taken close to Isfahan, called Shah Diz, and killed its ruler Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh and his son. ... Once Muḥammad’s sultanate was uncontested and no rival remained, there was no project more important to him than to attack and wage war on the Batinīs and to seek to revenge the Muslims for their tyrannical violence. He decided to begin with the castle at Isfahan which was in their hands, because the harm it caused was the greatest, as it exerted pressure on his capital.
JT: When Muḥammad settled in the sultanate and the contention ceased he intended to seize the castle and besieged it.

The key motivations for Sultan Muḥammad’s action were, as Ibn al-Athīr wrote: Aḥmad “used to send his men to raid the highway, steal goods and kill whomever they could. They killed a vast number beyond counting and acting on his behalf, imposed on the sultan’s villages and people’s property taxes which they collected in return for not harming them. On account of this the sultan was incapable of benefiting from his villages or the people from their properties.” However he frames it in religious rhetoric that Muḥammad had “no project more important to him than to attack and wage war on the Batinīs and to seek to revenge the Muslims for their tyrannical violence.” The Bāṭinis, for Ibn al-Athīr, are beyond the pale. Getting past the rhetorical polemics, the texts indicate that it was the economic and military threats that motivated the Saljuq sultan to action and not sectarian loyalties.

5. THE NIZARI *FATWĀ*

Ẓahīr al-Dīn mentioned that Muḥammad took the castle “by making peace”; when the Nizaris were pressured, they sought to negotiate and sent out a *fatwā* (legal opinion) which according to Ibn al-Athīr, resulted in an easing of the siege to the extent that the *wazīr* “Sa‘ad al-Mulk made arrangements for the food and fruit and all that they needed to be carried to them daily.

They themselves began to send to buy foodstuffs that they stocked to resist further in their castle.”

ZN: Story of the cupper
iA: When their situation had become serious, they wrote a <i>fatwā</i>, which contained, ‘What say the learned lawyers, imams of the Faith, concerning a people who believe in God, His scriptures. His prophets and the Last Day, and that what Muḥammad (may God bless him and give him peace) brought is the genuine truth, and only differ about the Imam? Is it permissible for the sultan to make peace and be reconciled with them, accept their allegiance and guard them from all harm?’
JT: When their situation became difficult, they [the Nizaris] wrote a <i>fatwā</i> which said: “What say the <i>imams</i> [i.e. jurists] of the faith concerning the right of a group of people who believe in the unknowable God, the All-Mighty, and in the coming of the prophet of God, Muḥammad the Arabian and know His books and prophets as true and righteous - who however, differ on the truth of the <i>imam</i>, is it permissible for the sultan of the age to reconcile and make peace with them, and accept their belief, and keep them from misfortunes and calamity?”

The section from Rashid al-Din is virtually identical to that in Ibn al-Athīr—indicates direct borrowing by the latter. Ṣahīr al-Dīn did not reference the Nizari *fatwā* at all. Instead he provided a fantastical story of the collusion of the Sultan’s *wazīr* with the Nizaris. David Durand-Guédy in his detailed study of the Persian and Turkic elites in Isfahan suggests a significant role played by the ‘*ulamā*’ transplanted from Central Asia in rousing opposition to the Ismailis. Durand-Guédy argues that these families patronised by the Saljuq establishment were pivotal in constructing and promoting notions of “orthodoxy”.¹⁴⁹ Not having local ties, they were considered loyal to the establishment; the *wazīr* Niẓām al-Mulk who in the *Siyāsatnāma* (*Book of Government*) decries the loyalty of the Iraqi ‘*ulamā*’ and recommended the Central Asians in their stead.¹⁵⁰ In the report of Ibn al-Athīr, we have already seen above that al-Khujandī instigated the massacre of the Ismailis in the early 1090s/480s. Here, again, another Khujandī plays a role in bringing about the death of the Sultan’s *wazīr*.

¹⁴⁹ Durand-Guédy. *Iranian Elites*. pp 230ff

¹⁵⁰ Niẓām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*. pp 158-178

Ẓahīr al-Dīn presented a fantastical story of how the *wazīr* was allied with the Nizaris and when Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh had communicated possible capitulation, the former had advised “‘Be patient one more week with things as they are, inasmuch as we are going to remove this dog’ that is, the Sultan, ‘and we are sending stores now.’” In the text, this removal would be done at the hands of the Sultan’s cupper who had been given handsome bribe and a poisoned lancet by the *wazīr*. It so happened that Chamberlain was aware of this and told his wife who in the throws of passion told her lover who was a friend of Ṣadr al-Dīn Khujandī. When the latter found out, he rushed to the Sultan with the information. The cupper was called for a treatment and in face of the Sultan’s “look of grandeur, power and sharp renunciation”, he broke down and revealed the plot; the lancet was used on the cupper and the plot was verified. The *wazīr* was crucified on the gates of Isfahan and two days later Shāhdiz was taken. Is it possible that Ẓahīr al-Dīn through this dubious story was pointing fingers at the party guilty of dubiously instigating the killing of the *wazīr*? The Khujandīs who even in the author’s time, a hundred years later, were very influential and so the language is guarded and fabulous.

The chronicles report that *ijmā’* (consensus) of the ‘*ulamā’*—both Hanafi and Shafī‘ī—found merit in the *fatwā* issued by the *dā‘ī* with the exception of Abū’l-Hasan ‘Alī al-Simanjānī who was one of the great *shaykhs* of the Shāfī‘īs. According to Rashid al-Din he said: “It is not permissible by virtue of the[ir] two testimonies of faith [the *shahada*] to accept them. The *imam* who they adhere to has made that which is forbidden [by the *Shari‘a*] lawful for them and this is against the *Shari‘a*.” Similarly, according to Ibn al-Athīr he said ask the Nizaris: “‘Tell us about your Imam. If he allows you what the Holy Law has forbidden or forbids you what the Law has allowed, do you accept his command?’” They will say “Yes”. In that case their blood is forfeit by consensus of the community.” This turned the *ijmā’* on its head.

While both texts present identical reports, the next step is differently described. Ibn al-Athīr has: “the Bāṭinīs asked the sultan to send them some people to dispute with them” while Rashid al-Dīn stated: “The sultan and the jurists were in agreement that the *qāḍī* (magistrate) Abū al-‘Alā Ṣa‘īd b. Yaḥyā Hanafī would go. He went to the castle and entered into debate and disputation with them. The commencement of the endeavour did not reach a conclusion. Their desire was to demand and delay.” In the later history there is a shift in agency from the Nizaris to the Saljuq sultan and the ‘*ulamā*’ in bringing about the theological disputation about the status of the Nizaris as Muslims. The sultan seemingly was willing to avoid battle and come and agreement.¹⁵¹ (Cf. Part One:6-V).

6. MUḤAMMAD B. MALIKSHĀH’S WILLINGNESS RECONCILE WITH THE NIZARIS

Ẓahīr al-Dīn’s biographical construction of sultan Muḥammad b. Malikshāh is unique amongst the fourteen sultans of the Great Saljuq dynasty. He wrote:

He made measureless exertions in strengthening religion and suppressing the deviationists and in protecting the central part of Islam he showed the white hand. With the sickle of conquest he cut down the thorn bushes of unbelief and religious innovation. And whoever has seen *dizkūh* near Isfahan knows that vexation and trouble he had to bear and what hardships he experienced. For seven years he did not rest in that struggle, until he destroyed all who had connection with them and uprooted them at their source.¹⁵²

This first paragraph set up the tone and two thirds of the rest of the chapter is focused on his dealing with the deviations, namely, of the Nizari Ismailis. This snapshot borders on being hagiographic. The sultan is seen as persistent in his struggle against the so-called heretics and protecting the *dār al-Islām* to the extent of drawing on miraculous metaphysical powers—the “white hand” recalls the contest between Moses and the Pharaoh’s magicians referred in Qur’ān 7:108. Subsequent sections have been discussed and analysed above. Like many modern scholars, Josef van Ess relying on similar reports wrote that the “situation changed definitely under Moḥammad b. Malekshāh who, immediately after Barkīāroq’s death in 498/1104, started

¹⁵¹ The religious disputations was also part of Saljuq siege tactics see case study V below.

¹⁵² Nīshāpūrī. *Seljuq Turks*. pp 73ff; Nīshāpūrī. *Saljūqnāma*. pp 40ff.

attacking the Ismaʿili strongholds. Šāhdez was besieged for almost one year.”¹⁵³ In contrast, Ibn al-Athīr’s account of the year 1106-07/500 portrays the sultan in a very different light, despite the rhetorical statement that “there was no project more important to him than to attack and wage war on the Bāṭinīs and to seek to revenge the Muslims for their tyrannical violence.” Far from having a prime objective of rushing to remove the Nizari threat looming over his capital, Muḥammad b. Malikshāh took action three years after the sultanate had been settled on him. The reason for even this action was economic; the Nizaris were attacking the highways, running protection rackets, killing their opponents and most egregiously, they were syphoning off the tax revenues from the villages. Ibn al-Athīr wrote

Ibn ʿAṭṭash acquired numerous support and great strength. His position in the castle flourished. He used to send his men to raid the highway, steal goods and kill whomever they could. They killed a vast number beyond counting and acting on his behalf, imposed on the sultan's villages and people's property taxes which they collected in return for not harming them. On account of this the sultan was incapable of benefiting from his villages or the people from their properties.¹⁵⁴

Sultan Barkīyaruq died on 29 December, 1104/2 *Rabīʿ al-ākhirā*, 498, however, Muḥammad planned to attack Shāhdiz on 5 March, 1107/1 *Rajab* 500. Ibn al-Athīr stated that the Nizari sympathisers at court were able to cause a delay in the offensive by first concocting news of an attack by a disloyal *amir* on Baghdad and then trouble in Khurāsān. The siege was delayed until 9 April/6 *Shaʿbān* and was led by the sultan himself.¹⁵⁵

The singular objective of dislodging the “heretics” from their perch a few miles outside his capital took over two years to commence. Was this delay due to the fact that Muḥammad needed to consolidate his rule after the turmoil of conflict with his brother? That he first had to co-opt or eliminate *amīrs* loyal to Bark-yāruq? Did he also have to counteract the significant adherence in the Saljuq establishment to Nizari Ismailism? Ḥaḥīr al-Dīn’s statement that for

¹⁵³ EIr. Josef van Ess: “Aṭṭāš”

¹⁵⁴ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. I:117

¹⁵⁵ *IA* I:118

“seven years he (Muḥammad) was occupied in that affair with much effort and exertion” is mere hyperbole. The local populace was riled up and came out to join the siege and watch the eight mile circumference of the mountain where the fort stood.¹⁵⁶ In the report of the re-capture of Shāhdiz, Muḥammad is portrayed as a pragmatist. At every instance the siege was intensified, the Nizaris asked for terms and these were given.

When the initial siege closed off access to supplies and defenders sent out their *fatwā*, the sultan was receptive. When the Sunni ‘*ulamā*’ rejected the Nizari overture, the sultan agreed to enter into doctrinal disputations (*munāẓarāt*).¹⁵⁷ Sensing that this was a ploy to buy time, the siege was pressed. The Nizaris, again under pressure, asked for the fortress of Khān Alanjān at a distance of some twenty one miles from Isfahan in place of Shāhdiz. The Sultan allowed this and permitted a delay in vacation of the fort until the next spring. The besieged were resupplied with food and necessities the by the sultan’s *wazīr* and the sultan even agreed to turn over anyone who would slander the Nizaris.¹⁵⁸

Ibn al-Athīr stated that there was an attempt to assassinate an *amīr* which resulted in the demolition of Khān Alanjān castle and again the siege was redoubled. Again the Nizaris sought an exit and an agreement and the sultan allowed it. The bulk of the residents would leave under an escort for Nizari fortresses and a small force would remain in the keep until news of safe arrival was received. The sultan allowed this. When Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh reneged on the agreement to vacate the fort once news of safe arrival of his coreligionists was received, again the siege

¹⁵⁶ *IA* I:118

¹⁵⁷ *IA* I:118; JT. p. 121ff.

¹⁵⁸ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. I:118

went to another level. With the help of a Nizari defector, the fortress was taken and Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh was brought down.¹⁵⁹

Beyond the rhetorical turns which have the Saljuq sultan as Sunni stalwart attacking the Nizaris as heretics, Muḥammad was engaged in pragmatic transactional relations with them. When a breech was made in the terms, the attack and siege were intensified but at each stage the sultan was willing to de-escalate the conflict and was ready even to “get along”. Ultimately the store of positive outcomes was exhausted and the end for Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh was terrible.¹⁶⁰

7. KILLING OF IBN ‘AṬṬĀSH

The killing of Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh was an exemplary public spectacle to project deterrence in its brutality. The *wazīr* Sa’d al-Mulk and others may have been killed in a purge of those who might have promoted a conciliatory approach to the Ismailis. Ṣahīr al-Dīn, as analysed above, even indicated that the *wazīr* was implicated as a Nizari and the plot was fantastically discovered through the instigation of the ‘*ulama*’. Two days after Sa’d al-Mulk’s execution, the long siege ended in victory for the Saljuqs with the capture of Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh. The texts describe Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh execution:

ZN: There remained no doubt or ambiguity for the Sultan about the treachery of Sa’ad al-Mulk, so that the next day he hanged him and Abu’l-‘Ala’ Mufaḍḍal. Two days later they took the castle and brought Aḥmad-i ‘Aṭṭāsh down. They brought him into Isfahan with hands bound and set on a camel, and more than a hundred thousand men, women and children came out. The catamites brought him into the city with drums, single skin drums and little kettle drums, and they cast offerings of dung and ashes and the like on his head. In that situation, a person asked him, “You used to claim to be an astrologer. It is astonishing that you did not see such a day in your horoscope.” He answered, “I had seen in the aspects of my horoscope that I would go around in Isfahan in a condition in which no king had gone, but I didn’t know it would be this way.” Then they dispatched him with exemplary and severe punishment, and they burned him and destroyed the castle. And with the conquest of that castle the heat of strife caused by those wretches cooled in Iraq.

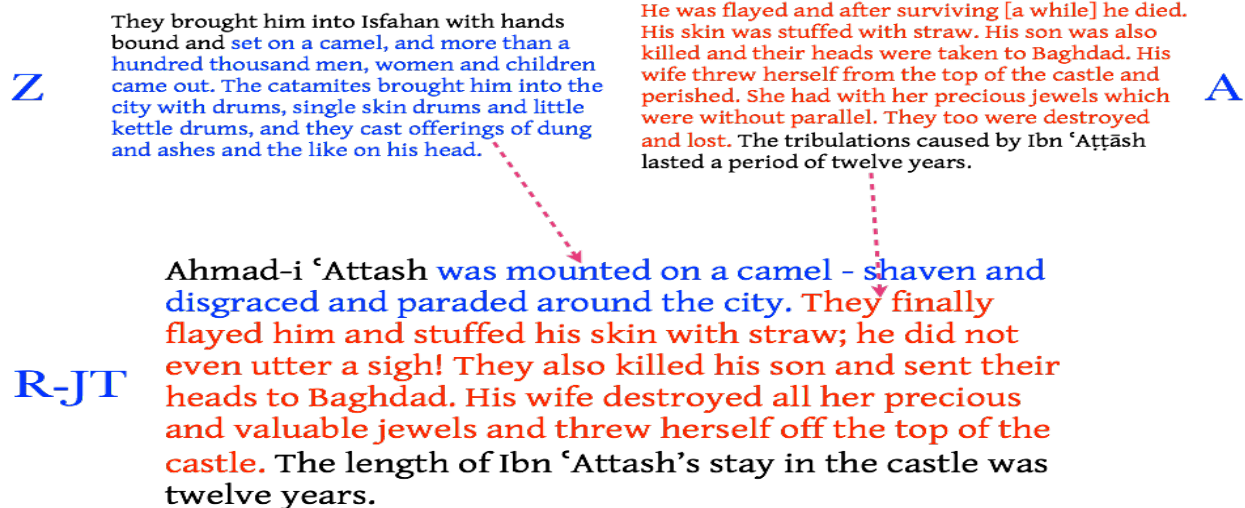
¹⁵⁹ IA I:118-119

¹⁶⁰ IA I:119; JT. pp 120-122

iA: All that remained were eighty men. The troops attacked by climbing up at that point and took the place. Most of the Bāṭinīs were slain. Some mingled with those who gained entrance and then left with them. However, Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh was taken prisoner. He was left for a week and then orders were given for him to be paraded through the whole town. He was flayed and after surviving [a while] he died. His skin was stuffed with straw. His son was also killed and their heads were taken to Baghdad. His wife threw herself from the top of the castle and perished. She had with her precious jewels which were without parallel. They too were destroyed and lost. The tribulations caused by Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh lasted a period of twelve years.

JT: Aḥmad-i ‘Aṭṭāsh was mounted on a camel - shaven and disgraced and paraded around the city. They finally flayed him and stuffed his skin with straw; he did not even utter a sigh! They also killed his son and sent their heads to Baghdad. His wife destroyed all her precious and valuable jewels and threw herself off the top of the castle. The length of Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh’s stay in the castle was twelve years.

Zahīr al-Dīn framed the end as a reflection of the unpredictability of fate placed in the protagonist’s own mouth. Ibn al-Athīr did not carry forward this literary turn; as the highlights show, he de-emphasised the disgracing and parading and detailed the brutality of the execution.



Rashid al-Dīn’s distillation makes reference to both prior sources but follows Ibn al-Athīr closely. From the last two texts we discover that Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh was active for twelve years and perhaps his capture of Shāhdiz can be dated back to the year 1095/488 when Bark-yāruq’s ascendancy began. With Muḥammad’s recapture of Khān Alanjān and Shāhdiz fortresses in

July 1107/*Dhū'l-qa'da* 500, the Nizari Ismailis, henceforth, would not have any long-term influence in Isfahan.¹⁶¹

C. Analyses

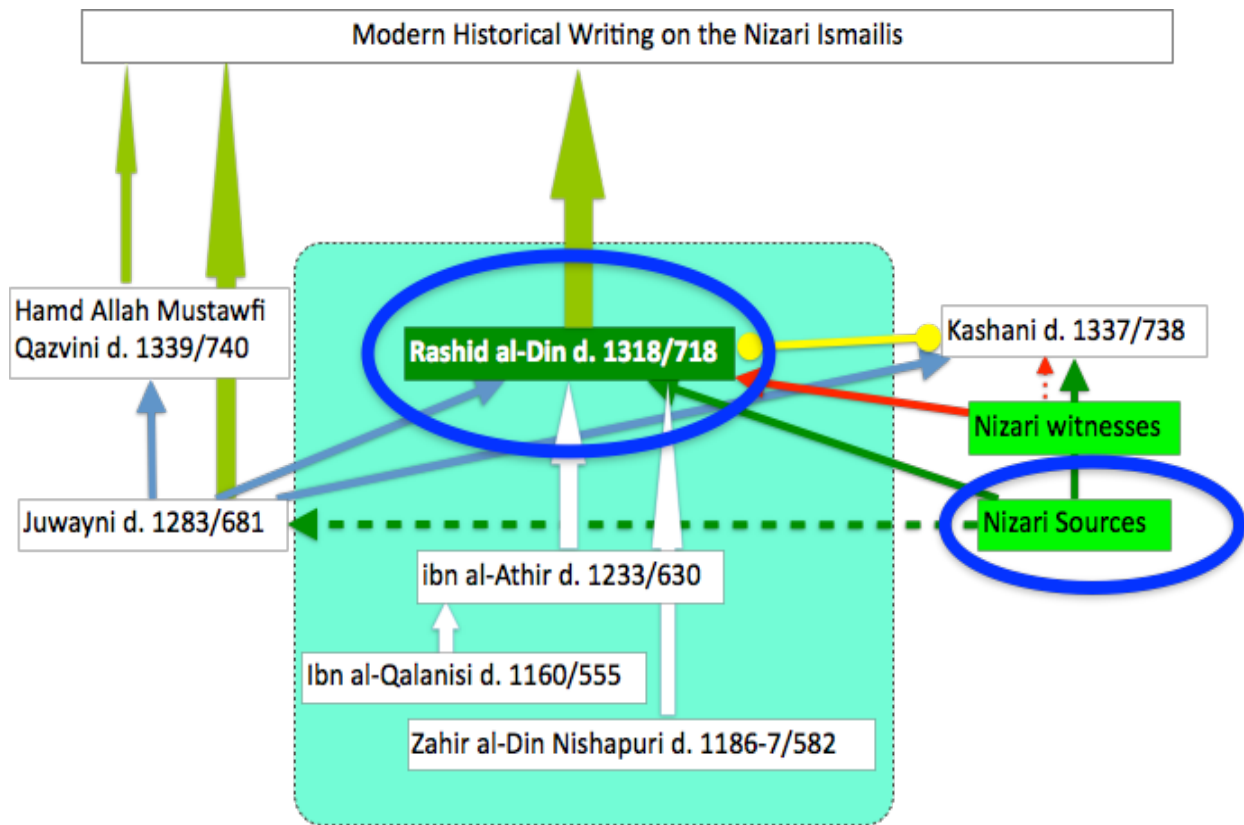
David Durand-Guédy noted that although “Hodgson has ascribed authorship of the massacre to Berk Yāruq, and in this he is followed by Lewis and Daftary”; in actual fact “the reprisals against the Ismailis were decided on, organized and carried out by the great families of Iṣfahān, under the leadership of Abū l-Qāsim Mas'ūd b. Muḥammad al-Khujandī.”¹⁶² All three scholars relied on Ibn al-Athīr's account and even Hodgson observed that the sultan was “pressed by his grandees”.¹⁶³ The above analysis demonstrates the genealogy of texts: the dynastic chronicle of the Saljuqs, the *Saljūqnāma* of Ṣāḥīr al-Dīn, formed the basis of information used by Ibn al-Athīr in his annalistic chronicle, *al-Kāmil*—he supplemented the *Saljūqnāma* with other sources at his disposal. In the case of the Saljuq recapture of Shāhdiz, his information is drawn from the *fatḥ-nāma* issued by Sultan Muḥammad b. Malikshāh—either due to direct access or through Ibn Qalānisi's history. In the 14th/8th century, Rashid al-Dīn's team distilled the Saljuq chronicle and Ibn al-Athīr's annalistic chronicle to assemble the much abridged reports in their dynastic chronicle account of the Nizari Ismailis. Ṣāḥīr al-Dīn's work could be construed as more of a literary hagiography than history of the Saljuqs. Ibn al-Athīr's annalistic account provides detailed and extensive information drawn from a variety of sources. Rashid al-Dīn's section on the Nizaris amounts to cribbed notes from the other two sources which one would assemble for a later smoother re-write and Qashani's account seems to refine these notes into more continuous prose.

¹⁶¹ JT p. 122; Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. I:119

¹⁶² Hodgson. *OA*. p. 88; Lewis. *Assassins*. p. 52; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 329; Durand-Guédy. *Iranian Elites*. p. 169 fn76 erroneously refers to p. 91 of the Lewis text--should be p. 52.

¹⁶³ Hodgson. *OA*. p. 88

Figure 6c: Genealogy of Texts



1. THE SALJUQ *FATH-NĀMA* OF THE RECAPTURE OF SHĀHDĪZ

The construction of the sultan, Muḥammad b. Malikshāh, as a defender of Sunni Islam against the so-called heresy of the Nizari Ismailis is not just a function of the historian's retrospective. Immediately after the recapture of Shāhdiz castle, a *fath-nāma* (proclamation of victory) was sent out to be read from every *minbar* (pulpit) in the sultan's domain and beyond. This document has been preserved by Ibn Qalānisi.¹⁶⁴ The proclamation describes the victory over the "heretics" as an exaltation of the faith by the support and divine aid:

Praise be to God that He has facilitated our effort to exalt the religion, raise His standard, punish crimes of His adversaries and make a clean sweep of the rebellious Bāṭiniyya in order to stand

¹⁶⁴ Abū Ya'lā Ḥamza b. Asad Ibn al-Qalānisi. *Tārīkh Dimashq: al-dhayl al-mudhayyal 'alā Tārīkh Dimashq li-Ibn al-Qalānisi*, Edited by Suhayl Zakkār. (Damascus: al-Takwīn li'l-Ta'lif wa'l-Tarjama wa'l-Nashr, 2007). pp 151-156; Abū Ya'lā Ḥamza b. Asad Ibn al-Qalānisi. *Damas De 1075 À 1154*, Translated by Roger Le Tourneau. (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1952). pp 66-73; H. A. R Gibb's translation of the text does not include this episode and there is no indication in the text that this section was excluded.

up to those who bewitched the perverted minds, have misled them with nonsense, reduced with fallacious arguments and have taken God's religion as a mockery. Praise to God that He has facilitated the victory of victories and giving us the means to take the proud citadel Shāhḍar (sic) and the pride of the mountain. They swarmed in injustice, like a mote in the eyes of empire and could fall upon the Muslims from the precipices, dangerous passes, and lookouts bringing evil to the Muslims and ingratitude (*kufṛ* disbelief) wherever their footsteps led.

The *fath-nāma* describes Ibn 'Aṭṭāsh and the cloak of holy warrior adopted by the sultan in the eternal battle against the scourge of evil:

Ibn 'Aṭṭāsh whose spirit flew on the path of error and went astray, he showed his followers that the Right Path (*al-Ṣirāṭ al-mustaḳīm*) was wrong and took his conduct from a book loaded with lies. He saw as lawful and with impunity the taking of blood of Muslims and their properties. Blood was shed! Rape was perpetrated! Wealth was destroyed! Injustices remained on the heart without vengeance!

They ... spilt incalculable amounts of blood and carried out other abominations against Islam that God cannot be satisfied by the effort of any Muslim. It was our duty to fight for the defence of faith and to wage against them a Holy War through mountains and valleys, even as far as China.

The document recites interpretations of the episodes of the siege and describes the final victory:

Before the sun had emerged and its first rays took their splendour, the citadel was taken by force and the blood of Bāṭiniyya heretics flowed. None of them managed to escape, and no sword failed its purpose. We immediately ordered destruction of the fortress and to cover the rubble, there remained not a trace of life, not a stone on the hill. We captured Ibn 'Aṭṭāsh, the brigand chief, the lord of the rebels of whom God said: "We appointed them leaders, calling to the Fire." (Qur'ān, 28:41)

After the descriptions of the final victory, the *fath-nāma* affirms the sultan's subservience to the 'Abbāsid caliphate: "This happy news, an exultation for Islam which commemorates the two ends of the world, we ordered spread in countries near and far, especially at the court of the caliph (may God extend his glory) such that, before any other, we inform and congratulate him." Ibn al-Athīr evidently either had direct access to the *fath-nāma* or the collection of epistolary samples assembled by Ibn Qalānīsī in his history. The information in *al-Kāmil* draws from and affirms the content of the *fath-nāma* and its construction of the Saljuq sultan as the champion of Sunni Islam.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. The sultan did nothing to confront the Crusaders.

2. SALJUQ COEXISTENCE WITH THE NIZARIS

The second finding is that despite their construction as champions and a bulwark of Sunni Islam, especially against Ismailism, the Saljuqs cooperated and coexisted with the Ismailis for significant durations of times. Sultan Bark-yāruq, who was accused of being an Ismaili, may well have facilitated and supported the Ismaili *dā'ī* Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh's seizure and control of Shāhdiz. Ibn al-Athīr explained that: "[t]he reason for their [Nizari] power in Isfahan was that, after Sultan Barkyāruq had besieged Isfahan, where his brother Maḥmūd and the latter's mother the Lady Jalāliyya (Tarkan Khātūn) were, and had withdrawn, the Bāṭinī creed was made public and spread far and wide."¹⁶⁶

3. NIZARI RETREAT FROM UNIVERSAL CLAIMS

The third and most significant of findings of this analysis is that the Nizaris at Isfahan retreated from asserting the exclusive veracity and universal truth of their interpretation of Islam and would have agreed to be accepted as a community among the mosaic of Muslims communities. This is a drastic shift away from the revolutionary movement centred around Alamut! Marshall Hodgson and Farhad Daftary have divided the Nizari Ismaili polity in Iran between 1090-1256/483-654 into three distinct periods tabulated below.¹⁶⁷

Hodgson-Daftary Periodisation of the Nizari Polity

	Marshall Hodgson 1955	Farhad Daftary 1990 & 2007
1090-1162	"Foundation": ...serve to establish the community as an independent power: the effort to overthrow the Sunni pattern is made, and fails; and the more restricted sphere of subsequent Nizari activity is marked out.	...covering the reigns of the first three rulers of Alamūt, the Nizārīs succeeded in establishing and consolidating their <i>da'wa</i> and independent state.

¹⁶⁶ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. pp 40-41

¹⁶⁷ Hodgson's periodisation should actually be 1090-1164; 1164-1210; 1210-1256--Hasan 'alā *dhikrihi'l-salām* became the ruler of Alamut in 1162 and two years later, in 1164, proclaimed the *Qiyāma* upon which he was recognised as the imam. Daftary avoids this error by speaking of the lords of Alamut as opposed to the *imamates*! Hodgson. *OA*. p. 42 Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 302-303.

1162-1210	“Rejection”: Nizarism is reconstructed by newly-found imams, rejecting as hopeless the Islamic society at large, and turning to its own genius for a world within itself: the realm of the Qiyama, the great Resurrection.	...coinciding with the reigns of the fourth and fifth lords of Alamūt who were recognized as imams, the Nizārīs symbolically turned to the realm of the ‘resurrection’ (<i>qiyāma</i>), which made the community spiritually and psychologically independent of the outside world, a world that was now considered spiritually irrelevant.
1210-1256	Rapprochement”: ...even this effort breaks down, and the Nizaris attempt to fit into the kaleidoscopic Sunni society as one state among many - an attempt which came to a violent end almost befitting its narrow ambition.	...concurrent with the rules of the last three lords of Alamūt, the Nizārīs, while partially retaining their inwardness and teachings emanating from the declaration of the <i>qiyāma</i> , attempted a rapprochement with the Sunnī world and also revived their political aspirations - endeavours that were terminated by the invading Mongols.

The control of Shāhdiz castle by Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh chronologically falls into the first stage of both studies. The seizure of the fortress is part of the effort by the Nizaris to establish their power in the region. The construal of “independent state” for the string of Nizari castles, not contiguously linked territorially and without the notion of a single self governing political entity, despite the issue of coinage under Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd and later, needs to be changed to conceptualise rather a multi-local Nizari polity in Iran and Syria. As in the case of Shāhdiz, each castellan polity operated with significant autonomy and limited central coordination between castles and the head quarters. If Ibn al-Athīr’s sources have validity then there was a competition if not conflict between Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. Rashid al-Din’s team had access to the Nizari accounts after the Mongol capture of Alamut which would not have been at Ṣabbāḥ or Ibn al-Athīr’s disposal. Consequently their accounts differ in the treatment of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh. Ibn Athīr’s account of the Ismailis in Isfahan was proportionately more extensive than that found in Rashid al-Din where Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and Alamut are the foci and the Ismailis in Isfahan and recapture of Shāhdiz were a minor episodes. He elaborated that “Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ, the lord of the fortress of Alamut, was asked, ‘Why do you revere Ibn ‘Attāsh when he is so ignorant?’ He replied, ‘For his father’s sake, because he was my mentor.’” Does this passage

capture factional differences and perhaps, independence and effective autonomy of policy from Alamut, recognised, in time, as the head quarters of the Nizari polity?

The promulgation of the *fatwā* of by Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh, though considered as part of a ruse by our sources and written in conditions of duress, signifies a willingness by a Nizari faction to accept Saljuq political and military overlordship while maintaining loyalty to the concealed Nizari *imam*. This shift by Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh amounted to a “rapprochement” as Daftary describes it and “attempt to fit into the kaleidoscopic Sunni society as one state among many” in the words of Hodgson. The culmination of these events which took place in the first period demarcated by the two authors are periodised by them as the last stage of the Nizari polity. Ultimately, Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh’s attempt of rapprochement failed because the *ijmā’* (consensus) of jurists—a foundational process of Sunni law—was swayed and overridden by the faulty *qiyās* (analogy) of one shaykh on a false premise. The Nizaris would follow the guidance of their *imam* perhaps at all costs; however, why would these *imams*—who considered themselves as custodians of the prophetic patrimony—call for a breach of the precepts of the *sharī‘a*? Even the detractors of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ found him pious and adherent to the principles and practices of the faith; it is the attachment to the Nizari *imamate* that rendered him and his co-religionists beyond the pale and thus the label *mulḥid* (heretic) was a mark of death!

The next case study examines Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s killing of his own sons. Beyond the *prima facie* readings of the sources, the double narrative analysis methodology reveals that Ḥasan’s filicide was a reaction to the challenges to his authority not simply hasty meting out of punishments.

IV. Filicide: Bad Family Values or Challenges to Authority?

According to the chronicles Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ executed two of his sons. The first, Ustād Ḥusayn was executed for the suspicion of his involvement in the murder of the Ḥusayn Qā'inī, the

Nizari dā'ī who propagated the *da'wa* in Quhistān. All three chronicles reported:

Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ had two sons, one of whom was called Ustād Ḥusayn. Now in the castle of Alamut there was an 'Alid called Zayd Ḥasanī, who was secretly conducting propaganda on his own behalf and was on the point of putting an end to Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. And first he caused Husayn of Qā'in, the dā'ī in Quhistān, to be slain by the hand of Aḥmad of Dunbāwand. The murder of Husayn of Qā'in was attributed to Ḥasan's son Ustād Ḥusayn, and Ḥasan ordered the execution both of his son and of Aḥmad of Dunbāwand.¹⁶⁸

A year later when it was established that the 'Alid named Zayd Ḥasanī was culpable for the murder—while residing at Alamut he had been calling people to himself as the true imam—Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ ordered both Zayd and his son executed.

Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's second son was executed at Alamut for drinking alcohol. Juwayni states:

Now Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ had founded his cause and his law (*nāmūs*) upon asceticism, continence and 'the enjoying (sic) of righteousness and the forbidding of unrighteousness', and during the 35 years that he dwelt in Alamut nobody drank wine openly nor put it in jars. Indeed such was his austerity that a certain person having played the flute in the castle he expelled him therefrom and would not re-admit him. Now his other son, whose name was Muḥammad, was accused of drinking wine and he ordered him to be put to death.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ TJG. p. 209-210; HWC. p. 679-680; (JT. p. 123-124 and ZT. p. 145 are identical)

حسن صباَح را دو پسر بود یکی را استاد حسین گفتندی، و در قلعه الموت علوی بود زید حسنی گفتندی در سر دعوت بخود می کرد بود و نزدیک آورده که کار حسن بدست او مکفی شود و ابتدا حسین قایینی را که داعی قهستان بود بدست حسین دناوندی کشته چود حوالت خون حسین قایینی بیسر او استاد حسین صباَح کردند بفرمود تا پسرش و احمد [۲۱۰] دناوندی را قتل کردند

¹⁶⁹ TJG. p. 210; HWC. p. 680

چون حسن صباَح بنیاد کار و ناموس بر زهد و ورع و امر معروف و نهی منکر نهاده بود در مدت سی و پنج سال که در الموت ساکن بود هیچ کس در ملک او آشکارا شراب نخورد و در خم نریخت تا بحدی که شخصی بر قلعه نای زده بود او را بیرون کرد و دیگر بار بر قلعه راه نداد، و پسری دیگر داشت محمد نام او را بشراب خوردن متهم کردن فرمود تا او را بکشند.

scribal error could have changed this from شَرَابِ اَسْكَر = intoxicating drink - which is more appropriate here. Boyle's transcription "enjoying" instead of "enjoining" from Q3:110 is an example of pre-desktop computer age spellcheck error!

Juwayni went on to state that Ḥasan “used to point to the execution of both his sons as a reason against anyone’s imagining that he had conducted propaganda [*da‘wa*] on their behalf and had had that object in mind.”¹⁷⁰

Juwayni highlighted another practice supposedly started by Ḥasan during an extended siege of

Alamut when supplies were completely depleted:

In conformity with this law (*nāmūs*) it happened on another occasion, at the time of the siege, that he sent his wife and two daughters to Girdkūh and wrote to the ra‘is Muẓaffar: 'Since these women work the spindle on behalf of our propaganda, give them their needs as wages therefor.' And from that time onwards their governors (*muḥtasham*), so long as they held that office, would have no women with them.¹⁷¹

The removal of the women folk to Girdkūh was necessary because in the castles “there was enormous scarcity and the people were down to eating grass. In this situation, the women and children were sent to places with plenty and abundance. Sayyidnā also sent his wife and daughters to Girdkūh.”¹⁷²

A textual comparison is useful to demonstrate how the three Ilkhanid chronicles used their sources—in this case the *Sarguzasht*. Rashid al-Din changed the order of narration putting the executions of the two sons together and then two references of Ḥasan’s rule (*nāmūs*):

پسری دیگر محمد نام داشت اورا بشراب خوردن متهم کردند، سیدنا بفرمود: تا اورا بکشتند. و قتل هر دو پسر خویش بر این حمل میکرد که بعد از وفات کسی را خیال نیفتد که او دعوت برای ایشان کرده است، و مقصود آن داشته.

¹⁷⁰ TJG. p. 210; HWC. p. 680

¹⁷¹ TJG. p. 210-211; HWC. p. 680

و مواقف این ناموس دیگر رفت که بوقت محاصره زن را با دو دختر [۲۱۱] بگردکوه فرستاد و برئیس مظفر بنوست که چون بجهت دعوت این عورات دوک ریسند بأجرة آن ما لابد ایشان بدهد و از آن وقت باز محتشمان ایشان در وقت محتشمی زن بنزدیک خود نداشتندی

¹⁷² JT. p. 125

و موافق این ناموس، دیگر آنکه بوقت محاصره زن خود [را] با دخترش، پیش مظفر بگردکوه فرستاد؛ و نمود که: چون بجهت دعوت، این عورات دوک ریسند، و بهای آن بما لابد ضروری ایشان صرف کنند. و از آن گاه باز محتشمان ایشان در حال رفعت زنش را پیش خود نداشتی. و بنای کار سیدنا و ناموس او بزه و ورع و تقوی بود، و بر امر معروف و نهی منکر. **در مدت سی و هشت سال** که در الموت ساکن بود هیچ کس در ملک او شراب آشکارا نخورد و در خم نریخت، تا بحدی که شخصی بر قلعه نای زده بود او را بیرون کردند، و دیگر بار بر قلعه راه ندادند.¹⁷³

Qashani reverted to the order found in Juwayni's account:

چون بنا و اساس کار سیدنا بر ناموس و زهد و ورع و تقوی و امر بمعروف و نهی منکر [بود]، **در سی و هشت سال** که در قلعه الموت بود هیچکس در ملک او شراب آشکارا نخورده و شیر در خم نریخت و آلات غنا را [بشکستند]، تا بحدی که شخصی بر پای قلعه نای زده بود او را از قلعه برون کرد و باز بر قلعه راه نداد. و پسری دیگر محمد نام داشت او را بشراب خوردن اتهام بود سیدنا فرمود او را کشتن. و قتل هر دو پسر خویش بر آن حمل میکرد تا بعد از او کسی گمان نبرد که دعوت برای فرزند خود کرده و موافق این ناموس، دیگر آنکه بگاه محاصره زن خود را با دو دختر بقلعه گرد کوه فرستاد و برئیس مظفر نوشت که جهت این دعوت عورات دوک ریسند و بهای آن به مالابد [و ضروری ایشان صرف کنند]. و از آنگاه باز محتشمان ایشان در وقت ترفع و تصدّر حال زنان پیش خود نداشتند.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ JT p. 124

His other son named Muḥammad was accused of drinking alcohol; Sayyidnā ordered him to be killed. He pointed to the execution of both his sons as a reason against anyone imagining that he had conducted the *da'wa* for them and he attained this objective.

In accord to this custom (*nāmūs*), on another occasion, at the time of a siege, he sent his wife with her daughter to Muẓaffar at Girdkūh and wrote: "Since these women turn the spindle for the *da'wa*, give them whatever they need in payment for this." From that time on their leaders did not have their women with them while in office.

Sayyidinā founded his cause and his law on asceticism, temperance and piety and on "the enjoining of righteousness and the forbidding evil". (Q3:110). In the period of 38 years (sic) that he resided at Alamūt no one openly drank wine nor produced it (lit: poured it into jars) in his realm. Such was the austerity that a man who played a flute in the castle was evicted and not allowed back in again.

¹⁷⁴ ZT. p. 145

Sayyidnā founded his cause on custom (*nāmūs*), asceticism, temperance and piety and on "the enjoining of righteousness and the forbidding evil". (Q3:110). In the 38 years (sic) that he was at Alamūt no one openly drank wine nor produced it (lit: poured it into vats) in his realm. They destroyed musical instruments (*ālāt-i ghinā*); such was the austerity that a man who played a flute at the foot of the fortress was evicted from the castle and not allowed back in again.

The textual analysis of these passages shows that given the consistency of the content and language the two later chronicles relied on Juwayni's account. Rashid al-Din's account appears to re-order information, perhaps, of the original text to focus a particular reading despite loss of cogency. In this case, Qashani has maintained the contiguity of the original and his ordering of narrative segments closely resembles that of the Juwayni account. The Qashani account tends to change the language of the text without changing the essential thrust. In terms of information, the Qashani account is closer to that of Rashid al-Din. This is evidenced, for instance, by the introduction of a variant (error) that is maintained: Juwayni stated that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was resident at Alamut for 35 years; which in Rashid al-Din was changed to 38 years and remained as 38 years in Qashani. No explanation is available for this disparity. Their dates of Hasan's arrival at Alamut and his death yield 35 lunar and 34.5 solar years: "on Tuesday night (*shab-i chahārshanba*) the 6 *Rajab*, 483/9 September, 1090, he came to the gates of Alamut"¹⁷⁵ and "on Tuesday evening¹⁷⁶ the 6 *Rabi' al-ākhira*, 518/[actually Friday]¹⁷⁷ 30 May, 1124, he left this world." Although the texts continue: "As has been previously mentioned,

His other son, Muḥammad, was accused of drinking wine; Sayyidnā ordered him to be put to death. He pointed to the execution of both his sons as a reason against anyone imagining that he had conducted the *da'wa* for them and he attained this custom. Another (custom): at the time of a siege, he sent his wife with two daughters to Girdkūh and wrote to Ra'īs Muẓaffar "Since these women turn the spindle for the *da'wa*, give them whatever they need in payment for this." From that time on their governors (*muḥtashamān*) did not have their women with them while in office.

¹⁷⁵ JT. p. 104; ZT. p. 126 in error omits و ثمانین same error is found in second edition of the text p. 140:

سیدنا بر قلعه رفت شب چهارشنبه ششم رجب ثلاث و اربعمائه در آن دژ که بایام سابق و زمان متقدم
«آله آموت» گفتندی.

¹⁷⁶ JT. p. 133 [HWC. p. 682 Boyle mistranslates this as Wednesday night, actually شب چهارشنبه = Tuesday evening. Note he converted to the Julian date.

¹⁷⁷ see JT. p. 104 the error in the day may be because the chronicler was making a miraculous reference that he died on the same day he entered the castle? In both cases شب چهارشنبه (Tuesday evening).

from the day Hasan first went up into the castle of Alamut until he departed this world, that is to say, for a period of 38 years, he never descended from the castle and he did not come out of the house (*sarāi*) in which he lived more than twice.”¹⁷⁸ This miscalculation does not make sense!

The content analysis of this episode facilitates the probing of Nizari author(s)’s narrative. This analysis of the execution of Hasan’s sons profoundly nuances our understandings of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, his rule and the Nizari polity. The text of the Nizari author(s) as reported by all three chronicles states that Ḥasan “used to point to the execution of both his sons as a reason against anyone’s imagining that he had conducted propaganda [*da‘wa*] on their behalf and had had that object in mind.”¹⁷⁹

There is a resonance of this issue in a Nizari text, the *Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw*—edited and translated here for the first time—a doctrinal treatise from a manuscript, now at the Institute of Ismaili Studies.¹⁸⁰ This manuscript contains several Nizari texts and was copied in the early part of the twentieth century. The only other copy, known at present, of the treatise is listed by Poonawala to be part of a *majmū‘a* in the Vazīrī collection at Tehran University.¹⁸¹ Content analysis suggests that the tract dates from a few years before the enactment of the

¹⁷⁸ JT p. 133; ZT. p. 153-154

¹⁷⁹ TJG. p. 210; HWC. p. 680; JT. p. 124; ZT. p. 145

¹⁸⁰ IIS Persian MS 32:57 I am also grateful to John Woods, Nazeer Lotfi Fard, Fatemeh Mazaheri and Zubair Saifi for patiently reviewing my translation. Thanks also to Paul Walker and Hermann Landolt for their comments on the text. Thanks also to Sunatullo Jonboboev of the University of Central Asia and Qudratbek Elchibekov at the Institute of Oriental Studies in Dushanbe for checking to see if any comparable texts or copies of this tract exist in the collections in Tajikistan.

¹⁸¹ Tehran-Markazī MS-F 2835; Poonawala. BBB. p. 353. I am grateful to Janis Esots for kindly securing a scan of this tract for me.

Qiyāmat-i Buzurg at Alamut in 1164/559 by Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām. (Cf. Part Two:2-III-E; 3-I-C; 3-II-E).

The text consists of a series of analepses (flashbacks) and prolepses (flash-forwards); the first flashback narrated in the voice of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ invokes an anecdote purportedly related to him by Nāṣir-i Khusraw about his appointment “to carry out the *da’wa* in the regions of Balkh, Kabul and Badakhshan.” This is followed by several episodes which explain how the line of descendants of Nizār b. al-Mustanšir (d. 1095/488) ended up in Iran and finally identifies Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām as the imam. In one of these episodes, when Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ—referred to as Sayyidnā—was in the presence of the imam, a son of Nizār

Mawlānā said that after you there will be discord. Ḥaṣrat Sayyidnā was bewildered by this. He left and that day and night was distressed and in contemplation. Later he went to Mawlānā, made a prostration and said: “Oh Mawlānā, disclose the secret to me.” Mawlānā told Sayyidnā. He came away and asked for a basin and a dagger. He had four sons;¹⁸² separately he cut off each one’s head with his blessed hand. He proclaimed to the Rafiqān: “I killed my four sons because you should seek after the son of Mawlānā who is the true imam (*imām-i ḥaqq*) and should not go astray.”

The Ilkhanid chronicles report about only two of Ḥasan’s sons; however, this tract dramatically conveys the point recorded by Juwayni. The rhetorical statement masks several issues not highlighted in modern scholarship.

The execution of Ḥusayn b. Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ points to the father’s rash or even desperate decision making. The target of the original murder was Ḥusayn Qā’inī who commanded the polity’s control of the region of Quhistān and perhaps was the second most powerful *dā’ī* after Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. Ḥasan acted ahead of establishing the accusation and without a thorough investigation, if there was one at all; this resulted in the sentence of death. The execution not only of the murderer but also the son of the head of the polity—given the title “*ustād*” meaning

¹⁸² Ilkhanid chronicles report two sons executed: for consuming alcohol and assassinating the *dā’ī* Ḥusayn Qā’inī—there the imam is not referenced

that he may have been a teacher and an intellectual—suggests an elaborate plot in the perpetration of the crime or a more elaborate effort in making the successful, even if, false accusation. Ḥusayn b. Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's implication and involvement in the murder plot and the accusations against him point to factionalism right at the centre of the nascent Nizari polity; as well as competition for and challenges to the position of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. The “real” perpetrators, Zayd Ḥasani and his son, were executed a year later with the added pretext that Zayd had been propagating a *daʿwa* in his own name as *imam*—in opposition not only to the authority of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ but the Nizari line of *imams*. This factionalism, whether Ḥusayn b. Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ was involved or not, was “heresy” right at the centre in Alamut.

The execution of Muḥammad b. Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ is equally controversial. Muḥammad, the chronicles state, was executed for drinking. Juwayni and Qashani's accounts which seem to maintain a narrative thrust and better connection between the different segments of the original Nizari source posit the execution and the reason for it immediately after the passage on Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's piety and austerity:

Now Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ had founded his cause and his law (*nāmūs*) upon asceticism, continence and ‘the enjoying (sic) of righteousness and the forbidding of unrighteousness’, and during the 35 years that he dwelt in Alamut nobody drank wine openly nor put it in jars. Indeed such was his austerity that a certain person having played the flute in the castle he expelled him therefrom and would not re-admit him.”¹⁸³

The Nizari author continues:

Now his other son, whose name was Muḥammad, was accused of drinking wine and he ordered him to be put to death.”¹⁸⁴

From the *Sarguzasht*, Hasan's early attitude towards alcohol is very clear. He said: “I was fearful of alcohol which in the *ḥadīth* is considered the ‘embodiment of all vice and mother of sins’.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ TJG. p. 210; HWC. p. 680. Quote is from Q3:110 and should read enjoining instead of enjoying - pesky spellcheck error in 1958 before spellcheck existed! This passage reflects Juwayni's grudging recognition of an Ismaili's strict adherence to the *sharīʿa*.

¹⁸⁴ TJG. p. 210; HWC. p. 680

¹⁸⁵ JT. p. 98; ZT. p. 121

When he came upon Ismailis drinking alcohol, he considered them impious and unethical. From the passage above “nobody drank wine openly nor put it in jars”—in Boyle’s literal translation of putting wine in jars (*dar kham narīkht*) refers to production of wine and in turn makes reference to the *ḥadīth* reported on the authority of Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq narrated through his ancestors: “The Messenger of God said, ‘Wine is forbidden.’ He cursed wine itself, the extractor of wine, the one who pressed it, its buyer, its seller, the one who drinks it, the one who serves it, its carrier, the one to whom it is carried, and the one who profits from its price.”¹⁸⁶

So what was the Nizari author recording by juxtapositioning a statement that alcohol was not produced or consumed at Alamut and then following up with the report of the execution by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ of his son for drinking alcohol? Again the *prima facie* and therefore easy reading is obvious—the son was a wine bibber. Given the other contextual factors that have been unravelling in these analyses, could this also be seen as Ḥasan doing away with another source of internal challenge? The son’s drinking would not have been an existential threat worthy of execution by itself. Ḥasan who adhered closely to *shari‘i* precepts could have simply administered the *ḥadd* punishment of forty or even eighty lashes. Does the execution suggest that Ḥasan’s son, Muḥammad, might have represented an antinomian opposition which desperately needed to be cut off?

The Nizari author could have simply remained silent on these rather troublesome matters. The fact that he chose to include the execution by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ of his two sons means that this

¹⁸⁶ al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān. *Pillars of Islam*. II:112; Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī. *Al-uṣūl min al-kāfi*, Edited by ‘Alī Akbar al-Ghaffārī. (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā’, 1985). VI:411 and 442; similar prohibitions on production, sale and drinking of wine are also reported by Bukhārī, Mālik, Muslim, Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah

was a critical issue. He was brief and circumspect; however, the message was clear that no opposition would be tolerated even by those close to the higher ranks of the *da'wa*. Beyond the rhetorical statement that Ḥasan “used to point to the execution of both his sons as a reason against anyone’s imagining that he had conducted propaganda [*da'wa*] on their behalf and had had that object in mind”, the delicate handling of the topic by the Nizari author also indicates caution exercised in recording troublesome events and the rash—if not iniquitous—actions by the head of the polity. This sensitivity, of course, would have been necessary towards the patrons and masters of the Nizari polity but the author was probably also very mindful of the readership. So who was reading his text and for what? The text was more than just a biography, autobiography or hagiography; in common with much other Ismaili writing, the *Sarguzasht* and other Nizari texts have to be treated as performing multiple functions. The above episodes, from the perspective of reception, would imply that the *Sarguzasht* was at least also a didactic, homiletic and even admonitory performance text.

The next case study examines the relations between the Nizaris and the Saljuqs. A number of scholars have characterised the Nizaris as an anti-Turk pro-Persian revolt. This case study debunks such notions and maps extended periods of coexistence and collaborations. The Nizaris pulled back from the universal claims of their *da'wa* significantly earlier than found in the earlier studies of the Nizaris. Another finding surfaced through this methodology is the Saljuq use of theological disputations (*munāẓarāt*) as weapons of war. The Sunni ‘*ulamā*’ collaborated with the Saljuq military operations by engaging in doctrinal disputations in Nizari fortresses at the height of siege. The Saljuqs consistently deployed the Sunni ‘*ulamā*’ to reconnoitre the fortress under heavy siege.

V. Relations between Nizaris and Saljuqs

As he was plundering the library at Alamut, Juwayni came across correspondence about which he later wrote that I saw several of

Sanjar's firmans (*manshūr*) which had been preserved in their library and in which he conciliated and flattered them; and from these I was able to deduce the extent to which the Sultan connived at their actions and sought to be on peaceful terms with them. In short, during his reign they enjoyed ease and tranquillity.¹⁸⁷

How is this to be reconciled with the accounts of brutality of siege, warfare and massacre countered by assassinations? How is it that Sultan Sanjar “sought to be on peaceful terms” with the Nizaris and “they enjoyed ease and tranquillity” during his reign?

In the analyses of the capture of Shāhdiz, it has already been suggested that there were previous instances of cooperation and coexistence, sometimes short-lived, between the Saljuqs and the Ismailis. It is even possible that Bark-yāruq, whilst struggling against the coalition of *amīrs* supporting his step mother Tarkan Khātūn (d. 1094/487) to place her infant son Maḥmūd (d. 1094/487) on the throne after the death of Malikshāh (d. 1092/485), may have been complicit in the Ismaili seizure of Shāhdiz—some eight miles outside of the contested Saljuq capital of Isfahan. In 1100/493, Sultan Bark-yāruq and his amīr Amīrdād Ḥabashī were supported by a force of 5000 Ismailis against the former's half-brother Sanjar.¹⁸⁸ At times Bark-yāruq was so closely allied with the Nizari Ismailis that his other half-brother Muḥammad's

¹⁸⁷ HWC. p. 682; TJG. p. 214-215

از مناشیر سنجرى در کتابخانه ايشان چند منشور که باقى مانده بود باستمالت و اِحْمَاد ايشان دیدم و از آن بر وفور اغضا و اغماض [۲۱۵] و سلامت طلبی سلطان استدلال گرفت، القصّه در عهد سلطان آسوده و مرقّه بماندند.

¹⁸⁸ Hodgson. OA. 86; Ḥusaynī. *The History of the Seljuq State: a Translation with Commentary of the Akhbār al-dawla al-Saljūqīyah*. pp 61ff; Ṣadr al-Dīn 'Alī b. Nāṣir Ḥusaynī. *Zubdat al-tawāriḫ-i Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥusaynī (Persian Translation of the Akhbār al-dawla al-Saljūqīyah)*, Translated by Ramaḍān 'Alī Rūḥ Allāhī. (Tehran: 2001). p. 120ff; Erroneously suggests that Sanjar and Bark-yāruq came to a common cause to dislodge Amīrdād Ḥabashī from his control of Khurāsān. Amīrdād was loyal to Bark-yāruq; see: Ibn al-Athīr. IA. p. 29-30

soldiers taunted his army with shouts of “*bāṭinī*!” (esoterists).¹⁸⁹ Similarly, the above analyses have detailed how Muḥammad b. Malikshāh pragmatically sought the path of cooperation and conciliation where possible; however the multiple interests at play resulted in the capture of Shāhdiz and the killing of the Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh, the Ismaili *dā’ī* who had taken possession of it.

Modern scholarship has begun to map these relationships with a few but increasing number of efforts to examine the collaboration and coexistence between the Saljuqs and Nizaris.¹⁹⁰ This case study significantly advances accepted understandings with a survey of the nature of Saljuq-Nizari relations through the disputations held at besieged fortresses after the capture of Shāhdiz and an examination of the backdrop to Juwayni’s discovery Saljuq *firman*s in the library at Alamut.

A. Between Overwhelming and Engaging the Opponent

After the capture of Shāhdiz, Sultan Muḥammad b. Malikshāh appointed Aḥmad b. Niẓām al-Mulk as his *wazīr*. This position had been vacated by the execution of its previous occupant, Sa’d al-Mulk Abū’l-Maḥāsin who was executed a few days before the capture of Shāhdiz along with four of his leading associates. A purge ensued. According to Ibn al-Athīr, the *wazīr* was accused of treachery and his companions for being Nizaris.¹⁹¹ Having distributed the survivors from Shāhdiz and Khānalajān to other Nizari fortresses, these other fortresses were then attacked and besieged. This is an interesting military strategy of drawing down the resources

¹⁸⁹ . *IA* p. 46

¹⁹⁰ Safi. *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry*.; Carole Hillenbrand. “The power struggle between the Saljuqs and the Isma‘ilis of Alamūt, 487–518/1094–1124: The Saljuq perspective” in Daftary. *MIHT*.; Durand-Guédy. *Iranian Elites*.; Deborah Tor. “‘Sovereign and Pious’: The Religious Life of the Great Seljuq Sultans,” in Deborah Tor, “‘Sovereign and Pious’: The Religious Life of the Great Seljuq Sultans,” in *The Seljuqs: Politics, Society and Culture*, ed. Christian Lange, and Songül Mecit Edinburgh University Press, 2012). Deborah Tor to list a few.

¹⁹¹ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. I:121 s.a. 500

of the besieged by adding the burden of refugees! The new *wazīr* was sent to attack Alamut.

Rashid al-Din recorded:

The sultan sent Nizām al-Mulk Aḥmad ibn Nizām al-Mulk with large numbers of soldiers to retaliate for his father's murder. He himself [Sultan Muḥammad b. Malikshāh] along with the nobles setup at Jarbādqān awaiting news of victory. From the beginning of spring to autumn Aḥmad set up a siege around Alamut; he burnt and ruined their crops but with no avail. He turned back in the winter due to excessive rain and snow. He came out of the Rūdbār and when he reached Baghdad, *fidā'īs* stabbed and killed him in a mosque.¹⁹²

This is derived from Ibn al-Athīr who did not make any reference to the issue of the retaliation (*qiṣāṣ*) for Nizām al-Mulk's assassination; he also located the beginning of the siege in August 1109/*Muḥarram* 503 and noted that Aḥmad survived the assassination attempt on him.¹⁹³ Two years after the failure of this siege, the *Atabaig* (preceptor) Anūshtakīn Shīrgīr was put in command of a large, well-provisioned force which included many leading amirs and nobles and the armies of Gīlān and Daylamān to attack the Rūdbār. The chronologies are unclear;

Juwayni gave different circumstances:

For eight consecutive years the troops came to Rudbar and destroyed the crops, and the two sides were engaged in battle. When it was known that Hasan and his men were left without strength or food, [Sultan Muhammad], at the beginning of the year 511/1117-18, appointed the atabeg Nush-Tegin Shir-Gir as commander of the troops and ordered him to lay siege to the castles from then onwards.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² JT. p. 124

سلطان نظام الملک احمد بن نظام الملک را بقصاص خون پدر با لشکری میکاثر و انبوهی متوافر بفرستاد، و خود با خاصگیان بجربادقان مقام کرد منتظر بشارت فتح و ظفره و احمد از اول بهار تا فصل خریف مدار الموت را محاصره کرد، و غله‌های ایشان بسوخت و تلف کرد، و فائده نداد. در فصل زمستان از افراط مطر و وفور ثلوج باز گشت، و از رودبار بیرون آمد، چون ببغداد رسید فدائیان او را در مسجد کارد زدند و بکشتند.

¹⁹³ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. I:150 s.a. 503; the assassin was captured and plied with wine until drunk and interrogated about his accomplices—he listed a number of people from the Ma'muniyya masjid in East Baghdad. Is this a form of water-boarding? JT. p. 136 lists him as being assassinated in the year 499/1105-6!

¹⁹⁴ TJG. p. 212; HWC. p. 681

و مدّت هشت سال متصل لشکر متواتر برودبار می‌آمد و غلّها تلف می‌کرد و از جانبین مناظره می‌کردند چون بدانستند که قوّت و قوّت نماند در اوّل سنه احدى عشر[ة] و خمسمائة اتابک نوشتکین شیرگیرا بر سر لشکرها امیر کرد و فرمود که بعد ازین قلاع را محاصره کنند

Despite these disagreements of dates, the Saljuqs captured the castles of Kulam and Bira and sent their occupants to Alamut which they went on to besiege for seven years. The military tactic of burning crops around Alamut and Lamasar worked as did the strategy of overwhelming the defenders with refugees—along with possible infiltrators. Ibn al-Athīr recorded: “the situation of the Bāṭinīs became difficult, foodstuffs and other things grew short. When things became critical, they sent down their women and children to sue for terms.” They asked for a writ of security for the vacation of Alamut which was declined. Things were so bad that “Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ issued each person daily with a loaf and three walnuts.”¹⁹⁵ Rashid al-

Din wrote:

A daily stipend (ration) of 100 diram weight of barley was allotted for a (every) person which was to be eaten at the top of the walls; some were not free from battle to take advantage of even this; some survived on pieces of wood, seeds, and [roots] of grasses; and these were known as rewards for the life to come. They consoled each other [saying]: “we endure these calamities for God, the Prophet, the Imam and the true faith; and [for] the victory of [the true] faith, this calamity is easy; because all prophets have been afflicted and troubled by the ignorant and the commonality—such that they have attained the satisfaction of God All-Mighty.” Everyday they vigorously, courageously and powerfully engaged in battle and by night attacked and ambushed the opponents (*khuṣmān*).¹⁹⁶

When in this context of desperation the Nizaris held firm, the Saljuqs picked up another mode of warfare; they engaged the Nizaris in disputation. A scholar named Abū'l-ʿAbbās Arjānī was sent to debate them at Alamut. He challenged Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ on the Nizari use of assassination and turned to doctrinal issues. Rashid al-Din captured a response by Ḥasan:

People find salvation in the Book of God and the sunnah (practice) of His messenger. The assumption of the opponents are that “We can know God through the intellect and thought and the knower of God himself does not go to hell. And now we say: by the Book of God and the

¹⁹⁵ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. I:185

¹⁹⁶ JT. p. 131 (100 diram equals about 300 grams)

هر روز مردی را صد درم سنگ جو راتبه موظف بودی که بر سر دیوارها بخوردندی، و از جنگ چندان نپرداختندی [که آنرا بفراغت بخورند]، و [بعضی] برنش چوب و تخم [وبیخ] گیاه زندگانی میکردند، و آنرا از مثنوبات عقبی دانستندی، و یکدیگر را دلخوشی میداند که: این بلاها برای خدای و رسول و امام و دین حق میکشیم، و نصرت مذهب [حق را این بلا] سهل است، چه انبیا از جهل و عوام زحمتهای و مشقتها کشیده اند تا رضای حق تعالی حاصل کرده اند. و هر روز در جنگ قوی تر و دلیرتر و نیرومندتر می بودند، و شبها بر خصمان هجوم و شیبخون می بردند.

sunnah and they say: through the intellect (*khirad*), thought (*andīshah*), opinion (*raʾī*), analogy (*qiyās*), consideration (*naẓar*), intellectual reasoning (*ijtihād*) and other such phrases.¹⁹⁷

The scholar then tried to pin him down in the classical Muʿtazilī discourse of whether the

Qurʾān was created or not? Ḥasan replied:

God All-Mighty has called the Glorious Qurʾān His own words: “If one amongst the Pagans ask thee for asylum, grant it to him, so that he may hear the word of God.” (Q9:6) The Qādirīs and other innovators say: “It is created.” “All innovation is error and all errors are a path to hellfire.” In all the world, those who possess [are knowledgeable in] the *ḥadīth* do not differ from us; and all others are followers of opinion (*raʾy*).¹⁹⁸

Around the same time another disputation took place at Lamasar; a scholar Abū Naṣr Kunyāt debated Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd. This attack was on the Nizari position on intellectual reasoning;

the *dāʾī* responded to the other’s characterisation of their beliefs:

We do not need not listen to our beliefs from the enemies. The basis of our faith is that people must possess intellect and through the intellect of the Prophet, may peace be upon him, whoever is without intellect is insane and if he does not listen to the words of the Prophet then he is an infidel. The similitude of this is that eyes are necessary to see the light; if one has eyes and no lamp then in the darkness it is not possible to see anything and on the other hand if one had a lamp but no eyes [equally it is not possible to see anything]. It is supposed that people must have faith and that God, All-Mighty, through the tongue of the Prophet, may peace be

¹⁹⁷ JT p. 127

مردم بکتاب خدا و سنت رسول او رستگار شوند. و زعم خصمان آنست که: بخرد و اندیشه خدایرا بشناسیم، و خدای شناس خود بدوزخ نرود. اکنون ما بکتاب و سنت میگوئیم، و ایشان بخرد و اندیشه و رای و قیاس و نظر و اجتهاد و گونه گونه عبارتها].

¹⁹⁸ JT p. 127

[خدایتعالی] قرآن مجید را کلام خود خواند که «و ان احد من المشرکین استجارک فاجره حتى یسمع کلام الله». قدریان و دیگر مبتدعان گویند که: آفریده است «کل بدعة ضلالة، و کل ضلالة سبیلها الی النار» در همه عالم صاحب حدیثی بغیر از ما نیست. و دیگر همه متابع رأی اند.

The first quote is from the Qurʾān 9:6

وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ [٩:٦]

“And if any of the idolaters seeks of thee protection, grant him protection till he hears the words of God; then do thou convey him to his place of security -- that, because they are a people who do not know.” The second quote is a *ḥadīth* found in al-Nawawī Chapter 1 *ḥadīth* 28; Ibn Mājah Chapter 1 *ḥadīth* 46;

upon him, in the Glorious Qur'ān has commanded—truth and falsity, the licit and illicit—he who stands with that which the Messenger has commanded can not be considered irreligious.¹⁹⁹

His interlocutor argued back that “Since God cannot be known through the intellect, if the Prophet were not sent then it would have been incumbent on people to know God. Then all Muslims would be infidels.” Then he referenced the *ḥadīth* about seventy-three sects saying that the prophet was asked:

He was asked about the sect that would be saved; he said: “The People of the Practice and Community.” He was asked about the People of the Practice and Community; he [Prophet] said: “What I am today to it [the People of the Practice and Community...] and my companions.”²⁰⁰

Abū Naṣr concluded: (*āknūn firqa-yi nājiya mā-yīm*). The *dā'īs* rejected the notion and responded: “With regards to the saved [sect] it is proper that we present the foundational belief. As the Prophet, may peace be upon him, has said: “Say: ‘There is no god but God, Muḥammad is the messenger of God’; those are the words of the testimony [of faith], whoever says it is Muslim and is saved; the non-Muslims are those who know God through their own intellect and consideration.”²⁰¹

Rashid al-Din copied a conciliatory epistle²⁰² published by Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ which declared the position of the Nizari Ismailis asking for an “unimpeachable compelling legal opinion (*mutafaẓlan-i mājuran-i fatwā*)”. He specifically stated that authoritative teaching (*ta'lim*) is not a necessity in regard to the Creator; for the remaining “questions there are roots and branches

¹⁹⁹ JT p. 128.

معتقد ما از خصمان نباید شنید. بنای مذهب ما آنست که مردم را خرد باید، و با خرد پیغامبر صلی الله علیه و سلم، [هر که] بی خرد باشد دیوانه باشد، و اگر سخن پیغامبر نشنود کافر. و مثال این چنانست که چشم [باید] و با چشم نوری، یا اگر چشم دارد و چراغ ندارد بتاریکی هیچ نتوان دیدن. و بعکس این اگر چراغ دارد و چشم نه. زعم آنست که مردم را دینی باید داشتن، که حق تعالی بر زبان پیغامبر صلی الله علیه و سلم بقرآن عظیم در فرموده است، و در حق و باطل و حلال و حرام چنان بدان قیام باید نمود که بزبان رسول فرموده است تا بی دینی نباشد.

²⁰⁰ JT p. 129. The *ḥadīth* is spurious and back projected since the concept of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* did not exist in the time of the Prophet.

و از فرقه ناجیه سؤال کردند، فرمود که: «اهل السنة و الجماعة». پرسیدند از اهل سنة و جماعة، فرمود که: «ما انا عليه اليوم و اصحابی».

²⁰¹ JT p. 129

ناجیه از آنجا درست آید که باقاعده اصل رجوع کنیم، چنانکه پیغامبر صلی الله علیه و سلم فرموده است: «بگوئید: لا اله الا الله، محمد رسول الله» و این کلمه شهادتست، هر که بگوید مسلمان و رستگار شد، و نامسلمان آنکه خدا را بخرد و نظر خویش بداند.

²⁰² This epistle will be examined in detail in Part Two under the doctrinal development.

contemptuously said to him: “Didn’t you err, old man, by submitting to the heretics (*malāḥida*)

and moreover, you gave the property of Amīrdād to them!” The Ra’īs replied:

It is because I saw truth with them, otherwise I did not nor do I have the expectation for property and position. Consider with what lofty titles the *divān* of the sultan addresses me and such high appointments have been written for me and they [the Ismailis] write to me informally. If the purpose of submission to them was for property or place, I would never have left the palace of the sultan. I would have been a secretary as the sultans wanted, then a wazir content with titles and names.²⁰⁵

The wazīr exclaimed “Bravo! At once ruler (*farmān-dih*) and subject (*farmān-bar*), how is that possible?” The officers persisted to demand return of the deceased Amīrdād’s lands and properties. The *dā’ī* responded “I and the residents of the castle are special servants of the sultan, nourished by his bestowal and nobility and grow and thrive in the shadow of his benevolence.” The sultan spoke over them and invested Ra’īs with great and special honours.²⁰⁶

Juwayni noted a different strand:

Because of his nephew's enmity Sultan Sanjar was unable to deal with the Heretics and they recovered their strength; but when he had restored the kingdom to order he sought to put an end to them and began by sending an army into Quhistān.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ JT p. 119.

حق با ایشان دیدم، و اگر نه توقع بمال و جاه نداشتم و ندارم، نگر که از دیوان سلطان مرا چگونه القاب علی و اسامی بلند نوشته‌اند، و ایشان چگونه بی تکلف می نویستند. اگر سبب انقیاد ایشان طلب مال و جاه بودی بایستی که هرگز از بارگاه سلطان دور نبودمی. و مردی منشی مسر بود، امثله سلاطین بخواست و پیش وزیر نهاد مشحون بالقاب و کنیت.

احسنت فرمان ده و فرمان بر، این [را] چه توان گفت

²⁰⁶ JT pp 119-120; ZT. pp 139-141.

رئیس مظفر در جواب گفت: من و سکان قلعه بندگان [خاص سلطانیم بانعام و اکرام او پروریده، و در سایه عاطفت او نشو و نما یافته.

²⁰⁷ TJG. p. 213; HWC. p. 681

جنانک شرح آن بر عقب می‌آید مخاصمت برادر زاده سلطان سنجر بتدارک کار ملاحظه نمی‌رسید دیگر باره قوت یافتند، و سلطان سنجر را چون ملک قرار گرفت بتدارک کار آن جماعت ابتدا لشکر بقیهستان فرستاد.

Meanwhile, according to this narrative, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ repeatedly sent envoys to sue for peace but Sanjar was not receptive so instead one of the Sultan's eunuchs was bribed. One night when the Sultan was drunk, the eunuch struck the dagger that was sent to him from Alamut into the ground near the royal bed. When Sanjar woke and discovered the dagger, he was alarmed and kept quite not knowing who was responsible. Ḥasan followed up with a message:

Sayyidnā sent a message: "Had I not good intentions and wished the sultan well, that dagger which—in the night was struck into the hard ground—would have been planted in his soft breast."²⁰⁸

The frightened Sultan inclined to peace, according to Rashid al-Din, he specified three conditions:

The sultan was fearful and was inclined to peace with them and ordered that: "We will make peace with them on three conditions. First, that they will not build new castles; second that they will not buy arms and armaments and third that they will not call people to their belief." The legists (*fuqahā*) did not favour this peace and accused him of allying [*dustī*] with them.²⁰⁹

After the death of Muḥammad b. Malikshāh, according to Rashid al-Din:

In *Dhū'l-ḥijja* 511/April 1118 Sultan Sanjar sent Ibrāhīm Sahlū to Alamut once again to seek peace through compacts and agreements such that the strategy of compacts led to a confirmed alliance (*dūstī-yi mu'akkadtār*).²¹⁰

Again, the chronologies are unclear. Rashid al-Din and Qashani date Ra'īs Muẓaffar's death in 1105/498 yet Sanjar's conflict with his nephew Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. Malikshāh did not arise until after his brother Muḥammad's death in 1118/511.²¹¹ Sanjar may have been hosted at

²⁰⁸ TJG, p. 214; HWC, p. 682; JT, p. 123. حسن صباح رسولی فرستاد و پیغام داد که اگر نه بسلطان ارادت خیر بودی آن کار در آن شب در زمین درشت می‌نشانند در سینه نرم استوار کردند.

²⁰⁹ JT p. 123

بسه شرط با ایشان صلح [کنیم]: نخست آنکه از نو قلعه بنیاد نکنند، دیگر سلاح و سلب جنگ نخرند، و سوم مردم را بر عقیدت خود دعوت نکنند. فقها این مصالحت پسندیده نداشتند، و سنجر را بدوستی ایشان متهم کرد[ند].

²¹⁰ JT p. 132

و در ذی الحجة حجة احدى عشرة و خمسمائه سلطان سنجر باز ابراهيم سهلوی را بالموت فرستاد بطلب صلح بعهود و موثیق، تا تمهید عقود دوستی مؤکدتر شد.

²¹¹ JT p. 119-120; ZT, p. 139-141.

Girdkūh on a previous journey. This again seems to be a case of moulding disparate events into the dynastic chronicle template. Both chronicles recorded that Sanjar made a truce with the Nizaris and allowed them to keep 3000 dinars raised from their lands in the Qūmis region; he also permitted them to collect a toll and levy tribute from the travellers on the road below Girdkūh. Juwayni noted that this practice survived to his day and that he was able to deduce “the extent to which the Sultan connived at their actions and sought to be on peaceful terms with them. In short, during his reign they enjoyed ease and tranquillity.”²¹²

Deborah Tor has argued that the Saljuq sultans were pious Sunnis and she attempted to solve the question why sources, including those after the fall of the Saljuqs, “perpetuate the Sunni aura of the Seljuq sultans?” While cognisant of topoi used in the near-hagiographical constructions of the sultans—in her effort to counter the revisionist scholarly consensus over the last half century which finds the Saljuqs as utilitarian in the religious affiliations—she explored “the personal piety, beliefs and practices of the sultans themselves, and the extent to which the sultans’ religious outlook influenced their actions and policies”. Her selective reading sets aside questions of the author-historian’s motives in their narrative choices—didactic and polemical to exhort their readership to emulate the heroic Saljuqs. Malikshāh’s personal beliefs and practices reflecting his Sunni piety, for instance, are demonstrated by his alms-giving during *Ramaḍān*, building of cisterns along the pilgrimage route and other acts which “could be construed as public relations ploys”. The sultan’s private personal religiosity, she stated, is clearly revealed for example “in his scruples over his own inveterate hunting”—having bagged 10000 animals in one hunt with his entourage, as remorse he ordered 10000

²¹² TJG, pp 214-215; HWC, p. 682; JT, p. 123

dinars distributed in charity.²¹³ She listed similar depictions of Muḥammad b. Malikshāh and

his brother Sanjar—though Bark-yāruq’s personal religiosity was not included. She concluded

But when we leave aside such obvious public relations ploys, there remains a body of evidence which indicates that, wholly apart from the propaganda at which the Seljuqs apparently excelled, many of the sultans exhibited pious Sunni religious beliefs and behaviour. And, despite the many situations in which political expediency or personal wants trumped religious principle for the Seljuq sultans, there remain those instances in which the opposite happened: belief trumped expediency, and religious principle shaped their lives, actions and political policies, rather than the other way around.²¹⁴

Contrary to Tor’s thesis, in this study, Sultan Muḥammad—held up as the iconic warrior against the Nizaris—has been demonstrated to have preferred agreement rather than conflict with them. Rashid al-Din wrote: “He (Muḥammad) placed a pigeon in his armpit and placed his hand there and swore a solemn oath that: “As long as this life remains in this body, he (Muḥammad) would be true to the oath.” After the oath was declared, they (the Nizaris) came down [from Shāhdiz] and the sultan ordered that they go to Alamut to Sayyidnā and razed the castle.”²¹⁵ His attack on the castle was predicated not by religious but economic and military objectives. Carole Hillenbrand—included by Tor among the revisionists—concurred with these findings; she wrote: “... it is debatable whether Muḥammad had the eradication of the Isma‘ilis as his prime concern. Nor did he ever fight personally against them at Alamūt. His personal involvement was to recapture his own power base in Iṣfahān, an action that could quite well have prompted by self-interest.” In this important of power struggles between the Saljuqs and

²¹³ Bagging 10000 animals in one hunt is a gross exaggeration even in the age of guns! The less than pious attempt by Malikshāh to depose the ‘Abbāsid caliph al-Muqtadī did not fit this narrative! Cf. C. Bosworth. "The Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World (A.D. 1000–1217)" in Boyle, s. p. 101

²¹⁴ Tor, “Sovereign and Pious’: The Religious Life of the Great Seljuq Sultans.”. The larger problem is that in his 20-year reign Malikshāh was away waging war more than he was at “home”—the author-historians were aware of the wages of war! This vignette ought not to be read without nuance! As a former hunter the notion of killing for sport is repugnant... the butchery on the battle field does not even begin to be fathomed—what point were the chronicles making? This was not an illustration of piety! The thesis of this chapter is a departure from Tor’s earlier article which apparently argued Saljuq complicity and responsibility in the killings of the Abbasid caliphs al-Mustarshid and al-Rāshid cf. Tor, “A Tale of Two Murders: Power Relations Between Caliph and Sultan in the Twelfth Century.”

²¹⁵ JT. pp 122-123

the Ismailis, Hillenbrand noted both the conflict and the cooperation between the two sides. The Ismailis, as with most other studies on the subject, were viewed as a monolithic entity centred on Alamut.²¹⁶ The factionalism amongst the Ismailis was unnoticed and importantly, the doctrinal shift in the Nizari position as a result of the struggle for Shāhdiz has not previously been focussed on.

The second conclusion of this case study is that the Saljuqs adopted different tactical approaches towards the Nizaris. The construal of Muḥammad b. Malikshāh, not as the champion of Sunni Islam against the Nizaris, but intent on avoiding conflict, may also be a literary trope of showing the ruler's munificence and the duress that forced his hands to the bloodbath. (Cf. Part One:6-III). The sheer military and financial costs of taking an impenetrable fortress was so enormous and it was prudent to avoid. The majority of Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh's followers were allowed to vacate the besieged fortress and were sent on to Alamut. As already mentioned this tactic was designed to overwhelm the fortress of Alamut by depleting stored resources to sustain a large influx of refugees. These refugees, of course, could also provide cover for agents infiltrating the enemy fortress. In the capture of Shāhdiz, the Saljuqs deployed tactics they would repeat in the sieges of Girdkūh, Alamut and Lamasar over the next few years.

The standard tactics of acquiring an enemy fortress by storming the walls, undermining the defences by mining under or sapping the walls and even biological warfare of flinging sick or dead animals or soldiers into the castle were inordinately difficult against the Nizari fortresses perched on high peaks.

²¹⁶ Carole Hillenbrand. "The Saljuq-Isma'ili power struggle" in Daftary. *MIHT*. p. 212

Figure 6c: Photographs of the Locations of four Nizari Fortresses



Catapults, trebuchets, ballistas, battering rams and siege towers were difficult to transport and construct in the difficult mountainous terrains. Due to the altitude, these weapons would not have sufficient capacities to penetrate the defences. The alternatives were deceptive infiltration, treachery by the inhabitants or starvation by siege.

The chronicles reported numerous sieges of the Rūdbār and Quhistān. Castellan polities consisting of limited space in the fortress and extended out to dependant villages and towns, when attacked became over-crowded with people from the surrounding areas seeking sanctuary from the attacks. The chronicles have documented that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and other commanders built storage capacities for food and ensured water supplies through construction of wells and channels. The attackers destroyed crops grown by the dependant farmers and yet the castles were able to hold out due to the stores built up for such eventualities. In the last years of the reign of Muḥammad b. Malikshāh, the eight-year sieges of the Rūdbār and Quhistān were designed to annually destroy the harvests and deplete the stores year-after-year and ultimately to bring the occupants to submission. In the midst of this warfare, the Saljuqs deployed a tactic used at Shāhdiz. At the height of the siege, presumably just before winter set in—the precise dates are not available—the chronicles report *munāẓarāt* (religious disputations) being held with the Nizaris in their castles. The overt purpose of these debates was the doctrinal jousting; however, the covert strategy should be read into these events—the

Sunni 'ālim and his entourage ascended to the Nizari fortress with the clandestine mission to gather intelligence and reconnoitre the opponent's state of preparedness. The report of morale, manpower, weapons, defences and supplies of food and other necessities would allow a determination of whether the siege could be fruitfully prolonged to force a capitulation or whether the besiegers would better be withdrawn until the next spring. This innovation of the Sunni 'ulamā' carrying out offensive manoeuvres as part of and in concert with military forces is a very early example of the cooption of the 'ulamā' classes by the ruling military elites.²¹⁷

A third conclusion of this case study is that the only specific hint of anti-Turk sentiment in the entire account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ in the three Ilkhanid era chronicles is found in the “three school fellows” story in the sentence:

ای دریغا اگر دوکس چنانکه باید با من یکدل و یکجهت بودندی من جواب آن ترک و این روستانی
 بگفتمی

“Oh alas! if I had two men of the same mind and direction with me I would give an answer to that Turk and this peasant.”²¹⁸ This sentence from an oft-rejected “spurious” source has led scholars to assert that the Nizaris were a manifestation of anti-Turk Persian revolt. Starting with Dānishpazhūh, Dābir Siyāqī in their *dībāchas*;²¹⁹ to Peter Willey writing: “They indicate not

²¹⁷ Cf. Ira M. Lapidus. *A History of Islamic Societies*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). pp 192-193. The common understanding has been that 'ulamā' were coopted by the ruling military elites to provide legitimation and legal governance to the extent that the Ottomans created the positions of *qāḍī 'askar* (military judge). This research shows that several centuries earlier the 'ulamā' were involved in offensive military manoeuvres and operations. The use of innovation here is intentional!

²¹⁸ TJG. p. 205 HWC. p. 677; JT. p. 112; ZT. p. 134

روزی در اثنای شکایت روزگار و حکایت تعصب سلطان و ارکان دولت [و قصهٔ وزیر] آهی از جان
 سیدنا برآمد و گفت: «ای دریغا اگر دوکس چنانکه باید با من یکدل و یکجهت بودندی من جواب آن
 ترک و این روستانی بگفتمی»

²¹⁹ JT. *dībācha* p. 11ff; Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Faṣlī az Jāmi' al-tawārīkh: Sarguzasht-i Ḥasan Šabbāḥ wa jānīshīnān-i ū yā Tārīkh-i firqah-i Rafīqān wa Ismā'īliyyān-i Alamūt. dībācha* p. 3ff

only the attractions of the Ismaili cause to ordinary Iranians, especially the Shi'a Muslims, but also their dislike of the Saljuq Turks who were regarded as foreign occupiers of their country.”²²⁰ Or Farhad Daftary writing:

Ḥasan's revolt was an expression of Persian 'national' sentiment – a factor that accounts for its early popular appeal and widespread success in Persia. The trend towards the Turkish domination of the Iranian lands, initiated by the establishment of the Ghaznawid and Qarakhānid dynasties, had reached a climax under the Saljūqs, who threatened the revival of Persian culture and sentiment. The Saljūq Turks were aliens in Persia and their rule was intensely detested by various social classes there. Anti-Saljūq sentiment was further aggravated by the anarchy and depredation visited on towns and villages by the Turks and their unruly soldiers, who were continuously drawn to Persia in new waves from Central Asia through Saljūq victories Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ himself openly resented the Turks and their rule. He referred to the Saljūq sultan as a mere ignorant Turk, and he is also reported to have said that the Turks were jinn not human beings.²²¹

In addition to the calling Malikshāh “that Turk” Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ also called Niẓām al-Mulk “this peasant” and worse than a jinn, Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ called the Niẓām a Shayṭān. Most recently, Durand-Guédy has written that the Turkish cavalry,

poorly acquainted with urban society and Persian culture, could do little against men experienced in covert action. Worse still, by their intrusive presence, the cavalry contributed to the success of Ismaili propaganda. The city was occupied by a large body of military who, in the absence of a strong ruler, enjoyed complete immunity. The sources tell us that ten thousand horsemen were encamped in the environs of Iṣfahān.²²² They were mostly mamluks—Turkish slave soldiers—although we also know that Isma‘il b. Yaquti arrived in 486/1093 with a large number of Türkmen.²²³ For the townsfolk, the abuses committed by the Turks were all the more intolerable given that the continuous military operations harmed the economy. Once the Saljuqs came to represent disorder, injustice and insecurity, entire segments of the population of Iṣfahān could be won over to the Ismaili cause, if not by conviction, then at least to protect their interests.²²⁴

Petrushevsky analysing the list of assassinations in the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* noted that among the seventy-five victims listed, there are eight rulers (including the Fatimid Caliph and Imam of the Musta‘lis, al-Amir; the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph Mustarshid and his son and successor Rashid; and the Seljuq Sultan of Iraq, Da‘ud, grandson of Malikshah); six viziers; seventeen generals and provincial governors; six city magistrates; thirteen Qadis and Muftis of different circuits including Qazwin, Hamadan, Isfahan, Ray, Kirman, Gurgan, Kuhistan, Tabriz, and Tiflis; heads of

²²⁰ Willey. *Castles*. p. 208

²²¹ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 316

²²² Ibn al-Athīr twice indicates the strength of ‘Unar’s troops. He states that in 487/1094 “there remained in the hands [of Tarkān Khātūn] nothing but the metropolis (*qaṣba*) of Iṣfahān and ten thousands Turkish horsemen (*fāris atrāk*)” Ibn al-Athīr. *Annals of the Saljuq Turks*. p. 277. Five years later, “Oner gathered around ten thousand of his most battle-hardened soldiers and left Iṣfahān for Rayy” Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. pp 20ff;

²²³ Ibn al-Athīr. *Annals of the Saljuq Turks*. p. 267

²²⁴ Durand-Guédy. *Iranian Elites*. p. 163

religious sects such as the Muqaddam of the Kiramis in Nishapur; the Imam of the Tabaristan Zaydis; courtiers, dignitaries, scholars and sayyids; and some Nizari traitors, one of them a former *dā'ī*. Practically all the individuals named belonged to the military, civil or clerical elite.²²⁵

The majority of these attacks were on Arabs and Iranians not just Turks. The construction of the Nizari revolt as anti-Turk pro-Persian is based on shreds and the consequence is that this optique overlooks long periods of interaction that were not entirely conflictual. Perhaps it is best to leave 20th/14-15th century ethno-nationalisms where they belong!

²²⁵ I. P. Petrushevsky. *Islam in Iran*, Translated by Hubert Evans. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985). p. 255

7. Epilogue: New Approaches to the Sources

For over a century, while academic scholarship on the Nizari Ismailism has lamented the dearth of sources and even the most careful scholars have been satisfied with picking up shiny nuggets of information to build their narratives. In more recent decades scholars have improved their mining methods and in their wake leave unattended the slag heaps of dross and pools of toxic slurries of the pre-modern historians' antipathies towards the Ismailis. In this research I have demonstrated new approaches. Continuing the metaphor, I have sought to crush the ore and treat the resultant fine particles with reactants and solvents to extract not just the precious resources but have even treated the effluent to make good use of it in understanding traces of past actualities. In these chapters I have demonstrated innovative approaches to re-reading the limited number of sources on early Nizari history and have revealed many significant and new findings.

In chapter 1, I examined the development of Islamicate historical writing and suggested that the (re)-emergence of Persian historiography needs to be attributed to the readerly classes and not simply to projects of self-legitimation by certain rulers and their scribes for hire. In chapter 2, I surveyed a selection of *firaq* and *radd* texts and demonstrated that legists and bureaucrats were trained within a system where their repeated patterns of re-tellings and writings became part of the structures by which they handed down beliefs about groups of people from generation to generation. In this collective memory and historic consciousness, those who ventured to write history rarely escaped the hermeneutical trap. In their writings about the Ismailis, they preserved, reproduced and amplified Sunni prejudices across intellectual and social networks.

In chapter 3, based on an analyses of a large corpus of texts, I postulated that Ismailis did not write history *qua* history in the *ta'rikh* genre. The historical writing in Ismaili *da'wa* literature comports to *sira* and *manāqib* passages which were often embedded in and incidental to doctrinal texts. Juwayni used such texts he plundered from the library at Alamut to write the earliest and most complete extant history of the Nizari polity in Iran. I argued that given the generic differences, Juwayni's writing and the histories derived from it can not simple be sifted for nuggets of usable information. The fragments of Nizari *da'wa* texts embedded in these *ta'rikh* texts need to be unwrapped and metaphorically unravelled to access the story and discourse in the chronicles and then in the fragments themselves which in their original contexts served very different purposes and were written in totally different generic styles must subjected to a second layer of distinction of story and discourse. To this end, in chapter 4, I subjected the Ilkhanid era chronicles and particularly the accounts of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ to the most thorough analyses yet. I mapped the emplotment and narratives in these chronicles down to the building blocks of lexical usages and introduced new digital humanities methodologies for philology in the twenty-first century. In chapter 5, I proceeded to investigate the sourcing and stemmatic genealogical linkages between Ilkhanid and later chronicle accounts of the Nizari polity in Iran. In chapter 6, I brought together all these approaches and demonstrated how to re-read the Ilkhanid chronicle accounts to access new readings of the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* the biography of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ.

I. Reformulations of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's Biography

Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's biography has been subjected to numerous reformulations. After the “three school fellows” story, another reformulation of Ḥasan's biography was produced by the Tīmūrid historian Muḥammad b. Khwāndshāh b. Maḥmūd Mīrkhwānd (d. 1498/904), in his seven volume *Rawḍat al-ṣafā'* (*Garden of Purity*) in the time of Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqara (r.

1469-1470/874-875; 1470-1506/875-912) in Herat. He included an account of the Fatimids and the Nizaris.¹ This most polemical reformulation of the account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ begins with a refutation of Ḥasan's ancestry and origins based on the so-called “*Waṣāyā*” (*Testament*) of Niẓām al-Mulk. Harold Bowen noted that this narrative, based on oral traditions may go back to the 11-12th/5-6th century, it “shows Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ as ungrateful for the Niẓām's kindness, and as attempting to oust him.”²

Mīrkhwānd stated that some historians related that Ḥasan was descended from Muḥammad b. Ṣabbāḥ Ḥimyarī; however, this opinion was refuted by Niẓām al-Mulk. The account continued in the first-person voice of Niẓām al-Mulk who told of joining the *madrasah* of the imam Muwaffaq in Nīshāpūr where he encountered ‘Umar al-Khayyām and Ḥasan. The latter's father, while known for his austerities and piety, espoused perverse beliefs (*ba-madhhab-i khabīṣ al-‘aqīdah*) and had constantly endeavoured, with lying words and false oaths, to exonerate himself in the eyes of Abū-Muslim the governor of Rayy. To escape the grasp of the governor, he enlisted his son in the *madrasah* of the renowned Sunni scholar at Nīshāpūr and himself entered a spiritual retreat (*zāwiyah*). As his declarations of schism and heresy were reported and he was accused of unbelief and impiety (*kufr wa zindaqa* = lit. unbelief and dualism), he claimed Arab descent stating that “I am descended from Ṣabbāḥ Ḥimyarī; my father came from Kūfa to Qumm and from Qumm to Rayy.” The people of Khurāsān, especially of Ṭūs rejected this and said: “his forefathers came from the villages of this region.” In the Ilkhanid chronicles, it was Ḥasan—not his father—who claimed Ṣabbāḥid Ḥimyarī descent and that his family had come from Kūfa to Rayy via Qumm.

¹ EI2. Anne Beveridge and Beatrice Forbes Manz: “Mīrkhwānd”; Mīrkhwānd. *Rawḍat al-Ṣafā*. Volume IV: Dynasties contemporary with the ‘Abbāsids; Browne. *LHP*2. II:191-192, 212

² Bowen, “Sar-gudhasht.”

The two *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* manuscripts at the Institute of Ismaili Studies bear some resemblances to Mīrkhwānd's narrative suggesting dialogical re-workings of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's life. In these texts, there is no conversion of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ; his father was an Ismaili—the heretic of the *Waṣīyātnāma*—and here a pious, learned scholar. These twentieth century copies of recensions purportedly of the *Sarguzasht* without information of provenance, authorship and date of original texts, detail fantastical quest narrative of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's journey to the Fatimid court of the imam-caliph al-Mustanšir and his return to Iran entrusted with the successor of the imam-caliph.³ The IIS MSS do not fully resemble the content of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ biography in the Ilkhanid accounts.

I have been unable to obtain the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* listed by Poonawala as “Tehran-Markazī F 2835 in a *majmū'a*, microfilm from Wazīrī collection (Mic. Cat. 735)”. Colleagues and friends have been able to obtain for me over a hundred folios of this *majmū'a*; however, several attempts to obtain those pertaining to the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* have proved to be fruitless.

Delia Cortese wrote that Poonawala's

Ismā'īlī Literature lists the existence of the manuscript of a work titled *Sarguzasht-i Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ* in Tehran's Markazi Library. The manuscript is in fact in Tehran's Library, Museum and Document Center of the Iranian Parliament and the text of the *Sarguzasht* is included in a *majmū'a* dated 1089/1678. Content-wise this version of Ḥasan's biography shares some similarities with parts of the text contained in Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn's works and that of the two IIS manuscripts. However, its genre, style and order of contents differ too much from those of the IIS manuscripts to make it a third, earlier copy of the IIS's *Sarguzasht* or the basis for the extracts found in Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn.

In the related footnote she located the text in the “*Majmū'a* no. 901, 54. Total leaves 387 (the *Sarguzasht* runs from leaf 199 to 223, pp 21-29).” Miklós Sárközy, who was commissioned to

³ IIS Per-MS 162 and 177. I am grateful to Dr. Delia Cortese for sharing her then unpublished paper in which she examined these MSS. Cortese, “Lost and Found.” in Eva Orthmann, and Petra G. Schmidl, eds. *Science in the City of Fortune: The Dustūr al-munajjimīn and its World* (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2017).

write a report on the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* for the Institute of Ismaili Studies,⁴ kindly shared a scan of this MS he had examined which matched the relevant folios in my copy of *Majmū'a* no. 901.⁵ I have since discovered that the text of these folios is from the entry on Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ in Khwāndmīr's *Dastūr al-wuzarā'*.⁶ This text is not the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* plundered by Juwayni from the library at Alamut. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ is listed among the Saljuq wazīrs and this entry is followed by that of Mu'ayyad al-Mulk b. Niẓām al-Mulk. The cover page of the manuscript reads: منشآت و احوال بعضی وزراء و خواص انشاء مع رساله اغاز و انجام خواجه نصیر الدین طوسی (Epistolary Exemplars and Accounts of Some Wazīrs and Eminent Scribes along with the *Risāla-yi aghāz wa anjām* of Khwāja Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī).⁷

Another Nizari text, the *Kalām-i Pīr*, in its first chapter provides pseudo-biographical sketches of the Fatimid *dā'ī* Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. Framed as a quest narrative, Nāṣir-i Khusraw with a troubled mind and at a breaking point is searching for succour and encounters the charismatic Bābā Sayyid-nā (Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ). He recognised in the latter's appearance great piety and from what he heard from him, he recognised that Bābā Sayyid-nā "knew the secret of the Water of Life, and of Eternal Existence". He sought out the master and shared the cause of his ills; namely, that his "sickness comes from this: God is one and the Prophet is one, therefore, all other religious leaders must be false and futile". The master replied: "Yes, so it is, and the true religious leader, Imam, the true religion, and the real proof of truth is only one, and the revealed book of God is one. My name is Bābā Sayyid-nā and I am appointed in this

⁴ Personal Communication with the Keeper of Ismaili Collections at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, April 2016. This report was not made available to me.

⁵ Personal Communications with Miklós Sárközy, April 2017

⁶ Khwānd Amīr. *Dastūr al-wuzarā': shāmil-i aḥwāl-i wuzarā-yi Islām tā inqirāḍ-i Taymūriyān*. pp 168-178. I plan to write a more detailed comparative analysis of the different accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's biography.

⁷ Shi'i Interpretations.

province (*jazīra*) to lead those who are lost in the desert of errors, out to recognition of the Imam of the day—exalted be his mention—making them see and hear the great proof (*ḥujjat-i a‘zam*), thus ultimately making them reach the eternal Paradise in future life.”⁸

Spending time with Bābā Sayyid-nā, Nāṣir was also honoured with an encounter with the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir who favoured him by an appointment as “the chief *dā‘ī*, (*dā‘ī-l-du‘āt*) of Khorasan.” Nāṣir reports in this account that he remained at the Fatimid court and on

one occasion the Imam summoned the *ḥujjats* and the *dā‘īs*. In his address, the Imam, asked Bābā Sayyid-nā, whom to put in charge of Badakhshān. My grandfather, Bābā Sayyid-nā, suggested this humble slave. When Our Lord, the Imam, glanced in my direction, my heart became filled with light, and I fainted. He kindly said to me. “Sayyid Nāṣir, I appoint thee the *ḥujjat* of Badakhshān—God help thee”. I kissed the earth in complete obedience, received my instructions, and started for Badakhshān, through Balkh I made a sign, and hills came to meet me,—this was the miracle of the Imam. So it happened, all that was destined and decided, as it is with all human affairs,—otherwise what could an ordinary mortal do? So that I had to carry on, fostering the guiding and rightful Ismaili preaching,—“what God wills, exists, and what God does not will, never comes into existence”.⁹

This anecdote clearly is chronologically impossible. Nāṣir-i Khusraw is believed to have died sometime after 1077/469 which is exactly the time Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was beginning his journey westward and his rise in the *da‘wa*. There is no possibility that the two were in same physical time and space. Yet it is intriguing that not only are they associated but there is a chronological inversion which the author of the *Kalām-i Pīr* must have been aware of.

A hundred years ago in the midst of a schism which resulted in the trifurcation of the Khoja community in India into Sunni Khojas and Ithnā‘asharī Khojas—both of which split from the Ismaili Khojas who remained loyal to the Nizari imams, the Aga Khans—Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s biography was used as a polemical tool. In 1915/1333, Edalji Dhanji Kaba published a

⁸ KP. chapter 1.

⁹ KP pp.

monograph in Gujarati entitled હસન બિન સબબાહ યાને અલમૌતના શેખલ જેબાલનૂ જીવન ચરિત્ર (*Hasan ibn Šabbāḥ or the Biography of Alamut's Old Man of the Mountain*) in which he claimed that Ḥasan started out being an Ithnā'asharī Shi'i and remained as such through out his life. A year later, Alimamed Janmamed Chunara, a Nizari Ismaili scholar, replied with અલમૌત નો ચદ્દ યાને હસન બિન સબબાહ (*The Struggle of Alamut or Ḥasan ibn Šabbāḥ*) and in a prefatory letter directly addressed Edalji Dhanji Kaba and attacked the validity of his claims. The latter followed up with an even longer text entitled હસન બિન સબબાહ પર ઉડતી નજર (*A Glance back to Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ*) in 1920/1338 where he doubled down on his anti-Ismaili claims.

How should these phenomena of repeatedly recasting of the biographies of well known individuals be understood? Should these narratives be castigated as fakes, forgeries and corruptions of the authentic originals with simple remarks of their spurious historical content?

The “three school fellows story” posited Ḥasan in the house of a leading member of the Isfahani Ismaili community to whom his ideas of a revolutionary movement were unfathomable and bordered on insanity. The episode ended, presumably between the massacre of Ismailis in Isfahan 1101/494 and Muḥammad b. Malikshāh's capture of Shāhdiz and Khān Alanjān fortresses in 1107/500. Ḥasan's host in Isfahan, Ra'īs Abū'l-Faḍl came to and fell at his feet recognising his predictions of the tumult which manifested after the killing of Niẓām al-Mulk.

A portion of the story was first mentioned in TJG, although there are allusions to elements of the account in Ibn al-Athīr's *al-Kāmil*. The full story is found in Rashid al-Din and Qashani's chronicles. In these conjectural analyses, several pieces of evidence have been brought together to suggest that the story may have been promulgated by the Nizari followers of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ between 1094/485 and 1101/494 when the beleaguered Sultan Bark-yāruq was fighting for survival and distressed by the treachery of his short-time *wazīr* Mu'ayyad al-Mulk b. Niẓām al-Mulk.

The purpose of the story was to highlight the stalwart leadership and incorruptible integrity of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and to woo the sultan into an orbit of favour and cooperation. The Ilkhanid chroniclers drew from the texts obtained by Juwayni which may originally have been developed as narrative for the *dā'īs* to speak about the excellences of their cause and master to the Saljuqs. The story remained in the collections of texts preserved to revere Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. In place of the structuralist rejection of the "three school fellows" story by philological analysts, this functionalist analysis based in historical-critical approaches to fathom not just the form but the functions of the story, postulates a very tendentious conjecture that the story was part of the campaign to forge an alliance between the fledgling Nizari polity and the Saljuq Sultan Bark-yāruq. These findings are far from conclusive, hopefully this conjecture will provide openings for further avenues of inquiry and understanding.

Part Two
Reconstructing Alamut

Prologue to Part Two

THE DEATH OF PROPHET MUḤAMMAD on 12 *Rabi' al-awwal*, 11/10 June, 632¹ precipitated a crisis of succession which had been smouldering among his associates during his lifetime. The ensuing contests of leadership (imamate) were so intense that in the 12th/6th century, al-Shahrastānī remarked that “no sword has ever been drawn in Islam on a religious question as it has been drawn at all times on the question of the imamate.”² Several constructs of leadership were formulated, in due course, by the different interpretations of Islam and each of them was undergirded by particular conceptions of the nature of God, the divine message, those who would safeguard and vouchsafe this message and ultimately, the nature of the privileged community of believers who would attain salvation. Following Muḥammad as the paradigm, the understandings of the imamate can be seen to have intertwined differing notions of political leadership, post-prophetic religious authority and soteriological eschatology. Several Shi'i and specifically Ismaili notions of imamate crystallised, over time, out of fluid morphologies integrating scriptural and philosophical conceptions of the Cosmos.

This analytical synthesis of Shi'i and specifically Ismaili notions of imamate, though neither exhaustive nor conclusive is intended to provide a survey of developments leading up to the emergence of Nizari Ismailism. This survey is divided in two parts. The first—imamate of history—examines some socio-political threads of imamate to illustrate developments of authority and communities. In this part I have included a careful analysis and commentary on Paul Walker's seminal study of succession to rule in the Fatimid Caliphate.³ The second part—

¹ Julian date = 7 June 632; MGSB also passed away on 10 June

² Shahrastānī. *Muslim Sects*. p. 19

³ Paul E Walker, “Succession to Rule in the Shiite Caliphate,” *Journal of the American Research Center In Egypt* 32 (1995). Walker, Paul E. “Succession to Rule in the Shiite Caliphate,” In *Fatimid History and Ismaili Doctrine*, II:1–48. Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate/Variation, 2008. [The analysis has been excised from this dissertation and will be published elsewhere.]

imamate through history—scrutinises the fabric and nature of the doctrines of imamate over time. These two frameworks of imamate do not exist in isolation; they are correlated and interdependent. Nizari thought, constructions of authority and manifestations of imamate—the subject of subsequent chapters in this study—are wrapped up in and founded on the contours of the socio-political and doctrinal developments analysed in this very brief survey.

I. Imamate of History

Divergences in the notions of post-prophetic authority began to take root on the day of the death of the prophet. The episode of ‘Umar al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 634-644/13-23) wielding a dagger outside ‘Ā’isha’s (d. 678/58) apartment wherein lay the body of the prophet—threatening anyone who would claim that the prophet had died—is reported as ‘Umar’s clumsy attempt to deal with the immediate crisis of the death of the prophet.⁴ Is it also possible to analyse that one of the most intimate of associates of the prophet imagined that the world could not persist beyond Muḥammad’s death and that the prophet could not die until the eschatological end of the world? Later that same day, ‘Umar played a critical role in the deliberations at the Saqīfa where Abū Bakr (r. 632-634/11-13) seized the leadership of Muḥammad’s polity.⁵ The

⁴ Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. Yazīd al-Ṭabarī. *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa’l-mulūk)* Vol. 9: *The Last Years of the Prophet*, Translated by Ismail K. Poonawala. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990). p. 183 “When the Messenger of God died, ‘Umar b. al-Khattab stood up saying, “Some of the hypocrites allege that the Messenger of God is dead. By God, he is not dead, but has gone to his Lord as Moses b. ‘Imran went and remained hidden from his people for forty days. Moses returned after it was said that he had died. By God, the Messenger of God will [also] return and will cut off the hands and feet of those who allege that he is dead.””

In the Qur’an, the punishment of cutting off hands occurs in four verses: Q5:38 as exemplary punishment for theft; and in Q7:124, Q20:71 and Q26:49 as punishment from Pharaoh to the believers who had accepted the teaching of Moses and Aaron before he gave them leave to do so. Here, ‘Umar puts the punishment in the (returning) prophet’s hand. There is a drastic difference in that Moses went up Sinai with the knowledge of others. Muḥammad’s body was going through stages of rigor mortis—he had not indicated that he would be back.

⁵ Ṭabarī-V09 pp186ff. Wilferd Madelung. *The Succession to Muhammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate*, (Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996). pp 1-56

supporters of ‘Alī (r. 632-661/11-40) spurned Abū Bakr and his two successors as usurpers; however, even while their ranks grew, they are not known to have overtly come together to contest the succession. The general disaffection with ‘Umar’s successor, ‘Uthmān (r. 644-657/23-35), and the increasing numbers of Shi‘a (partisans) of ‘Alī resulted in the acclamation of the latter to the caliphate in 657/35 in Medina. During his tumultuous reign as caliph, ‘Alī combined this role and the Shi‘i conceptions of him as the imam.

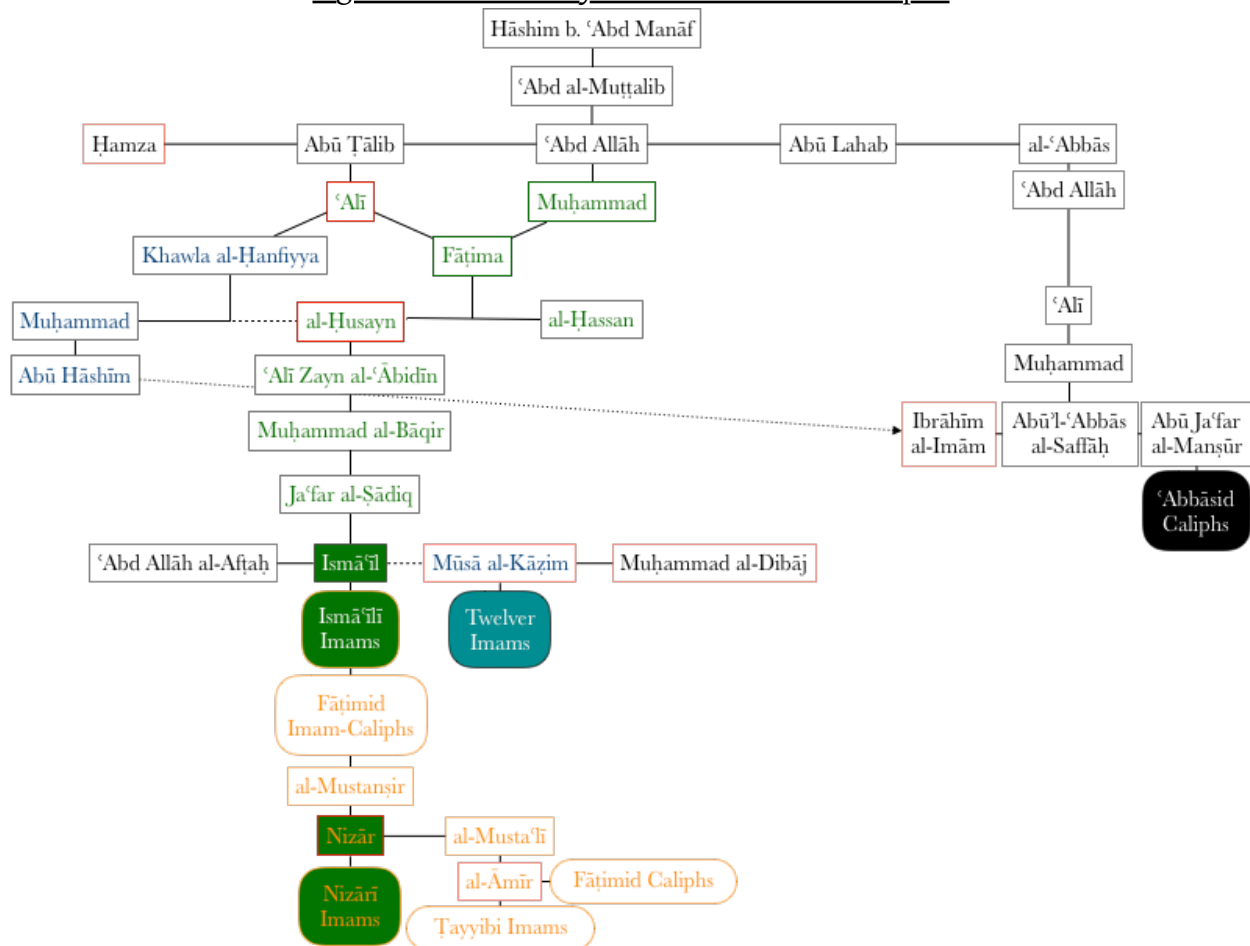
A central precept of later Shi‘isms is that ‘Alī was explicitly designated by Prophet Muḥammad based on Divine command and that he inherited the mantle of the prophet in every aspect except that God having completed His message to humanity, no further revelation would take place after Muḥammad. As Amīr al-Mu‘minīn (Commander of the Faithful), ‘Alī struggled but ultimately did not succeed in asserting his authority over the entire territory of the realm. Thirty years after the death of the prophet and after ‘Alī’s assassination, the successive recognition of ‘Alī’s three sons as his successors by groups which could be termed early Shi‘is, points to the inchoate nature of the understandings of Islamicate post-prophetic authority. The conceptions of imamate were never concrete—its doctrines continued to be elaborated in face of changing circumstances and by partisan groups. Figure Pa shows some resultant groups which adhered to different candidates as successors to the mantle of the prophet.

A. Succession of ‘Alī

Ḥasan b. ‘Alī (r. 661-669/40-49) died after abdicating the caliphate to Mu‘āwiyya b. Abī Sufyān (d. 680/60) the founder of the Umayyad caliphate (fl. 661-750/40-133). Ḥasan is regarded as the

second imam by the Shi'a⁶ and was succeeded by his younger brother, Ḥusayn (r. 669-680/49-61) who, unlike his older sibling, refused to yield allegiance (*bay'a*) to the Umayyad, Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyya (r. 680-683/60-64) enthroned in Damascus. Forced to flee from Medina towards Kūfa, Ḥusayn and all the men in his retinue, except his son 'Alī, were massacred at Karbalā'.⁷

Figure Pa: The Family Tree of Imams and Caliphs



⁶ Syed Husain M. Jafri. *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*, (London; New York: Longman, 1978). pp. 130-154; EI2. L. Veccia Vaglieri, "al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib"; EI2. W. Madelung, "Ḥasan b. 'Alī". The Nizari regard Ḥasan as a *mustawda* (caretaker) imam and he ceased to be included in the line of imams.

⁷ A number of soldiers from the Umayyad army are also known to have switched sides and died along Husayn—since they opposed the order to annihilate the family of the prophet.

After the collapse of several responses of outrage, in 685/66, Mukhtār al-Thaqafī (d. 687/67)—in the name of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (d. 700/81), the third eldest son of ‘Alī with his wife Khawla of the Banū Ḥanifā—led a revolt to avenge the death of Ḥusayn and the massacre of the family of the Prophet.⁸ Large numbers of Shi‘a joined the revolt against the Umayyads and the Zubayrid caliphate (fl. 680-692/60-73) and managed to take control of Kūfa. Consisting mainly of non-Arab *mawālī*, they styled themselves as the *Shi‘at al-Mahdī* (partisans of the Mahdī). Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya was referred to as the Mahdī (the rightly guided one)—a term used for the messianic saviour in later Islamic thought.¹⁰ While Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya did not participate in the rebellion, yet he is not known to have denied their cause nor their following and association with himself. According to Tabari, a group of Shi‘a reported Mukhtār’s agitation to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah who listened until, they had finished, he praised God and extolled Him, prayed for the Prophet, and then said

Now, concerning what you have said about the way God has singled us out in merit, “God imparts it to whomever He wishes, for God is possessed of great merit.” God be praised! And as for what you said about our affliction with the killing of Husayn, that was ordained by Divine Wisdom; it was an apocalyptic catastrophe [*malhamah*] foreordained for him, it was an honor which God granted him by which the standing in the hereafter of a people who were with him has been exalted while others have been cast down. “God’s command is carried out and God’s command is preordained!” Regarding what you have mentioned about the summons of he who has summoned you to seek vengeance for our blood, by God, I want God to aid us against our enemies by means of any of His creatures He wishes. This is what I say and I ask God’s forgiveness for me and for you.

When they left him, and they were saying, “He has given us permission. He has said, ‘I want God to aid us against our enemies by means of any of His creatures He wishes.’ If he had

⁸ Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. Yazīd al-Ṭabarī. *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk) Vol. 20: The Collapse of Sufyanid Authority and the Coming of the Marwanids*, Translated by Gerald R Hawting. (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989). pp 93 and 191-197 EI2. G. R. Hawting, “al-Mukhtār b. Abī Ubayd”; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. pp 52ff

⁹ *Ismailis* p. 53

¹⁰ al-Ṭabarī. *Ṭabarī-V20*. Ṭabarī-V20. pp 93 and 192; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 58; there is no indication in Ṭabarī of Muḥammad being called the Mahdī in his presence nor that he referred to himself as such. EI2. W. Madelung. “al-Mahdī”.

disapproved, he would have said, ‘Do not do it!’”¹¹ The revolt lasted only a year and was brutally suppressed by the Zubayrids in 687/67 when Mukhtār was killed.

Mukhtār’s following referred to by the heresiographers as the Kaysāniyya divided into three groups after the death of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya: one claimed that Mukhtār was divine and their leader, a certain Ḥamza b. ‘Umara al-Barbārī, was his prophet; a second asserted that Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya and his Shi‘a would come back to life (*raja’*) and will fill the earth with justice and equity; the third group denied the death of Muḥammad claiming that he had gone into occultation (*ghayba*) in the Raḍwā mountains near Medina and will rise up as the Mahdī to fill the earth with justice and equity, as it had been filled with injustice and oppression.¹²

In these successions of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib there are two noteworthy developments in the concepts of imamate: first, that any ‘Alid, not just the descendants Fāṭima bt. Muḥammad, was acceptable and considered eligible to be the imam and second, that the movements around Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya introduced doctrines of *raja’* (return), Mahdī and *ghayba* (occultation) into Shi‘ism and the general Islamic eschatological discourse.

B. Imamate of the ‘Alids?

The only male survivor from Ḥusayn’s family at the battle of Karbalā’, ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (r. 680-714/61-95), was widely recognised as imam. Under close surveillance by the Umayyads, he

¹¹ al-Ṭabarī. *Ṭabarī-V20*. p. 191

¹² EI2. Madelung: “al-Mahdī”; Marshall G. S. Hodgson, “How Did the Early Shi‘a Become Sectarian?,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75, no. 1 (1955).; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 52 “This title had already been applied in a purely honorific sense to ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, but its first use in a messianic sense now derived from al-Mukhtār. The concept of the Imam-Mahdī was a very important doctrinal innovation, and it proved particularly appealing to the non-Arab Muslims, the so-called mawālī who constituted the bulk of the oppressed masses of Kūfa.”

remained politically quiescent and was known for his deep spirituality. His son, Muḥammad al-Bāqir (r. 714-732/95-114) and grandson, Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (r. 732-765/114-148)—both scholars of great repute—also stayed out of the political fray. During the latter’s imamate, three uprisings of note occurred: first, Ja‘far’s uncle Zayd b. ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (d. 740/122) raised the banner of revolt and claimed the imamate for himself; second, the ‘Abbāsids overthrew the Umayyads and third, Muḥammad, the great-grandson of Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib known as al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (the Pure Soul) (d. 762/145) led a rebellion as the Mahdī.¹³

I. EARLY ZAYDIS

In 740/122, Zayd went into open revolt which was crushed by the Umayyad governor of Kūfa. Zayd was killed, his body was publicly displayed in town and his head was sent to Damascus. According to the beliefs of the early Zaydis, imamate was not the preserve of the ‘Alids nor was it hereditary.¹⁴ Zayd had advocated that a legitimate imam must assert his claim publicly by rising up with a sword in hand (*khurūj*) and had to be marked by religious knowledge, high moral standing, justice and piety. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, who apparently held his uncle in esteem, is said to have rhetorically asked if Zayd’s own father would, by these terms, be considered an illegitimate imam since he did not take up arms?

In departure from other Shi‘i movements, early Zaydis even accepted Abū Bakr and ‘Umar as legitimate bearers of authority although ‘Alī was considered more excellent (*afḍal*). They allowed for rule of the less excellent since ‘Alī himself had pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. The Zaydis denied resort to *taqiyya* (precautionary dissimulation), the concepts of *naṣṣ* (designation) and Mahdī. Daftary remarked that the “early Zaydis essentially retained the

¹³ Nawbakhtī, al-Ḥasan ibn Mūsā. *Shi‘a Sects: (K. Firqat al-Shi‘a)*, Translated by Abbas K. Kadhim. London: ICAS Press, 2007. p. 76; Hugh Kennedy. *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World: The Rise and Fall of Islam’s Greatest Dynasty*, Da Capo Press, 2006). pp 21-26.

¹⁴ Hodgson, “How Did the Early Shi’a Become Sectarian?”

politically militant and religiously moderate attitude prevailing among the early Kūfan Shī'a."¹⁵ Even when these early creedal positions were eclipsed by closer alignments with Shī'i doctrines, Zaydi thought remained at variance from the beliefs of the followers of Zayd's brother and nephew.

II. 'ABBĀSIDS

The 'Abbāsids, in contrast, cultivated a more strategic and ultimately successful movement. For thirty years, their *dā'īs* organised in cells and had called people to the name of *al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad* (the one with whom [God] is pleased from the family of Muḥammad). In the absence of identification of the specific individual among the *ahl al-bayt* (the Prophet's family) a wide array of Shī'a were drawn into this movement.¹⁶ In 745-746/128 the charismatic *mawlā* of the 'Abbāsids, Abū Muslim (d. 755/138) was sent to take command of the movement in Khurāsān. Within two years the region was consolidated under his control. Previously, he is said to have even attempted to represent Ja'far al-Ṣādiq in the East and had been affiliated with groups pejoratively labelled as *ghulāt* (exaggerators)¹⁷ for their anthropomorphic beliefs and cosmogony resonant of Judeo-Christian and Manichaean Gnosticisms.¹⁸ Abū Muslim reconstituted the armies of Khurāsān bringing parity between the Arab and non-Arab contingents as opposed to the hierarchical tribal organisation of the Umayyad armies and society which privileged the Arabs over others. He marched the "black banners" westwards

¹⁵ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 73; Farhad Daftary. *A History of Shī'i Islam*, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013). p. 146; Farhad Daftary. *Historical Dictionary of the Ismailis*, (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2012). "Zaydis"

¹⁶ P. Crone, "On the Meaning of the 'Abbāsīd Call to al-Riḍā", in Clifford Edmund Bosworth, Charles Issawi, and Roger Savory, eds. *The Islamic World: From Classical to Modern Times: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press., 1991)., pp. 95-111; reprinted in Etan Kohlberg, ed. *Shī'ism* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003). pp. 291-307. Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 77

¹⁷ Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shī'a Become Sectarian?"

¹⁸ Richard N. Frye, "The Role of Abū Muslim in the 'Abbāsīd Revolt," *Muslim World* 37 (1947).; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 77

and the Umayyads were swiftly defeated. A respected Kūfan Shi'a, Abū Salama took the reins of the forces and sought to install the new head of the polity. He called upon Ja'far al-Ṣādiq who declined to associate with the rebels as did his Ḥasanid cousin 'Abd Allāh al-Maḥdī.

Abū'l-'Abbās al-Saffāḥ (r. 749-754/132-136) was proclaimed in Kūfa as the 'Abbāsīd caliph by the Khurāsānis in November 749/*Rabī' al-ākhir* 132 and just a few months later, they put an end to Umayyad dynasty in Syria. As the 'Abbāsīds consolidated their power, leaders of the revolution such as Abū Salama, Abū Muslim and others were killed. The first five 'Abbāsīd caliphs styled themselves with regnal titles tinged with messianic connotations.¹⁹ The 'Abbāsīds originally legitimised themselves claiming *naṣṣ* from Abū Hāshim the son of Muḥammad al-Ḥanafiyya;²⁰ however, by the reign of the caliph Muḥammad al-Maḥdī (r. 775–785/158–169), this claim had little efficacy. The 'Abbāsīds then also asserted that the Prophet had designated his uncle al-'Abbās to succeed him and cast aside their Shi'i legitimacy.²¹ This re-orientation towards Jamā'i-Sunni doctrine amounted to a repudiation of the imamate of 'Alī and was seen as a betrayal by the supporters of the revolution with Shi'i inclinations who believed that *al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad* implied the imam descended from 'Alī.

III. AL-NAFS AL-ZAKIYYA AS THE MAHDĪ

Repression of 'Alids and their supporters by the 'Abbāsīd caliphate resulted in religio-political revolts and scattering of their Shi'i-inclined followers to various other claimants. An important such claimant was the Ḥasanid, Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya who refused to give allegiance

¹⁹ al-Saffāḥ (shedder of blood), al-Manṣūr (the victor), al-Maḥdī, al-Hādī and al-Rashīd

²⁰ EI2, B. Lewis, "Abbāsīds"; EIr, C. E. Bosworth, "Abbāsīd Caliphate"; *Ismailis* p. 76

²¹ Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. Yazīd al-Ṭabarī. *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa'l-Mulūk)* Vol. 28: *'Abbāsīd Authority Affirmed*, Translated by Jane Dammen McAuliffe. (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1995). pp 169ff particularly p. 175 letter from al-Maḥdī to Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya; Arzina Lalani. *Early Shi'i Thought: The Teachings of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir*, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004)., EST. p. 53

to the ‘Abbāsīd al-Manṣūr (r. 754-775/136-158) and rose up in rebellion as the Maḥdī. As early as 744/126, Muḥammad’s father ‘Abd Allāh al-Maḥḍ, the grandson of Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, had gathered the members of the family of the Prophet at al-Abwā’ outside of Medina and sought allegiance for his son as the potential caliph.²² Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq had declined to support this claim; however, at the time, the heads of the ‘Abbāsīd family had given their allegiance to Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya. Tabari recorded that it had been “recounted that Muḥammad [al-Nafs al-Zakiyya] used to say that Abū Ja‘far [al-Manṣūr the ‘Abbāsīd caliph] was among those who rendered the oath of allegiance to him on the night when the Banū Hāshim, together with the rest of the Mu‘tazila who were there with them, deliberated in Mecca about whom they should choose as caliph.”²³ However, after the ‘Abbāsīd success, Muḥammad and his brother Ibrāhīm had attended al-Saffāh’s court but turned away from his successor, al-Manṣūr. The new caliph went to great lengths to establish their whereabouts and bring them to heel. Tabari reported a caustic exchange between the caliph and ‘Abd Allāh al-Maḥḍ purportedly in March, 762/*Dhū’l-ḥijja* 144 when

Abū Ja‘far [the caliph] made the Pilgrimage and distributed gifts (*qusūm*), in which he especially favored the family of Abū Ṭālib. As the sons of ‘Abdallāh [al-Maḥḍ] did not present themselves to him, he sent for ‘Abdallāh and asked about them. ‘Abdallāh expressed ignorance of their whereabouts, to the point that he and the caliph spoke rudely to each other and Abū Ja‘far told him to “Go suck!” “O Abū Ja‘far,” ‘Abdallāh replied, “by which of my mothers would you have me suck? By Fāṭimah, daughter of the Messenger of God? Or by Fāṭimah bt. Asad? Or by Fāṭimah bt. Ḥusayn? Or Umm Ishāq bt. Ṭalhah? Or Khadijah bt. Khuwaylid?” Abū Ja‘far answered, “Not by a single one of them, but by al-Jarbā’ bt. Qasamah b. Zuhayr, a woman of Tayyī.”²⁴

²² Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 74

²³ al-Ṭabarī. *Ṭabarī-V28*. p. 85

²⁴ *Ṭabarī-V28* pp 94-95 from footnotes: “Fatimah was the most famous of the Prophet's daughters. She was the wife of ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, mother of al-Hasan and al-Husayn and thus great- great-grandmother of ‘Abdallah. Fatimah bt. Asad b. Hashim b. ‘Abd Manaf, the mother of ‘Ali b. Abi Talib. Fatimah bt. Husayn, granddaughter of ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, was married first to al-Hasan b. Hasan b. ‘Ali and then to ‘Abdallah b. ‘Amr b. ‘Uthman. She died in 110/728. Umm Ishāq bt. Talhah b. ‘Ubaydallah was the mother of Fatimah bt. al-Husayn. Khadijah bt. Khuwaylid was the first wife of the Prophet and mother of Fatimah. Al-Jarbā’ bt. Qasamah b. Zuhayr, the mother of Umm Ishāq bt. Talhah, was thus named because of her beauty, a beauty so extraordinary that other women would shun her to avoid comparison. The Banu Tayyī were an ancient Yamani tribal group who migrated to the northern part of the peninsula.”

‘Abd Allāh’s life was saved from the caliph’s wrath by a fast-acting interlocutor and soon after he was incarcerated. The search for Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and Ibrāhīm was drawn out, and their militant messianic call brought together many anti-‘Abbāsīd opponents, including the Shi‘i-inclined Zaydis. The caliph paid informants, sent out spies and appointed a tenacious governor with forces in Medina to pursue them. Unable to track them down, the caliph ordered all the Ḥasanids in Medina arrested; they were tortured, some were killed and the remainder dragged off in chains and shackles to Iraq. Ibrāhīm captured Basra for a while and Muḥammad held the Ḥijāz but the revolt was put down in the same year and the brothers were killed.

IV. IMAMATE OF THE ‘ALIDS AND OTHERS

All three of these movements launched their political revolts after many years of organisation and calling their followers to the leader descended from the Prophet. The early Zaydīs held that any worthy member of the *ahl al-bayt* with the necessary qualification could claim the imamate and later restricted to the descendants of ‘Alī through his sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. The ‘Abbāsīds’ initially claimed legitimacy through *naṣṣ* from Abū Hāshim b. Muḥammad al-Hanafīyya b. ‘Alī and within a decade, the second ‘Abbāsīd caliph al-Manṣūr, wrote that the Prophet had bestowed succession on his uncle al-‘Abbās and the ‘Alids had no right to authority.²⁵ The Zaydī acceptance of the imamate of non-‘Alid members of the *ahl al-bayt* and the legitimacy of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar and the ‘Abbāsīd call in the name of *al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad* and claim of Hāshimid *naṣṣ* represent positions of confessional ambiguity which drew support from across the spectrum of people with Shi‘i and Jamā‘ī-Sunni inclinations. In time these principally anti-Umayyad political revolts oscillated to their doctrinal stances in Shi‘i and Jamā‘ī-Sunni notions of authority respectively. The revolt of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-

²⁵ *Ṭabarī*-V28 pp 169-176

Zakiyya which was swiftly and brutally ended, on the other hand, while planned for almost a decade, channeled the sentiments of betrayal felt by the Shi'a in the 'Abbāsīd claims. The discourse of authority between 'Abd Allāh al-Maḥḍī, his son Muḥammad and the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Manṣūr is reflected in the *akhbār* in Tabari's lengthy treatment of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's revolt. The exchanges in the *khbar* quoted above encapsulates the arguments. The caliph demanding the whereabouts of 'Abd Allāh's two sons who were plotting a revolt, insulted the Ḥasanid who rhetorically asked which of his ancestral mothers' breast the caliph would have him suckle? Should it be the mothers of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, or of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, 'Abd Allāh's own mother who was the daughter of Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, or her mother and lastly, Khadijah, the wife of the Prophet? The caliph rejected all of these, and rather named a woman known for her beauty but shunned by other women—possibly a woman of disrepute. While 'Abd Allāh anchored his legitimacy in descent from the Prophet, 'Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, the caliph cast him as a son of a prostitute. Al-Manṣūr in his letter to al-Nafs al-Zakiyya argued that inheritance through a daughter was invalid and that an uncle, being in place of a father, had greater rights. Namely that the claims of the 'Alid's through a genealogical link to the Prophet's daughter Fāṭima were invalid and that succession through the Prophet's uncle al-'Abbās was legitimate.²⁶

In sum, two generations after the death of 'Alī, these three movements extended the notions of authority and legitimacy to succession of claimants from non-'Alid branches of the family of the Prophet. Second, the revolt by the Ḥasanid, Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, was the first large-scale instance of an 'Alid claiming Mahdiship for himself. Third, in the aftermath of the weakening of the Zaydī movement, the Jamā'ī-Sunni orientation of the 'Abbāsīds and the suppression of the revolt of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, the followers of Muḥammad al-Bāqir and most other Shi'is gravitated towards his son Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.

²⁶ Ṭabarī-V28 pp 169-176

C. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and his Successors

The teaching of Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq was foundational to the consolidation of Shi'i doctrine and their learning and renown attracted a diverse following. According to Arzina Lalani, al-Bāqir taught that the "imam is to be followed because of his inherent qualities, including *ʿilm* (knowledge) and *ʿiṣma* (inerrancy). Al-Bāqir's views on the imamate had a profound impact on a number of people who as a result became attached to his circle of adherents despite the divergent notions of authority that existed at the time."²⁷ Al-Ṣādiq's associates ranged even wider from the eponymous founders of the Sunni *madhhabs*, Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān (d. 767/150) and Mālik b. Anas (d. 795/179) to those considered to be extreme and so-called "exaggerators" (*ghulāt*)²⁸ such as Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb.²⁹

Al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq interpreted certain verses of the Qur'an and reports from the Prophet's time to assert that 'Alī was designated to succeed the Prophet and that this designation (*naṣṣ*) was explicit. Events such as the fact that 'Alī was the first male to respond to Muḥammad's message, that 'Alī was the only one to accept Muḥammad's call when he preached the message to his clan in 612, and the event of Ghadīr Khumm amongst others became central to the discourse on post-prophetic authority. Qur'anic verses related to such events were interpreted and used as proof texts affirming the 'Alid imamate. The two imams defined seven pillars of Islam with *walāya* (devotion to the imams) as the foremost responsibility of the faithful. Both claimed their own legitimacy through designations from 'Alī to Ḥasan then Ḥusayn who designated his son 'Alī who in turn designated al-Bāqir.³⁰ This hereditary succession excluded all other claimants and restricted the imamate to Faṭimids and specifically to the descendants

²⁷ Lalani. *EST*. p. 58

²⁸ Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shi'a Become Sectarian?"; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp

²⁹ Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shi'a Become Sectarian?"; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 84-85

³⁰ Lalani. *EST*. chapter 4 especially pp 168ff

of Ḥusayn. *Naṣṣ* implied a transfer of esoteric (*bāṭin*) *‘ilm* (knowledge) of the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) from one imam to his successor and rendered the imam inerrant (*‘iṣma*) and sinlessness (*ma‘ṣūm*). Daftary stated that “Ja‘far maintained that there was always in existence a true imam, designated by the *naṣṣ* of the previous imam, who possessed all the authority of the sole legitimate imam of the time, whether or not he was at the time ruling over the community.”³¹

Recalling the fate of his great-grandfather at Karbalā’, Ja‘far distanced himself from his uncle, Zayd’s policy of an imam with a sword in his hand. Both he and his father, al-Bāqir permitted *taqiyya* (precautionary dissimulation). It may be because of the aversion to political activism and militant revolt that Ja‘far declined to support or lead the major rebellions of his time. As other movements fell away, the lengthy imamates of al-Bāqir (18 years) and al-Ṣādiq (33 years) during this period of great upheaval in Islamic domains coupled with their set-up of networks of *da‘wa* resulted in increases in Shi‘i adherents. With the establishment of fundamental Shi‘i doctrines, ‘Alī, his sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and the Ḥusaynid imams came to be regarded as successors to the Prophet because of their excellence and precedence and also because of their preference. The Shi‘is argued that the ‘Alī was proclaimed by Divine command to succeed the prophet and subsequently the ‘Alid imams were preferred by God and his Prophet.³²

I. SUCCESSION OF JA‘FAR AL-ṢĀDIQ

At the death of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq in 765/148, his followers, according to Nawbakhtī, divided into ten groups—several were short-lived and others coalesced into long-persevering movements.³³

³¹ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 81ff

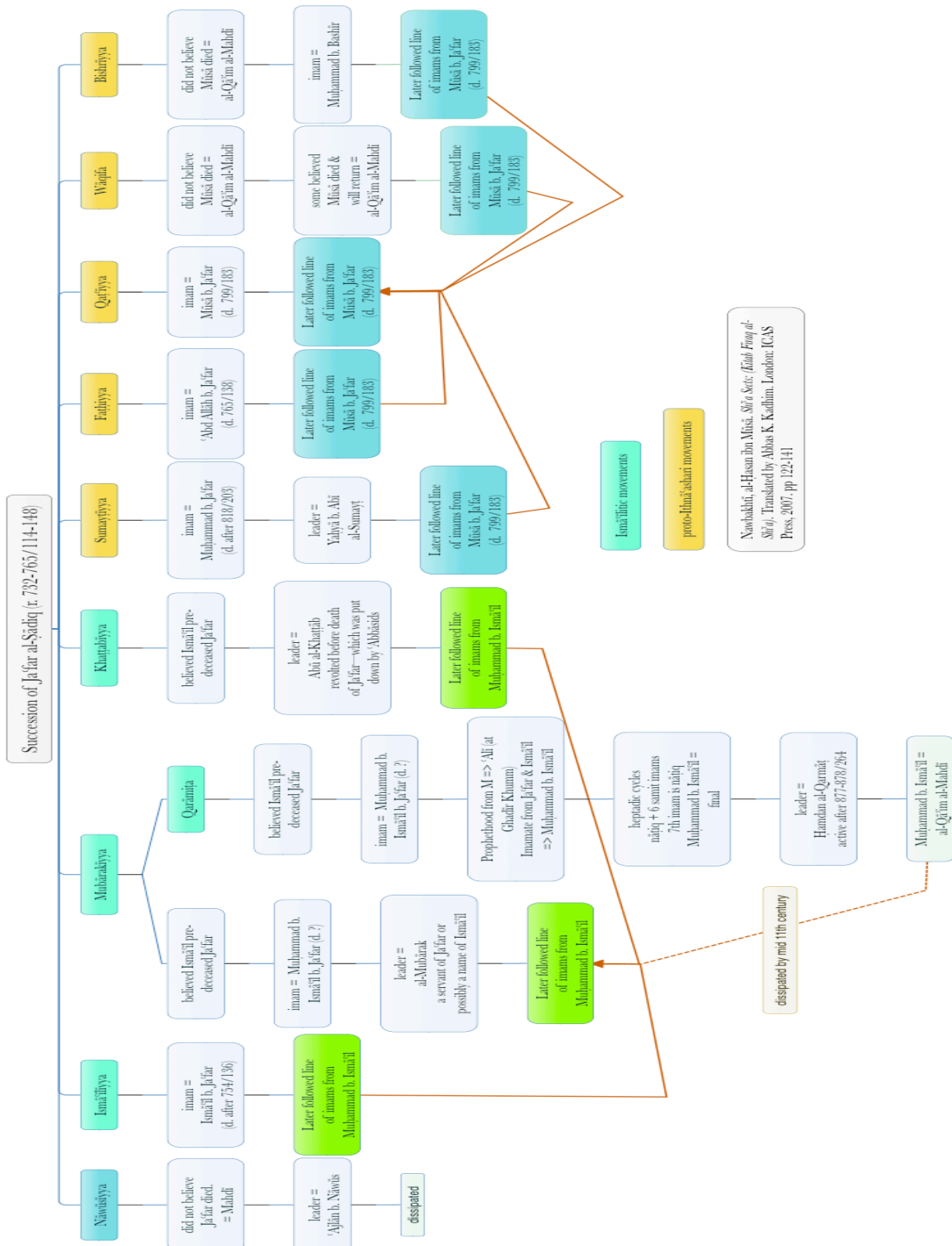
³² Nonetheless, pre-modern and modern scholars of Shi‘ism and the Shi‘a themselves and leading Shi‘i institutions continue to erroneously attribute ‘Alī’s succession to his close family relationships to Muḥammad!

³³ al-Nawbakhtī. *K. firaq al-Shi‘a*. pp 122-141; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 88ff

These followers attached themselves to each of Ja‘far’s four sons, namely, ‘Abd Allāh al-Afṭah, Ismā‘īl, Mūsā al-Kāẓim and Muḥammad al-Dībāj. One group, the Nāwūsīyya believed that Ja‘far had not died and as the Qā’im would usher the end of days. The largest number of Ja‘far’s followers (Faṭḥīyya) initially recognised ‘Abd Allāh as their imam; however, when he died seventy days after his father and without any sons, this group went over to Mūsā b. Ja‘far (r. 765-799/148-183). Muḥammad b. Ja‘far’s (d. 818/203) followers (Sumayṭīyya) after the failure of his revolt in 815-816/200, similarly, accepted the line of Mūsā b. Ja‘far as their imams.

Figure Pb shows the different groups listed by Nawbakhtī which appeared after the death of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq. They coalesced into the Ismailitic and proto-Ithnā‘asharī movements.

Figure Pb: Succession of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq



II. FOLLOWERS OF MŪSĀ B. JAʿFAR AL-ṢĀDIQ

While politically inactive, Mūsā's large following presented a serious threat to the ʿAbbāsids. Mūsā was incarcerated for much of his life and died in prison, purportedly poisoned on the orders of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786-809/170-193). The latter's son al-Ma'mūn (r. 813-833/198-218)—three years after he defeated his brother and secured the caliphate for himself—designated Mūsā's son ʿAlī al-Riḍāʾ (r. 799-818/183-203) as his heir.³⁴ The confessional ambiguity of a Sunni caliph designating a claimant to the Shiʿi imamate as his heir did not last long as the imam died on a journey to the caliph's headquarters in Khurāsān.³⁵ ʿAlī al-Riḍāʾ's descendants, Muḥammad al-Taḳī (r. 818-835/203-220), ʿAlī al-Naḳī (r. 835-868/220-254) and al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (r. 868-874/254-260) were successively recognised as imams. At the death of each one of them their followers were sub-divided into numerous groups with divergent beliefs and different constructions and candidates for the imamate.³⁶ After the death of the eleventh imam of this line, Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, Nawbakhtī listed fourteen divisions and over time these collapsed into one larger community. The twelfth imam in this line, Muḥammad al-Mahdī (b. 255/869) went into occultation (*ghayba*) and is considered the Lord of the Age (*ṣāḥib al-zamān*), who in God's time will manifest himself and establish justice and equality. This group became known as the Ithnāʿasharīs (Twelvers) due to their adherence to the twelve imams.

III. FOLLOWERS OF ISMĀʿĪL B. JAʿFAR AL-ṢĀDIQ—EARLY ISMAILITIC MOVEMENTS

The other major segment of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq's followers coalesced around his son Ismāʿīl. It was universally accepted that Jaʿfar had declared *naṣṣ* for Ismāʿīl as his heir. However, the extant

³⁴ B. Lewis, 'Alī al-Riḍāʾ', EI2, vol. 1, pp. 399–400; and W. Madelung, 'Alī al-Reżā' EIR, vol. 1, pp. 877–880

³⁵ In his last year al-Ma'mūn, switched from his alignment with a Shiʿi movement to support the Muʿtazili theology. He imposed the *miḥna* (inquisition) requiring all *qāḍīs* to testify that the Qurʾān was created as opposed to eternal which lasted from 833-848.

³⁶ al-Nawbakhtī. *K. fīraq al-Shīʿa*, pp 142-153

sources relate different accounts about the latter's succession. Nawbakhtī mentioned four Ismailitic groups: the Ismā'īliyya who believed that Ismā'īl succeeded his father, whereas the Mubārakīyya, Khaṭṭabīyya and the later Qarāmiṭa maintained that Ismā'īl had pre-deceased his father and since *naṣṣ* is irrevocable, it passed on to Ja'far's grandson Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. (Cf. Part One:2-I-A and Part Two:2-I). All these movements were clandestine; the later Ismailis term this period *dawr al-satr* (period of concealment) when the identity of the imams was not publicly known and their followers were also concealed. The Khaṭṭabīyya espoused many divergent beliefs but eventually dissipated into the Mubārakīyya and followed the line of imams descended from Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. The Mubārakīyya, according to Nawbakhtī, were purportedly named after al-Mubārak, a client of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far; however, Ivanow using Ismaili sources has established that al-Mubārak was one of the names the clandestine Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, himself.³⁷ The Mubārakīyya were an umbrella group among whom some recognised succession from Ja'far to Ismā'īl to Muḥammad and others who considered Ismā'īl to have died before his father and yet are said to have posthumously elevated him to the imamate.

The Qarāmiṭa coalesced out of the Mubārakīyya and may have emerged as a separate group when the eponymous founder Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ (fl. ca 877-933/264-321) broke with the *da'wa* centred on Salamiyya in Syria.³⁸ Nawbakhtī reported that Ḥamdān “claimed that Muḥammad b.

³⁷ Ivanow. *Alleged Founder*. pp 108-112; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 90. This usage was attested by Abū Ya'qub al-Sijistānī in his *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwat* and is found in the letter from the imam-caliph al-Mahdi to the *da'wa* in Yemen recorded by the *dā'ī* Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman. al-Hamdani. *On the Genealogy*. p. 10 Tr. p. 12. Also cf. Hamdani, and Blois, “Al-Mahdī's Letter.”

³⁸ Daftary. *MIHT*. p. 24. Madelung, W. “Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ.” EI2. Madelung noted “According to Ibn Ḥawqal (p. 96), however, Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ survived and was later known under the kunya Abū 'Alī. This would imply that after initially defecting together with 'Abdān, he rejoined the Fatimid camp and was moved to Fuṣṭāṭ in Egypt from where he maintained the links between the headquarters of the movement in Salamiyya and the Isma'ili missionaries in the Yemen and the Maghrib. His son Abū'l-Ḥasan later became chief of the Fatimid treasury in the Maghrib. Ibn Ḥawqal knew Abū'l-Ḥasan personally. His information may well be reliable.” Ibid p. 56 fn28

Ismāʿīl did not die and that he is in the land of the Romans [Rūm = Anatolia], saying that he is al-Qāʾim al-Mahdī”. Eventually, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl was elevated to be counted among the seven *ūluʾl-ʿazm* (prophets with resolution, namely: Ādam, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ʿĪsā, Muḥammad, and Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl) and that he would manifest and abrogate the Prophet Muḥammad’s *sharīʿa*.³⁹ Madelung wrote that “Ḥamdān and ʿAbdān had been instructed to teach that the Imam Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl was alive and that his return as the Mahdī was imminent. Now ʿUbayd Allāh [ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī] claimed the imamate for himself and denied the return of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. Ḥamdān and ʿAbdān considered themselves cheated and broke off the propagation of the doctrine.”⁴⁰ Ḥamdān and ʿAbdān’s rejection of the imamate of the future al-Mahdī fissured the inchoate Ismailitic movements into a following of the Fatimids and the remainder to whom the label Qarmatī is applied. ʿAbdān was killed by a pro-Fatimid *dāʿī*. Both the *dāʿīs* are rarely mentioned in Fatimid sources; however, Madelung has shown that Ḥamdān re-emerged in the service of the Fatimids and was sent to Byzantine territory as a representative where, eventually, he died.⁴¹ Several other splinter groups similarly proselytised in favour of their own claimants and endeavoured to capture territory for their cause.

Early Ismaili thinkers formulated complex syntheses of aspects of history, scientific and philosophical thought, and interpretations of Qurʾānic revelation to explain the drama in

³⁹ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 97; 131; 226 The reference to these prophets is taken from the Qurʾān (46:35). The verse, however, does not specify these prophets by their names; in some reckonings Adam is not counted and others ʿAlī is included.

⁴⁰ Daftary. *MIHT*. p. 28

⁴¹ Wilferd Madelung, “Ḥamdān Qarmatī and the Dāʿī Abū ʿalī,” in *Studies in Medieval Shiʿism*, ed. Wilferd Madelung, and Sabine Schmidtke (Farnham: Ashgate Variorum, 2012). Wilferd Madelung’s monumental study, “The Fatimids and the Qarmatis of Baḥrayn”, clarified that the various Qarmatī movements did not coordinate their military activities with the Fatimids and did not accept the authority of the Fatimid imam-caliph as had been believed going back to Ibn Khaldūn. Also cf. Madelung, “The Fatimids and the Qarmatīs of Baḥrayn.”

heaven and the history on earth. This hierohistory constituted helical cycles which explained the existence of the Universe originated by the ineffable transcendent God. The very early gnostic notions of *ex nihilo* creation recorded in K. *‘ālim wa’l-ghulām* attributed to the Fatimid *dā’ī* Ja‘far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman⁴² were overshadowed by the Neoplatonic thought of the Iranian—mainly Qarmaṭī—*dā’īs*. Combined with the revelation, the Ismailis construed heptadic helical eras of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and the last most complete and perfect one of Muḥammad and Islam. At the culmination of each cycle a messenger would enunciate (*nāṭiq* = enunciator) another cycle and bring a new *sharī‘a* transcending or abrogating the previous dispensation. Each of these law-giving prophets was succeeded by his *waṣī* (legatee) and his explicitly designated descendants as imams (referred to as *ṣāmit* = silent) until the seventh would rise up as the new *nāṭiq*. Muḥammad had proclaimed that after him there would be no further messenger and therefore the next *nāṭiq* would bring a culmination in the Qiyāma. In this era, Muḥammad’s *waṣī* was ‘Alī and he was followed by Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, Ismā‘īl and lastly Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl, who as the seventh would rise up as the Mahdī.⁴³

D. Fatimids

The most successful and long-lived Ismailitic movement was that of the Fatimids. The Ismaili *da‘wa* emerged out of the obscurity of *taqiyya* and towards the end of the ninth/third century established territorial footholds from Multan to Yemen. The *dā’īs* were centrally coordinated although local doctrinal and political independences persisted well into the establishment of the Fatimid Empire. The Fatimid *da‘wa* was successful at a time when the ‘Abbāsīd absolutist caliphate was disaggregating into locally independent kingdoms. At the same time the groups

⁴² Master and Disciple.

⁴³ The heptad of *ṣāmits* with the last one being a *nāṭiq* often excludes ‘Alī who as the *asās* is an imam of different standing. The numbers have to add up after all!

which accepted Mūsā b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq and his descendants as their imams were convulsed with the occultation (*ghayba*) of the twelfth imam in 874/260. This imam over the next seven decades (between *ghayba al-ṣuġrā* and *ghayba al-kubrā*) was cast as the messianic redeemer who would manifest at the End of Times. In this vacuum of manifest post-prophetic authority, the Fatimid *daʿwa* actively proselytised in the name of Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh who took the regnal title al-Mahdī biʾllāh (r. 909–934/297–322).

I. THE DYNASTY OF MAHDĪS

In 899/286 when ʿAbd Allāh had proclaimed himself the imam descended from Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, as already mentioned, the Ismailitic movements were fissured. Even the Fatimid *daʿwa* enunciated in the name of al-Mahdī exhibited an ambiguity of the identity of the claimant to the mantle of the Prophet.

An early Fatimid *dāʿī* Jaʿfar b. Aḥmad b. al-Haytham (fl. 9–10th/3–4th c) demonstrates the theological ambiguities of whether the messianic figure promised by the Ismaili movement was Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl or a descendant of his. Ibn Haytham’s memoir details his meetings and conversations in Ifrīqiya with the *daʿī* Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Shīʿī (d. 911/298), the architect of the founding of the Fatimid Empire and his brother Abūʾl-ʿAbbās (d. 911/298). Al-Mahdī travelled to North Western Africa to escape Qarmaṭī rebel attack on his base in Salamiyya, Syria and attempts to arrest him by the ʿAbbāsids in Egypt. In April 909/*Rajab* 296, Abū ʿAbd Allāh’s forces took Raqqāda, the capital of the Aghlabid rulers of North Africa (fl. 800–909/184–296) and two months later he ventured further west, across the desert, to rescue the imam from captivity by the ʿAbbāsīd vassal in Sijilmāsa.⁴⁴ In the meanwhile, he discussed at

⁴⁴ Abū ʿAbdallāh Jaʿfar Ibn al-Haytham, “The Advent of the Fatimids: A Contemporary Shiʿi Witness: An Edition and English Translation of Ibn al-Haytham’s Kitāb al-munāẓarāt,” (2000). pp 126ff

length the bases of religion with the neophyte, Ibn al-Haytham. After administering the oath to Ibn al-Haytham, Abū ‘Abd Allāh spoke about the covenant (*‘ahd*) and then turned to the doctrine of imamate:

‘May God have mercy on you, you should know that the imams are seven.’ He then cited everything that provides evidence of sevens out of all that God has created. ... When he had covered this completely, explaining it all and putting it in proper order, he said, ‘Understand that for each imam there are twelve visible diurnal *ḥujjas* and twelve nocturnal *ḥujjas* ... and that they [the *ḥujjas*] were the veil of the imam and are his mouthpieces and gateways, his deputies, and the messengers to from him to the *dā’īs*, who in turn convey the message to the believers. He proved this by reference to matters which had previously been incomprehensible and which, before these demonstrations and explanations for it, had appeared unreasonable.

In a subsequent conversation Ibn al-Haytham and Abū ‘Abd Allāh discussed the identity of the imam:

I said: ‘O master, what is the name of the Imam and who is he and whose son is he?’

He said: ‘There will be another time for that.’

I said: ‘Bestow or withhold without an accounting.’

After some silence he said: ‘The Imam is Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far.’

I said: ‘The period is long; today is a hundred and forty years from the death of Ja‘far, and Ismā‘īl is said to have died in the lifetime of his father.

He said: ‘Would you deny that he might live a thousand years when Noah lived among his people for a thousand years?’

I said: ‘We don’t deny it because of following your lead and believing in your declaration. We affirm that this is a cover for another.

He said: ‘God does what He wishes.’

I said to him: ‘Certainly there is among the reports from the Prophet that he said, “The Mahdī will have my name and the name of his father will be that of my father”.’

He said: ‘He meant by “his father” Ismā‘īl the son of Abraham, his ancestor, whom he takes here as a father.’

In this extraordinary exchange, Abū ‘Abd Allāh, the founder of the Fatimid Empire who had spent eighteen years cultivating Ismailism among the Berbers of North Africa and preparing ground for the effort to restore ‘Alid rule of the Ummah in the line of Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far, when asked, replied that the imam was Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl. Six months after this conversation, Abū ‘Abd Allāh was returning having rescued al-Mahdī. During this time Ibn al-Haytham continued his discussions with Abū ‘Abd Allāh’s brother, Abū’l-‘Abbās, who ruled Raqqāda in his absence. During the month of *Ramaḍān*, the two discussed the works of Aristotle, Plato and a host of philosophical and theological issues. Then a letter came regarding the imminent arrival of al-Mahdī. Ibn al-Haytham wrote:

The dawn broke and morning appeared, the day came upon us and the night went away, souls were delighted and hearts radiant at the arrival of his news. Such joy it held it cannot be forgotten, a glowing splendour inextinguishable, a light that cannot be concealed. It was he whose excellence could not be hidden and 'truth has now arrived and falsehood has perished' [17:81]. The stars declined and the Alive and Self-subsistent appeared.

He elaborated that the earth began to shine and the world was illuminated by the arrival of al-Mahdī whom he described as an “erudite sage and a king who is gentle and compassionate with the believers, merciful ‘in a shade extended, water poured, fruits that abound uncut and not forbidden’ [56:30-33].” These are the words of a highly educated scholar familiar with both Islamicate religious sciences and Hellenic philosophy.

Just over a year later, the two brothers, Abū ‘Abd Allāh and Abū’l-‘Abbās, who had yielded authority to al-Mahdī, were accused of plotting an overthrow and perhaps of heresy. They were killed on the orders of the imam. Ibn al-Haytham in his memoir written more than two decades after these events, towards the end of his narrative turned to poetry and only indirectly alluded, by reference to the instability afterwards, to the killing of the two *dā’īs* central to the foundation of the Fatimid Empire.⁴⁵ Daftary noted that the Fatimids

like the ‘Abbāsids before them, came to face a serious internal conflict soon after their victory. This conflict, threatening the very existence of the newly founded Shī‘ī dynasty, had its roots in the incompatibility between the ideas and expectations of those *dā’īs* who had played a vital role in bringing the Fāṭimids to power on the one hand, and the needs of the state and the responsibilities of sound government on the other. The establishment of Fāṭimid rule required some modifications in the revolutionary objectives and policies of the Ismā‘īlī *da‘wa*.⁴⁶

The doctrinal controversies anchored in the preaching of the *da‘wa* in the name a messianic redeemer versus the line of successive descendants claiming ‘Alid genealogy reverberated in the efforts to recast the revolutionary apocalyptic Ismaili *da‘wa* into the Fatimid *dawla*.

⁴⁵ *Advent; Advent* pp 171-75; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 141

⁴⁶ *Ismailis* p. 141

Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān’s *Iftitāḥ al-da‘wa wa-l-ibtidā’ al-dawlah* was written to re-write this troublesome period.⁴⁷ (Cf. Part One:3-I-D). Its text conforming to *sīra* and *manāqib* (biography and virtues of exemplars) genres may have been used to train officials of the *da‘wa* and embeds an extensive amount of historical content. The homiletic, proselytic, didactic, legitimatory and hortative functions of the text are noteworthy in the constructions of Abū’l-‘Abbās. As al-Mahdī fled Egypt, he sent Abū’l-‘Abbās ahead as a scout; however, the latter was arrested in Qayrawān. Pressed to admit his identity and to yield al-Mahdī’s whereabouts, he held firm as a merchant and did not betray the imam. Al-Mahdī’s intention was to join Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Shī‘ī but he went on to Sijilmāsa because his arrival in Ikjan—the latter’s headquarters—would have affirmed Abū’l-‘Abbās’ affiliation with the imam and he would have been killed by the Aghlabid rulers of Qayrawān. It is the same Abū’l-‘Abbās who is cast in the text as the “hypocrite” (*munāfiq*), who bent on maintaining power corrupted his brother, Abū ‘Abd Allāh, and others to rebel against the imam.⁴⁸ The text honoured Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Shī‘ī’s contributions to the *da‘wa* and his early good standing—perhaps to bring about a reconciliation with the Kutāma Berbers who were attached to his memory more so than to that of the Mahdī. His brother, however was vilified beyond reprieve.

The magnitude of the rebellion is exemplified by al-Mahdī’s punishments for leaders of the *da‘wa* who were suspected of opposition. He

⁴⁷ Founding the Fatimid State: The Rise of an Early Islamic Empire. The *Iftitāḥ* is the principal text all scholars referred to, in conversations, to counter my postulate that Ismailis did not write history.

⁴⁸ dispatched Abū Zākī to Tripoli, whose governor was his paternal uncle Abū Yūsuf. When (Abū Zākī) arrived there, (al-Mahdī) wrote to (the governor) to execute him.³⁶⁷ Accordingly Abū Yūsuf, his paternal uncle, killed him in captivity and sent his head to al-Mahdī. Several conspirators were also executed in the provinces and in Raqqāda in various ways.³⁶⁸ Ibn al-Qadīm fled and went into hiding, but was caught after a search and was executed.pp 124-125 and 213-223. The term *munāfiq* occurs 29 times in the Qur’ān and is applied to those who betrayed their commitment and would be severely chastised and punished.

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Abū Zākī was a trusted lieutenant of Abū ‘Abd Allāh and was instrumental in the success of the *da‘wa* in Ifrīqiya. His execution in Tripoli achieved two goals—first, he was executed at a distance from Raqqadāh where the imam-caliph was contending with a major revolt and his killing would have ignited further rebellion. Second it established Abū Yūsuf’s loyalties—if he had hesitated in carrying out the order to execute his own nephew, he too would have been counted among the rebels.

Al-Nu‘mān recorded many other rebellions including a case of a group who broke away and acclaimed a young boy as the Mahdī. Several of these groups were accused of antinomianism and all the rebellions were put down. These eruptions were labelled by al-Nu‘mān as political and the falling away of misguided libertines; however, the foundation of this instability was doctrinal. For the various groups, including leading members of the *da‘wa*, al-Mahdī did not measure up to the promised chiliastic messiah. He and his son had to use force to eradicate internal opposition. This dissension may well have contributed to the failure of three Fatimid attempts to conquer Egypt (913-915/301-302, 919-921/307-309 and 935/323) and the success of the revolt of the Ibāḍī imam Abū Yazīd (943-44/332-947/336) “which capitalized on the socio-economic grievances of the Berbers as well as on the Zanāta-Ṣanhāja, Sunnī-Shī‘ī and Khārījī-Shī‘ī rivalries in the Fāṭimid dominions, almost succeeded in overthrowing the new dynasty.”⁵⁰ The doctrinal and political legitimacies of the early Fatimids were foundational to the weaknesses that resulted in loss of all the territories Abū ‘Abd Allāh had captured and the

⁴⁹ *Founding the Fatimid State: The Rise of an Early Islamic Empire* p. 220

⁵⁰ *Founding the Fatimid State: The Rise of an Early Islamic Empire* pp 228-230; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp. 145-147

Fatimids reduced to their besieged capital Mahdiyya. Al-Qā'im died on 23 May, 946/13 *Shawwāl*, 334, fighting Abū Yazīd's forces. His death and succession was not declared until a year later. The successor, al-Manṣūr, announced his father's death only after he had defeated Abū Yazīd's rebellion. It is noteworthy that the first three Fatimid imam-caliphs took regnal titles of al-Mahdī (the Messiah), al-Qā'im (the Resurrector) and al-Manṣūr (the Victor)—all of which have messianic connotations.⁵¹ (Cf. Part Two:1-II-C).

II. AL-MANṢŪR'S TATHBĪT AL-IMĀMA—AL-MU'IZZ' REFORMS

It is in this context of politico-military instabilities with underlying doctrinal problems and controversies that al-Manṣūr penned his *Tathbīt al-imāma* (*Confirmation of the Imamate*). (Cf. Part Two:1-II-C and 2-II-C). This important and earliest of Ismaili treatises on the imamate detailed the scriptural and historical legitimacies of the imamate of 'Alī and his descendants. Madelung wrote that al-Manṣūr “was faced in the few years of his reign right after his military triumph [over Abū Yazīd], with the need to gain the loyal allegiance of his Sunni, mostly Mālikī, subjects, many of whom had for a time sided with the Khārijī rebel.”⁵² The efflorescence of doctrinal materials in al-Manṣūr and his successor, al-Mu'izz' reigns evidences the discourses of authority taking place at the time. The *da'wa* literature produced at the time would be used for didactic and ritual purposes training cadres of *dā'īs* attuned to the teachings authorised by the *da'wa* carrying the imprimatur of the imams. (Cf. Part Two:1-II-B). Written in the mode of *kalām* texts the *Tathbīt* would have enabled proponents to articulate and debate the Fatimid Ismaili conceptions of post-prophetic authority with Sunnis and other members of public. The strength and stability of al-Mu'izz' reign not only allowed for the successful conquest of Egypt (969/358) but a centralisation of the far-flung *da'wa* coordinated from the new capital, Cairo

⁵¹ This is another 'Abbāsīd pattern the Fatimids followed.

⁵² Chase F. Robinson, ed. *Texts, Documents, and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D. S. Richards* (Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill, 2003). p. 69

and centred on the Fatimid imam-caliphs. The expansion of territories was matched by the consolidation of the *daʿwa* hierarchy and wider promulgation of authorised doctrines. (Cf. Part Two:1-II-C).

As the Fatimid cause achieved success, the messianic function was reconstituted from a single individual Mahdī to accommodate the succession and dynasty of imams as completing the mission of the Mahdī in the restoration of justice and equality.⁵³ The term Fatimid was rarely used in their early writings—the imam-caliphs were referred to as the Mahdīd imams (*al-aʿimma al-mahdiyyīn*).⁵⁴ Fatimid literature also increasingly refrained from using the term Mahdī other than to refer to the first imam-caliph al-Mahdī.⁵⁵ The ultimate *nāṭiq* came to be styled the *Qāʾim al-Qiyāmat* (the one who will rise up at the Resurrection).⁵⁶ The shift from a single messianic actor to a dynastic messianic principle expanded the fissure between the Qarmaṭī groups and the Fatimids. The early demarcation between the two may have remained porous—al-Muʿizz, to win over the Qarmaṭīs even made a concession that the Mahdī in fact was the seventh imam, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl and the Fatimid imam-caliphs were his caliphs (deputies).⁵⁷ Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān wrote that “the *qāʾim* ‘abrogates all laws, he reveals meaning and translates it’. With the *qāʾim* ‘God seals the era of works and opens the era of knowledge and requital’. This unveiling could not take effect at the time of the *qāʾim*’s first incarnation as Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, as he came in a period of complete concealment. But after the

⁵³ Madelung, “Das Imamāt.” pp 88ff; Madelung, “Imamate.” pp 105ff

⁵⁴ Paul E. Walker. *Orations of the Fatimid Caliphs: Festival Sermons of the Ismaili Imams*, (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009). pp 69-72

⁵⁵ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 119ff; al-Hamdani. *On the Genealogy*; Hamdani, and Blois, “Al-Mahdī’s Letter.”. Al-Mahdī’s controversial letter complicated Ismaili explanations of his genealogy. Importantly, however, the letter introduced the concept of *ḥil bāṭin* (esoteric) succession.

⁵⁶ Wladimir Ivanow, ed. *Collectanea Volume 1* (Leiden, Holland: Published for the Ismaili Society by E.J. Brill, 1948). *Kitāb’r-Rūshd wa’l-Hidayāt*. The Arabic text edited by Dr. M. Kamil Hussein. pp 185ff

⁵⁷ Madelung, “Das Imamāt.”

appearance of the Fatimids, his deputies, there was no reason to withhold his revelation from the believers any more.”⁵⁸ (Cf. Part Two:1-II-C).

III. AL-ḤĀKIM—CLAIMS OF DIVINITY

By the 11th/5th century the Fatimids had solidified their doctrinal ideology based on dynastic principles. However, in the last years of the reign of al-Ḥākim (r. 996–1021/386–411) the pendulum swung the other way. A group of *dāʿīs* drawing on earlier eschatological ideas construed al-Ḥākim not simply as the imam-caliph or the Mahdī but as the Divine manifestation on earth. This claim of divinity (*ulūhiyya*) was countered by the official Fatimid *daʿwa*, yet the movement gained support. In 1017/408, the *dāʿī* al-Ḥāsan b. Ḥaydara al-Akhram began to teach that al-Ḥākim was divine; he was assassinated later that year while riding in al-Ḥākim’s company. A year later an associate, Ḥamza b. ʿAlī b. Aḥmad continued al-Akhram’s teaching. A competing *dāʿī* Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Darazī who may have been Ḥamza’s disciple, began to openly preach al-Ḥākim’s divinity. The name for this religion which soon fell outside of the bounds of Islam and Ismaili Shiʿism is derived from this Turkic Bukharan *dāʿī*, al-Darazī. The followers do not prefer to be called the Druze; preferring *Muwaḥḥidūn* (Unitarians) instead. According to Samy Swayd “Darazi is considered by Druzes and the Druze manuscripts to be ‘the first [Druze] apostate,’ ‘the deviate,’ and ‘the great heretic.’ The word ‘Darazi’ remains a contemporary epithet and, when used by Druzes, implies that someone is a heretic.”⁵⁹ Al-Darazi was killed and many followers massacred in the riots that ensued in Cairo as the Turkic military units attacked the *Muwaḥḥidūn*. Ḥamza and a group of *dāʿīs* continued propagation of the doctrine with success in the Syrian mountains.

⁵⁸ *Das Imamāt*

⁵⁹ Samy S. Swayd. *Historical Dictionary of the Druzes*, (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2006). p. xxxii

The founders of the movement taught that al-Ḥākim was the embodiment of the One. They taught that

the imam's function no longer included *tawīl*, since the time had arrived for the removal of the distinction between the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of religion. Henceforth, the imam was to help the believers to realize themselves by recognizing the unity of God through al-Ḥākim. Ḥamza also expected al-Ḥākim to initiate the final era of the sacred history, abrogating all the previous religious laws, including the *sharī'a* of Islam and its Ismā'īli interpretation.⁶⁰

The eminent *dā'ī* Ḥamīd a-Dīn Kirmānī was called to Cairo at the height of these doctrinal challenges to provide theological counter to the teachings of Ḥamza and others. In the invocation of his *Risālat al-durriyyah* (*The Brilliant Epistle*) he wrote

I praise Him with the praise of the one who affirms only that which is comprehended of itself by His essence. And there is none among His originated things that is a deity, and there is none among His originated creatures but a supplicant to Him through glorification. And I truly bear witness according to my creation, and thereby I hope to attain salvation and success when there will be no longer time to escape, that divinity is not among the things that can be comprehended by an intellect or a soul, nor is it among those that can be judged by an imagination or a sense, except that while affirming Him they are compelled to say that He is Allah, other than Whom there is no deity. Nor is there anyone worthy of worship (*ma'būd*) other than Him.⁶¹

Beginning thus with a reassertion of the Ismaili conceptions of the ineffable God, he proceeded to elaborate on the nature and concepts of unity and multiplicity. He repudiated his opponents' ideas that "the resurrection (*qiyāma*) had occurred with the appearance of al-Ḥākim and that the era of Islam had ended. The era of Islam and the validity of its *sharī'a* would, he argued, continue under al-Ḥākim's numerous prospective successors as imams."⁶² Al-Kirmānī's doctrinal output provided ideological support for the official *da'wa*—many *dā'īs* returned to the Fatimid fold, and severe persecution forced the followers to retreat into their mountainous refuges. Their community over time was "divided into the *'uqqāl* (singular, *'āqil*), 'sages', who are initiated into the truths of the faith, and the *juhhāl* (singular, *jāhil*), 'ignorant persons', the majority of the uninitiated members, who are not permitted to read the more

⁶⁰ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 190

⁶¹ Seyyed Hossein. Nasr, and Mehdi Amin Razavi, eds. *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia Volume 2: Ismaili Thought in the Classical Age* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008). p. 200. Translated by F. M. Hunzai

⁶² Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 188

secret Druze writings.”⁶³ They believe in metempsychosis (*tanāsukh*) such that souls are reincarnated immediately after death. After al-Ḥākim’s disappearance in 1021/411 and Ḥamza’s death, the Muwaḥḥidūn await their return. The small communities have survived the last thousand years secretly guarding their doctrines and the boundaries of their closed community and faith.

With al-Ḥākim’s disappearance, the two cousins he had designated as *walī ‘ahd al-muslimīn* (heir designate of the Muslims) and *walī ‘ahd al-mu’minīn* (heir designate of the Believers) were removed from succession and al-Ḥākim’s son al-Ẓāhir li-’zāz Dīn Allāh (r. 1021–1036/411–427) was enthroned. (Cf. Part Two:2-I) Barring these anomalous designations by al-Ḥākim which are detailed below, the succession of Fatimid imam-caliphs was relatively uncontroversial until the death of al-Mustanṣir in 1095/487.

IV. SUCCESSION OF THE FATIMID IMAM-CALIPHS

Walker has meticulously analysed succession during the Fatimid Empire to study the “general problem of Ismaili succession” and through these examinations endeavoured to develop a theory of succession. Relying preferentially on Maqrīzī’s *Itti‘āz al-ḥunafā’*, he has supplemented and extended the earlier analyses of succession by Stern; however, he did not reference or use the Ilkhanid era chronicles and their accounts in his discussions of Nizari claims about the succession.⁶⁴ In a detailed exposition of the central issues of succession in Shi‘ism, he noted that while other communities no longer gave importance to the central Shi‘i concept of *naṣṣ*, the Ismailis insisted that each imam in turn must designate his successor. Further that this

⁶³ *Ismailis* p. 190

⁶⁴ Samuel M. Stern, “The Epistle of the Fatimid Caliph al-Āmir (al-Hidāya al-Āmiriyya): Its Date and its Purpose,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 82, no. 1-2 (1950); Samuel M. Stern, “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).

practice became a “source of troublesome anxiety” for the line of Fatimid imam-caliphs since, for example, a public designation of a successor who were to die before his father would delegitimise the entire genealogy.⁶⁵ Such concerns, he concluded, led to one general rule that the

goal of each imam in regard to succession was to provide what we would consider a “revocable” *naṣṣ*, that is, a designation as firm as possible but yet, to the end of that imam’s reign, not final in its theological significance. In practice that meant choosing a son to be groomed for succession whose actual designation was provisionally known only to a trusted third party who was sworn to secrecy.⁶⁶

He re-stated this in terms of Fatimid “policy” and “rule”

There were thus two stipulations in Fatimid policy: one to provide at all times for succession even under the requirement imposed by the doctrine of *naṣṣ*; and yet never to allow such decisions to become irrevocable should the heir die prematurely.

In practice this rule meant that often one prince was clearly favored and was therefore the obvious choice to succeed, but the formal act of designation waited until the previous imam had actually died (or was, perhaps, only at death’s door). The explicit *naṣṣ* was then frequently conveyed by testament, which is to say, as a bequest, and was usually passed on by a third party subsequent to the exact moment of death.⁶⁷

Writing a century or more before Maqrizī, all three Ilkhanid chronicles recorded that al-Musta‘lī received a second *naṣṣ* implying that the first *naṣṣ* was conferred on Nizār—the chroniclers derived their information from Nizari sources plundered at Alamut.⁶⁸ The question of whether *naṣṣ* was conferred on Nizār as claimed by the Nizaris or that the *naṣṣ* was conferred on al-Musta‘lī when their father al-Mustanṣir was on his deathbed as claimed by the Musta‘lians remained a major issue of contention between the two factions with divergent political and doctrinal implications. (Cf. Part Two:1-I and III-B)

In this brief survey, I have examined pivotal socio-political developments of imamate which provide useful frameworks to further explore the evolution of imamate in the Nizari contexts.

⁶⁵ Walker, “Succession.” p. 3 [Detailed analysis and commentary on this paper have been excised from here.]

⁶⁶ *Succession* p. 7

⁶⁷ *Succession* p. 7

⁶⁸ TJG. pp 190-191; HWC. pp 668-669; JT. p. 101; ZT. p. 124.

These manifestations of “imamate in history” are founded upon and correlate to doctrinal evolution I am calling “imamate through history”. In the next section I briefly examine doctrinal development of the conceptions of imamate which also will be essential for understanding their evolutions in the Nizari contexts.

II. Imamate Through History

The elaborations of the doctrines of post-prophetic authority in Shi‘ism while gradual, were spurred by several drastic moments in history. These events in the socio-political spheres were undergirded by the evolution of the conceptions of imamate. The event at Saqīfa on the day of the death of the Prophet began, as leaders of one of the Anṣār tribal confederation, the Aws, gathered to determine who would take the place of Muḥammad whom they had adopted as their leader when their tribal *shaykh* had died. This became a tussle with their opponents the Khazraj; and the entry of the Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and Abū ‘Ubayda made it a three-way tug of war.⁶⁹ Abū Bakr’s seizure of power, in due course, would distinguish into the very different Shi‘i-Sunni notions of authority.

The Shi‘a claimed that the Prophet had designated ‘Alī as his successor in several instances and the reports are universally recognised; however, the significances are differently interpreted. On the authority of the imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir, this designation is based on three important revelations. The first of these verses was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad when he was seated among a group of people.⁷⁰ Upon receiving the message Muḥammad rose and went towards the place of prayer to inquire about the circumstances of the revelation.

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ

⁶⁹ Madelung. *Succession to Muhammad*. pp 1-56; Jafri. *The Origins and Early Development of Shi‘a Islam*. pp 27ff

⁷⁰ Lalani. *EST.*; al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān. *Pillars of Islam*.

Your Guardian is none other than God, and His Messenger, and the believers who perform the prayer and give alms while bowing down. (Q5:55)

On his way, the Prophet encountered a beggar who recounted that he was asking for alms and no one paid any attention to him until he beseeched ‘Alī, who while bowing in prayer gave the beggar his ring. In her study of Muḥammad al-Bāqir, Lalani has shown that the exegesis of this verse is contingent on a single letter, *wāw*. Most interpreters read the letter *wāw* in *wa hum rāki‘ūna* as a conjunctive which would yield the meaning “and they bow down”. The imam, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, interpreted the letter as a *wāw al-ḥāl* which introduces the state of the entity performing the action which yields the meaning “while bowing down”. Thus the phrase *wa hum rāki‘ūna* (while bowing down) is restrictive to this Prophetic report and event.⁷¹ The verse sets up an equivalence between God, His Prophet and a third entity—if the *wāw* is interpreted as a conjunctive the third entity becomes all those who worship. Then the verse translated as “your Guardian is none other than God, and His Messenger, and the believers who perform the prayer and give alms and bow down” does not make sense since all worshippers who bow down would be equated to God and His prophet. Muḥammad al-Bāqir’s exegesis restricts the third entity to ‘Alī according to the account of the events of the moment of revelation of the verse inherited in the imam’s family. In this exegesis of the verse: “your Guardian is none other than God, and His Messenger, and the believers who perform the prayer and give alms while bowing down”, the one from among ‘the believers who perform the prayer and give alms while bowing down’ exclusively refers to ‘Alī. Accordingly, the Shi‘i emphasise the high status and *walāya* (devotion to the imams) of ‘Alī and the imams descended from him.⁷²

⁷¹ Lalani. *EST*. pp 58ff.

⁷² *EST* p. 61; Maria Massi Dakake. *The Charismatic Community : Shi‘ite Identity in Early Islam*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). pp 103ff. Lalani gives examples of plural usages in the Qur‘an referring to singular individuals. Further, the verse begins with *walī* instead of the plural *awliyā’* meaning that all three members of the predicate would be singular.

Shi'i exegeses of the revelation and the events of Ghadīr Khumm, similarly, elevate 'Alī to the unique status of being explicitly designated by God. According to these interpretations, as Muḥammad was returning back to Medina from his last pilgrimage he received the revelation

يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

O messenger, deliver that which has been sent down to you from your Lord; for if you do not, you will not have delivered His message. God will safeguard you from the people. God does not guide the unbelieving peoples. (Q5:67)

He gathered back all the pilgrims in the area of Ghadīr Khumm (pool in the Khumm valley) and elaborate ceremonies are recorded to have followed. A pulpit (*minbar*) was improvised from which the prophet conveyed this message and gave a sermon. He asked the people if he had truthfully and faithfully conveyed the message of God to which they responded affirmatively. He conveyed to them that the time for his departure from this mortal coil was near and after him he would leave two weighty things, the Book of God and his progeny—the two shall remain together until they would reach him at the Pool of Paradise.⁷³ He took 'Alī by the hand and declared “*man kuntu mawlā fahadā 'Alī mawlā*” (he whose *mawlā* I am, 'Alī is his *mawlā*). He called on God to favour those who love 'Alī and to oppose those who oppose him. According to these interpretations, when he had completed these actions, the last revelation was received

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed my favours upon you and have approved Islam as your faith. (Portion of Q5:3)

Between the revelation of Q5:55 and then Q5:67 there is an apparent hesitation in the prophet's declaration of 'Alī as his successor. Q5:67 has a forceful Divine command to overcome this hesitation. Muḥammad's actions at Ghadīr Khumm were followed by the revelation of Q5:3, “perfected” the faith of Islam. All the gathered recited the two *raka'āt* festival prayer and purportedly gave allegiance to 'Alī. The early Shi'a drew on these three verses along with

⁷³ This is the famous *ḥadīth* called “*thaqalayn*” or the two weighty things.

numerous others and the reports of many events and pronouncements during the career of the prophet which indicated 'Alī's succession.⁷⁴

Those opposed to 'Alī's authority, differed on the interpretation of the word *mawlā* in Muḥammad's proclamation at Ghadīr. For them, the prophet was merely seen as publicly asserting confidence in his lieutenant. The Shi'a; however, saw an equivalence in the prophet's proclamation that 'Alī was equal to himself. Over the next two centuries, those opposed to 'Alī claimed the sufficiency of the Qur'an and relied on principles such as the prophet's reported pronouncement that his community would never agree on error. In essence, the eventual Jamā'i-Sunnīs endowed sovereignty to the scripture and to those capable of accessing its language and meaning—in time, the class of 'ulamā' made themselves the custodians of the interpretation of God's word.

A. Imamate as Continuity of Guidance

The Shi'a argued that the prophet ensured succession in the imamate so that the mercy of God and Divine guidance would continue. Their prophetology and anthropology anchored in a theology of Divine justice and mercy could not countenance the prophet leaving posterity to the whims and inclinations of people without guidance.⁷⁵ 'Alī was not simply *primus inter pares* but rather he embodied precedence in Islam as the first male convert, excellence in the service to Muḥammad's cause as a pious, learned and valiant defender, and preference not just of the prophet but of God. After the abdication of Ḥasan b. 'Alī, deprived of political power, the Shi'i

⁷⁴ Wilferd Madelung, "Sayf b. Umar: Akhbari and Ideological Fiction Writer," in *Le Shi'isme Imamite Quarante Ans Après: Hommage À Etan Kohlberg*, ed. M. A. Moezzi, M. Bar-Asher, and Simon Hopkins (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2009). Wilferd Madelung At Kūfa, 'Alī called on those who were present at Ghadīr Khumm to share their witness. He is not known to have legitimised his claim to authority prior to becoming the caliph in 656/35.

⁷⁵ al-Manṣūr bi'llāh, Abū Ṭāhir Ismā'īl. *The Shi'i Imamate: A Fatimid Interpretation.*, Edited by Sami Makarem. Translated by Sami Makarem. London: I.B.Tauris, 2013. p. 51

discourse focussed on the special knowledge (*‘ilm*) of the imam. Especially as large numbers of non-Arabs joined the fold, the imams were relied on for the esoteric (*bāṭin*) of the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) commandments of faith and the inner meanings of the scriptures. Each imam was to explicitly designate (*naṣṣ*) his successor and the special knowledge and ultimate authority of allegoric, symbolic and esoteric exegesis (*ta’wīl*) was considered to be inherited from one imam to the next.

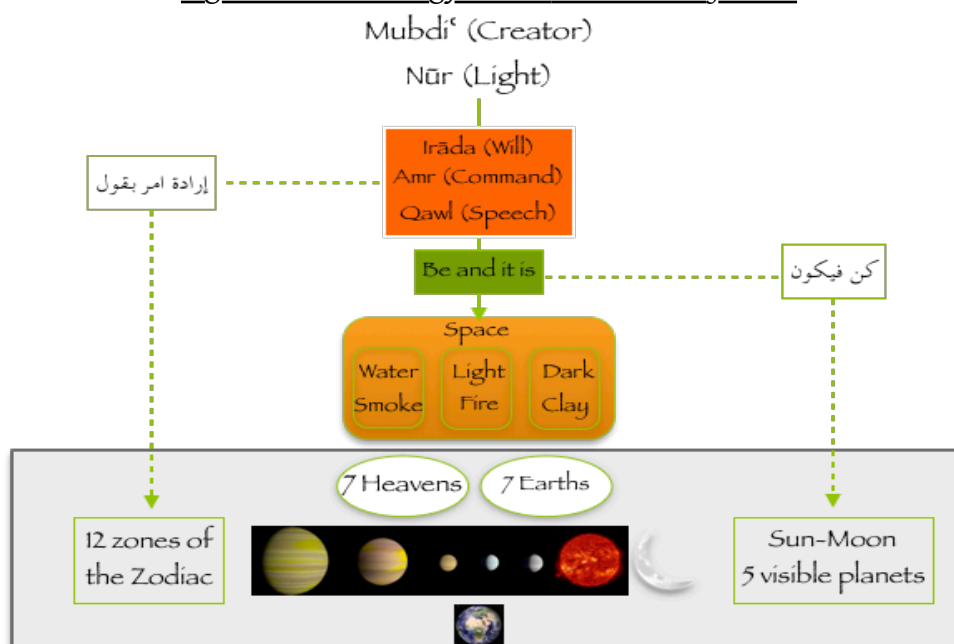
Muḥammad al-Bāqir and his son, Ja‘far al-Šādiq, restricted *naṣṣ* to the descendants of Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī. Along with *‘ilm* and the capacity for *ta’wīl*, the imam was considered to be *ma‘šūm* (sinlessness) and possessing *iṣma* (inerrancy). In the doctrinal developments of imamate, the imams, like the Prophet Muḥammad before them, were considered to be the safeguards and vessels for the transmission of the word of God. Therefore the imams had to possess the highest levels of *‘ilm* and the capacities for *ta’wīl*. Most especially, they had to be free of the contaminations of sin and error, else the word of God that they safeguarded would be contaminated.

B. Unified Theory of Being

Contemplating God’s creation, the Ismaili thinkers, in particular, projected the historic imamate onto the cosmological timespan of creation as a trans-historic institution stretching back to the beginning of time and forwards to the end of times—interspersed with revelation in a chiliastic periodicity. The exegesis of the Qur’an in light of pre-Muḥammadan histories, Hellenic thought and Judeo-Christian and Zoroastrian traditions coupled with theological speculations led to developments of a “unified theory of being”. God, beyond all human conception, through the command *kun fayakūn* (Be and it is) unfolded the known universe. The *K. ‘ālim wa’l-ghulām* (The Book of the Master and Disciple) attributed to the Fatimid *dā’ī* Ja‘far b.

Manṣūr al-Yaman records one of the earlier models of emanation of the material world. The Creator out of Light and through Will, Command and Speech uttered “Be” and the Universe unfolded. In space, the principles: light, darkness and water precipitated the elements: fire, clay and smoke which went to constitute the seven heavens and earths shown in Figure Pc.⁷⁶

Figure Pc: Cosmology in the K. *‘ālim wa’l-ghulām*



The material universe reflected the drama in heaven and its governance was explained through methods of *‘ilm al-hurūf* (the science of letters). The seven letters of the command *kun fayakūn* (كن فيكون) govern the five visible planets, the sun and the moon and the twelve letters *irāda-amr-qawl* (Will, Command, Speech) govern each of the zones of the Zodiac. In the sub-lunary earth, the macrocosm is reflected in the microcosm; the heavenly principles are reflected in and represented by the hierarchy of the *da‘wa* which is the means of cosmological return. The seven letters corresponded to the seven *‘ulū’l-‘azam* (prophets with resolution) who bring a new dispensation, namely, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muḥammad and the

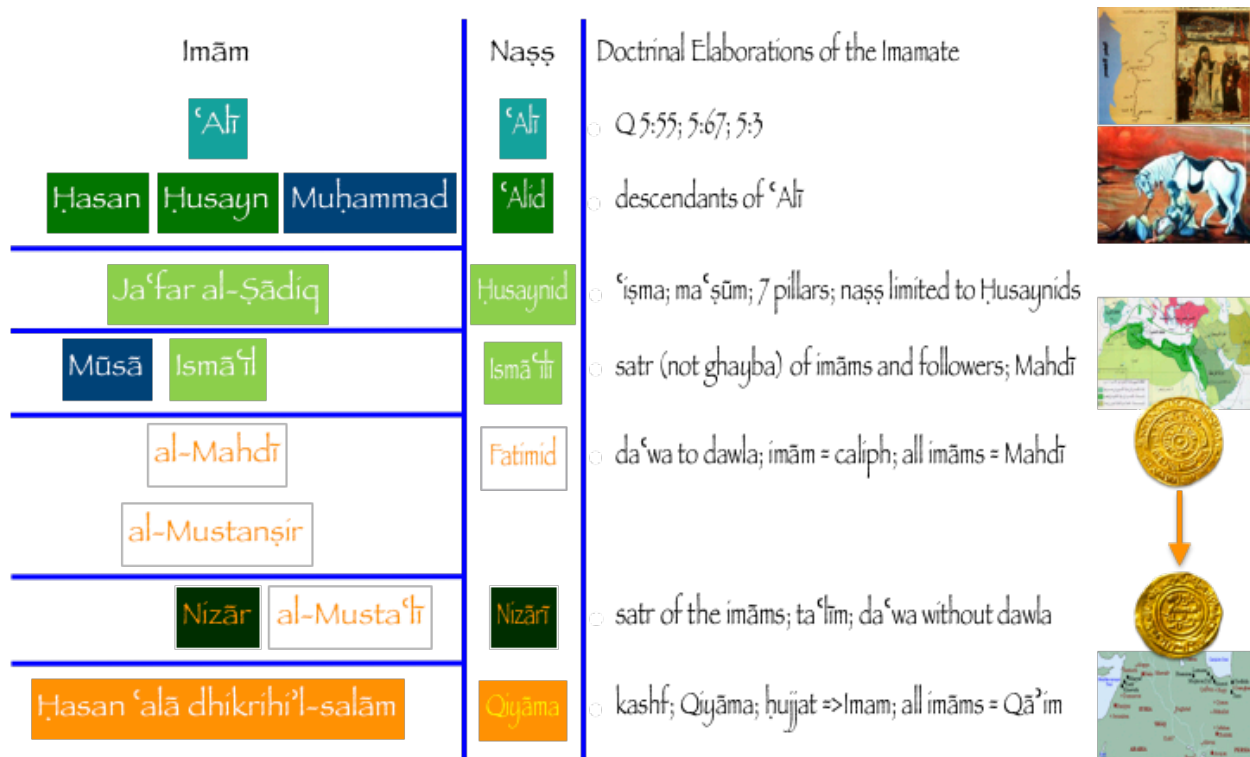
⁷⁶ Ja‘far ibn Manṣūr, al-Yaman. *The Master and the Disciple: An Early Islamic Spiritual Dialogue*, Translated by James Winston Morris. London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001. pp 79ff

Qā'im.⁷⁷ The number seven is also reflected in the heptads of imams in each cycle from the law bringing prophet to the next.

C. Cosmology of Imamate

Refinements were made as the Neoplatonic and Aristotelian conceptions of creation, the universe and return were elaborated; however, some of the basic constructs remained. Anchored in their Qur'anic exegesis, the Ismaili thinkers, in common with thinkers from other religious contexts, took a historical institution—the 'imamate in history' and mapped it to the extents of cosmological time—'imamate through history'. Figure Pd shows the elaboration and evolution of the conceptions of imamate over time.

Figure Pd: Evolution of the Doctrines of Imamate



By the time of the Nizari polity most Shi'is had accepted some notion of continued guidance—if the Prophet Muḥammad, according to the Qur'ān, was sent as a mercy to all the worlds, God

⁷⁷ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 97

would be unjust if only the generations that encountered the Prophet during his lifetime were to benefit from Divine mercy—the Qur’anic verse calls him a mercy to all the worlds.⁷⁸ This theology of Divine justice and mercy was tied to the soteriology of revelation and then continued guidance to all humanity before and after Muḥammad. The Ismailis had elaborated seven helical cycles of law-bringing prophets (*nāṭiq* = enunciator) followed by seven imams (*ṣāmit* = silent) and seventh rising as an enunciator for the next cycle as an explanation of Divine guidance to humanity throughout history. They were never very strict when the numbers did not exactly add up. The *dā’ī*-authors knew that the imamate in history was not the same as their conceptions of the imamate through history and yet they persevered. Their unified theory was a means of explaining the nature of the unknowable God, creation of the Cosmos, governance of the Universe and humanity on earth, and ultimately, the soteriology of cosmic return. The intersection of the historic and trans-historic imamate were pivotal to their understanding of the Beginning to the End; from the moment of *ālastu birabbikum* (Am I not your Lord?) (Q7:172) through *yawm al-dīn* (the Day of Judgement) (Q1:4) and back to *ālastu birabbikum*. It is the imam who guides by his *ta’līm* (teaching) and *nūr* (Light) and at the appointed hour (*al-sā’at*) (Q33:63) as the Qā’im will arise and bring about the End of Times and return.

After the killing of Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir, those who accepted him as their imam believed that his descendant imams went into *satr* (concealment) and anxiously awaited the *kashf* (manifestation) of the imam of the time. As in the case of the ending of the previous era of *satr* and the public manifestation of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mahdī, the manifestation of the Nizari imam was construed in cosmological and messianic terms. The *kashf* of the imam would usher a new and glorious era.

⁷⁸ Q21:107 We have not sent thee, save as a mercy unto all beings. وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

Al-Shahrastānī's observation is still valid. Those who have studied post-prophetic authority, whether writing academically or a pious catechism have tended to simplify the imamate as either an idiosyncratic institution or the source of salvation claimed by a select group. In this brief survey I have endeavoured to highlight some intricacies which both the scholar and the believer can look back at and appreciate the complex responses of our fellow human beings, in their time, framing how their societies, lives and salvation were to be ordered. The contours of the imamate were cast in these responses within specific historical contexts mediated by doctrinal elaborations and evolution to make sense of their world and the hereafter. In the following chapters, I examine how in the Nizari contexts, the complexity of responses redrew these contours.

III. Outlines of Part Two: Chapters 1-3

Using the approaches outlined in Part One, particularly the methodologies of DNA (double narrative analyses), to re-read the Ilkhanid era chronicles and other sources, and by referring to Ismaili doctrinal treatises—including ones I have edited and translated—in the following chapters I analyse the evolution of the conceptions of imamate and the developments in the Nizari polity in Iran.

In Chapter One, I examine the proliferations of the Ismaili *da'wa* in Iran leading up to and following the succession crisis after the death of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanşir. I postulate a “Fatimid eastern policy” which was gradually forming a wide pincer around the ‘Abbāsīd-Saljuq establishment. During the Nizāri-Musta‘lian schism, the Ismailis of Iran exclusively chose Nizār—I examine the contexts and reasons for this, and highlight subdued voices and traces of factionalism among their leadership. Lastly, I analyse the relations

between the indigenising and sedentarising Saljuq xenocracy confronted by the autochthonous Nizaris who were attempting to consolidate a territorial polity attributing sovereignty to the Nizari Ismaili imamate and aiming to establish a Shi'i theocracy.

In Chapter Two, I examine how groups in the Nizari polity responded to the *satr* (concealment) of the imams. I analyse the discourse of authority between the Nizaris and their principle opponents—the Jamā'ī-Sunni and the Fatimid Ismailis. I use treatises I have edited and translated 1) to explore how the Nizaris expanded the doctrines of *naṣṣ* and *ta'līm* and 2) to identify factionalism among the Nizaris I have labelled as satrists and *ẓuhūrists*—those who sought to persevere in the concealment of the imam versus those who sought the urgent manifestation of the salvific actor, the *Qā'im* of the *Qiyāma*.

In Chapter Three, I compare the Qur'anic concept of the *Qiyāma* and the event at Alamut as well as the Nizari doctrines of the *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt*. I dissect the explanations of how a descendant of Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir was believed to have become the head of the Nizari polity establishing the imamate in Iran—this includes the analysis of Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām's genealogy back to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. I explore the socio-political and religious reconfigurations of society brought about by Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām's counter-revolution of the *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt*. I detail the continued contests between the satrists and *ẓuhūrists* in the Sunni interlude implemented under Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan and the gradual reinstatement of the teachings of the *Qiyāma* by his successor. I explore accounts of shifting alliances, especially between the Nizaris and the Mongols and analyse the collapse of this alliance which led to the decapitation and end of the Nizari polity and the massacres by Hūlāgū b. Tuluy b. Chingiz Khān's forces.

1. *Da'wa* without *Dawla*

WHILE THE AGED IMAM-CALIPH AL-MUSTANŞIR'S BODY AWAITED BURIAL, the royal princes, Nizār, 'Abd Allāh and Ismā'īl were called to the throne room early in the morning on 18th Dhū'l-ḥijja 487/4th January 1095.¹ Upon arrival they saw their youngest brother, Aḥmad sitting on the throne with his brother-in-law, the powerful *wazīr* al-Afḍal b. Badr al-Jamālī at his side. Al-Afḍal ordered the princes to kiss the earth "before God and Mawlānā al-Musta'li bi'llāh for he is the one who was designated (*naṣṣa 'alayhi*) by Imam al-Mustanşir before his death, to succeed him to the caliphate." Nizār insisted that, "Any oath I would give is invalid since he (Musta'li) is younger than I and because of a document (*khaṭṭ*) written by my father that is in my possession appointing me his heir (*walī 'ahdihi*) and I will bring it." He left the gathering and escaped to Alexandria. According to Maqrīzī, the other two also declined and each claimed that their father had promised him the caliphate; they too did not give allegiance at this time and withdrew to a mosque in Cairo.²

¹ I am grateful to Paul Walker for providing me with an electronic copy of Maqrīzī's *Itti'āz al-ḥunafā bi-akhbār al-a'imma al-khulafā*.

² Walker, "Succession." p. 253 rev. p. 28; Taqiyy al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī Maqrīzī. *Itti'āz al-ḥunafā bi-akhbār al-a'imma al-khulafā*, Edited by Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid. (Cairo: National Library and Archives Press, 2016). III:6

فأمرهم الأفضل بتقبيل الأرض وقال لهم تقدموا وقبلوا الأرض لله تعالى ولمولانا المستعلى بالله وبايعوه فهو الذي نص عليه الإمام المستنصر قبل وفاته للخلافة من بعده.

and

إن قطعت ما بايعت من هو أصغر سنًا مني وخط والدي عندي بأني ولي عهده و أنا أحضره

An observant reader might see an equivalence between this event and the succession to the Prophet—while the body of the Prophet was being prepared for burial by 'Alī and Muḥammad's other close associates, on the other side of Medina, at the Saqīfa, a discourse of tribal authority was under way which resulted in the seizure of power by Abū Bakr and ultimately in divergent conceptions of post-prophetic authority which splintered the Ummah.

In the meanwhile, the senior *dā'ī*, second in rank to al-Afḍal, proclaimed 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mustanṣir as the imam-caliph with the title al-Muwaffaq.³ Al-Afḍal had retained for himself the title of *Hādī du'āt al-mu'minīn* (Director of the *Dā'īs* of the Believers) which his father, Badr al-Jamālī, had appropriated.⁴ While no further details are available, it would appear that once Nizār was no longer in the picture of the fast moving events, the *dā'ī* Barakāt, at least to counter al-Afḍal's manoeuvre, proposed the senior prince in Cairo, 'Abd Allāh, as the successor and challenged al-Afḍal's installation of al-Musta'li. Luck did not hold out for either 'Abd Allāh al-Muwaffaq or the *dā'ī*. Barakāt, effectively the most senior Fatimid *dā'ī*, was arrested and shortly executed.⁵ Walker noted that al-Afḍal orchestrated a

second ceremony meticulously, taking the *bay'a* to al-Musta'li first from the *qāḍī al-quḍāt* and then moving down the ranks. Finally, the two brothers [Ismā'il and 'Abd Allāh], who had waited until then in the mosque under guard, were brought back, this time to face a *fait accompli* and this time to swear loyalty and accede to their brother's rule without evident hesitation; under the circumstances, there was little else they could have done.⁶

³ Walker, "Succession." p. 254 rev. p. 29; Maqrīzī. *Itti'āz*. III:8

وكانت الدعاة عندما بلغهم موت المستنصر اختلفوا فيمن يبائعونه من بعده فدعا بركات وهو أمين
الدعاة لعبد الله المستنصر ونعته بالموفق فقبض الأفضل عليه وقتله هو وابن الكحال.

⁴ *Itti'āz* II:437; Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad al-Shirāzī and Fatimid Da'wa Poetry: A Case of Commitment in Classical Arabic Literature*. p. 98: "Four years later in *Sha'bān* 470 (1077) [sic should be February/March 1078]—two months before al-Mu'ayyad's death—Badr was also given the title of *Hādī du'āt al-mu'minīn* (Guide for the *Dā'īs* of the Believers). Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. p. 104; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 194-195 and 204. Gives al-Afḍal's title as *dā'ī al-du'at* (chief *dā'ī*). Walker, "Succession." p. 252; Paul E. Walker, "Succession to Rule in the Shiite Caliphate," in *Fatimid History and Ismaili Doctrine* (Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate/Variation, 2008). Paul E. Walker p. 25-26: Walker wrote: "Nothing is known for certain about how Badr may have effected the Ismaili *da'wa* of which he was titular head as *dā'ī al-du'āt*" adding in a footnote: "Technically Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shirāzī remained *dā'ī al-du'āt* until his death in 470/1077 (sic) and only thereafter did Badr assume this title." This was corrected in his article in *The Fatimid Caliphate: Diversity of Traditions*, Edited by Farhad Daftary, and Shainool Jiwa. (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2018). p. 88.

⁵ Walker, "Succession." p. 254 rev. p. 29; Maqrīzī. *Itti'āz*. III:8 al-Muwaffaq and Barakāt both have meanings of "good fortune"!

⁶ Walker, "Succession." p. 254 rev. p. 29; See below, Nuwayrī recorded that 'Abd Allāh escaped with Nizār to Alexandria. al-Nuwayrī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb. *Nihāyat al-arab fi funūn al-adab*, Edited by Sa'id 'Ashūr. Cairo: National Library and Archives Press, 2002. v28:240ff

Walker further questioned that since the chief *qāḍī* al-Muʿayyad bi-Naṣr al-Imām ʿAlī Nafiʿ b. al-Kuḥḥāl was also executed along with Barakāt, was the Fatimid leadership in Cairo unwilling to accept al-Mustaʿlī?⁷

In this chapter I do not focus specifically on sequential series of events in early Nizari history, instead I have drawn on a number of episodes to illustrate a syntheses and analyses of past actuality. I examine the succession of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir and the adherence of the Ismailis in Iran to the imamate of his son Nizār. I have used the DNA (Double Narrative Analyses) approaches elaborated in Part One to refine the readings derived by other scholars from TJG, JT and ZT as well as Ibn al-Athīr, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, Ibn al-Muyassar and Maqrīzī.⁸

I begin this examination with analyses of the events in Egypt after the death of al-Mustanṣir. Then, to answer the question of why the Ismailis in Iran adhered to Nizār, I survey the Ismaili *Daʿwa* in Persianate domains and map what I call the “Fatimid Eastern Policy”. I argue that this policy had three interrelated components: first, to win over divergent Ismailitic groups to Fatimid Ismailism; second, to increase adherents to the *daʿwa*; and third, to increase territory under Fatimid control. The second postulate is that the success of the *daʿwa* in Iran would have amounted to an eastern arm of a pincer around the Saljuq-ʿAbbāsīd establishment. The death of al-Mustanṣir and the killing of Nizār who may have been understood by many to be the heir, cleaved the Ismailis in Iran from the Fatimid Empire and the pincer was never tightened.

⁷ *Succession* p. 254 rev. p. 29;

⁸ While my analyses benefit greatly from relevant studies of Farhad Daftary, David Durand-Guédy, AAA Fyzee, Marshall Hodgson, Bernard Lewis, Wilferd Madelung, Samuel Stern and Paul Walker, the use of DNA will be apparent from my significantly different readings of the primary sources in several instances.

The second section of the chapter examines why the Ismailis in Iran adhered to Nizār as their legitimate imam. In this section I continue the re-reading of the sources begun in Part One Chapter 6 to further examine the purposes of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's journey to Egypt and his efforts to implement the "Fatimid Eastern Policy" after he returned to Iran. After the death of al-Mustanšir, I propose that the Ismailis in Iran followed Nizār since he may have been understood by the upper echelons of the *da'wa* there to be the *walī al-'ahd* (designated heir) to the Fatimid caliphate and the holder of the *naṣṣ* (specific designee) to succeed his father as the imam. I analyse Ḥasan's activities after his return to Iran and excavate traces of friction with the existing hierarchy of the *da'wa*. These developments were influenced by three vectors; namely, the cleavage of the nascent Nizari Ismailis from the Fatimid *da'wa*, the factional contestation within the Ismaili communities in Iran and the responses to the Sunni challenges and the Saljuq establishment.

In the third section of this chapter, I describe the clash between the Saljuq xenocracy and an attempt to establish a Shi'i theocracy. The Saljuq xenocracy consisted of nomadic Turks, Persianate bureaucrats and '*ulamā*' from the East who were engaged in a long process of indigenising and sedentarising. They were confronted by an autochthonous movement to expand the sparse and scattered centres of local power into a territorial polity attributing sovereignty to the Nizari Ismaili imamate. I conclude the chapter with the study of this tumultuous engagement between the expanding Saljuq Empire characterised by what I call "fractional sovereignties" on the one hand and the multi-castellan polity of the Nizari Ismailis on the other.

I. Succession of the Imam-caliph al-Mustanšir

After the death of the imam-caliph al-Mustanšir, Rashid al-Din recorded that

Musta'li wanted to arrest Nizār al-Muṣṭafā li-dīn Allāh for claiming to be the heir of Mustanṣir (*wali 'ahd-i Mustanṣir*). He (Nizār) fled with his two sons to Alexandria. Nāṣir al-Dīn Aftakīn who was the governor there and a servant of his father, along with all the people of Alexandria gave allegiance to him.⁹

The use of Nizār's regnal title, al-Muṣṭafā li-dīn Allāh, suggests that this information in JT may have been derived from a Nizāri source. Al-Musta'li is substituted for the powerful *wazīr* al-Afḍal indicating the Nizari *dā'i*-author's doctrinal focus in place of the political. In Alexandria, Nizār received support from the governor and the chief *qāḍī*; and the people of the city gave him their *bay'a* (oath of allegiance). He was proclaimed the imam-caliph and coins were struck in his name under his regnal title.¹⁰

Figure II.1a: Coin—Imam-caliph Nizār, al-Muṣṭafā li-dīn Allāh



This one-of-a-kind gold dinar minted in Alexandria in the year 1095/487-488 in the field on the obverse side has the name and title of the imam-caliph: "Al-Muṣṭafā li-dīn Allāh Nizār Amīr al-Mu'minīn (The Chosen for the faith of God, Nizār, Commander of the Faithful)."¹¹ The outer circles indicate the location and date of minting. The field on the reverse has the *shahāda*: "There is no god but God and Muḥammad is the messenger of God" in central circle. The middle

⁹ JT. p. 60

مستعلی خواست که المصطفیٰ لدین الله، نزار، را بگیرد، به تهمت ولی عهدی مستنصر، او با دو پسر گریخته به اسکندریه رفت، که ناصر الدین افتنکین والی آنجا بود و بنده پدرش؛ و او با جمله اهل اسکندریه بر او بیعت کردند، و المستعلی بالله را خلع کرد.

¹⁰ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 242

¹¹ Retrieved from <http://iis.ac.uk/library/nizar-b-al-mustansir-bi-llah-gold-dinar>

circle reads: “Alī is the most excellent of the successor and the wazīr of the best of the messengers.” The outer circle reads: “Muḥammad is the messenger of God who sent him with guidance and the religion of truth that he might make it supreme over all other religions, even though the polytheists detest it (Q9:33).”

Later in the month—January 1095/Muḥarram 488—al-Afḍal led his forces against Nizār at Alexandria and was defeated. In the same year, a second attack was mounted after more thorough preparations in which the Turkish *amīrs* and the tribes supporting Nizār were bribed and won over. Al-Afḍal pushed Nizār’s forces back into Alexandria and bombarded the city. To protect the citizens from further attack, Nizār and Aftakīn surrendered under an *amān* (guarantee of safety) but were arrested and sent to Cairo.¹² Rashid al-Din wrote that Musta’lī sent an army to Alexandria; Aftakīn was captured and executed and the imam-caliph and his two sons were brought back to Cairo and Nizār was immured and never seen again.¹³ It is noteworthy that Nizār was immured rather than publicly executed. Could it be that the regime did not want to arouse the public to revolt by executing the prince who might have been expected by some to be the legitimate successor to the throne.¹⁴ Building a wall to enclose one’s brother to their death invokes the cruelty and depth of the bitter rivalry.

Maqrīzī reported that many members of the caliphal family escaped to the Maghrib, including among them Nizar’s brothers, Muḥammad, Ismā’īl, and Ṭāhir, and a son of his named al-

¹² JT. p. 60

¹³ For a later Musta’lian account cf. Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn. *The Fatimids and their successors in Yaman: the History of an Islamic Community: Arabic edition and English summary of Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn’s ‘Uyūn al-akhbār wa funūn alathār*, vol. 7, Edited by Ayman F. Sayyid. Translated by Paul E. Walker, and Maurice A. Pomerantz. (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002). pp 76-78 and Ar. Text pp 196ff. JT. p. 60:

مستعلی لشکری بفرستاد تا افتکین را بگرفتند و بکشتند و نزار را با دو پسر پیش او آوردند. او را در میان حایطی کرد و دیواری به روی او برآورد و بعد از آن ظاهر نشد

¹⁴ Maqrīzī. *Itti’āz*. III:6

وقوم یذکرون أن المستنصر کان قد أجلس ابنه أبا المنصور نزاراً لأنه أكبر أولاده وجعل إليه ولاية العهد من بعده فلما قربت وفاته أراد أن يأخذ له البيعة على رجال الدولة

Ḥusayn and from there, after gathering support, they launched three unsuccessful revolts. In 1132/526, Nizār's son Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn launched a large attack on Egypt; he was arrested and killed and thereafter, his troops dispersed. Another son of Nizār revolted in 1148/543 and the caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ again was able to easily defeat the Nizāri pretender. The third attempt, in 1161-2/556-7, was led by Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Nizār—this grandson of Nizār was duped by the caliph al-ʿĀḍid's *wazīr*, Ibn Ruzzik who had promised to raise an army and support his cause. When Muḥammad came to Ibn Ruzzik's tent, he was arrested, taken to Cairo and executed.¹⁵

The extent of Nizāri support in Egypt and North Africa is apparent not only by the coercion exercised by al-Afḍal to support his candidate but may also be surmised in the continuing readiness on part of the populace to rise up against the caliphate for over half a century. Maqrīzī recounted a curious anecdote where al-Afḍal's mother, while her son was away fighting Nizar, went in disguise around Cairo looking for signs of loyalty for her son. She came across two types of opponents, namely the “fanatic Ismaili” (*kāna ismāʿīliyyan mutaghāliyan*) and the “Nizari” (*kāna nizāriyyan*). They cursed al-Afḍal and praised Nizār. Walker concluded that it “is possible to interpret this incident as merely being anti-al-Afḍal but it appears equally likely to indicate serious support for Nizār among the Ismaili population of Cairo.”¹⁶

While in Egypt and North Africa, the forces of the Fatimid Empire strove to eradicate the Nizari movements, the *daʿwa* in Iran, without any known exceptions, rejected al-Mustaʿlī and chose to

¹⁵ Walker, “Succession.” p. 255 rev. pp 32-33;

¹⁶ *Succession* p. 32; Maqrīzī. *Ittiʿāz*. III:12 The term “Ismaili” was rarely used in the chronicles, especially self-referentially. It is often a pejorative appellation denoting extremist or heretical groups. The *Ḥikayāt-i Nāṣir-i Khusrāw* edited for this research (see below) also noted that there were two groups: “In Egypt two groups appeared and a great chaos ensued. One of the groups turned towards Mawlānā Nizār in Cairo and were called “the just on behalf of the family” (*ʿādil-i ḥaqq al-āhl*).”

follow Nizār as their imam and successor to al-Mustanşir. The stability of the Nizari *da'wa* and its encroachment into Syria as well as covert activities in Egypt led to public denunciation of the legitimacy of Nizār's claims to the imamate. The doctrinal content of the *al-Hidāya al-Āmirīya* issued after a gathering in December 1122-January 1123/*Shawwāl* 516 will be analysed in the next chapter. This conclave was prompted by the assassination of al-Afḍal in December 1121/*Ramaḍān* 515, allegedly by three Aleppan Nizaris and the subsequent disquiet in Cairo.¹⁷ The new *wazīr*, al-Ma'mūn, according to Ibn al-Muyassar, introduced stricter controls to prevent infiltration of Nizari spies and *fidā'īs* into Fatimid domains. He also intimated to the imam-caliph al-Āmir, who had just been freed from al-Afḍal's firm tutelage, that Nizār's cause had many supporters, including in his own palace. Nizār's sister who was implicated was one of the key witnesses at the assembly of governmental and religious dignitaries.¹⁸ Her testimony was exculpatory and relayed a number of her observances that cast aspersions on the legitimacy of Nizār's claim. The rescript was issued in the name of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Āmir b. al-Mustā'li. Ironically, al-Ma'mūn, himself, fell from grace accused of Nizari sympathies. Maqrizī wrote that al-Ma'mūn instructed a loyal Yemeni *amīr* to issue coins in the name of al-Imām al-Mukhtār Muḥammad b. Nizār for which he was crucified.¹⁹ According to JT some seven years later, on 16th October, 1130/4th *Dhū'l-qa'da* a group Nizaris fell upon al-Āmir and killed him in retaliation for the killing of Nizār.²⁰

¹⁷ JT. p. 137

¹⁸ Stern, "The Epistle of the Fatimid Caliph al-Āmir (al-Hidāya al-Āmiriyya): Its Date and its Purpose."

¹⁹ Walker, "Succession." p. 33; also see 'Umāra al-Yamanī, Abū Ḥamza Najm al-Dīn b. 'Alī al-Ḥakamī, "Ta'rikh al-Yaman (Yaman, its Early Mediaeval History)," (1968).; EI2. D. M. Dunlop, "al-Baṭā'ihī"; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 244-245

²⁰ JT. p. 67

Rashid al-Din concluded the section on the succession crisis in the account of al-Musta'li stating that “[t]hey say that one of the sons of Nizār who was designated as the imam, left a son in Alexandria. No one had laid hands on him nor was he recognised. He is known as the Alamuti Nizari (*Nizāriya-i Alamūti*).”²¹ The death of Nizār commenced the era of concealment of the imams (*satr*).

The next section of the chapter examines why the Ismailis in Iran adhered to Nizār and his successors as their legitimate imams. I examine the purposes of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s journey to Egypt and his efforts to implement the “Fatimid Eastern Policy” after he returned to Iran. The Ismailis in Iran, I argue, followed Nizār since he had been construed by the upper echelons of the *da‘wa* in Iran to be the *walī al-‘ahd* (designated heir) to the Fatimid caliphate and the holder of the *naṣṣ* to succeed his father as the imam. The deathbed designation claimed by the *wazīr* al-Afḍal was seen by them to be illegitimate and unacceptable. I analyse Ḥasan’s activities after his return to Iran and excavate traces of friction with the existing hierarchy of the *da‘wa*. The influence of three vectors are examined, namely, the cleavage of the nascent Nizari Ismailis from the Fatimid *da‘wa*, the factional contestation within the Ismaili communities in Iran and the responses to the Sunni challenges and the Saljuq establishment.

²¹ *JT* pp 60-61:

گویند که از يك پسر نزار که علامت امامت داشت پسری ماند در اسکندریه که کسی بر او دست نیافت و کسی او را نشناختند؛ و اسما و القاب نزاریه الموتی بدوست

TJG. pp 180-181; HWC. p. 663: Juwayni reported the same matter but added a typical negative remark and did not have the appellation for the purported grandson of Nizar: “The Nizaris claim that one son of Nizar, who according to their vain beliefs was designated Imam, left a son in Alexandria on whom no one had laid hands, not having recognized him. And to-day the leader of the Heretics of Alamut traces his descent from this son, as shall be mentioned in [the chapter on] the New Propaganda.”

II. Ismaili *Da'wa* in Iran

The Ismaili *da'wa* in Persianate domains dates back to the late 8th/2nd century. Madelung stated that the “Ismā‘ili movement in its historically recognizable form was born in Iran and initially spread from there.”²² The *dā‘īs* in Iran, he added,

unlike in the Arab countries, were not sent from Iraq and were not dependent on the *da'wa* there. The exact date of the beginnings of the missionary activity in Iran is unknown but there is reason to assume that it began not later than in Iraq and perhaps slightly earlier. Ismā‘ili *dā‘īs* soon were active in the region of Ray, Nishapur, and elsewhere in Khurasan, Transoxania and in Fars.²³

Juwayni and Rashid al-Din both recorded that the descendants of Ismā‘īl went into concealment as the ‘Abbāsids persecuted them for their claims to the imamate; some went to Iraq and Khurāsān and others to the Maghrib. Rashid al-Din noted that according to the Sunnis (*zu‘m-i āhl-i sunnat wa jamā‘at*) Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq pre-deceased his father by five years. TJG and JT record that in 762/145, Ja‘far assembled a large group of Medinan notables to attest Ismā‘īl’s death and burial in the Baqīh cemetery. Those who affiliated with Ismā‘īl (*jamā‘atī ki ba Ismā‘īl intisāb dāshtand*) construed this as an unusual and elaborate spectacle feigned to conceal Ismā‘īl and protect his followers from persecution by the ‘Abbāsids. They said that Ismā‘īl “lived for five years after his father.”²⁴ Both TJG and JT state that when Ismā‘īl died

his son Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl, who in the time of Ja‘far was an adult and older than Mūsā, moved to Jibāl (lit: mountains, Central Iran); from there he went to Rayy and then to Shalanba in the Damāwand region. The Muḥammadābād district in Rayy is named after him. His sons went into hiding in Khurāsān and to the vicinity of Qandahār, a region of Sind, and lived there.²⁵

²² Wilferd Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran*, (Albany, N.Y.: Persian Heritage Foundation, 1988), p. 92

²³ *Religious Trends* p. 93

²⁴ JT. p. 5; Juwayni does not accord this perspective to the Sunnis, his report categorically states that “Ismā‘īl died before Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq.” The narrative structures in both accounts suggest common sourcing. TJG. p. 146; HWC. p. 643

²⁵ TJG. p. 148; HWC. pp 644-645; JT. p. 6 NB: Not the same as Qandahār, Afghanistan.

Further, according to the two chroniclers, ‘Abd Allāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāh—whom Ivanow and Daftary have identified as the son of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl—²⁶from his base in Ahwāz, sent his deputy (*khalifa-yi khud*) to Rayy, Isfahan, Hamadān and Qumm.²⁷ This tableau of movement illustrates that the *da‘wa* had clusters of followers across Iran and suggests that Rayy was a centre of activities.

After the death of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl a substantial number of followers were drawn to the notion that he had not died and would manifest as the Mahdī. This is probably due to three factors, namely, his lengthy imamate, the coincidence of the Ismailitic movements going into *satr* (concealment of the imam) and the elaboration of cyclical notions of cosmology in Ismaili thought. Between the above mentioned reports of the death of Ismā‘īl, five years after his father, in 770/153 and the date of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl’s son’s death in 827-828/212 there was a period of 57 years.²⁸ As such, Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl was the last overtly known claimant to the imamate and then for a hundred more years he was the rallying focus since his successors had assumed the cloak of *taqiyya*. During this period the movements adopted the cyclical notions of hierohistory where Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl was cast as the al-Qā‘im al-Mahdī and the seventh

²⁶ Ivanow discovered that Maymūn al-Qaddāh and his son ‘Abd Allāh were clients (*mawla*) of Ja‘far al-Šādiq and could not be the “Alleged founders of Ismailism”. Stern disagreed with Ivanow (Ismailis did not get the Qaddahid genealogy from Ibn Rizam; Ibn Rizam got it from them...) Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā‘īlism*. p. 273. These criticisms of Ivanow resulted in harsh words against Stern. Cf. Corbin, and Ivanow. *Correspondance Corbin-Ivanow: lettres échangées entre Henry Corbin et Vladimir (sic) Ivanow de 1947 à 1966*. pp 36 and 42; Daftary has synthesised evidence from a number of sources to support that the descendants of Ismā‘īl used clandestine identities and names and that ‘Abd Allāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāh in the 9th/3rd century refers to the imam descended from Ismā‘īl. Ivanow. *Alleged Founder*. pp 28-82; Ivanow. *Rise of the Fatimids*. pp 127ff; 140-156; EI2. W. Madelung, “Maymūn al-Kāddāh”; EI2 S. M. Stern, “‘Abd Allāh b. Maymūn”; EI2. H. Halm, “‘Abdallāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāh”; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 101-105;

²⁷ TJG. p. 148; HWC. pp 644-645; JT. p. 6

²⁸ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 100; Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān in his *Asrār al-nuṭaqā’* admits the decease of Ismā‘īl before his father; however, a few pages he sites Ismā‘īl’s appearance in Basra sometime after his purported burial and the ‘Abbāsid caliph’s consternation at the news. Ivanow. *Rise of the Fatimids*. p. 291 and 301ff

and last *nāṭiq* (enunciator) who would manifest the *bāṭin* (inner truths) and abrogate or supersede the Muḥammadan *sharīʿa*. (Cf. Part One:2-I-A). This suggests that as the *daʿwa* penetrated into Iraq, Iran and Central Asia, the populace and thinkers drawn to it, espoused gnostic and Neoplatonic beliefs which the thinkers of nascent Ismailism synthesised with precepts of Shiʿi thought and Qurʾanic revelations.

Most scholarship on early Ismailism intimates that at the death of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, the larger group of Ismailis followed Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl as the seventh and last *nāṭiq* and al-Qāʾim al-Mahdī. It is more probable that this perspective developed gradually near or after Muḥammad’s death. In the tumult of Jaʿfar’s succession it is unlikely that there was wide circulation of such a notion in favour of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl in preference to his father or illustrious grandfather simply based on his being the seventh in line from ʿAlī. The modern analyses result from 10th/4th century and later sources in which the prime operation was categorisation of the different groups and not precise chronological parsings of events after the death of Jaʿfar. It should also be noted that the Ismaili cyclical hierohistory developed in a discursive context of encounters with at least Zoroastrian and Judeo-Christian gnostic and philosophical traditions—either directly or through cross-fertilisations as a result of conversion of the populace familiar with these notions and thinkers grounded in these beliefs.

The next sections examine the longstanding history of Ismailitic movements in Iran and Central Asia and detail the shift from the Qarmaṭī rejections of the Fatimid claims to the ultimate victory of the latter *daʿwa* in the 11th/5th century after the collapse of the Qarmaṭī movements. These foundations are critical for understanding the emergence and development of Nizari Ismailism in Iran.

A. Qarmaṭīs in Iran and Transoxiana

Some of the most prominent thinkers and *dā'īs* of early Ismailism came from and operated in Iran and Central Asia; and for the most part, these *dā'īs* and their followers did not recognise any imams after Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl.²⁹ The movements fissured into two factions in 899/286; one faction followed the

leadership of 'Abd Allāh ('Ubayd Allāh), the future Fatimid Caliph al-Mahdī, after he repudiated the expectation of the advent of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl and claimed the imamate for himself. The other branch broke with him and generally reaffirmed their belief in the return of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. The latter branch, which for the sake of convenience may be called the Qarmaṭīs (though the historical usage of the name is not so clear-cut) comprised the communities in Iraq, al-Baḥrayn, and most of those in Iran. The Fatimid branch included mainly the Yamanite community founded by Ibn Ḥawshab and those founded by the *dā'īs* sent by him in the Maghrib, Egypt and Sind. Some of the Ismā'īlis in Khurāsān, probably a minority, also remained loyal to the Fatimids.³⁰

The Fatimids founded their caliphate in Ifrīqiya (North Africa) in 909/297 and busied with converting their messianic *da'wa* to *dawla* (summons to state). In the east, at the same time, the chronicles reported intense Qarmaṭī activity. The chief *dā'ī* Hamdan Qarmaṭ³¹ after whom the movement is named and his associate the *dā'ī* 'Abdan broke away from al-Mahdī. In Iraq, they proselytised in the name of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, the *ṣāhib al-ẓuhūr* (possessor of divine manifestation). A sizeable number of *dā'īs* in Iran, India and Central Asia also remained distant from the Fatimid faction.³² Niẓām al-Mulk and Rashid al-Din reported similar narratives of the activities of a number of these *dā'īs* indicating the latter's reliance on the former or use of a common source—in part from Ibn Rizām through the recension in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*³³ and

²⁹ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 99

³⁰ Madelung. *Religious Trends*. p. 96; Stern Studies p. 213 ff

³¹ Wilferd Madelung, "Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ and the Dā'ī Abū 'Alī," *Proceedings of the 17th Congress of the UEA [Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants]* (1997).

³² Petrushevsky. *Islam in Iran*. pp 238ff;

³³ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 110ff; Paul E Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism: The Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). pp 13ff; Samuel M. Stern, *Studies in Early Ismā'īlism* (Jerusalem : Leiden: Magnes Press, Hebrew University ; E.J. Brill, 1983). p. 220

‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī’s *Al-farq bayn al-firaq*.³⁴ (Cf. Part One:2). Niẓām al-Mulk stated that already by “the year 200 (from the *hijra*)/815 CE the religion [Ismailism] was widespread.”³⁵ He

further recorded that in

the year 295[/907] Muhammad ibn Harthama, the governor of Herat, informed Isma‘il ibn Ahmad the Samanid (called The Just Amir-may Allah have mercy upon him), that in the foothills of Ghur and Gharcha a man known as Abu Bilal had appeared and had spread the doctrines of the Qarmatis; people of all classes had gathered about him and he had styled himself *Dar al ‘Adl* [The Abode of Justice]. Many people from the country around Herat had gone to join him and were swearing allegiance to him; their numbers exceeded 10,000.³⁶

Around 937/326, north of the Āmū Daryā, in *Mā warā’ al-nahr* (Transoxiana), the *dā‘ī* Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasafi, succeeded in converting the nobles of Bukhara and even won over the Sāmānid Amīr Naṣr II b. Aḥmad. Al-Nasafi authored the *Kitāb al-maḥṣūl* (*Book of the Harvest*) written in 911-912/300, which framed Ismaili esoteric thought, for the first time, in the language of Neoplatonic cosmology largely replacing earlier doctrine. This was later also adopted by Fatimid Ismailism.³⁷ The doctrine in this text was an important catalyst for the *da‘wa* in Iran and Central Asia. (Cf. Part One:1-II-A). Madelung observed that in the first decade of the 4th century/912-23

the Ḳarmaṭī movement appears to have regained its ideological unity which prepared it for the great outburst of activity during the following decade. An important role in this process was played by the *Kitāb al-maḥṣūl* of the Transoxanian *dā‘ī* al-Nasafī, which introduced a Neoplatonic cosmology into Ismā‘īlī gnosis and reaffirmed the imāmate of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl, who was to return as the Mahdī. The book evidently soon gained wide acceptance in Ḳarmaṭī circles.³⁸

K. al-maḥṣūl which is no longer extant, sparked a centuries-long disputation. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 934/322), a leading *dā‘ī* and philosopher, himself, steeped in Neoplatonism, wrote a

³⁴ al-Baghdādī. *Al-farq bayn al-firaq* (*Moslem Schisms and Sects*). pp 107-157

³⁵ Niẓām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*. p. 216

³⁶ *Book of Government* p. 226

³⁷ Madelung. *Religious Trends*. p. 95; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 113 and 225; Stern noted that Abū’l-Qāsim al-Bustī in his refutation mentioned a *dā‘ī* Abū Ayyūb al-Qayrawān who used philosophical language to argue the creation of the world in time in his *K. al-hidath*. Stern wrote: “Abū Ayyūb is not known from any other source; it is important to learn that it was not a monopoly of the natives of Khurāsān to combine Ismā‘īlism and philosophy, and to find in the ranks of the Ismā‘īlī philosophical authors a man whose *nisba* shows him to have been a native, or resident, of al-Qayrawān.” Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā‘īlism*. pp 308-309.

³⁸ EI2. Madelung “Karmati”

refutation of al-Nasafi in his *Kitāb al-iṣlāḥ* (Book of Correction). In turn, this was criticised by Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī in his *Kitāb al-nuṣra* (Book of the Support). Abū Ya‘qūb is counted among al-Nasafi’s disciples.³⁹ A century later, Ḥamid al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, an Aristotelian and Nāṣir-i Khusraw also weighed into this historic debate. Daftary wrote that al-Kirmānī reviewed this debate from

the viewpoint of the Fāṭimid *da‘wa* in his *al-Riyād* with extensive quotations from all three works, and in particular upheld the views of Abū Ḥātim against those of al-Nasafi in affirming the indispensability of both the *ẓāhir* and the *bāṭin* of the law. This explains why Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī’s *al-Iṣlāḥ* was the only early text related to this debate that was selected for preservation by the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlī *da‘wa*. Later, the antinomian tendencies of al-Nasafi and al-Sijistānī were also attacked by Nāṣir-i Khusraw who, like al-Kirmānī, reflected the position of the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlī *da‘wa*.⁴⁰

Another thrust for the *da‘wa* had come from Abū Ḥātim’s leadership. He claimed the higher rank of *khalīfa* of the concealed imam—a rank that after him was held by the *dā‘ī* of Rayy. He sent *dā‘īs* to Iṣfahān, Āzarbayjān, and Gurgān and corresponded with Abū Ṭāhir, the leader of the Qarmatīs in Baḥrayn.⁴¹ Several local rulers were won over by him, including Aḥmad b. ‘Alī (fl. 919-924/307-311), governor of Rayy; the Daylami leader Asfār b. Shīrawayh and the founder of the Ziyārid dynasty, Mardāwīj. He also converted Siyāhchashm (d. ca. 928/316), the Justānid king of Daylam in Alamut.⁴² With the freedoms to operate in these domains, the *dā‘īs* worked to convert the populace in these regions.

³⁹ Walker. *EPS*. p. 56: “His relationship with al-Sijistānī, in addition, is often held to be that of master and disciple, certainly later members of the *da‘wa* thought this to be the case.”

⁴⁰ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 225-226

⁴¹ Eastern Arabia not the island presently known as Baḥrayn

⁴² EI2. Madelung “Karmatī”; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 112; Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā‘īlism*. pp 196ff on p. 198 he noted: On the other hand, statements to the effect that some ruler or other is said to have been “converted” to Ismā‘īlism must be taken with a grain of salt: sometimes such statements need not mean more than that the ruler was willing to listen to the missionary (such passing contacts could then be given exaggerated significance by hostile rumour); at other times he might have gone further and inclined to real believer. But even if the ruler may sometimes have been more or less an Ismā‘īlī at heart, it was still a long way to an open allegiance to the cause.

Periodically, Qarmaṭī dā'īs predicted that the Mahdī, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl would manifest and establish the seventh and final religious era. With the failure of such predictions, the followers dissipated and the dā'īs' reputations and even their persons suffered.⁴³ Famously, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī made such a prediction for the year 928/316.⁴⁴ When the prediction did not materialise he was chased out of Rayy. After Abū Ḥātim, the *da'wa* came into the hands of two of his acolytes, a certain Ishāq who was based in Rayy and 'Abd al-Malik Kawkabī at Girdkūh.⁴⁵ Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, therefore, had spread Ismailism to Alamut and Girdkūh—however short-lived—some a hundred and fifty years before the Nizaris acquired the fortresses.⁴⁶ The next section examines factors which led to the collapse of the Qarmaṭī movement and its consequences.

B. Collapse of Qarmaṭī Movement

The failure of the Qarmaṭī predictions of the manifestation of al-Qā'im al-Mahdī in 928/316 had different impacts on the two communities in Iran and Baḥrayn. In Iran, Abū Ḥātim had to escape from Rayy to the Caspian Region to survive; while in Baḥrayn, Abū Ṭāhir, who had the resources of the polity he controlled and a sizeable fighting force, increased attacks on neighbouring areas in Arabia. In 930/317, at the height of these campaigns, his forces sacked Mecca during the *ḥajj* (annual pilgrimage). They massacred the local inhabitants and pilgrims and carried away the Black Stone (*al-ḥajar al-aswad*) of the Ka'ba. Little over a year later he

⁴³ *Studies in Early Ismā'īlism* p. 196: The Sunnis renewed the persecution of Ghiyāth, and, says Niẓām al-Mulk, as the time which Ghiyāth had foretold, while in Khurāsān, for the coming of the Mahdī passed by, the zeal of his followers was also on the ebb. Ghiyāth, discouraged, went off “and nobody knew where he could be found”.

⁴⁴ He may have coordinated with Abū Ṭāhir who also predicted the manifestation of the imam in 928/316 --EI2. Madelung “Karmaṭī” and Madelung. *Religious Trends*. p. 95

⁴⁵ Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā'īlism*. p. 204

⁴⁶ Niẓām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*. p. 216; EI2. Madelung “Karmaṭī”.

installed and yielded all authority to a young Iṣfahānī in Baḥrayn as the Mahdī.⁴⁷ The Iṣfahānī ordered fire worship and the restoration of Zoroastrian practices. All the prophets and ‘Alī were publicly cursed and the Ismaili teachings repudiated. Eighty days later, when he ordered the deaths of prominent Qarmaṭī leaders, Abū Ṭāhir killed him and recanted his decision. Madelung cautioned judgment of this event; he suggested that this could not have been the lone act of the Iṣfahānī and that others in the *da‘wa* in Baḥrayn had predilections to restore pre-Islamic Iranian traditions and religion. The vigour of the Qarmaṭī movements never recovered from this event.⁴⁸

In Iran, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī tried to restore ideological unity; however, his efforts to broaden the movement after the episode of the false Mahdī were not successful. His criticism of al-Nasafī in his *K. al-iṣlāḥ* aroused resentment among the Khurāsānī and Central Asian Ismailis who continued to consider al-Nasafī’s *K. al-Maḥṣūl* as authoritative and adhered to his teachings. Daftary wrote that in Khurāsān and Transoxania

the dissident Ismā‘īlī view persisted after the advent of the Fāṭimids. The *dā‘ī* al-Nasafī reaffirmed the imamate of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl, who was to reappear as the Mahdī, in his *Kitāb al-maḥṣūl*, which also introduced a type of Neoplatonic philosophy into Ismā‘īlī thought. It seems that *al-Maḥṣūl* soon gained widespread acceptance within the various Qarmaṭī circles. In fact, it played an important part, prior to the episode of the Persian Mahdī, in unifying the ideas of the dissident eastern Qarmaṭīs, who lacked central leadership. As Madelung has noted, it may be assumed that Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, who like other *dā‘īs* must have been shocked by the events in Baḥrayn, probably wrote his *al-iṣlāḥ* to correct the erroneous statements of *al-Maḥṣūl*, after the episode of the ‘Persian Mahdī’ and as a partial censure of that event and its accompanying manifestations of libertinism. This also explains why *al-iṣlāḥ* pays particular attention to criticizing the antinomian aspects of *al-Maḥṣūl*.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ JT. p. 11; Madelung. *Religious Trends*. p. 96. The date was chosen, according to al-Bīrūnī, to coincide with the passing of 1,500 years from the death of Zoroaster, at the end of the year 1242 of the era of Alexander for which prophecies attributed to Zoroaster and Jamasp were predicting the restoration of a the reign of the Magians.

⁴⁸ Petrushevsky. *Islam in Iran*. pp 247-248

⁴⁹ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 154. Does use of “dissident” imply a normative validation of Fatimid doctrine by the author?; EI2.Madelung “Qarmaṭī”

Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī who in his *K. al-Nusra* (Book of Support) refuted Abū Ḥātim’s criticisms and upheld al-Nasafī’s positions, himself, was under attack for his emphasis on the *sharī‘a* and *ta’wīl* (allegorical interpretation) as bases for religious understanding. Al-Nasafī’s followers, on the other hand, insisted that the teaching should first focus on the soul, the cycles of prophets and issues of creation.⁵⁰

It is important to restate that Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl, according to the Ismailis, succeeded his father to the imamate in 770/153. As argued above, at the time of the death of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, it is inconceivable that Muḥammad was widely construed as the *nāṭiq*—his charismatic grandfather would have been the focus of such thought. Further, Muḥammad was the eighth imam after the Prophet Muḥammad ergo Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far, his father—as the seventh in line—would have been a better candidate for the *nāṭiq*. These schema were finally worked out over time. ‘Alī according to some reckonings was considered the *asās* (founder) and therefore was not counted among the seven imams—the seventh of whom would be the *nāṭiq*. Doctrinal adjustments, such as to map out who succeeded Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, had to be made and promulgated first to the network of *dā‘īs* and through them to their followers. Most importantly, the schemes of heptadic prophetic cyclicity were concretised in Ismaili thought by the Qarmaṭī *dā‘īs* in the ninth-early tenth/third-early fourth century—decades after the death of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq. This is the reason why the intellectual conflicts mentioned above materialised in the 10th /4th century.

In the 11th/5th century due to the lack of leadership and concerted doctrine, the Qarmaṭī movement disintegrated and was absorbed by the Fatimid *da‘wa* which was backed by a successful *dawla* (state). The Fatimid *da‘wa* offered a dynasty of Mahdīs whereas the Qarmaṭīs

⁵⁰ Madelung, *Religious Trends*, p. 100; Stern, *Studies in Early Ismā‘īlism*, p. 308; Daftary, *Ismailis*, pp 223ff

promised a remote manifestation of the messianic figure. The Imam-caliph al-Mu'izz' doctrinal reforms and eastern policies succeeded in centralising the *da'wa* on Cairo. The *dā'īs* loyal to the Qarmaṭī cause were caused to be replaced or brought into the Fatimid *da'wa*. Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī was won over and he

fully backed the Fatimid imamate in his later works. He thus became the chief representative of the Persian school of Ismā'īlī Neoplatonism in Fatimid Ismā'īlism. A portion of the earlier works of the school also entered Fatimid literature at this time though apparently in a purged form. The school of al-Nasafī in eastern Iran seems to have survived somewhat longer.⁵¹

Above all, the intense persecution and successive massacres of Ismailis in Mā warā' al-nahr and Khurāsān by the Sāmānids (fl. 819-1005/204-395) and the early Ghaznavids (fl. 977-1186/366-582), particularly in 943/332 when al-Nasafī was executed, substantially restrained Qarmaṭī *da'wa* activities in the region. Twenty years after the sack of Mecca, the Black Stone was returned. Eventually, the Qarmaṭīs in Iraq and Arabia were in service of the 'Abbāsids providing protection for pilgrims on routes they had previously ravaged.⁵² Nāṣir-i Khusraw who passed through their polity in 1051/443 remarked on the benevolent state and the communal socio-economic practices as well as a lack of fanaticism among the people. The Qarmaṭī polity in Baḥrayn was destroyed in 1077/470⁵³ and the *da'wa* from Sind to Badakhshan to Iran became centred on Cairo and more importantly, the Fatimid Imam-caliph. This process was a longstanding effort by the Fatimid Empire to centralise all Ismailitic groups around the imam-caliph.

In the next section I map out an effort I call the "Fatimid Eastern Policy" which was designed to achieve this goal and cultivated followers in Iran, Central and South Asia. In the following pages I make a case that whether by design or accident, this thrust was building up a massive eastern front to oppose the Saljuq-'Abbāsīd establishment and that the death of al-Mustansir

⁵¹ Madelung. *Religious Trends*, pp 100-101

⁵² Petrushevsky. *Islam in Iran*, pp 247-248

⁵³ Daftary. *Ismailis*, p. 210

and the resultant succession crisis deflated any momentum for concerted action on the eastern and western fronts of the Saljuq domains—the pincer never manifested.

C. Fatimid Eastern Policy

The break-up of the Ismailitic movements at the beginning of the 10th/3rd century when al-Mahdī declared himself as the imam, was a challenge and disappointment to the Fatimids. While they established themselves in North Africa, their eyes were set to the East and the prize was Baghdad. The capture of the ‘Abbāsīd capital was ephemerally achieved in 1058/450; however, the larger reconciliations with and cultivation of divergent Ismailitic communities in India, Iran and Central Asia were a manifestation of what can be called the Fatimid eastern policy.

This long-term policy had three interrelated components: first, to win over divergent Ismailitic groups to Fatimid Ismailism; second, to increase adherents to the *da‘wa*; and third, to increase territory under Fatimid control. The first was achieved through a push and pull model where if the *da‘wa* headquartered in Cairo could displace a *dā‘ī* who held on to anti-Fatimid beliefs then his followers would also switch allegiances. The second was made possible by sending capable *dā‘īs* to regions who not only proselytised to different classes of people in the area but developed networks of subordinates who in turn would build the network in other areas. When critical masses of followers from these two endeavours coupled with messianic eschatologies were attained, a revolt in the name of the Shi‘ī caliphate became possible. This pattern, of course, is undergirded by multiple complexes of religio-political, social, economic, military and human factors both at the Fatimid headquarters and along the networks into distant territories.

The signs of such endeavours were apparent already in the time of the third Fatimid imam-caliph, Abū Ṭāhir Ismāʿīl al-Manṣūr bi'llāh (r. 945–952/334–341). The *Tathbīt al-imāma* (*Confirmation of the Imamate*) attributed to him reflects an effort to articulate a comprehensive set of proofs and legitimation of the Fatimid Ismaili imamate.⁵⁴ The editor and translator of the text, Sami Makarem wrote that this treatise which addressed a number of Islamic and Islamicate communities,

could have also meant to serve as a guide book for the Ismailis in proving the *raison d'être* of the Fatimid state. The right of the Ismaili imams to the vicegerency of the Prophet is, therefore, discussed at length. Also discussed are the necessity of the imamate from the Ismaili point of view, the validity of installing the imam by appointment from above rather than through election by the *umma* and, consequently, the illegitimacy of the imamate of the first three caliphs and the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties.⁵⁵

This earliest of texts on the Ismaili notions of imamate was written a few years after the existential crisis brought about by the Khārijī rebellion of Abū Yazīd⁵⁶ (fl 928–947/316–336) against the Fatimid imam-caliphs al-Qā'im and al-Manṣūr. After his victory, al-Manṣūr sought to provide proofs to win over the Sunni populace of Ifrīqiya which had sided with the rebellion. These proofs were clearly meant to fortify functionaries in the *da'wa* to argue the legitimacy of the Ismaili imamate, internally however; the text could also be purposed to win the Qarmaṭīs over to Fatimid Ismailism. (Cf. Part Two:Prologue-I-D-ii).

Al-Manṣūr's successor, Abū Tamīm Ma'add al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh (r. 952–975/341–365) made concerted efforts to centralise the *da'wa* and to win over wayward eastern *dā'īs* to Fatimid Ismailism. These *dā'īs* predominantly adhered to the Qarmaṭī interpretations of imamate. Al-

⁵⁴ It is noteworthy that the *Aḥkām al-sultāniyya* (Ordinances of Government) describing the qualifications, powers and duties of the Sunni caliphate written by the Shafī'ī jurist al-Māwardī (d. 1058/450) may have been styled on and structured to respond to the *Tathbīt al-imāma*

⁵⁵ Abū Ṭāhir Ismāʿīl al-Manṣūr bi'llāh, “The Shi'i Imamate: A Fatimid Interpretation: An Arabic Edition and English Translation of the *Tathbīt al-imāma*, Attributed to the Fatimid Caliph-Imam al-Manṣūr,” (2013). p. 4

⁵⁶ Daftary. *Ismailis., Ismailis.* pp 145–147

Mu'izz' doctrinal consolidations as found in writings such as those of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, suggest that there was a systematic effort to repurpose pre-Fatimid eschatological contemplations to align with a dynastic notions of imamate and a removal of the end of times to a remote future such that each imam-caliph incrementally enacted the role of the Mahdī. Madelung commented that

al-Nu'mān does however take over the idea of the final *qā'im* from the old doctrine. In his *Ta'wīl da'ā'im al-islām* he explains that the pilgrimage, the seal of the duties of the believers, symbolizes Muḥammad, the seal of the prophets. "After the pilgrimage [the sixth of the seven pillars of Islam] the only [remaining] pillar of Islam is holy war. It is a symbol of the seventh imam, the seventh of the last heptad, the lord of the resurrection." There will be no executor and no imams after him. He will publicly proclaim the inner meaning which was hidden in the time of the prophets and kept by the latter's *ḥujjas*. They will abolish the external law.⁵⁷

Al-Mu'izz enacted reforms that adopted the doctrines elaborated by the eastern *dā'īs* thus coopting them and their followers. He reinstated the doctrine of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl as the *Mahdī-Qā'im* of the seventh cycle who had manifested in the era of concealment and that the *Qā'im*'s actions would be completed by his deputies, namely, the line of imams. This return to earlier doctrine clearly was designed to attempt a reconciliation between the Qarmaṭī and Fatimid Ismailis. Al-Mu'izz corresponded with *dā'īs* in the East and received emissaries from these regions and instructed correction of their dogmatic errors. There is a report that al-Mu'izz was unhappy with the *dā'ī* in Sind who had allowed his followers to "keep some of their pagan customs" and that al-Mu'izz had made "arrangements to purge that *jazīra*." The *dā'ī* was conveniently unseated by his horse rather than by the imam-caliph and died, forestalling any arrangements to purge—he was replaced by a *dā'ī* loyal to al-Mu'izz' doctrine.⁵⁸ (Cf. Part Two:Prologue-I-D-ii).

⁵⁷ Madelung, "Das Imamat." p. 85; Madelung, "Imamate." p. 102

⁵⁸ Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā'īlism*. pp 263-264

The accounts and biographies of numerous luminaries directly or indirectly point to the efforts made by the Fatimid *da'wa* in Iran and Central Asia.⁵⁹ It has been well established that the *dā'i* Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī was won over to the Fatimid cause; however, there are numerous other accounts that point to such successes for the Fatimids.⁶⁰ Bartold noted that the famous Sāmānīd poet Abū 'Abd Allāh Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Rūdakī (d. 941/330) spoke “quite frankly of his loyalty towards the Shiit[e] Fatimid Caliphs”.⁶¹ Re-reading of Ibn Nadīm and Niẓām al-Mulk's accounts of Ismailism in *Mā warā' al-nahr* yield a subdued narrative that even al-Nasafī and his predecessor had an association with the Fatimids. One of the accounts of al-Nasafī's execution suggests that he was found with 40,000 dinars given to him as part of a restitution for the killing of his predecessor, the *dā'i* Ḥusayn b. 'Alī. This money was to have been conveyed to the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Qā'im and in the narrative, discovery of the money in al-Nasafī's house cast him as a duplicitous thief. According to this reading of the narrative Ḥusayn b. 'Alī and al-Nasafī were agents of the Fatimid imam-caliph since the *qiṣāṣ* (blood money or restitution) for the killing of Ḥusayn was ultimately due to al-Qā'im.⁶²

The Ismā'īlī *da'wa* was expanded under al-Ḥākim. Carefully selected and trained *dā'īs* were sent to various regions both inside and outside the Fāṭimid domains.⁶³ According to Daftary the imam-caliph “[a]l-Ḥākim even attempted in 403/1012–1013, though without success, to obtain the allegiance of Maḥmūd of Ghazna who had two years earlier massacred the Ismā'īlīs of Multān.”⁶⁴ Eric Hanne wrote that Ibn al-Jawzī reports that Maḥmūd sent the letter from the

⁵⁹ Madelung, *Religious Trends*. p. 100

⁶⁰ Walker. *EPS*. pp 3-24 and 46ff; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 154-155

⁶¹ Vasily Vladimirovich Bartold. *Mussulman Culture*, Translated by Sir Hassan Suhrawardy. (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1934). pp 81-82

⁶² Bartold. *Turkestan*. p. 253; Ibn al-Nadīm. *Fihrist*.

⁶³ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 183-184

⁶⁴ *Ismailis* p 185

Fatimid imam-caliph al-Ḥākim to the ‘Abbāsīd caliph, al-Qādir in which al-Ḥākim had asked Maḥmūd to establish the *khutba* in his name. Maḥmūd had spat on the letter and partially destroyed it before sending it to al-Qādir in a show of loyalty.⁶⁵

Some decades later, the killing of the Ghaznawid *wazīr* known as Ḥasanak, by Mas‘ūd b. Maḥmūd became a literary paradigm. Returning from the *ḥajj* he passed through Syria and Palestine and received a robe of honour bestowed on him by the imam-caliph al-Zāhir (r. 1021–1036/411–427). On his return he fell out of favour, was accused of being an Ismaili and executed in 1032/423.⁶⁶ Mas‘ūd’s father, Maḥmūd (r. 998–1030/388–421) had carried out numerous raids into India and in addition to his pillage and looting is famous for the massacres of Ismailis in Multān. (Cf. Part One:1–V).

Active Fatimid efforts to expand the Ismaili *da‘wa*’s reach further into the ‘Abbāsīd territories resulted in hostile polemical responses. In Baghdad, the populace chanted the Fatimid imam-caliph’s name: “Yā Ḥākim, Yā Maṣṣūr”.⁶⁷ Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, the leading *dā‘ī* in Iraq, tried to win over the Būyid *Wazīr* Fakhr al-Mulk.⁶⁸ Regional rulers of Kūfa, Madā’in, Mawṣil and the districts around Ḥilla in Iraq had switched their allegiance to the Fatimids to the extent that

⁶⁵ Hanne. *Putting the Caliph in His Place : Power, Authority, and the Late Abbasid Caliphate*. p. 68

⁶⁶ Paul Walker. “Purloined Symbols of the Past: The Theft of Souvenirs and Sacred Relics in the Rivalry between the Abbasids and Fatimids” in Madelung, Wilferd., Farhad. Daftary, and Josef W. Meri, eds. *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung* London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003. pp 374–376; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 200; Abū’l-Faḍl Muḥammad Bayhaqī. *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, Edited by ‘Alī Akbar Fayyāz. (Mashhad: University of Mashhad Press, 1971); *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī* pp. 71–72, 220–236; *History of India*. vol. 2, pp. 88–100; Gardīzī, *Zayn al-akhbār*, pp. 196–197; Clifford Edmund Bosworth, “The Transition From Ghaznavid to Seljuq Rule in the Islamic East,” diss., University of Edinburgh, 1961). pp. 182–184; and EI2. B. Spuler, “Ḥasanak”; Waldman. *Theory of Historical Narrative*. pp 93–124 and translation of Bayhaqī pp 166–176

⁶⁷ Kraemer. *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival During the Buyid Age*. p. 72; Master of the Age. p. 7

⁶⁸ *Master of the Age* p. 7

the ‘Abbāsids cobbled together the so called “Baghdad Manifesto” to defame Fatimid legitimacy (Part One:2-C).

Two decades later, writing about his childhood around this time in Transoxiana, Abū ‘Alī Ibn Sīnā (fl. 980-1037/370-429) wrote:

وكان أبى ممن أجاب داعى المصريين و يعد من لإسماعيلية . وقد سمع منهم ذكر النفس و العقل على
الوجه الذى يقولونه و يعرفونه هم و كذلك أخی . و كانوا ربما تذاكروا ذلك بينهم و أنا أسمعهم و أدرك ما
يقولونه و لا تقبله نفسى و ابتدأوا يدعوننى إليه.⁶⁹

The precocious future physician, philosopher and polymath rejected, at a very young age, his father and younger brother’s Ismaili notions of the soul and intellect. When his father died and the Sāmānid Empire collapsed, rather than go to Ghazna, he went to Iran where he served various Būyid princes in Rayy, Hamadan and lastly in Isfahan. There is a debate on his affiliation with Ismailism; in the biography, probably written in Isfahan, Ibn Sīnā mentioned that his father and brother were adherents of Fatimid Ismailism and that he had not accepted their views on the soul and reason (*al-nafs wa’l-‘aql*). Translations of the above passage have rendered the concluding phrase as “they began appealing to me to do it [to accept the Ismā‘īlī doctrines.]”.⁷⁰ The subject of the sentence is the Ismaili understandings of the soul and intellect so a better translation would be that “so they began appealing to me to accept it” where it refers to the Ismaili teaching of the soul and intellect. Dmitri Gutas and other scholars have concluded that Ibn Sīnā was a Ḥanafī Sunni. His biography; however, gives witness to the facts

⁶⁹ Abū ‘Alī Ibn Sīnā, and ‘Abd al-Wāḥid Jūzjānī, “The Life of ibn Sīnā; A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation,” *Studies in Islamic philosophy and science*. (1974). pp 18-19. I have modified the translation:

“My father was one of those who responded to the call of the Egyptians and was reckoned among the Ismā‘īlīs. From him and my brother, I heard the account of the soul and the intellect in the manner in which they speak about it and know it. Sometimes they used to discuss this among themselves while I was listening to them and understanding what they were saying, but my soul would not accept it, and so they began appealing to me to accept it.”

⁷⁰ *Ibn Sīnā* p. 19.

that his family members adhered to Fatimid Ismailism in Bukhara in the late 10th/4th century; that he went to key centres of Ismaili activity and was accompanied during his escape from Hamadan to Isfahan by his brother who, according to the biography, was an Ismaili. Ibn Sīnā may not have been an Ismaili himself; however, he definitely was closely related to followers of the Fatimid imam-caliph.⁷¹

Further south, the eminent *dā'ī* al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 1077/470) succeeded to his father's position as the head of the *da'wa* in Fārs and was able to convert the Daylamī troops of the Buyīd army, many people in Shīrāz and even the Amīr Abū Kālījār (r. 1024-1048/415-440). Due to al-Mu'ayyad's public *da'wa* in the name of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir—to the extent of restoring a masjid in Ahwāz with inscriptions of the names of Ismaili imams on the *mihrāb* and reciting the *khuṭba* in the name of al-Mustanṣir—along with court intrigue in Fārs and pressure from the 'Abbāsīd caliph, he left Shīrāz in 1046/438 and ended up in Cairo.⁷² He rose in influence but was not able to secure his goal of heading the *da'wa* and as the Saljuq armies under Ṭughril Baig (r. 1040-1063/431-455) were marching westwards, al-Mu'ayyad was grudgingly sent on a mission to Northern Syria. He cultivated a relationship with the Turkish Būyīd commander al-Basāsīrī. As the Fatimid representative in Iraq, he furnished money, robes, horses, weapons and conveyed a writ of investiture from al-Mustanṣir to al-Basāsīrī. The coalitions he built were able to defeat the Saljuqs in western Iraq in 1057/448 and al-Mustanṣir was recognised in Kūfa and Wāsiṭ and even for a short period in the 'Abbāsīd capital, Baghdad.⁷³ Al-Mu'ayyad withdrew to Aleppo and the next year was back in the capital. He

⁷¹ Elr. Dmitri Gutas “Avicenna-Biography”; EI2. Goichon “Ibn Sina”

⁷² Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 203-204; Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. pp 69ff. Daftary states that al-Shīrāzī arrived in Cairo in early 1047/439 while Klemm wrote: “Al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī arrived in Cairo in 437/1045 or 438/1046, either the tenth or eleventh year of the reign of the Caliph-Imam al-Mustanṣir,...”

⁷³ Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. pp. 82ff

eventually was *bāb al-abwāb* (Supreme Gate) noted in non-Ismaili sources as the *dā'ī al-duāt* (chief *dā'ī*)⁷⁴ and remained in that position until a few months before his death when the functions were appropriated by Badr al-Jamālī.⁷⁵ Al-Mu'ayyad patronised the *da'wa* in Yemen through his relationship with the *dā'ī* Qāḍī Lamak b. Mālīk⁷⁶ and the *da'wa* in *Mā warā' al-nahr* by his support of Nāṣir-i Khusraw.⁷⁷

Nāṣir-i Khusraw, the prominent Central Asian poet and philosopher travelled to Cairo, as briefly mentioned above (Part One:6-II), following a circuitous route to the Fatimid capital. He left his position as a government official in Marw which was then under Saljuq control. His declared intention was to go on a pilgrimage. Many scholars believe that before his departure, he was already an Ismaili. Ivanow has suggested that Nāṣir-i Khusraw may have been collecting dues for the Fatimid imam-caliph from the Ismaili communities and this may have been the reason for his circuitous route through the Southern Caspian Region, Northern Iraq, Anatolia and the Levantine coast.⁷⁸ Nāṣir did not travel with a caravan which would have been normal for the *hajj*; travelling light, accompanied only by his brother and a servant, he could skirt the authorities in remote areas. Be that as it may, after a seven-year journey, four pilgrimages and an extensive stay in Cairo, he returned to Balkh as the *Ḥujja* of Khurāsān. The Ilkhanid chroniclers also mentioned Nāṣir-i Khusraw and his travels. Rashid al-Din reads:

⁷⁴ Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. pp. 91-92

⁷⁵ Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. p. 104 "In fact, two months before al-Mu'ayyad's death, Badr al-Jamālī was given the title of the *Hādī du'āt al-mu'minīn* (Guide for the *dā'īs* of the Believers) a clear indication that the religious and organisational functions of the *da'wa* were now subordinated to the military. Al-Mu'ayyad was thus the last great religious scholar of the Fatimid state."

⁷⁶ EI2. Ismail Poonawala, "al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn"; he stayed with al-Shīrāzī 1062-1067/454-459

⁷⁷ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 203-207; Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. pp 69ff

⁷⁸ KP. p. xvii; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 205-207

و ناصر خسرو به آوازه مستنصر از خراسان به مصر آمد، و هفت سال در آنجا ساکن بود و هر سال به حج می‌رفت و به مصر رجوع می‌نمود. و آخر، به راه حج به بصره آمد و با خراسان گشت و به بلخ دعوت علویان مصر می‌کرد. اعدا قصد او کردند، بر کوه یمگان متواری شد و تا بیست سال بر آنجا بماند و به آب و گیاهی قناعت می‌نمود.⁷⁹

On the renown of Mustanşir, *Nāṣir-i Khusraw* came to Egypt from Khurāsān and *resided there for seven years*. Every year he went on the pilgrimage (*hajj*) and returned to Egypt. Finally, by way of the pilgrimage, he came to Basra and continued on to Khurāsān. He brought the *da'wa* of the 'Alids of Egypt (*da'wat-i 'alawiyān-i Miṣr*) to Balkh. Enemies attacked him and he fled to the mountain of Yumgān. He remained there twenty years and contented himself with water and vegetables.

Qashani similarly recorded:

مستنصر ممدوح ناصر خسرو بوده که از خراسان به آوازه بزرگی و فضل و فضایل او به شام و مصر مبادرت نمود، و هفت سال به مصر ساکن بود، هر سال به موسم حج به زیارت کعبه معظمه مرفت و با مصر رجوع منمود. و بعدما که به حجت ملقب گردید به حکم اجازه بر صوب بصره و اصفهان با خراسان مراجعت نمود. و چون به بلخ رسید اظهار حجت کرد، و به سادات علویان مصر دعوت. عوام الناس و جمعی مدعیان قصد او کردند. نردبانی از سرگین گوسفند ساختند برگوه [و به] یمگان گریخت و بیست سال در آنجا منزوی بود و به گیاه و آب قناعت نمود.⁸⁰

When he travelled from Khurāsān to Syria and Egypt, *Nāṣir-i Khusraw* praised Mustanşir for his greatness, grace and virtues. He *resided in Egypt for seven years*. Every year in the season of Pilgrimage (*hajj*) he made a visitation (*ziyārat*) to the Glorious Ka'ba and returned to Egypt.

After he was given the title of *ḥujjat*, when granted permission, he returned to Khurāsān by way of Basra and Isfahan. When he arrived in Balkh, he revealed [himself] as the *ḥujjat* and [revealed the cause of] the 'Alid princes of the Egyptian *da'wa* (*sādāt-i 'alawiyān-i Miṣr-i da'wat [kard]*). The common people and a group of enemies (*mudda'iyān* could also be a group of *dā'īs*) attacked him—calling his constructions sheep dung [lit: they built a ladder of sheep dung]. He escaped to Yumgān and remained there for twenty years secluded and contented himself with water and vegetables.

A common sourcing is apparent since both chronicles contain the error of Nāṣir's seven-year stay in Cairo—his entire journey lasted seven years (1045-1052/437-444)—this may be a perspectival issue of the source used by the chroniclers. The stay in Cairo perhaps ought to have read: “was away from here” where “here” is the location of the author in eastern Islamic lands. Qashani's account specifically states that Nāṣir-i Khusraw was appointed *ḥujjat* and on his return to Balkh he declared himself as such. Further, this later chronicle

⁷⁹ JT. p. 59

⁸⁰ ZT p. 103

expands Rashid al-Din's report of the attacks on Nāṣir stating: "The common people and a group of enemies (*mudda'iyān*) attacked him calling his constructions sheep dung". Qashani's use of *mudda'iyān* (group of enemies) is of great interest since it could also mean a group of Ismaili *dā'īs*. If the text were to be read as such then the report implies that Ismaili *dā'īs* in the region vehemently rejected the appointment and Fatimid affiliation of Nāṣir-i Khusraw. Daftary wrote that when Nāṣir returned to Balkh, he extended his activities to Nīshāpūr and other regions of Khurāsān. Because of enmity due to his success, he went to Ṭabaristān (Māzandarān), to preach the cause of the Fātimids in the Caspian provinces, a region already penetrated by Shī'ism. According to the testimony of his contemporary Abu'l-Ma'ālī, who completed his well-known work on religions in 485/1092 and who is the earliest authority referring to our *dā'ī*, Nāṣir succeeded in winning many converts in Ṭabaristān, and possibly in other Caspian regions.⁸¹

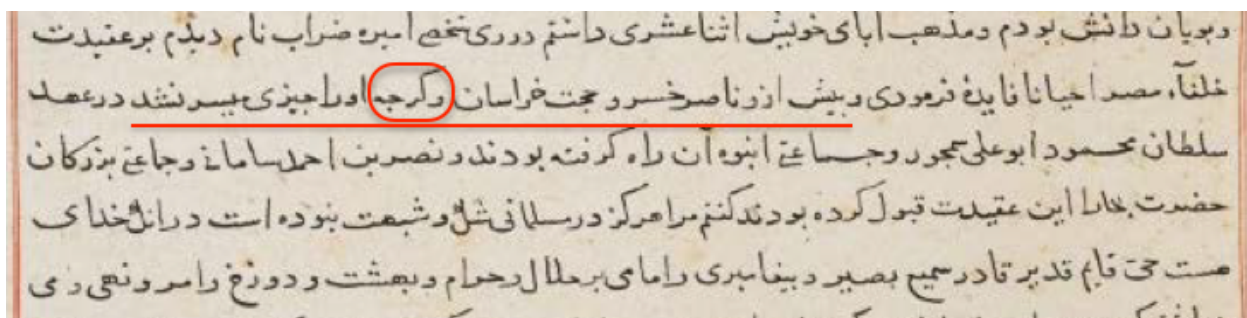
Based on the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*, the Ilkhanid chronicles record otherwise

در ری شخصی امیره ضراب نام دیدم بر عقیدت خلفای مصر احياناً فائده‌ای فرمودی. و پیش از او ناصر خسرو حجت خراسان اگر چه او را چیزی میسر نشد. و در عهد سلطان محمود ابو علی سیمجور و جماعتی انبوه آن راه گرفته بودند. و نصر بن احمد سامانی و جماعتی بزرگان حضرت بخارا این عقیدت قبول کرده بودند.

Hodgson translated the passage that:

In Rayy I [Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ] met a person by the name of Amīra Ḍarrāb; from time to time he explained the doctrine (*'aqida*) of the Caliphs of Egypt, *as before him Nāṣir-i Khusraw, ḥujja of Khurāsān and Georgia. It had had no success in the time of the Sultan Mahmud. Abū 'Alī Sīmjur and a great number had accepted that way*; and Naṣr ibn Aḥmad the Samanid and a number of the great men of the court at Bukhara had received that doctrine.⁸²

Figure II.1b: *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* British Library MS 7628 folio 290r



⁸¹ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 206

⁸² Hodgson. *OA*. p. 44.

Hodgson erroneously read “Gurjah” and translated the word as Georgia—the correct reading is گرجه (*garchi* = even though) as found in the British Library manuscript copy of JT made for Shāhrūkh b. Tīmūr in 1443-44/837 which he had access to and used.⁸³ This renders the passage “even though before him, Nāṣir-i Khusraw the *hujjat* of Khurāsān, was not able accomplish much. In the reign of Sultan Maḥmūd, Abū ‘Alī Sīmjur and a large group took up that path...”. The thrust of this brief mention suggests that Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s influence was inconsequential or more forcefully, can be read as a rejection of the earlier *dā’i*’s *da’wa*! Qashani’s account smoothes out the notes and simply states that before Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ there was the *da’wa* of Nāṣir-i Khusraw:

و او حسن بن علی بن محمد بن جعفر بن حسین بن جعفر بن حسین بن محمد [بن] صباح است که
اعتزا و انتساب او بقبیله حمیر میروود و پادشاهان یمن بودند. پیش از ظهور او دعوت ناصر خسرو بود،
ولی عهد سلطان محمود غزنوی بوعلی سیمجور باجمعی این راه و طریقه داشتند، و نصر احمد سامانی
و بزرگان حضرت او به ماوراء النهر مذهب او داشتند.

Al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. *Ja’far b. Ḥusayn b. Ja’far b. Ḥusayn* b. Muḥammad [b.] Šabbāḥ was related to and descended from the tribe of Ḥimyar who had been rulers of Yemen. *Before him there was the da’wa of Nāṣir-i Khusraw*. The successor of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghaznawī, [A]bū ‘Alī Sīmjur and a group took up that path and way (*rāh wa ṭarīqah*); Naṣr b. Aḥmad Sāmānī and a large number of the notables of Transoxiana (*Mā warā’ al-nahr*) also had this creed (*madhhab*).⁸⁴

Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s final refuge and exile was in Yumgān valley in the Pamir Mountains south of the Āmū Daryā. For fifteen years he remained in the territory of the amīr, Abū’l-Ma’ālī ‘Alī b.

⁸³ *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh* British Library MS-7628 folio 290r. Daniel Beben, “The Legendary Biographies of Nāṣir-i Khusraw: Memory and Textualization in Early Modern Persian Ismā’īlism,” diss., Indiana University, (2015). pp 124ff. Beben followed Hodgson’s erroneous translation and postulated that mention of Nāṣir-i Khusraw by Rashid al-Din was an arbitrary interpolation because no such mention is found in Qashani. At the Middle East Studies Association national meeting in Boston, November, 2016 the findings in this research that 1) Qashani did mention Nāṣir-i Khusraw (see below) and 2) the Hodgson’s reading Georgia was incorrect, were shared with Dr. Beben during our panel “*Nasir-i Khusraw and His Associations: Shifting Biographies and Affiliations in the Appropriations of the Persian Poet, Philosopher and Fatimid Da’i (summoner)*”.

⁸⁴ JT. p. 97

al-Asad an independent Ismaili ruler in Badakhshan and produced some of his most important works.⁸⁵

North of the River, Daftary noted that in “436/1044–1045, a large number of Ismā‘īlīs, who had been converted by Fāṭimid dā‘īs and who recognised the imamate of al-Mustanṣir, were massacred in Bukhārā and elsewhere in Transoxania on the orders of the local Qarakhānid ruler Bughrā Khān.”⁸⁶ Again a half century later, “Ismā‘īlism survived in that region, and later in 488/1095, Aḥmad b. Khiḍr, another Qarakhānid who ruled over Bukhārā, Samarqand and western Farghāna, was accused by the local Sunnī ‘ulamā’ of having embraced Ismā‘īlism, and was executed.”⁸⁷

What this selective scan of events and personalities over the span of two centuries and extending throughout localities of the *mashriq* (the Eastern Islamic lands) suggests is that the Ismaili *da‘wa* was expanding its followings and that the Fatimids endeavoured to and nearly succeeded in aligning all these Ismailis to their cause. The Fatimids clearly did not consistently and single-mindedly implement an eastern policy but their actions over a century and a half effectively created a pincer around the ‘Abbāsids. The polities in the East—however short-lived—were aimed not only as temporary beachheads but to establish permanent territories ruled by Fatimid vassals. Ultimately, their desire was to attain the prize of overthrowing the ‘Abbāsids and in accord with Shi‘i aspirations, to restore the rule of the Islamic domains to the rightful descendants of ‘Alī.

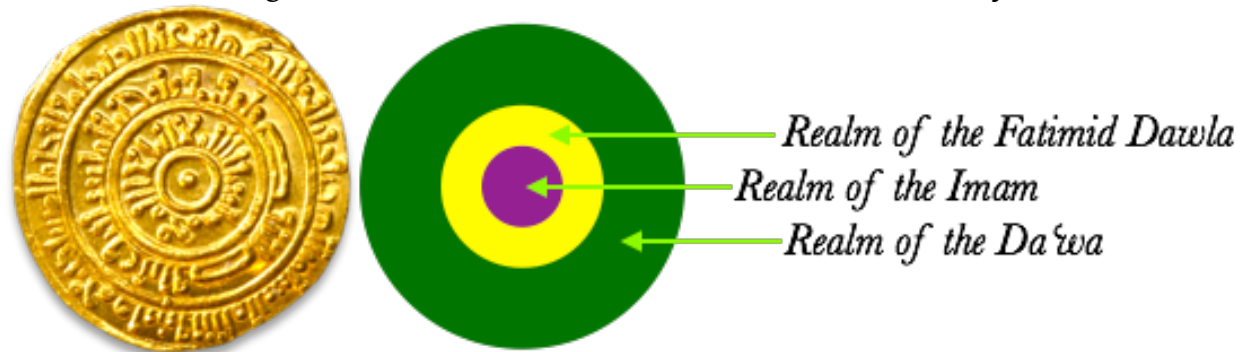
⁸⁵ Between Reason and Revelation: Twin Wisdoms Reconciled: An Annotated English translation of Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s Kitāb-i Jāmi‘ al-ḥikmatayn. pp 1ff; 30-31.

⁸⁶ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 203

⁸⁷ *Ismailis* p. 203 fn 118: Ibn al-Athīr. *Al-Kāmil*. vol. 9 pp. 180–181, and vol. 10, pp. 58–59, 84; Maqrīzī. *Ittī‘āz*. II:249-251; and Bartold. *Turkestan*. pp. 251, 304–305, 316–318.

Authority was conceived as socio-political, religious and soteriological; and the just society was construed as ruled by the divinely ordained and favoured imam which lead to revolutionary attempts to displace the existing rulers with the imamate. The Fatimid division of the world can be schematically divided into three concentric realms:

Figure II.1c: Three Concentric Realms of Fatimid Authority.



It is a fortuitous coincidence that the schematic mirrors Fatimid coinage. This coin dates from the reign of al-Mustanşir and minted in Cairo in the 1074-75/467.⁸⁸

The efforts of the *da'wa* were directed to move people and territories from the outer to the inner realms. The realm of the *da'wa* consisted of the parts of the world not yet reached or

⁸⁸ I owe the concept of concentric realms of authority to Michael Brett with whom I studied the Age of the Fatimids in 1984-1985 at SOAS. The coin is from the David Collection retrieved from: <https://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/dynasties/tulunids-and-fatimids/coins/c47>
OBVERSE: Inner circle: *la ilah illa allah muhammad rasul allah*; “no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God”

Middle circle: *wa ‘ali afdal al-wasiyyin wa wazir khayr al-mursilin*; “and ‘Alī is the most excellent of the caretakers and the vizier of the best of the messengers”.

Outer circle: *muhammad rasul allah arsalahu bi’l-huda wa din al-haqq li-yuzhirahu ‘ala al-din kullihi wa law kariha al-mushrikun*; “Muhammad is the messenger of God who sent him with guidance and the religion of truth that he might make it supreme over all other religions, even though the polytheists detest it”; Sura 9:33

REVERSE: Inner circle: *al-mustansir billah amir al-mu‘minin*; “al-Mustanşir billah, Commander of the Faithful”

Middle circle: *da‘a al-imam ma‘add li-tawhid illa lahu al-samad*; “the Imam Ma‘ādd summons all to confess the unity of God the eternal”.

Outer circle: *bism allah duriba hadha’l-dinar bi-misr sana sab‘ wa sittin wa arba‘mi’a* “in the name of God, this dinar was struck in Misr the year seven and sixty and four hundred”

where the *dā'īs* toiled to win people over to their cause. The realm of the Fatimid *dawla* is where the Fatimids ruled but not all the people were their followers. The realm of the Imam represents the domains where the Fatimids ruled and the people were their adherents. On this, the 10th/4th century Fatimid *dā'ī* Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī wrote that the kingdom is the protector of the faith; the kingdom of the imam is built on religion. If the affairs of both the religion and the *da'wa* are in proper order and well maintained, the kingdom will run properly and without disorder. All of the populace will be servants of the imam, whether in his presence or in other regions; they become like his army, supporters and well-wishers, none able to betray or rebel against him.⁸⁹

By contrast, Stern had argued that

[we] are perhaps not mistaken in observing that in one respect the mission both in north-west and north-east Iran differed from other contemporary manifestations of the Ismā'īli movement. While elsewhere—in 'Iraq, in Baḥrayn, in the Yemen, in North Africa—the missionaries aimed at winning popular support, and after rallying large sections of the population, led them in open revolt against the authorities, the leaders of the mission in Persia seem to have relied more on the conversion of members of the ruling class. To be sure, our account makes it quite clear that the first missionaries of Rayy began their activities with popular propaganda work among the inhabitants of the rural districts.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī, “A Code of Conduct: a Treatise on the Etiquette of the Fatimid Ismaili Mission - a Critical Edition of the Arabic Text and English Translation of Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī's *al-Risāla al-mūjaza al-kāfiya fī ādāb al-du'āt*,” (2011). p. 74. Clearly resonant of the circle of justice. Wladimir Ivanow, “The Organization of the Fatimid Propaganda,” *JBRAS* 15 (1939). Ivanow translated the passage: The empire of the Imams is based in religion (*dīn*). The spread of the religion (*dīn*) and the success of the *da'wat* (Fatimid domination) strengthen the empire, removing obstacles and difficulties in the way of its progress. All subjects of the Imam may then become his devotees, residing either within the limits of the empire (*fī ḥadhratih*) or in different *jazīras* i.e. Religious colonies, where they form his *jund*, vanguard or his auxiliaries, or supporters who should never betray the interests of the Imam or revolt against him.

Stern translated the passage: “Kingship is the guardian of religion; the spread of religion and the success of the *da'wa* strengthen the Empire (*dawla*). The subjects of the Imām reside either within the limits of his empire (*fī ḥadhratih*) or in different *jazīras* [dioceses of the *da'wa*] where they are his *jund* (army - or shall we say “fifth column”?)” Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā'īlism*. p. 235

⁹⁰ *Studies in Early Ismā'īlism* p. 222

Other modern scholars have also made similar conclusions of a shift from converting the masses to focussing on the elite.⁹¹ Pre-modern sources predominantly focus on the elites whether leaders or scholars and their lives and machinations. The very same sources also speak of substantial number of adherents rising in revolt and the multitudes of souls massacred. To these numbers, even if exaggerated, must be added the innumerable masses that the court chroniclers would not deign to associate with. In these circumstances, the analyses of the sources have to probe not only why and how they wrote about a particular topic but also, if at all possible, to contemplate what is left unsaid and why. The converting scholars and leaders all had followers and supporters. The Ibn Rizāms and Nizām al-Mulks were writing about their own “turf” and these “others” remained as such in the shadows of time. Wide networks of people supported the *dā'īs* who operated among the masses of the respective societies. The rapidity of recovery of Ismaili communities in *Mā warā' al-nahr*, for

⁹¹ Farhad Daftary, “The Later Development of Shi'ism: The Twelvers, the Zaydis and the Isma'ilis,” in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia Volume IV the Age of Achievement: A.d. 750 to the End of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. M. S. Asimov, and C. E. Bosworth (Paris: Unesco Publishing, 1992). Farhad Daftary pp 51-55. Following Stern, Daftary wrote:

In the Iranian lands, the Isma'ili *da'wa* was originally addressed to the rural population, and the first *dā'īs* in Jibal concentrated their efforts on the villagers around Rayy. By contrast to their positive response to the neo-Mazdakite Khurramiyya movement, however, the peasantry of the Iranian lands was not attracted in large numbers to the Shi'ite Islamic message of the Isma'ilis during the ninth century. The early realization of the movement's failure to acquire a large popular following which could be led in open revolt against the local authorities, as had been the case in the Arab lands where villagers and tribesmen had converted to Isma'ilism in large numbers, led to a new *da'wa* policy for the Iranian world. According to this policy, implemented especially in Khurasan and Transoxania, the *dā'īs* henceforth directed their efforts towards the élite and the ruling classes. This policy, too, failed to have any lasting success, although Abū Hātim al-Rāzī (d. 934), the fifth *dā'ī* of Jibal, did manage temporarily to win the allegiance of several amirs and rulers of Jibal and the Caspian region; and, in Khurasan and Transoxania, numerous notables were converted, including the commander al-Marwazī, who himself became a chief local *dā'ī* there. The brief success of this policy in Central Asia reached its climax in the conversion of the Samanid amir, Nasr II (914-13), and his vizier through the efforts of the *dā'ī* al-Nasafi. This success could not be tolerated, however, by the Sunni '*ulamā*' (religious scholars) and their Turkish military allies in the Samanid state. They reacted by deposing Nasr II, under whose son and successor, Nūh I (943-54), al-Nasafi and his chief associates were executed in 943 and their followers massacred.

instance, after repeated massacres and the extent to which ‘Alid loyalism subsequently permeated societies where Ismailism had taken root, is a testament to the fact that there was a wider base of support and Ismailism was not limited to handfuls of elite followers in each city or region who may have been killed during a purge. Walker observed that the details of Ismaili history and its *da‘wa* reveal it to be as complex and varied as other ideological movements, despite its claim to a supreme, unimpeachable authority. Its numerous agents did not fit a single mold. Among the scores of names preserved for such Ismaili officials in the first hundred and fifty years of the sect’s existence as an independent movement (from the signs of the first Qarmatian revolts about 261/874 until the disappearance of the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim in 411/1021), there are persons whose careers indicate a range of special roles within the *da‘wa*. Some endeavoured to convert semiliterate, non-Arabic speaking tribesmen, others to dispute with scholars of the highest intellectual attainments. In response to individual situations, the methods of individual *dā‘īs* changed. Probably, the doctrines they taught under differing circumstances likewise had various levels appropriate to different audiences. This seems quite natural.⁹²

It is a mistake to assume that the *da‘wa* ceased to seek after non-elite followers. Otherwise, philological reliance solely on the lines of chronicle texts marginalises and wipes away the anthropological masses. The reach to the ruling and intellectual elites was a reflection of the *da‘wa*’s success in eliciting *dā‘īs* who could also operate in such elevated socio-political circles and not of an exclusionary pivot to the ruling elites.⁹³

In the last decades of the 11th/5th century, the *da‘wa* in Iran operated within the frameworks outlined in the analyses in this section. ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh and his subordinate, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, as *dā‘īs*, toiled in ‘Abbāsid-Saljuq territories to convert Iranians to the cause of the Fatimid imam-caliph and to “become like his army, supporters and well-wishers.” The death of the al-Mustanšir and the subsequent succession crisis changed all this. In the era of *satr*

⁹² Walker. *EPS*, p. 8

⁹³ The A‘yān-Amīr System discussed in Part One:1 has a complement in the *hudūd-i dīn* and the quadripartite division of society in the Nizari polity which will be discussed in the following chapters.

(concealment of the imam), Ḥasan struggled to carry out and consolidate the *da'wa* in the name of Nizār al-Muṣṭafā li-dīn Allāh b. al-Mustanṣir as his rightful imam.

In the next section, I examine how the *da'wa* in Iran was linked to the Fatimid Empire. I map the *da'wa* hierarchy (*ḥudūd al-dīn*) to the functions of the *dā'īs* detailed in the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* to develop an understanding of the operation of the *da'wa* within the Fatimid framework of twelve islands (*jazā'ir al-arḍ* sing. *jazīra*) of the world.

III. The Nizari Da'wa in Iran

Over a century and a quarter after the Qarmaṭī *dā'ī* Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī had to flee from Rayy due to a failed prediction of the appearance of the Mahdī, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ encountered the Fatimid *da'wa* in the same city. Abū Ḥātim had openly preached his faith, debated opponents in public and even converted the amīr to Qarmaṭī Ismailism. Ḥasan encountered *dā'īs* who proselytised in favour of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir. As a teenager he met a *dā'ī* named Amīra Ḍarrāb who challenged Ḥasan's beliefs and presented him with *ilzāmāt* (compelling proofs) such that during his transformative illness he realised that if he were to die without accepting Ismailism, he would not have attained Truth. During this period he was given access to books in which, as an Ithnā'asharī, he found proof in the imamate of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far. Having become separated from Amīra, after his recovery, Ḥasan sought out another Ismaili, Bū Najm Sarrāj, who was able to explain to him the intricacies and veracity (*ghawāmiz wa haqīqat*) of the faith. He then implored *dā'ī* Mu'min to accept his pledge and oath. In

Ramaḍān 464/May-June 1072 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭash, who at the time was the *Da'ī* of Iraq,⁹⁴

⁹⁴ BL-MS 7628 has *da'ī* of Isfahan and Āzarbāyjān. There is no mention of 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭash in Ibn al-Muyassar and Maqrīzī. The mention of Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭash in both texts *sub anno* 1086/479 corresponds to the account in Ibn al-Athīr. This suggests that Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn al-Muyassar may have drawn from the same source and Maqrīzī, with few changes, used Ibn al-Muyassar's briefer account. Ibn al-Muyassar died two years before *al-Kāmil* was

came to Rayy; he was pleased with Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and deputised (*niyābat farmūd*) him in the *da'wa*.⁹⁵

In the first few paragraphs of the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*, embedded in the Ilkhanid chronicles, there is a representation of the *da'wa* hierarchy (*ḥudūd al-dīn*) and scant information of the operations of the *da'wa* in Iran headquartered in Isfahan (cf above Part One:6-IA).⁹⁶ In Rayy, Amīra Ḍarrāb, who possibly worked as a minter (*ḍarrāb*),⁹⁷ was a patient and knowledgeable preacher. He acted as a *mukāsir* (lit. one who breaks, persuader)—a *dā'ī* of this rank was responsible for attracting converts and causing them to question their previously held beliefs.

Bū Najm Sarrāj, from his name, would appear to have been a saddler (*sarrāj*). In the *da'wa*, he functioned as a *ma'dhūn* (licentiate)—a *dā'ī* who was charged with explaining aspects of the *da'wa* to initiates. Ḥasan was finally accepted as an Ismaili by the *dā'ī* Mu'min. The play on words and Mu'min's hesitation to confer the oath on Ḥasan, illustrates the hagiographic nature of the account of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ in the *Sarguzasht*.⁹⁸ (Cf. Part One:6-I).

completed so that could not have been his source. Ibn al-Muyassar, and Taqiyy al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī Maqrīzī. *al-Muntaqā min akhbār Miṣr*, Edited by Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid. (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire, 1981); *al-Muntaqā min akhbār Miṣr* pp 47-48; Maqrīzī. *Itti'āz*. II:422-425; Ibn al-Athīr. *Al-Kāmil*. pp 10:316ff and 10:430ff

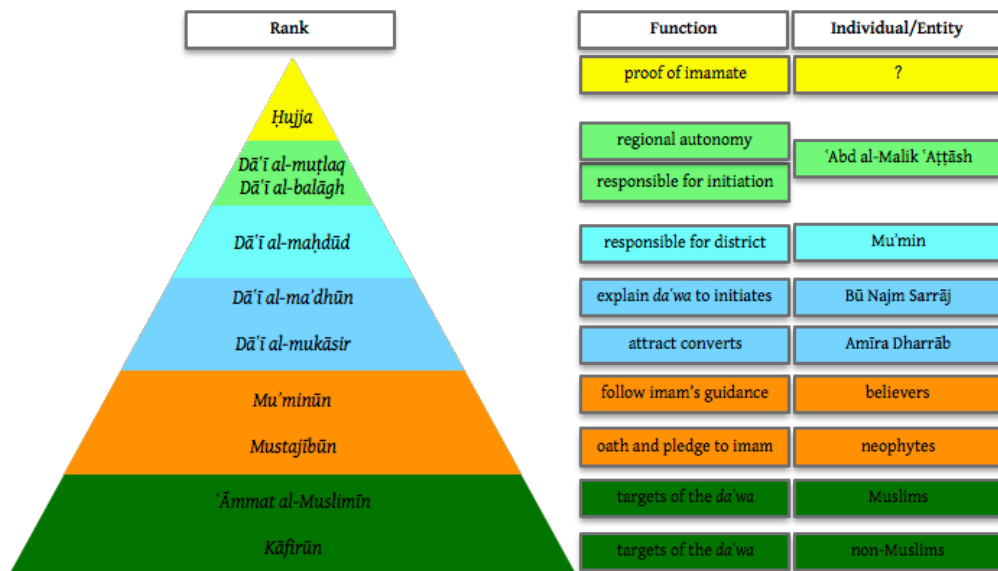
⁹⁵ JT. pp 97-99; ZT. pp 120-122;

⁹⁶ JT. pp 97-99; ZT. pp 120-122.

⁹⁷ There is no way of knowing; however, it is possible that Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's separation from Amīra might have been due to the latter's profession. As a minter, once his work was finished, he might have had to move to another locality for work. Steven Album indicated that most pre-modern minters were itinerant in that they would travel from centre to centre to offer their services. (personal communication ca. August 2015) This also indicates that Rayy which was the Buyid capital had now become a provincial city and may not have needed the continuous services of minters since Isfahan became the administrative capital for the Great Saljuqs.

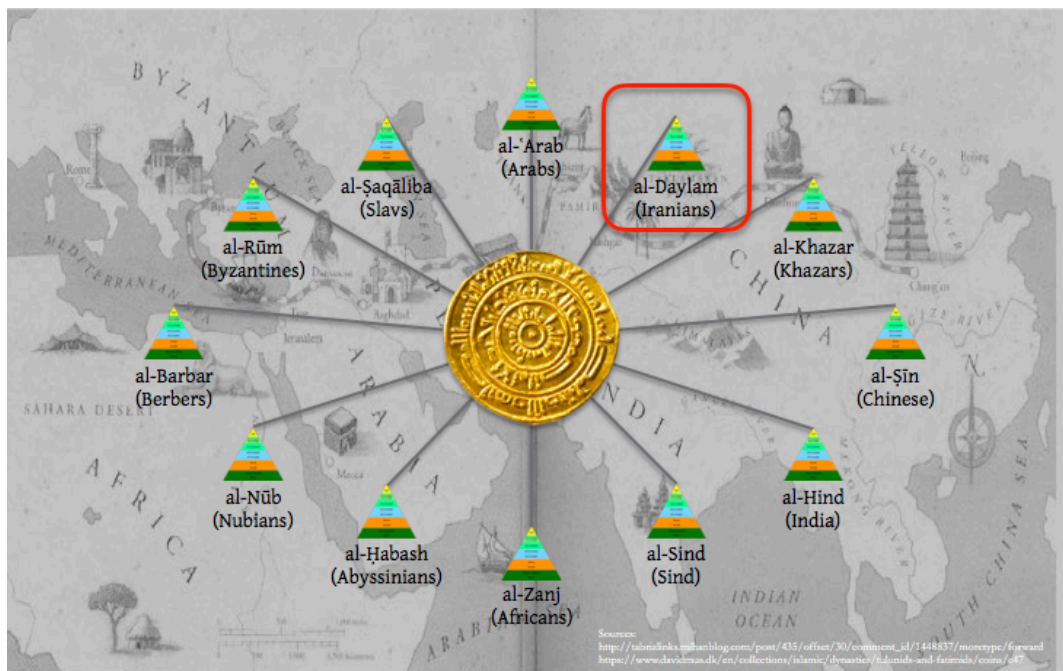
⁹⁸ JT. pp 97-98

Figure II.1d: Fatimid *Hudūd al-dīn* described in the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*



Mu'min was a *dā'ī* of a higher rank, possibly, *dā'ī al-mahdūd* (with defined regional territorial authority) and would have been responsible for the *da'wa* in the city and region around Rayy. He had been authorised in the *da'wa* by Shaykh 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh.

Figure II.1e: Fatimid *Jazā'ir al-arḍ* Division of the World into 12 "Islands"



Modern scholarship has suggested that ‘Abd al-Malik was responsible for the *da‘wa* in Iran, parts of Iraq, Azerbaijan, and possibly also Khurāsān and Quhistān.⁹⁹ He was addressed as Shaykh, implying his origins or at least, a position of esteem held in Arab speaking contexts.¹⁰⁰ His title of *dā‘ī* of Iraq; however, is otherwise unknown. Previously, Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī “was known, perhaps retrospectively, by the honorific title, *ḥujjat al-‘Irāqayn* (chief *dā‘ī* of both ‘Irāqs—al-‘Irāq al-‘Arabī and al-‘Irāq al-‘Ajāmī), which is often added to his name and which may be of a late origin, implicitly he may also have been active in the northwestern and west-central Iran.”¹⁰¹ In the Fatimid schema the *ḥujja* (proof, guarantor) was at the apex in each one of the twelve islands of the world (*jazā‘ir al-arḍ*, sing. *jazīra*) demarcated with ethno-linguistic and geographic boundaries.¹⁰² The term *ḥujja* applied to Nāṣir-i Khusraw in the *Sarguzasht* but not Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and was also not applied to ‘Abd al-Malik.¹⁰³

In JT and ZT, ‘Abd al-Malik was referred to as *dā‘ī-yi ‘Irāq* (the *dā‘ī* of Iraq);¹⁰⁴ who according to Ibn al-Athīr, was “a learned and eloquent man, possessing a good calligraphic hand, capable of swift extempore composition, and virtuous.”¹⁰⁵ He held a high rank in the *da‘wa*; possibly that of “*dā‘ī al-balāgh* (*dā‘ī* responsible for initiation) who served to link the central *da‘wa* headquarters in Cairo and the local *da‘wa* of a *jazīra* (Island).”¹⁰⁶ ‘Abd al-Malik’s stature in the

⁹⁹ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 311; Hodgson, O A. p. 45.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Abd al-Jalīl al-Qazwīnī al-Rāzī. [*Kitāb al-]Naqḍ: ma‘rūf bi ba‘ḍ mathālib al-nawāṣib fī naqḍ ba‘ḍ faḍā’ih al-Rawāfiḍ*, Edited by Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥusaynī Muḥaddis. (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Anjuman-i Āthār-i Millī, 1980). p. 125 states that he was from Fars.

¹⁰¹ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 184

¹⁰² *Ismailis* pp 217-8 lists the 12 islands of the world pp 59ff

¹⁰³ JT. p. 97

¹⁰⁴ JT p. 99; ZT. p. 122

¹⁰⁵ Ibn al-Athīr. *Al-Kāmil*. 10:431ff; Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. I:117; Nīshāpūrī. *Saljūqnāma*. p. 40; Nīshāpūrī. *Seljuq Turks*. p. 74

¹⁰⁶ *Elslm*. Daftary “*dā‘ī*”; Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. p. 94; Code of Conduct. pp 13-14; Ivanow, “The Organization of the Fatimid Propaganda.”; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 217-220

da'wa is exemplified by the letter addressed to him from the imam-caliph al-Mustanşir preserved by Ṭūsī

Mawlānā Mustanşir wrote in a *sijill* to Shaykh 'Abd al-Malik, God have mercy [on him], and commanded (*farmāyad*) to those who accept the *da'wa*: Be children who do good works (*farzandān-i nikūkār*), and be like trees that are the fruit of your Imam's pleasure, which is the pleasure of God. In this way be close to him in [your] hearts and bodies. Increase your knowledge in that which brings you to liberation. Desire the paradise of wisdom (*rawzat-ha-yi hikmat*) such that others who follow God (*rāgbān-i farmān-i khudā*) will be led. To such an extent that it is said: Be pious (*khudāshanāsān* lit. knowers of God); whatever you teach is from the book (*kitāb* = Qur'ān) and whatever you read is from the sciences (*'ilm-hā*).

The letter continues to elaborate the use of the intellect.¹⁰⁷

According to Ilkhanid chroniclers in May-June 1072/*Ramaḍān* 464 'Abd al-Malik came from Isfahan to Rayy;¹⁰⁸ however, Nīshāpūrī suggested that he fled from Isfahan due to sectarian attacks.

در اصفهان ادیبی بود او را عبد الملك عطاش گفتندی او در ابتدا خود را بتشیع نسبت کردی بعد از آن باسمعیه متهم شد اهل اصفهان خواستند که او را تعرض رسانند بگریخت و بری پناهید و از آنجا پیش حسن صباح رفت ... خط او خطیست معروف و در اصفهان بخط او کتب بسیار مسطور است
In Isfahan there was a scholar named 'Abd al-Malik 'Aṭṭāsh. To begin with he presented himself as a Shi'i and later he was suspected of Ismailism. The people of Isfahan wanted to attack him so he fled and found refuge in Rayy and went to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. ... His calligraphy is well known and in Isfahan there are many books written by him.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ *Sijill* is a treatise, letter, decree and epistle; see *Ismailis* p. 6; Daftary. *IL-B.* p. 158 Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ṭūsī. *Akhlāq-i Muḥtashamī—wa sih risāla-yi dīgar-i ū*, Edited by Muḥammad Taqī Dānīshpāzhuḥ. (Tehran: Dānīshgāh-i Tīhrān, 1960).

مولانا مستنصر در سجلی به شیخ عبد الملك رحمه الله نوشته بود، و مستجبیان دعوت را می فرماید که: او را بجای فرزندان نیکوکار باشید، و مانند درختانی باشید که میوه خشنودی امام شما باشند که بخشنودی خدا مقرون است، و همگنان بنزدیک او روید بدلها و تنها، و فرا گیرید از علم از آنچه شما را بخلاص رساند، رغبت کنید در روضه های حکمت تا دیگر راغبان فرمان خدا را انقیاد نمایند، آنجا که میگوید: خداشناسان باشید آنچه می آموزانید از کتاب، و آنچه میخوانید از علمها.

In the text, Ṭūsī provides the Arabic and Persian translation. The remainder of the *sijil* continues to discuss the use of the intellect

¹⁰⁸ TJG. p. 189; HWC. p. 668; JT. p. 99; ZT. p. 122

¹⁰⁹ Nīshāpūrī. *Saljūqnāma*. p. 40; Nīshāpūrī. *Seljuq Turks*. p. 74

His flight to Rayy occurred a few months before the death of Sultan Alp Arslān in November 1072/*Rabi' al-awwal* 465. At this time Niẓām al-Mulk was in full control of Saljuq affairs particularly when the sultan was away on a campaign. When 'Abd al-Malik came to Rayy, he recognised Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's abilities and elevated his rank in the *da'wa*. The chroniclers intimate his new role as *nā'ib* (deputy); Ḥasan is quoted in the JT saying that 'Abd al-Malik "deputised me in the *da'wa*" (*niyābat-i da'wat ba-man farmūd*).¹¹⁰ The term *nā'ib* is not known in the Ismaili *da'wa* hierarchy.¹¹¹ Some time after this deputisation, 'Abd al-Malik instructed Ḥasan to go to the Fatimid court in Cairo.¹¹² What was the function of this journey to the Fatimid court and the headquarters of the *da'wa*?

A. Go West Young Man!

Modern scholarship has tended to view the purpose of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's journey to Egypt to acquire training and that he returned having observed the collapse in Fatimid Cairo to pursue an independent militant revolt in Saljuq domains since no succour or support would be available from Egypt.¹¹³ Daftary wrote that

Ḥasan seems to have learned important lessons in Egypt. By that time, the Persian Ismā'īlīs were already aware of the declining power of the Fāṭimid regime, and the shrewd Ḥasan had personally witnessed the difficulties of al-Mustaṣṣir at the very centre of the Fāṭimid state. He must have realized that the Fāṭimid regime, then under the effective control of Badr al-Jamālī, lacked both the means and the resolve to assist the Persian Ismā'īlīs in their struggle against the Saljūqs. It was in recognition of these realities that Ḥasan eventually charted an independent course of action.¹¹⁴

While these analyses may be valid overall, closer refinement of timelines suggest that the purpose of Ḥasan's journey and activities after his return to Iran should be viewed differently.

¹¹⁰ JT. p. 99

¹¹¹ The position of *nā'ib* (deputy) is more frequently encountered in Ithnā'asharī nomenclature. Hodgson. OA. pp. 45-46

¹¹² 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh's flight from Isfahan to Rayy has greater resonances with the story of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ in the three schoolfellows narrative. Could 'Aṭṭāsh's biography have been the base narrative which was the appropriated for the famous story?

¹¹³ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 312;

¹¹⁴ *Ismailis* p. 313;

In the case studies above, I have tried to show that Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ had eminently argued the legitimacy of the Fatimid imams and the doctrine of *ta'lim* at Mayyāfāriqīn on his way to Cairo, and being an adept may not have been in need of any training (Part One:6-I and II). There is little indication in his biography or any other sources of any training given to him. If anything, the hagiographical content of the *Sargužasht* indicates that his arrival was celebrated with pomp and circumstance. On Wednesday, 5 September, 1078/18 Šafar, 471, when he arrived in Cairo, the notables came out to receive him including “[A]Bū Dā’ūd, who was the *Dā’ī al-Du’āt* [the chief *dā’ī*] and Sharīf Ṭāhir Qazwīnī who was amongst the notables”.¹¹⁵ Neither of these individuals are otherwise known—historians record that some months prior to al-Mu’ayyad fī’l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī’s death, Badr al-Jamālī had appropriated the control of the *da’wa*. The biography continued that while Ḥasan did not meet with the imam-caliph, al-Mustanşir praised him so much that this aroused the jealousy among the courtiers and the ire of the generalissimo Badr al-Jamālī.¹¹⁶

The actual purpose of his journey may have been a function of the *hudūd al-dīn*—the *ḥujja* or *dā’ī al-muṭlāq* (head of the regional *da’wa*) in the far off lands was responsible to maintain contacts with the centre. In the case of the late 11th/5th century, ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh, as the head of the *da’wa* in Iran sent Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ as his emissary to Cairo. This assignment can fruitfully be understood using military models of over a century ago—before modern communications became prevalent. A field-marshal in charge of an expeditionary force would never be expected to relinquish command and travel to the distant headquarters nor would an untrained soldier be sent on a sensitive mission. The commander and his general staff would remain in location and a trusted lieutenant, colonel or major would be sent with intelligence

¹¹⁵ JT. pp 100-101

¹¹⁶ JT p. 101

from the field and return with directions from the headquarters. He would travel through enemy territories *incognito* and would be aided along the way by partisans. This emissary, while senior enough to be entrusted with tactical information from the field and capable of gathering further reconnaissance and organising support along his route, ultimately, remained expendable to the overall operation. Successful return would elevate the emissary to a privileged position in the field due to his strategic grasp of the vision, policies and guidance from the central headquarters; however, his loss would not grind the expedition to a halt.

In this manner, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, as the *Sarguzasht* indicated, was promoted in or after 1072/464; he accompanied ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh, his superior, from the provincial to the regional headquarters of the *da‘wa*—from Rayy to Isfahan—in 1075/467. Two years later, as a senior *dā‘ī*, he was sent on the mission to Cairo. As the emissary, he would report on the situation in the *jazīra* under ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh and would return with direction for future activities. Ḥasan’s sojourn at Mayyāfāriqīn so prominently recorded in the *Sarguzasht* and preserved in the Ilkhanid chronicles, sheds light not only a turning point in his journey but is an indicator of Ḥasan’s stature, as well as the purposes of his travels. Closely following Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s route, he might have been touching base with existing pockets of Ismailis and as Ivanow had suggested for Nāṣir-i Khusraw; Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, too, might have been collecting dues to be delivered to the imam. Bosworth wrote that the

Marwānids of Diyārbakr, Akhlāt, and Malāzgird [Manzikert] ([fl.] 372-489/983-1096) were also of Kurdish origin, but they rose to power as vassals of the Fatimids. During the long reign of Naṣr al-Daula Aḥmad b. Marwān (401-53/1011-61), his cities of Āmid, Mayyafariqin, and Ḥiṣn Kaifā in Diyār-bakr enjoyed considerable material prosperity and a vigorous cultural life; an invasion of the Oghuz in 443/1041-2 was beaten off, and the annalist Ibn al-Athīr records that the sense of security and the prevailing justice in Ibn Marwān’s dominions were such that people actually dared openly to display their wealth. A local historian of Mayyāfāriqīn, Ibn al-Azraq (d. after 572/1176-7), describes enthusiastically how Naṣr al-Daula lightened taxes and, as part of his

charitable works, supplied the town with piped water. However, the Marwānid territories came under Saljuq suzerainty soon after Naṣr al-Daula's death.¹¹⁷

The perils of Ḥasan's travel described in the *Sarguzasht* included the added dangers of traversing an active war-zone, for the Saljuqs had recently invaded Anatolia and the Diyār Bakr region had become more dangerous to traverse and more importantly, the communities of Ismailis along Nāṣir-i Khusraw's route may have been devastated. Turning back through Mesopotamia added almost a thousand miles to Ḥasan's journey—not lightly done when the means of travel were by foot or at best mounted on a donkey, horse or camel. This type of endeavour would not have been tasked to a neophyte; Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was clearly an accomplished individual and a senior *dā'ī* before he set out for Egypt (cf above Part One:6-II).¹¹⁸

The second element of the modern analyses is that Ḥasan with his experience of the weakening state of affairs in Fatimid Cairo, came back to Iran and initiated a radically independent revolutionary movement. This view is also the result of observations of earlier times through the compactions of later history. Despite his unsatisfactory experiences in Cairo, as a *murīd* (disciple) of the imam-caliph, Ḥasan would have come back with a zeal to redouble service to the *da'wa* and the imamate—the loci of his solemn duty and salvation. His loyalty to the imam was sacrosanct and his unfortunate treatment by the upper echelons of the empire would have engendered urgencies not only to galvanise the efforts in the field but also to call the leadership in his own region to help cleanse the corruption at the centre and fortify those he considered to be truly loyal to the imam.¹¹⁹ In the *Sarguzasht*, there is no trace of antipathy to the imamate. Ḥasan returned to his *jazīra* well before there was a crisis of succession. The future al-Musta'li was still a child and Badr al-Jamālī had almost a decade and a

¹¹⁷ Boyle, s. p. 24; Amedroz, "The Marwanid Dynasty At Mayyafariqin in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries Ad."; EI1. Zetterstéen, "Marwānids".

¹¹⁸ JT. pp 98ff

¹¹⁹ JT pp 98ff

half to consolidate his position and to endeavour to eliminate sources of opposition. In the meantime, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ possibly left Cairo at the time when Nizār was construed as the successor to his father's imamate.

For over a century, the Fatimids had attracted adherents to their brand of Ismailism in the East. If the death of al-Mustanşir had not precipitated a succession crisis, the *da'wa* headquartered in Iran would have become part of a most vigorous Fatimid challenge to the 'Abbāsids and Saljuqs. The spheres of operation of the *da'wa* in the region, whether strategically planned or incidentally established, would have constituted the eastern arm of a massive pincer around the 'Abbāsīd-Saljuq domains connecting a vast arc from Anatolia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Afghanistan to Central and South Asia. This perspectival difference from other modern analyses allows vital understandings of the *da'wa* in Iran, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's role at its core and the Ismaili movement in the East. At the time of his return to Iran, Ḥasan was a devout subordinate of the Fatimid *dā'ī* in Iran and was enacting aspects of the Fatimid Eastern Policy. Why then did Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and the rest of the Ismaili *da'wa* in Iran attach themselves to the Nizari line of imams and cleave themselves from the Fatimid Empire?

B. Acceptance of Nizār b. al-Mustanşir in Iran

Nuwayrī (d. 1333/733), who like Maqrīzī (d. 1442/845), apparently relied on al-Muyassar's (d. 1278/677) account of the succession of al-Mustanşir. Writing thirty years before Maqrīzī's birth, Nuwayrī gave two different accounts of the succession. The first account is similar in detail to that of Maqrīzī discussed in the previous sections; however, Nuwayrī did not report that Nizār's brothers 'Abd Allāh or Ismā'īl claimed to succeed their father. Could this have been a later interpolation by Maqrīzī? He reported that when the princes arrived in the throne room in response to al-Afḍal's call, "they saw their youngest brother seated on the throne of

the *khalifat*, at which they were filled with indignation.” When al-Afdal demanded that they do homage to their brother, the successor to their father, Nizār replied: “I would rather be cut to pieces than do homage to one younger than myself, and moreover I possess a document in the handwriting of my father, by which he names me his successor, and I shall go and bring it.”¹²⁰ In principle, this is consistent with Maqrīzī’s later account where Nizār fled to Alexandria and on the failure of his revolt was killed; however, Nuwayrī recorded a very different second account:

Some relate however, that when al-Mustansir Billah died, his son Nizar, who was the *Wali’l-Ahd* (or khalif elect) (sic), took his seat on the throne and desired homage to be done to himself; but al-Afdal refused (to permit this), through dislike to Nizar, and he had a meeting with a number of emirs and men of rank, to whom he said, that Nizar was come to the age of manhood, and they could not hope to escape his severity; so the best thing to be done was to do homage to his youngest brother Abu’l-Kasim Ahmad. This plan was approved by all except Mahmud (Muhammad?) Ibn Massāl صل al-Maliki, who had received from Nizar the promise of being named vizir and general-in-chief in place of al-Afdal; in consequence, he informed Nizar of what was doing; but al-Afdal hastened to proclaim Ahmad khalif under the name al-Mustali Billah, and having placed him on the throne of the empire.”¹²¹

The narrative continues in accord with Maqrīzī’s account with additional details of incidents and persons. The significance of this account is that an early Arabic source from Egypt reported that Nizār took the throne in Cairo, but ultimately, he and the princes were outmanoeuvred by the *wazīr*.

The Ismaili *da’wa* in Iran accepted Nizār as the successor of al-Mustansir—there are no reports of any contestations of this imamate. Previously the *da’wa* had been promulgated in the name of the Fatimid imam-caliph and the contact with the headquarters was by means of emissaries travelling to Cairo and back. Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, as one of the senior emissaries had returned at a

¹²⁰ Abū’l-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn Khallikān. *Ibn Khallikan’s Biographical Dictionary—Kitāb Wafayāt al-a’yān wa-anbā’ abnā’ al-zamān*, Translated by William MacGuckin de Slane. (Paris: Oriental translation fund of Great Britain and Ireland, 1842-1871). “al-Musta’lī” Vol I:160-161 fn 7. Baron *Biographical Dictionary* included Nuwayrī’s account under Ibn Khallikan’s entry on the imam-caliph al-Musta’lī. al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*. v28:240ff

¹²¹ *Biographical Dictionary*. “al-Musta’lī” Vol I:160-161 fn 7. al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*. v28:240ff

time when the *da'wa* in Iran may have construed Nizār b. al-Mustanşir to be the *walī al-'ahd* (designated heir) to the Fatimid caliphate and the holder of the *naşş* (specific designation) to succeed his father as the imam. This state of affairs did not change until the day of the death of al-Mustanşir when al-Afdal claimed a deathbed designation by the imam-caliph of a different son to succeed. Based on the reports that Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ, and perhaps others, brought back from Egypt, the power of Badr al-Jamālī and subsequently his son, al-Afdal, was construed as a usurpation of the imam-caliph's authority. The marriage of the future al-Musta'li to Badr's daughter may have been seen as an attempt to solidify an alliance with the royal house by the powerful wazīr at a time when the aged imam-caliph was nearing the end of his life. The sources report that the marriage had not yet been consummated at the time of the succession crisis.¹²²

In contrast, the *da'wa* in Yemen accepted al-Musta'li because of the much closer linkages between Cairo and the Ṣulayḥid (fl. 1047-1138/439-532) dynasty.¹²³ These Fatimid vassals—who most successfully exemplified the Fatimid Eastern policy—established an independent state in Yemen which by geographic proximity and tighter integration was closely aligned with the headquarters. Even in Yemen, after the assassination al-Musta'li's son al-Āmīr, the bulk of the *da'wa* gave allegiance not to the claimant to the throne in Cairo but to the infant son of imam-caliph al-Āmīr who was believed to have been designated to succeed him. The Ṭayyibīs, named after the eponymous al-Ṭayyib (b. 1130/524), rejected the regent al-Ḥāfiẓ (fl. 1130–

¹²² Nīshāpūrī. *Saljūqnāma*. p. 76; Nīshāpūrī. *Seljuq Turks*. p. 45. Hodgson intimates several tenuous reasons for the Iranian *da'wa*'s acceptance of Nizār; namely the emphasis on *ta'līm* and that there was a sense of independence—the old versus the new *da'wa*; furthermore he suggests that a resentment of foreign, military and conservative domination—Badr al-Jamālī was supported by Turkish troops... All these are inadequate explanations. Hodgson. OA. pp 62ff

¹²³ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 198ff

1149/524-544), a cousin of al-Āmir, who claimed the imamate. His claim was considered illegitimate according to their notions of imamate and al-Ḥāfiẓ was seen as a usurper.¹²⁴

Ibn al-Athīr's report that Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ met with al-Mustanşir and ascertained that Nizār would succeed him seems to be a distorted report if not a fanciful fabrication. His account states that Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ "had an audience with the ruler, al-Mustanşir, who received him with honour and gave him money, ordering him to call people to recognise his Imamate. Ibn al-Šabbāḥ asked, 'Who is the Imam after you?' and he indicated his son Nizār."¹²⁵ It would be untoward, first of all, for an official of the *da'wa*, no matter how high-ranking, to inquire from the imam about his death and successor. Furthermore, as already mentioned, the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* specifically states that Ḥasan did not meet the imam-caliph. The Nizari authors could have easily embellished the hagiography of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ but on this point they specifically did not. The Ilkhanid sources based on their Nizari sources, in this case as in many others, facilitate more reliable information for analyses of past actualities than non-Isma'ili writing in Arabic. At the remote distance from the Fatimid capital, the *da'wa* in Iran simply did not recognise the claim for al-Musta'li as a legitimate designation. The Ismailis in these regions apparently remained behind their leadership in these decisions. After the deaths of al-Mustanşir and Nizār, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ brought about changes in the direction of the Isma'ili communities in Iran. What were these changes and what were the consequences? The next two sections explore the faint traces of factionalism amongst the Ismailis in Iran.

¹²⁴ Michael Lawrence Bates. *Yemen and its Conquest by the Ayyubids of Egypt (A.d. 1137-1202)*, 1975). pp. 77-120; Stern, "The Succession to the Fatimid Imam al-Āmir, the Claims of the Later Fatimids to the Imamate, and the Rise of Ṭayyibī Ismailism."

¹²⁵ Ibn al-Athīr. *IA*. p. 42

C. *You've got to be Crazy!*

There is no mention of 'Abd al-Malik 'Aṭṭash in the chronicles after his deputation of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and his return to Isfahan in 1075/468. The *Sarguzasht* as the biography of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was primarily focussed on Ḥasan's activities. He returned to Isfahan in mid-June, 1081/*Muḥarram* 474 and then undertook a series of journeys around Iran. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ spent some two years in Isfahan before his departure to Egypt and returned there.

Table II.1a: Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's Journeys in Iran 1081-1090

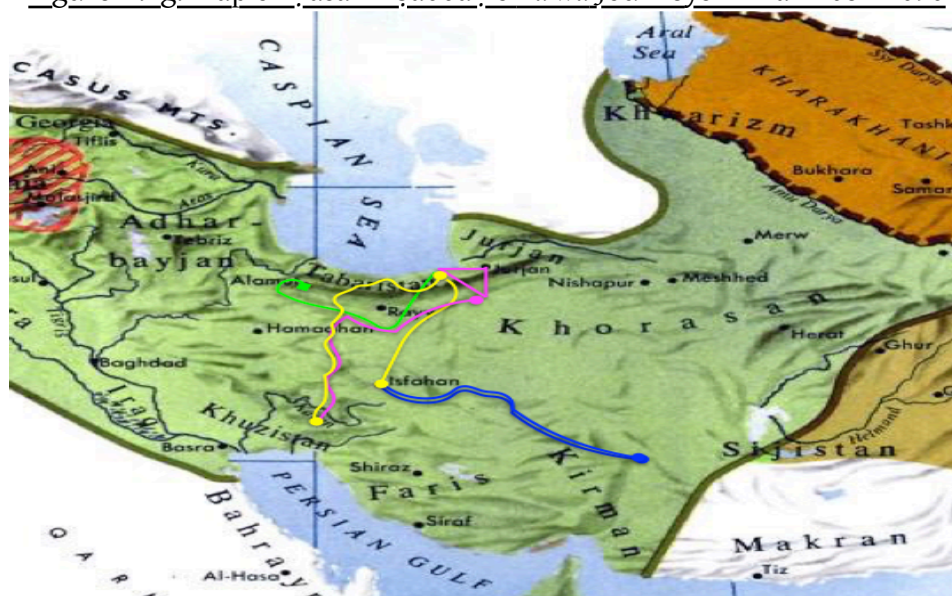
From Egypt	Isfahan (June 1081)	Yazd	Kirman			
10+ months	Isfahan	Farīm	Shahryār Kūh (4 months)	Khuzistān (6 months)	Dāmagān	
3 years	Dāmagān	Jurjān	Chanāshak			
Sent <i>dā'īs</i> to Alamut area	Shahryār Kūh	Jurjān	Ṭarz	Sūhad	Chanāshak	
	Chanāshak	Sārī	Dar-i dīhī	Damāvand	Khvār-i Rayy	Qazwīn
1090	Qazwīn	Alamūt				

He then went to Yazd and Kirman and again returned to Isfahan where the headquarters of the *da'wa* in Iran was located. His later activity was concentrated in northern Iran with one journey to Khuzistān.

Figure II.1f: Map of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's Journeys 1075-1090



Figure II.1g: Map of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's Da'wa Journeys in Iran 1081-1090



The chronicles do not show Ḥasan returning to Isfahan again. He had extended stays in Shahryār Kūh and Khuzistān and spent three years shuttling between Dāmagān, Jurjān and Chānāshak. From Shahryār Kūh he sent dā'īs to the region of Alamut. After journeys to several places east of the Caspian coast in Iran, while avoiding Rayy for fear of being captured, he

made his way to Qazwīn. From there he sent his *dā'īs* and followers who infiltrated Alamut and himself entered the fortress in 1090/483.

While there is no explicit account or explanation of Ḥasan's role in the *da'wa* immediately after his return to Iran, from his extensive journeying and later history, certain surmises can be elaborated. First, he stayed in Isfahan for two years before leaving for Cairo and on his return did not remain there for too long. Might this suggest that the networks of the *da'wa* in Isfahan, despite the prestige of his having returned with privileged information from the Fatimid capital, did not have a place for him? Does his journeying suggest that he was seeking a location to establish himself? If these surmises have merit, then can the event at Ra'īs Abū al-Faḍl's house from the three school fellows narrative be linked to Ḥasan's last stay in Isfahan (cf above Part One:6-III)? In this only mention of Ḥasan at Isfahan after his return, was he promoting Fatimid interests in the East? Did the Ra'īs—a stand-in for the Iranian *da'wa* in the narrative—reject Ḥasan's suggestions to open an eastern front against the Saljuqs as insane? The narrative had the Ra'īs treating him for melancholia and having realised that his thoughts were construed as madness, Ḥasan fled from Isfahan.

D. Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and Ibn 'Aṭṭāsh

Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's journey to the Fatimid capital elevated a promising underling in the *da'wa* to a privileged position; however, this does not preclude the fact that there were other capable *dā'īs* operating in Iran who may have been more senior to him. While the emissary was sent to the headquarters, the hierarchy of the *jazīra* remained in place. One such high-ranking person was Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh, who, as the son of the head of the *da'wa* in Iran and himself a capable *dā'ī*, held a prestigious position. When his father fled from Isfahan to Rayy, Aḥmad remained there and clandestinely organised and consolidated the *da'wa*. In 1075/467

‘Abd al-Malik returned to Isfahan and brought Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ along with him; however, no

further information is available on the former. Daftary noted that according to some unreliable reports, the *dā’ī* ‘Abd al-Malik himself had by now left Iṣfahān for Alamūt, where he spent his final years under Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s protection. There are no reliable details on the final phase of this *dā’ī*’s career, but it is safe to assume that by 494 AH [1101] he was no longer active in Iṣfahān, having been succeeded in a much more limited capacity by his son Aḥmad.¹²⁶

While the head of the *da’wa* may have been eclipsed by his younger subordinates, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s journeying after his return to Iran reflects efforts to set up his own independent network of *dā’īs* and Ismaili followers. The conquest of territory, in face of the vigorous Saljuq presence in Iran, was difficult. To invest and hold a region, large forces of infantry and cavalry would be necessary; the Ismaili *da’wa* in Iran did not have such concentrations of forces available at the end of the 11th/5th century. The resort to acquiring strategically located fortified installations allowed small groups to secure significant tracts of territory. Alamut, the first fortress acquired by Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, should be regarded, as part of the unfolding of the Fatimid Eastern Policy and not a rogue independent militancy. This fortress, like many others, was acquired without bloodshed. Alamut became the centre of the energetic *da’wa* activities south of the Caspian Sea, taking shelter in the mountains and valleys and attempting to control trade routed through the region. This combination of proselytisation in the name of the Fatimid Ismaili imamate and military operations expanded over time to connect large number of castles. Saljuq interests were seriously threatened and they mounted serious attacks on the regions under Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s control.

¹²⁶ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p 583 Daftary did not elaborate on the source where the “unreliable reports” came from; Hodgson, “IS.” p. 430

In retaliation, the Ismailis might have had a hand in the assassination of the *wazīr*, Nizām al-Mulk on 22 October, 1092/12 *Ramaḍān*, 485; and soon after Sultan Malikshāh died.¹²⁷ The ensuing chaos and tumult was an opportunity for the Ismaili movements in Iran to expand; however, the death of the imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir on night of Thursday 4 January 1095/18 *Dhū'l-ḥijja* 487¹²⁸ resulted in the severing of ties between the Fatimid Empire and the *da'wa* in Iran. The Iranian *dā'īs* from this moment on proselytised in the name of the Nizari Ismaili line of imams.

Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's activities and victories differentiated his tactics from that of the existing leadership. The acquisitions and constructions of impregnable fortresses along key routes proved to be a successful tactic. The mountain-people who lived around these fortresses formed the bases of the multi-castellan polity. Their labours and products provided supplies for the castles and the tolls and taxes from the areas yielded revenue for the construction, renovation and upkeep of the forts. The peasants also served as infantry and cavalry during conventional battles and the hardest among them were elite warriors in the asymmetric warfare which came to characterise the Nizari polity.

The *dā'īs* at Isfahan also fell in line with Ḥasan's approaches; Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh took control of Shāhdiz and Khānalajān fortresses near Isfahan—which he may have ruled

¹²⁷ JT. pp 110 ff; Ibn al-Athīr. *Al-Kāmil*. 10:204-205; Ibn al-Athīr. *Annals of the Saljuq Turks*. p. 253 fn 86; Ibn al-Athīr gives the date as 10 *Ramaḍān*. DS Richards notes that in the *Muntazam* the day is given as eve of Saturday (i.e. Friday night) and therefore he converts it to 14 October 1092 [Julian date which corresponds to 20 October, 1092 of the Gregorian calendar]—there is a discrepancy of a some days here! شــــبــــب آدینه = Thursday night = 11 *Ramaḍān* = 21 October (15 Julian); the *Muntazam* “eve of Saturday” = Friday night = 12 *Ramaḍān* = 22 October (16 Julian).

¹²⁸ Gregorian date 4 January 1095 corresponds to the Julian date 29 December 1094. The death date for the Imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir is therefore given as 1094 by most scholars—frequently by even those who state they are converting dates to the Gregorian calendar.

independent of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. The accounts of Aḥmad b. ‘Aṭṭāsh exaggeratedly detail that in Isfahan he had some 30,000 followers.¹²⁹ (Cf. Part One-6:III). As already discussed in Part One, during the siege of Shāhdiz, Aḥmad negotiated the evacuation of these two fortresses near Isfahan to Nizari controlled fortresses of Arrajān in Khūzistān and Ṭabas in Quhistān. The remaining soldiers in the castle would then proceed to Alamut. While the evacuations were carried out, the siege ended with the killing of all the remaining Ismaili troops. Aḥmad and his son were disgraced and paraded around town; they were executed by flaying; their skins were stuffed and severed heads sent to the ‘Abbāsīd caliph. Sultan Muḥammad b. Malikshāh thus put an end to a dynasty of *dā’īs* in Isfahan. This last battle of the siege is reported to have been a retaliation for the killing of a Saljuq amīr—could this also be read as Aḥmad’s forces choosing to die rather than be sent to Alamut?¹³⁰ (Cf. Part One-6:III).

Here the DNA (double narrative analyses of Ilkhanid and the underlying Nizari sources) is stretched to the limits by the silence on the activities in Isfahan in the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*. As established in the case study in Part One (Part One-6:III), the Ilkhanid authors relied on non-Ismaili sources for their accounts of the Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh’s acquisition of

¹²⁹ Nīshāpūrī. *Saljūqnāma*. p. 74

¹³⁰ David Durand-Guédy, “The Ismailis of Isfahan. A Reassessment,” in *Science in the City of Fortune—the Dustūr al-Munajjimīn and its World*, ed. Eva Orthmann, and Petra G. Schmidl (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2017). David Durand-Guédy pp 223-261. Durand-Guédy recently has also argued that a rivalry existed between the two *dā’īs*; however, his suggestions that the *Sarguzasht* falsified the dates of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s travels to present him as succeeding to ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh’s mantle is forced especially due to the privileging of non-Ismaili sources. The *Sarguzasht* was written for an audience which already accepted the authority of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ as sacrosanct. The authors did not need to massage past actuality to get them to better accept Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s hagiography. The selective use of external sources for revision of histories is fraught with challenges. Sources such as Ibn al-Athīr which provide the alternate readings and datings also contradict the *Sarguzasht* on central questions of succession—Ibn al-Athīr stated that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ inquired from al-Mustansīr who his successor would be and was told Nizar. Why would the *Sarguzasht* falsify such a critical point by stating that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ never met the imam-caliph? Selective reading from external sources, to be plausible, has to treat these sources, their contents and motives consistently, else the process devolves into mining for nuggets as cautioned by Marilyn Waldman.

Shāhdiz and its recapture by the Saljuqs in 1107/500. Does this illuminate the Nizari author's sensitivities in mentioning the activities of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's competitors and perhaps even his superior in the *da'wa* hierarchy? The destruction of a community of 30,000 or 3,000 or even 300 would have generated lamentations of loss of comrades and anger at the persecutions. How is it that there is no trace of the Ismaili community in Isfahan in the surviving literature of the Nizaris? Are there voices of factionalism here so subdued to have been silenced? What were the doctrinal differences beyond the political positioning for power? Perhaps, some heretofore unknown tract or a re-reading of sources might shed some more light in the future.

In the next section, I describe the Saljuq xenocracy made up of nomadic Turks, Persianate bureaucrats and the *'ulamā'* they coopted—all originating in Khurāsān and Mā warā' al-nahr. In Iran, they were undergoing a long process of indigenisation and the nomads amongst them were sedentarising. This xenocratic empire came into confrontations with the autochthonous attempt to consolidate and expand sparse and scattered centres of local power into a territorial polity attributing sovereignty to the Nizari Ismaili imamate and aiming to establish a Shi'i theocracy. The next section is a study of this tumultuous engagement between the expanding Saljuq Empire characterised by what I call "fractional sovereignties" on the one hand and the multi-castellan polity of the Nizari Ismailis on the other.

IV. Saljuqs and the Ismailis

The analyses in Part One have illustrated that the picture of the relations between the Ismailis and the Saljuqs emerging from pre-modern historical writing can be categorised, at best, as tumultuous. For the most part the chronicles have reported Saljuq predations and sieges countered by Nizari assassinations which in turn were responded to by invasions, battles, brutality and massacres. Their interactions have been construed on "sectarian" lines with the

Saljuqs as champions of so-called Sunni “orthodoxy” cleansing away the “heretical” Ismailis and their revolt in *dar al-Islām*. (Cf. Part One:2, 4, 5 and 6-II, III, V). Therefore, careful approaches are needed to sift through invective and bias in the narrative norms and structures to interpret past actuality.

For several decades now modern scholarship has been reading past these polemics and biases in classical chronicles and yet the discourses of “orthodoxy” and “heresies” continue—if not overtly then in the persistent terminologies and narrative choices and emplotment. Even some very careful scholars have not been able to eradicate the contagion of nineteenth century Eurocentric orientalisms and in their historical analyses have thrust racial connotations of conflict between the Turk and Tajik and the Nizari polity as a Persian revolution against the invading Turks.¹³¹

Removing these lenses is vital to understand the fraught interactions between the vastly mobile Turkic military class supported by a predominantly Persianate bureaucracy and coopted ‘*ulamā*’ class with the clandestine activities of the Nizaris which at times came into the open as they sought to expand their territorial base and numbers of adherents. Society in Iran during the Saljuq period was coloured by shifting factional sovereignties and confessional ambiguities across the Shi‘i-Sunni interpretations of Islam—even as Sunnism, as we know it, was crystallising. The Nizari *da‘wa* emerged out of Fatimid efforts to capitalise on the Qarmaṭian followings in the region and to attract wider followings to the Fatimid Ismaili interpretation of Islam; however, the death of the imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir precipitated a cleavage of the Ismailis in Iran from the Empire.

¹³¹ Hodgson, “IS.” p. 427; Madelung. *Religious Trends*. p. 102.

Useful frameworks to understand Ismaili-Saljuq confrontations need to consider the polidimensional processes of expansion of Saljuq Empire engaging with the establishing Nizari polity in Iran. On the one side, the nomadic Saljuqs Turks, reliant on Persianate bureaucrats, were a xenocracy in a long process of indigenising and sedentarising. They were confronted by an indigenous attempt to consolidate and expand sparse and scattered centres of local power into a territorial polity attributing sovereignty to the Nizari Ismaili imamate and aiming to establish a Shi'i theocracy. Each of the two involved multitudes of competing internal actors and numerous external interlocutors. What was the nature of the emerging Saljuq Empire?

A. Saljuq Imperiogenesis

Theories of imperiogenesis developed by scholars such as Thomas Barfield and Peter Turchin have suggested that the “scale of political organization among the nomads was directly proportional to the size of the neighboring agrarian empires.”¹³² In the 11th/5th century, the Saljuqs, in a short span of thirty years overran the vast ‘Abbāsid domains which relied on agrarian and trading resources of the peoples. The Saljuqs defeated and subordinated rulers and social groups from Central Asia to Anatolia and imposed vassalage on them through their Persianate bureaucrats and mostly nomadic forces. This control fluctuated based on the proximity of conquest, the positioning of forces and proper functioning of alliances.

For over a century, the ‘Abbāsid Empire had been fragmenting into local kingdoms with increasing autonomy as local rulers extracted and used resources of agrarian production and

¹³² Peter Turchin, “A Theory for the Formation of Large Agrarian Empires,” *50th Annual Convention “Exploring the Past, Anticipating the Future”* (2009).; Peter Turchin. *Historical Dynamics : Why States Rise and Fall*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003).; Peter Turchin. *War and Peace and War : The Life Cycles of Imperial Nations*, (New York: Pi Press, 2006).; Thomas J. Barfield. *The Perilous Frontier : Nomadic Empires and China*, (Cambridge, Mass.: B. Blackwell, 1989).; Thomas J. Barfield, D. M. Bondarenko, and N. N. Kradin. *Nomadic Pathways in Social Evolution*, ([United States]: MeaBooks Inc : Made available through hoopla, 2003).

trade for themselves. North Africa had been conquered by the Fatimids and the Shi'i Buyids (fl. 932-1062/320-454) overran Iran and Iraq but continued to maintain the 'Abbāsid caliphs as suzerains. This "dual kingship" of the 'Abbāsid caliph and Būyid *amīr* elevated the military commander to supreme political power while diminishing the weakened caliphate to drastically restricted roles. The Buyids espoused the system of corporate dynastic rule where members of the ruling house had claim to rule the dynasty based on seniority and the senior ruler distributed appanages to his kin. This system led to fragmentation as members of different branches vied for greater power. Their confrontations with the Ghaznavids in the East and contests with a number of opponents allied with the Fatimids and Byzantines in the West made the Buyids vulnerable to the onslaught of Turkic nomads. The Saljuqs also followed similar patterns of corporate dynastic rule and appanages; and their rule was also marked by significant confessional ambiguities.¹³³

Rapid successes propelled the Saljuqs and their Turkic followers westwards and in the processes they faced challenges of adapting from nomadic to sedentary modes of living and governance of the immense agrarian tracts that fell to them. In this shift from leaders of nomadic bands to territorial sovereigns, according to the sources, the Saljuq princes relied on

¹³³ The concepts of "dual kingship" and "corporate dynasty" have been developed by John E. Woods. The first explains the correlated authority and balance between the titular caliph and the power of the Buyid amīrs and then the Saljuq sultans. The second conceptualises the complex systems of distribution of appanages and succession in certain royal houses. The pattern involves lateral succession based on seniority which inherently leads to fragmentation of territory and power and ultimately a powerful ruler from among the family would subjugate or do away other coequal rulers and establish lineal succession. This framework is especially useful for the study of the Buyid, Saljuq and the Ilkhanid dynasties.

Persianate bureaucrats and religious leaders.¹³⁴ When the *a'yān* of Marw, Herat and Nīshāpūr capitulated rather than be attacked, the sultan, Ṭughril Baig, struggled to contain looting and destruction. At this early stage, the nomadic warriors lacked resources for survival; Ṭughril al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī recorded that Chagrī Baig threatened his brother that he would kill himself unless they were allowed to loot the city. Ṭughril had to distribute his own wealth to prevent the Turks from rampaging through Nīshāpūr. Ibn al-Athīr recorded this differently, in that, “Tughril Beg then pulled out a dagger and said to [his brother], ‘By God, if you plunder anything, I shall kill myself!’ So he gave it up and turned instead to the imposition of a levy. He levied about 30,000 dinars on the inhabitants of Nishapur which he distributed to his followers.”¹³⁵

After the decisive defeat of the Ghaznawids at the battle of Dandāqān,¹³⁶ the Saljuqs sent a letter to the ‘Abbāsīd caliph proclaiming their victories against the Ghaznawids and seeking a decree to legitimate their rule. In reply the caliph sent an emissary who was to remain with Ṭughril Baig and advise him till he reached Baghdad. In his letter the caliph advised the Saljuqs not to be “overbearing towards the servants of God, and do not ruin the land.”¹³⁷

¹³⁴ According to Ṭughril al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, a midnight prayer was arranged as the forces prepared a night attack on Mas‘ūd b. Maḥmūd, the Ghaznavid ruler at Dandānqān near Marw. Chagrī Baig heard the Qur’ānic verses: “David, behold, We have appointed thee a viceroy in the earth” and “Say: ‘O God, Master of the Kingdom, Thou givest the Kingdom to whom Thou wilt, and seizest the Kingdom from whom Thou wilt, Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt; in Thy hand is the good; Thou art powerful over everything” when these were explained to him, he took them as a good omen since his name was Dāwūd. Nīshāpūrī, *History of the Seljuq Turks*, pp 37-38. The two quotes in the passage are Qur’ānic verses 38:26 and 3:26 respectfully. The prayers were supererogatory and maybe a Sufi *dhikr* ceremony. The meaning of the verses was most like explained to Chagrī Baig by a Persianate scholar. Passages such as these illustrate the Turks adapting to Islamic and Persianate customs and practices.

¹³⁵ Ibn al-Athīr. *Annals of the Saljuq Turks*. p. 26

¹³⁶ According to Boyle, s. pp 21ff the date is 1040/431 but Nīshāpūrī. *Seljuq Turks*. p. 38 gives the date as 329/1037-38

¹³⁷ *Seljuq Turks* p. 41

It is noteworthy according to an account recorded by Bayhaqī, that at time of the capitulation of Nīshāpūr, all the notables of the city came out to meet Ibrāhīm Īnāl; however, Qāḍī Saʿīd, the leader of the Ḥanafīs and Sayyid Zayd the leader of the ʿAlids held back and only went out to receive Ṭughril Baig when he arrived. Imām Muwaffaq, leader of the Shafīʿīs, mentioned the three school fellows story of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's early life (cf above Part One:6-1), enthusiastically welcomed the Saljuqs.¹³⁸ Despite this, the Saljuqs vigorously patronised Ḥanafī Sunnism to the detriment of the Shafīʿīs until several decades later when Niẓām al-Mulk promoted the Shafīʿīs.

Three years after the ʿAbbāsīd emissary and letter were sent to Ṭughril, he came to Baghdad after his name was included in the *khuṭba* and coinage.¹³⁹ The so called “Būyid captivity” was displaced by a “Saljuq captivity” of the ʿAbbāsīds;¹⁴⁰ however, immediately the sultan had to

contend with frequent challenges to his own authority by his kin and the rebellions of Ibrāhīm Īnāl, of Qutlumush b. Arslan Isrāʿīl, and even of the senior member of the family, Mūsā Yabghu—show that these provincial rulers never understood their subordinate position in the hierarchy of power that was roughly taking shape under the sultan. As for the masses of the Türkmen, now nominally Muslim, they remained at a cultural level little higher than that which they had enjoyed in the steppes, and their irreconcilable attitude towards any settled government was kept alive by the arrival of fresh tribal elements from Central Asia, who were attracted westwards by prospects of plunder.¹⁴¹

In 1058/449 Ṭughril's half brother, Ibrāhīm Īnāl—according to Daftary, “aspired to seize the Saljūq sultanate for himself with the assistance of al-Basāsīrī and the Fāṭimids”.¹⁴² He entered into communication with al-Basāsīrī and sent a letter to the Fatimid *dāʿī* and plenipotentiary in the East, al-Muʿayyad fī'l-Dīn Shīrāzī, promising to recognise the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir. When Ṭughril, with the help of his nephew Alp Arslān b. Dāwūd, was able to muster

¹³⁸ Clifford Edmund Bosworth. *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994-1040*, (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1973). pp 252-257

¹³⁹ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 195ff

¹⁴⁰ Roy P. Mottahedeh. *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980). pp 54ff

¹⁴¹ Boyle, s. pp. 21-22

¹⁴² Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 196; Lambton, “Changing Concepts.”

enough forces to confront and defeat his half-brother's rebellion, he personally strangled Ibrāhīm Īnāl with a bowstring.¹⁴³

While the sultan was away, al-Basāsīrī took Baghdad and established the *khutba* in the name of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanşir. The 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Qā'im was exiled to 'Āna and held there by the governor of Ḥadītha. Meanwhile, due to internal political competition in Cairo, the Fatimids abandoned al-Mu'ayyad's project of supporting al-Basāsīrī and others in the East just as they attained the objective of long-term Fatimid ambitions and policies to conquer Baghdad. Ṭughril "proposed to leave al-Basāsīrī in Baghdad, provided he would renounce his Fāṭimid allegiance and restore al-Qā'im to the throne".¹⁴⁴ Al-Basāsīrī rejected this and left Baghdad in December 1059/*Dhū'l-qa'da* 451.¹⁴⁵ He was pursued and killed near Kūfa by the Saljūqs.¹⁴⁶

Ṭughril accompanied the freed 'Abbāsīd caliph back into Baghdad and was lavished with a more laudatory title. Nīshāpūrī recorded that the sultan wanted to ask the caliph for money to provision his armies but his *wazīr*, 'Amīd al-Mulk Abū Naşr Kundurī, anticipated that the caliph will be asking the sultan for a stipend to run his household. He devised a stratagem by which they set-up a stipend for the caliph and took control of the caliphal tax-registers and thereby the processes of collections of revenues.

¹⁴³ Nīshāpūrī. *Seljuq Turks*. p. 42; Lambton, "Changing Concepts."; Ibn al-Athīr. *Annals of the Saljuq Turks*. p. 125. Strangulation was an honourable death since in Turco-Mongolic tradition spilling of royal blood was taboo. Cf. Boyle, s. p. 89

¹⁴⁴ Ibn al-Athīr. *Annals of the Saljuq Turks*. p. 197;

¹⁴⁵ *Annals of the Saljuq Turks* pp 194ff; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 195ff. Lambton, "Changing Concepts."—Lambton's dates vary greatly from Daftary

¹⁴⁶ Nīshāpūrī. *Seljuq Turks*. p. 42; Lambton, "Changing Concepts."; Ibn al-Athīr. *Annals of the Saljuq Turks*. p. 197; EI2. M. Canard "al-Basāsīrī"

The sultan demanded the caliph's sister, Sayyida, in marriage but the consent was not readily given. Kundurī cut off the revenue to the caliphal household and was able to exact compliance.

The 'Abbāsīd princess was taken to Tabriz for the marriage; Nīshāpūrī wrote that the caliph sent the Chief Judge of Baghdad with the litter of Sayyida to pronounce the betrothal at Tabriz upon a marriage portion of four hundred silver dirhams and one gold dinar from the marriage portion of the Lady of Women, Fāṭima al-Zahrā' (upon her be peace!). When the litter of Sayyida reached Tabriz, they decorated all the city and scattered much money, and the chief judge of Baghdad concluded that the marriage contract. Then the Sultan and left Tabriz in the direction of the city of Rayy, so that the marriage procession would be in the capital. A slight illness overtook him. He was staying in Qaṣrān-i Bīrūnī at the village of Tajrisht outside Rayy. He had stopped there because of its coolness, of the heat was extreme. He had a nosebleed which could not be stopped is with any medicine, so that finally his strength failed, and in that sickness he left the world in the month of *Ramaḍān* (August-September) of the year 455 (1063)¹⁴⁷

The ageing sultan, based on this narrative, may well have been poisoned. He was succeeded by his nephew, Alp Arslān b. Dāwūd Chagrī Baig. The second Saljuq sultan went about consolidating his rule fighting his own family members who had designs on the sultanate and by distributing and re-assigning regions to be governed by his loyal subordinates. One of the key changes he made was to replace Kundurī, his father's *wazīr*, after confiscating his wealth and controls of revenues. The killing of Kundurī at the behest of his successor, Nizām al-Mulk became an oft repeated classic narrative in Persian historical writing.¹⁴⁸

These events have been gleaned from the sources and literature to briefly illustrate the functions and inter-relations between the various actors in the Saljuq domains as they

¹⁴⁷ Nīshāpūrī. *Seljuq Turks*. p. 45

¹⁴⁸ Khwānd Amīr. *Dastūr al-wuzarā': shāmil-i aḥwāl-i wuzarā-yi Islām tā inqirād-i Taymūriyān*. pp 148-149 (Kundurī) and pp 149-168. Note that the entry on Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ pp 168-178 has been mistakenly identified as the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidinā* (by Cortese, "Lost and Found."). and Miklos Sarkozy in a personal communication 20 March 2017. Sarkozy has prepared a report on the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidinā* for the Institute of Ismailis Studies (not available to me). Both scholars have been led to believe that Majmū'a no. 901 dated 1678/1089 from the Library Museum and Document Centre of the Iranian Parliament Collection in Tehran is the Tehran copy of the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidinā*. Majmū'a no. 901 folios 199 to 223 (labeled pages 21-29) correspond Khwānd Mīr's entry on Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. Ismail Poonawala listed the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidinā* as Tehran-Markazī F 2835, microfilm from Vazīrī MS (Mic. Cat., 735). I have managed to obtain several tracts from this Majmū'a and await the pages pertaining to the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidinā*. See Poonawala. *BBB*. p. 353 entry 281.

encountered the Nizaris. As the Saljuqs moved westward, they brought along with them a host of political, religious and cultural elites from Khurāsān and Mā warā' al-nahr. These Persianate bureaucrats and 'ulamā' were also in competition with their equivalents in Iran and as exemplified by Nizām al-Mulk's *Siyāsatnāma* (Book of Government). This xenocracy made up of both Turks and Tajiks ("Persians") was distrustful and apprehensive of Iranians and Iraqis suspecting them of Shi'i sympathies. In 1053/445 Kundurī had initiated a purge of Ash'arīs-Shafi'īs and Shi'īs and they were to be denounced from the pulpits.¹⁴⁹ Nizām al-Mulk when he came to power during the reign of Alp Arslān reversed the persecution of the Ash'arīs-Shafi'īs and men such as the legist, Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī (d. 1085/478) and the Sufi, Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 1072-73/465) were able to return from exile and the likes of al-Ghazālī (d. 1111/505) would thrive under the newly established Nizāmiyya *madrasas*.¹⁵⁰ As the *Siyāsatnāma* indicates, Nizām al-Mulk continued the policies against the Shi'a in general and raised alarm against the Ismailis.¹⁵¹

Ludmila Stroeve's analyses of Saljuq policies in the settled agrarian territories they conquered is useful to understand some of these processes. She wrote that Saljuq efforts to integrate different classes of peoples in their governance structures was based on the

desire to gain allies in the ranks of local notables, the need for experienced managers, the desire to establish in the minds of the people inviolability of their power with the support of Muslim clerics and dervish shaykhs, the opportunity to participate in the profitable operations of powerful merchants—all of this factored in Saljuq policies in Iran. For the above-mentioned Iranian social groups alliance with Saljuqs was also beneficial.

Therefore the ruling class of the Saljuq state did not appear monolithic; it consisted of several feudal groups. The leading role amongst them was played by Turkic nomadic nobility. To this group belonged members of the Saljuq house, warlords, amirs, courtiers, etc. The Turkic nobility occupied commanding posts in the army and important positions at court. The political and

¹⁴⁹ Boyle, s. p. 46

¹⁵⁰ Ibrahim Kalin, ed. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam* (2014). pp 59ff;

¹⁵¹ Nizām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*.

economic power of these feudal groups was founded on conditional land ownership i.e. *iqṭā'* holdings.

Another group of the ruling class of the Saljuq state was the Persian bureaucracy. The most striking representative of that nobility was the famous Nizām al-Mulk (1017-1092), who held the position of *wazīr* with Alp-Arslān and Malik Shāh for over 30 years.¹⁵²

According to Stroeve, the '*ulamā'*', the Sufis, landed aristocracy from pre-Islamic times and merchant classes also played vital roles in Saljuq governance. These groups mostly supported the centralisation enforced by the Saljuq sultans even as they undermined the caliphate; however, the *amīrs* and the Turkic tribal groups were a constant counter and caused fragmentation. In contrast to Stroeve's propositions, Bosworth construed the dialectics of "nomad" versus "sedentary" equated to "barbarian" versus "civilised" respectively, in the concluding chapter of his dissertation. He wrote that it is necessary

always to remember that the Seljuqs were barbarians; their supplanting of the Ghaznavids in Khurasan is a classic example of successful barbarian infiltration across the borders of civilisation (sic). We have pointed out that the Turkmens' contacts with Perso-Islamic culture and religion had not been of long duration and had been only superficially accepted; moreover, the Oghuz were among the less advanced Turkish peoples of Central Asia. ...

In their desire for plunder, the masses of Turkmens were prepared to destroy the administrative capital of the province which they were in process of taking over and to alienate the classes which their leaders would have to depend on for guidance. Apart from Tughril and Chaghri, it does not seem as if any other of the leaders showed awareness of the new horizons opening up before them; thus the division between the supreme ruler and his entourage on one side, and the mass of tribesmen on the other, which was to bedevil the Sultanate of the Great Seljuqs, existed already in embryo.¹⁵³

All groups of Saljuq society coveted enrichment; the military and political elites, at least for the time that good fortune was with them, were most able to amass wealth. Opposing their interests, covert and overt antagonisms, and chronic rivalries weakened the Saljuq state at the turn of the 11-12th centuries. The Saljuq sultans, their relatives and pretorian guards along with the Persianate bureaucrats formed the upper tier of the *a'yān-amīr* system (cf Part One:1-III). This xenocracy was layered on top of existing patterns and institutions of government.

¹⁵² Lûdmila V Stroeve. *Gosudarstvo Ismailitov v Irane v XI-XIII Vv*, (Moskva: Nauka, 1978). pp 3-4

¹⁵³ "The Transition From Ghaznavid to Seljuq Rule in the Islamic East." pp 514-518. Would he have construed the Crusaders, who entered the Nilox region a few decades later, as barbarians?

The nomadic administrative structures standing over the traditional ones were formed in response to military conflicts and not due to internal development of the nomadic pastoral economy and society, as such their practices were predatory and punishments brutal. The primary purposes of the political structure and collection of revenues was to enrich the ruling classes and enable their capacities to maintain fighting forces. The resources collected by the centralising power would be distributed by the ruler to loyal kin and allies. “Kinship relationships and clan alliances maintained priority in civil life and consolidated society in face of external threat.”¹⁵⁴ How was the Saljuq dynasty organised and what was it about these structures that created a clash with the Nizari polity?

B. Factional Sovereignities

In common with many polities of nomadic origins, the Saljuqs operated as a corporate dynasty meaning that all (male) agnatic descendants of the founder of the dispensation, having reached the age of discretion (*sinn al-tamyīz*), became entitled theoretically to rule and to a portion of the “state”.¹⁵⁵ In practice the selection of the ruler was a much more chaotic affair involving a designation of a successor and selection by councils of the influential power-brokers and jockeying of the military commanders. Ultimately, the successful claimant to the sultanate was reliant on the coalition of the courtiers and military forces he was able to muster. The caliph would then be made to issue the decree of investiture.

The instability of the realm is evidenced by each new ruler’s redistribution to their supporters of appanages and *iqṭā’āt* (tax farms).¹⁵⁶ The chronicles record that the sieges of Nizari fortresses

¹⁵⁴ Barfield, Bondarenko, and Kradin. *Nomadic Pathways in Social Evolution*. p. 54 Somethings never change!

¹⁵⁵ Woods. *Aqquyunlu*. pp 19-20

¹⁵⁶ Boyle, s. pp 81ff

in Quhistān were lifted when Muḥammad b. Malikshāh died in 1118/511.¹⁵⁷ At the death of a ruler, the *amīrs* rushed to the capital to participate in the “horse-trading” to anoint the successor and benefit from the redistribution of treasures, territories and tax farms. The *amīr*’s prestige and power, counted in terms of proximity of kinship to the ruler and size of forces, which in-turn determined his role and participation in the succession processes. Alliances were shifting and the rulers reassigned the appanaged territories to their allies and took grants of tax farms from weaker *amīrs* for their loyal supporters.

An example of such a reassignment is the grant of the fortress of Girdkūh and surrounding regions by Bark-yāruq to Amīrdād Ḥabashī b. Altūntāq. The previous owner of the *iqṭāʿ*, Khurdak Khādim, who was Malikshāh’s retainer resisted this reassignment and was killed by the sultan. Years later, the *amīrs* demanded a return and re-distribution of the *iqṭāʿ* and the property of Amīrdād then held by the Nizaris. The Ilkhanid chronicles reported that when Rā’is Muẓaffar proclaimed that he and the Nizari Ismailis of the region were loyal servants of the sultan, Sultan Sanjar confirmed the contested possessions on him.¹⁵⁸ (Cf. Part One:6-V).

Similarly, the major flashpoint with the nascent Nizari movement reported in the Ilkhanid chronicles took place in the *iqṭāʿ* of Yūruntāsh. This amīr “possessed” the region around

Alamut and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s takeover of the fortress brought them into conflict. JT states that Yūruntāsh an *amīr* of Malikshah held the area of Alamut as an *iqṭāʿ* (tax farm). He repeatedly attacked the foot of Alamut and used to massacre those who had [accepted and] submitted to the *daʿwa* of Sayyidnā and laid waste to the area. Since the stores at Alamut had not yet been provisioned [the residents there] were reduced to desperation and hopelessness and resolved to give up [Alamut] to some unattached individual and themselves to depart to the environs. Sayyidnā declared that a message from the court in Cairo had been received from Imam al-Mustanṣir Billāh that “our adherents should not move from that place and that good fortune awaited them there.” Such that the people determined to endure and remain at Alamut; on

¹⁵⁷ JT. pp 131-132

¹⁵⁸ JT pp 116ff

account of these words they named it *Baladat al-Iqbāl* (the Province of Good Fortune).¹⁵⁹ (Cf. Part One:5-I-vii).

Yūruntāsh was unable to dislodge Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's followers from his *iqṭā'* so Sultan Malikshāh

reassigned it and in March 1092/beginning of the year 485,

he sent amir Arslāntāsh to attack Alamut and to subdue and suppress Sayyidnā and his followers. And he, besieged Alamut June 1092/in *Jumādā'l-āwwal* of the same year [485]. At that time with Sayyidnā [in the castle of Alamut] there were no more than 70 men. They had few provisions and on the strength of these meagre provisions they busied themselves in war and fighting the besiegers.¹⁶⁰

Ibn al-Athīr reported that the defenders were down to a ration of three walnuts and a small portion of bread.

Dihdār Bū 'Alī from Zuvāra and Ardistān who was a *dā'i* of Sayyidnā was resident in Qazwīn. Many Qazwīnīs responded to him and similarly many in the district of Ṭālaqān and Kūh-i Bara and in the district of Rayy had submitted and followed the *da'wa* of Sayyidnā and committed themselves to Dihdār Bū 'Alī. Sayyidnā appealed to him for help. From individuals and auxiliaries of Kūh-i Bara, Ṭālaqān and Qazwīn and districts, he [Bū 'Alī] sent some 300 men with weapons and instruments of war to aid Sayyidnā. They advanced on Alamut assisting the residents and defenders from among the people of Rūdbār from outside of the castle who were allies.

One night at the end of *Sha'bān*/October 1092 they undertook a night-attack on Arslāntāsh's army and killed many of them and the remainder retreated in defeat. The Nizaris acquired a lot of booty of arms, grain, goods, meats, and drink; in the castle prices came down. Sultan Malikshāh became concerned about the situation and sought counsel from every advisor.¹⁶¹

The conflict escalated in this way such that the Saljuqs were besieging the Ismailis in the Rūdbār and Quhistān. The villagers attached to the fortresses would recede into the fortress, flee to other regions or be killed. Their farming, crafts and livelihoods were severely harmed by the fighting.

The next section examines the strategic importance of the locations of Nizari fortresses and why their control of regions south of the Caspian was a threat to the Saljuqs.

C. Castellan Politics

¹⁵⁹ JT p. 108; the entirely different relationship between the two reported by ZT is completely at odds with the image of conflict in other texts. ZT. p. 126

¹⁶⁰ JT. p. 109

¹⁶¹ JT p. 109. NB the "Nizaris" not Ismailis and that in the castle food was not distributed but was for sale. Traders supplied the needs of the residents in the castle

Alamut located 70 miles from the Caspian Sea in the Alburz forest steppe region—an ecoregion between a belt of broad and mixed forest near the Sea and grasslands south of this belt—is not at the centre of great agricultural production.¹⁶² Why then did the Saljuqs vigorously and constantly attack the Nizari positions? The primary reason was economic and strategic.

Peter Willey has identified some one hundred and fifteen installations in Iran that were appropriated or built by the Nizaris in Iran. These fortresses, castles and watchtowers south of the Caspian Sea and east of the *Dasht-i Kabīr* (the Great Salt Desert) and the *Dasht-i Lūt* (the empty plains) did not form a contiguous territory; however, they arrayed to provide lines of control.¹⁶³

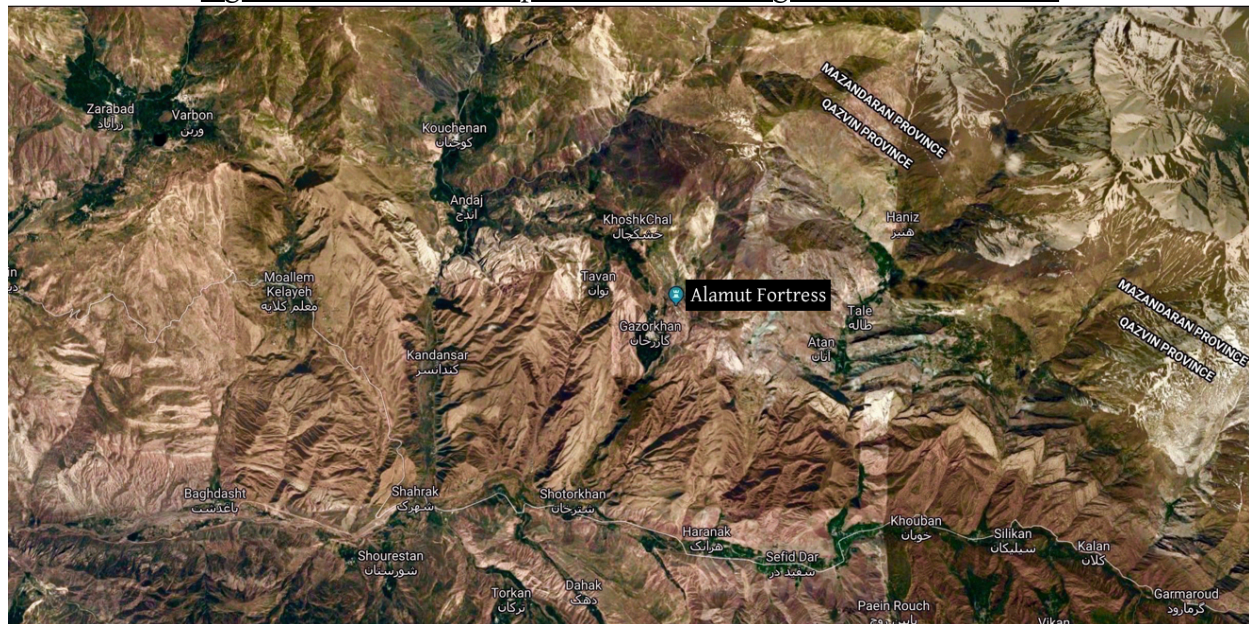
The early acquisitions of Alamut and other principle castles in the Rūdbār and Gilān already allowed the Ismailis capabilities to harass if not control three major trade routes south of the Caspian Sea. The first was along the shores of the Sea between Rasht and Ardabil into the Caucasus in the west connecting Gurgān into northern Khurāsān and Mā warā' al-nahr. The second ran some 100 miles inland connecting Qazwīn to Tabriz and then into Anatolia in the west and Sabzawār, Nīshāpūr into Khurāsān in the east leading to Marw and Herat and beyond.

¹⁶² The major crops in the region according to US Central Intelligence Agency map dated 1978 [used here with a pinch of salt given massive failures in intelligence at the time] were rice, tea, wheat and barley. The Caspian region in Iran became a coveted centre for silk production during the Safavid period, it is possible that mulberry trees were already important or were introduced during the Nizari rule. Fruits and nuts (almonds, pistachios, ...) were significant to agrarian production. Cf. http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/iran_major_crops78.jpg

¹⁶³ Willey, *Castles*. The Nizari installations are listed on pp 270-276 by region: Alamut Valley and the Rudbar (38); Qumes and the South Caspian region (18); Qohistan (north of Qa'in) (12); Qohistan (south and east of Qa'in) (38); Isfahan, Arrajan and other regions (9); as well as Jabal Summaq (9) and Jabal Bahra (15) in Syria. [See Appendix Part Two:1a](#) for map of Nizari installations in Iran

Third, the line of control established over time by the locations of Nizari fortresses permitted control and predation of trade plying north-south to and from the Sea.¹⁶⁴

Figure II.1h: Satellite Map of the Alburz Range Centred on Alamut



The region around Alamut in present day shows small pockets of cultivated land and sparse forests which in pre-modern times might have been thicker. The agrarian production of the region, itself, does not seem worthy of the Saljuq effort to constantly war against its residents. The location was chosen for its strategic remoteness yet proximity to control key trade routes.¹⁶⁵

Beyond the predation and impediment of movement of trade goods, the key reason for the attacks on these fortresses was “sectarian”. The memories of al-Basāsiri’s capture of Baghdad, the defections of powerful amīrs such as Ibrāhīm Īnāl and most of all, the perception that Ismailis were penetrating every stratum of society—especially the upper echelons of the Saljuq court—made these fortresses immediate targets. Before Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ had adequately provisioned Alamut, the castle was under attack.

¹⁶⁴ Hodgson, “IS.” p. 431

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Lambsar+Castle,+Qazvin+Province,+Iran/Qazvin+Province,+دسترسی+به+قلعه+حسن+صبح,+Alamut+Castle,+Iran%E2%80%AD//> [not to scale]

Figure II.1i: Theatre of Nizari-Saljuq Engagements South of the Caspian Sea



The names in green boxes indicate locations that came under Nizari control; the dashed red lines indicate choke points on east-west trade routes and the dashed orange line indicates regions of north-south trade interruption due to the Nizari castellan polity.¹⁶⁶

What was the nature of society and how did individual and group identities function within it? How would an Ismaili loyal to the Fatimid cause fit into society under control of the Saljuqs in the ‘Abbāsid domains? What was their mode of group identity, solidarity and social networking? In this next section, the structure of Nizari society, derived from the chronicle accounts, is analysed. How were the communities under Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ different from the pockets of Ismailis which had existed for many decades before his time?

D. Structure of Communities in the Nizari Polity

¹⁶⁶ source: <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Lamasar+Castle,+Qazvin+Province,+Iran/Qazvin+Province,+دسترسى+به+قلعه+حسن+صباح,+Alamut+Castle,+Iran%E2%80%AD//> [not to scale]

With regard to group identifications, Mottahedeh observed that most of these Near Eastern associations lacked formal internal structure, unless such structure was imposed by a central government. Their leaders were spokesmen, not directors. Entry into such groups was seldom marked by any formal observance, or datable from any specific moment. Men belonged to such groups because they identified themselves and others as belonging to certain accepted categories such as "merchant" or "scholar"; and, in general, they rallied to such groups only when the categories with which they identified were threatened. Even neighborhood factions, in which some historians have hoped to find the basic units of these societies, were only rarely a focus for positive loyalties, the means for sustained and predictable local cooperation. In most cases they were a focus for negative loyalties, a means for local defense. One can hardly say that men participated in society through their membership in such groups.¹⁶⁷

In the case of the Ismailis, it has already been established, from the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā* that process of entry into the community was elaborate and formal in that the neophyte wishing to enter Ismailism had to undertake a process of learning (therefore testing) and finally a formal oath of allegiance to the imam—at least that was the experience of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. (Cf. Part One:6-1). Those born into the community would not have the same bar of entry. Living in a context where the Ismaili imam did not exercise political rule meant that the follower either existed in a state of *taqiyya* (pious dissimulation) or if the circumstances permitted openly as an Ismaili. However, this would entail multiple loyalties in that the Ismaili follower would be subject to the authority of those who lorded over them in their place of abode and a second loyalty to the lordship of the imam of the time (*imām-i zamān*) at whatever remote distance. With exception to a few instances, the Ismailis in Iran existed in a state of socio-cultural and political loyalties to those in control of their immediate localities while their religious loyalty was consonant with their notions of the imam and given to the local hierarchy of the *da'wa* representative of his authority.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Mottahedeh. *Loyalty and Leadership*. p. 4

¹⁶⁸ This dual loyalty: to the nation of citizenship and to the imam of the time is formally addressed in the Constitution of the Ismailis and in as much as the pre-modern Ismaili's loyalty was suspected by their fellow "citizens"; modern day Ismailis also face such questions and in certain contexts, persecution.

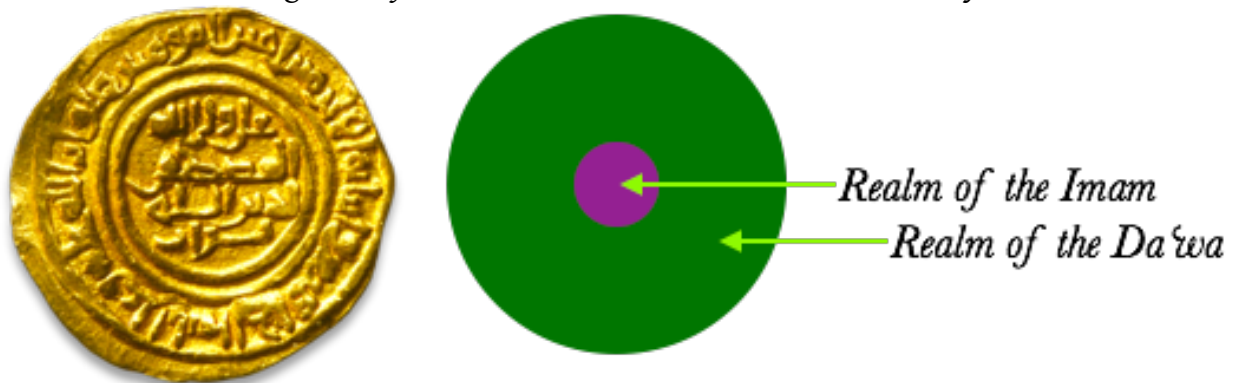
The Ismailis in Rayy, Isfahan and elsewhere had existed in these modes of socio-political and religious identifications for many decades. The shift by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ initiated changes in this not just for those who would join him and his movement but also for those who might remain in the contexts of non-Ismaili rule. The followers who went over to the Realm of the Imam (and after the death of Nizār b. al-Mustaṣṣir, the Realm of the *Dā'ī*) identified with and overtly declared their loyalties to the imam and Ismailism in socio-political as well as religious contexts. Those living in the territories not controlled by Ismailis were forced to either resort to deeper dissimulation or to migrate to the *dar al-ḥijra* (abode of emigration) created by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's *da'wa*. This may have been the greatest bone of contention between the *da'wa* leadership at Isfahan and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. Ḥasan's lament and boast that he would bring down the Saljuqs if only he had two like-minded confreres was for his host Rā'is Abū'l-Faḍl sheer madness but the consequences of such acts were treacherous.

Mottahedeh remarked that “[s]ocial networks are only knit together, and social building blocks are themselves only built, by the fears and inclinations of the individuals who form them. No society can hope to coerce all the people all the time.”¹⁶⁹ The bold strategies implemented by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ coerced the larger body of Ismailis in Isfahan and elsewhere to follow suit. The well-placed Ismailis in Isfahan moved to the castles—Rā'is Muḥaffar moved to Girdkūh castle and Rā'is Abū'l-Faḍl came to Alamut and acknowledged Ḥasan's success. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh, who most likely headed the *da'wa* in Isfahan acquired Shāhdiz castle and was brutally killed when the Saljuqs recaptured the fort. While these efforts may initially have been part of a Fatimid Eastern policy, the lack lustre abilities of Cairo to project power in the face of the Saljuq strength meant that any efforts in Iran would stand alone.

¹⁶⁹ *Loyalty and Leadership* p. 5

The second consequence was that after several pogroms against the Ismailis, the death of Nizār in 1095/488 and the fall of Shāhdiz in 1107/500, Nizari activities gravitated away from the major cities and the loci for action shifted into more rural and remote contexts with attempts to raid and capture cities. The effort to move people from the realm of the *da'wa* into the realm of the Fatimid *dawla* failed and after the break with the Fatimid Empire, the Nizaris became a *da'wa* without a *dawla*. The Realm of the Dā'ī/Ḥujja during the period of *satr* collapsed into a schematic model of two concentric domains:

Figure II.1j: Two Concentric Realms of Nizari Authority



Again, it is a fortuitous coincidence that the schematic mirrors Nizari coinage. This coin dates from the reign of Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihī'l-salām and was minted in Alamut in 1162/557.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ I owe the concept of concentric realms of authority to Michael Brett with whom I studied the “Age of the Fatimids” in 1984-1985 at SOAS.

The coin is from the David Collection retrieved from: <https://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/dynasties/seljuks/coins/c538>

OBVERSE

Field: *Lā ilāh / illā Allāh / Muḥammad / rasūl Allāh*

“There is no god but God, Muḥammad is the messenger of God”

Margin: *Bismallāh ḍuriba hādhā'l-dinār bi-Baladat al-Iqbāl Kursī al-Daylam sana sab'a wa khamsīn khamsmī'a*

“In the name of God, this dinar was struck in the Province of Good Fortune, Kursi al-Daylam, year five hundred fifty seven”

REVERSE

The Nizaris vied to establish a contiguous territorial state but their Castellan polity would remain as a string of fortresses from Syria to Afghanistan until extinguished by the Mongols. What was the nature and constitution of this Nizari polity?

1. STRUCTURE OF COMMUNITIES IN THE NIZARI POLITY

Very little information is available to describe the nature and constitution of Nizari polity. The contours can be traced and synthesised from peripheral references in the historiographical and doctrinal sources. These contours changed over time as the *da'wa* in Iran—morphed from a Qarmaṭī orientation to a clandestine pro-Fatimid Ismaili mission in 'Abbāsīd territories in the late 10th/4th century, then to a totally independent movement drawing on the authority and charisma of men such as Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ at the end of the 11th/5th century into open conflict with the Saljuqs. This realm of the *dā'īs* would change again, as will be discussed in the next chapters, when the Nizari Ismailis construed their imamate coming out of *satr* (concealment) into *kashf* (manifestation) in the middle of the 12th/6th century. The realm of the imams lasted almost a hundred years until their alliance with the Mongols collapsed and Hūlāgū's invasion vanquished the Nizari polity. The schematic hierarchy of the *da'wa* (*ḥudūd-i dīn*), described in the second section of this chapter, was collapsed and reconstituted over this arc of time. In this section, the structure of the Nizari polity is mapped to illustrate the nature of the people who were construed by the Saljuq establishment as a challenge and threat.

In the early 12th/6th century as Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was busy consolidating his base after the death of Nizār b. al-Mustaṣṣir. There is no indication in the historical sources of the introduction of

Field: 'Alī walī Allāh / al-Muṣṭafā / li-dīn Allāh / Nizār

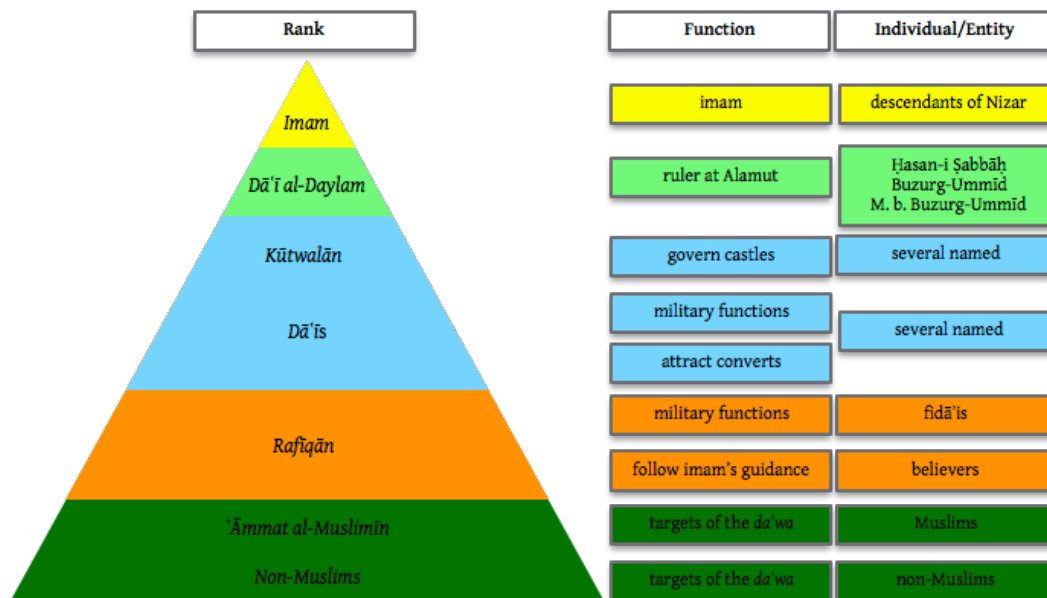
“Alī is the friend of God; the Chosen one of God's faith, Nizār”

Margin: *Amīr al-mu'minīn ṣalawāt Allāh 'alayhī wa 'alā abā'ihī al-ṭāhirīn wa abnā'ihī al-akramīn*

“Commander of the Faithful, God's blessings on him and his purified ancestors (lit. fathers) and his generous descendants (lit. sons)”

hierarchies of the Fatimid era in the regions. It is likely that the various functions of the *ḥudūd-i dīn* were carried out by functionaries but were not picked up by the Sunni chronicles. The term *ḥujja* (proof, guarantor), for example, is rarely found in the early Nizari contexts. The absence of its use in the Ikhanid chronicles may be because the term was not used in their sources, particularly the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*. It is plausible that someone other than Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ occupied such a position—possibly ‘Abd al-Malik ‘Attāsh and after him Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Malik ‘Attāsh—and therefore the usage was avoided in Ḥasan’s hagiographical biography. The most important reason for this was that the *da‘wa* must have been going through a phase of finding its footing and appropriating and redefining the doctrinal inheritances after the break with Cairo. The products of such reformulations are apparent in defined borders of communities found in doctrinal tracts from after the declaration of the Qiyāma in 1164/559.

Figure II.1k: Early Nizari *Ḥudūd al-dīn* described in the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā*



Before the declaration of the Qiyāma, the polity consisted of the imam descended from Nizār b. al-Mustanšir at the apex, who according to Nizari belief was in *satr* (concealment) and was living clandestinely. The second tier was occupied by Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and his successors,

Buzurg-Ummīd and Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummīd—the *de facto* sovereigns of the polity. The commanders of the other fortresses were subordinate to the ruler at Alamut—such as Ḥusayn Qā'inī in Quhistān¹⁷¹, Kiyā Buzurg-Ummīd at Lamasar and Ra'īs Muẓaffar at Girdkūh. (Cf. Part One:6-IV). These castellans were at the same time *dā'īs*, administrators and military commanders. Buzurg-Ummīd was designated by Ḥasan to replace himself at the head of the polity. The chronicles report

he called Kiyā Buzūrg-Ummīd from Lamasar and conferred him as his successor and appointed him in place of himself. He placed Diḥdār [Abū] 'Alī Ardistānī on the right and entrusted him with the *da'wa* and *dīwān*.¹⁷² He placed Ḥasan son of Ādam Qaṣrānī on the left and Kiyā Bā Ja'far, who was the head of the military, he sat in front and made a testament that until the time that the imam comes to rule his own polity (*imām ba sar-i mulk-i khish āyad*) the four of them would work together and in consultation.¹⁷³

From this it can be determined that already by 1124/518 the polity required multiple people occupying different leadership positions for its administration. The new leader's right-hand man was in charge of the *da'wa* as well as the chancellery, judiciary and exchequer functions. Ḥasan b. Ādam Qaṣrānī's function is not specified; Kiyā Bā Ja'far would coordinate the military functions across the different fortresses.

Numerous *dā'īs* are named in the sources although their functions are not specified—while the Fatimid era divisions of responsibilities of different *dā'īs* may have remained operative in larger centres, most *dā'īs* historically would have carried all the functions of attracting converts, teaching them and initiating them by accepting their pledge and oaths. Under Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and subsequently, some of the *dā'īs* also had military functions. After the Qiyāma, the rulers of Quhistānī fortresses were given the title *muḥtasham* which involved the roles of ruler, administrator and scholarly *dā'ī*.

¹⁷¹ TJG. p. 209-210; HWC. p. 679-680; (JT. p. 123-124 and ZT. p. 145 are identical)

¹⁷² TJG. p. 124 دعوت دیوان

¹⁷³ JT. p. 133

Teaching was central to the Nizaris since they were widely known as Ta'limiyya. Though this implies authoritative teaching about the greater mysteries, it is unlikely that modern distinctions of religious and other knowledge were separate in this teaching and learning. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, according to Qashani, busied himself with teaching; his son was known as Ustād Ḥusayn implying a scholarly function. The libraries that Alamut and other fortresses are famed for housed scholars and their students. Was this the function of *dā'īs* or were there teachers who were not *dā'īs*? How and by whom were such teachers and *dā'īs* remunerated? This type of information is simply not available.

The chronicles speak of the Nizaris as *Rafīqān* (pl. of *rafīq* friend, comrade);¹⁷⁴ this includes the ordinary Nizari as well as those of other ranks. In the account of the reign of Buzurg-Ummīd, there is a report of a raid in which the *Rafīqān*

attacked Ṭaram up to the valley (*rūdbār*) of Fārāb and they took 250 horses, 4000 sheep, and 20 loaded mules, and killed 20 Qazwīnīs. That evening they remained in Ṭaram and killed 100 of the Turks. They took a lot of booty and divided it: two shares for the cavalry and one for the infantry. They (the *Rafīqān*) gave their own share to the *da'wa*. In this manner they captured the fort of Lashkah.¹⁷⁵

This report suggests that the Nizaris deployed cavalry and infantry in this attack and that some of these soldiers may not have been Nizari. The Nizaris among them did not take their share of the booty but instead gave it over to the *da'wa*. The sources do not provide any information on how the soldiers were recruited, trained and paid nor how the contributions to the *da'wa* would be dispensed. Another report recorded that in 1092/485, when Arslāntāsh's intense siege of Alamut was broken one night

at the end of Sha'bān/October 1092 they (the *Rafīqān*) undertook a night-attack on Arslāntāsh's army and killed many of them and the remainder retreated. The Nizaris acquired a lot booty of

¹⁷⁴ Steingass, "Steingass." p. 582 "أ رفیق rafīq, A friend, companion, colleague, accomplice, associate, assistant, partner, ally; a laic member of the Ismailite sect;--*rafīqi jihād (safar)*, A fellow-soldier, a brother-in-arms;--*rafīqi ghār*, An intimate friend; a confidant; an accomplice."

¹⁷⁵ JT. p. 143

arms, grain, goods, meats, and drink; in the castle prices came down. Sultan Malikshah was concerned about the situation and sought counsel from every advisor.¹⁷⁶

The booty did not go into a communal repository to be distributed but that these resources, even at the castle of Alamut, were traded. The villagers living near the Nizari fortresses traded their produce and products not just among themselves but also engaged in trade. Jūzjānī recorded traveling to Nizari territories in Quhistān to reestablish trading after the Chingissid invasion of Khurāsān; he wrote that this votary

who is Minhāj-i-Sarāj, the writer of this *Ṭabaqāt*, and author of this history, upon three different times, had occasion to travel into that part [Quhistān] on a mission. The first occasion was in the year 621 H. (1224 CE), from the fortress of Tūlak, after Khurāsān had become cleared of the Mughal [Mongol] forces, on account of the scarcity of clothing, and dearth of some requisites, which had run out in consequence of the irruption of the infidels; and people were distressed for necessities of life. At the request of Malik Tāj-ud-Dān, Ḥasan-i-Sālār, Khar-post, the author proceeded from the fortress of Tūlak to Isfirār, in order to open the route for *kārwāns*. From thence he proceeded towards Qā'in, and from that place to the fort of Sar-i Takht, and Jowārsher, and Farmān-dih of the territory of the Quhistān. At that time the Muḥtashim (sic correct as Muḥtasham) [of the Mulāḥida] was Shihāb-i-Manṣūr, Abū'l-Faṭḥ.¹⁷⁷

The castellans such as Muḥtasham Shihāb-i Manṣūr played an immense role and with great autonomy but in coordination with the headquarters at Alamut. (Cf. Part One:4-I-A). They secured their rule and endeavoured to expand the territorial control. They took and held

prisoners and after Chingissid invasions provided refuge for '*ulamā*'. Jūzjānī continued his assemblies contained some of the most distinguished of the '*ulamā*' of Khurāsān, such as that Imām of the Age, Afzal-ud-Dīn, the Bamiānī, and Imām Shams-ud-Dīn, Khusraw-Shāhī, and other '*ulamā*' of Khurāsān, who had come to him [the Muḥtasham]; and he had treated all of them with honour and reverence, and showed them much kindness. They stated to this effect, that, during those first two or three years of anarchy in Khurāsān, one thousand honorary dresses, and seven hundred horses, with trappings, had been received from his treasury and stables by '*ulamā*' and poor strangers.¹⁷⁸

In addition to those who were pledged to the Nizari imams, the castellan polities were also home to non-Ismaili communities. Some were allies and others opposed and in this era of factional sovereignties, the allegiances were fleeting. In the regions south of the Caspian Sea the populace also consisted of Zaydi Shi'is, Sunnis and some remnant communities of Zoroastrians. As already mentioned above, Benjamin of Tudela reported that significant Jewish

¹⁷⁶ JT p. 109

¹⁷⁷ Jūzjānī. *Ṭabaqāt*. pp 182-183ff; Jūzjānī. *Ṭabaqāt-Tr.* pp 1197ff

¹⁷⁸ Jūzjānī. *Ṭabaqāt*. pp 182-183ff; Jūzjānī. *Ṭabaqāt-Tr.* pp 1197ff

populations also existed in Nizari territories and they were allied with and fought along the Nizaris. (Cf. Part One:5-III).

All the populations under Nizari rule were not permanently pacified; periodically conflicts flared up. In the account of Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummīd, JT recorded a revolt by neo-Madakī movement. The Nizari chronicler, ‘Abd al-Malik, narrated that the leaders of this revolt synthesised elements Shi‘i and Zoroastrian beliefs and promulgated antinomian practices—many of these accusations were hurled at the Ismailis themselves by the Sunni polemicists and historians.¹⁷⁹ (Cf. Part One:2). Another flare-up occurred among the Zaydīs in Gilān—a certain Bā Hāshim ‘Alavī claimed the Zaydī imamate in Daylamān and Khurāsān and took up arms against the Nizaris under Buzurg Ummīd. (Cf Part Two:2-III-A). Suffice it to say that the territories controlled by the Nizaris consisted of their adherents inter-mixed with non-Ismailis who cooperated with them and there were also groups who opposed them. These groups were severely treated; in the two examples given here, the first was a reversion to pre-Islamic Persianate religious practices and the second was a Shi‘i threat to the Nizari claims of imamate—according to the chronicles the leaders of both movements were burnt.

Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s policies and action forced the Ismailis, especially in northern Iran, to precipitate out of their communities in the same manner after the claim of imamate by the future Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mahdī around 899/286, the disparate pockets of the Ismailitic followers in ‘Abbāsīd domains were first forced to precipitate out in favour of his claims or to come out in opposition. Then a decade later, after the establishment of the Fatimid Empire, all people suspected of Ismaili affiliations but living outside of their control were treated as Fatimid agents regarded with suspicion by the local powers. In Iran two centuries later such

¹⁷⁹ JT. p. 153

claims were made by *dā'īs* in the name a concealed imam. The endeavour to carve out a Nizari state succeeded only in creating a polity connecting a string of fortresses. Outside of the areas of direct Nizari control, their adherents—especially in large urban areas—persisted much in the same way as Ismailis had done for many decades. As in the Fatimid case, in the wake of the establishments of the multi-castellan polity by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, the communities of Ismailis, such as in Isfahan, where the critical mass had allowed certain levels of uncloaking of *taqiyya*, were forced to flee to areas controlled by Nizaris when attacked.

This type of persecution and potential for attack may have been the added impetus for changes in policies by the entire Iranian *da'wa* hierarchy whereby even Aḥmad b. 'Aṭṭāsh acquired fortresses around Isfahan. The followers of Nizari Ismailism unable to separate themselves out continued to invoke *taqiyya* and dissimulated their beliefs where they remained “citizens” of the Saljuq-‘Abbāsī domains but gave allegiance to the Nizari imamate.

V. The Realm of the *Dā'ī*

Turchin wrote that three states founded by the nomadic

Berbers broke through the 1 Mm² [million square miles] threshold: the Fatimids [4.1 Mm²], the Almoravids [1.0 Mm²], and the Almohads [2.0 Mm²], and these achievements were possible only because these states started, or moved their center of gravity outside the Maghreb. The Fatimids originated in Tunisia in 909, when the Kutama Berbers were converted to the Shia Islam, but very soon they conquered Egypt and moved the capital to Cairo (in 969). It was the agricultural wealth of Egypt that financed their expansion into the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula.¹⁸⁰

The Fatimids, when they conquered Egypt, were effectively a xenocracy consisting of a ruling religious and military elite of Arab and nomadic Berber origins. They were able to transition into a sedentary agrarian power since they harnessed the administrative capabilities not only

¹⁸⁰ Turchin, “A Theory for the Formation of Large Agrarian Empires.” Turchin’s macro-analysis needs modification since nomadic empires, once established, become sedentary and follow the norms of sedentarised urban polities based on extraction of revenue from commercial and agrarian production. The theory must also accommodate an intermediary state of hybridised nomadic-sedentary governance. The framework postulated by Turchin in his several works is nonetheless extremely useful in conceptualising the growth of empires.

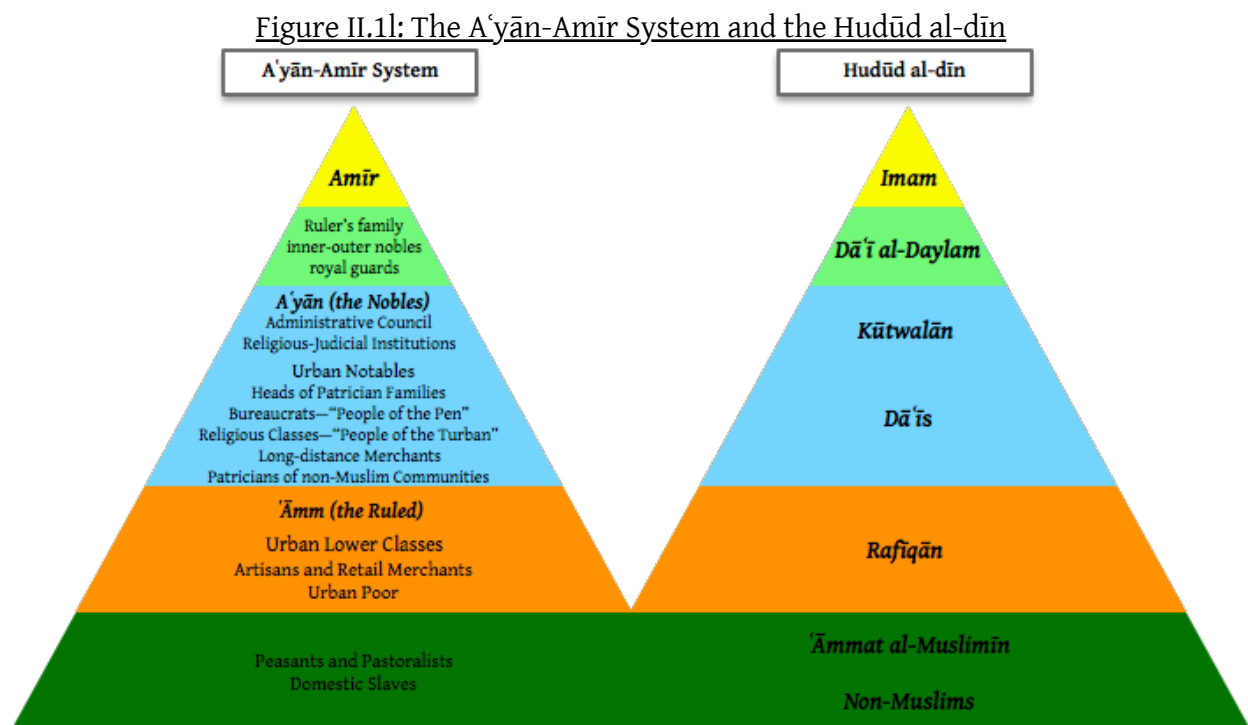
of their “imported” military and clerical cadres but those of their newly subject Sunni Arab, Coptic Christian and Jewish communities as well. Further imports of military and scholars were a source of renewed vigour and vexations, in some cases, for the Fatimid enterprise.

Similarly, in the 11th/5th century, the Saljuqs, broke across the Āmū Daryā and began to build their massive empire [3.9 Mm²] as they conquered the Iranian plateau and established their administrative centre in Isfahan.¹⁸¹ The difference is that while the Fatimids were able to marginalise their nomadic elements principally to military service, the Saljuq themselves were the ruling nomadic military class and they continued to rely on their “imported” Persianate bureaucrats and ‘*ulamā*’. Their transition to sedentary ruling patterns was also a more prolonged process since control of their territories was more fractious due, in part, to their inherently decentralising corporate dynastic, appanage and tax-farming systems, and the persistent foreignising tendencies especially related to their Turkic language compared to the Perso-Arabic used by the majority of their subjects. Even the class of imported bureaucrats and scholars maintained their distinction and privilege over their local equivalents for several decades.

The Saljuq establishment, in essence, was displacing the uppermost echelons of the *a’yān-amīr* system. (Cf. Part One:1-III). In their confrontation with the Nizari Ismailis they ran into a system of “state formation” that was completely dissimilar. Metaphorically, while the Saljuqs were changing the roof of the building, the Nizaris were bringing the entire edifice down and were attempting to rebuild from the foundation up. In the revolutionary phase, at least, the

¹⁸¹ The massive Fatimid and Saljuq empires went through exponential growth when the first crossed the Nile River and the second the Āmū Daryā (Oxus River). This is a clear demonstration of Marshall Hodgson’s Nile-to-Oxus (which I shorten to Nilox) geographic framework for understanding Islamic history.

Ismailis were attempting to dislodge the *a'yān-amīr* system in its entirety and sought to replace it with structures of the *ḥudūd-i dīn*. The result was that the *'ulamā'* classes—the Sunni ideological vanguard—were agitated as the survey of a small portion of *radd* and *fīraq* literature demonstrated. (Cf. Part One:2). This agitation supported by likeminded wealthy merchants and high level bureaucrats sought to incite the Turkic *amīrs* and military to action against what they saw as the scourge of the Ismaili *da'wa*. In response to massacres and massive attacks, the under-resourced Nizaris fought back with conventional and asymmetric warfare as well as the art of persuasion at the core of the *da'wa*.



The Nizari model of governance was very different from the Saljuq establishment since their polity was founded not on invasion of an army or a xenocracy but rather a revolution mounted by proselytised followers in the name of the Ismaili imam or his agents. The Ismaili "states" in Yemen, Multan, the Qarmaṭī polity in Bahrain, the Fatimid Empire in Ifrīqiya, and the amīrates

in Badakhshan all had this quality. In the case of Nizari polities in Iran and Syria, for much longer periods the Ismailis had existed in the realms of other rulers—often under the guise of *taqiyya*. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's achievement was that he was able to trigger the proselytic movement to turn revolutionary and aspire to take on the powers of empire.¹⁸²

Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Shī'i spent eighteen years to win over the Kutāma Berbers to build a critical mass of followers and launch the Fatimid cause, similarly Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ spent eight years to establish the castellan polity centred on Alamut.¹⁸³ In the context of Iran, the Ismaili *da'wa* had focussed both on rural agrarian and urban populations. Ḥasan's activities may have increased the non-urban focus while the *dā'īs* prior to him may have been more active in the cities—at least that is what the sources indicate. Their targets included the 'Abbāsids, the local Iranian dynasties and aristocracy, the Buyids and then the Saljuqs and the local populace. The vigorous emergence of Saljuqs coincided with the attempts to create an “eastern pincer” of the pro-Fatimid Ismaili *da'wa*—if such centralised processes and monolithic entities are conceivable. The succession crisis at the death of al-Mustansir and the cleavage of Iranian Ismailism resulted in the Nizari revolt adrift as a *Da'wa* without a *Dawla*.

In this chapter I have postulated that Muḥammad b. Ismail could not have been construed as the Mahdī at the death of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. This was an outcome of his long tenure as imam, the

¹⁸² The magnitude of this is conceivable in present-day terms if pockets of Soviet sympathisers were imagined to exist in the West during the height of the Cold War or vice versa. Every instrument of government would have been brought to bare to eliminate the “contagion” of the enemy. The Ismaili presence in Rayy, Isfahan and northern Iran can be contemplated to be tantamount to the existence of group in Moscow or Leningrad during the 1970-80s, not simply attuned to Western ideals but working to overthrow the Soviet government or a group of communists in Washington, DC aiming to establish a Soviet style republic in the United States of America. Even if such groups were not directly associated with the perceived foreign “enemy” powers, the reactions of the apparatus of government would have been swift and harsh.

¹⁸³ Daftary. *Ismailis*, pp 126-128

coincidence of the invocation of *satr* (concealment of the imamate) and the fact that he was the last imam to be publicly known. The former view is a result of compactions of history viewed from a later perspective. I proposed that from the time of the imam-caliph al-Mu'izz, the Fatimids espoused what I call the "Eastern Policy" which had three interrelated components: first, to win over divergent Ismailitic groups to Fatimid Ismailism; second, to increase adherents to the *da'wa*; and third, to increase territory under Fatimid control. Further that the success of the *da'wa* in Iran would have amounted to an eastern arm of a pincer to encircle the Saljuq-'Abbāsid establishment. Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's journey to Egypt and efforts after his return to Iran were part of this endeavour. The death of al-Mustansir and the killing of Nizār, who may have been understood by many to be the heir, cleaved the Ismailis in Iran from the Fatimid Empire.

I argued that the Ismailis in Iran remained loyal to Nizār since the upper echelons of the *da'wa* in the *jazīra* understood him to be the *walī al-'ahd* (designated heir) to the Fatimid caliphate and the holder of the *naṣṣ* (specific designation) to the Ismaili imamate. The deathbed designation proclaimed by the *wazīr* al-Afḍal was seen by them to be illegitimate and unacceptable. The followers of the *da'wa* remained loyal to the line of imams descended from Nizār who were believed to be in *satr* (concealment).

I proposed that the developments in the early Nizari *da'wa* were influenced by three vectors; namely, the cleavage of the nascent Nizari Ismailis from the Fatimid *da'wa*, the factional contestation within the Ismaili communities in Iran and the responses to the Sunni challenges and the Saljuq establishment. I demonstrated that in the reports of Ḥasan's activities after his return to Iran and silences about events in Isfahan, there are traces of friction with existing

hierarchy of the *da'wa*. I concluded that the Saljuq xenocracy consisting of nomadic Turks, Persianate bureaucrats and *'ulamā'* from the East engaged in a long process of indigenising and sedentarising was confronted in Iran by the autochthonous attempt to consolidate and expand sparse and scattered centres of local power into a territorial polity attributing sovereignty to the Nizari Ismaili imamate and aiming to establish a Shi'i theocracy. This tumultuous engagement was characterised by what I call “fractional sovereignties” on the one hand and the multi-castellan polity of the Nizari Ismailis on the other.

In the next chapter I examine early Nizari doctrinal elaboration in these contexts. I postulate that the doctrinal “revolution” initiated by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was terminated by what I am calling a “counter-revolution” of the *Qiyāma* (1164/559). While the influence of the Fatimid Empire among the Ismailis in Iran had waned by the middle of the 12th/6th century, the absence of the imam led to contests among groups I have labelled *satrists* and *ḡuhūrists*. The former persevered in the absence of the concealed imam while the latter strove for the manifestation of the imam. The discourse leading to the *Qiyāma* was doctrinally posited in three directions: in contrast with Fatimid Ismailism, debates within Nizari Ismailism and rejection of non-Ismaili religious polemics. I use the meagre set of published works from the period and doctrinal tracts, which have not been previously studied, that I have edited from manuscripts and translated for this research to study the early Nizari notions of authority and eschatology.

2. Dawr al-satr—Realm of the Dā'ī

THE BIOGRAPHY OF ḤASAN-I ŠABBĀḤ (d. 1124/518), the founder of the Nizari Ismaili polity in Iran (fl 1090-1256/483-654), reads that when a group of his followers put together his genealogy and presented it to him, he rejected it. “He washed it in water and did not consent to it and said: “I would rather be a personal slave of the Imam (*banda-i khāṣṣ-i imām*) than illegitimately (*nākhalaf*) the son of the Imam (*farzand-i nākhalaf-i imām*).”¹ Juwayni reported a portion of this passage which is identical and more fully quoted without the negative construction in both Rashid al-Din and Qashani:

در سرگذشت آورده‌اند که وقتی جماعتی از متبعان او احوال پدران او بنوشتند و بنزدیک او آوردند از راه تصنع و تلبیس بدان رضا نداد و آن اوراق را در آب شست TJG p 188 It is related in the <i>Sarguzasht</i> that some of his followers wrote an account of his forefathers and brought it to him; but from a desire to deceive and misrepresent he would not sanction it and washed the pages in water. HWC p. 667
وقتی جماعتی از متابعان او انساب او نوشتند و بر او عرض کردند، او آنرا در آب شست و بدان رضا نداد و گفت: من بنده خاص امام باشم دوست‌تر از آن دارم که فرزند ناخلف امام باشم. JT p. 97 Once a group of his followers composed his genealogy and presented it to him. He did not accept it and destroyed it (lit: washed it in water) saying: “I would rather be a personal slave of the Imam (<i>banda-i khāṣṣ-i imām</i>) than illegitimately (<i>nākhalaf</i>) the son of the Imam (<i>farzand-i nākhalaf-i imām</i>).”
در سرگذشت او آورده‌اند که وقتی از متبعان انساب او نوشتند و بر رای او عرض کردند و او استرضا ننمود و آن اوراق را در آب شست و گفت: من بنده خاص امام باشم دوست‌تر دارم که فرزند ناخلف امام باشم. ZT p. 120 In the <i>Sarguzasht</i> it is related that once a group of his followers composed his genealogy and presented it to him. He did not accept it and destroyed it (lit: washed that paper in water) saying: “I would rather be a personal slave of the Imam (<i>banda-i khāṣṣ-i imām</i>) rather than illegitimately the son of the Imam (<i>farzand-i nākhalaf-i imām</i>).”

Following Juwayni’s characterisation of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, Hodgson paraphrased this passage of the JT as: “[w]hen his followers wrote up a genealogy for him in the usual elegant style, he is said to have thrown it into the water, remarking that he would rather be the imām’s favored

¹ JT p. 97 and ZT p. 120

servant than his degenerate son.”² This key sentence is preceded in the paragraph in JT and ZT by the genealogy of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ naming seven and nine generations of his antecedents, respectively and the note that he was descended from the Ḥimyar rulers of Yemen. (Cf. Part One:5-II). Like Hodgson, other scholars have rendered the word *nākhalaḥ* as “degenerate” and without further consideration of the peculiarity of this sentence have moved on.³ Why did the Nizari chronicler use of *nākhalaḥ* from the Arabic root خلف (*khalafa*) in the sentence? In Persian, the borrowed root with the negative prefix allows for a semantic range where the ordinary

² OA p. 51 In his footnote he added: “Not necessarily his illegitimate son, as Defrémery, JA, ser. 5. XV (1860), 160 (but not Jourdain from Mirkhwānd) translates it.” C. Defrémery, “Documents sur l’histoire des Ismaéliens ou Batinien de la Perse, plus connus sous le nom d’Assassins,” *Journal Asiatique* sér. 5, t. 15 (1860). p. 160 n1 reads: “Ahmed, fils de Mohammed albokhâry, raconte la même chose dans son *Kitâb téwârikh âli âlem*; pui il me ces paroles dans la bouch de Haçan: «J’aime mieux être l’esclave particulier de l’imâm que son fils illégitime.» (Cf. Mirkhond, *Notice des manuscrits*, t. IX, p. 202. 203)

³ OA p. 51

During my research at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in 2013, I discovered the Gujarati edition *Ismaili Heroes* published by the Ismailia Association for Pakistan originally in 1972-3 in which Shaykh Muḥammad Iqbāl, the author of this biography of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ wrote: પરંતુ જ્યારે લોકોએ તેમની વંશાવળીને હઝરત ઇમામ અલયહિસ્સલામના પવિત્ર વંશવેલા સાથે સાંકળી લેવાનો પ્રયત્ન કર્યો તો સચ્ચિદિના એ ફરમાવ્યું: મન બન્દ એ ખાસિએ (sic) ઇમામ બાશમ દુસ્ત તર અઝ આન દારમ; કિ ફરઝન્દે નાખલ્હે (sic) ઇમામ બાશમ. અર્થાત્: હું ઇમામ અલયહિસ્સલામનો ખોતો વંશવારસ બનવાને બદલે મૌલાનો ખાસ ગુલામ બનવાનું વધુ પસંદ કરું છું.

(However, when people proposed to link his genealogy to the holy lineage of the imam, peace be upon him, Sayyid-nā said: “Man banda-yi khāsi-yi (sic) imām bāsham dust-tar az ān dāram kī farzand-i nākhalf-i (sic) imām bāsham”. Meaning: I prefer to be a special servant of our Lord (Mawlano khas gulam) than be a false descendant of the imam, peace be upon him (imām alayhīsalāmno khoto wanswāras))

The English edition reads: “However, when people began to mix up Hasan bin Sabbah's ancestry with that of Imam, he himself is reported to have said: “Instead of becoming an unlawful descendant of Imam I would prefer to be his devoted servant.” *The Great Ismaili Heroes: Contains the Life Sketches and the Works of Thirty Great Ismaili Figures* (Karachi, Pakistan: H.S.H. Prince Aly S. Khan Cology Religious Night School, 1973).

This, perhaps, might be the only other person in eight-hundred years who has thought along these lines; however, he too moved past this sentence without any further analysis.

usage has the meanings of degenerate, unworthy, ignoble and wicked on the one hand—as read by Juwayni and all pre-modern and modern scholars.⁴ On the other hand, the Arabic root خلف has meanings of succession, following, similarity and substitution.⁵ Did the Nizari chronicler record this sentence and use this word to have different meanings to different audiences? Reading *nākhalaḥ* as “degenerate” lends no particular depth of meaning to the sentence; however, “illegitimately”, in the phrase *farzand-i nākhalaḥ-i imām*, transforms the sentence from an allusion to Ḥasan’s steadfastness into a doctrinal shattering. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ did not simply reject the genealogy written for him in the “usual elegant style”. In the reported speech he emphatically repudiated the genealogy that would render him as the imam.

This group of Ḥasan’s followers proposed a breach of the central belief of Shi’i Islam and long-established Ismaili theories of imamate. The imam had to be a descendant of ‘Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib (d. 661/40) in the line of Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (d. after 750/132). The Ḥimyarī genealogy noted in every account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ indicates that he was not even remotely an ‘Alid. The consequences of this breach were so profound that the Nizari chronicler and the Ilkhanid historians kept this interesting sentence in their accounts—which for eight centuries has been regarded as an inconsequential curiosity. How is it that this group of Shi’i followers sought to

⁴ Steingass: نا خلف *nā-khalaḥ*, Degenerate, ignoble, spurious, villainous, dastardly; wicked, vicious (boy).

Hayyim: خلف (*khalaḥ*) Adjective-Noun A. 1. A successor. A substitute. Posterity. By ext. A son. 2. Worthy of his father, good. Ex. فرزند خلف a good son, a son worthy of his father, a true successor. [(*akhlaḥ*) اخلاف = Plural] Compare سلف

فرزند ناخلف An unworthy (or posterity), unworthy children.

⁵ Hans Wehr Ed. IV p. 297; Penrice p. 44; Lane Lexicon p. 792

cast Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, a non-ʿAlid, as their Ismaili Shiʿi imam? What does this say about their context and doctrines?

I. Ismaili Thought at the End of the Shiʿi Centuries

At the beginning of the 12th/5-6th century, as the Nizari movement began to crystallise, efforts were underway that would, over the course of time, undermine the attainments and influence of the most extensive period of Shiʿi rule of the Islamicate domains. The coalitions of *ʿulamāʾ* and bureaucrats, in many cases from Iran and Khurāsān, who worked in the Saljuq-ʿAbbāsīd establishments, began to lay new foundations of Sunni Islam. With the end of the Fatimid Caliphate, later in the same century, long-lasting Shiʿi rule would not emerge until the rise of the Safawids (fl. 1501-1736/906-1148) four centuries later. In this period, the nascent Nizari *daʿwa* faced pendulous shifts as the circle of Islam became more narrowly defined and they were excluded from it.

As I have argued in the previous chapter (Cf. Part Two:1), the development of the early Nizari Ismaili thought has to be viewed in the context of three phenomena. The first was a continuing differentiation and finally the total cleavage of the Ismaili *daʿwa* in Iran from the Fatimids. The second was the local discourse which responded to the increasing Sunni castigation in the context of the socio-political and religious struggles between the Ismailis and the crystallising Sunni establishment under the ʿAbbāsīds-Saljuqs. The third was the eschatological aspirations and doctrinal elaborations by the Ismailis in Iran. The doctrines of *naṣṣ*, *taʿlīm* and *satr-kashf* were of extremely important for the Nizaris. In this chapter I examine these doctrines in three sections.

In the first section I analyse the doctrine of *naṣṣ* which was central to the Shi'i conception of imamate. While initially the doctrine of *naṣṣ* was elaborated to support the claims of the descendants of Ḥusayn b. 'Alī to post-prophetic authority as the Shi'i imams, in the 12th/6th century it was deployed primarily in the discourse between the Nizari-Musta'lian factions. The *da'wa* in Iran, without any known exceptions, favoured the succession of Nizār b. al-Mustaṣṣir. How did the Nizaris develop the concept of *naṣṣ* and what was its function in the period of concealment of the imams?

In section two I examine the related doctrine of *ta'līm* (authoritative teaching of the imams) which has been associated with Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and has been studied as it was deployed by his followers against their opponents. I have argued that Shahrastānī's connection of the doctrine solely to Ḥasan and his building of the "new summons" (*al-da'wa al-jadīda*) is not to be relied upon (Part One:6-IV-B). In this section I trace this doctrine back to the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Manṣūr. In addition to the framing in Shi'i-Sunni discourse—such as the attacks against the Ismailis by al-Ghazālī, I examine how Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and his followers might have also used the notions of *ta'līm* against fellow Ismailis and Nizaris.

In section three I study groups of Ismailis I have called Satrists and Ṣūhūrists. During the period of satr, some groups vied to bring about the urgent manifestation of their candidate who bore the *naṣṣ* and was the source of *ta'līm* and salvation (*ṣūhūrists*) while their opponents vied to continue in the absence of the imam (*satrists*). I apply the DNA (double narrative analyses) approaches to Ilkhanid era historical sources to analyse how these groups attempted to proclaim the imamate of their candidate. The *ṣūhūrists* won out with the declaration of the *Qiyāma*. Why did their factions advocate for the manifestation of soteriological authority even

in jeopardy of Ismaili theories of imamate? How did issues of *naṣṣ* factor into these processes? Why did coinage continue to be issued for several decades in the name of the deceased Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir? In addition to the Ilkhanid era sources I draw upon the published Nizari doctrinal texts and most importantly, three treatises I have newly edited and translated for this research.

II. Naṣṣ—Designation of the Bearer of the Imamate

The imams Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq advanced the concept of *naṣṣ* to constrain the succession of post-prophetic authority among the Ḥusaynid ʿAlids. Lalani wrote that the fact that many early Shiʿi groups invoked the doctrine “shows that some conception of succession by designation had existed very early on” and that al-Bāqir was trying to bring some order to the muddled, confused and chaotic ideas of the imamate rampant at the time and his restriction of *naṣṣ* narrowed the bounds of those who could claim the *naṣṣ* and thus acquire a licence for leadership.⁶

The death and succession of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq resulted in contestations of *naṣṣ* and succession and as already discussed, the issue became that could Jaʿfar’s public designation of Ismāʿīl be withdrawn. The Ismailis contended that this would be tantamount to a change in God’s “mind” since the *naṣṣ*, recalling the designation of ʿAlī was seen as a Divine act.⁷ The arguments also revolved around the legitimacy of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq’s imamate and inerrancy in that his initial designation of Ismāʿīl, if subject to a corrective change, would have been provisional and erroneous. All the Ismailitic movements rejected such possibilities of the change of Divine

⁶ Lalani. *EST*. p. 43

⁷ Q 5:55; 5:67; 5:3; EI2: Ghadīr Khumm. ʿAlī was designated in his own right and not because of his relationship to Muḥammad.

command and the errancy in the *‘ilm* of the imam and steadfastly recognised succession through Ismā‘īl.

The succession to the imamate was not automatic—rules such as of primogeniture did not apply—the succession was by specific designation. With the establishment of the Fatimid Empire, the succession of imamate proceeded smoothly until the reign of the imam-caliph al-Ḥākim.⁸ He designated two individuals successively; in 1013/404 he elevated his cousin ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. Ilyās b. Aḥmad, and in 1018/408 he added another cousin, Abū Hishām al-‘Abbās b.

Shū‘ayb.⁹ Walker wrote that al-Ḥākim himself

mounted the minbar and delivered the sermon in which he asked God to bless Ibn Ilyas. Treat him as if he were to me as Aaron was to Moses, he said. Over the years after 1013, the cousin often filled the role of the caliph in public rituals and ceremonies, delivering the sermon, performing the sacrifice, riding in processions wearing the regalia of a caliph. On one occasion he is described as sumptuously adorned astride his horse, whereas, in the same procession, al-Hakim appeared in plain dress riding a donkey. An order at one point decreed that petitions should be handed to him in place of the caliph. Although we lack sufficient information an interpretation of this situation makes of Ibn Ilyas merely a stand-in for the over-burdened caliph, not in reality the person intended for succession. The appointment thus becomes a ruse, a device to relieve al-Hakim of his formal public duties so that he could see to others less obvious to his people.¹⁰

Al-‘Abbās was given a loftier designation as the *walī ‘ahd al-mu’minīn* (heir designate of the Believers) whereas Ibn Ilyās was the *walī ‘ahd al-muslimīn* (heir designate of the Muslims). While his son was by-passed in these designations, when al-Ḥākim disappeared in 1021/411, Walker stated that his sister Sitt al-Mulk had Ibn Ilyās murdered and allowed al-‘Abbās to renounce his

⁸ Walker. *Caliph of Cairo*. p. 8

⁹ *Caliph of Cairo* pp 250-251; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 186. Daftary attributes this to the imam-caliph’s “strong inclination towards asceticism”. Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī, “Degrees of Excellence a Fatimid treatise on leadership in Islam; a new Arabic edition and English translation of Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī’s Kitāb ithbāt al-imāma,” (2010). pp 31-32. Naysābūrī in the opening invocation of the Ithbāt wrote: “May He [also] bless the master of the palace and age [al-Ḥākim] supported by conquest and victory. May the most excellent salutations of God, and the most bounteous blessings and purest greetings be upon him and on the heir-apparent of the Muslims (*walī al-‘ahd al-muslimīn*) and the vicegerent (*khalīfa*) of the Commander of the Faithful [meaning Ibn Ilyās], as long as tongues discourse and darkness and light continue to alternate.”

¹⁰ Walker. *Caliph of Cairo*. pp 250-251

claims. Al-Ḥākim's son al-Zāhir li-I'zāz Dīn Allāh (r. 1021–1036/411–427) was enthroned as his successor. Seven decades later, after the death of the latter's son, al-Mustaṣṣir, once again there were contestations of the doctrine of *naṣṣ* which resulted in the Nizari-Musta'lian schism.

A. Naṣṣ in the Ilkhanid Chronicles

The Ilkhanid chronicles mentioned *naṣṣ* in five very different contexts. The first was in the early biography of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ where before his transformative illness in the books he was given to read, he said “I found a lot of proof in the imamate of Ismā'īl; another time, when I got to the concealed imams, I was at a loss. I said: “This imamate is dependent on *naṣṣ* (specific designation) and constraint (*tawqīf*) and I do not know who they are.”¹¹ (Cf. Part One:6-I-B). The second was the intimation of a second *naṣṣ*; the biography of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ stated: “Musta'li, whom by a second designation he [al-Mustaṣṣir] had made his heir. Now I, in accordance with the principles of my religion, conducted propaganda on behalf of Nizar.”¹² (Cf. Part One:5-I-vi). The third mention related to the succession of Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd; JT reads: “Three days before his death, Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd declared *naṣṣ* and succession [in favour] of Muḥammad. Kiyā Muḥammad came to Alamut and the task of “verily we found our fathers upon a community” (Q43:22–23) perpetuated, and he continued in the ways of his father.”¹³ The fourth instance is the succession of Kiyā Muḥammad, JT reads: “On Tuesday 4 *Rabī' al-awwal* 557/28 February 1162 Kiyā Buzurg Muḥammad [b. Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd] passed from this world. He governed for 25 years and after him, the [*Raḥīqān*] achieved a lot and erected many forts. In previous times he had designated Kiyā Buzurg Ḥasan as his successor (*qā'im-i maqāmī*) and heir (*walī 'ahd*).”¹⁴ The remaining mentions are related to the succession of imams, namely, when

¹¹ JT p 98; ZT pp 121–122

¹² TJG p. 190; HWC p. 668

¹³ JT p. 146

¹⁴ JT p. 160

Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām was assassinated, his son, Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 1166-1210/561-607) took his place having received the *naṣṣ*;¹⁵ and after his lengthy imamate, he in turn, was succeeded by his designated son Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan (r. 1210-1221/607-618).¹⁶

The last succession of the Nizari polity, that of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn b. Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan (1221-1255/618-653), is controversially recorded; during the childhood of his son, Rukn al-Dīn (r. 1255-1257/653-655),

‘Alā’ al-Dīn had said: “He is my heir (*walī ‘ahd*) and will be your imam.” When Rukn al-Dīn was older, their followers did not distinguish between him and his father in terms of rank and respect, and his word was obeyed as that of his father.

‘Alā’ al-Dīn became antagonistic toward him and said: “Another son will be my heir” Those people did not accept or listen to this. They said: “[Only] the original *naṣṣ* (designation) is valid”. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn always irritated by Rukn al-Dīn and always tormented, rebuked and chastised him. He (Rukn al-Dīn) always remained among the womenfolk in an enclosure which was the same as his father’s; he did not have the courage to come out during the day.¹⁷

The Ilkhanid chronicles drawing on Nizari sources yield varied meanings of the doctrine of *naṣṣ* and its application. The last report of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s succession may well have been from Rashid al-Dīn’s own recall of events. This demonstrates either that the Sunni chroniclers expanded the semantic range of the term *naṣṣ* beyond its specific Shi‘i significations or alternatively, the Nizari, themselves, might have allowed the broader usages.

B. Nizari-Mustafian Discourse on Naṣṣ

After the death of Prophet Muḥammad, the doctrine of *naṣṣ* supported the claims of legitimacy of ‘Alī against other associates of the Prophet. Over time, the doctrine more often was evoked to legitimise claimants in contests to succeed their fathers or close relatives as the manifold

¹⁵ JT p. 170

¹⁶ JT p. 173. The passage is dissonant as the Nizari chronicler’s words are spliced with the Ilkhanid commentary: “He [Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad] had two sons, the most contemptible was Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan whom, during his childhood, his father had bestowed on him the *naṣṣ* as successor. As he became older and he showed signs of intelligence; he renounced and criticised the belief of his father and ancestors. A hostility developed between them; they became fearful and wary of each other.

¹⁷ JT p. 182

Shi'i interpretations manifested. After the death of al-Mustanşir this contestation was between the supporters of his sons Nizār and al-Musta'li. The tenor and challenge of the Nizari attacks on the legitimacy of al-Musta'li's *naşş* can be gleaned from *al-Hidāyatu'l-Āmiriyya*, the epistle issued in the name of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Āmir b. Al-Musta'li in December 1122-January 1123/*Shawwāl* 516 which Fyzee stated was in response to Nizari proselytisation.¹⁸ (Cf. Part Two:1-1). The document draws Qur'ānic and Biblical analogies to expound theological arguments; however, the authors mainly strung together circumstantial evidence to support the designation of al-Musta'li in preference to Nizār. The major arguments—some repeatedly stated were: 1) Nizār did not receive the *naşş* (repeated 3 times); 2) the Nizaris themselves selected a candidate of their choice (4 times); and 3) the designation at the moment of death (*naşş fī daqīqat'l-intiqāl*) is paramount and that Musta'li was designated by al-Mustanşir on his deathbed (4 times).

The text goes on that Nizār's illegitimacy was determined by the failure of his enterprise and further, that he recanted his rebellion. That a verbal declaration of *naşş* is not sufficient and that it has to be supported by actions and indications to wit al-Mustanşir did not verbally designate al-Musta'li and yet the text reads that it is an irrefutable and

undoubted fact that our Master, the Imam al-Mustanşir billāh the Commander of the Believers, did not appoint anyone to sit in his place, did not appoint anyone to succeed him, did not make his station inheritable, did not delegate his authority and governance, did not transfer his

¹⁸ al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh. *Hidāya*. p. 3. I am grateful to Mohamad Ballan for sharing his unpublished translation of *Al-Hidāya al-Āmiriyya* which I have relied on to supplement the sections I have translated. Samuel Stern wrote two papers on the issue of Fatimid succession in the 1950s. Hodgson, Lewis, Daftary and others have also analysed these events; however, Paul Walker has produced a most comprehensive study on the subject. Stern, Samuel M. "The Epistle of the Fatimid Caliph al-Āmir (al-Hidāya al-Āmiriyya): Its Date and its Purpose." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 82, no. 1-2 (1950): 20–31. Idem "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): 193–255. Walker, Paul E. "Succession to Rule in the Shiite Caliphate." *Journal of the American Research Center In Egypt* 32 (1995): 239–64. My analyses rely on these works; however, I have quoted from Fyzee 1938 study since his comments speak to the ambiance of the conclave which produced the *Hidāya*.

caliphate, and did not give the reins of his kingdom to anyone except to our Master, the Imam al-Musta'li billāh, the Commander of the Believers.

Al-Mustanşir's actions, the text reads, were observed by others in that: 1) he gave the future al-Musta'li a *kunya* (nickname or epithet) Abū'l-Qāsim Aḥmad—the *kunya* of the Prophet which was a “hidden mystery which only those who know and understand can decipher”; 2) when the news of the prince Aḥmad was born and a well-wisher said to the imam “may the prince give you joy”; al-Mustanşir is said to have replied you should instead say to me ‘may the imam make you happy’; 3) during his wedding to the daughter of Badr al-Jamālī,¹⁹ Abū'l-Qāsim Aḥmad was seated to the right of his brothers indicating his superiority; 4) al-Musta'li was designated as *walī 'ahd al-mu'minīn* while Nizār and 'Abd Allāh had a lower rank of *walī 'ahd al-Muslimīn*. While these circumstances are generally explainable;²⁰ *al-Hidāya* suggests that a *naṣṣ* once declared could be withdrawn. Firstly this admits that Nizār was proclaimed as designated heir by his father; secondly, this breaches the Ismaili notions of imamate and *naṣṣ*. Fyzee was incredulous at the fact that

the author quite earnestly admits, and even emphatically defends, the principle of revocation of the *naṣṣ*. As is known, Ismailism itself came into existence as an independent sect of Islam in circumstances closely resembling the case of Nizār, and the immediate cause of the split of the Shi'ite community was exactly the defence of the dogma of the irrevocability of the *naṣṣ*. The sect was formed by the followers of Ismā'il, the son of Imām Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq who refused to recognize the legality of the second *naṣṣ*, to Mūsā al-Kazīm, although there is much more foundation for this in the fact of Ismā'il's pre-deceasing his father. And yet they firmly stood for

¹⁹ *Hidāya* p. 1. Fyzee erroneously states that she was al-Afdal b. Badr al-Jamālī's daughter. See Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 241. Bernard Lewis in his review of Fyzee's publication repeated that mistake. Lewis, “Al-Hidayatu'l-Amiriya, being an epistle of the tenth Fatimid Caliph al-Āmir bi-Aḥkāmi'l-lāh, and an appendix Iqa' Ṣawa' Iqi'l-Irgham. Edited with an introduction and notes by Asaf A. A. Fyzee. Published for the Islamic Research Association by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1938”; *Al-Hidayatu'l-Amiriya, being an epistle of the tenth Fatimid Caliph al-Āmir bi-Aḥkāmi'l-lāh, and an appendix Iqa' Ṣawa' Iqi'l-Irgham. Edited with an introduction and notes by Asaf A. A. Fyzee. Published for the Islamic Research Association by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1938*

²⁰ 1) *Kunya* such as Abū'l-Qāsim (father of al-Qāsim) is adopted when one fathers such a child. The notion does not make sense in Aḥmad's childhood; 2) there is no context to suggest that the “imam” in the subject sentence referred to the future al-Musta'li; 3) the groom would naturally be accorded the privileged position—that would have been the case for all of the other sons of al-Mustanşir; 4) this evokes the designations by al-Ḥākim—the authors clearly knew how the holders of those titles ended up.

the transfer of the rights of Imāmat to Ismā'īl's son, Muḥammad, in preference to Ismā'īl's younger brother, Mūsā.²¹

Hodgson also noted the breach, he wrote that the justification of the schism, however,

was quite legitimately doctrinal. The basis on which the Ismā'īlīs, at least retrospectively, had justified their adherence to Ismā'īl and his son (as against Mūsā, whom the Twelvers followed) was that Ja'far al-Ṣādiq had explicitly designated Ismā'īl as the next imam, and that a subsequent designation of another son-supposing it had occurred-could not validly supersede the first designation. Al-Afḍal claimed that al-Mustanṣir had designated al-Musta'li on his deathbed, but it was understandable that pious Ismā'īlīs should hold by the earlier designation of Nizār.²²

This doctrine of irrevocability of *naṣṣ* is found in the writings *dā'i*-authors spanning several centuries. In his *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'*, the 10th/4th century *dā'i*, Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, wrote—speaking to an unnamed Ithnā'asharī interlocutor—in regard to the transmission of *naṣṣ* from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq to Ismā'īl, who predeceased his father, then on to Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl that God had never

done such a thing as He has done with Ismā'īl, making him predecease his father. Both, we and you, accept the tradition concerning al-Ṣādiq saying: “Verily God acts as He wills and pleases in everything except for the matters concerning the Imam.”²³

According to Ja'far the transmission of *naṣṣ* occurs through inspiration and aid from God to the imam and such a Divine act can not be taken back. In this account after detailing the death and burial of Ismā'īl, the author related the latter's sighting in Basra reported to the 'Abbāsīd caliph who summoned Ja'far al-Ṣādiq—the imam brought along documents attesting his sons burial which calmed the caliph's anger. The *dā'i*-author continued at length to argue against the claims of Ismā'īl's brothers and their followers.

The 11th/5th century *dā'i*, Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, dedicated the sixth light of the Proof of the Imamate to “That, after the designation had reached Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, the imamate belonged to

²¹ al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh. *Hidāya*. p. 6

²² Hodgson. IS. pp 437-438

²³ Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman's *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'* in Ivanow, *Rise*. Tr. p. 81ff. The *Zahru'l-ma'ānī* of the 15th/9th century Ṭayyibī *dā'i* Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn has a parallel account of the succession of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq; however, after Ismā'īl's death Idrīs states that Ja'far appointed his son Mūsā as a “screen and trustee”. This illustrates how fluidly the conceptual frameworks shifted over time. Ibid. pp 47ff.

Ismā'īl, and his descendants, to the exclusion of any of Ismā'īl's brothers". He wrote that the "Shī'a differed about Ismā'īl with regard to what they held about his having died before Ja'far and about Ja'far's having pointed afterward to another of his sons. They disagreed also about whether he said: 'Never has God changed His mind as He did in regard to Ismā'īl.'" He meticulously went on to argue the legitimacy of the position that the *naṣṣ* to Ismā'īl was not revoked and implicitly not revokable. In the third demonstration he wrote given that the imam is infallible, never having made a mistake, and given that, if Ismā'īl had not had a son nor successor nor descendants, it would make Ja'far's designation of him a mistake, since he was designated, with respect to the infallibility of the imam, that requires that Ismā'īl had a successor and descendants. If he had descendants and a successor, his successor is more deserving of the imamate than his uncles. Therefore, the imamate after Ismā'īl belonged to his son, and to his descendants, to the exclusion of everyone else.²⁴

This is infallibility of the imam is related to the irrevocability of the *naṣṣ*. If Ja'far erred in his designation and had to revoke his designation of Ismā'īl then his imamate was invalid. Al-Kirmānī presented a number of such proofs to legitimate the succession down to his patron the imam-caliph al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh. Several centuries later, Ṭūsī and Abū Ishāq in the *Haft Bāb* also implicitly addressed this matter from the angle of inerrancy and perfection of the imam and thus the act of first designation carried such inerrancy and irrevocability.²⁵

Turning back to the *Hidāya*, the conclave also produced testimony from Nizār's sister affirming several of the repeated assertions. She acknowledged al-Musta'li's imamate in the presence of witnesses and

faithfully testified to all who were present that Mawlānā, the Commander of the Believers, al-Mustanṣir billāh had clearly told her on several occasions that Mawlānā, the Imam, al-Musta'li billāh was to be his successor, the inheritor of the imamate and his noble station. She also stated that her brother Nizār had rebelled in full knowledge of his grave transgression against God, the Almighty, as a result of his actions, and was driven by sheer envy. She mentioned that on the day of the wedding of Mawlānā al-Musta'li billāh to the daughter of the Amīr al-Juyūsh [Badr al-Jamālī], Nizār said to her: "I did not despair of attaining the caliphate until today for Mawlānā al-Mustanṣir billāh has designated my brother Aḥmad 'walī 'ahd al-mu'minīn' and had him seated on his right while seating the remainder of his children to his left."

²⁴ Master of the Age. Tr. pp 104-113

²⁵ Ṭūsī. *The Rawdatu't-Taslim*. Tr. p. 123 and Quhistānī, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm. *Haft Bāb, or, Seven Chapters*, Translated by Wladimir Ivanow. Bombay: The Ismaili Society, 1959. Tr. pp 22-23

She then disassociated herself from the imamate of her brother Nizār and cursed anyone who considered it to be legitimate, either publicly or privately.

God sought to purify her [by way of this testimony] from the filth of disobedience and rebellion before her death and so that He may confirm for her the rank of true belief and so that she may be in the good graces of her Imam, who bestowed blessings upon her and was well-pleased with her.

Fyzee commented that “It is quite obvious; that being frightened to death the aged princess was doing her best to defend herself, and that her words were far from being an impartial testimony. The words of the author about her being “to purify her from the sin of disobedience before her death,” and her “blissful end of the faithful” which she earned by this, are really ominous.²⁶ He wondered if “the princess died soon after this—of natural causes, or whether her ‘blissful end of the faithful’ was achieved with extraneous help despite her emphatic denunciation of her brother.”²⁷ The fact that after twenty-seven years Nizār’s sister was made to disavow him demonstrates the desperation in Cairo to confront the legitimacy of Nizār’s claims. The revolts launched from Ifrīqiya by Nizār’s relatives over the next two decades, though unsuccessful, illustrate that the Musta’lian Fatimid Empire was still susceptible to challenges that stemmed from the schism. (Cf. Part Two:1-I).

Walker wrote that the *Hidāya*,

in fact, makes most of the argument that the only valid designation will occur at the time of death, *fī waqt inḥisālīhi wa daqīqāt intiqālīhi* (“at the time of his passing and the moment of his death”). Such a claim appears far more sound on the surface than any other since the main Nizārī argument relies simply on an earlier designation of Nizār, which a deathbed designation would nullify.²⁸

Given the repeated invocation of the irrevocability of the *naṣṣ* suggested from the *dā’ī*-authors quoted earlier, the question becomes was Nizār ever designated. Again Walker wrote that the *Hidāya*

²⁶ al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh. *Hidāya*., *Hidāya*. p. 10

²⁷ *Hidāya* p. 10

²⁸ Walker, “Succession” p. 257 rev. p. 36

also seeks to use the designation of ‘Abdallāh against Nizār in that it weakens just this claim of earlier designation. According to the *Hidāya*, ‘Abdallāh was nominated *walī ‘ahd al-muslimīn* later than Nizār and thus replaced him, as in fact, by this line of argument, did Abū’l-Qāsim Aḥmad eventually replace them both. What gives Nizār precedence over ‘Abdallāh? it asks. But the *Hidāya* strangely insists that the designation of either Nizār or ‘Abdallāh served only to calm the fears of al-Mustaṣir’s anxious, weak-minded followers who needed some assurance that an heir was available, although all along the imam knew that a son would be born later who would become the true imam.²⁹

To those arguing the legitimacy of al-Musta‘lī at the conclave in Cairo, these were sound arguments; however, the Nizaris would not accept this and would invoke the irrevocability of

naṣṣ and the earlier designation of Nizār as governing. Walker noted that *Hidāya* asserts that a denial that a written document appointing Nizār as successor can have any validity. The *ahl al-bayt*, says the *Hidāya*, do not employ writing in their activities and transactions. Another assertion is that, if the designation of Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far was sound, as being an “*Ismā‘īlī*” automatically implies, then the designation of Nizār must be correct as well. These two points, although quickly rejected by the *Hidāya*, must have formed a part of the Nizārī arsenal of polemical counterargument.

He concluded that “by the time of these events, almost twenty years after the succession in question, careful knowledgeable debate no longer mattered since the sides had long been separated by bitter antagonism and hostility.”³⁰

The confrontation with the Fatimids diminished over time and the central doctrine of *naṣṣ* became an internal Nizārī issue. The doctrinal elaboration shifted from legitimation to the nature of imamate and identification of the person of the imam. From the time of the imam, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, designation of the rightful imam was tied to the special *‘ilm* (knowledge) of which he was a custodian and with this endowment of knowledge the imam would bring the believer to the recognition and knowledge of God (*ma‘rifa*). This aspect was exemplified and the knowledge elevated to that of Divine truths.

C. Nizari Elaborations of Naṣṣ

²⁹ Walker, “Succession” p. 257 rev. p. 36

³⁰ Ibid. p. 258 rev p. 37.

The third chapter of the *Haft Bāb* identifies ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib as the Qā’im al-Qiyāma, then discusses all the other imams as the Qā’im endowed with the knowledge and power; and focusses especially on Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām and his proclamations. Near the end of the chapter there is a paragraph that specifically mentions *naṣṣ*

Our lordship (*khudāwand*), may his name be sanctified, says: ‘Ultimately, towards whom did Sayyid-nā summon people? Did he not summon them to ‘Alā dhikrihi’l-salām? I, by virtue of both his physical and real designation (*ba naṣṣ-i zāhir wa ba naṣṣ-i ḥaqīqī-yi ‘ū*), am his successor (*qā’im-i maqām*) and the judge of his religion (*qāḍī-yi dīn-i ‘ū*).’³¹

This reported speech of the imam of the time of writing, possibly Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 1166-1210/561-607) during whose reign the text may have received its final form, indicates a new development of doctrine. The early Nizaris, as the next chapter will fully illustrate, frequently discussed the physical (*zāhiri*) spiritual (*ruḥānī*) and essential or real (*ḥaqīqī*) nature of *naṣṣ* related to these layers of imamate. Ṭūsī wrote that the imams,

both outwardly and inwardly, both exoterically and esoterically, issue from the pure line and loins of the Imam, one after another. The Imam is perfect when still in the form of sperm in the loins of his father and the pure womb of his mother. An Imam is always an Imam and always perfect. Otherwise, why should he say, ‘The Imam knows from which drop of sperm the Imam after him will come?’³²

In this interpretation, the *naṣṣ* is determined before even the sperm enters the ovum. Similarly, the 16th/10th century *dā’ī*-author asserts that the imams possessed pre-eternal miraculous ‘*ilm*’; he wrote that

the “people of the order,” i.e. the *dā’īs* and other inferior ranks (*ḥudūd*) can always trace the person of the Imam by the guidance of two signs of which one is his legitimate nomination (*naṣṣ*) and the other his descent. But the chosen, i.e. the *Ḥujjat*, knows him since pre-eternal times by his miraculous knowledge and by innate disposition. In several past incarnations some *dā’īs* have not erred in recognising the Imam’s person through being in possession of the true knowledge. The reason (of their correct recognition) was their following that principle. But the other *dā’īs*, who were misguided, committed an error, the reason of which was that they took into consideration only the

³¹ HB. p. 28 tr p. 70 modified to more closely comport with the text from IIS-PER-MS 32

خداوند تقدس اسمائه میفرماید که آخر این سیدنا دعوت بسوی که کرده است نه بسوی علی ذکر السلام کرده است بنص ظاهر و بنص حقیقت او قائم مقام اویم و قاضی دین اویم

³² Paradise of Submission. p. 154-56 Tr. p. 125

(Imam's) descent. Therefore they gave up Shah Nizar with his (real rights for) Imam. This was the reason (why it happened in this way).³³

The *Kalām-i Pīr* even accommodates the line of imams descended from Mūsā al-Kazīm b. Ja'far

al-Ṣādiq within the Ismaili schema that since Ismā'īl knew

that Imam was to remain with his descendants he agreed to the *naṣṣ* of Mūsā Kazīm, so that they were not opposed to each other. It is known to all that, as stated in the book called *Rawḍatu't-taslīm* when Mūsā Kazīm was imprisoned by the caliphs of Baghdad, his enemies told him that his brother Imam Ismā'īl, was trying to usurp his position. He replied: "How can you tell such lies, — he is the one appointed by God and by the Prophet, by the verse of the Coran (III 30) "Descending one from the other, and God hears and knows". He then prayed for Ismā'īl saying: "God, do not deprive my descendants of the blessing of the descendants of Ismā'īl".³⁴

The Divine designation of the imam (*naṣṣ*) is one of the doctrinal cornerstones of Shi'ism. As briefly illustrated in this section, the doctrine underwent development as it was deployed to legitimise a candidate for the imamate and to advocate the nature of institution in different contexts. The early Shi'is argued that 'Alī was designated to be the holder of authority after the Prophet and various of his descendants would lay claim to this mantle and their thinkers elaborated the doctrine of *naṣṣ* to justify their claims. *Naṣṣ* became central to the intra-Shi'i discourse of succession. As Walker has shown, the Fatimids had a pragmatic approach to the theories of imamate and succession and the examples provided here reflect some departures in practice; however, repeatedly the *dā'ī*-authors returned to the theoretical core of the doctrine.³⁵ The *mard-i khudā* (Man of God meaning the Qā'im) was a single person in the line of 'Alī—who was designated by Divine command and his followers attain salvation. All the authors championed the cause and legitimacy of their candidate claiming descent from 'Alī and looking to guide his community to salvation through the special knowledge which was claimed as an endowment of Divine Grace along with the designation.

³³ Muḥammad Rīzā Khayrkhawāh Harātī. *On the Recognition of the Imam or Faṣl dar bayān-i shinākht-i imām*, Translated by Wladimir Ivanow. (Bombay: Published for the Ismaili Society by Thacker, 1947). pp 22-23

³⁴ KP. p. 71. also cf fn 1. Mūsā al-Kazīm is not mentioned in the *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*.

³⁵ Walker, "Succession."

Hodgson argued that *naṣṣ* served to “center the allegiance of the faithful on one individual” and it “gave them a continuous imamate, and so a permanent group existence—where otherwise Shi‘ism was rather an indeterminate sentiment, which could be called upon by any candidate for the season of a revolt, but depended upon by none.”³⁶ He wrote that the “idea of an imāmate by *naṣṣ*, restricted to a definite individual out of all the ‘Alids, continuing through all political circumstances, was complemented by that of an imāmate based not primarily on a political claim, but on special knowledge, *‘ilm*.”³⁷ The next section will examine *ta‘līm* which is quintessentially linked with early Nizari Ismailism as the mode of authoritative teaching of the imam. *Ta‘līm* not only yielded one of the several appellations for the Nizari Ismailis but also was the cause of much derogation for them. The next few pages further explore the doctrinal bases for the teaching; the attacks by the likes of al-Ghazālī and vectors of deployment of *ta‘līm* by the early Nizaris.

III. Ta’wīl to Ta‘līm—‘Ilm in the name of the Imam

The Ilkhanid chroniclers wrote that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ diverged from the path of his predecessors. According to them, Ismailis had emphasised *ta’wīl* (allegorical interpretation) and the conceptions of *ẓāhir* (exoteric) and *bāṭin* (esoteric); however, Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ relied only on *ta‘līm* (authoritative teaching of the *imam*). (Also Cf. Part One:6-II). Following Juwayni, Rashid al-Din wrote that once he was established independently at Alamut, he made manifest his own doctrine and *da‘wa* and

despatched *da‘is* to the surroundings areas and focused himself to spreading his *da‘wa*. His interpretation—those claims which after him were called the New *Da‘wa* (*Da‘wat-i jadīda*) by those people—is as follows: predecessors based their principles of faith on *ta’wīl* (allegorical interpretation) and *tanzīl* (revelation), especially on the allegorical verses [of the Qur’an] and strange interpretations of the significance of the prophetic reports (*akhbār wa āṣār*) and the like. They used to say: “Indeed to every revelation there is an allegorical meaning and to every *ẓāhir* (exoteric) there is a *bāṭin* (esoteric).”

³⁶ Hodgson, “How Did the Early Shi’a Become Sectarian?” pp 10ff

³⁷ *How Did the Early Shi’a Become Sectarian?* p. 12

Sayyid-nā completely relied on *ta'lim* (authoritative teaching of the *imam*) and said: "Knowledge of God is not possible through the intellect (*'aql*) and speculative reasoning (*naẓar*) but through the authoritative teaching (*ta'lim*) of the *imam*, since most of humanity is endowed with reason and everyone is capable of speculative reasoning in the ways of faith. If the use of reason (*naẓar-i 'aql*) were sufficient for the knowledge of God, the Mighty, then no followers of any faith could criticise or disavow their opponents. For all would be equal as everyone has faith through the use of reason. Since the path of criticism and disavowal is nullified, some [resort] to imitation (*taqlīd*) and others to choice (*ikhtiyār*). It is only in the doctrine of authoritative teaching (*ta'lim*) that reason alone is insufficient and there has to be an *imam* in every age so that the people, through his authoritative teaching, might be instructed and have faith." He constructed several concise sentences as decoys of compulsion (*ilzām*) of the people.³⁸

Juwayni labeled Ḥasan's doctrine "his reform of their heresy (*bid'at*)" and in his conclusion of the section he wrote that such was "the nonsense which he (Ḥasan) expounded; whereof the outward form were snares of deceit and the inner meaning the wiles of Iblīs and the purpose of which was to prevent the use of reason and the acquisition of knowledge."³⁹ Rashid al-Din and Qashani, like Juwayni, got their critique of the doctrine of *ta'lim* most likely from al-Ghazālī's vilifications of the Ismailis and perhaps even through Shahrastānī (Cf. Part One:2-I-I and 6-II).⁴⁰

A. *Refutations of Al-Ghazālī*

Al-Ghazālī (d. 1111/505) who wrote five tracts against the Ismailis. He summarised Ismaili belief in his *al-Mustazhirī*, written around 1095/487, as a doctrine

the exterior of which is *rafḍ* [rejection, i.e. of first three Caliphs], and its interior out-and-out infidelity [unbelief]; and its beginning is the restricting of the ways to attain knowledge [sure cognitions] to the utterance of the Infallible Imam, and the removal [isolating] of minds [intellects] from being [able to] perceive [grasp] the truth because of the doubts which befall them and the disagreements to which reasoners are open, and imposing, for the seeking of the truth, the way of instruction and learning, and the judgment that the Infallible Imam is the seer [the only one able to see], and that he is informed-from the part of God-of all the secrets of the revealed Laws: he guides to the truth and explains problems [difficulties], and that every age must have an Infallible Imam to whom recourse is to be had concerning any ambiguities in religious matters. This is the beginning [basis, starting point] of their propaganda. Then, in the end they present [produce] what contradicts the Law. And it is as though this is their ultimate aim.⁴¹

³⁸ JT pp 105-106; cf TJG pp 195ff; HWC pp 671ff and ZT pp 129ff

³⁹ TJG pp 18-199; HWC p. 673

⁴⁰ OA pp 12

⁴¹ McCarthy. *Freedom and Fulfillment*. p. 195. Chapter 4. On the Report of their Doctrine. in *Faḍā'ih al-Bāṭiniya wa Faḍā'il al-Mustazhiriya* (The Infamies (Enormities) of the Batinites and the Virtues (Merits) of the Mustazhirites).

He attributed to and attacked the Ismailis for the notion that “truth is apprehended solely by conforming to the instruction of the imam”⁴² and that since, for example, daily recourse to the imam was impossible for all his followers, then the doctrine and reliance of society on such an imam was invalid. He argued that the Ismaili dependence on the imam’s teaching was mere *taqlīd* (conformity)—it is precisely for blind conformity to the ‘*ulamā*’ that the Ismailis castigated the Sunnis. He imputed on the Ismailis a rejection of intellectual reasoning in favour of the *ta’līm* from the imam and denied the Shi’i claims of infallibility and inerrancy of the imams. He levelled an accusation to the Ismailis that “when they comprehend through the Imam the real natures (realities) of things and become aware (informed) of the “interiors” (*bāṭin* = inner meanings) of these “exteriors” (*ẓāhir* = literal texts) these fetters are loosed from them and the action-oriented injunctions fall away from them.”⁴³ He argued that intellectual reasoning was sufficient to arrive at Truth and even when he conceded that intellectual reasoning was deficient, he chose to locate final authority in the Prophet and not the infallibility of a later post-prophetic contemporary imam. Daftary noted that the doctrine—particularly as advocated by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ—provoked a strong reaction from the Sunni establishment; *ta’līm*,

as restated by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, became so central to early Nizārī thought that the followers of the Nizārī *da’wa* came to be known as the *Ta’līmīyya*. This reformulated doctrine of *ta’līm*, which also denied the legitimacy of the ‘Abbāsīd caliph as the spiritual spokesman of Muslims, produced an official reaction from the ‘Abbāsīd-Sunnī establishment. Many Sunnī theologians and jurists responded to the new intellectual challenge posed by the Persian Ismā’īlīs and attacked their doctrine of *ta’līm*. Al-Ghazālī, as noted, was the foremost and probably the earliest Sunnī scholar in this group. He wrote several treatises against the Ismā’īlīs and paid special

⁴² Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, “al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl (The Rescuer from Error),” in *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Muhammad Ali Khalidi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī p. 59. The wording matches the quote from Juwayni above.

⁴³ McCarthy. *Freedom and Fulfillment*. p. 202; Hodgson. OA. p. 126 Slightly modified.

attention to refuting the doctrine of *ta'lim* in his *al-Mustazhirī*, commissioned by the 'Abbāsīd caliph *al-Mustazhir*.⁴⁴

Badakhchani noted that McCarthy. *Freedom and Fulfillment*.’s reiteration of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s

formulation of *ta'lim* is more detailed than that of Shahrastānī.

“His claim of a profound examination of the Nizari Ismaili literature” is likely to be correct. Relevant materials with regard to the doctrine of *ta'lim* can be found in the sixth chapter of *al-Mustazhirī*. This chapter occupies almost one quarter of the whole book and is the only part which Ghazzali wrote without quoting other heresiographers. It is also chronologically the last book that Ghazzali wrote before leaving the Abbasid Court and it is possible, as Henry Corbin suggests that the writing of the *Mustazhirī* contributed to the great spiritual crisis in the latter part of Ghazzali’s life.⁴⁵

In his study of the works of theologian Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 1209/606), Paul Kraus concluded

that Ghazālī misunderstood the concept of *ta'lim*. He stated that Rāzī

exposes the weakness of Ghazālī’s criticism and calls him a bad apologist and accuses him of having misunderstood the heretical (sic) thesis. ... Ghazālī proved that intelligence is necessary for distinguishing between the true and the false. But the Ismā‘īlian thesis never denied it. Intelligence [intellectual reasoning] is surely indispensable, but as it is not infallible, it is insufficient for the knowledge of truth, therefore it must be led by the Imam: the hereditary holder of divine wisdom. Razi could have exposed the Ismā‘īlian thesis in affirming that human intelligence was nothing but an instrument of knowledge, and its function depended on something which is above itself. He prefers to use an image which the Ismā‘īlian authors of Fātimide period often used and by that Razi proves his intimate knowledge of the doctrine. Intelligence (he makes his opponent say) is comparable to the organ of sight which makes us see visible objects. But the organ of sight is not sufficient unto itself, its functioning depends on the light which lightens up the visible object. Just as the organ of sight cannot see without the material light, in the same way human intelligence cannot reach knowledge without the spiritual light dispensed by the Imām.⁴⁶

The metaphor of sight and light closely resembles one used by Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd when during the siege of Lamasar, the Saljuqs sent a scholar, Abū Naṣr Kunyat to debate and reconnoitre the besieged fortress (Cf. Part One:6-V-1); the latter argued

⁴⁴ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 342. Niẓām al-Mulk and Al-Ghazālī’s use of *Ta’līmīyya* did not specifically address the Nizaris, rather they generalised against all Ismailitic movements. *al-Mustazhirī* was written prior to the Nizari-Mustalian schism. The paragraph is preceded with the claim that “Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ recognised as ḥujjat”—there is little evidence for this appointment. In later Nizari writings Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ is construed as the ḥujjat.

⁴⁵ Badakhchani, “Shahrastānī’s Account.” pp 30-31. Henri Corbin, “The Ismaili Response to the Polemics of Ghazzali,” in *Mediaeval Isma‘ili History and Thought*, ed. Farhad. Daftary (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Henri Corbin p. 70

⁴⁶ Paul Kraus, “The ‘Controversies’ of Fakhr al-Din Razi,” *Islamic Culture* XIV (1938). pp 147 and 149. Kraus observed that Rāzī was familiar with the *Fuṣūl al-arba‘a* attributed to Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ; and that “Razi does not only tell us that this document is translated from the Persian by Shahrastani, but he also quotes, in the latter part of his work. at least one phrase from the original. and compares it with Shahrastani’s paraphrase.”

“You deny the intellect, whoever, does not have an intellect is insane.”

Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd said: “We do not need to listen to our beliefs from the enemies. The basis of our faith is that people must possess intellect and through the intellect of the Prophet, may peace be upon him, whoever is without intellect is insane and if he does not listen to the words of the Prophet then he is an infidel. The similitude of this is that eyes are necessary to see the light; if one has eyes and no lamp then in the darkness it is not possible to see anything and on the other hand if one had a lamp but no eyes [equally it is not possible to see anything]. It is supposed that people must have faith and that God, All-Mighty, through the tongue of the Prophet, may peace be upon him, in the Glorious Qur’an has commanded—truth and falsity, the licit and illicit—he who stands with that which the Messenger has commanded can not be considered irreligious.”

These were no idle discussion of epistemology; it has been demonstrated that the focalisation in the Ilkhanid chronicles was on battles, sieges, assassinations and tied to these were the disputations. (Cf. Part One:4-III-D). Between Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s acquisition of Alamut in 1090/483 and the completion of al-Mustaẓhirī five years later, the Ismailis were subjected to five sieges and four major battles in the Rūbār and Quhistān. One of these battles, in 1093/486, was led by Ibn Za’frānī, the *muftī* and scholar from Rayy who fielded a force of 10,000 militiamen—implying that Saljuq forces were not involved—outnumbered ten to one, the Ismailis defeated the attackers.⁴⁷ Around 1094/487, JT reports that “in the castles there was enormous scarcity and the people were down to eating grass.”⁴⁸ The list of assassinations in JT shows that fifteen of the thirty-one killings dateable between 1094/487 and 1107/500 were of the ‘*ulamā*’.⁴⁹ The Ismailis were clearly reacting to the power of the ‘*ulamā*’ to orchestrate doctrinal opposition to military action. (Cf. Part One:1-III). It is noteworthy that in the other group of assassinations many number among opponents of Sultan Bark-yāruq. In 1095/488, a year after Bark-yāruq became sultan, Ghazālī underwent his great spiritual crisis—he left his position at the helm of the Nizāmiyya Madrasa in Baghdad and did not return from his

⁴⁷ JT p. 114.

⁴⁸ JT p. 125;

⁴⁹ JT pp 134-137

peregrination in Syria and Ḥijāz until after the sultan had died.⁵⁰ The correlation between the two career arcs is not coincidental. The sultan, as has already been mentioned, for some time at least, was a Nizari sympathiser; JT stated that “Bark-yāruq was well disposed to the Rafīqān and did not deny their belief (*Bark-yāruq dūstdār-i Rafīqān būdī, wa ‘aqīdat īshān-rā munkarna*).⁵¹ (Cf. Part One:6-I-D-2).

Bark-yāruq received his investiture from the ‘Abbāsīd caliph al-Muqtadī (r. 1075-1094/467-487) and later that evening, on the 10 February, 1094/15 *Muḥarram*, 487, the caliph suddenly died after his evening meal.⁵² The caliph was quietly buried and his 16 year-old son, al-Mustaẓhir (1094-1118/487-512) was enthroned. Three days later the death and succession were publicly declared.⁵³ Was this instability at the commencement of the young al-Mustaẓhir’s caliphate and the subsequent change in the sultan’s inclinations towards the Ismailis connected with Ghazālī’s breakdown and hasty departure from Baghdad?⁵⁴

⁵⁰ al-Ghazālī, “Rescuer From Error.” p. 79. In his final years, he wrote about this episode in his autobiography:

For almost six months, starting in the month of *Rajab* 488 AH [July–August 1095 AD (sic)], I swung between the temptations of the temporal world and the call of the afterlife. Finally, by the sixth month, it ceased to be a matter of choice and became one of necessity, for God locked up my tongue and I became incapable of teaching. I would exert myself to lecture for even one day to satisfy the hearts of those around me, but my tongue would not utter a single word, and I would be completely incapable of doing so. Obstruction of the tongue eventually led to desolation of the heart, which in turn brought with it a break down of the faculty that digests and assimilates food and drink; I could not even keep down broth or digest a single bite. This led to a weakening of all my faculties and the doctors lost hope for a cure. They said: “This is an affliction of the heart that has spread to the temperament, so the only way to cure it is by revival of the heart and removal of the derangement.”

⁵¹ JT 120

⁵² Ibn al-Athīr. *Annals of the Saljuq Turks*. pp 271-272. Was the 38 year-old caliph poisoned? While the text is not definitive, it appears that he was buried a few hours after he died—during the night?

⁵³ *Annals of the Saljuq Turks* p. 273

⁵⁴ *Annals of the Saljuq Turks* p. 284

Some twelve years later, after Muḥammad b. Malikshāh became sultan, in their attacks against the Ismailis, the Saljuqs coopted the ‘ulamā’ and weaponised the *munāẓarāt* (religious disputations). At the height of intense sieges of Nizari fortresses, an ‘alīm ascended to engage in *munāẓarāt* and the pivotal topic was *ta’līm* and weapon of choice were the refutations of the Ismailis drawn from the writings of al-Baghdādī, Niẓām al-Mulk and especially al-Ghazālī. (Cf. Part One:2; and especially 6:III and V). Muḥammad b. Malikshāh recaptured the fortress of Shāhdīz in 1107/500 and then escalated the attacks on the Nizari fortresses in the Rūdbār and Quhistān. The repeated attacks and burning of crops weakened the Nizaris; yet during the *munāẓarāt* they vehemently defended their beliefs. As already mentioned, the Nizaris pulled back from their universalist Truth claims and revolution, and in several instances presented themselves as one community amongst the many Muslim communities⁵⁵ and asserted that their imam was a teacher among teachers. Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, according to Rashid al-Din, published a conciliatory epistle which sought an “unimpeachable compelling legal opinion (*mutafaẓlan-i mājuran-i fatwā*)” that the Nizari Ismailis should be accepted in the circle of Islam since their beliefs diverge only in the “questions there are roots and branches (*usūl wa furū’i*) that leaders of interpretations (*ṭawā’if*) of Islam” provide in explanations. (Cf. Part One:6:V-1).

B. New Sources in the Study of Ta’līm and Nizari Ismailism

I have edited and translated two documents entitled *Rāh-i ma’rifat (Path to Knowledge of God)*⁵⁶ and *Nāma ba ‘ulamā’-yi Qazwīn (A Letter to the ‘Ulamā’ of Qazwīn)*⁵⁷ both are focussed on the doctrine of *ta’līm*. The texts were copied by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ghufrānī, possibly in the early 20th/14th century and are found in Persian MS 32 now part of the Institute of Ismaili Studies

⁵⁵ JT pp. 128-129

⁵⁶ IIS Per-MS 32:27 f. 28b-31b. Javan. *Catalogue*, p. 28.

⁵⁷ IIS Per-MS 32:27 f. 28b-31b. *Catalogue* p. 36.

collection.⁵⁸ Both treatises are undated and there is no explicit indication of authorship or provenance. The *Rāh-i maʿrifat* attributed to Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ was published by Jalal Badakhchani edited from another manuscript—although he did not give it this title.⁵⁹ The *Nāma* appears to be in the voice of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. I have divided the text of the *Nāma* into 20 paragraphs—the first two relate biographical details—many of which have little direct resonance with the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyid-nā*. Overall, the text conforms to a formulary suggesting that the author was familiar with chancellery and diplomatic style.⁶⁰ Like the *al-Fuṣūl al-arbaʿa*, both texts emphasise the necessity of the imam’s authoritative teaching; however, while the letter is replete with Qur’anic verses, the *Rāh-i maʿrifat* is a very tightly constructed treatise with no quoted proof texts. Definitive dating of the texts is not possible; however, content analysis suggests that the *Nāma ba ‘ulamā’-yi Qazwīn* mirrors the discourse of authority reflected in the Ilkhanid chronicles around the time of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and the doctrine of *taʿlīm* before the declaration of the Qiyāma (1164/559).⁶¹ The *Rāh-i maʿrifat*, on the other hand, evinces the teachings of post-Qiyāma Nizari Ismailism when the people of Unity (*ahl al-waḥdat*) centred on the Word of Unity (*Kalīma-yi tawhīd*) were paramount and so may be from the post-Qiyāma period.

⁵⁸ HB, p. 40. Javan. *Catalogue*. pp 28 and 36.

⁵⁹ Badakhchani, “Shahrestānī’s Account.” p. 27 He wrote that “[t]he treatise attributed to Hasan-i Sabbah constitutes fragment no. 17 in the manuscript of Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī’s *Rawḍa-yi taslīm* dated Tuesday, 15th Shawwāl 640/7th April 1243 currently housed at the library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies.” His footnote suggests that this witness was a *unicum*: “In view of its uniqueness, the typed reproduction in the appendix is exactly the same as the manuscript itself with minor additions in square brackets suggesting contemporary forms of few words. Manuscript is copied professionally in broken Nasta’liq script preserving the classical norms of Persian writing. There are no gloss or marginal corrections. To have an idea of the script and style.” While Badakhchani has worked with IIS-Per-MS 32 for the edition of the Haft Bāb, this witness may not have to come to his attention, Cf. HB, pp 37ff

⁶⁰ A detailed study of this document will published in 2019.

⁶¹ The text might also be dateable to the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan (1210-1221/607-618) when he is believed to have invited the ‘ulamā’ of Qazwīn to sift through the library at Alamut and expunge “heretical” materials. Dating after the fall of the Nizari polity in Iran does not make any sense for the discourse of *taʿlīm* with the ‘ulamā’ of Qazwīn would be meaningless.

1. RĀH-I MA'RIFAT (PATH TO KNOWLEDGE OF GOD)

The eponymous text links the teaching (*ta'līm*) of the truthful teacher (*mu'allim-i ṣādiq*) and

gnosis (*ma'rifat*) on the Path to Knowledge of God (*Rāh-i ma'rifat*) such that

[e]very one in whom *ta'līm* (authoritative teaching of the imam) finds a path attains Divine light (*nūr-i khudā*) such that enlightenment (*rawshnā'ī*) of the heart increases the more s/he accepts *ta'līm*, until gnosis (*ma'rifat*) is attained and God is reached (*ba khudāy rasīd*). Once s/he has reaches God, *ilm* (knowledge) and gnosis have no path there, because knowledge becomes a veil for gnosis, and gnosis a veil for the truthful one (*muḥiqq*); both knowledge and gnosis must be abandoned.⁶²

Only the trustworthy teacher (*mu'allim-i ṣādiq*) is capable of providing this *ta'līm* with the Divine light which is the word of Unity (*kalima-yi tawḥīd*); while everything else is refutable the teaching of this teacher—the words of the people of Truth are eternally beyond reproach. This teacher is one and through him his followers are one, although his disciples and novices

(*mustajibān*) are individually numerical,

... they are all one, because in reality and meaning they belong to Him and are all to be considered as one. Meaning and reality (*ma'nī wa ḥaqīqat*), we have said, is the light of Unity (*nūr-i tawḥīd*), which enlightens their hearts with the same knowledge of God; they will recognize only one person who is the teacher, the caller (*dā'ī*) and the guide (*dalīl*), from whom they have acquired knowledge of God and understanding. Therefore, through him they are one, through him they have faith and believe; through him they recognize and worship God—not through each other or anyone else.

Beyond this unity are the idol worshippers in perdition. Commenting on the mode of selection of the Sunni caliph, in contrast to the designation (*naṣṣ*) of the imam, the author states that choosing someone “through one’s own inclination [saying]: ‘this is a faithful brother’ and then worshipping him. Such idol-worshipping is like literalism. In this manner no one can reach himself, let alone reaching the Lord.” The access to knowledge of the Divine from the trustworthy teacher becomes manifest in the believer and radiates to others; the text states

[14] The path to God is knowledge of God, and the path to knowledge of God is teaching. The faithful person (*mu'min*) can be recognised through the light of God, which is this very ‘Word of Unity’. The faithful person is alive with the light of God, and the light radiates from him to the heart of other weak[er] believers.⁶³

⁶² I have preferred my edition and translation of the treatise from IIS-Per MS 32 but have relied on Jalal Badakhchani’s edition and translation

⁶³ Badakhchani, “Shahrastānī’s Account.” pp 45-48 translation modified

This reflects the schematic conception of the Nizari *da'wa* without *dawla* (cf. Part Two:1-IV-D) of the realm of the *imam* separated from the rest of the world into which the *da'wa* permeates.

The text reads that we know that

Divine light shines from one exalted person to the heart of believers. Even though in person he does not reach the entire world, the light of his summons (*da'wat*) does. And it shines from a person who exists through His light and summons the people to Him by His command. That person is, in meaning and reality (*bi ma'nī wa ḥaqīqat*), He Himself and not separate from Him, even though in person they appear two, in meaning they are one. Because the light is one, people's heart became alive with that light, and with the guidance of that light they recognize their Lord.

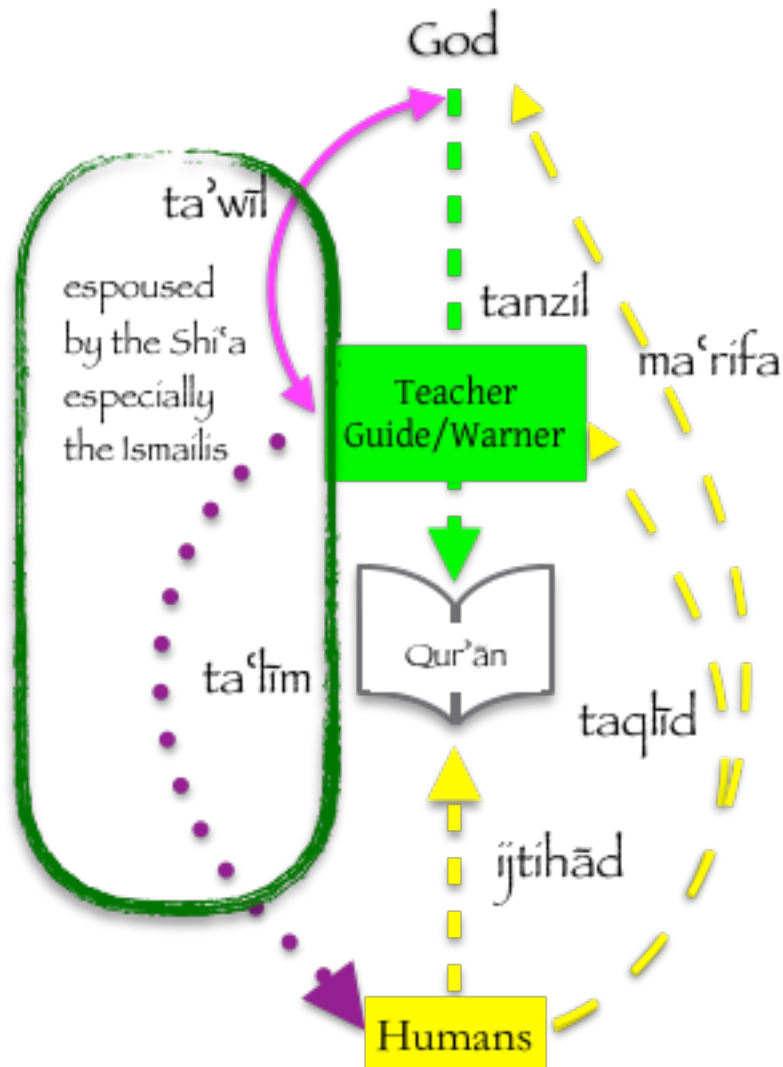
This reflexivity and language of metaphor and allegory when read unsympathetically amounts pantheism and anthropomorphism. The emphasis on unity of the community of followers of the imam is repetitive and emphatic in the text—the acquisition of learning unites all who attain it because ostensibly both the knowledge and its source are singular. The text began with a declarative that the path to gnosis is *ta'līm*.

The first premise in Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's formulation of *ta'līm*—whether a teacher is needed to know God is immaterial here. A negative response to the question would have meant that all who exercise speculative reasoning can know God and therefore cannot prefer their own knowledge over that of others. The second premise that the teacher must be authoritative or any teacher will do, is also nullified by the text. According to the text, the *ta'līm* of the trustworthy teacher (*mu'allim-i ṣādiq*) lights the path to God.

The third premise, that the teacher's authority must be demonstrated or any teacher will do is also redundant. The author points to the trustworthy teacher and the audience must be aware of his authority going back to the Divine designation of imamate of 'Alī and his explicitly designated descendants. The last premise of the *Fuṣūl-i arba'a* requires that there must be an unimpeachable teacher whose authority is self-evident and has no recourse to other proofs.

The text does this by bringing together the trustworthy teacher and his followers who recognise him as such.⁶⁴

Figure II.2a: Cycle of Tanzīl, Ta'wīl, Ta'līm, Ijtihād, Taqlīd and Ma'rifa



This formulation of the text suggests that the audience of this missive does not appear to be other than those who are already deeply in the fold with an impetus to encourage their further attachment to the gnostic teaching of the trustworthy teacher. There is no effort in the text to identify this soteriological actor—the audience would already be familiar with the identity of

⁶⁴ Hodgson. OA. pp 52ff and 325-328; Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 340-342; Badakhchani, “Shahrastānī’s Account.”;

the imam. This structure, content and mode of argument in the text suggests that the *Rāh-i ma'rifat* should be dated to after the Qiyāma when the imams were manifest.

II. *NĀMA BA 'ULAMĀ' -YI QAZWĪN* (A LETTER TO THE 'ULAMĀ' OF QAZWĪN)

The *Nāma*, is a completely different document; the addressees are explicitly specified, the context is apparent and the structure, content and argument fit into the pattern of contemporary discourse recorded in the Ilkhanid chronicles. The text begins with an invocation which calls for the addressee, the 'ulamā' of Qazwīn to be guided on the straight path (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*) and then turns to the author's journey to Ismailism. It states that over a period of ten or eleven years he had undertaken thirteen journeys to the Ḥijāz presumably for *hajj* (pilgrimage).⁶⁵ He was troubled and sought death as an escape. He ended up in the company of Ismailis in Gilān and initially, with reluctance observed them and disputed with them and found that he was drowning in a sea of error (*daryā-yi dhalālat*), they brought him out of the disquiet of darkness (*ḥairat-i ḡulmat*) to the protection of God and Light. The next paragraph suggests the impetus for writing; it states that

[t]hey have separated idolatry⁶⁶ (*shamanī*) from belief (*mu'taqad*) and that which after it has come to their awareness is cut it off. They have written in response that they have removed all the people, from top to bottom (*pāya āz sar* lit. foot from head) in the way of words and actions (*ikfā'*) and in manner of guidance (*irshād*)⁶⁷ have been provided proof—the proof of God, He is the Certitude (*al-Mūqin wa al-Mu'in*).⁶⁸

The letter was written as a reply to accusations of infidelity and idol-worship—though it is not clear what type of antinomian beliefs and practices this would refer to. The author, nonetheless, indicates that such individuals and actions have been rooted out. He recognises that “between this faction and other factions there is difference and disagreement” and

⁶⁵ This seems rather unlikely; there may have been later scribal interpolations from 3 to 13 or the author simply made a lofty biographical claim.

⁶⁶ The MS is hard to decipher. Looks like شمنه reading as شمن/سمنی = idol worship/er

⁶⁷ Text reads ارشاد => از شد

⁶⁸ The words *al-Mūqin* and the more clearly legible *al-Mu'in* both mean “certitude”. These are not among the 99 Names of God. This phrase is not found in the Qur'an.

proceeds to identify the agreement. There is agreement amongst all the different interpretations (*jumla-yi ṭawa'if-i mukhtalifah*) that God exists and is One. This Unique God must be known and the knowledge of God (*ma'rifat*) is possible only through the intellect (*'aql*) and contemplation (*naẓar*) that without intellect (*bī-khiradī*) not a grain of knowledge can be attained. He begins with the agreement to set a positive tone and room for dialogue—if this were an outright attack the preliminary agreement would not be brought up.

That which is different between this community and them is that we say the intellectual and contemplator (*'āqil wa nāẓir*) along with intellect (*'aql*) and contemplation (*naẓar*), needs authoritative teaching (*ta'līm*) to know God, Mighty and Exalted. As God, Mighty and Exalted, has said—this word of God, in the lifetime of every deputy of His, the Mighty and Exalted, has been conveyed to the people. [29b] 'I am setting in the earth a viceroy' (Q2:30) as also "We have sent among you, of yourselves, a Messenger, to recite Our signs to you and to purify you, and to teach you the Book and the Wisdom, and to teach you that you knew not." (Q2:151). The wisdom (*ḥikmat*) of this is: "Call thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and good admonition, and dispute with them in the better way" (Q16:125).

The Qur'ānic verses also emphasise the thrust of the argument by referencing God's viceroy (*khalīfa*), the messenger (*rasūl*) whose function was to teach the Book and Wisdom—implying that the revelation in itself is not sufficient and the last verse alludes to the *da'wa* (call). He elaborates that God "has created us and given us a head, eyes, heart and knowledge (*khirad*) and opened up the way of right and wrong (*rāḥ wa chāḥ* lit. path and pit) such that as we look at the sky and the earth and every creature (*gūna-yi gūna-yi khalqān*) and come to know God."

There are two modes of accessing knowledge; one is through observation, perception and intellection and the second is through revelation and teaching. In the first instance

God is attained in this way by the autodidacts (*khud-khiradmandān* lit. self-intellectuals) that they look at the sky and the earth and say that “there is a Creator for this creation”; they did not deny us (*mā-rā nīz chashm nadūkhta-and* lit. they have not stared at us) and in this thought there is no distance (*āz īn naẓar miyān na-dāshta*); [30a] [between us in that] when we looked at the sky and the earth and we came to know that this creation has a Creator (*īn ẓan'-rā ẓāni'-i-hast*).

He doubles down by arguing the Sunni acceptance of *ikhtilāf al-madhāhib* (permissible difference of opinions among the creeds)⁶⁹ that given that the Ismailis having come to the knowledge of God through observation, perception and intellection can not be denied according to

to their *fatwā* (legal opinion) we are knowers of God (*khudāshanās bāshīm*). Those who are the enemies of the knowers of God are not knowers of God (*khudānashanās*) and are infidels (*kāfir*). In this way, their *fatwās*, on the knowledge of God, cannot reject this truthful faction known as the Ismailis; and this truthful faction can reject them.

By the second mode, “knowledge of God attained by the word of God (*ba-qawl-i khudā*) and that word of God is conveyed to the people of the time (*mardum-i rūzgār*) by the truthful one of the age (*muḥiqq-i rūzgār*) and this is obligatory on the scholars (*khiramandān*)” the author asks if this community (*jamā'at*) can be contradicted when the truthful one of this truthful faction is certain and excellent in both discourses, then which truthful one is there who is more certain such that the enemies of this community who repeat that ‘the scholars know that there is God’ or that ‘they listen to the truthful messengers (*paigambarān-i ẓādiq*)’?

He advances the argument further stating that the

followers of God (*khudāparast*) are those that know God Himself (*khudā-rā khūd shanāsand*) such that it is put forward that in piety in both paths of truth and falsehood, there is no one in the world who can reject the knowledge of God of this community. That if there is certainty in your concern (*āgar bar gam-i shumā musallam dārand*) that knowledge of God is through individual consideration of every observer (*ba mujarrad-i naẓar-i har nāẓir-ist*), then no one can not reject this community since this community are also observers (*nāẓirand*).

Having asserted the equality of all interpretations, the author suggests that the *ikhtilāf* is resolved by turning to the Sovereign and “[f]rom Him, among the creation, there is a prophet in every era and the imam of the time (*imām-i waqt*) who is truthful and a guide for the people in every age, that in this knowledge of God, belief in Him and the word of the Glorious and Exalted and his deputy (*khalīfa*), he sent, is His word.”

⁶⁹ Schacht, J., “*Ikhtilāf*”, in EI2.

C. Roots of Ta'lim

This discourse of authority and authoritative teaching was not simply an epistemological difference and the debates were certainly not new. The Fatimid imam-caliph al-Manṣūr made a powerful case for the Ismaili doctrine of *ta'lim*—very much along the lines of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's teachings but a century and a half earlier—in his *K. tathbīt al-imāma* (*The Confirmation of the Imamate*).⁷⁰ Al-Manṣūr strongly rejected the appointment of the caliphs Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān and made a case for 'Alī's right and thereafter the authoritative teaching of the imams. He argued against the Sunni position that the Prophet did not appoint a successor by stating that if guidance was the Prophet's foremost duty then how could he neglect the continuance of such guidance.⁷¹ He asked did the Prophet appoint anyone to take his place

If they say yes, then we say to them: Who is that man? If they say [that] he is 'Alī, then, by not following him, they would profess unbelief in God, since they disobeyed him after he was appointed as imam and did not heed what he decided, nor go back to what he judged, nor accepted what he said. If, on the other hand, they say: He did not appoint anyone, our reply would be: Then the saying of God (Glory be to Him): 'Obey God, and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you' (4:59) and His saying: 'If you should quarrel on anything, refer it to God and [17v] the Messenger (and to those in authority among you)' 10 (4:59), would be meaningless. Hence you relied on personal opinion and analogy, on independent judgement and discretion, or on approximation and assumption. To rely on such things was forbidden to the Messenger of God (God's blessings be on him). How then can you claim that God has relieved you of such things and permitted you to do what He prohibited the Messenger of God to do?

He continued, how could you claim that the prophet

neglected the question of the imam in spite of his knowledge that it was necessary for the umma to have an imam who would take care of their affairs, unite them, judge between them, flog the adulterers and cut off [the hands] of the thieves, lead them in conquering the enemy, divide the booty among them and teach them what they did not know about religion, and about the lawful and the unlawful, and in spite of all that, he would not designate, install nor declare anyone as imam, so that no one, whether minor or senior, would have any doubt about the appointed person? How could he neglect such an issue to give priority to the dispatching of Usāma's army and to forsake [19v] the most important and noteworthy issue.

⁷⁰ *Tathbīt al-Imāma*.

His contemporary, the dā'ī Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman (d. 957/346) in his *Kitāb al-'ālim wa'l-ghulām* (*The Book of the Master and Disciple*) also demonstrated a very early articulation of the centrality of the authoritative teaching of the imam. Master and Disciple.

⁷¹ *Tathbīt al-Imāma*, p. 30

Near the time of his death Muḥammad had ordered Usāma b. Zaid to lead an expedition against Byzantine Syria and had harangued his most senior associates to join under Usāma's command.⁷² Al-Manṣūr continued that if the Prophet erred or forgot one religious duty—that of appointing a successor—it “would be a clear proof that he might err and forget all necessary things commanded by God”. By the time of al-Manṣūr, inerrancy and infallibility was attached to the Prophet. Sovereignty was at stake in the discourse; the Ismailis who were cast outside of the circle of Islam used the very methodologies of Sunni *kalām* to argue that if their Islam was to be rejected, then that of their rejectors was equally invalid by their own rules. Based on *ḥadīths* such as ‘my community will not agree on error’, the developing ‘*ulamā*’ classes argued for sovereignty of the community. For the Ismailis, sovereignty could not rest with the Umma or more specifically with the ‘*ulamā*’ because the latter differed amongst themselves. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ argued at Mayyāfāriqīn, if all the Shafīī *mujtahids* differed, who amongst them was truthful? Whose judgment could be counted on to establish the rectitude of faith? (Cf Part One: 6-II). According to the Ismailis, sovereignty is the preserve of God and through his revelation and those charged with safeguarding it. Reduced to its essence, the claim of the proponents of *ta’līm* was that no-one else claimed the mantle of the truthful teacher other than their imam descended from ‘Alī therefore their imam was the *mu’allim-i ṣādiq*.

The so-called *Fuṣūl-i arba‘a*, *Rāḥ-i ma’rifat* and *Nāma ba ‘ulamā’-yi Qazwīn* all share similar conceptions of theology of a benevolent knowable God who sent a revelation through his messengers whose function was not just to convey the message but to teach and explicate its essence. All three texts are anchored in the notions of anthropology and soteriology that the human is not able to attain gnosis through the intellect (*‘aql*) and speculative reasoning (*naẓar*)

⁷² Blankinship, Khalid Yahya. “Imārah, Khilāfah, and Imāmah: The Origins of the Succession to the Prophet Muḥammad,” In *Shīite Heritage: Essays on Classical and Modern Traditions*, edited by Lynda Clarke, pp 19–43. Binghamton, N.Y.: Global Publications, 2001. p. 35

alone. The function of the intellect is indispensable but without the *ta'lim* (authoritative teaching) of the *mu'allim-i ṣādiq* (the truthful teacher) true knowledge of God is not possible. The eschatological goal cannot be attained without this continuous guidance and as such the revelation is seen as, in part, between the covers of the Book and, in part, in the teaching of the one who safeguards the revelation.

The Ismaili conceptions of religious authority by the Nizaris resisted and rejected the process of canonisation of the *'ulamā'* which after Nizām al-Mulk's establishment of *madrasa* systems developed institutionalised momentum. The discourse was not an idle intellectual debate—Sunni attacks on *ta'lim* were tied to devastating military attacks and conflict. The *'ulamā'* reacted with the full force of the resources of the Saljuq-Abbāsīd establishments. Hodgson wrote that a scholar Abū'l-Maḥāsīn Rūyānī “persuaded the Qazwīnīs to decree death for anyone coming from the direction of Alamūt, lest mingling with the Ismā'īlīs should give rise to disaffection within Qazwīn. To his political argument he added a judicial one: that the Ismā'īlīs' exclusive exaltation of *ta'lim* threatened the religious law, which they made to depend upon the imam's word alone.” Similar arguments were made in Shāhdiz and elsewhere and as detailed above in the height of siege the Hanafi or Shafī'ī scholars went up to the Nizari fortresses and while secure under protection of an emissary (*amān*) jousted with their hosts calling them infidels. (Cf Part One:6-V-3). Hodgson wrote that the thrust against the Ismaili notions of post-prophetic authority and their reliance on the doctrine of *ta'lim* came out of a popular panic and was anchored in Ghazālī's refutations; he

helped to mould this decision to a critical precision which gave it not only a definitive place in the Ismā'īlī struggle, but perhaps in the whole self-definition of Islam. He had worked out a careful analysis of what it must in fact mean to profess the formula of Muslim faith, and so be permitted the privileges of acceptance in the Sunni society; in this analysis ... he drew a line between the milder Shi'a—in error, but still genuinely professing the faith—and the Ismā'īlīs, who did not mean by the formula the minimum amount that it had to mean. By rejecting the

plain meaning of the Prophet's teachings, the Ismā'īlīs rejected in fact Muhammad's prophethood; and were therefore beyond the pale.⁷³

The legitimization of the imam's privileged knowledge and authority, implicitly, legitimised the privileged knowledge and authority of the author-*da'i* and the system of the *da'wa* itself which, in turn made its followers targets.

However, within the Ismaili contexts, *ta'līm* became even more potent in the absence of the imam. At a geographic distance from the political centre where the imam resided or at a temporal distance during the *satr* (period of concealment of the imam), the *da'is* emphasised *ta'līm* of the imam as the only source of certitude which was not subject to differing opinions of the scholars (*ikhtilāf*) and the impossible *ijmā'* (consensus) of their *ijtihād* (intellectual reasoning). *Ta'līm* of the imam and the *da'wa* in his name, lit path for his followers and was a powerful rhetorical challenge against the opponents but in the era of *satr* some were not satisfied with the remoteness of the imam. In the next sections the efforts of the *ẓuhūrists* (those who vied for the manifestation of the imam) versus the *satrists* (those who sought to persevere in the absence of the imam) will be examined.

IV. Burdens of Satr

The doctrines of *naṣṣ* (designation) and *ta'līm* (authoritative teaching) of the *mu'allim-i ṣādiq* (trustworthy and rightful teacher) had been at the core of Nizari thought at the commencement of the period of *satr* (concealment). The Ismailis in Iran had held fast to the designation of Nizār as the successor to the imamate of al-Mustaṣṣir. Then how should the report described at the beginning of this chapter to be understood? What were the contexts, meanings and consequences of a group of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's followers composing his genealogy that he rejected (lit: washed it in water) saying: "I would rather be a personal slave of the

⁷³ Hodgson, OA, pp 123-124. Hodgson's pre-commitments and biases in this passage and use of terms such as "milder Shi'a" is noteworthy.

Imam (*banda-i khāṣṣ-i imām*) than illegitimately (*nākhalaḥ*) the son of the Imam (*farzand-i nākhalaḥ-i imām*)”?

A. Doctrinal Challenges Against the Nizari Da‘wa

The seven-decade-long Realm of the *Dā‘īs* (1090-1164/483-559) established by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and after him, ruled by Buzurg Ummīd and his son Muḥammad struggled to maintain doctrinal unity as the Nizaris differentiated from Fatimid Ismailism and countered the ideological attacks from Sunni ‘*ulamā*’. The Ilkhanid chroniclers report that these three rulers maintained strict enforcement of adherence to the *sharī‘a*—in part, this was to distinguish what they would label as the heresy in the subsequent reign of Ḥasan ‘*alā dhikrihi*’l-salām; however, these reports based on Nizari sources—albeit with some rhetorical manipulations—intimate that strict adherence of the *sharī‘a* was central to the Ismaili precepts of the pillars of Islam.⁷⁴ The reports of numerous incidents over the seventy years suggest that the *dā‘īs* had to maintain constant vigilance against individuals within their own polity and ruthlessly extirpated doctrinal opposition. The execution of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s sons, as analysed above, points to such challenges to the authority of their father and perhaps, opposition to his doctrines. (Cf. Part One:6-IV). The *Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw* analysed below claims that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ executed four of his sons based on an admonition of the putative imam descended from Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir; and further that Ḥasan took pride in this act as a loyalty to the Nizari line of imams. The Ilkhanid chroniclers enumerate equally harsh treatment of other doctrinal opponents during the reign of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ.

His successor also dealt with a number of challenges to his authority. In 1131/526, Buzurg Ummīd’s forces defeated a Zaydī claimant to the imamate who had proselytised in the Caspian

⁷⁴ JT pp 163-165

region as well as in Khurāsān. When the Nizaris defeated Bā Ḥāshim ‘Alawī’s army, “they produced much proof against him and burnt him.”⁷⁵ In the same year, five individuals were named in the accounts among whom two were called *amīrs* (military commanders) together with a group of others in the village of Sarim in Daylamān; they planned to betray the Nizaris; however, one of them informed on the conspirators. All were taken to Alamut, individually interrogated and confessed their error—they were bound up and imprisoned.⁷⁶ In 1139/533, the chronicles report that the Nizaris attacked Rayy and captured the chief (*ra’īs*) of the city, ‘Abd al-Malik Qaṣrānī and his son, and there “was another group who lived in hypocrisy and subterfuge. They captured all of them and killed them after they had admitted their crimes and offences.”⁷⁷

The reign of Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd in JT contains a lengthy account of a Mazdakī revolt among the people who called themselves Pārsīs. The Nizari dā’ī-author through the screen of the Ilkhanid chronicles recounts their beginnings in the teachings of Mani (fl. 216-276) and then Mazdak (d. ca. 528) who along with his followers was killed by Anushīrwān the Just (r. 531-579). Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ had sent a dā’ī Dihkhudā Kaykhusraw to these people; after he died in 1135/530, his sons ‘Abu al-‘Alā’ and Yūsuf succeeded him. JT records that when Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ passed away,

⁷⁵ JT p. 141; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 346: “Buzurg-Ummīd sent the Zaydī leader a letter of advice, but Abū Ḥāshim persisted in accusing the Nizarīs of unbelief and heresy (sic). In *Muḥarram* 526 AH, an army was sent from Alamūt to Gīlān against Abū Ḥāshim, who had gathered a force of his own. The Zaydis were defeated and Abū Ḥāshim was captured and brought to Alamūt, where the Nizārīs held disputations with him. According to the Nizārī chronicler of the reign of Buzurg-Ummīd, Abū Ḥāshim eventually renounced his claim to the imamate and expressed his willingness to convert to Ismā’īlism. He was later executed.”

JT account clearly states that Bā Ḥāshim was burnt—there is no indication of a renunciation of his claim or acceptance of Ismailism. Per JT p. 157 The revolt continued. His son, Kiyā Hādī, was captured and taken to Alamut after a defeat of his band of sixty fighters in 1151/545.

⁷⁶ JT p. 148

⁷⁷ JT p. 148

a man named Jūlāhi-yi Badīl in Āzarbāyjān carried out *da'wa* to the Pārsīs and said: “God (*ḥaqq*) is with the Pārsīs and the Ismailis are *ẓāhirīs* (exoterists) and the *bāṭin* (esoteric) is this that Abū al-‘Alā’ and Yūsuf are in place of Muḥammad and ‘Alī. Muḥammad, ‘Alī and Salmān all three are divine; at one time they manifest in one person, sometimes two and sometimes three. The laws of the *sharī'a* are for the *ẓāhirīs* and they themselves do not have to comply with the permitted and forbidden, and the establishment of prayer and fasting should be removed. He said that for Bu al-‘Alā’ all that is forbidden is permitted.

Women are reservoirs of water, whoever is thirsty can drink; what then are the dowry and marriage? Girls are permissible to their fathers and brothers. In short, everything that is forbidden he made permissible. They said: “Heaven and hell are here not elsewhere; and whoever knows Abū al-‘Alā’ and Yūsuf as god, through metempsychosis (*tanāsukh*) will return in the human form otherwise when they die, will return in the form of beasts (*sabu*).”⁷⁸

In 1142/537 the leaders of the movement were arrested, tortured and Abū al-‘Alā’ and Yūsuf were killed and burnt; and for a year their followers were hunted down.⁷⁹ Five years later, JT records that “on 7 *Rabī' al-ākhirā* 542/12 September 1147 the chief (*rā'is*) of Hamadan, Dihkhudā [Abū al-Faḍl Burujirdī] who was the *dā'ī* of Hamadan and that region, he [Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd] secretly ordered to be killed.”⁸⁰

What this scan of events indicates is that during the period of *satr* (concealment) of the imam, several individuals led urgent movements to break with the *da'wa* which was advocating the eventual manifestation of the imam descended from Nizār. As the survey of this handful of instances indicates, the agitators challenged the authority of the *dā'ī*-rulers of the Nizari polity in favour of their personal, Zaydī, neo-Mazdakī and other claims of religious authority. The common thread is that these groups sought manifestation of their soteriological figure rather than persevere in the hierarchy of the *ḥudūd-i dīn* in the absence (*satr*) of the imam. Placed in this matrix, the genealogy depicting Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ as a Nizari descendant has some valence. A direct line can be drawn from this event to the execution of 250 people and the banishment of 250 others from the polity by Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd for believing that his son Ḥasan

⁷⁸ according to Steingass: “because mostly they give birth after seven months”

⁷⁹ JT pp 151-152

⁸⁰ JT pp 151-152

was the imam and then to the declaration of *Qiyāma* and the recognition of Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām as the imam.

B. Satrists Versus the Ṣuhūrists

The group of leaders around Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ sought to put him in the position of the imam to fill the void of the murdered Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir. Ḥasan washed away the ambitions of this group who advocated for the *ṣuhūr* (manifestation) of the soteriological figure by rejecting the constructed genealogy in the line of Nizari imams. The movement of *ṣuhūr* continued to grow over time and in due course, the *ṣuhūrists* were able to overwhelm the *satrists*. In the reign of Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd, large numbers of Nizaris began to coalesce around the charismatic personality and learning of his son Ḥasan and portrayed him as the long-expected imam. Muḥammad took severe action against Ḥasan’s supporters and suppressed the movement to openly proclaim an imam. The large numbers of people punished demonstrates that the *ṣuhūr*ist movement had gained substantial following and momentum. After the declaration of the *Qiyāma*, Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām was universally acclaimed not just as the Nizari imam but the *Qā’im-i qiyāmat* (Lord of the Resurrection) of the *Qiyāmat-i qiyāmāt* (Resurrection of Resurrections)—the *ṣuhūr*ist had triumphed.

C. Soteriology and Eschatology in Manifestation of the Imam

This second era of *satr* was different from the first such period in Ismaili history. After the death of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq both the imamate and the community of followers went into concealment; in the Nizari case the community of followers, in the castellan policy and in some other spaces, was not concealed. It was the line of imams that were not publicly known. In the previous case the problems of leadership would manifest fully only when both leaders and their communities would uncloak. The early Ismailitic movements, nonetheless, had

several claimants to power and the Qarmaṭī rejection of the Fatimid line are indications of the divergent searches for leadership. In the Nizari case where a significant population existed openly as Ismailis, the search for authority and variant legitimations among the different factions of followers would be more apparent. These voices have been subdued since the hegemony was established by the rulers of Alamut and the histories were written by *dāʿī*-authors from their vantage within the Nizari polity. Modern scholarship has been focussed on issues of the Nizari “struggle against the Islamic world” of survival. Factionalism among the Nizari Ismailis has not substantively been examined and it is difficult since the sources have naturally muted the opposing voices.

I. ḤASAN-I ŠABBĀḤ AS THE IMAM

The above-mentioned group of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s followers were willing to breach majoritarian Shiʿi and Ismaili theory of imamate by drafting him, a non-ʿAlid, as the imam.⁸¹ The brief fragment which survived in the Ilkhanid chronicles from the Nizari author suggests that the group may have woven Ḥasan’s genealogy as a descendant of Nizār. Having an imam would not change issues of legitimacy with the Sunnis nor would it offer any advantage with the Ismaili Fatimids—this effort was clearly something that effected the internal dynamics of the Nizari communities. Is it conceivable that the group of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s followers felt that if he took on the role of imam this would eclipse all others who had claim to authority in the community? The accounts in the Ilkhanid chronicles derived from the *Sarguzasht-i Sayyid-nā* do not elevate Ḥasan in the *ḥudūd-i dīn*. His designation of imam would surpass anyone who was ranked higher than a mere *dāʿī*—is this report evidence of the competition between Alamut

⁸¹ It is possible that this group may have had linkages with Zaydī Shiʿism which did not always require the imam to be an ʿAlid. Several Zaydī opponents of the Nizaris are noted in the accounts as are the numerous “converts” to the Nizari cause from traditionally Zaydī areas south of the Caspian.

and Shāhdiz? Did Ḥasan's followers try to elevate him above Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh, who was possibly the head of the *da'wa* in Iran and who had a significantly larger following? If so, this effort is dateable to before 1107/500—the date itself is ominous due to its millennial connotations. Later Nizari texts would designate Ḥasan as the *Hujjat*⁸² who blew the first trumpet of the *Qiyāmat*⁸³—the Ilkhanid chronicles never mentioned him in this capacity. The second impetus which has to be surmised is that a portion of Nizaris adhered to an eschatology which urgently required a soteriological actor and this practical need eclipsed all theory.

II. MUḤAMMAD B. BUZURG UMMĪD AND THE QĀ'IM

The third ruler of the Nizari Polity in Iran inherited a castellan polity that spanned several hundreds of miles in a period when the Saljuq-Nizari relations were relatively calmer. The supreme sultan Sanjar had his capital in the East at Marw and his nephews tried to hold sway in Iran. The shifting factional sovereignties meant that the attacks against the Nizaris rarely consisted of all the major Saljuq forces. Sanjar, for many years, had established diplomatic relations with the Nizaris and there are indications even of some coordinated actions. Juwayni

⁸² Kalām-i Pīr p. 44[51] fn2.

In fn1 Ivanow notes “In all copies, and even in the HB Abū Ishāq, this place is badly mutilated and is extremely ambiguous. It is not clear by whom and what was handed, and to whom. It may appear as if Mustanṣir or Nizār has handed the Imamāt to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ—which is obviously nonsense. There is no doubt that something is omitted here, most probably (and naturally) the words *farzadi khūd-rā*, as suggested in the translation.”

This may be a surviving trace of the attribution of imamate to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ by the faction of his supporters which then was mutilated by later Nizaris? I plan to examine MSS of Kalām-i Pīr and Haft Bāb-i Abū Ishāq to explore this question further. Until then, it should be carefully noted that this is a footnote on a footnote!

⁸³ An allusion to Q39:68

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَىٰ فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ

For the Trumpet shall be blown, and whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth shall swoon, save whom God wills. Then it shall be blown again, and lo, they shall stand, beholding.

was particularly critical of Sanjar's relations with the Nizaris. This larger domain also brought a greater diversity of people and their beliefs under Nizari domination. However, Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd had to contend with a greater frequency of religious challenges and one of the most serious ones revolved around his own son Ḥasan. JT states that

Mahdī al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd was born in the year 520/1126-7. When he reached the age of maturity, he desired to study the teachings and religious discourses of Sayyid-nā and his [own] ancestors. He diligently studied the compelling arguments (*ilzāmāt*) in the texts (Lit: speeches) of the *da'wa* and became skilful and expert in their exposition. He busied himself with study of religious and Greek sciences (*'ulūm-i imānī wa yūnānī*).⁸⁴

Sourced from the writing of the *dā'ī*-author, Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī,⁸⁵ (Cf. Part One:4-I-A) the epithet Mahdī for Ḥasan b. Muḥammad survived the screen of the Ilkhanid chronicles who painted Ḥasan as a charismatic learned person, steeped in early Ismaili thought and the *Rafīqān* not having heard discourse

of this type before and compared to his father, they considered him an inveterate wise man and a scholar versed in the sciences and began to think that this was the *imām* promised by Sayyid-nā. The inclination of the *Rafīqān* toward him increased and they were hasty and excessive in following him.⁸⁶

His father, Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd, who had been “staunch in the tradition, of his father and Sayyid-nā, in the cause of the *da'wa* for the *imām* and firm in the outward practices of Islam” emphatically denounced Ḥasan saying “This Ḥasan is my son and I am not an *imām*; in fact I am a *dā'ī* from among the *dā'īs* of the *imām*. Whoever listens to and affirms other than these words is an infidel and irreligious.”⁸⁷ Muḥammad forced Ḥasan to disavow his following and to write treatises distancing himself from any claims to the imamate. JT reported that Muḥammad

punished a group who had believed in the *imāmate* of his son with all sorts of interrogations, punishments, mutilations and tortures. On one occasion he put 250 persons to death at Alamut

⁸⁴ JT p. 162

⁸⁵ JT p. 161. ZT p. 181

⁸⁶ JT p. 163

⁸⁷ JT p. 163; ZT p. 184. Qashani's quote includes the phrase: “... our descent is from Daylam, not the imam ...”

and bound their corpses to the backs of 250 others who were implicated in this way and evicted them from the castle.⁸⁸

The fortress of Alamut could barely sustain about 300 people so an execution of 250 and banishment of another 250 even if exaggerated was a serious affair.⁸⁹ If the 500 person number was close to being accurate then the unfortunates came from the environs of the fortresses in the Rūdbār. What exactly were these people doing and believing that such extreme punishment was meted out to them? Ḥasan's "followers and companions regarded his commission of forbidden acts and drinking of grape wine a sign of the promised *imām*." While Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd was cast as being staunch in the *da'wa* and the precepts of the *sharī'a*; Ḥasan was branded as antinomian and—reminiscent of Muḥammad b. Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ (Cf. Part One:6-IV).—the trope of drinking grape wine was also levelled at Ḥasan-ʿalā dhikrihi'l-salām. While the former was executed, Ḥasan was not harmed.⁹⁰ This indicates that Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd would not put his son who challenged his authority to death as done previously by Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ—perhaps due to the immense growth of the *zuhūrist* movement in the Nizari polity that would have protected their man. However, the *zuhūrists* faced a challenge of explaining how a descendant of Nizār, who was murdered in Cairo, would manifest in Iran. The Ilkhanid chronicles have relayed several explanations of how this may have happened. Below I examine a unique doctrinal text I have edited and translated for this research is presented which gives an understanding of a faction among the Nizaris who sought the manifestation of their imam and explains how a descendant of Nizār b. al-Mustanşir came to Alamut. First, however, I analyse numismatic evidence to demonstrate how the normative proclamations of Nizari imamate were undertaken in the Nizari polity.

⁸⁸ JT p. 163; ZT p. 184

⁸⁹ Ivanow. *Alamut and Lamasar*. pp 8ff, 35ff especially p. 40

⁹⁰ JT p. 163; ZT p. 184 Qashani wrote that "Kiyā Muḥammad imprisoned until his [Muḥammad's] death". Although this is not supported by the adjacent passages.

D. Numismatic Evidence of Satr to Kashf

The Nizari polity while not constituting a contiguous state, nonetheless, was establishing ever wider zones of projection of its power. An illustrative indicator of this was the minting of coins which began during the rule of Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd. While minting coins and establishing the *khuṭba* in the name of the ruler were markers of zones of sovereignty in pre-modern Islamicate contexts, the former merely required the services of a minter who could make the die for the coins. The operations to strike the coins was a simple set-up of aligning the die with the correctly weighing ball of gold, silver or copper. That the itinerant minter—such as the Ismaili *dā'ī* Amīra Ḍarrāb (minter)—would be able to pack the die-making tools on his donkey. (Cf Part One:6-I-A and B and Part Two:1-III). Elaborate permanent mint facilities were not necessary and not usually available.⁹¹ The securing of substantial quantities of gold, silver and copper and the maintenance of standards of exchange and prices implies significant institutional and territorial reach.

Figure II.2b: Gold Dinar—Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd Minted at Alamut



This gold dinar minted at Alamut in 532/1138 or 536/1142 at the mint called Kursī al-Daylam (Throne of Daylam) in the field on the obverse side has the *shahāda*: There is no god but God and Muḥammad is the messenger of God. The name Muḥammad ibn (r) Buzurg Ummīd (l) occurs to the right and left of the *shahāda*. The field on the reverse reads: 'Alī walī Allāh; al-Muṣṭafā li-dīn Allāh Nizār. 'Alī the friend of God is a standard Shi'i formulation and Nizar, the chosen for the faith of God evokes the imam's regnal title and asserts preference to his brother al-Musta'li. The

⁹¹ Personal communication with Stephen Album, one of the leading coin specialists. June 2015

margin reads: “Commander of the Faithful, the blessings of God on him and his pure fathers and his most generous sons”.⁹²

Figure II.2c: Gold Dinar—Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd Minted at Alamut



This gold dinar was struck at the Kursī al-Daylam mint; the field on the obverse side has the *shahāda*: There is no god but God and Muḥammad is the messenger of God. The margin reads: “In the name of God, this *dinar* was struck in the City of Fortune, Kursī al-Daylam, year five hundred and fifty-seven.” The field on the reverse reads: ‘*Alī walī Allāh; al-Muṣṭafā li-dīn Allāh Nizār*’ and the margin reads: “Commander of the Faithful, the blessings of God on him and his pure fathers and his most generous sons”. The coin dates from the first year of Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd’s reign, namely 1162/557.⁹³ Even after the declaration of the Qiyāma two years later, coins issued during the reign of Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām carried this same formula—that is Ḥasan’s name did not appear on the coins, rather, they carried the name of Nizār and his anonymous descendants as the imams.⁹⁴

In the year 1178/574 the regnal titles of the rulers began to be used on the coins; however, Willey notes that the word *imām* is not found in reference to the rulers other than on coins from ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad’s (r. 1221-1255/618-653) reign. He wrote: “various times the later lords of Alamut replaced the sultanic title with their proper religious title of *al-mawlā* but they never used the designation of Imam on the coins. Some of the Nizari silver coins bear figural representations, such as birds or lions formed out of the names of Imams.” ‘Alā’ al-Dīn restored the teaching of the Qiyāma which had been suspended by his father; his coins carried the phrase “*lā imām illā amīr az-zamān Nizār*, ‘there is no imam except the Commander of the Age,

⁹² Available at <https://en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces81436.html>

⁹³ Available at <https://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/dynasties/seljuks/coins/c538>

⁹⁴ Peter. Willey. *Eagle’s Nest: Ismaili Castles in Iran and Syria*, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005). p. 297

Nizar’.”⁹⁵ The changes in usage on coinage illustrate the complexities of the proclamations of the manifestation of the imam and evidence the shift from *satr* (concealment) to *kashf* (manifestation) of the imams. Nizar continued to be evoked even after the Qiyāma—implying that the Nizari polity asserted its legitimacy in opposition to the Fatimid imam-caliphs for over a century.

E. A Manifesto of the Ṣuhūrists—Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw

The *Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw* is a unique artefact, perhaps, the manifesto of the *ṣuhūrists* which yields a fascinating account of the dynamics between the *satrists* and the *ṣuhūrists*. The treatise was copied by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ghufrānī, in the early 20th/14th century⁹⁶ and is part of Persian MS 32, mentioned above, which is housed in the Institute of Ismaili Studies collection.⁹⁷ A second witness of the text is listed by Poonawala as part of a *majmū‘a* in the Vazīrī collection at Tehran University.⁹⁸ There are only minimal differences between the two witnesses.⁹⁹ Content analysis suggests that the treatise dates within a few years of the enactment of the *Qiyāmat-i Buzurg* at Alamut in 1164/559 by Ḥasan ‘alā *dhikrihi*’l-salām. (Cf

⁹⁵ *Eagle’s Nest* p. 290

⁹⁶ HB, p. 40. Javan. *Catalogue*, pp 28 and 36.

⁹⁷ IIS Persian MS 32:57 I am grateful to Dr. Farhad Daftary and Professor Eric Ormsby for kindly permitting to have access to the digitised Manuscripts at the Institute of Ismaili Studies. Shah Hussain, Assistant Librarian at IIS for his help, support and time and for making certain MSS available to me during my research trip at the Institute in 2013. I am also grateful to Professor John Woods, Nazeer Lotfi Fard and Fatemeh Mazaheri for patiently reviewing the translation. Thanks also to Dr. Paul Walker and Professor Hermann Landolt for their comments on the text. Grateful thanks also to Dr. Sunatullo Jonboboev of the University of Central Asia and Dr. Qudratbek Elchibekov at the Institute of Oriental Studies in Dushanbe for checking to see if any comparable texts or copies of this tract exist in the collections in Tajikistan—no such account is known.

⁹⁸ Tehran-Markazī MS-F 2835; Poonawala, *BBB*, p. 353. I am grateful to Dr. Janis Esots for kindly securing a scan of this tract for me from the University of Tehran.

⁹⁹ I plan to publish an annotated study of this treatise in 2019-20.

Appendix: Treatises-II). The text consists of a series of analepses (flashbacks) and prolepses (flash-forwards) summarised here:

- Paragraphs 1-4: In the voice of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ related a narrative told to him by Nāṣir-i Khusraw about his encounter with al-Mustanṣir and appointment “to carry out the *da‘wa* in the regions of Balkh, Kabul and Badakhshan.”¹⁰⁰
- Paragraph 5: al-Mustanṣir divided his domain between his two sons and the died soon after.
- Paragraph 6: [al-]Musta‘lī wrote to Nizār “Everyone says our father commanded that you would be the ruler and I would be the commander of the forces in your service. The greater good is that you come to the city and take father’s place.” When he reluctantly came, Musta‘lī demanded that Nizār relinquish his authority.¹⁰¹
- Paragraphs 7-10: Nizār met Ḥasan Sa‘īd and a hermit; both of whom were instructed by al-Mustanṣir to await the encounter with, validate and serve Nizār, his designated son (*farzand-i manṣūṣ*). Nizār went to Baghdad with his two sons and Ḥasan Sa‘īd. Musta‘lī demanded that the [‘Abbāsīd] caliph return Nizār or face an invasion. Nizār returned but sent his son Hādī with Ḥasan Sa‘īd secretly to Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ at Alamut.
- Paragraphs 11-12: Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ ruled by the command of the imam who lived in concealment. He executed his own four sons because the imam intimated that they would be the cause of discord.
- Paragraphs 13-14: Before Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ died he appointed Buzurg Ummīd who knew of the concealed imam; when he died, his son and successor, Muḥammad, was unaware of the secrets of Mawlānā (*ḥāl wa āsrār-i Mawlāna waqūf bar āṣl nabūd*). Mawlānā Hādī and his successor Muhtadī wrote treatises for teachers of the community. ‘Mawlānā Qāhir, peace be on his mention, said: “I am the *Hujjat* of the Imam.”’
- Paragraph 15: After Muhtadī, some “*Raḥiqān* knew that the imam is Mawlānā Qāhir”; however, Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd was ignorant of this. “He was by nature opposed to the essence of the imam (*dhāt-i imām*). He was suspicious of the imam such that one day when Mawlānā arrived with eighteen companions; that unfortunate pursued the companions and treated them as the accursed (*malā‘īn*). They martyred His Majesty and the eighteen companions who were with him.”

¹⁰⁰ Nasir-i Khusraw arrived in Balkh in 1052—probably around the time of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s birth or at least his infancy. Ḥasan departed for Egypt in 1077 around the time of the last references to Nasir-i Khusraw are found. It is highly unlikely that the two ever met. Let alone exchanged important matters of faith. See my forthcoming Shiraz Hajiani, “Second Fiddle: An Examination of the Chronology of Biographies of Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and its Later Inversion in the Legitimations of Authority in Nizari Ismailism,” .

¹⁰¹ al-Musta‘lī is referred to simply as Musta‘lī and is cursed for martyring Nizar (Para [9]); Nizār is consistently referred to as Mawlānā Nizār.

Muḥammad, the ruler of the polity, took the imam's pregnant wife into his own household awaiting the birth. If the issue were to be a son, he was to be killed. As fortune would have it, the *dā'ī*'s wife gave birth to a daughter and the imam's wife, at the same time, gave birth to a son. According to paragraph 16 of the text, the *dā'ī*'s wife, a believer of the imamate, swapped the two children. Through this substitution, the imam was brought up in the household of the ruler of the Nizari polity. The next analepses returns to a prophecy by Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ of the characteristics of the Qā'im. He said that

when he will enter the library, he will urinate (*chun ba kitābkhāna dar āyad zahrāb pāshad*). Second, during a hunt he will split two animals in half with a single stroke of a sword. Third, during the controversy of Kiyā Muḥammad (*dar ḥāl-i nizā'-yi Kiyā Muḥammad*) he will be wearing boots and have an orange in his hand¹⁰² and will be throwing the orange from one hand to the other." [Paragraph 17]

When the child was ten, Kiyā Muḥammad observed that he entered the library and urinated on the books; two years later during a hunt he chased a pregnant wild ass and "struck it with his sword and cut the foal which was in the belly into two and so the [second] prophecy became apparent." [Paragraph 18]. One day Muḥammad was sitting with the *Raḥīqān* and relating these events and Ḥasan "came through the door and was wearing boots and had an orange in his blessed hand and was throwing it from one hand to the other. Kiyā Muḥammad became certain of all that is—he is (*har chi hast ishānand*).¹⁰³ He took Mawlānā's skirt in his hand and said: 'My Lord (*Khudāwand*) have mercy on me.'" Ḥasan refused to have mercy since Muḥammad had killed his father, the imam and his eighteen companions—he "crushed his head with his blessed boot and Kiyā Muḥammad died immediately." [Paragraph 19]. The treatise concludes that the *Raḥīqān* celebrated

¹⁰² out of the three conditions the first two metaphors can easily be glossed; in the third, the boots seem to be functional rather than metaphorical while the orange may be an allusion to the Sun/*kashf*

¹⁰³ Lit: All that is — he is. or smoother as: all that he is - it is him — see para 14 above

the manifestation of the imam (*zuhūr-i khudāwand*) and organised a feast. They exclaimed:¹⁰⁴ “Sayyid-nā, may God sanctify his soul, had proclaimed that ‘the hope that you have from God¹⁰⁵ will be known when the pleasure of the brother-believer (*riḍāi-yi birādar-mu’min*) is the pleasure of the imam (*riḍāi-yi khudāwand*), may God sanctify his mention.”

May Mawlānā grant everyone Divine favour (*tawfiq*) and harmony (*ittifāq*) to seek the pleasure of the brother-believer. Peace!

A tentative exegesis of the metaphors is useful. The young son’s urination on books symbolises the rejection of book-learning. The splitting of two animals symbolises his capacity to dissect both the material and spiritual realms where the pregnant animal represents the manifest (*ẓāhir*) and the foetus the inner (*bāṭin*). Lastly, the boots appear to be functional; however, the orange could be emblematic of the earth or more likely the creative power of the sun which the young imam tossed from one hand to the other.¹⁰⁶

There is no information of the authorship, date or provenance of the original text. It is likely to have been the manifesto of the *zuhūrist* faction and may have been used to rally the members together. It might be placed after Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd’s efforts to stamp them out by executing 250, banishing another 250 and repressing all who would look to Ḥasan as the imam. Such a text and its content would have no value or meaning if written more than a generation after the Qiyāma or in a later time.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ MSS Not clear هـ *hazz* (v.n), Cutting, making an incision, notching; excelling, exceeding (in nobility and generosity); time, season; severe in language.

¹⁰⁵ revelation of the imam? salvation?

¹⁰⁶ I have searched several databases and indices of myths, symbols and metaphors and not found a satisfactory explanation for the orange. Polly Grimshaw, and Stith Thompson. *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: Bibliography and Abbreviations*, (Bloomington, Ind.: P. Grimshaw, 1976).

¹⁰⁷ I am grateful to Herman Landolt for reviewing my edition and translation of the text. He commented: “The document is evidently of great interest even if it may, of course, be dismissed historically as an *afsāneh* for the reasons you yourself point out. As you also suggest, it may depict the state of mind of those ‘young Nizaris’ (cf. Daftary, the Ismailis, 2nd ed p 357f.) who wished to assert a certain spiritual continuity of the ‘true’ imamate in the line of Nizar.” Personal communication January 2017/*Rabī al-ākhira* 1438

Several episodes in the text do not match historical accounts. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and Nāṣir-i Khusraw could not have met; the Fatimid realm was never divided between Nizār and Musta‘lī; there is no evidence of Nizār going to Baghdad and Musta‘lī’s threat to the ‘Abbāsīd caliph is fanciful; the chronicles report Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ had only two sons whom he executed not four and the circumstances of their killings are very differently recorded. Why was Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd not entrusted with the secret of the concealed imam? This last question is also pertinent to the accounts of the latter’s succession in the Ilkhanid chronicles. The text enumerates two of the three reports in the Ilkhanid chronicles of how Ḥasan the imam ended up in the household of the ruler of Alamut, the *dā‘ī* Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd—namely, the role of Ḥasan Sa‘īd in conveying the future imam to Alamut and the substitution of the child of the imam for that of the *dā‘ī*.¹⁰⁸ While the two reports are nicely tied together into a single narrative,¹⁰⁹ there is a major doctrinal issue here in that at the death of the imam al-Qāhir, the future imam was in his mother’s womb.¹¹⁰ The acrimonious relationship between Muḥammad and Ḥasan is recorded differently in the chronicles based on Nizari sources. While Muḥammad seriously punished those who believed his son to be the imam, in 1146/541 when Ḥasan would have been twenty years old, Muḥammad “appointed his son Ḥasan as his deputy at Alamut and himself went to Lār and came [back] to Alamut. At the beginning of *Shawwāl* he went in the direction of Daylamān by way of Filāmrud and from there he came to Daylamān and built the fort of Alīkā.”¹¹¹ The chronicles do not report that Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd was killed—in fact, his portrayal in this treatise completely contradicts that in the Ilkhanid accounts.

¹⁰⁸ The report of the imam fornicating with the *dā‘ī*’s wife is not included in this text. cf TJG. pp 231ff especially p. 232, HWC pp 691ff especially p. 692

¹⁰⁹ If it dates back to before the declaration of the *Qiyāma* and it was preserved and available to the Ilkhanid chroniclers, this treatise may well have been their ultimate source for this episode.

¹¹⁰ This parallels the expectation of the birth of al-Ṭayyib b. al-Āmīr.

¹¹¹ JT p. 155

That being said, the *Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw* may be a nuanced manifesto of the *Zuhūrists*. If, as asserted here, it dates back to within a few years of the *Qiyāma*, then this treatise is a unique witness to the early Nizari communities and their struggle to explain the *kashf* (manifestation) of the imamate in Iran. This very early treatise attests to the line of imams consonant with later Nizari reckoning: Ḥasan ‘*alā dhikrihi*’-*l-salām* b. al-Qāhir b. al-Muḥtadī b. al-Hādī b. Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir and illustrates the elevation of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ into a sanctified forebear of early Nizari Ismailism.

V. The Liberation of *Zuhūr*

In this chapter I have examined the Nizari Ismaili core doctrines of *naṣṣ* and *ta’līm*. I have shown how the concept of *naṣṣ* elaborated and developed over time to constrain succession to the imamate to specifically designated descendants of ‘Alī, Ḥusayn, and Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq. By the 12th/6th century, this doctrine was most potent in the Nizari-Musta‘lian discourse of legitimacy. While, as Paul Walker has shown, the Fatimids appear to have changed their designations as a matter of expedient practice, I have argued that the immutability of *naṣṣ* remained a constant in the disputations of legitimacy of imamate.¹¹² Writing in the 13th / 7th century, Ṭūsī intimated that the Divine designation of the imam occurs even before the sperm enters the ovum. Later Nizari Ismailis used the doctrine for the succession of the early rulers of the polity—they even elevated the *ḥujjas* as designated by God—although this may have been a function of the Ilkhanid chroniclers’ adaptation of technical into mundane usages.

¹¹² Walker, Paul E. “Succession to Rule in the Shiite Caliphate.” *Journal of the American Research Center In Egypt* 32 (1995): 239–64. Walker, Paul Ernest. “Succession to Rule in the Shiite Caliphate,” In *Fatimid History and Ismaili Doctrine*, pp II:1–48. Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 2008. Having detailed the accounts of the different sides, derived primarily from Maqrīzī, and having developed his “theory” of Fatimid succession, Walker has resolutely concluded that the deathbed designation was paramount and trumped any prior designations.

The concept of the special *‘ilm* (knowledge) of the imam so integrally intertwined with *naṣṣ* at the practical level is fundamentally tied to the doctrine of *ta‘līm* (authoritative teaching of the imams)—the theoretical process of dissemination the *‘ilm*. Ghazālī wrote five treatises to refute the Ismailis and attack their notions of *ta‘līm*. While Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī concluded that Ghazālī misunderstand or rather misconstrued the Ismaili doctrine, Saljuq era *‘ulamā’* used the latter’s dogma to castigate and condemn the Nizaris. Using newly edited sources along with the Ilkhanid chronicles, I depicted the debates between the Nizari *dā‘īs* and their Sunni interlocutors. *Rāh-i ma‘rifat* (*Path to Knowledge of God*) and *Nāma ba ‘ulamā’-yi Qazwīn* (*A Letter to the ‘Ulamā’ of Qazwīn*) demonstrate how the Nizaris debated their epistemology of Truth which they argued resided in the *ta‘līm* of the *mu‘allim-i ṣādiq* (the Truthful teacher) rather than in the divergent speculative reasoning (*naẓar*) of the *‘ulamā’*. I demonstrated that this debate is rooted in the legitimacy of post-prophetic authority and the notions of anthropology and soteriology that the human is not able to attain gnosis through the intellect (*‘aql*) and speculative reasoning (*naẓar*) alone. The intellect is indispensable but without the *ta‘līm* (authoritative teaching) of the *mu‘allim-i ṣādiq* (the truthful teacher) true knowledge of God is not possible. The Ismaili *dā‘ī*-authors began with the revelation to Muḥammad and located the contextual interpretation in the *ta‘līm* of the Truthful teacher who is charged with safeguarding the revelation; where as the Sunnis looked back to the *ta‘līm* of the Prophet and the *‘ulamā’* took on the role of custodians. The gap between Muḥammad and the Qā’im, in the Sunni interpretation is spanned by the *sharī‘a*, whereas for the Ismailis the two are directly linked by the imams who continue to expound on the intricacies and mysteries of the ineffable revelation. Nizari eschatology insisted on Divine sovereignty and continuous guidance since revelation was seen as, in part, between the covers of the Book and, in part, in the teaching of the one who safeguards the revelation.

Within the Nizari Polity, I surveyed a number of break-away groups that posed doctrinal and existential challenges to the rulers and their followers. These groups agitated for alternatives to the Nizari Ismaili imam cloaked in *taqiyya* (dissimulation) and *satr* (concealment). They urgently advocated for a salvific figure in addition to the religio-political rule of the *dā'īs* of Alamut. I highlighted the growing numbers of the *zuhūrists* from 1) the attempt to declare Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ as the imam to 2) the coalescence around Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd as the imam which resulted in the execution of 250 and banishment of another 250 out of Alamut to 3) the declaration of the Qiyāma. The *Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw* which I date to just before the Qiyāma illustrates the thrust of the *zuhūrists* as they sought the manifestation of imam. In the next chapter I will examine the doctrinal and historical bases of the counter-revolution of the Qiyāma and the consequences of its declaration.

3. Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt—The Great Resurrection

AT NOON ON THE 17 *Ramaḍān*, 559/15 AUGUST 1164, Ḥasan, the ruler of the Nizari Ismaili polity in Iran, descended from Alamut and mounted the pulpit (*minbar*) which had been set-up in the prayer ground at the foot of the fortress. Four large banners coloured red, green, gold and white¹ were hoisted one on each of the four pillars of the *minbar*. The *minbar* was arranged so that the congregation had their backs to the *qibla* (marker for prayer in the direction of Mecca) and instead faced Ḥasan.² Dressed in white garments and a turban, he greeted the Nizaris arrayed to the left from Central and Western Iran (‘Iraq ‘Ajamī), to the right from Khurāsān and Quhistān and facing him from the Rūdbār and Daylam.³ Following norms of the recitation of the *khuṭba* he sat then rose and in a loud voice with his sword in hand, he delivered a message and “those present were moved by it since he attributed the words to the *imām*.”⁴ Seventy years after the death of Nizār b. al-Mustansir, the concealed imam was again in communication with his followers.

¹ Gold and white were Fatimid colours (the texts have yellow instead of gold) and red and green are common on Shi‘i standards.

² Alamut is located at latitude 36.48 longitude 50.39 so the direction of the Ka‘ba would be South-South-East—214.27 degrees. On this occasion the *qibla* would have been set in the North-North-East direction towards the Caspian Sea. Bruce Lincoln noted that “the most radical phase of the Nizārī Ismā‘īlī (Assassin) (sic) movement was inaugurated by the Festival of the Resurrection (Qiyāma), a feast staged 8 August 1164 in such a way as to produce “a solemn and ritual violation of the law,” for not only were all participants obliged to break the fast of *Ramaḍān*, but the pulpit was erected so that all attending turned their backs on Mecca. Hardly an oversight, this coincided with the explicit message of the Qiyāma: the end of traditional law and authority and the entry of all present into a new and paradisaal state of being. At a more practical level, this festival also announced and effected the Nizaris’ estrangement from other more orthodox Muslims (sic), who could scarce be expected to embrace them after such desecrations.” Bruce. Lincoln. *Discourse and the Construction of Society : Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). pp 116-117. In this study of phenomenology of myth and ritual, Lincoln included this paragraph under the subtitle “Rituals of Collective Obscenity”—given the contents and context of the chapter, his reading of and from the studies of Hodgson and Lewis is quite “orthodox”!

³ Hodgson. OA. p. 152 fn 16; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 358

⁴ JT. p. 164

The reports of the *Qiyāma* originate in the late 13-14th/7-8th century Ilkhanid chronicles. No contemporary 12th/6th century source, not even Ibn al-Athīr, the early 13th/mid-7th century historian who meticulously gathered information from far and wide has any mention of this event. Juwayni⁵ was the earliest historian to record this event and the comparison of his report and Rashid al-Din's⁶ is telling:

Juwayni	Rashid al-Din
Then mounting the pulpit he indicated to those bewildered wretches, who under his misguidance were proceeding in the direction of perdition and destruction, that from their reprobate leader, that is the imaginary Imam, who was non-existent, someone had come to him in secret bringing, to use their language, a <i>khuṭba</i> and a scroll (<i>sijill</i>) regarding the observance of their corrupt faith. And standing on that wrongly placed pulpit he delivered a discourse on the subject of his own false and distorted beliefs. Their Imam, he said, had opened the door of mercy and the gates of his compassion to the Moslems and to them also and had sent them [a token of his] pity; he had summoned his special chosen servants and had relieved them of the duties burdens and charges of the <i>Shari'at</i> and brought them to the Resurrection.	He mounted the <i>minbar</i> which was facing the <i>qibla</i>. To the <i>Rafīqān</i> it seemed that from the leader, that is the supposed imam, whose whereabouts were unknown, someone had arrived in secret. He had brought a <i>khuṭba</i> to explain to them the manner of their traditional belief. Atop the <i>minbar</i> he delivered an eloquent and rhetorical oration and at the end of the <i>khuṭba</i> said: "The <i>imām</i> of the time sends you greetings and mercy; and has summoned you his exceptional chosen servants and has removed the toil of the <i>Shari'a</i> from you and has delivered you to the <i>Qiyāmat</i> (Resurrection)."

Allowing for the different styles and approaches of translations, it is quite apparent that Rashid al-Din's text is shorter and less vitriolic precisely because of the absence of vitriol. This means that the fragments of Nizari *da'wa* literature must be carefully distilled out of the mould of the Ilkhanid chronicles. DNA (double narrative analyses) methodologies are applied to retrieve the fragments and to better understand traces of past-actuality. With increasing access to texts from the Nizari polity in Iran, details in the *ta'rikhs* can be correlated and supplemented. As more manuscript archives open up, perhaps, more light may be shed on the events of the *Qiyāma* in such doctrinal texts sourced directly from the Nizari *da'wa* literature.

⁵ TJG. pp 226-227 HWC. pp 688-689

⁶ JT. p. 164

In this chapter, in addition to the chronicle accounts, I will draw on the *Haft Bāb*, identified by Badakhchani as the work of Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī,⁷ the writings of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, the meagre set of published post-Alamut texts and the treatises I have edited and translated for this research.

How is this ultimate of eschatological events, the proclamation of the *Qiyāmat-i qiyāmāt* or *Qiyāmat-i Buzurg* (the Resurrection of Resurrections or the Great Resurrection) to be understood? What socio-political developments underly these doctrinal shifts? What did the *Qiyāma* mean and what were the consequences of its invocation? The chapter is divided into four sections to explore these questions.

In the first section I continue the examinations from the previous chapter to establish the contextual factors that led to the declaration of the *Qiyāma*. I investigate the Qur'anic concept of the *Qiyāma* in comparison to the event at Alamut. I detail how different groups of Nizaris and the Ilkhanid era chroniclers attempted to explain the transference of the imamate from Egypt and the manifestation of the imam descended from Nizār b. al-Mustaṣṣir and analyse Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām's genealogy back to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib found in JT.

In the second section I explore the Nizari eschatological and soteriological doctrines associated with the *Qiyāma*. I examine the event of the declaration of the *Qiyāma* and the socio-political and religious reconfigurations of society brought about by Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām's counter-revolution of the *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt*.

⁷ HB. p. 2. "His name has also been recorded variously as Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan, Malik al-Kuttāb Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan, Ra'īs Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī and Ḥasan-i Salāḥ-i Bīrjandī." Badakhchani uses the name Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib.

In the third section examine the development of the teachings of the *Qiyāma* after Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām. The *zuhūrist* victory in ending the *dawr al-satr* and manifesting the soteriological actor, the imam, was eclipsed in the adoption of Sunni Islam by the grandson of Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām. I detail the continued contests between the satrists and *zuhūrists* in this Sunni interlude implemented under Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan and the gradual reinstatement of the *Qiyāma* by his successor. I explore accounts of the shifts in the alliances between the Nizaris and the Mongols and analyse the collapse of this alliance.

In the fourth section I analyse Hūlāgū b. Tuluy b. Chingiz Khān’s conquest and decapitation of the Nizari polity. I probe Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh’s alleged parricide, diplomacy with and capitulation to the Mongols. Each of these processes was attempted to rebuild the Nizari-Mongol alliance; however, ultimately the efforts failed and the Nizari polity was destroyed.

I. Towards the *Kashf* (Manifestation) of the Imam

The eras of *satr* (concealment) were periods of uncertainties when the *da‘wa* was clandestine and the safety and security of the imamate and its communities of followers were tenuous. The first such era in Ismaili history which commenced after the death of the imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq lasted almost a century and a half (765-909/148-297). The *dā‘īs* increasingly construed the end of this *satr* of both the imams and their followers as a cosmological occurrence. The *kashf* of the imam was to be an eschatological event—the imam would arise as the Mahdī and establish justice and equality in place of injustice and inequity of the world and as the Eschaton, would bring the world to an end.

The proclamation of imamate, around 899/286, by the future imam-caliph al-Mahdī splintered the Ismailitic movements into two major groupings—those who rejected his claim in the

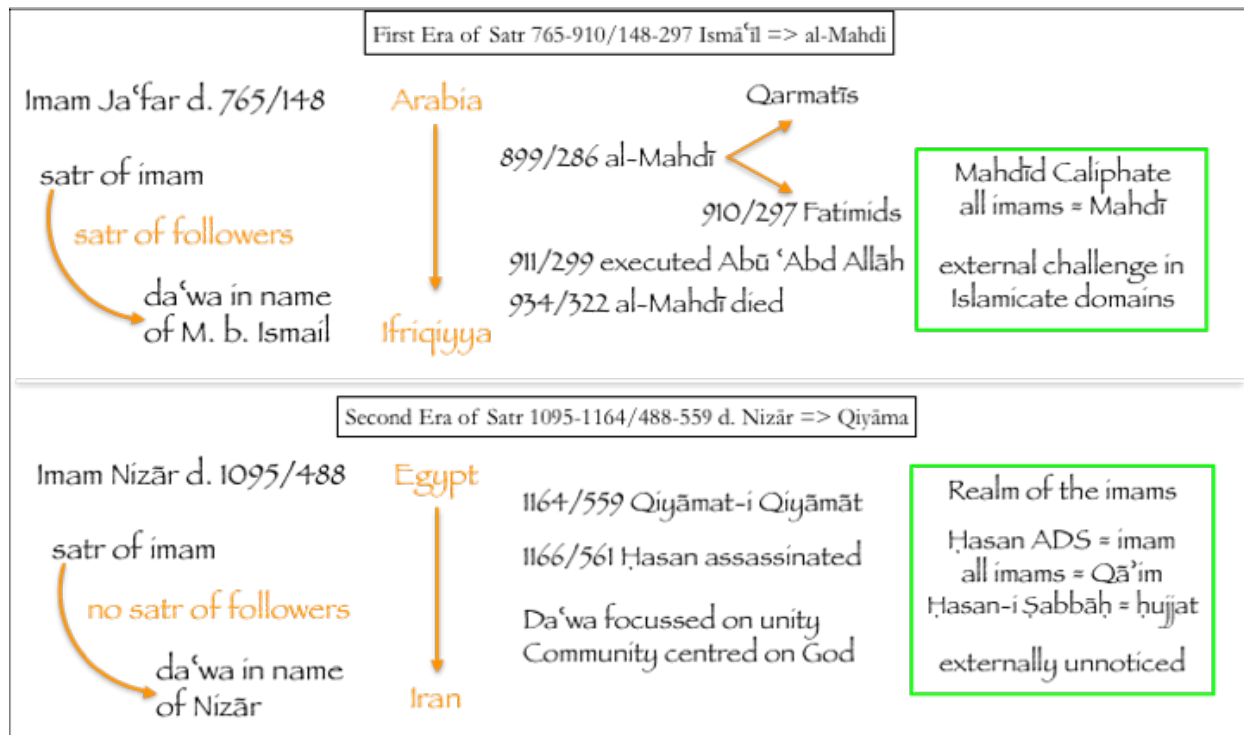
expectation of the return of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl as the Mahdī and those who recognised him as a descendant of the line of imams back to Ismā'īl and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. Both these two groups, the Qarmatīs and the Fatimids, respectively, presented immense religious, political and military challenges in the Islamicate realms. In 934/322 when al-Mahdī died, the Fatimid domains continued to be ruled by his successors and they styled themselves as *al-khulafā' al-rāshidīn al-mahdiyyīn* ('the rightly guided *mahdī*-ist caliphs'), the *al-a'imma al-mahdiyyīn* (*mahdī*ist imams) and eventually *al-dawla al-fāṭimiyya* ('the Fatimid state' or 'the Fatimid dynasty').⁸ The eschatological functions were transferred from the individual to the dynasty—each imam would successively and incrementally bring the world towards the eschatological end. (Cf. Part Two:Prologue).

The second era of *satr*, commenced with the death of Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir, lasted seventy years (1095/488-1164/559) and the *da'wa* was promulgated in the name of his descendants believed to have gone into concealment. Differently from the first *dawr-i satr*, the Ismailis who lived around the string of fortresses in Iran, openly espoused their faith. The *Ẓuhūrists* amongst them increasingly sought the manifestation of an imam. This movement was discernible in the reign of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ; it gained momentum in the subsequent two reigns and achieved its objective with the declaration of the *Qiyāma*. As in the previous era of concealment, the manifestation of the imam was construed in eschatological terms. The expected imam was termed the *Qā'im-i Qiyāmat* (Lord of the Resurrection) and the event was designated the *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt* (the Resurrection of all Resurrections). Within the Nizari contexts, this epochal event was construed as a culmination of creation itself, yet there no mentions of proclamation of the *Qiyāma* in historical writing of the day until after the fall of Alamut. In essence, this was purely an internal Nizari counter-revolution which Sunni historians came to

⁸ Walker. *Orations of the Fatimid Caliphs: Festival Sermons of the Ismaili Imams*. pp 69ff

label as *ilhād* (heresy) after Juwayni's access to the Nizari *da'wa* literature in the library at Alamut.⁹

Figure II.3a: Eras of *Satr* after Deaths of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and Nizār b. Al-Mustansir



The *Qiyāma* resulted in political, social and religious transformations of the Nizari communities. Why was eschatological language used to frame these changes? How did the *Qiyāma* relate to the Qur'ānic notions of the End of Days? What were the key elements of this Nizari counter-revolution? How do the life and career of the fourth ruler of the polity influence this Nizari synthesis? The next three sections will examine these questions to enable comparisons with the development of Ismaili cosmological and eschatological thought which were central to the reformulations of notions of authority.

⁹ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 262 "Contemporary Sunnī chroniclers, like Ibn al-Athīr, do not mention the Nizārī *qiyāma*. All this implies that the Persian Nizāris of the *qiyāma* times had not attracted the attention of other Muslims by any drastic changes in their lifestyle."

A. *Qiyāma* in the *Qurʾān*

The term *yawm al-qiyāma* (day of resurrection) occurs in seventy verses of the *Qurʾān*; chapter 75 of the scripture is named *al-Qiyāma* and many related terms—day of judgment (*yawm al-dīn*) and the last day (*yawm al-ākhir*) among them—occur numerous times.¹⁰ These occurrences are tied to apocalyptic passages and the event of the Last Judgement. The depictions of eschatological events related to individuals, human society and the cosmos are central to the *Qurʾānic* message. Many passages throughout the *Qurʾān* speak about death, Resurrection, Divine Judgment, Paradise and Hell in highly symbolic language. According to Jane I. Smith, some “56 Meccan and eleven Medinan *sūras* deal in some way with resurrection and judgment.”¹¹ In these chapters the apocalyptic imagery portrays disintegration and rupture of the Universe that will occur at the End of Times and the Hereafter is presented as a constant reality.

As examples: Q81 The Enfolding (*al-Takwīr*), Q82 The Cleaving Asunder (*al-Infītār*) and Q84 The Sundering, (*al-Inshiqāq*) paint dramatic pictures of the cataclysmic inversion in which the normal order both in Heaven and on earth is turned inside out¹²: “when the sun is enfolded, and when the stars fade away; when the mountains are set in motion”¹³ (Q81:1-3), and “when the sky is cleft asunder, and when the stars are dispersed, when the seas are burst forth, and when graves are turned inside out, then shall each soul know what it has sent forth and what it has left behind”¹⁴ (Q82:1-5). Q99 The Earthquake (*al-Zalzalah*) with a powerful staccato end-

¹⁰ Encyclopaedia of the *Qurʾān* (Brill Online), Jane Dammen. McAuliffe, ed. Leiden: Brill, 2001-2006. Q Isaac Hasson “Last Judgement”. “Al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), for example, gives more than one hundred names or epithets designating *yawm al-qiyāma*.”

¹¹ EQJane I. Smith “Eschatology”

¹² *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, Edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, et al. (New York: HarperOne, 2015). Ch. 101. Slightly modified.

¹³ *The Study Quran* Ch. 101. Slightly modified. Q81:1-3

¹⁴ *The Study Quran* Ch. 101. Slightly modified. Q82:1-5

rhyme describes the tumult of the convulsion of the earth, while Q101 describes the Calamity (*al-Qāri‘ah*) as

يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ
وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ

A day that humanity shall be like scattered moths,
and the mountains shall be like carded wool. Q101:4-5¹⁵

The timing of the moment is unknown, the Qur’an instructs the Prophet that the

يَسْأَلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُونُ قَرِيبًا

The people will question you about the Hour. Say: ‘The knowledge of it is only with God; what shall make you know? Perhaps the Hour is near.’ (Q33:63)

The portents of the day, in addition to the convulsions and collapse of the world, include the loosening of the marauders, Gog and Magog;¹⁶ the rising from the earth of a beast which will speak to the humans;¹⁷ and the blowing of the trumpet (*ṣūr*) to summon all creatures.¹⁸ The terror of the apocalyptic end and the gathering (*ḥaṣhr*), when reunited humans assemble to await the judgment is a component of the disparate passages pertaining to the End of Times. In these and other passages, the human is admonished to be righteous and to do good for the Judgement will be harsh and the punishment severe. The eschatology of the Qur’ān relates earthly action through the accountability of the Judgement to existence in the hereafter which will be enjoyed by those who affirm Divine Unicity (*ahl-i tawḥīd*) in its fullness.

Nizari *da‘wa* literature does not hint at any conceptions of cataclysmic events that preceded the declaration of the Qiyāma nor are there any prognostications of signs of the End of Times.

¹⁵ *The Study Quran* Ch. 101. Slightly modified.

¹⁶ Q18:94 the marauders, Gog and Magog, were restrained by Dhu’l-Qarnain (Q21:96) will be set loose

¹⁷ Q27:82 the verse laments “Humanity had no faith in Our signs”

¹⁸ Q27:87; 36:51; 39:68; 69:13; 78:18 and 74:8; some seven other signs are added from the *aḥadīth* and the cross-currents from Judeo-Christian and Zoroastrian eschatologies. Cf. Jane I. Smith, and Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad. *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

The Qiyāma does not align with the Qur'ānic notion of a second life after Resurrection found in the verses:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ

It is He who gave you life, then He shall make you dead, then He shall give you life. Surely man is ungrateful. (Q22:66)

Or:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ
سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

God is He that created you, then He provided for you, then He shall make you dead, then He shall give you life; is there any of your associates does aught of that? Glory be to Him! High be He exalted above that they associate! (Q40:30).

This Qur'ānic vision of the *Yawm al-Qiyāma* does not correlate with the event of the *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt* declared at Alamut. While the Nizaris used the terminology of the End of Days, there is a marked absence in the *da'wa* literature of the terrors of the apocalypse described in the Qur'ān. The counter-revolution of the Qiyāma drew from the sublime aspects of the Qur'ānic depictions of the Judgement and demarcated society into three, namely the *Ahl-i taḍadd* (People of Discord), the *Ahl-i tarattub* (People of the Order) and a charmed community of the *Ahl-i waḥdat* (People of Unity) who in concord with their imam are brought to the presence of God.

B. Nizari Counter-Revolution

Until the fall of Alamut, the reforms of the *Qiyāma* went unnoticed outside of the Nizari communities. The survey of *radd* literature demonstrated that the opponents of the Nizaris had previously already construed them outside of the circle of Islam. (Cf. Part One:2). The anonymous *Baḥr al-favā'id*, completed in 1162/557¹⁹—the year Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd became the ruler of the Nizari polity—had already accused the Ismailis of heresy,

¹⁹ *Baḥr al-Favā'id*, pp vii-xix

refuted the legitimacy of their imamate, repudiated the doctrine of *ta'lim* and made their blood

licit. The author wrote that the Ismailis consider

the world pre-existing, and deny the resurrection of the body, Judgment Day, and reward and punishment; they are the enemies of Islam, and consider the prophets to be lawgivers...²⁰

The basic tenet of their creed is that he who acknowledges the Imam is relieved of the obligations of the Law and is freed from the need to pray, fast, make pilgrimage, or give *zakāt*, knows the secrets of the occult world, and is free from all constraints.²¹

These same accusations were levelled by Ghazālī half a century earlier and by others who wrote within the literary narrative paradigms which construed the Ismailis as heretics. (Cf. Part One:2).

Qashani's title of the account of Nizari Ismailis as already analysed gives his framework of periodisation in which the declaration of the *Qiyāma* was a turning point (Cf. Part One:5-I): "Account [of the Nizaris] from the beginning (*bidāyat*) to 'Alā dhikrihi'l-salām and after him the heretics (*malāḥida*) and esoterists (*bāṭiniyya*) whose leader was "Sayyid-nā Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ". It consists of an introduction and the account is composed of eight reigns." Rashid al-Din also characterised the declaration of the *Qiyāma* as the point from which the Nizaris were called heretics. He wrote

since [*al-*]Mahdī to now, they have been steadfast in obedience, worship, prayer and fasting; and have believed in the commandments of the *Sharī'a*; and counted as Ismailis and Nizaris. Now since they abandoned the religious commandments and pillars of the *Sharī'a*, they were called "*mulḥid*" (deviant, heretic) and the notion of heresy came to be defined by them.²²

Given the absence of any mentions of the Nizari proclamation of the *Qiyāma* by Ibn al-Athīr, Jūzjānī and other author-historians closer to the time, the later reports of the Ilkhanid

²⁰ *Baḥr al-Favā'id* p. 239

²¹ *Baḥr al-Favā'id* p. 242

²² JT. p. 165.

بر جمله از مهدی تا اینجا ایشان بطاعت و عبادت و نماز و روزه قیام می نمودند [ی]، و باحکام شرعی قائل بودند، و در [زمره] اسمعیله و نزاریه بودند. و [از] اینجا [باز] چون امور دینی و ارکان شرائع فرو گذاشتند ایشان را «ملحد» خواندند. و لفظ الحاد بر قامت استقامت ایشان چست آمد.

chronicles that from the moment of the declaration and their abandonment of the precepts of the Shari'a the Nizaris began to be called *malāḥida* (deviants, heretics) have to be re-assessed.²³ These expressions of prejudice appear to be polemical back-projections and were written within the narrative paradigms of collective memory and historic consciousness—what I have termed the “hermeneutic trap” in which the Ismailis are construed as the threatening “other” and doctrinally deviant and heretical. (Cf. Part One:2-III). The historical writing details that the first three rulers of the Nizari polity strictly adhered to and enforced the *shari'a* in their domains; and that this adherence, purportedly, was relaxed after the declaration of the *Qiyāma* to the point of abandonment. No evidence of such antinomianism has been reported.²⁴ The

²³ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 362

²⁴ Bernard Lewis, “Kamāl al-Dīn’s Biography of Rāšid al-Dīn Sinān,” *Arabica* 13 (1966). pp 240ff. Lewis lists a number of accounts of antinomianism by groups in Syria purportedly acting on changes introduced by Rashīd al-Dīn Sinān; the leading *dā'i* in Syria who was a childhood companion of Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām. The analyses of these interesting episodes is outside of scope of the present study; however, Lewis’ explanations are worthy of mention. It should be noted that the authors mentioned wrote after the Nizari power in Syria was extinguished.

Several authors report the coming of the *qiyāma* among the Ismā'īlīs in Syria. Under the year 561/1165-6 the author of the *Bustān al-Ġāmi'* records that the Ismā'īlīs changed their doctrine (*madhhab*) and drank wine, practised incest, drank during *Ramaḍān* by night and by day, destroyed their mosques and castles and abolished prayer. They called themselves *al-Ṣufāt*—the sincere or, perhaps, the pure. The *Ta'riḥ Maṣṣūrī* records the same event, more briefly, under the year 560/1164-5, and lays the blame on Sinān. The affair in the Ġabal al-Summāq is recorded by Kamāl al-Dīn in his History of Aleppo (*Zubdat al-ḥalab*) under the year 572/1176-7. In this year, he says, the population of Ġabal al-Summāq, calling themselves the *Ṣufāt*, practised all kinds of debauchery. Men and women mingled in drinking parties; they practised incest; the women wore men's clothes, and some of them proclaimed Sinān as God. Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ sent the army of Aleppo against them. They fled and fortified themselves at the mountain tops. Sinān sent to make enquiries about them, and disavowed their activities, although they had claimed to be acting under his orders. Sa'd al-Dīn Gümüštekin agreed to accept Sinān's intercession, and the army of Aleppo withdrew, leaving Sinān to pursue their leaders and destroy them.

A passage in Dhahabī's biography of Sinān, not to be found in either Yūnīnī or Ṣafadī, says explicitly that Sinan abolished the Šari'a and violated the fast of *Ramaḍān*, on orders which had reached him from the Grand Master in Alamūt, and that they continued in this way.

That the outbreak of libertinism in Syria was connected with proclamation of the *qiyāma* in Persia is obvious, the more so since the Syrian historians clearly know nothing of the events at

Sunni aspersions and attacks were in response, primarily, to the earlier intellectual and doctrinal ideas of the Ismailis. Daftary noted that

the Nizāris doubtless continued to regard themselves as Shī'ī Muslims, and therefore, especially since after the declaration of the *qiyāma* the community came to be led by a manifest imam, they did not become a lawless society indulging in libertinism and antinomian practices. Indeed, the contemporary Muslim chroniclers and the Persian historians do not cite any lawlessness in connection with the Persian Nizārī community of the *qiyāma* times. Even Juwaynī, always free with his invectives against them, does not report any instance of libertinism in the Nizārī community of the Alamūt period.²⁵

The evidence suggests that the declaration of the *Qiyāma* was an internal matter—a counter-revolution against the creed enforced by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and his two successors in the period of *satr*. The *Ẓuhūrist* tendency of seeking the manifestation of a soteriological and salvific figure won out. Ḥasan 'alā *dhikrihi*'l-salām proclaimed the *dawr-i kashf*. Nizari society was reformed and its relations with and perspectives of neighbouring communities received a new colouring. Hodgson, reflecting a Sunni perspective of *sharī'a* wrote that after the proclamation of the *Qiyāma*,

for those who chose to notice at all the changes within the Ismā'īlī society, the worst suspicions of the Ismā'īlīs' opponents were confirmed. Rejecting the *sharī'a*, the Ismā'īlīs put themselves beyond the pale of Islam by any obvious standard: variations in the *sharī'a* could be tolerated, but now the Ismā'īlīs were no longer even “people of the Qibla”, who performed worship (as prescribed by the *sharī'a*) in the direction of Mecca. Thus they failed the minimal test of adherence to Muḥammad's mission.²⁶

As noted above, the notice of any changes was not taken until after the Nizari Polity was decapitated and then the writing was within the paradigm of constructing the Nizaris as deviant and heretical. The hermeneutic trap is difficult to escape, even for very careful modern scholars!

Alamūt recorded by the Persian historians Ḥuwaynī and Rašīd al-Dīn. It seems more than probable that Sinān himself introduced these changes in Syria, acting as the emissary of Alamūt. His destruction of the *Ṣufāt* in the Ḡabal al-Summāq, reported by Kamāl al-Dīn in the *Buḡya* and in the *Zubda*, may reflect an internal conflict among the Ismā'īlīs; more probably, it represents an attempt to ward off outside interference from Aleppo by a pretence of dealing with the problem himself.

²⁵ Daftary. *Ismailis*. 362

²⁶ Hodgson, “IS.” p. 467

C. *Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi l-salām*

The Ilkhanid chronicles based on their Nizari sources reported that Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd from his childhood studied and was inclined towards the teachings of his

predecessors. Juwayni wrote that Ḥasan, born in 1126-27/520, when he approached the age of discretion he conceived the desire to study and examine the teachings of Ḥasan-i-Sabbah and his own forefathers; and he closely scrutinized the text (*sukhan*) of the Propaganda in the Sabbahian manner and making use of the same *ilzāmāt*. And so he came to excel in the exposition of their creed. And having mingled such sayings with Sufistic homilies (*mavā‘iz*) and subtleties (*nikat*) and poured his own interpretations, lavishly or sparingly, into the same mould, he was constantly, during the life-time of his father Muhammad, uttering moral sentences and the like such as the vulgar and immature would marvel at upon the first hearing (which is called ‘*the stupid hearing*’) and so commending that propaganda; and with the courtesy of his manner and the eloquence of his words he won over the greater part of that people.²⁷

Qashani wrote that Ḥasan acquired intellectual and traditional learning (*‘ulūm-i ‘aqlī wa naqlī*) and was aware of the contents of the Hebrew Bible, Christian Gospel and the Qur’ān (*Tawrāt wa Injīl wa Furqān*) and their commandments and interpretations.²⁸ Delia Cortese has suggested that “it is probable that Ḥasan studies the *Rasā’il* of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’”²⁹ based on the fact that Rashīd al-Dīn Sinān’s³⁰ biography mentions the *Rasā’il* among the books he studied and the latter was brought up with Ḥasan.³¹ It is also probable that he was also attuned to if not directly accessing early Ismaili teachings and writings to be able to bring into the Nizari formulations elements of cosmological thought from Neoplatonists such as al-Nasafī and al-Sijistānī and Aristotelians such as al-Kirmānī and bringing together earlier Qarmaṭī and Fatimid thought into new Nizari syntheses.

²⁷ HWC. pp 686-687; TJG. pp 222-223 Boyle’s translation reflects the inelegance of the original author’s rant

²⁸ ZT. p 183. He wrongly stated that Ḥasan studied for sixty years; the latter died when he was forty years old.

²⁹ Delia Cortese, “Eschatology and Power in Mediaeval Persian Ismailism,” diss., University of London - SOAS, 1993). p. 132

³⁰ ref

³¹ *Eschatology and Power* p. 155 fn 10; Lewis, “Kamāl al-Dīn’s Biography of Rāšid al-Dīn Sinān.”

In the sources, Ḥasan ‘*alā dhikrihi*’-*l-salām*’s genealogy is as controversial as his declaration of the *Qiyāma*. Beginning with Juwayni, the chronicles record two explanations of how the Nizaris distinguished Ḥasan, as a son of the concealed descendant of Nizār from Ḥasan, the son of the *dā’ī*, Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd—the head of the Nizari polity. Juwayni claimed that the most discreditable explanation the Nizaris believed was that the imam lived in a village near Alamut and as a coincidence a child was born in the household of the imam and that of the *dā’ī* at the same time. Three days after their births a woman brought the imam’s son under her clothing into the *dā’ī*’s house³² and exchanged him with the *dā’ī*’s son. Juwayni found this to be implausible because surely the members of the household would be able to distinguish a strange child from their own.³³ The more plausible explanation for Juwayni was that the Nizaris believed that their imam had fornicated with the wife of Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd and thus the child was that of the imam and not the son of the *dā’ī*. The child of the illicit affair would succeed to the rulership of the Nizari polity and in reality be the son of the *imam*.³⁴

Ivanow, stated that in “matters such as these we surely cannot expect any clearcut and irrefutable documentary evidence. But it is worth while to show, that Juwayni’s theorising is perfectly worthless because he completely and deliberately disregards what should be the matter of the greatest importance, the religious aspect of the events. He disregards the local conditions, and even chronology.”³⁵ Ivanow accepted the veracity of these anecdotes since he believed Juwayni had culled them from Nizari chronicles. He explained that at the time of the substitution, Kiyā Muḥammad was not the ruler of Alamut and as the remains of the fortress suggest, in the castellan environment even the ruler’s quarters would not have had guards

³² Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd was not the ruler at the time of the birth

³³ TJG. pp 234-235; HWC. p. 694; JT. pp 166-167;

³⁴ TJG. pp 234-235; HWC. p. 694; JT. pp 166-167; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 630

³⁵ Ivanow. *Alamut and Lamasar*. p. 26

allowing easy access to all where “every one knows every one”. He also argued for the plausibility of the second explanation in that the *dā’īs* would not “hesitate to sacrifice the honour of their wives, daughters, sisters (sic) for the great aim which they had in view. It is also ignored that the Imam is not in the position of an ordinary man, but may sometimes do what the ordinary man should not do.”³⁶

The substitution story has been found in other Nizari writing; for example the *Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw* mentioned above (Cf. Part Two:2-III-E) recorded that when Muḥammad b.

Buzurg Ummīd killed the imam al-Qāhir, the

Lady of the Qiyāmat (*khātūn-i Qiyāmat*) was pregnant at the time; that unfortunate (*badbakht* = Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd) took the Lady to his own house and said: “When the pregnant Lady delivers, if the child is male he is to be killed.” In that house, his own wife was also pregnant. By destiny and Divine decree (*qadhā wa chunīn taqdīr shud*) the pregnant Lady and his wife both gave birth at the same time. The pregnant Lady carried that very Lord (*ham-ān khudāvand*) who became manifest (*ki zuhūr farmūdand*) and the wife of that unfortunate had a daughter. Since she was a believer, she brought her own daughter and placed her next to the Lady and His Majesty was placed next the woman. That unfortunate was informed that the Lady gave birth to a girl and His Majesty was portrayed as his own son.³⁷

In this way Ḥasan, the future imam, was brought up as the son of Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd. According to the Ilkhanid chronicles, Ḥasan was born in 1126-7/520; however, Muḥammad did not succeed his father, Buzurg Ummīd, until 1138/532. The account in the *Ḥikāyat* is anachronistic and furthermore, there is an implication in it that the ruler of the Nizari polity, killed the imam who was in concealment and intended to wipe out the Nizari imamate by killing the future claimant. The second profound implication of this narrative is that since the previous imam had died, his son, the future imam, existed, for a time, only as a

³⁶ *Ālamut and Lamasar* p.p 26-27

³⁷ IIS Persian MS 32:57 *Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw* Paragraph 16

According to the text the two women are: the “wife” of al-Qāhir and mother of Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām and the wife of Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd; these are very rare mentions of women. The “imam’s wife” is most respectfully mentioned.

foetus in the mother's womb. This is highly problematic, since the Ismaili conceptions of imamate are emphatic that the earth cannot exist without an imam.

Later Nizari writings even imply that two different Ḥasans existed, each from the lines of the imams and the *dā'īs* and assert that Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām was the son of the previous

imam.³⁸ Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī (aka Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib) in the *Haft Bāb* alluded to this

In another *Faṣl*, addressed to Amīr Ḥaydar Mas'ūd, may God grant him peace and Paradise, he [Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām] says: 'One should consider the story of the son of Muḥammad in the same manner because, he, may God be pleased with him, was the deputy and judge (*qā'im maqām wa qāḍī*) of my religion, and so was his son Ḥasan after him. And this is a secret which cannot be divulged at this time. Exoterically (*bi-ḥukm-i zāhir*), the pure birth of the lord (*khudāwand*) Ḥasan, may his name be sanctified, happened a number of years after this.³⁹

This relates the importance of Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd and his son Ḥasan who are construed in the text as the *qā'im maqām* and *qāḍī* successively, in service of the imam, Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām. These variant narratives endeavour to explain how the imamate relocated from Cairo to Alamut and how the generations of imams of the second *Dawr-i satr* were fitted into the genealogy of the imamate. By the time of the last ruler of the Nizari polity in Iran these wrinkles were smoothed out. Rashid al-Din began the account of Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh (r. 1255-1257/653-655), the imam and eighth ruler of the Nizari polity, with his genealogy linked back to the grandfather of the first imam-caliph 'Alī:

³⁸ "Eschatology and Power." p. 133

As an example of more recent statements on the subject, the 13th/19th century Ismā'īlī author Muḥammad b. Zayn al-'Abīdīn Fidā'ī claims that Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd exercised power in the material world on behalf of the Imams Muhtadī and Qāhir. This Imam Qāhir appointed Ḥasan 'Alā dhikrihi'l-salām, surnamed Ḥasan Nāṣir, as his 'executor of the pact' (*wālī 'ahd*) (sic - *walī 'ahd*). Fidā'ī states that Mawla-nā Ḥasan Nāṣir was appointed to both the Imamate and the Sultanate after his father and during his rule, continued and perfected the work of his father. In typical hagiographical fashion, Ḥasan is described as benevolent, munificent, chivalrous, brave and good looking.

Eschatology and Power footnote (p. 156 fn17) illustrates that Fidā'ī's work as a pious hagiography and not a sound history.

³⁹ HB. p. 27 Tr. pp 69-70. Slightly modified. The Amīr is not otherwise known.

He was Rukn al-Dīn al-Hasan known as Khūrshāh b. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. *Nūr al-Dīn known as ‘Alā Dhikrihi’l-salām* b. al-Qāhir Bi-Quwat Allāh b. al-Muhtadī Billāh b. al-Hādī *ilā* Allāh b. *al-Muṣṭafā li-Dīn Allāh Nizār* b. āl-Mustanṣir Billāh b. al-Zāhir li-‘Azāz Dīn Allāh b. al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh b. al-‘Azīz Billāh [b. *al-Mu‘izz Billāh*] b. al-Manṣur bi-Nuṣrat Allāh b. al-Qā’im bi-Amr Allāh b. al-Mahdī Billāh b. *al-Taqī b. al-Naqī b. al-Raḍī b. Muḥammad al-Sāba’* b. Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq b. Muḥammad al-Bāqir b. ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn b. al-Ḥusayn al-Shahīd b. Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, *Peace be upon them* b. ‘*Abd al-Ṭālib*.⁴⁰

This genealogical line—distinct from the line of imams which may include Ḥasan b. ‘Alī as the second imam—is remarkable as it connects the generations of imams in a continuity across six centuries back to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib’s grandfather. There are equally remarkable anomalies: in one line: *Nūr al-Dīn* (‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad) is conflated with Ḥasan *‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām* who is not mentioned. *Al-Muṣṭafā li-Dīn Allāh* is the *laqab* (epithet) given to *Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir*.⁴¹ The Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mu‘izz was omitted. The *order of imams of the first Dawr-i satr* is given as one of the several variants. Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl is called *Muḥammad the Seventh*—meaning the seventh imam which is possible in three ways: i) if ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib is not counted as an ordinary imam but rather is entitled the *asās* (foundation) a term used for him as the founder of the line of imams in the heptadic reckoning of *nāṭiqs* (enunciator prophet) followed by *asās* and *samīt* imams and then the *Qā’im*; ii) if Ismā‘īl is understood to have predeceased his father and omitted as an imam or if iii) if Ḥasan b. ‘Alī is omitted from the line of *mustaqarr* imams. Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī is given the *laqab* “the Martyr”. The grandfather of Prophet Muḥammad and Imam-caliph ‘Alī was Shaybah b. Hāshim known as ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib—here he is designated as ‘Abd al-Ṭālib.⁴² It is also interesting that the pious invocation of blessings includes Abū Ṭālib but not his father, ‘Alī and the Prophet’s grandfather. Does this reflect the author’s perspective that since ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib pre-deceased the Prophet’s career and call, he cannot be counted as

⁴⁰ JT. p. 185; Cf. Shajara of imams from Nizar onwards in KP. pp 44-45

⁴¹ JT. p. 185 and Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh: tārikh-i Ismā‘āliyyān*, Edited by Muhammad Rawshan. p. 182. Both the Dānishpazhūh and the Rawshan editions list al-Muṣṭafā li-Dīn Allāh as the son of Nizār. The British Library MS 7628 f. 305v shows the name as al-Muṣṭafā li-Dīn Allāh Nizār.

⁴² Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. Yazīd al-Ṭabarī. *The History of al-Tabari (Ta’rikh al-rusul wa’l-mulūk) Vol. 17: The First Civil War*, Translated by G. R. Hawting. (Abany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996). p. 227

Muslim, and that Abū Ṭālib in his final moments had accepted Islam according to some Shi'i accounts and so is worthy of prayers?

The narratives explaining how Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām ended up in the ruling household of the Nizari polity are inadequate and implausible or as Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī put it “both accounts are weak (*har du riwāyat sust āst*)”⁴³ and must be analysed with care. The illicit scandal narrative seems extremely improbable to have been sourced from Nizari *da'wa* literature, *pace* Wladimir Ivanow; until an urtext, if it exists, can be found with such an account, this narrative must be attributed to Juwaynī's calumny. Given the curious parallels between the *Ḥikāyat* and Juwaynī's nefarious representation, is it possible that he had access to and read the *Ḥikāyat* and from this developed his twisted versions of events? (Cf Appendix T-II §13-16 TJG. pp 231-237 HWC 693-696). If this inter-textual reading is plausible, then this is, perhaps, the first time since 1260s that the two texts have been thus connected and further evidence to support the dating of the *Ḥikāyat*.⁴⁴

In sum, these analyses demonstrate how different groups of Nizaris and the Ilkhanid era chroniclers attempted to explain the transference of the imamate from Egypt and the re-emergence of the imam descended from Nizār b. al-Mustaṣṣir. It is worth restating that numismatic evidence suggests that the issue of genealogy and *naṣṣ* remained unsettled until the reign of Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām's son and successor, Nūr al-Dīn ('Alā' al-Dīn) Muḥammad (r. 1166-1210/561-607). At this time the coinage began to carry the name of the imam of the time instead of the anonymous descendants of Nizār. (Cf. Part Two:2-III-D). It is significant to note that all three Ilkhanid chronicles, after their description of the event of the

⁴³ Qazwīnī. *Guzīda*. p. 522

⁴⁴ See my forthcoming publication of the *Ḥikāyat*.

Qiyāma reported the account of Qāḍī Ḥasan Saʿīd conveying the son or grandson of Nizār b. al-Mustanşir to the care of Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ at Alamut.⁴⁵

II. Great Resurrection

After Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd's death, when Ḥasan became the head of the polity, he issued an amnesty and freed large numbers of prisoners from Rayy, Qazwīn and other places. He said: "Whoever wants to stay here by his own wish should remain and whoever wants to leave, may leave." All those who wished were re-patriated to their native lands.⁴⁶ He had studied the *ilzāmāt* (compelling arguments) of Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ, early Ismaili thought, Greek sciences, Islamic philosophy and Sufism. This learning combined with a generosity of spirit and charismatic presence resulted in a large following of reverential followers.⁴⁷ According to

Juwayni, when Hasan came to power,

his followers and supporters went to every extreme to show him honour because of their beliefs regarding him, whom they considered to be the Imam. He for his part, his authority now being absolute, [did not rebuke or punish them for uttering such nonsense, nay in the first days after his accession he began to abolish or modify lawful practices and Islamic usages which had been observed from the times of Hasan-i-Sabbah.](#)⁴⁸

Rashid al-Din follows this but adds a contradictory detail

[he did not reproach or punish the *Raḥīqān* for their eager transgressions. In fact after some years he began to change and permit corruption of the practices of the *sharīʿa* and rules of Islam which from the time of Sayyidnā were assiduously observed.](#) It became customary and habitual that Ḥasan, on Fridays, would come from home and mount the *minbar* (pulpit), offer the *khuṭba* (sermon) and lead the prayer and thereafter return the same way.⁴⁹

The first part of this paragraph in JT conveys the same meaning as Juwayni and seems to have been derived from the TJG. The second sentence; however, states that Ḥasan rather than relax precepts of the *sharīʿa* adhered to them personally. He habitually attended the Friday

⁴⁵ TJG pp 231-232; HWC. p. 692; JT. pp 166-167; ZT pp 185-186

⁴⁶ JT p. 162. Forgiveness is an act that occurs after the Judgment. Was he enacting an eschatological function?

⁴⁷ JT pp 162ff

⁴⁸ TJG. p. 225; HWC. p. 688

⁴⁹ JT. p. 164

congregational prayer and in fact recited the *khuṭba*.⁵⁰ This also reflects that the Nizaris had formal *masājid* (sing. *masjid* = place of prostration) for Friday prayer.

The only indication of breach or relaxation of the *sharī'a* according to Juwayni is that “Hasan used secretly to drink wine. His father had some inkling of this and went to great pains to discover the truth. Hasan made use of all sorts of devices to free himself from the charge; and in the end his father’s suspicions were dispelled.” How would Juwayni have fathomed this secret drinking after a century?⁵¹ The Nizari sources are extremely unlikely to have recorded such a construal of the person they would elevate to the level of the *Qā'im*. What then should be made of the central premise that Ḥasan permitted corruption of the practices of the *sharī'a*? Was this reporting another set-piece written within the hermeneutic trap?

Two years later on the 17 *Ramaḍān* 559/15 August 1164, the people of his provinces who had been called to Alamut were ordered to gather in the prayer grounds and made the declaration of the *Qiyāma* which Juwayni reported that according to Ḥasan, their imam

had opened the door of mercy and the gates of his compassion to the Moslems and to them also and had sent them [a token of his] pity; he had summoned his special chosen servants and had relieved them of the duties burdens and charges of the *Shari'at* and brought them to the Resurrection. He then read out a *khuṭba* in the Arabic tongue in which not only were the contents nothing but lies and falsehoods and a patchwork of absurdities but the language itself, for the most part, broken, corrupt and full of gross mistakes and confused expressions; and these, he claimed, were the unknown words of their non-existent Imam.⁵²

⁵⁰ This is reminiscent in part of the descriptions of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Ḥākim who was considered as Divine by a group of his followers. Walker, *Caliph of Cairo*.; *Caliph of Cairo* p. 87: “Al-Hakim rode for Friday prayer in the mosque of Cairo. The people thronged about him on his return ride from the mosque to the palace. He stopped for them and accepted their petitions, speaking and laughing with them. Because of the frequency of his stopping and conversing with the commoners, he did not reach the palace until sundown.”

⁵¹ Hodgson. *OA*. p. 147. Hodgson and others have accepted this account without question. Cf. Part One:6-IV wine drinking is a literary trope which points to challenges to authority.

⁵² HWC. p. 689. Does this reflect the bias of a court clerk trained in *adab* literature and rhetorical oratory?

The *khutba* named Ḥasan not only as the imam's *dā'ī* and *ḥujja* (proof) but also the imam's *khalīfa*, (deputy). Ḥasan was to be followed in all spiritual and temporal matters, and his word was that of the imam's. Ḥasan descended from the pulpit; performed the two prostrations (two *rakats*) of the festival prayer (*namāz-i 'īd*) and all those gathered broke their fasts in the middle of the day, in the middle of the month of *Ramaḍān*. That day was declared as the 'festival of the resurrection' (*īd-i qiyāmat*), the people feasted and made merry and the 17th *Ramaḍān* was celebrated thereafter as a day of rejoicing. Over the ensuing months the *Qiyāma* was announced in other locations and the Nizaris rejoiced.⁵³

Hodgson wrote that in these ceremonies,

Ḥasan was undertaking three revolutionary innovations;⁵⁴ all three of which were accepted thereafter to one degree or another by the Nizārīs everywhere. He proclaimed himself no longer just *dā'ī*, but Caliph and divinely appointed ruler; he ended the sway of the *sharī'a*, the ritual law; he proclaimed the resurrection of the dead, the end of the world having finally come.

Hodgson commented further that to claim the mantle of Shi'i imamate with an 'Alid genealogy was already a giant leap; however, Ḥasan claimed the end of the law which was a reversal far-reaching not only in the general Islamic context but within the purism of the Ismaili milieu. Lastly Ḥasan "asserted that the end of the world not only was about to come, but had now in fact happened; that those who in spirit had responded to his call were now risen to life immortal, and those who had been deaf to him were now judged and banished into nonexistence. Ḥasan had either to be laughed at or adored. He was in fact adored; and the commonest name for him came at last to be simply a blessing: 'Alā Dhikri-hi s-Salām—'upon his mention peace'."⁵⁵ This epithet is applied to the messiah. Hodgson and others examined the *Qiyāma* in the context of the Nizari

⁵³ HWC 689; Hodgson. OA. pp. 148-9. There is disagreement in the sources on the date of 'Alī's death. al-Ṭabarī. *Ṭabarī-V17*. p. 213ff; EI2. Veccia Vaglieri, L., "Ibn Mulḍjam"

⁵⁴ Given Hodgson's careful use of terminology should this loaded term alert the reader to a pre-commitment?

⁵⁵ Hodgson. OA.150-1

“struggle against the Islamic world”⁵⁶ and their conclusions accordingly, speak of independence from the larger Muslim society or failure to take over the wider society and banishment of all those who did not recognise the imamate into nonexistence. While these analyses were soundly attained in the paradigm of struggle against the Islamic world, many of the key findings resulted from compactions of many decades of developments in doctrine into unitary wholes.⁵⁷ In view of the present analyses that the *Qiyāma* was primarily an internal Nizari “counter-revolution”, how should these events be interpreted?

A. Nizari Caliphate?

At the political level, Ḥasan had faced opposition during Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd’s reign; just in the environs of Alamut some 250 of his supporters had been executed and 250 others banished. The hierarchy of leadership might also have been arrayed against him having been part of the “old guard”. The declarations at the event of the *Qiyāma* elevated this *dā’ī* above the entire *da’wa* hierarchy. The *sijill* from the concealed imam was tantamount to a writ of investiture for Ḥasan; it proclaimed

حسن بن محمد بن بزرگ امید خلیفه و حجّت و داعی ماست، و شیعه ما در امور دینی و دنیاوی مطیع
و متابِع او باشند و حکم او محکم دانند و قول او قول ما شناسند و بدانند که مولانا فاها بفیهم بریشان
رحمت کرد و ایشان را در رحمت خود خواند و بخدا رسانید⁵⁸

Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd is our vicegerent (*khalīfah*), *dā’ī* and *ḥujjat*. Our Shi’a must obey and follow him in spiritual and temporal matters and regard his commands as binding, and consider his word as our word, and they know that *Mawlānā* (our Lord) has interceded for them and has brought you to God.

In the repetition of the ceremonies in Mu’minabad and Syria, Ḥasan was announced as the paramount ruler of the polity. His trusted lieutenants, Ra’īs Muḥaffar at Mu’minabad and Rashīd al-Dīn Sinān in Syria, were affirmed by investitures as his deputies. Ḥasan had been proclaimed as the *dā’ī*, *ḥujjat* and the caliph. This last term has been seen as merely meaning

⁵⁶ Subtitle of the OA

⁵⁷ OA150ff; Daftary. *Ismailis*. 360

⁵⁸ TJG. p. 227 HWC. p. 689; JT. pp 164-165; ZT. p. 185

“deputy”; however, in the *sijill* sent to Mu‘minabad, Ḥasan was equated with the imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir. Was Ḥasan emulating al-Mahdī’s proclamation of the Fatimid caliphate? Was this the establishment of the Nizari caliphate which would counter those of the Fatimids and the ‘Abbāsids?

B. Qā’im-i Qiyāma

At another level, the ending of *taqiyya* (dissimulation) and the *dawr-i satr* (era of concealment) was no easy matter. Unless a person possessed of overwhelming might were to proclaim and enforce such momentous changes, it would be futile—even with Ḥasan’s learning and charisma—the drastic re-orientations of society were ordinarily impossible. In the Ismaili contexts, since the first *dawr-i satr*, the Mahdī or Qā’im was seen as the catalyst for transformation of the community and to enable the imamate in concealment to emerge into open manifestation. The shift of focus from the circumference to the centre—the mundane to the sacred—was facilitated by conflation of the historical and the trans-historical. Numerous other examples of societal transformations are found in history where singular moments or events have been raised up to the cosmological level. For instance, the era of Zarathustra will be brought to an end by the emergence of the Sayoshiyānt—by the end of the first millennium after Zarathustra, three of his sons were construed, in millennial succession, to incrementally act as the Sayoshiyānt and bring victory of Light over darkness. In Judaism, the Mosaic Law will be brought to a culmination by the Messiah. In Christianity, within eight decades of the crucifixion Jesus, he was begun to be construed not as the carpenter’s son but the Son of God and the Parousia will bring about the End of Times.⁵⁹ The cosmological leap mediated by eschatological actors and the yearnings of the believers for salvation at the End of Times prepares the communities of followers to undergo massive and sometimes, rapid

⁵⁹ See my forthcoming “Persianate Messianisms: Comparing Zoroastrian and Ismaili Eschatologies,”

transformation in the present. Group solidarity within communities undergoing tumultuous transformation—especially when the long-promised direct Divine intervention is believed to be at hand—opens the door for transcendence of the present to new states of being. The oscillation between the understandings of *naṣṣ* (designation) and descent in the line of ‘Alī to the eschatological and soteriological construals of imamate in Ismailism was a means to enable the followers to align themselves within the material and spiritual transformations of Nizari society.

Abū Ishāq in his *Haft Bāb* recorded that Ḥasan, at the declaration of the Qiyāma, began the *khuṭba* with a call

O ye beings of the world, jinns, men and angels! know that *Mawlā-nā* the *Qā’im* of the Resurrection (*Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt*)—prostration and prayer on His mention!—is the Lord of everything in existence. He is that Lord who is the Absolute Being (*wujūd-i muṭlaq*). He is in every respect the negation of the (physical) existence, and His own existence is transcendent to that “higher than all that the sinful associate with Him”. He opened the gate of His mercy and by His bounty granted life to all. Glorification and thanksgiving to Him is the duty of every intelligent one. He is exalted in the greatest measure above all this. And He is Glorious and omniscient by His substance.⁶⁰

The concealed imam was described as the *Qā’im* of the Resurrection (*Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt*) and identified as the Absolute Being. The treatise called the *Dawr-i Kashf wa Dawr-i Satr* describes the era of *Kashf* as that when the sun is risen, the moon and the stars while present are not luminous—in the manifestation of the imam, the light of the *ḥujjat* and the *da’wa* are eclipsed. This anonymous text for which there is no information of authorship and provenance, based on content analysis may be placed in the post-Qiyāma period. It states:

The people of the rightful *da’wa* of the age (*aṣḥāb-i da’wat-i muḥiqq-i rūzgār*) know that in the era of disclosure (*kashf*) and the era of concealment (*satr*) and dissimulation (*taqiyya*) of *Mawlānā*, on whose mention be peace, wisdom of reality (*ḥikmat-hā-yi ḥaqīqī*) and divine secrets (*āsrār-i illahī*) can not be apprehended through the intellect (*‘aql*), conjecture (*wahm*) and perception (*ḥiss*) of each creature (*khalq* here = person). The duration of the form and essence of manifestation (*hangām-i zuhūr-i shaklī wa ma’nawī*) is fixed in time by universal knowledge and attributes (*‘ilm-i ‘ālam wa ṣifāt*). Its similitude is that when the sun is concealed (*ghāyib*), the moon and stars, each

⁶⁰ HBAI. p. 41

within their own limits are luminous. When the sun is risen, the moon and stars do not give light—that is all the people of gradations (*aṣḥāb-i marātib*) are concealed and do not emit light.⁶¹

The passage asserts that perception, conjecture and intellect are unable to attain wisdom of reality (*ḥikmat-hā-yi ḥaqīqī*) and divine secrets—implicitly, the *taʿlīm* (authoritative teaching) of the *Muḥiqq* (the bearer of Truth) is necessary. In the era of *satr*,⁶² the text further explains that it is obligatory for the servants of the *daʿwa* to observe the order of the concealment and dissimulation of the Lord of Truth (*khudāwand-i ḥaqq*) and without the command of his learned ones must not unveil the disclosure (*aẓhar-i kashf*). They should be [one] with his *jamāʿat* (community). For the benefit of the visual encounter (*dīdārī*) they should not be deficient in self control and knowledge so that deviation does not come about (*istqāmat dar ḡalālāt ni-uftad*) since the knowledge of the imam of the age (*maʿrifat-i imām-i zamān*) is not dependent on the physical encounter (*mulāqāt-i jismāni*). In every age at every time when the person of the imam is concealed from the eyes of the people (*khalq*), the learned of the faith of the *daʿwa* of Truth (*buzurgwār-i dīn-i daʿwat-i ḥaqq*) by means of proofs from the Qurʾān (*naṣṣ-i qurʾān*) have explained (*taqrīr kardi-and*) to the scholars.⁶³

The opening that Ḥasan was proclaiming was not simply a manifestation of an imam, it was the closure of this era of *satr* which required a momentous uncloaking. A simple announcement by an ordinary individual would not suffice. Ḥasan proclaimed that the long-awaited imam had “opened the gate of His mercy and by His bounty granted life to all.”⁶⁴

As in the case of the *Dawr-i satr* which began after the death of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, here too, the end of the era was construed as an eschatological moment. In the 8th/2nd century, the heptadic helical eras of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad were invoked. Since the

⁶¹ IIS Persian-MS 32:56 Folios: 112b-114b; Compare HBAI p. 43:

Sometimes it happens that a period of *satr* and living under protective dissembling (*taqiyya*), is sent for the sins committed by the faithful slaves (of God), when our Lord looks upon them with anger. And the period of *kashf* may be sent out of compassion, when our Lord looks upon them benevolently. The period of manifestation (*dawr-i zuḥūr wa kashf*) is like day, and the Revealer of Truth (*Muḥiqq*) is like the sun, while the period of *satr*, occultation, is like night, and the *ḥujjat* is like the moon and *dāʿīs* like stars. When at night the sun is hidden, light comes from the moon and stars, so during the period of *satr*, when the followers of Truth (*ahl-i Ḥaqq*) cannot have direct contact with the holy substance of the Imam, religious life (*dīn*) comes from, obedience to, and recognition of His agents (*mard-i ū*), i.e. The *ḥujjat* and *dāʿīs*.

⁶² This text refers to a *dawr-i satr* enacted after the Qiyāma, nonetheless the principle holds.

⁶³ IIS Persian-MS 32:56

⁶⁴ HBAI p. 41

Prophet Muḥammad had proclaimed that after him there would be no further messenger, the next *nāṭiq* would bring a culmination of history. In the reckoning, this eschatological figure, the seventh imam after the *waṣī*, ‘Alī, was to be Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq.⁶⁵ As the messiah, he was to restore justice and equality and bring the world to the End of Times. While the *da‘wa* had been promulgated in his name for many decades, the Fatimid Empire was heralded by ‘Abd Allāh al-Mahdī who claimed lineal descent back to Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq. Two and a half centuries later, the second era of *satr* was prognosticated to end with the manifestation of the Qā‘im-i Qiyāma. Since he would be the seventh *nāṭiq* of the seventh cycle—Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl was according to this reckoning the seventh *nāṭiq*, however, he had manifested during a period of *satr*—so the Qā‘im-i Qiyāma would bring the cycles to full culmination. He would initiate the Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt—the Great Resurrection. Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī noted that all the imams are the same as ‘Alī, but they appear different due to the rule of relativity (*ḥukm-i idāfāt*). He added that in the Blessed Sermon it is said that the month of *Ramaḍān* signifies [the numbering of the] Imams. The first ten, that is, from Mawlānā ‘Alī, prostration and prayer be upon mention of him, until Taqī Aḥmad, the tenth Imam, the Imams are called *waṣī* (vicegerent). ... The middle ten are called Imams, [that is], the Persons of Unity (*ashkhāṣ-i waḥdat*), from Mawlānā Mahdī, who was the eleventh, until the [grand?]son of Mawlānā Nizar, who was the twentieth. The last ten are called Qā‘ims, that is, the Persons of Unity from Mawlānā [Ḥasan] ‘Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām, who was the twenty-first (sic), until the thirtieth Imam.

The Blessed Sermon would imply the sermon given by Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām at the declaration of the Qiyāma; however, this may be a sermon given by Ḥasan’s successor since Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām is mentioned in the passage in the third person. The latter was the twenty-fourth imam not the twenty-first. In as much as the dynasty of Fatimid imam-caliphs were construed as the continuity of the Mahdis, here too, the line of imams are functionally joined together as the Qā‘im. The predicted action by the trans-historical eschaton remained tied to the historical line of imams from the momentous manifestation at the end of the era of

⁶⁵ Muḥammad’s *waṣī* was ‘Alī and he was followed by Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, ‘Alī Zayn al-‘ābidīn, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, Ismā‘īl and lastly Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl who would rise up as the Mahdī.

satr. The conflation of the historical and trans-historical could not survive the passing of the event. As shown in the diagram below, post-Qiyāma Nizari *da'wa* literature elevated the imam-qā'im and equated him to the Divine Command (*Kalima-yi a'lā* = Sublime Word). The *ḥujjat* who is from the same essence was equated to the First Intellect (*'Aql-i awwal*) above the station of the prophet who was equated to the Universal Soul (*Nafs-i kullī*).⁶⁶ The imam, *ḥujjat* and prophet have their equivalents in the transcendental realm (*mala'-i a'la*). Through the revelation (*waḥy*) and inspiration (*ilhām*) received by the prophet, the believers are able to adhere to the law brought to them by the prophet (*sharī'a*). Through their submission (*taslīm*) to the teaching of the imam and the *da'wa* they are able to attain knowledge of God (*ma'rifa*) and beyond that, through love (*maḥabbat*) can attain Unity.

The *ahl-i waḥdat* (the people of Unity) according to the *Rāh-i ma'rifat* are one because the Teacher is one and

through him his followers are one... they are all one, because in reality and meaning they belong to Him and are all to be considered as one. Meaning and reality (*ma'nī wa ḥaqīqat*), we have said, is the light of Unity (*nūr-i tawḥīd*), which enlightens their hearts with the same knowledge of God; they will recognise only one person who is the teacher, the caller (*dā'i*) and the guide (*dalīl*), from whom they have acquired knowledge of God and understanding. Therefore, through him they are one, through him they have faith and believe; through him they recognise and worship God—not through each other or anyone else.⁶⁷

Abū Ishāq wrote that at the time “every prophet laid foundation to a religious system (*sharī'at*), the Imam is pleased to manifest himself in his real holy substance (*ẓuhūr ba dhāt-i muqaddas*), and the prophet pointed him out (to his followers).” The prophet must appoint someone to save humanity from the illusory world (*kawn-i tashābuh*) and that person is the Qā'im of the Qiyāmat who must always be in existence as otherwise humanity will for ever remain in the illusory world. Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām stated that “the meaning (*ma'nī*) of the Qiyāmat is eternity; (*hamīshagī*), and the meaning of the Qā'im is “always” (*hamīsha*).” In the periods of

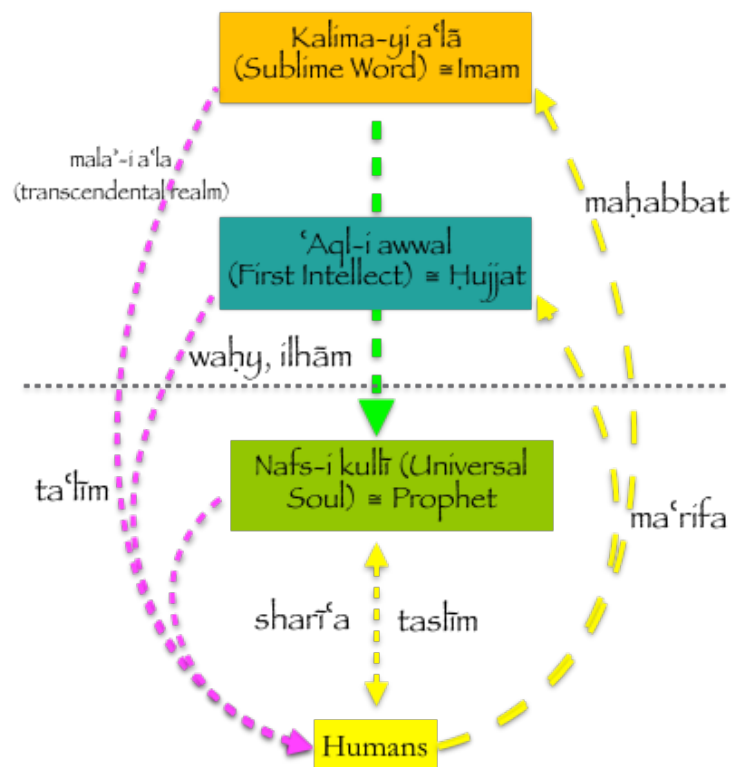
⁶⁶ Paradise of Submission. p. 139 Tr. p. 113

⁶⁷ IIS Persian MS 32:21 folios 13b-16b; Badakhchani, “Shahrastānī's Account.”

zuhūr (manifestation) the believers must directly know this *Muḥiqq* (bearer of Truth); in the periods of *satr*, the *da‘wa* was to be carried out by the *ḥujjat* and the *dā‘īs*. During these times, those firm in their faith would know that the “Qā’im of Resurrection always exists, was and will be.”⁶⁸

The Qā’im who is the locus of Truth always exists and the cloaking and uncloaking in the eras of *satr* and *kashf* relate not to this Reality but in the relative human sphere. From the perspective of ordinary human beings, the circumstances may be such that for a period the bearer of Truth is in occultation and at other times manifest yet that source of Truth is immutable.

Figure II.3b: Tūsī’s Cosmology of Revelation and Return



The treatise *Dawr-i kashf wa dawr-i satr* states that the

⁶⁸ HBAI, pp 38ff and 42-43

ignorant (*nādānān*) did not recognise the imam as imam (*na imām rā imām taṣawwur kardi-and*) and speak ill⁶⁹ of his holy presence (*ghibat-i ḥuṣūr-i mubārakish kunand*). Those who went before (*sābiqān*), by way of truth, unity and who believe in the Oneness of God (*muwaḥḥidān*) know him through his Light (*ba-nūr-i ū-rā mī shanāsand*). All their lives/eras are the hour of dawn (*sāʿat-i fajrist*) and are free from disclosure and dissimulation (*āz kashf wa taqīya fāriḡhand*) as one of the people of Truth has said:

The manifestation and occultation are never bound
In the presence of the Man of Resurrection⁷⁰
what is occultation and what is manifestation
Ḥuṣūr [wa] ḡhaybat shaklī ba-hīch bāz maband
*Ba pīsh-i mard-i qiyāmat chi ḡhaybat wa chi ḥuṣūr*⁷¹

C. *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt*

The *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt* carried different meanings in different contexts and to different groups of people. To the Sunni author-historians, it was the commencement of *ilhād* (deviation, heresy). Sherman Jackson has described

the distinction between formal heresy, i.e., the wilful persistence in error, and material heresy, or the holding of heretical other words, could connote not one but several categories of theological deviance, from outright unbelief (*kufr*) to unsanctioned (though non-damning) innovation (*bidʿa*) to honest mistakes and misunderstandings. Whether a doctrine would be relegated to one or another of these categories would depend on how broad or narrow the criterion for determining orthodoxy (sic) was and how objectively it was applied.⁷²

TJG, JT and ZT as well as later histories derived from them, tended to label the event of the *Qiyāma* as the beginning of formal heresy or unbelief. Juwayni applied the narrow criterion which his intellectual forbears had done for five centuries and others have followed his example for eight more.

The absence of reporting by contemporary historians leads to a conclusion that, for the most part, the declaration of the *Qiyāma* was internal to the Nizari communities. Hodgson noted the startling contrast between

⁶⁹ reading *ghibat* = speak ill of ...; also possible is *ghaibat* = conceal

⁷⁰ i.e. the *Qāʾim*

⁷¹ Appendix T-III

⁷² Sherman A. Jackson. *On the Boundaries of Theological Tolerance in Islam: Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghāzalī's Fayṣal al-Tafriqa Bayna al-Islam wa al-Zandaqa.*, Oxford University Press, USA, 2002). pp 3-5

the effect on Islam (sic)⁷³ at large of the revolt led by Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, and of the great Qiyāma of Ḥasan (‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām), Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ is prominent in every historical survey of his time, and a number of thinkers then and even later devoted considerable time to the refutation of his ideas: every Muslim was aware of the Nizari revolt of 1090 C.E.⁷⁴ On the contrary, Ḥasan II’s Qiyāma was quite unknown to his contemporaries. “Not a writer mentions it till after the fall of Alamūt, when it was learned of from the internal sources; even so comprehensive a writer as Ibn al-Athīr obscured the matter completely, having the wrong man succeed to the throne at the time, with not a word of the Qiyāma.” Even the later writers who were concerned with the Ismā‘īlīs were still refuting Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ two generations after the light of the Qiyāma had flooded his heralding torch into insignificance. The trumpet of Qiyāma blasted the “people of opposition” into an eternal nonexistence so profound that they were quite unaware even of the trumpet blast itself.⁷⁵

To be exact, there was no Nizari revolt in 1090—this is the date when Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ as a Fatimid *dā‘ī* ascended and took control of the fortress of Alamut. The Nizari-Musta‘lian schism had not yet occurred; however, Hodgson’s larger point is correct. The counter revolution of the *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt* was a purely an internal reform. At the political level, by his declaration of the *Qiyāma*, Ḥasan established his absolute superiority over all others within the *da‘wa*. On the other hand, the event brought an end to the seventy-year concealment of the identity of the imam descended from Nizār b. al-Mustanšir—a clear victory for the *Ẓuhūrists*. The re-orientation of Nizari communities and how they related to the wider world required extraordinary measures that a mere announcement would not have achieved. Ismaili cosmological, eschatology and soteriological ideas and language were deployed once again as they were at the end of the first *Dawr-i satr*. The end of the *dawr-i satr* and the commencement of *dawr-i kashf* had to be momentous. God had sent the Prophet as a mercy to humanity, in the same manner, that continued mercy of guidance through the designated imam which had been cloaked during the *satr* and now was to be manifest. According to the JT Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-

salām taught that in the era of the *Qiyāma*

the obligations of the Shari‘a (*takālīf-i sharī‘ī*) are lifted from the people. Everyone, on this day of Resurrection (*rūz-i Qiyāmat*), in every aspect, must turn to God and abandon the rites of the

⁷³ Surely this should read “Muslims” MGSB was formulating his thoughts on epistemological approaches to the study of islam and Muslim civilisations which ended up in his posthumous work. Cf. Hodgson. *Venture I*. pp 3-69

⁷⁴ This is a bit of a stretch.

⁷⁵ Hodgson. *OA*. pp 180-181

sharī'a in which customs and worship are limited in time. In the *sharī'a* it is stipulated that worship should be established five times a day to glorify and exalt God and to be with God. That obligation is exoteric. In [the era of] Resurrection in their hearts they should constantly be with God and regard their own souls connected with the Divine. This is prayer in Reality. They interpreted all the principles of the *sharī'a* and all the practices of Islam in this manner.

Sometimes by allusion and sometimes explicitly Ḥasan said that just as in the period of the *sharī'a*, if a person did not obey and worship but complied with the commands of the Resurrection that is he did not consider obedience and worship as spiritual, that person was chastised, punished, tormented, and stoned; if in the period of the Resurrection a person complied with the commands of the *sharī'a* and was meticulous in worship and material practice, it would be licit to chastise, torment, stone and execute that person.⁷⁶

This was a complete re-orientation of humanity; Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī wrote that in the realm of the *Qiyāma*

it is impossible for humanity to share anything with God, because in that realm they will not have any existence. Therefore, it is absurd [to say] that God may be manifested in the realm of the *sharī'a*, which is shared between man and God, but be hidden in the realm of the *Qiyāma*, which is unique to God and where creatures cannot share anything with Him; [or that He] will hide away and conceal Himself from the eyes of the people. Rather, they [the Qā'imids] have said: 'In the realm of the *sharī'a*, God (*Khudā*) will be hidden most of the time, and in the realm of the *Qiyāma* He (*Khudāy*) will be manifest, openly known and recognised with authority (*ḥākim*) among mankind, from the first to the last, as it is now.'⁷⁷

The manifestation of the imam-qā'im is negation of the physical existence and is the total abnegation of the self. In this realm there is no law because every act is to be in the way of God.

D. Abrogation of the Sharī'a

Constant admonitions in the Nizari *da'wa* literature to adhere to the *ẓāhir* (exoteric) without which the *bāṭin* (esoteric) may not be reached, on the one hand, indicate normative definitions but on the other hand, suggest breaches of such norms.⁷⁸ At the core are issues of authority and sovereignty to protect the *sharī'a* as a right of the imamate claiming Divine *naṣṣ*. Ultimately, the fundamental questions revolve around the nature of the *sharī'a* itself. The *sharī'a* as a unified monolith is conceptually and historically unfounded. The *sharī'a* defined by the Sunni '*ulamā*'—if such a totality were possible—differed from that of the Shi'i and Ismaili

⁷⁶ JT. p. 169

⁷⁷ Here the author uses the term *Khudāy* instead of *Khudā* to make clear that he intends the Qā'im.

⁷⁸ Shi'i Interpretations. pp 40ff

visions of it defined under the aegis of the imam of the time. The Ismailis had consistently rejected Sunni notion of diversity of opinion as a Divine Mercy (*ikhtilāf ummatī raḥma*) warranted by and implicit in the canonisation of the Sunni ‘ulamā’. They refused to be imprisoned by a *sharī’a* defined by the ‘ulamā’ and instead followed the creed laid out for them not just by the imam, Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, but the one emanating from the interpretation of each successive imam in his own time. In the case of the *Qiyāma*, the Nizaris followed the path lit for them by the teaching of Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām.

E. Reconfiguration of Society

After the *Qiyāma*, the focus of the Nizari communities turned to the *bāṭin*, the esoteric spirituality of religion—not merely observing the *ẓāhir*, the exoteric meaning—and with access, once again, to the infallible ‘Alid imam, the people of the *Qiyāma* were to focus on the spiritual reality behind the letter of positive law. Ḥasan resorted to Ismaili *ta’wīl* (allegorical interpretation) to interpret the *Qiyāma* symbolically and spiritually. It meant nothing less than the manifestation of Truth (*ḥaqīqa*). Those who acknowledged the rightful imam of the time were now capable of understanding the Truth and the spiritual resurrection. Paradise was actualised in this world; the elect among humanity would rise to a spiritual level of existence, transcending from *ẓāhir* to *bāṭin*, from *sharī’a* to *ḥaqīqa*, or from the literal interpretation of the law to an understanding of its spirituality and the eternal truths of religion. Ṭūsī explained in the *Rawḍa-yi taslīm* that

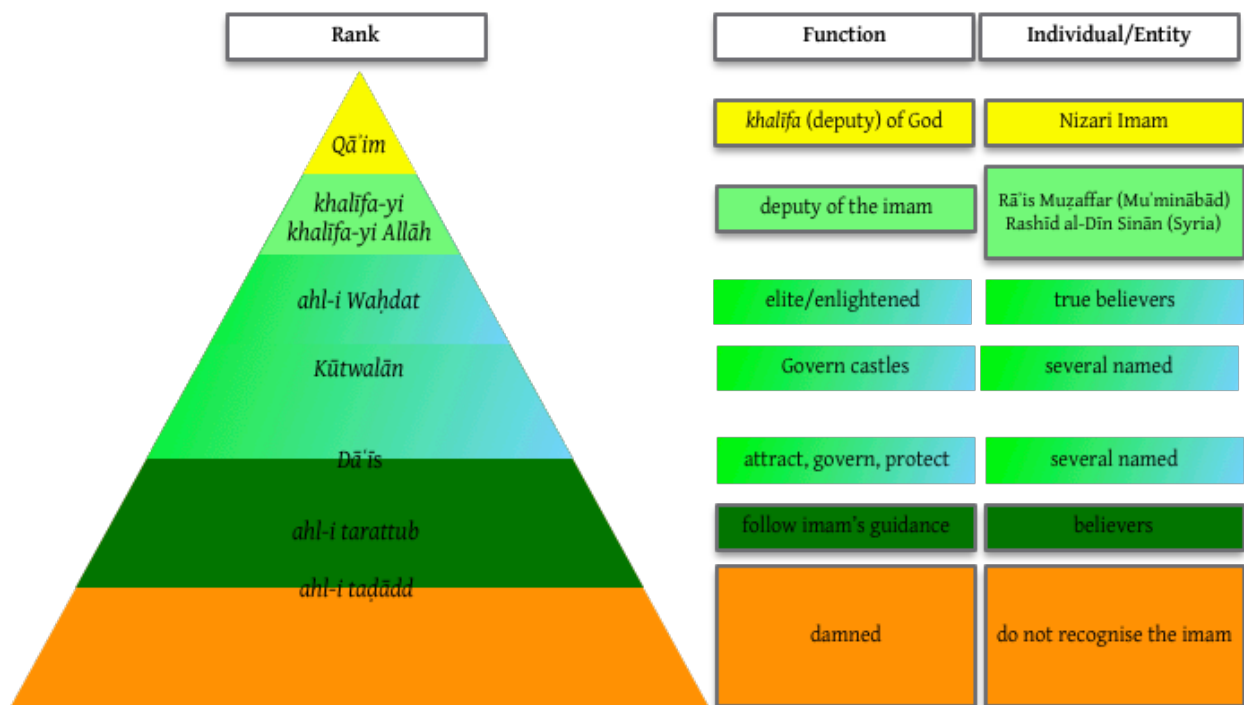
the age of religious law (*zamān-i sharī‘at*) is a time in which worship (*‘ibādat*) is ordained at specific times, when the practice of external, physical behaviour is dictated (*da‘wat ba ẓāhir-i a‘māl-i jismānī*), and when all acts of worship are completely absorbed in their specific temporal moments. [This age] is called the cycle of concealment (*dawr-i satr*), being particularly characteristic of the Prophets - peace be upon them.

[On the other hand], the age of Resurrection (*zamān-i qiyāmat*) [is] when specific times of worship are abrogated, when people are summoned unto God for His own sake, and when all the moments [of life] are completely absorbed in the practice of devotion. [This age] is called the

cycle of manifestation (*dawr-i kashf*), which is specifically characteristic of the Imam - may salutations ensue upon mention of him.⁷⁹

He elaborated that the daily obligations of the *sharī'a* amounted to two hours of the day; the obligations of the *Qiyāma*, on the other hand, demand a constant vigilance and God consciousness.⁸⁰ A momentary lapse would mean that the adherent fell out of the circle of the *ahl-i waḥdat* (people of unity). A single act committed outside of the cause of God would mean a falling away from Grace. On the other hand, the 'outsiders,' the non-Nizaris who were incapable of recognising the truth, were rendered spiritually non-existent. The people of the world were divided into three: the *ahl-i waḥdat* (people of Unity), the *ahl-i tarattub* (people of gradation) and those beyond the pale namely the *ahl-i taḍādd* (people of discord).⁸¹

Figure II.3c: Hudūd-i Dīn after the Qiyāma



⁷⁹ Paradise of Submission. p. 135 Tr. p. 110

⁸⁰ Shi'i Interpretations. pp 42ff

⁸¹ Shi'i Interpretations pp 62ff

With declaration of the *Qiyāma*, the imamate was manifest and the structure of society in relation to the *ḥudūd-i dīn* underwent changes. The positions in the hierarchy collapsed and society was divided into three. At the founding of Islam, those who accepted the message of the Prophet became part of the Ummah where the bonds of faith superseded those of kinship. *Sharī'a* became the focus of their existence. After the declaration of the *Qiyāma*, those who recognised the essence of the imam-qā'im were united as the *ahl-i waḥdat* (people of Unity). Their focus became the *haqīqa* (reality) and every moment of existence became worship and demanded consciousness of Divine Unity and Unicity (*tawḥīd*). The remainder of society were divided into those who recognised only the form of the imam-qā'im and as such were the *ahl-i tarattub* (people of the order) and the remainder of society devolved to the *ahl-i taḍādd* (people of discord).

The *Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw* which I have suggested dates to within a few years of the declaration of the *Qiyāma* concludes that the Rafiqān

celebrated the manifestation of the imam (*zuhūr-i khudāwand*) and organised a feast. [They exclaimed]:⁸² "Sayyidnā, may God sanctify his soul, had proclaimed that 'the hope that you have from God will be known when the pleasure of the brother-believer (*riḍāi-yi birādar-mu'min*) is the pleasure of the imam (*riḍāi-yi khudāwand*), may God sanctify his mention."

May Mawlānā grant everyone Divine favour (*tawfiq*) and harmony (*ittifāq*) to seek the pleasure of the brother-believer.

The most pious of acts became the service of the fellow believer and the pleasure of the imam because every act was an act before God. These principles of mutual help and emphases on ethical moral behaviour, henceforth, became a major part of *da'wa* literature and perhaps of the Nizari society.

⁸² MSS is indecipherable here

F. Nizari Synthesis

The struggle between the *Satrists* and the *Ẓuhūrists* shifted towards the latter. In the same way that the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mu‘izz had reformulated the doctrine of the Mahdī to make an accommodation with the Qarmaṭīs, Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām made an effort to transcend the doctrinal path or rather to re-channel Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s teachings. The emergence out of this path amounted to a counter-revolution, a turning of an era. He brought his followers from a narrow channel directly into the open and unlimited Ocean. The Nizari Synthesis reached back to early eastern Ismaili doctrines couched in Islamicate Neoplatonism of al-Nasafī and others.⁸³ The reach was not just to apprehend Truth beginning with the revelation and the *sharī‘a* but to extend the trajectory to its eschatological end and look back. This perspective of and from the End of Times would have resonated with remnant Qarmaṭī ideas, with the millennialist traditions that emerged out of Zoroastrianism, Judeo-Christian traditions and other faiths in the regions where the Nizaris promulgated their *da‘wa*. The counter-revolution of the Nizari Synthesis promoted by the *Ẓuhūrists* shrouded the *Satrists*. With the declaration of the *Qiyāmat-i Buzurg* the veils of *Satr* were uncloaked and a new era was born.

III. The Sun is Eclipsed by the Moon

Two years after the declaration of the *Qiyāma*, Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām was attacked and killed by Ḥasan b. Nāmāwar, a purported descendant of the Buyids. JT and ZT state that he was the brother-in-law of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ,⁸⁴ TJG on the other hand, described him as “amongst those to the nostrils of whose hearts there still came some scent of piety and religion” and the brother-in-law of Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām.⁸⁵ The reports in JT and ZT are highly unlikely since the brother-in-law of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ would be in his sixties even if he were a teenager

⁸³ Henry Corbin. *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, (London; Boston: Kegan Paul International in association with Islamic Publications Ltd., 1983). pp 175-176

⁸⁴ JT. p. 169; ZT p. 191

⁸⁵ TJG. p. 239; HWC. p. 697

during the latter's lifetime. Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām's nineteen-year-old son Nūr al-Dīn, known as 'Alā' Muḥammad (r. 1166-1210/561-607) succeeded him. All three chronicles report that Ḥasan b. Nāmāwar and all the Buyids—men, women and children—were wiped out.

The comparison of Juwayni and Rashid al-Dīn's description of 'Alā Muḥammad, again, is very telling:

Juwayni	Rashid al-Din
This man, Muḥammad, i.e. praiseworthy, in name but blameworthy in deed, was more extreme than his father in proclaiming the heresy (<i>bid'at</i>) which they called the Propaganda of the Resurrection, of which libertinism (<i>ibāḥat</i>) was a necessary consequence, and more explicit in laying claim to the Imamate. He also professed a knowledge of philosophy although completely ignorant of that and all other sciences. He would insert expressions taken from the philosophers in the inelegant treatises that he wrote and the incoherent principles to which he gave utterance and by the introduction of subtle points in their manner would seek to parade his learning. The Prophet (blessings and peace upon him!) hath said: 'He that adorneth himself with what is not his own is like one who weareth false garments.' His expressions and language in his remarks on Arabic style, philosophy, exegesis, Traditions, proverbs and poetry—for he pretended to a knowledge of all these things—were full of corruptions, absurdities, mistakes and mis-spellings.	This Muḥammad was more conspicuous than his father in the promulgation of the <i>da'wa</i> of the <i>Qiyāma</i> and more emphatic in his declaration of imamate. He claimed knowledge of wisdom and sciences of philosophy. In the treatises and doctrines he wrote and in his speech he used the terminology of philosophy; he dressed up and paraded his proofs out-striping the speech of philosophers in citation of metaphysical signification. His words and meanings in his discourse on Arabic, philosophy, exegesis, [prophetic] lore (<i>akhbār</i>), epistolography (<i>inshā'</i>) and poetry are plentiful. There is no benefit in elaboration in this abridgement.

Again allowing for the different styles and approaches in the translations, it is quite apparent that Rashid al-Din's text⁸⁶ must more closely represent the Nizari source than Juwayni's account.⁸⁷ It is during 'Alā' Muḥammad's reign that Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām was proclaimed as the holder of the *naṣṣ* and spiritually and physically descended from Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir. During this time Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī completed his *Haft Bāb*; and began to write the *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyāt* and possibly the first Ismaili text written in the *ta'rikh* genre, namely, the *History of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ*, which is presently not known to be extant.⁸⁸ (Cf. Part One:4-I-A). Coinage, for the first time, carried the name of the ruling imam rather than the anonymous descendant of Nizar. The doctrine of the *Qiyāma* was elaborated and the *Ẓuhūrists* consolidated their success in establishing the *Dawr-i kashf* (era of manifestation of the imam).

Their victory, however, was short-lived as the *Satrists* made a resurgence. With the death of 'Alā Muḥammad, his son and successor Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan (1210-1221/607-618) abolished the teachings of the *Qiyāma* and according to the chronicles, adopted Sunni Islam. Juwayni recorded

I have seen a letter in the hands of the notables and cadis (sic) of Qazvin, which had been dictated by Jalal-ad-Din Hasan and in which he spoke of his adoption of Islam, (sic) and acceptance of the rites of the Shari'at, and deliverance from the heresy (sic) and belief of his forefathers and ancestors. And Jalal-ad-Din had written a few words in his own handwriting upon the front of that letter and in mentioning his deliverance from their religion (*madhhab*), when he came to the names of his father and ancestors, he added the curse: 'May God fill their graves with fire!'⁸⁹

Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan established good relations with the 'Abbāsids, married into the ruling houses of Daylamān and he allied with and fought along the Atabaig Muẓaffar al-Dīn Uz-Baig, who was ruler of Arran and Azerbaijan. During Chingiz Khan's (r. 1206-1227/602-624) first invasion, as

⁸⁶ JT. p. 170. Qashani's account is identical ZT. p. 192

⁸⁷ TJG. pp 240-241 HWC. p. 698

⁸⁸ HB., Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā'imīyyāt*.

⁸⁹ TJG. p. 244 HWC. pp. 700-701

he crossed the Āmu Daryā in August 1219/*Jumādā'l-āwwal* 616, Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan was “the first ruler on this side of the Oxus to send ambassadors, and present his duty, and accept allegiance.”⁹⁰ The Nizari section of the TJG was written west of the Āmu Daryā.

When Jalāl died, his nine-year-old son ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 1221-1255/618-653) succeeded him under the tutelage of a regent. Muḥammad’s thirty-four-year reign experienced drastic shifts. Turning back from his father’s “adoption” of Sunni Islam, the teachings of the Qiyāma were gradually reinstated. Rashid al-Dīn’s family took refuge among the Nizaris at this time. The Muḥtasham Shihāb in Quhistān gave refuge to Sunni ‘*ulamā*’ as they escaped the depredation of the Chingizid invasions in the East—he would later lose favour purportedly for his generosity towards the Sunnis as the teachings of the Qiyāma were reasserted. (Cf. Part One:4-I-A; 5-III and Part Two:1-IV-D-1). The contestations between the *Satrists* and *Zuhūrists* continued and the latter, again, gained the upper hand. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī became an Ismaili during Muḥammad’s reign and produced a substantial body of works which survives. In time, the alliance with Chingiz Khān collapsed and the latter’s grandson, Mangū Khān (r. 1251-1259/649-657) ordered his brother Hūlāgū’s westward march with a primary goal of subduing the Nizari polity.

All three Ilkhanid chronicles report that ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad was an unstable ruler and did not dedicate his energies to governance. Yet, in stark contrast, the eyewitness account of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Nasawī (d. ca 1250/648), the secretary and biographer of the Khwārazmshāh Jalāl al-Dīn, portrays an image of a noble and generous ruler. Given that soon after ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s demise, the Mongols captured the Nizari fortresses and decapitated the polity, it would appear that his regnal account may not have been fully committed to writing

⁹⁰ TJG. TJG, pp 248 HWC. HWC p. 703

and a greater part of it may be based on Juwayni's writing assembled through interactions with local interlocutors and was, of course, coloured by the author's pre-commitments and biases. 'Alā' al-Dīn was assassinated and his son, Rukn al-Dīn, who had a testy relationship with his father, took over. Their reported relationship was so bad that the son had contemplated rebellion and the father had tried to withdraw the *naṣṣ* from his son as he grew older. The texts suggest that Rukn al-Dīn may have had a hand in his father's death.⁹¹ The account of his reign is dominated by Hūlāgū's attack, Rukn al-Dīn's submission and ultimately the annihilation of the Nizari polity in Iran.

A. Qiyāma and Back—the contest between Sātrists and Ṣuhūrist

After the declaration of the Qiyāma, Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām claimed that although he was “outwardly (*ẓāhir*) known as the son of Muḥammad b. Buzurg [Ummīd, in actuality (*dar ḥaqīqat*)] he was the *imām* of the time and the son of the *imām* from the descendants of Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir.”⁹² In Quhistān, when the Qiyāma was declared on 3 October 1164/7 *Dhū'l-qa'da* 559 he proclaimed “I who am Ḥasan say: I am the *khalīfa* of God on earth and my *khalīfa* is Ra'īs Muẓaffar (the Nizari commander in Quhistān). It is incumbent to follow his commands (*farmān*) and recognise them as our word and that whatever he says is faith (*dīn*) and truth (*ḥaqq*).”⁹³ The manner in which the fragility of the core doctrine of *naṣṣ* was elaborated is examined below and the relative shifts and positions of the *sātrists* and *ṣuhūrists* are highlighted.

The Nizari *da'wa* literature of the period and for several centuries afterwards drew its impetus from the teachings of the counter-revolution of the Qiyāma. Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī completed the *Haft Bāb* in the reign of 'Alā' Muḥammad ca 1200/596 and the *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyat* he started

⁹¹ TJG. pp 258-259 HWC. pp 711-712; JT. pp 184-185; ZT. p. 206

⁹² JT. p. 165

⁹³ JT p. 166;

was completed in the reign of the latter's grandson. This poetic work spanned the declaration of the *Qiyāma*, the elaboration of its doctrines followed by its closure during the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan (r. 1210-1221/607-618) and finally the return to the teachings of the *Qiyāma* in the reign of 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 1221-1255/618-653). Over the course of this time and continuing into the writings of 15th century *dā'i*-authors, the status of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ was raised from an ordinary *dā'i* to not just the *ḥujjat* but to the one associated with blowing the first trumpet of the *Qiyāma*. He was sanctified as the one who predicted the coming of the

Qā'im, Ḥasan-i Šalāḥ-i Munshī in the *Haft Bāb* stated that

the cycle of the *Qiyāmat* which was prior to the cycle of our Adam, up to the present cycle in which we are—although the *Qiyāmat* is perpetual (*hamishagī*) but recurring in relation to the *sharī'at*—all the good and pious people have identified the supreme *ḥujjat* (proof)⁹⁴ of the *Qā'im* and have given the glad tidings about him. They have said: 'The position of the *ḥujjat* in relation to the *Qā'im* is similar to that of the vicegerents (*awṣiyā'*) to the Prophets with resolution (*anbiyā'-i ulūl 'aẓm*).⁹⁵ All the good and pious people of our time also admit that Sayyidnā Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, may God sanctify his soul and bless us with his meditation (*shafā'at*), was the chief *ḥujjat* of the *Qā'im* of the *Qiyāmat* and the Messiah of the cycle of the *Qiyāmat* who manifested the work of his father (*kār-i pidar āshkārā kard*).⁹⁶

Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām also underwent similar hagiographic (re)-constructions in the doctrinal texts. The epithet 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām was applied to several other imams including imam-caliph 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and the descendants of Nizār to the extent that it becomes challenging to distinguish the quotes from one imam to another in the post-*Qiyāma* texts. They are mostly attributed to Ḥasan and purportedly sourced from the *Fuṣūl-i mubārak*. The tabulation below shows the number of attributed quotes in the *Haft Bāb* which indicates the importance given by the author to the words of these sources. Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām's

⁹⁴ In Shi'ism generally, the term *ḥujjat* means the 'proof' or 'evidence' of God on earth, that is, the Imam. In Fatimid Ismailism, it was also used as the title of the most senior dignitary of the *da'wa*. Among the Nizari Ismailis, as in this text, it refers to the chief representative of the Imam.

⁹⁵ That is, the six great Prophet-Messengers from Adam to Muḥammad (also called *nātiq*, 'speaker', pl. *nuṭaqā'*, in Ismaili terminology), each of whom inaugurates a new religious law, thus perfecting the law of the previous one.

⁹⁶ HB. pp 67-68

teachings became paramount, although many of the quotes may actually be from his successor ‘Alā’ Muḥammad.

Table II.3a: Quotations in the Haft Bāb of Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī

Individual	Number of Quotations
Unidentified dā’ī(s)	8
Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ	8
Imams—predominantly imam-caliph ‘Alī	19
Aḥadīth	23
Qur’ān	20
Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām	29

Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ as the *hujjat* founder of the polity and the one who blew the first trumpet and Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām as the *imam-qā’im* became icons and stand-ins for monumental change and shifts in doctrine. The reformulations of their biographies were secondary to the doctrinal development associated with them and both types of reformulations continued to evolve for several centuries.⁹⁷ Both Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām were cast as soteriological actors on the cosmic scale within the Ismaili understandings of theology, cosmology, anthropology and eschatology. The repeating themes of Ismaili cosmology centre on the origin of humanity in the command of the transcendent God (*amr-i bārī ta’ālā*) which “through the mediation of Intellect, Soul, spheres, stars and effects of natural constitutions (*ṭabāyi*). And this lower world (*‘ālam-i suflī*) [which] is a trace or vestige (*athar*) of the higher realm (*‘ālam-i ‘ulwī*).”⁹⁸ The human condition requires knowledge of the sublime and this gnosis (*ma’rifā*) is attainable through *ta’līm* (authoritative instruction) of the truthful instructor

⁹⁷ See my “Second Fiddle: an examination of the chronology of biographies of Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and its later inversion in the legitimations of authority in Nizari Ismailism”

⁹⁸ Ṭūsī. *Shī’i Interpretations of Islam*. p. 36

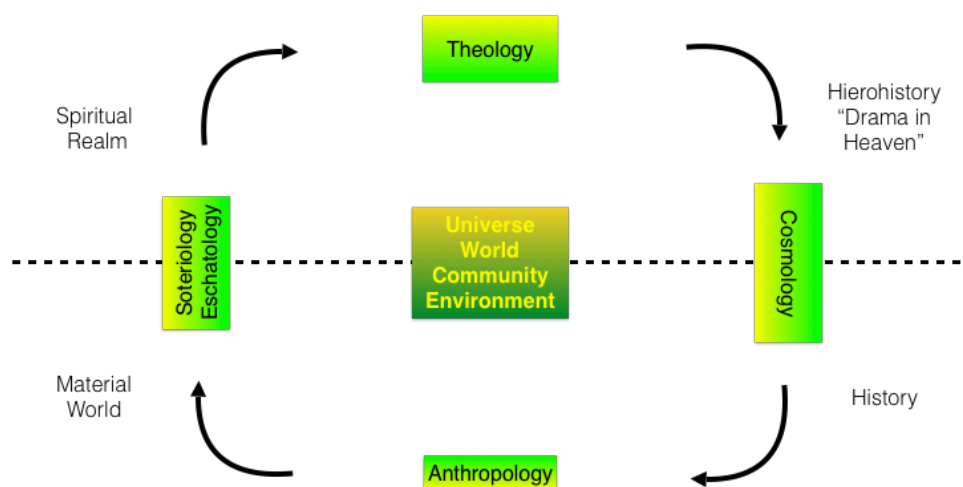
(*mu'allim-i šādiq*). Ṭūsī in the short treatise *Maṭlūb al-mu'minīn* (Desideratum of the Faithful)

wrote that

whenever the wise one abides by the command of the Imam of the time, follows the directive of the truthful instructor (*mu'allim-i šādiq*) and spends his possessions, family attachments, and body and soul—all of which are borrowed (*āriyat*) things—in the path of truth and totally abandons his own self, he will be returning from this illusory world to the eternal world of real existence (*‘ālam-i lā-yazālī-yi wujūd-i ḥaqīqī*). As mentioned in the adage: ‘Everything will return to its origin.’⁹⁹

The interlocking conceptions of God, the Universe, humanity and return to a notion of pre-creative perfection are common to most religious systems. Hodgson noted that others at the time were also engaging in similar explorations of revelation, its re-interpretation, gnosis and return. That Ṣanā'ī, ‘Aṭṭār, Rūmi and particularly Ibn al-‘Arabi were exploring these very themes.¹⁰⁰

Figure II.3d: Map of Conceptions of the Universe in Religious Traditions



In the Nizari teaching “the recognition of God, the Exalted, is the most difficult issue, the truth demands that in this matter one needs an instructor, and that the [chain of] instructors should

⁹⁹ Shi‘i Interpretations. Tr. p. 38

¹⁰⁰ Hodgson. OA. p. 181-182. Hodgson’s statement: “As in Caliphal Egypt; as in Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s incisiveness confronted with the leadership of Ghazzā’ī; so now even on its home ground, whither it had withdrawn in a magnificent gesture of final discovery, Ismā‘īlism was outbid” reflects the sectarian conflict which was central to his conception of the Nizari Ismaili movement.

end up with an instructor who does not need a book [for] acquiring gnosis at all.”¹⁰¹ The emphasis on authoritative teaching is an emulation of God—a Divine Sunna—in that at the time of creation, God taught Adam the names which the angels did not know. The passage in the Qu’rān (Q28-39) begins with the verse: “How do you disbelieve in God, seeing you were dead and He gave you life, then He shall make you dead, then He shall give you life, then unto Him you shall be returned?” (Q2:28). The end then is a return to that pre-creative moment of perfection, of the concord between the Creator and the creatures where God asked the uncreated creation *أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ* (Am I not your Lord?) and the reply was a resounding *بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا* (Verily, we testify) (Q7:172)

Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, who according to his autobiography had been searching for a path to follow, when he came up on the *Fuṣūl-i mubārak* attributed to Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām decided to join the Nizari Ismailis.¹⁰² In the extensive quotes from this text in Ṭūsī’s *Rawḍa-yi Taslīm*, Ḥasan identified three aspects of the ceaseless, changeless and inalterable imamate. The first related to the inner reality (*ma’nā*) and not the external—exemplified by Salmān, the associate of ‘Alī; the second was that of external (*shakl*) but not the inner reality—exemplified by imam-caliph al-Musta‘lī b. al-Mustanṣir and the third was related to both inner and external realities exemplified by—Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām. This is “because human beings are necessarily divided into three groups: the followers of the exoteric (*ahl-i zāhir*), the followers of the esoteric (*ahl-i bāṭin*), and the followers of truth (*ahl-i ḥaqīqat*).” Each of these learns from the imam at their own level. According to Ṭūsī, the imperfect human soul needs a more perfect soul to perfect it in a regress until the entity which does not need any other cause for its perfection, that is until the imam is reached. These types of philosophical and theological

¹⁰¹ Shi‘i Interpretations. Tr. pp 37-38

¹⁰² Contemplation and Action.

arguments were proffered to undergird understandings of God, the cosmos, humanity and salvation across the spectrum of drama in Heaven that gave rise to the existence of the Universe and will fold up in the teleology of return (*ma'ād*). “From the deep centre of the earth to the highest sphere, all physical and spiritual beings have to reach their point of return (*ma'ād*), and reaching there is entirely through the human form.”¹⁰³

The Nizari doctrines related to *naṣṣ*, imamate, salvation and God continued to be sophisticatedly elaborated during the era of *kashf* aligning philosophical thought with scripture and the teachings of Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām. The ambiguities of Ḥasan’s representation physically as the *dā’ī* and spiritually as the recipient of *naṣṣ* from the Nizari imam disappeared into the arguments of the ceaseless existence of the *imam-qā’im* however some of the traces persisted. Ṭūsī quoted Ḥasan saying that

while the Prophets and the *ḥujjats* may change—at one time this one, at another time that one, at one time in this community, at another time in that—the Imam will never change: “We are the people of eternity.” The essential nature of the Imam will never change, even when he is a drop of sperm in the loins of his father, or [a foetus] in the womb of his mother. ... In reality, it is impossible for any past or future Imam to be better or more powerful than another, or to be better at one time than at another time. For example, it is wrong to suppose that he should be better when he reaches maturity than when he was a drop of sperm, or better when the designation (*naṣṣ*) was made than before it was made. The designation which is made is not in order to make him an Imam; it is only made so that people should recognise him as such...¹⁰⁴

According to Ṭūsī this recognition then must be based in certitude. The persons of certitude have certainty at three levels: the first is veracity of certainty (*ḥaqq-i yaqīn*) who are at the rank of those of faith who from this world face the Hereafter; the second is knowledge of certainty (*‘ilm-i yaqīn*), the rank of those who have attained perfection of the Hereafter; and third is certainty itself (*‘ayn-i yaqīn*), the rank of those who have surpassed this world and the

¹⁰³ HB. pp 76-77; Shi’i Interpretations. pp 33-44 and 45ff

¹⁰⁴ Paradise of Submission. pp 153-154 Tr p. 123

Hereafter and are the people of unity (*ahl-i waḥdat*).¹⁰⁵ This echoed in the words of Ḥasan ‘alā

dhikrihi’l-salām in the *Dawr-i kashf wa dawr-i satr*

If a person claims that knowledge from God, the Exalted (*ma’rifat min khudā-i ta’ālā*) is pure (*khālīṣ*) then it is necessary that their action also be pure. Since they make this claim, their actions, on account of the two stations (*martaba* [i.e. this world and the next]), will be pure for them and they will apprehend the Exalted and Sanctified and will not need another; no one who will do the same and will attain this station. They will be released from this world and bound to the next (*ākhirat*); and released from hell and attain heaven. They will be liberated from selfhood (*khūdī*) and non-existence of the self (*nīstī-yi khūd*); and their being (*hastī*) will be in the Glorious and Exalted (*‘azz wa ‘alā*) and by Eternal Truth will persist [eternally] (*bā ḥaqq-i baqā’ī bāqī shawad* lit. remaining with the one who remains). That is why, the near ones (*nazdikān*) cannot be adhered to until the selfhood of the self (*khūdī-yi khūd*) is annihilated, ...”¹⁰⁶

The declaration of the *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt* brought the believers to the Sublime Presence and demanded that in every breath and every heartbeat, not just at appointed times of the day, this duality must be transcended into *Tawḥīd* and called to liberation from selfhood (*khūdī*) and non-existence of the self (*nīstī-yi khūd*) such that their being (*hastī*) will be in the Glorious and Exalted and by Eternal Truth they will persist eternally (*bā ḥaqq-i baqā’ī bāqī shawad*).¹⁰⁷ All this while living the human existence.

B. The Sunni Interlude

Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan when he came to power wrote to the ‘Abbāsid caliph al-Naṣr (r. 1180-1225/575-622) and is reported to have formally accepted Sunni Islam. He instituted Sunni practices; built bath houses and *masājīd*;¹⁰⁸ issued coinage with his own title as sultan and the

¹⁰⁵ Shi’i Interpretations. Tr. p. 39

¹⁰⁶ IIS Persian MS 32:56 folios 112b-114b

¹⁰⁷ IIS Persian MS 32:56 folios 112b-114b

¹⁰⁸ Juwayni. *TJG* p. 243, *HWC* p. 700; Rashid al-Din. *JT* p. 174; Qashani. *ZT* p. 198. The Ilkhanid chroniclers imply this as an act of fidelity to Sunni Islam. As already mentioned Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām was wont to go to congregational prayers and recite the *khutba*. Was the building of mosques in the territory as remarkable? How did this compare with other local polities? Was this a function of greater “Islamisation” or increase in populations in the Caspian region? Modern scholarship has unquestioningly accepted this factoid! Cf. Hodgson. *OA* p. 217 and *IS* p. 470; Lewis. *Assassins* p. 119; Daftary. *Ismailis* p. 375.

‘Abbāsīd caliph’s name.¹⁰⁹ He made overtures to win the Qazwīnīs over to the extent of opening up the libraries in the fortresses and allowing the ‘ulamā’ to burn any books they considered heretical. He may have given away more than expected since the Sunni establishment did not have much of an idea of the reforms of the Qiyāma. As far as they were concerned the earlier Ismaili teachings were already heretical—burning texts from the Qiyāma would have been an added bonus for them. For this, he was called *Naw Mussalman* (new Muslim)! Nonetheless, he was able to make alliances with the Caspian region rulers and even marry into their houses. Most of all, he allied himself with Uz-Baig who was battling his rebellious deputy. This rebel,

Māngli, had attempted an alliance with the Khwārazmshāhs.¹¹⁰ Juwayni recorded that the caliph sent a message to Atabeg Özbeg (ruler of Āzarbaijan) encouraging him to make war on Māngli and promising him assistance. He ordered Jalaluddin Muhammad, the lord of the Ismailis’ fortresses, to reinforce him and promised him that when they got rid of Māngli, part of the territory would be the atabeg’s, part the caliph’s, and part Jalaluddin Muhammad’s (sic).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Willey. *Eagle’s Nest*. pp 299-300. The Appendix “Ismaili Coins from the Alamut Period” by Hussein Hamdan and Aram Vardanyan lists three Nizari coins minted in the reigns of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan and his son Muḥammad with the ‘Abbāsīd caliph Nāṣr li-Dīn Allāh as the Amīr al-mu’minīn.

(23) Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad (607–618/1210–1221) 299 (23) Kursī al-Daylam, date illegible, (gold) Obv: Lā ilāh illā Allāh / Muḥammad rasūl Allāh / [al]-Nāṣr li-dīn Allāh / amīr al-mu’minīn Marginal legend: Bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm ḍuriba hādihā al-dīnār bi-Kursī [al-Daylam] al-hijra Rev: Al-sultān al-a’ẓam / Jalāl al-dunyā wa / al-dīn Abū al-Fatḥ / al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Marginal legend: Bismillāh huwa al-ladhi arsalahu rasūlahu bi’l-huda wa dīn al-ḥaqq liyuzhirahu ‘alā al-d[īn]

(24) Mint and date illegible (gold) Obv: Lā ilāh illā Allāh Muḥammad rasūl Allāh an-Nāṣr li-dīn Allāh Rev: Allāh / as-sultān al-mu’aẓẓam / Jalāl al-dunyā wa / al-dīn Abū al-Fatḥ / al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad

(25) Mint and date illegible (gold) Obv: Al-Imām / Lā ilāh illā Allāh / waḥdahu lā sharīk lahu / an-Nāṣr li-dīn Allāh / amīr al-mu’minīn Marginal legend: Unread. Rev: [Muḥamm]al rasūl Allāh / ṣalla Allāh / al-mawlā al-mu’ayyad Abū / Muḥammad al-Ḥasan Marginal legend: hādihā al-di[nār] Notes: In the word ‘Allāh’ between the letters the word “aliya” is placed.

¹¹⁰ Juwaynī. *Jahān-gushā*. vol 1 pp 73-74; HWC. p. 140

¹¹¹ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jamī’u’t-Tawārīkh-Tr.* p. 238 This should read Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan cf. JT. p. 349.

According to Nasawī, the Nizari imam Jalāl al-Dīn himself had initially offered allegiance to the Khwārazmshāhs; he then inclined towards the ‘Abbāsids and near the end of his life was allied with Chingiz Khān. Juwayni reported that

when the World-Emperor Chingiz-Khan set out from Turkestan, before he came to the countries of Islam Jalal-ad-Din had in secret sent couriers to him and written letters tendering his submission and allegiance. This was alleged by the Heretics (sic) and the truth is not clear, but this much is evident, that when the armies of the World-Conquering Emperor Chingiz-Khān entered the countries of Islam, the first ruler on this side of the Oxus to send ambassadors, and present his duty, and accept allegiance was Jalal-ad-Din.¹¹²

Jalāl al-Dīn’s Sunni reforms and shifting alliances did not encounter much opposition among the Nizaris. The treatise *Dawr-i Kashf wa Dawr-i Satr* states that the

servants of the *da’wa* (*bandagān-i da’wat*) should not have any doubts or take refuge in foolishness, that the efforts of the opponents (*mukhālifān*), or that disrepute, misfortune, and confusion in religion and the world (*khalal-i dīn wa dunyā*) return ... [when] the master of the path (*ṣāhib-i qūf*) orders the command of concealment and dissimulation (*hukm-i satr wa taqiyya*). Then it is obligatory for the servants of the *da’wa* to observe the order of the concealment and dissimulation of the Lord of Truth (*khudāwand-i ḥaqq*) and without the command of his learned ones must not unveil the disclosure (*aẓhar-i kashf*). They should be [one] with his *jamā’at* (community). For the benefit of the visual encounter (*dīdārī*) they should not be deficient in self control and knowledge so that deviation does not come about (*istqāmat dar ḍalālat ni-uftad*) since the knowledge of the imam of the age (*ma’rifat-i imām-i zamān*) is not dependent on the physical encounter (*mulāqāt-i jismānī*). In every age at every time when the person of the imam is concealed from the eyes of the people (*khalq*), the learned of the faith of the *da’wa* of Truth (*buzurgwār-i dīn-i da’wat-i ḥaqq*) by means of proofs from the Qur’ān (*naṣṣ-i qur’ān*) have explained (*taqrīr kardi-and*) to the scholars. They did not accept them (the scholars) among themselves until doubt no longer veiled their belief, and the wicked demons and humans (*shiyātīn al-jinn wa’l-ins*)—in the cloak of their own *da’wa* could not again appear and the doubts of group of weak ones from the era of Mawlānā ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām were refuted.

The *Satrists* had gained the upper hand and *Ẓuhūrists* viewed this period as a reimposition of *taqiyya* and another *Dawr-i satr*. The alignment with the ‘Abbāsids did not remain long after Jalāl al-Dīn’s death. He was succeeded by his nine-year-old son Muḥammad and his regents did not immediately lift the restrictions of the era of concealment. In the *Rawḍat al-taslīm*, Tūsī recorded the time in which the deliberations (*taṣawwurat*) were

being recorded is an epoch of concealment (*satr*) and prudence (*taqiyya*), and it is his eminence [i.e., the Imam]—exalted by his power—who ordains *taqiyya*, his command being—may salutations ensue upon mention of him: ‘*Taqiyya* is my religion and the religion of my forefathers.’ Therefore, considering that in the entire heaven, earth, world and the realm hereafter, no form of [religious] truth can exist outside of him, nor can it be permitted, the devotees of the rightly guided mission (*da’wat-i hadiya*), consider him to be the truthful master (*muḥiqq*). Truth without him is infidelity (*kuf*), and [to recognise truth] besides him is to ascribe

¹¹² TJG, pp 248 HWC. p. 703

partners to God (*shirk*). They follow his command - may salutations ensue upon mention of him - and in the spirit of true prudence (*taqiyya-yi haqqi*), in so far as their humble understanding allows, they guard and protect the truth in the heart. They neither speak [of this] nor write it down on paper, observing thus the propriety of the [Imam's] command so far as their wretched and frail condition permits. [In this manner], they avoid becoming subject to his wrath.¹¹³

He went on to say that from this “one can apprehend just how much [that is, how little] this most wretched of all wretches can write down of his philosophical conceptions that have been granted him by grace of [the Imam's] infinite mercy. However, I am obliged to write down a few words concerning [those matters] that he has permitted [to be communicated].”¹¹⁴ Ṭūsī's writings drawing on the teaching of Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām and other such works may have been part of the effort to end the Sunni interlude and return to the teaching of the *Qiyāma*.

Rashid al-Din recorded that all those who out of fear of his [‘Alā’ al-Dīn's] father had followed the *shari‘a* of Islam still held firm to [the depraved creed of] his grandfather. Now not seeing anyone to refuse or restrain their commission of disagreeable and forbidden acts and not having anyone to encourage and evoke their following of the religious obligations and laws and their observation of the paths of rectitude and salvation, they turned to heresy and within a short time attained victory and power. For a second time heresy became manifest in that people and the basis of religion, state and the greater good of faith and this world - all for this reason remained neglected and abandoned and faced obliteration.¹¹⁵

This clearly is not from the Nizari source; it is a commentary drawn from the equivalent section from Juwayni.¹¹⁶

C. Mongols and the Nizaris

Reporting events he himself witnessed, Juvayni wrote: “Now it had been laid down in the original *yasa* of Chingiz Khan and also in the decree of Mengü Qa’an that none of that people should be spared, not even the babe in its cradle.”¹¹⁷ This bombastic sentence occurs near the

¹¹³ *Paradise of Submission*, pp 146-147, Tr. 118-119

¹¹⁴ *Paradise of Submission* pp 146-147, Tr. 118-119

¹¹⁵ JT. p. 179

¹¹⁶ TJG. p. 250 HWC. pp 704-705

¹¹⁷ TJG. p. 275; HWC. p. 723; JT. p. 193

و چون در اصل یاسای قان و فرمان منکوقان آن بود که ازیشان یکباره تا بچه در گهواره نگذارند

end of the account of Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh in TJG as Juwayni detailed the orders sent out for the massacre of the Nizaris. Between these events in 1257/655 and the initial contacts as Chingiz Khān's forces crossed the Āmu Daryā, nearly four decades earlier, a complex set of Nizari-Mongol relations developed that have been inadequately studied. A set of events and episodes are analysed here to illustrate the nature and complexities of the relations.

In 1220/617, the great Mongol general Sübādāi (Sübētēi) in pursuit of Sultan Muḥammad Khwārazmshāh (r. 1200-1220/596-617) arrived at Dāmghān. The notables of the town took refuge in the Nizari castle of Girdkūh. Overnight, Juwayni reported, that some ruffians (*runūd*) who had remained, fought with the Mongols at the gates of the town. The next day Sübādāi's forces continued their pursuit of the Khwārazmshāh and headed to Simnan and Khuwar of Rayy where they killed many people and then on to Qazwīn.¹¹⁸

Both Juwayni and Rashid al-Din describe the massacres and destruction as Sübādāi and Jebe's campaigns criss-crossed Iran and the Caucasus. The Mongols skirted Nizari territories; however, the Nizaris were spared because the Chingizid *yāsā* did not call for their annihilation. In fact, their attacks in Simnan, the Khuwar of Rayy and Qazwīn coincided precisely with the theatre of military operations for the Nizaris.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Juwaynī. *Jahān-gushā*. vol I p. 115; HWC. pp 146-7

¹¹⁹ Juwaynī. *Jahān-gushā*. vol I pp 115ff HWC. pp 146ff; Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jamī' u't-Tawarikh-Tr.* pp 258ff;

Figure II.3e: Sübädäi's Pursuit of Sultan Muḥammad Khwārazmshāh



The Nizaris did not give refuge to the Khwārazmshāh since they were actually allied with the Mongols.

The *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyāt* also makes reference to this alliance between the Mongols and the Nizaris.¹²⁰ In several instances Chingiz Khān is depicted in a positive light. He and the Mongols were chosen by the Qā'im to aid the “righteous ones”

In the year [6]21/1224 he (Chingiz Khān) took the righteous ones (*nīkān*) to his heart
And obeyed the command of the Lord of the Age (*amr-i Khudawand-i Zamān*).¹²¹

¹²⁰ Peter Jackson. *The Mongols and the Islamic World: From Conquest to Conversion*, Yale University Press, 2017). p. 20, 74 A book published in the second decade of the 21st century by a very learned scholar continues use the term Assassin in place of Nizari!

¹²¹ Qaṣīda 124 Verse 3759; Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā'imīyyāt-Tajik*. pp 327-331; Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā'imīyyāt*. pp 446-449. The Sunni chroniclers were not alone in casting Chingiz Khan as a Divine agent!

Some parts of this section have benefitted from long discussions with Miklós Sárközy after our panel on “The Ismaili State in Iran” at the Second Ismaili Studies Conference held at Carleton University, Ottawa in March 2017.

Elsewhere

Look to the deeds of Chingiz Khān since he showed
The community immeasurable kindness and unity
The Qā'im took his people by hand and sight and
Shed his garments to the ground like the transient world
He ordered: "Be with them in friendship!
Do not take a breath of disunity in any act"¹²²

The Nizaris were opposed to and threatened by the empire of the Khwārazmshāhs (fl. 1097-1231/490-628) and after the Uṭrār incident made common cause with the Mongols.¹²³ The Mongol invasion of the Islamic lands was predicated on the killing of four-hundred and fifty Muslim traders who were returning from Mongolia having sold their goods there and now were trading on behalf of Chingiz Khān's sons, *noyāns* (nobles) and commanders. Juwayni reported that the party carried a message from Chingiz Khān to the Khwārazmshāh to open up trade. The Khwārazmī governor of Uṭrār suspected that the traders hid a Mongol emissary amongst them. According to Juwayni, due to a slight by an Indian trader and his own greed, the governor, Inalchīq, killed all the traders and confiscated their property. Other than the greed motive, the rest of this narrative is unsatisfactory. Why would the regional governor prevent Muslim traders from entering the realm and treat an ambassador to his ruler as a spy, unless the traders and the envoy were suspected of enemy activity or were destined to an opposing power?

Al-Nasawī recorded a similar incident a decade later. In 1228/625 the Nizari emissary Badr al-Dīn travelled to Bukhara to appraise Chormaqan Qorchī of the Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn's defeat by Sultan Ashrāf of Aleppo and Saljuq Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn of Rūm and the weakness of his position. In response, Jalāl al-Dīn ordered all caravans to be stopped on suspicion that enemy emissaries

¹²² Qaṣīda 78 Verse 2284-2286; Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā'imīyyāt-Tajik*. pp 211-213; Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā'imīyyāt*. pp 340-342.

¹²³ TJG p 248; HWC. p. 703; Bartold. *Turkestan*. pp 396-403; Hodgson. OA. p. 252; Lewis. *Assassins*. p. 86; Jackson. *The Mongols and the Islamic World: From Conquest to Conversion*. pp 72ff

were travelling amongst the traders. In the same year, his *wazīr*, Sharaf al-Mulk, put to death a Syrian Nizari caravan of seventy merchants in Āzarbāyjān.¹²⁴ They too were suspected of harbouring a Mongol envoy. Could the Mongol emissary and the traders killed at Uṭrār also have been headed to establish relations and trade with the Nizari territories?

The Nizaris of Quhistān bordered the territories of the Khwārazmshāhs and as Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn was pushed westward by the Mongol attacks, their contacts and conflicts increased. As already discussed, the Nizari muḥtasham in Quhistān, Shihāb al-Dīn, had welcomed refugees fleeing the Mongol attacks and might have become allied with the Khwārazmshāhs. Jūzjānī suggested that the expenditure on refugees was the cause for the imam ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad to replace Shihāb al-Dīn. (Cf. Part one:5-III). The relations with the Khwārazmshāhs shifted over time. Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Mangūbirtī (r. 1220-1231/617-628) as he was pursued out of Khurāsān, established himself in Rayy and there received a Nizari ambassador sent by ‘Alā’ al-Dīn. The envoy was accompanied by nine *fidā’īs* who offered their services to kill any of the Sultan’s enemies. After consultations with his advisors who did not trust the Nizari intentions, the Sultan returned the *fidā’īs* to ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, saying: “You are not ignorant of who are our enemies and our allies, our competitors and our friends. If you want to do what you say, nothing prevents you from acting and we need not to give you indications. As for us, if God wills, we will not impose such an obligation on you; our sharp sabres and our valiant warriors dispense us from having recourse to the dagger and the hand of the Ismailis.”¹²⁵

Nasawī, the author-historian himself, was ordered by the sultan to go to Alamut to collect arrears in tribute and to reprimand the Nizaris for provisioning the sultan’s own rebellious brother, Ghiyāth al-Dīn, rather than turn him over. Nasawī was to demand the reinstitution of the *khutba* in the sultan’s name. This suggests that by the time of this journey in 1228-29/626—seven years after the death of the imam Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan, the Nizaris had begun to revert

¹²⁴ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 387

¹²⁵ al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Sīrat-i Jalāl al-Dīn Minkubirnī*. p. 177; al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Histoire du sultan Djelal ed-Din Mankobirti*. pp 241-242

back to the teachings of the Qiyāma. Nasawī was obligated by the sultan not to extend diplomatic niceties so as to insult and abase his hosts and to insist on a direct meeting with the imam ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad. The negotiations went ahead since the Nizaris had assented to Nasawī’s demand of meeting the young imam directly. They rejected the re-institution of the *khuṭba*. The subject of the 100,000 dinar tribute the Nizaris were to annually pay the Khwārazmshāhs resulted in extensive negotiations. The amount of immediate payment of the arrears was agreed,

it was decided that the lord of Alamut should immediately pay the sum of 20,000 dinars, and that a respite should be granted him for the remaining ten thousand dinars, in order that he (Nasawī) might consult the sultan on this subject. The sum was immediately weighed: it was in *ghiyāthī* and *ghūrī* gold coins of the best quality that existed in fact of *rukni* coins. In the same audience a number of other questions were dealt with, in which it was necessary to display a great deal of firmness and insistence, but there is no need to relate them.¹²⁶

The sultan had instructed Nasawī to demand that ‘Alā’ al-Dīn send Badr al-Dīn Aḥmad to him. The latter was one of his courtiers, who had been sent by the imam as an emissary to the Mongols in *Mā warā’l-nahr*; the sultan wanted to know the result of his mission.¹²⁷ The answer given to him was that

the Sultan knows that we have territories bordering those of the Mongols. So we need to take steps to preserve these provinces from harm. If it be proved to the Sultan that this step has occasioned some inconvenience for his empire, the fault remains with us (‘Alā’ al-Dīn), and not to him. He will then be able to show us the thing, clarify the matter and act towards us as he sees fit.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Sīrat-i Jalāl al-Dīn Minkubirnī*. pp 229-233; al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Histoire du sultan Djelal ed-Din Mankobirti*. pp 353-360

¹²⁷ Daftary. *Ismailis*. pp 386-387:

Badr al-Dīn boasted that several *fidā’īs* had been posted in the service of the Khwārazmshāh and his vizier, and summoned five of these agents to prove his claim. On hearing this news, Jalāl al-Dīn ordered Sharaf al-Mulk to burn the *fidā’īs* alive. The vizier, who had become greatly alarmed, tried in vain to change the sultan’s mind. The *fidā’īs* shouted the name of Alā al-Dīn Muḥammad as they were dying. Alamūt now sent another envoy, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn ‘Alī, to Sharaf al-Mulk, demanding 10,000 dinars in recompense for each of the five *fidā’īs* burned, and threatened his life should he refuse. Thereupon, Sharaf al-Mulk reduced the annual tribute payable by the Nizārīs by 10,000 dinars for a period of five years. The truce between the Nizārīs and Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn, however, did not prove very effective, as Alamūt continued to maintain friendly relations with the ‘Abbāsīd caliph and the Mongols, the two main enemies of the Khwārazmians

¹²⁸ al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Sīrat-i Jalāl al-Dīn Minkubirnī*. pp 230-231; al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Histoire du sultan Djelal ed-Din Mankobirti*. pp 355-356

As Nasawī was departing, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn bestowed some 3000 dinars worth of gifts on him, telling him that no other ambassador was treated this way. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn also sent 400 head of sheep which were difficult to obtain due to Mongol activity in Iran. The flock was meant for a *khānāqa* (Sufi retreat) in one of Nasawī’s fortresses. He was not charged for these because the imam wanted to join him in the benefit of the pious act. Along with Nasawī was sent a Nizari ambassador to the sultan. The ambassador, Asād al-Dīn

remained in Tabriz. On arriving at Mūqān, the Sultan received a letter written to him by [his *wazīr*, the governor of Iraq] Sharaf al-Mulk, which contained the following words: “The ambassador of Alamut addressed a despatch to the Tatars, in which he urges them to arrive quickly. I have seized this despatch and have put to death Asād al-Dīn and the persons who accompanied him.”¹²⁹

The Nizaris were allied with the Mongols and their ambassador helped them to target Jalāl al-Dīn. These reports from Nasawī indicate that the Nizaris played with both sides in a web of trading and diplomatic relations. The amount of tribute due to the Khwārazmshāhs indicates the wealth the Nizari polity was acquiring in these days compared to the daily ration per person of a handful of bread and three walnuts from the early days of the rule of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. (Cf. Part One:6-V-A). Some of these revenues must have come from agriculture, taxes and tolls through Nizari territories. A great proportion of the revenue; however, came from trade.¹³⁰

This trade must have been one the key elements of early Mongol-Nizari relations. Peter Jackson noted that “Chinggis Khan’s concern to promote trade is evident from the safe conduct and armed protection he offered to merchants who visited his dominions.”¹³¹ After the initial Chingizid invasion of 1219-1221/616-618 and the withdrawal of the expeditionary

¹²⁹ al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Sīrat-i Jalāl al-Dīn Minkubirnī*. pp233; al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Histoire du sultan Djelal ed-Din Mankobirti*. pp 360.

¹³⁰ ref

¹³¹ Jackson. *The Mongols and the Islamic World: From Conquest to Conversion*. p. 73; Juwaynī. *Jahān-gushā*. vol I pp 59-60; HWC. pp 77-78

forces, the extensive trade corridor between Khurāsān and Anatolia as well as the Levant along which the fortresses of the Nizari castellan polity were located was protected by them. The Mongol attack on Islamic lands was not simply a retaliation for the killing of an ambassador. The caravan destroyed by Inalchīq consisted of some four hundred and fifty traders. The Mongols as nomadic peoples relied on imports of items of basic survival such as grains and luxury goods such as brocade. The restriction of trade into Mongol territories by the Jin and Xia dynasties is considered to be one of the impetuses for Mongol expansion into China. As Barfield has noted, conflicts between China and the nomads in Mongolia were rarely driven by disputes over frontier pasturelands, however. Far more significant to the nomads was the wealth of China that lay beyond the walls and was the source for cloth, metals, and grain. Nomadic peoples sought access to border markets where they could trade pastoral products for such goods, but if denied, they turned to raiding the frontier for these same products as well as captives who were often transported to the north to serve as farmers.¹³²

The attacks on the Khwārazm Empire eliminated such a denial and a barrier to westward trade. The processes of imperiogenesis described above with relation to the Saljuq Empire were repeated in the expansion of the Mongol Empire. (Cf. Part Two:1-IV-A). The scale was much grander as the Mongols, over the course of four decades, devoured and devastated the massive agrarian empires to their south and west. The alliance with the Nizari polity made sense as the Mongols dismantled the domain of the Khwārazmshāh. As the Mongol presence in the region increased from expeditionary to occupying forces, the previous arrangements became superfluous and the ally turned into an impediment which needed to be removed.

Qaṣīda 79 from the *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyāt* quoted above in which the Nizari imam-qā'im ordered Chingiz Khān to be in friendship continues that Chingiz did so and was kind and generous to the people. Then he turned away and demanded that the imam go to him in submission. The

¹³² Thomas J. Barfield, "Nomadic Pastoralism in Mongolia and Beyond," in *Mapping Mongolia: Situating Mongolia in the World From Geologic Time to the Present*, ed. Paula L.W. Sabloff University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). Thomas J. Barfield p. 107

fidā'īs became aware of this and rose up to respond—the poet recorded a severing of the alliance.¹³³ The last Khwārazmshāh, Jalāl al-Dīn was killed in flight and his empire was ended in 1231/628. As already mentioned in 1232-3/630, the Mongols captured Nishāpurī and Ṭus. One of the prisoners from this campaign was Juwaynī's father Bahā' al-Dīn. He was appointed *ṣāhib dīwān* (minister of finance) under three Mongol governors of Khurāsān and received a *pāiza* (tablet of authority) and a *yarlīgh* (royal decree) from the Great Khan, Ögedei in 1235-6/633 which affirmed him this position. Bahā' al-Dīn acted as the viceroy of Arghūn Aqā who was the overlord of Mongol territories in the west. (Cf. Part One:3-III-A). Bahā' al-Dīn's son's antipathy to the Ismailis and the Nizari polity, in particular, has been an analytical thread in this research which is incontestable. How likely is it that the father did not espouse the same attitudes? Was the administration of Mongol relations in Khwārazm actively working against an early ally of Chingiz Khān?

After the death of Chingiz Khān in 1227/624, his son and successor Ögedei (r. 1229-1241/626-639) appointed his father's *qorchī* (quiver bearer) Chormaqaṇ (d. ca 1242/639) as military governor in Iran. Chormaqaṇ *Qorchī's* army consisted of three *tümān* (3 x 10,000) designated as *tamā* (garrison, army of occupation) and was responsible for the consolidation of Khwārazm.¹³⁴ He overran Kirmān, Fārs and also conquered Isfahan in 1235-36/633.¹³⁵ He essentially consolidated Mongol conquests in Iran and Āzarbāyjān which would form the core of the Ilkhanid Empire. However, he did not confront the Nizari polity, so it would appear that the alliance still held.¹³⁶ When he was incapacitated due to illness, his deputy Bāyjū Noyān was

¹³³ Qaṣīda 78 Verses 2284-2286 Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā'imīyyāt*. pp 211-213; Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā'imīyyāt-Tajik*. pp 340-342.

¹³⁴ Juwaynī. *Jahān-gushā*. vol 1. pp 149-150; Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jamī'u't-Tawarikh-Tr.* pp 313ff; although on p. 41 JT states he was assigned four *tümāns*

¹³⁵ John E. Woods, "A Note on the Mongol Capture of Iṣfahān," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 36 (1977).

¹³⁶ Jūzjānī. *Ṭabaqāt-Tr.* 313; Lewis. *Assassins.*, 90; C. Edmund Bosworth, "The Isma'īlis of Quhistan and the Maliks of Nimruz or Sistan", in Daftary. *MIHT*. p. 224.

appointed in his stead as commander of the Mongol armies in Northwestern Iran and Iraq. Bāyjū's forces defeated the Saljuqs of Rūm at the battle of Kösedagh in June 1243/*Muḥarram* 641 and expanded Mongol territories into Syria.¹³⁷ As the Mongol overlord in Iran, his forces did not attack the Nizaris and the alliance persisted.

The *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyāt* indicates that the alliance was starting to fall apart, however. It mentions that the first Khān was Chingiz and he was on good terms with the Nizaris; his flag flew high and victories accumulated to him. When he turned to confrontation with the truthful faction (*tā'ifa-yi ḥaqq*) within a year his glories were lost and he was ruined by the rage of anger of the Lords of the Qiyāma (*Khudāīgān-i Qiyāmat*) and his realm came to the Qā'ān (Ögedei Khān also referred to as Chingiz-i Thānī meaning the second Chingiz) who deputised his brother Chaghataī ...¹³⁸ This is anachronistic since Chaghataī (r. 1226-1242/626-639) became ruler in 1226/623 of his *ulus* (patrimony, one of the four *uluses* or divisions of the Mongol Empire distributed among the four sons of Chingiz Khān) that is a year before Chingiz Khān's death and three years before Ögedei assumed the throne. A second *qaṣīda* allows actual identification of the Chaghataī mentioned in the *Dīwān* as Chaghataī *Qorchī*, a leading commander under Chormaqan and Bāyjū, who was sent on campaigns in the Caucasus regions. *Qaṣīda* 133 gives an account of the threat of attack against the Nizaris by Chaghtaī *Qorchī* and of his assassination.

Tell the story of the killing of Chaghataī
 Who was the sign of despotism and the image of hatred
 He was boastful of his own strength that in the world
 'I will conquer a thousand well-fortified fortresses
 I do not fear the wound of the dagger and will not yield
 An iota of deference to the holy warriors (*mujāhidān*) of the world
 Ḥusām al-Dīn Ḥasan b. Ali the courageous (*jawānmardī*)
 Who was the sign of benevolence in that world and this

¹³⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh, *Jamī' u't-Tawarikh*-Tr. p. 42

¹³⁸ *Qaṣīda* 49 Verse 1489ff; Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātīb. *Qā'imīyyāt*. pp 150-152; Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātīb. *Qā'imīyyāt-Tajik*. pp 282-285

He rose up in the spirit of faith to destroy him (Chaghata'ī)
With perfect resolve, true purpose and weighty counsel
He saw his prey amid that blackness ...

Four other amīrs agreed with him
they ran to the throne—the throne of God ...¹³⁹

Rashid al-Din recorded this killing in a short sentence that “Chaghatai Qorchi of the Arulat tribe, a relative of Borghochin Noyan; he was stabbed by miscreants.”¹⁴⁰ Timothy May wrote that this assassination of Chaghata'ī was a turning point in the Nizari-Mongol relations—“their amiable relationship ended sometime after 1243. The event that triggered the conflict was the assassination of Chaghata'ī Qorchi, one [of] Baiju's lieutenants.”¹⁴¹ Chaghata'ī Qorchi was killed in Armenia after 1240/638 though the exact date of the assassination is not given in the sources. While the Nizaris ranged far and wide in their operations, this killing of a Mongol commander in Armenia, by itself, does not seem to be sufficient evidence of its pivotal importance in their relations—the *qaṣīda* might suggest otherwise. According to Bayarsaikh Khan Dashdondog, Hūlāgū received assistance from the Armenian lords for his campaign against the Nizaris. He wrote that “in 1256, David VII Ulu, the King of Georgia (r. 1247–1270) with Armenian and Georgian auxiliaries took part in the Mongol conquest of Alamut.” If the Nizaris were actually responsible for the assassination of Chaghata'ī Qorchi, this would illustrate both the depth of intelligence and anticipatory action of such an act. If they possessed such sophisticated understandings of Mongol intentions so as to attempt to thwart the cultivation of alliances against their polity, why did the Nizaris not carry out more attacks against the Mongol high command, *pace* William of Rubruck for his fanciful anecdote of four-hundred

¹³⁹ *Qaṣīda* 133 Verse 4003-4012; Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā'imīyyāt*. pp 350-352; Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib. *Qā'imīyyāt-Tajik*. pp 465-467

¹⁴⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jamī' u't-Tawarikh*-Tr. p. 42

¹⁴¹ Timothy May, “The Mechanics of Conquest and Governance: The Rise and Expansion of the Mongol Empire 1185-1265,” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004). p. 342

assassins to kill Mangū Qā'ān.¹⁴² The plausibility of such coordinations is questionable. However, it is accurate to state that by the early 1240s/late 630s, the Nizari-Mongol relations were in a serious decline. By this time the Mongols had already established their presence and reach throughout Iran and further west into Syria and Anatolia. What benefit did the Nizaris hold for them now?

According to Daftary, under Ögedei, as the Mongols redoubled their efforts to consolidate their hold on Iran, the Nizaris lost Dāmaghān to them and since

‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad III had by now decided to resist the Mongols, in 1238[/625] he despatched an embassy, in cooperation with the ‘Abbāsīd caliph al-Mustaṣṣir (623–640/1226–1242), to the kings of France and England to seek an alliance between Muslims and Christians against the Mongols. Matthew Paris, as noted earlier, relates the dealings of this embassy in Europe, particularly at the English court of Henry III. The mission failed however to have any results, since the Christian monarchs of Europe were soon attempting to ally themselves with the Mongols against all Muslims.¹⁴³

The chasm widened with the enthronement of Güyük Qā'ān b. Ögedei (r. 1246-1248/644-646). The envoys from the imam ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad at Alamut, and the *muḥtashams* of Quhistān, Shihāb al-Dīn and Shams al-Dīn were harshly rebuffed by the new Great Khān at the *qūriltāi* (council of notables) held in 1246/644 to enthrone him.¹⁴⁴ Rashid al-Dīn reported that Güyük “ordered a reply written in the harshest of terms to a letter the emissaries from Alamut had brought.”¹⁴⁵ He designated Chingiz Khān’s nephew Eljigidāi to displace Bāyjū in command of Mongol forces in Iran and the west. He ordered that Eljigidāi’s armies were to consist of two out ten Tajik (Iranian vs Turkic or Mongol) soldiers to subdue all areas in rebellion beginning with the “heretics” (sic), namely the Nizaris. Güyük, himself, was to follow shortly;¹⁴⁶ however,

¹⁴² Willem van Ruysbroeck. *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253-1255*, Edited by and David Morgan Peter Jackson. Translated by Peter Jackson. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990). p. 222; Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 389;

¹⁴³ *Ismailis, Ismailis* pp 388

¹⁴⁴ Juwaynī. *Jahān-gushā*. vol I pp 205, 213; HWC. pp 250, 258;

¹⁴⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jamī‘u’t-Tawarikh-Tr.* p. 392

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid* p. 394

he died in 1248/646 near Samarqand as he was heading to confront his cousin Batu b. Jochi b. Chingiz Khān.

After the Tuluid and Juchids overthrew their Ögedeid cousins and when Mangū Qā'ān (r. 1251-1259/649-647) was enthroned, he reinstated Bāyjū in command of the forces in Iran who “after he arrived here he sent a messenger to complain of the Heretics (sic) and the Caliph of Baghdad.” The nature and content of the complaints against the Nizaris is not known; however, they were amplified by those of the Qāḍī Shams al-Dīn of Qazwīn who appeared in the presence of the Great Khān wearing chainmail. Rashid al-Din reported that the qāḍī said “‘I always have to wear this chain mail beneath my clothing in fear of the Heretics (sic).’ He then reported something of their hegemony and domination.”¹⁴⁷ Mangū Qā'ān assigned immense

amount of military forces under his brother, Hūlāgū's command and ordered him to go with a large army and innumerable force from the borders of Turan to the country of Iran. From Turan pass strutting into Iran and raise your name to the shining sun. Observe Genghis Khan's customs and *yosun* and *yasa* in all matters large and small. From the River Oxus to the farthest reaches of the land of Egypt, treat kindly and affectionately and reward sufficiently whoever obeys and submits to your orders. Grind beneath the feet of your wrath those who resist, along with their wives, children, and kith and kin. Begin with Quhistan and Khurasan, and destroy the fortresses and castles. Rip up Gird Koh and Lambasar fortress and turn them upside down. Neither let any bastion remain in the world nor leave a pile of dust standing. When you are finished there, head for Persia and eliminate the Lurs and Kurds who constantly practice brigandage a long the highways.¹⁴⁸

The orders were given to wipe out an old ally and remove other polities—the Lurs, Kurds and the ‘Abbāsids—similarly in the way so that in the newly acquired Mongol domains, so traders could ply the highways without impediment.

D. There is no Dark Side of the Moon

While Hūlāgū's massive army made its way west capturing and consolidating territories along the way, according to the chronicles, the imam ‘Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 1221-1255/618-653)

¹⁴⁷ Ibid p. 478

¹⁴⁸ *Jami' u' t-Tawarikh-Tr* p. 479

was losing control of his faculties and the loyalties of the Nizari leadership. His eldest son Rukn al-Dīn who had fallen out of his father's favour sought to build a coalition of support. Rashid al-Din reported that he said

“The Mongol armies intend to attack this state as a result of the actions, affairs and words of my father! My father does not care! I will distance myself from him and send emissaries to his majesty the Emperor of the face of the world and to the servants of his court; and will agree to submission and allegiance. After this, I will not allow anyone to do any corrupt act such that the realm and people will survive.” For these reasons and claims, most of the notables and leaders of the military gave allegiance to him and forged an agreement on the condition that where ever he went they would accompany him and would not contend or remonstrate with the forces and followers of his father and would not raise a hand against him or strike him with anything.¹⁴⁹

While he was with his flocks in the pastures on Shirkūh, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn was attacked and killed in his sleep—an Indian and a Turk who slept along with him, each was also wounded; afterwards the Turk died from the wound. This took place at the end of *Shawwāl* 653/early December 1255. Several people were killed on the accusations of complicity of the murders. Everyone was suspected; however, after a week

it became known that Ḥasan Māzandarānī, who was the elect among the elite of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn and was attendant upon him day and night and custodian of his secrets, had killed him. Although this act was by order of Rukn al-Dīn, after one week he killed the aforementioned and burnt his body. They also burnt a son and two young daughters of his.¹⁵⁰

The report continued that Ḥasan Māzandarānī

took this action on the orders of Rukn al-Dīn, because when this act became public Rukn al-Dīn did not question or investigate the premise. He sent him (Ḥasan) to the royal flock to look again and with diligence. He sent someone trustworthy after him such that at the edge of the pasture he was struck in the neck with an axe and killed. Based on this indication they became certain that murder of his father by Ḥasan had been in connivance and conspiracy. He was afraid that if he explored and investigated [the event], Ḥasan would publicise his secrets.¹⁵¹

He sent an emissary to Yasūr Noyān in Hamadan to inform him that

rulership has come to me “and I would like to take the path of allegiance and submission” and he would cleanse the turbid vapours of enmity from the face of fidelity.

Yasūr Noyān replied: “The arrival of the armies of the World Prince Hūlāgū is near. It would be prudent for you yourself to come out hasten to his presence!”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ JT. p. 183

¹⁵⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jamī‘u’t-Tawarikh-Tr.* p. 184

¹⁵¹ Ibid. p. 184

¹⁵² Ibid. p. 184

Very shortly afterwards, the Mongol forces appeared in the Rūbār and skirmished with the Nizaris. Ambassadors went back and forth between *noyāns* (commanders) who led the advance parties and the Nizari fortresses. Rukn al-Dīn sent his brothers and sons to Hūlāgū's *ordū* (encampment) in submission and as signs of goodwill. While these overtures were accepted, the demand to present himself before the "World-king" and to destroy his fortresses was constant. The Mongol armies closed in, destroyed crops and established a siege around Maymūn Diz, the fortress where Rukn al-Dīn held court. Hūlāgū's forces also arrived and intensified the pressure on the Nizaris. Rukn al-Dīn sought leave of a year to present himself before the Mongol Prince; however, that was not to be permitted. With the coming and going of ambassadors and threats and encouragement, on

Sunday 29 *Shawwāl*/26 November 1256, he himself came in submission to the World King and he received the good fortune of standing at the portico with Khwāja Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī and a group of leaders, notables and the treasures that he had as offering to the King. Although they were not as magnificent as their fame, whatever there was they brought out. Most of this the King distributed to his troops. All the people and affiliates from Maymūn Diz were brought down and that castle was liberated without battle and so with other of his castles.¹⁵³

Rukn al-Dīn was well received and was encouraged to instruct the castellans of fortresses such as Alamut, Girdkūh and Lamasar to also to destroy their battlements and to descend in submission. The commander of Alamut capitulated when Hūlāgū's army reached the fortress; however, Girdkūh and Lamasar held out.

He was well treated by Hūlāgū and his soldiers were divided up among the Mongol commanders. He married a Mongol woman and was given 100 bactrian camels by Hūlāgū because he took interest in them for fighting. He accompanied the Mongol prince to his *ordū* near Hamadan and then asked to be allowed to go to Mangū Qā'ān. He journeyed to Mongolia

¹⁵³ Ibid. p. 190

with emissaries and guardians and on his way was to order the Nizaris at Girdkūh to descend.

He gave the order without success. Rashid al-Din recounted that when he

reached Qarāqūm, Mangū Qāʾān declared “It was unnecessary to bring him on so long a journey. Our ancient yāsā is well known.” He sent him an order that: “Since you claim fealty (*īlī*) why is it that you have not dismantled some castles such as Girdkūh and Lamasar? Now go back and when you have destroyed those castles then you will have the honour of presenting your gifts (*tikishmīshī*).”¹⁵⁴ With this hope he was turned back.¹⁵⁵

On the way back as they reached the Khangai Mountains he was killed. Back in Iran the Nizaris were massacred and they gave “two or three of them to Bulgāi [Khātūn] to exact retribution of the murder of her father Chagatāʾī who had been stabbed by the *fidāʾīs* and killed.” (CF. Part Two:3-III-C). In Quhistān, 12000 Ismailis were killed; elsewhere, wherever they were found, they were killed. Within a year of Rukn al-Dīn’s alleged parricide, he had capitulated to the Mongols and few months later he and many of his followers were put to the sword. The account of the Nizari Ismailis in the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* concludes:

When this house had fallen, one year later the ‘Abbāsīd house also fell. Together it was as if they were related and always rivals and enemies.

Which polity is there that does not come to an end and fall? Which summit of life is there that does not end in its nadir? Which blessed mountain does not descend into submission and extinction. “This is a reminder to those who remember” (Q11:114).

This is that which this feeble one has read in the books of the ancients and heard reported in the words of esteemed and trustworthy narrators. Responsibility remains with the narrator.

The history of the Ismailis and Nizaris is finished composed by great master, the just sultan of *wazīrs* in the world, Rashīd al-Ḥaqq waʾl-Duniyā waʾl-Dīn ʾImād al-Islam waʾl-Muslimīn (the Rightly Guided of Truth and the World and Faith, Pillar of Islam and the Muslims); God glorify those who help his realm, with the aid of God, cherished is His Name at the end of *Jumādāʾl-ākhira* 714/19 October, 1314 in the writing of al-ʿAbd al-Nakābī al-Hāfiẓ, praise to his Guardian, and prayers and peace upon Prophet Muḥammad and all his family—the good and virtuous.¹⁵⁶

This summary of the account of Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, the last ruler of the Nizari Ismaili polity in Iran, raises several questions. The parricide was reported in a matter of fact manner without recourse to literary devices where the author-historian would absolve himself from the responsibility of the report and attribute responsibility to the narrator. Does this imply that

¹⁵⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *The Successors of Genghis Khan*. p. 340

¹⁵⁵ JT. p. 194

¹⁵⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh. *Jamiʿuʾt-Tawarikh-Tr.* p. 195

the account of the last ruler of the polity was compiled by a non-Nizari Ismaili—the “feeble one” in the above quote? A Nizari would be confronted with issues of reporting the killing of an imam—which would amount to treason, regicide, irreligion and rebellion against God. (Cf. Part One:4-I-A). Al-‘Abd al-Nakābī al-Hāfiẓ was clearly the scribe who wrote the text and not the “feeble one” who might be identified with the composer, Rashid al-Din, mentioned in the last paragraph. The account then was composed based on “esteemed and trustworthy narrators”, namely eye witnesses, perhaps, such as Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī or the *wazīr*’s own family members who had been at the Nizari court.

Second, given that the Nizaris had withstood long and hard sieges by the Saljuqs over a century and a half of warfare, why did Rukn al-Dīn capitulate without putting up a fight against the Mongols and what was the purpose of the extensive diplomatic exchanges? Various explanations have been put forward which focus on the young imam’s inexperience and fear of the Mongols.¹⁵⁷ Daftary suggested that in its decision to surrender,

the central Nizārī leadership seems to have been greatly influenced by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and perhaps other outside scholars then living amongst the Nizārīs—scholars who, having enjoyed the hospitality of the Nizārīs, were now eager to taste the munificence of the Mongols, which they did upon dissociating themselves from the last lord of Alamūt and entering into the service of the Īlkhānid dynasty of Persia founded by Hülegü (654–663/1256–1265).¹⁵⁸

These factors may have played a role in Rukn al-Dīn’s surrender; however, evidence can be assembled in a different direction. While Rukn al-Dīn was inexperienced, he relied on a cadre of leaders in the *da‘wa*—including those asserted to have guided him incorrectly—his inexperience would have been ameliorated by that of those around him. The Mongol tactic of using destruction and devastation in one place to terrorise other enemies in their path into capitulation would have been known to them because the Nizaris used the same tactic in spreading the fear of assassinations. In their castles, the Nizaris had experienced and

¹⁵⁷ Hodgson. *OA*. pp 259-262

¹⁵⁸ Daftary. *Ismailis*. p. 398

withstood the same nature of attacks by the Saljuqs for many decades. In the skirmishes with the advance forces, the Nizaris managed to hold their own ground and in a few instances even pushed the Mongol armies back. The third strand of explanation that the grandees and outside scholars wanted to try the Mongol hospitality is unlikely for two reasons. First, many of the “refugees” were with the Nizaris precisely because of Chingiz Khān's invasion and the Mongol activities in the East and would be unlikely to fall into their arms. Second, according to the Mongol *yāsā* any betrayal of a lord would be punishable even if such traitors brought benefit to the Mongols.¹⁵⁹ The chronicles record that Ṭūsī, a trusted emissary and others later claimed to have been kept captive by the Nizaris—this would have been viable only after Rukn al-Dīn fell out of favour and was dispensed with. Until then all those who descended from the fortresses would logically have been treated as Rukn al-Dīn's retinue and would have been treated as his subordinates. To claim captivity once Rukn al-Dīn was gone would have been a path to survival. So what was Rukn al-Dīn's role?

He initiated contacts with the Mongol high command in Iran on coming to power and while he prevaricated in the diplomatic exchanges, this may have been to buy time to build up his forces or rather to safeguard his people and materiel. Rashid al-Dīn wrote that after Rukn al-Dīn sent his brother to Hūlāgū's *ordū* in submission, *Jumādā'l-ākhira* 653/July 1256 the prince sent a *yarligh* (royal mandate)

of conciliation and benevolence that “Since you have sent your brother and have shown the fidelity of allegiance and submission and continue to do so, the crimes of your father ‘we forgive.’” As Rukn al-Dīn himself, in the time that he had been in his father's position had not committed any crimes, now he should destroy and come in submission. The armies will not devastate his territories if he shows obedience and sincerity. Rukn al-Dīn destroyed some parts of the castle and removed the gates of Alamut, Humāyūn Castle (Maymūn Diz) and Lamasar; and destroyed some battlements (*sar dīwār-hā*) and turrets (*kungurah-hā*).¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Anonymous. *Secret History*.

¹⁶⁰ JT. pp 186-187

When the imam himself capitulated, he was treated as a noble by the Mongol prince, he asked leave to go to the court of the Qāʾān. From this, is it more likely that since he was well received when he surrendered that Rukn al-Dīn and his advisors thought that the alliance with the Mongols could be repaired? All the efforts on the Nizari side seem to have been to protect the high standing of the imam independently and then in relation to the overwhelming Mongol forces, Rukn al-Dīn endeavoured to attain a favoured status.

Third, why did the Mongols relentlessly pursue the defeat and destruction of the Nizaris? The decline of Nizari-Mongol relations have only just begun to be explored. The Ilkhanid chronicles have suggested that the complaints of the Sunni *qāḍī* of Qazwīn brought to Güyük's attention that something had to be done.¹⁶¹ William of Rubruk reported that at the *qūriltāi* to enthrone Güyük, the Nizaris had sent four hundred assassins—clearly an exaggeration.¹⁶² The complaints of the *qāḍī* on their own are unlikely to have roused the Mongols to send their largest ever expeditionary force to destroy the Nizaris. In the previous section the assassination of Chagatāʾī *noyān* has been suggested as a cause of decline of the Nizari-Mongol alliance. (Cf. Part Two:3-III-C). The import of this killing is notable in that when the Nizaris were being massacred, the *noyān*'s daughter Bulgāi Khātūn was given two or three Nizaris to exact retribution of the murder of her father; however, this was a subsidiary event. The chronicles do not tell of any Nizari leaders killed by the daughter for her father's murder and these killings were only allowed when the fate of all the Nizaris was sealed. I have suggested that the Nizari-Mongol alliance was based on trade relations. Chingiz Khan's invasion of the Islamicate domains was launched because of the killing of his traders and possibly an envoy at Uṭrār. Further that the Nizari military installations straddled three important trade routes in

¹⁶¹ *Ismailis*. p. 388; *Ṭabaqāt*. pp 181-182 tr. pp 1189-1197

¹⁶² *Ibid*. pp 15 and 388; *Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*. pp 128 and 222

northern Iran and therefore a principal part of the alliance was the Nizari protection of Mongol trade. As the expeditionary forces in Iran were replaced by a Mongol occupation force, the Nizaris became an obstacle and had to be eliminated.

So what was 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad's crime that Güyük and Mangū ordered the destruction of the Nizaris? Is it possible that the Mongol reaction was to the Nizari betrayal of the Nizari-Mongol alliance? Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan had formed alliances with the 'Abbāsids and their vassals and similarly his son 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad maintained a tributary relationship with the Khwārazmshāhs. Ironically, the Nizari double-dealing was caught out when their agent sent by an ambassador accompanying Nasawī on his return from Alamut was intercepted by the Khwārazmian amīr Sharaf al-Mulk. The coordinates of the Khwārazmshāh never made it to the Mongol high command and the Nizaris were suspected of a double-cross. This notion of a Nizari alliance with the Khwārazmshāhs, sworn enemies of the Mongols was an unforgivable crime which may have prompted Mangū Qā'ān to order Hūlāgū's westward march. While in the field, Hūlāgū was willing to accept Rukn al-Dīn's fealty since the Khwārazmshāhs were no longer a factor; however, the Qā'ān could not countenance a former ally whose commanders remained in rebellion. The Mongols saw no value in restoring the alliance since their own forces now occupied the territories the Nizaris might have secured for them.

The Sunni historians who also were officials of the court, endeavoured to construct the Mongols within monotheistic and even in Islamicate frameworks. In common with pre-Mongol historiography, they conceived the primary cause of discord and instability in society to be heresy. The Ismailis were, once again, construed as such a heretical group and threat to society. Writing about the destruction of the Nizari fortresses, Juwayni declared:

Now to every fortune there is a limit and to every cause a term, which has been fixed by God Almighty in His perfect knowledge and power at the beginning of time, and until the appointed

hour is come abundant strength and gear and equipment will accomplish nothing. And the proof of this is that the conquest of these castles and the destruction thereof was dependent on the rising of the fortune of the World-Emperor Mengü Qa'an and was executed by the power, majesty and action of his brother, the World-King Hülegü, who in one week utterly and finally overthrew the whole of their abodes and dwelling places, and they became like [those cities which] 'We turned upside down', as shall be hereinafter described.¹⁶³

Symbolised in the Qur'anic quote and referencing the ending of the Persianate narrative of Mazdak,¹⁶⁴ for Juwayni, the agency of Hülāgū's forces turned the Nizaris from highest to the lowest in accord with the Providential decree. Not only had the limited term of fortune of the Nizari polity ran out, but the Mongols were more powerful than the Saljuqs because Hülāgū took down the polity in one week where the Saljuqs had no such success at all. Implicitly also, the Mongols had their own limited term of fortune that was ticking away.

When the orders were given according to the *yāsā*, the Nizaris—both the satrists and the *zuhūrists*—were annihilated. The imam and his community were sent into the mercy of God. The Nizari line of imams and their followers were once again forced to go into *satr*. In the fifteenth century, the *dā'ī*-author Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm Quhistānī wrote that at the time of the Great Qiyāmat (*Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt*), when there will be complete manifestation (*kashf-i kullī*) and the veil will be lifted from both the *zāhir* and *bāṭin*, in the eyes of men, neither the *hujjat* will be manifested, nor any other (dignitaries), and the existence of all of them (will be merged in) our Lord the *Qā'im-i Qiyāmat*, just as it was at the time of the Lord 'Alā dhikri-hi's-salām.¹⁶⁵

For now as the sun once again was eclipsed by the moon, it was manifest that there is no dark side of the moon—it is all dark. The future moment, as the later Nizari *dā'ī*-author wrote, will be more glorious than anything in the past; however, the manifestation of the imam after seventy years of *satr* and the event of the *Qiyāma* were sublime.

¹⁶³ TJG. pp 212-213; HWC. p. 681

¹⁶⁴ Niẓām al-Mulk. *Book of Government*. p. 237

¹⁶⁵ Quhistānī, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm. *Haft Bāb, or, Seven Chapters*, Translated by Wladimir Ivanow. Bombay: The Ismaili Society, 1959. p. 44

Epilogue

In the foregoing chapters I have laid out new approaches to the study of the *Qiyāma* and the Nizari Polity in Iran. In Part One, the Archaeology of Sources, I outlined and demonstrated methodologies and tools to re-read the Persian and Arabic historical writing about the Ismailis and the fragments of Nizari *da'wa* texts embedded in them. The Ilkhanid era dynastic chronicles of Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and Qashani preserve the earliest most complete accounts of the Nizari polity in Iran. They were written in the 13-14th/7-8th century genre of *ta'rikh* while their information was derived from Ismaili *da'wa* literature which did not employ the *ta'rikh* frameworks. The *akhbār* in Ismaili writing conform more to the *sīra* and *manāqib* genres of Islamicate literature since the Ismailis did not write history *qua* history in the *ta'rikh* genre. The Sunni author-historians immersed or even caged in collective memory rehearsed and perpetuated inherited prejudices and antipathies towards the Ismailis whom they construed as heretics. It is essential that the influences of their epistemology their historical writing should be taken into account. The interpretation of past actuality in the sources of these sources then requires the double narrative analyses methodologies I demonstrated.

In this process I placed the historical writing about and by the Ismailis within the matrix of Islamicate historiography and proposed that the (re)-emergence of Persian historical writing and cultural efflorescence has to be attributed to the reception by the readerly classes and the wider populace and not to the legitimacy projects of rulers and their scribes for hire.

In examining Shahrastānī's account of the Nizaris in his *K. al-milal wa-'l-niḥal* (*The Book of Religious Communities and Sects*) I showed that the entire work's organising principle followed the famous *ḥadīth* of the seventy-two erring sects and the one saved one within the *Ummah* of Muḥammad. In the structure of the text, Shahrastānī located the Nizaris at the apex and

culmination of the seventy-three interpretations of Islam—perhaps revealing his true religious affiliations. I also examined the lives and works of the three Ilkhanid chroniclers and proposed a revision to the biography of Rashid al-Din. He was most likely born in a Nizari fortress and his early formative years were spent among the Nizaris who gave his family refuge. This explains why the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* is fairer in treatment of the Ismailis.

I demonstrated digital humanities methodologies to analyse the nature, tendencies and bias in the Ilkhanid accounts. The techniques of narrative and lexical analyses enhance the possibilities of discourse analyses by examining the textual infrastructure at the usage level. I showed that the Ilkhanid chronicles used terms such as *qatala-kushtan* (to kill) far more frequently in their accounts of the Nizari Ismailis than found in a very large corpus of comparable historical writing. Fifty percent of the account of the reign of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ was focussed on warfare tied to related doctrinal elaboration and religious disputation. These methodologies open new doors to philology and textual analyses in the twenty-first century.

I examined three Ilkhanid chroniclers at the content and discourse levels and through comparisons established the stemmatic “genealogies of texts”. I showed that Juwayni and Rashid al-Din became paradigms for later histories and in the 15th/9th century Mīrkhwand’s chronicle reconstrued Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s biography and the account of the Nizaris and this too became a third paradigm for later histories into the modern period. Finally I used these approaches developed in Part One in five case studies and added new and original findings about the life, career and reign of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ.

In Part Two, Reconstruction of Alamut, I proposed that the Fatimids espoused what I call the “Eastern Policy” to win over the Ismaili movements in Iran to their cause and that the resultant pincer which would have encircled the Saljuq-‘Abbāsīd realm collapsed with the Nizāri-Musta‘lian schism. The Ismailis in Iran remained loyal to Nizār since their upper echelons of the *da‘wa* understood him to be the *walī al-‘ahd* (designated heir) to the Fatimid caliphate and the holder of the *naṣṣ* (designation) to the Ismaili imamate. The deathbed designation proclaimed by the *wazīr* al-Afḍal was seen by them to be illegitimate and the *da‘wa* remained loyal to the line of imams descended from Nizār who were believed to be in *satr* (concealment).

I examined the Nizari Ismaili core doctrines of *naṣṣ* and *ta‘līm* and illustrated how the concept of *naṣṣ* elaborated and developed over time to constrain succession to the imamate to specifically designated descendants of ‘Alī, Ḥusayn, and Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq by the 12th/6th century was most potent in the Nizari-Musta‘lian discourse of legitimacy. The theory of immutability of the *naṣṣ* remained a constant in the disputations of legitimacy of imamate.

In the debates between the Nizari *dā‘īs* and their Sunni interlocutors I used the newly edited *Rāh-i ma‘rifat* (*Path to Knowledge of God*) and *Nāma bi ‘ulamā’-yi Qazwīn* (*A Letter to the ‘Ulamā’ of Qazwīn*) to demonstrate how the Nizaris argued that Truth resided in the *ta‘līm* of the *mu‘allim-i ṣādiq* (the Truthful teacher) rather than in the divergent speculative reasoning (*naẓar*) of the ‘ulamā’. I demonstrated that this debate is rooted in the legitimacy of post-prophetic authority and Shi‘i notions of anthropology and soteriology that the human is not able to attain gnosis through the intellect (*‘aql*) and speculative reasoning (*naẓar*) alone. The intellect is indispensable but without the *ta‘līm* (authoritative teaching) of the *mu‘allim-i ṣādiq* (the truthful

teacher) true knowledge of God is not possible. Nizari eschatology insisted on Divine sovereignty and continuous guidance since revelation was seen as, in part, between the covers of the Book and, in part, in the teaching of the one who safeguards the revelation.

Within the Nizari communities, I unearthed factionalism between groups I call the *satrists* and the *zuhūrists*. These groups agitated on behalf the Nizari Ismaili imam cloaked in *taqiyya* (dissimulation) and *satr* (concealment) versus those who advocated the manifestation of a salvific figure in addition to the religio-political rule of the *dā'īs* of Alamut. The *zuhūrists* urgently sought this manifestation of the Qā'im (Resurrector). The *Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw* which I date to just before the declaration of the *Qiyāma* illustrates the thrust of the *zuhūrists* as they sought the manifestation of the imam.

The Nizari eschatological and soteriological doctrines associated with the *Qiyāma* did not conform to the apocalyptic notion of the *Qiyāma* in the Qur'an rather the declaration at Alamut brought about socio-political and religious reconfigurations of society, and possibly, an attempt to establish a caliphate. The *zuhūrist* victory in the declaration of the *Qiyāmat-i Qiyāmāt* was short-lived since Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām was assassinated two years later and his grandson Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan adopted Sunni Islam. The counter-revolution to the path laid out by Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ continued as the doctrines of the *Qiyāma* were elaborated. Ḥasan-i Šalāḥ Munshī's *Haft bāb* and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Rawḍat-i taslīm* and other such works were written in the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn and his son 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad and may have paved the way for a reintroduction of the teachings of the *Qiyāma*.

During this timeframe, after a century and a half of relations and struggle with the Saljuqs, the

Nizaris were faced with another imperial force with nomadic roots. Jalāl al-Dīn had been the first Muslim ruler west of the Āmū Daryā to ally himself with Chingiz Khān. Over the next three decades the alliance gradually soured. I postulated that one of the purposes of the alliance was that the Nizaris could secure trade routes for the Mongols. As they replaced their expeditionary forces with armies of occupation, the Mongols could dispense with an unreliable ally. I postulated that the last ruler of the Nizari polity in Iran capitulated without a fight because there was hope for a restoration of the alliance. Several explanations for the collapse of the Nizari-Mongol alliance have been suggested. While Hūlāgū was willing to forgive Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh for any transgressions, Mangū Qā'ān did not yield. Rukn al-Dīn's father's "crime" I proposed may have been that of betrayal. While allied with the Mongols, the Nizaris had formed relations with the Khwarazmshāhs and had become their tributary vassals. This may have been the cause of Mongol displeasure that ultimately resulted in the destruction of the Nizari polity in Iran.

The confessional ambiguities of the age before and at times during the Saljuq era were refracted into ever more definite boundaries where the Ismailis were placed beyond the pale. Their struggle to redraw the map was wiped away along with the power of their opponents when Hūlāgū's armies appeared. Henceforth Shi'i political power shifted towards Ithnā'asharī Shi'ism culminating in the establishment of the Safawid dynasty in 1501/907. The heightened 'Alid loyalism and rise of numerous messianic movements from the 15th/10th century on throughout the Persianate Islamicate regions were, in part, rooted in and reflected Nizari Ismaili notions of post-prophetic authority and their proclamation of the *Qiyāmat-i qiyāmāt*.

Dawr-i satr wa Dawr-i kashf

The news of the death of Nizār b. al-Mustanşir in 1095/488 must have been traumatic for the Ismaili leadership in Iran. While he was alive, the decision to accept him as imam-caliph was in accord with Ismaili theories of imamate. When they received news of his brutal killing and the possibility that his descendants may also have suffered a similar fate; however, the hope of restoring the imamate to the one they considered legitimate must have turned to despair. What was going through Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's head? What was conveyed to the *da'wa* leadership? What, in turn, was told to the Ismailis around Iran? There is no information about how this crisis was faced. The *hudūd-i dīn* was decapitated and according to long-standing Shi'i theory the world could not exist without the imam. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's creation of the castellan polity centred on Alamut was a blessing and a curse. The blessing was that the fortresses provided abodes of emigration (*ādwār al-hijra*) and the successes in establishing these sanctuaries allowed the establishment of an alternate socio-political order of the rebellion. It is this very confidence and rebellion that brought about the onslaught of the Saljuq forces, over and over again. This also forced Ismailis who had persisted in the state of *taqiyya* (dissimulation) to precipitate out of their societies when they reached certain critical mass and thus made them targets for persecution and attack. The dedication of the *fidā'is* meant that the Ismailis could counter the might of Saljuq military power with the precision of asymmetric warfare. Their targeted killings projected power beyond their means of military capacity and the fear they incited invited retaliations of massacres and mass murder. Strictly adhering to the *sharī'a*, the Ismailis were counted as heretics and beyond the pale. Continuing in the direction Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's generation had chosen now meant navigating a theological abyss but they persevered.

For increasing numbers of Nizaris, in the next generation, the wait for the concealed imam to manifest was untenable. In common with other chiliastic communities, some Nizaris sought to hasten the appearance of the eschaton while the establishment and the majority maintained status quo. The populace from regions where Zoroastrian and Judeo-Christian ideas had prevailed, were drawn to earlier Ismaili notions of the Mahdī/Qā'im who would establish justice and equality before the end of times. During the reigns of Buzurg Ummīd and his son and successor Muḥammad, many schismatic movements arose among the Nizaris and in the territories they ruled. All were ruthlessly put down. This was not a stable time for the leadership and cannot have been tranquil for the *Raḥīqān* (the Nizari faithful). The magnitude of the increase of *zuhūrist* tendency is apparent in the harsh punishment Muḥammad meted to the group of Nizaris who gathered around his son Ḥasan as the promised imam. He executed 250 and banished another 250 out of the Rūdbār—even if the numbers were exaggerated tenfold, this was a very large movement.

The declaration of the *Qiyāmat-i qiyāmāt*, in 1164/559 while not conforming to the Qur'anic apocalyptic End of Times or early Ismaili chiliastic expectations, was the culmination of the seventy-year *Dawr-i satr*. This counter-revolution transformed Nizari society without any known resistance; yet there is no indication that anyone outside their community took notice. Invoking forgiveness, the ultimate act of Divine Grace, the new era began with an amnesty and repatriation of prisoners. In the middle of the month of *Ramaḍān* the event of the *Qiyāma* was enacted at Alamut and the imam was manifest (*kashf*) once again. The faithful became the elect and were to associate with their like (*tawallā*) and dissociate from all others (*tabarrā*). The apex of the *ḥudūd-i dīn* was restored and the teachings of Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihī'l-salām became sacrosanct. He had brought the community of believers directly to the presence of God. The

esoteric significances of the *Qiyāma* were further elaborated in the long reign of Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām (r. 1166-1210/561-607). These were rapturous moments for the *da‘wa* leadership as well as the faithful but soon life would return to normal routines.

The leader of the third generation, the imam Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan (1210-1221/607-618) took the unprecedented steps of declaring himself a Sunni and accepting the authority of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs. Given that the imam was inerrant, his actions were seen as *taqiyya* (dissimulation) and the imam and his community entered an unusual era of concealment—not of their physical beings but of their true beliefs. The imam and his forces fought along with the Atabaig Muẓaffar al-Dīn Uz-Baig, ruler of Arran and Azerbaijan, against a vassal of the Khwārazmshāh and gained great acclaim and territories. The move also resulted in alliances with regional houses in Daylamān and Māzandarān. When Chingiz Khān crossed the Āmū Daryā, Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan was the first to offer allegiance. After his death, during the imamate of his son, the Sunni reforms were eventually done away with as the *dā‘ī*-authors such as Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ Munshī and especially Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī advocated the restoration of the *Qiyāma*.

During the reigns of last two imams of the polity, the Mongols dominated the region. The alliance from Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan’s time persisted—the Nizaris were relatively unmolested while the Mongols pursued their prey in Iran. The Nizari polity neighboured Khwārazmian territories whose rulers were hounded by the Mongols. The last Khwārazmshāh moved westward and managed to make the Nizaris his tributary vassals. Sharaf al-Mulk, the Khwārazmian commander intercepted and killed a Nizari spy whose mission was to inform the Mongols of the whereabouts of the Khwārazmshāh. The Mongols never found out that the

double-cross was in their favour. This more than anything else sealed the fate of the Nizari polity. After withstanding 166 years of attacks by the Saljuqs and others, the last ruler of the Nizari polity, Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh capitulated to the Mongols without a fight but with a hope to restore the alliance. Hūlāgū was lenient and even allowed the imam to go and present himself before Mangū Qāʾān. The latter, however, dismissed the imam since two of his forts were still holding out. The orders were given for the final solution and the last ruler of the Nizari polity in Iran and thousands of his followers were put to the sword. Once again the Nizaris and their imam were thrust into an era of concealment and in the language of the *dāʿīs*, the sun was eclipsed by the moon.

Appendices

Treatises

T-I. Nāma ba ‘Ulamā’-yi Qazwīn

Edited Text: Nāma ba ‘Ulamā’-yi Qazwīn

Translation: Nāma ba ‘Ulamā’-yi Qazwīn

T-II. Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw

Edited Text: Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw

Translation: Ḥikāyat-i Sayyid-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw

T-III. Dawr-i Kashf wa Dawr-i Satr

Edited Text: Dawr-i Kashf wa Dawr-i Satr

Translation: Dawr-i Kashf wa Dawr-i Satr

General Appendices

Appendix Part One:4a: “Digital Humanities at the End of the World: Methodology and Workflows in the Study of Islamic History and Eschatology” => pp 184ff TBD

Appendix Part One:4b: Narrative Segments in the Three Ilkhanid Account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbah => pp 218ff and 237ff

[Appendix Part One:4c: Lists and Mapping of Assassinations](#) pp 227ff TBD

Appendix Part Two:1a for map of Nizari installations in Iran pp 505ff TBD

T-I. *Nāma ba 'Ulamā'-yi Qazwīn*

Institute of Ismaili Studies Persian MS 32 tract 27 folios 28b–31b.

Authorship: Attributed to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ

Karim Javan Handlist No: 27 MSS. No: 32¹:

Title: *Nāmih ba 'Ulamā'-yi Qazwīn* نامه به علمای قزوین

Author: [Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (d. 517/ 1124)]

Content: This is a letter sent to the 'ulamā' of Qazwin. The author, assumed to be Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, has defined his doctrine of Ta'līm, in the same manner that Shahrastānī mentions in his "*al-Mīlāl wa al-Niḥāl*". At the beginning, there is an account of how the author joined the Ismailis, which is quite similar to Ḥasan's story. Although the text is synthetic, the language is simple—apart from the Quranic quotations. Another reason for relating this work to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ is the style that it is written, based on the dialect of Ray and Rūdbār. The text begins with a summary of Ḥasan's life, and continues with the main argument, such as the similarities and distinctions between the Ismaili and other Islamic interpretations. At the end, he affirms his position as the "sole true path".

Volume: N/A

Incipit: *dānishmandān-i qazwīn- hadāhum Allah ilā... -shuma rā ma'lūm ast...*

دانشمندان قزوین هدیه‌م الله الی . . . شما را معلوم است که از وقت بلوغیت

Copyist: Ishāq Ghufrānī²

Date: Undated

Physical Description: Fol. 28b–31b; in black ink, *Nasta'liq* (very crude); Folio size: 18 × 15 cm; text size: 16.5 × 11.5 cm; 14 line per page; burn spots on the top margin; bound in thick parchment and cardboard.

References: For the doctrine of Ta'līm or *Fuṣūl-i Arba'a*, see: Poonawala, (p. 254, no. 2)

References: None

Studies : None

¹ Javan. *Catalogue*, p. 36

² Badakhchani gives the copyist's name as Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ghufrānī. HB. p. 40

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

[۱] دانشمندان قزوین ﴿هُدِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾³ و ﴿جَمِيعِهِمْ عَلَىٰ كَلِمَةِ التَّقْوَىٰ﴾⁴ شما را معلوم است که از وقت بلوغیت تا باین غایت مبالغت در راه آخرت از قرآن و اشکال کم کسی را بوده است و در این مدت ده یازده سال سیزده کرت راه حجاز بریدم و رنج های بسیار در پیش گرفته ام. و ترک لذات و شهوات در مقامگاه نزهت که ﴿مَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا﴾ از روی این تهدید و احتراز از این وعید ﴿فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ﴾⁵ و تحصیل آن وعدکم ﴿وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا﴾⁶ و دیگر آنکه و ﴿وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ﴾⁷ تا به آن حد راغب مرگ شدم و قدم در آن جاده نهادم که ﴿إِنْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ

³ *Ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* occurs in 18 verses of the Qur'an. Here there is an insertion of 'Allah' in the phrase from Q5:16 يَهْدِيهِمُ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمُ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

whereby **God guides** whosoever follows His good pleasure in the ways of peace, and brings them forth from the shadows into the light by His leave; and He guides them to a **straight path**.

⁴ Uses phrase from Q48:26 كَلِمَةِ التَّقْوَىٰ; however, the whole phrase in the text has diacritics added suggesting that this is a scriptural text: جَمِيعِهِمْ عَلَىٰ كَلِمَةِ التَّقْوَىٰ Did the author or the scribe see the entire phrase as Qur'anic? If so does this represent variant version of Qur'an? The most likely explanation is that the scribe saw the Arabic جَمِيعِهِمْ عَلَىٰ and applied diacritics.

إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَىٰ وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

When the unbelievers set in their hearts fierceness, the fierceness of pagandom, then God sent down His Shechina upon His Messenger and the believers, and **fastened to them the word of godfearing to which they have better right and are worthy of**; and God has' knowledge of everything.

⁵ Q9:24. Say: "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your clan, your possessions that you have gained, commerce you fear may slacken, **dwellings you love**—if these are dearer to you than God and His Messenger, and to struggle in His way, **then wait till God brings His command**; God guides not the people of the ungodly."

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

⁶ Q17:19 "Those who do wish for the (things of) the Hereafter, and strive therefor with all due striving, and have Faith,- they are the ones whose striving is acceptable (to God)."

⁷ Q4:100 "Should he die as a refugee from home for God and His Messenger, His reward becomes due and sure with God"

مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٨﴾⁸ که چون رنجها میرسید که در شرف هلاکت نزدیک بود چنان دلخوش و راضی [29a] شده بودم که ذره اندیشه در دل من راه نمی یافت.

[۲] مقصود از این قصه که چون بجانب جیلان میرفتم محشور و؟؟؟ قومی از این طایفه از مقضیان و متعلقان این طایفه محقر شدم. و از روی متقابلت و حقد قدیم که با الله الطالب که به اکراه در ایشان می نگریدم و مدت چند ماه با ایشان در طریق مجد مدت و مجادله کار میفرمودم. تا آن وقت که یقین بدانستیم که در دریای ضلالت مستغرق شده ام؛ مرا دستگیری می کردند و از حیرت ظلمت برانگیختند. با فضای نور الهی که ﴿اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ﴾¹⁰ رسانیدند.

[۳] شمنه¹¹ از آنچه معتقد است من قسم داشته اند و آنچه ایشان را بعد از وقوف در مضامن آن برش آید بجواب نویسنده دانند که از بصیرت تمام پای از سر سبیل¹² اکفی برداشتند و بر سبیل ارشاد¹³ مثبت کردند مثبت الله انه هو الموقن و المعین.¹⁴

⁸ Q62:6 “if you assert that you are the friends of God, apart from other men, then do you long for death, if you speak truly”

⁹ Undecipherable. Reading: مانور

¹⁰ The substantive part of the verse is found several times in the Qur’ān. For example Q2:257

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

God is the Protector of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. Of those who reject faith the patrons are the evil ones: from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness. They will be companions of the fire, to dwell therein (For ever).

¹¹ Hard to decipher. Looks like شمنه this word is not found in the dictionaries. Reading as /شمن/ = idol worship/er. It is not clear what the author meant by idolatry. Is this a reference to antinomian beliefs and practices? If so what? Suffice it to say that Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, the purported author, acknowledges such existence among the Ismailis which was rooted out.

¹² Unclear, reading سبیل could also read سيل

¹³ Text reads ارشاد => reading از شد

¹⁴ The word after هو is difficult to decipher. Could be الموقن but more likely الموقن. Al-Mūqin and the more clearly legible al-Mu’īn both mean “certitude”. Neither are counted among the 99 Names of God. This phrase is not found in the Qur’an.

[۴] اول می باید که معلوم باشد که اتفاق است میان این طایفه و دیگر طوایف مختلفه و اختلافست . در اول آنچه اتفاق است شروع کنیم

[۵] ما میگوییم خدای هست و جمله طوایف مختلفه برین مقرند و میگوییم یکیست و هم بر این اتفاق است میان هر دو طایفه و میگوییم که این خدای یگانه بر باید شناختن و در معرفت هم اتفاقست بعقل و نظر ببايد شناختن که بر بیخردی کاورس دانه نشاید دانستن تا باین جا میان ما و ایشان اتفاقست . آنچه خلافتست میان اینجماعت و ایشان اینست که ما میگوییم عاقل و ناظر با عقل و نظر در معرفت خدای عزو علا بتعلیم حاجتست . بقول خدای عزو علا و این قول خدای در هر روز¹⁵ [29b] روز گاری خلیفه او جل علا بخلق رساند . ﴿إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً﴾¹⁶ ﴿كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾¹⁷ و این حکمت اینست ﴿ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ﴾¹⁸ .

[۶] پس تقریر میکنم که بر ما و بر همه خلق واجب است که در این حکمت که طریق معرفتست بفرمان خدای از خلیفه خدای که رهنمای قومی هر روز گاریست قبول کردن . ﴿إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ﴾¹⁹ تا بقول خدای، خدا را شناخته باشند و معرفت خدای هم از خدای حاصل شده باشد ﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾²⁰ ﴿وَأَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحَىٰ﴾²¹ ﴿إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا﴾²² .

¹⁵ moved to next page and reading as روز گاری

¹⁶ Q2:30: 'I am setting in the earth a viceroy.'

¹⁷ Q2:151: as also We have sent among you, of yourselves, a Messenger, to recite Our signs to you and to purify you, and to teach you the Book and the Wisdom, and to teach you that you knew not.

¹⁸ Q16:125: Call thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and good admonition, and dispute with them in the better way.

¹⁹ Q13:7: Thou art only a warner, and a guide to every people.

²⁰ Q112:1-4: Say: 'He is God, One, God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and equal to Him is not any one.'

²¹ Q20:13: I Myself have chosen thee; therefore give thou ear to this revelation.

²² Q20:14: Verily I am God; there is no god but I.

وَأَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحَىٰ

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

I Myself have chosen thee; therefore give thou ear to this revelation. Verily I am God; there is no god but I; therefore serve Me, and perform the prayer of My remembrance.

[۷] نحن این طایفه محقه در معرفت حق سبحانه و تعالی بر این موجبست . و معتقدا²³ طوایف مختلفه ها هم گرفته برین موجبست که حق سبحانه و تعالی ما را بیافرید و سر و چشم و دل و خرد داد و راه و چاه را باز نمود تا در آسمان نگریم و در زمین نگریم و در گونه گونه خلقان و خدایرا بشناسیم و در حد خداشناسی که²⁴ پیغمبر خدا که خلیفه خدا است حاجتست .

[۸] در سر²⁵ کتابی که آورده است اکنون ازین دو قسمت بیرون هست²⁶ اگر خدای خود خردمندانرا²⁷ باین طریق حاصل می آید که در آسمان و زمین²⁸ نگرند و گویند این خلق را خالقى هست، ما را نیز چشم ندوخته اند و از این نظر میان باز نداشته [30a] در آسمان و زمین نگریدیم بدانستیم که این صنع را صانعى هست پس به فتوای ایشان خداشناس باشیم . آنانکه دشمنی خداشناسان کنند خداشناس و کافر باشند . باین موجب بفتوای ایشان در خداشناسی انکار باین طایفه محقه عارفه اسماعیلیه نتوانند کردن و این طایفه محقه بر ایشان انکار توانند کردن .

[۹] و بدیگر قسمت خداشناسی بقول خدا حاصل آید و آن قول خدا محق روزگار بمردم روزگار رساند و بر خردمندان واجبست . آن قول در توحید و تعالی از محق روزگار قبول کردن . این حد مذهب طایفه محق است .

[۱۰] پس بهر دو قسمت و مقالت و مقالات محقه و مقالات مبطله بر محضی این جماعت در معرفت رب العزة انکار توانند کردن چون محق این طایفه محقه بهر دو مقالت معین و برین است . کدام محق باشد ازین معین تر آنچه خصمان از این جماعت باز میگویند که خردمندان بدانند که خدای هست یا از پیغمبران صادق بشنوند .

[۱۱] کلا و حاث²⁹ که این جماعت این نگویند که میگویند در هستی حق سبحانه به تعلیم معلم حاجتست به حکم این آیت که ﴿وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ³⁰ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ³¹ إِلَى الْآيَةِ³²﴾

²³ Undecipherable in MS

²⁴ Reading as که

²⁵ Reading as در سر

²⁶ Reading as هست

²⁷ Reading as خود خردمند; there is a و missing.

²⁸ This word is written twice—at end and begin of next line.

²⁹ Reading حاث per Dihkhuda, this is same as حوث which has the same meaning as حیث.

³⁰ Q43:87: If you ask them, 'Who created you?' they will say, 'God.' How then are they perverted?

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

³¹ Q3:64: Come now to a word common between us and you

[۱۲] از آنچه خلاف در آنست ، آنست که شنوی که به یزدان و اهرمن گوید میدانند که خدای هست اما او را اعتقاد آنست که دواست حق جلا و علا نفی آن میفرماید ﴿لَا تَتَّخِذُوا إِلَهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ﴾³³ و بعضی میگویند که خدای هست اما سه آن است لا تقربو ثلثیه و بعضی گویند آفتاب و ماهتاب است که لا تتخذ³⁴ [30b] الشمس و القمر.³⁵ و بعضی گویند خدای هست ﴿أَرْبَابٌ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمِ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ﴾.³⁶ و علی هذا در داخل اسلام همه میدانند که خدای هست اما یکی گوید دیدنیست³⁷ و یکی گوید نادیدنیست یکی گوید آنست که بر عرش است یکی گوید آنست که بر فرش است یکی گوید آنست که نیک و بد از اوست یکی گوید آنست که نیک از اوست و بد از خلق و یکی گوید از افعال نیک و بد منزله است .

[۱۳] اکنون همه میدانند که خدای هست هیچکس نمیگوید که خدای نیست . پس خلاف نه اینجا است که خدا هست و نیست که نه خدای را بخدا میدارند . اکنون چون در معرفت این خلاف پدیدار آمد تقریر میکنم که حاکمی باید و این حاکم خود³⁸ خداست تعالی و تقدس . كما قال الله تعالى ﴿إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا﴾.³⁹

³² Sections from Q43:87 and Q3:64 (green font) NB: *ilā al-āyat* = to the end of the verse.

وَلَمَّا سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

If you ask them, ‘Who created you?’ they will say, ‘God.’ How then are they perverted?

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ [۳:۶۴]

Say: ‘People of the Book! Come now to a word common between us and you, that we serve none but God, and that we associate not aught with Him, and do not some of us take others as Lords, apart from God.’ And if they turn their backs, say: ‘Bear witness that we are Muslims.’

³³ Q16:51: Take not to you two gods

وَقَالَ اللَّهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوا إِلَهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونَ

God says: ‘Take not to you two gods. He is only One God; so have awe of Me.’

³⁴ Phrase occurs numerous times in the Qur’an.

³⁵ Phrase occurs numerous times in the Qur’an. Not found connected to the previous phrase in the Qur’an.

³⁶ Q12:39. Say, which is better, my fellow-prisoners—many gods at variance, or God the One, the Omnipotent?

يَا صَاحِبِي السِّجْنِ أَرْبَابٌ مُتَفَرَّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمِ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

³⁷ MSS has word crossed out

³⁸ Reading خود MS hard to decipher—there is a superscript correction.

³⁹ Q20:14. The text is at variance from the Qur’an here; it reads:

[١٤] ز از قبل او تعالى تبليغ آن كتاب كه قول اوست عزوعلام بحكم ﴿بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ⁴⁰ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ⁴¹ يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ⁴² شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ هُوَ⁴³﴾ ميگويم بر ما و جمله ای فلان و ناظران آن عالم واجبست، این

اننى انا الله لا الله انا

In variance from the verse but without change in meaning:

إِنِّى أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

Verily I am God; there is no god but I; therefore serve Me, and perform the prayer of My remembrance.

⁴⁰ Q5:44. Note that the preceding word in the MSS reads بحكم (bahukm) whereas the Qur'an has يحكم (yahkumu)

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَخَشَوُا اللَّهَ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا^{٤٤} وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ [٥:٤٤]

Surely We sent down the Torah, wherein is guidance and light; **thereby the Prophets** who had surrendered themselves gave judgment for those of Jewry, as did the masters and the rabbis, following such portion of God's Book as they were given to keep and were witnesses to. So fear not men, but fear you Me; and sell not My signs for a little price. Whoso judges not according to what God has sent down - they are the unbelievers.

⁴¹ Q5:15-16

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ

People of the Book, now there has come to you Our Messenger, making clear to you many things you have been concealing of the Book, and effacing many things. There has come to you from God **a light, and a Book Manifest**

يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

whereby God guides whosoever follows His good pleasure in the ways of peace, and brings them forth from the shadows into the light by His leave; and He guides them to a straight path.

⁴² Q5:67. **O Messenger, deliver that which has been sent down to thee from thy Lord;** for if thou dost not, thou wilt not have delivered His Message. God will protect thee from men. God guides not the people of the unbelievers.

يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

⁴³ Q3:18. Note the variance from the Qur'anic verse:

گواهی حق سبحانه و تعالی در معرفت او تعالی از خلیفه او تعالی قبول کردن و به قول خدا خدای را شناختن و در کل عالم از مشرق تا مغرب بیرون از این طایفه محقه کسی دیگر را این دعوی و دعوت نیست. ﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي﴾ **اخینا لدینه**.⁴⁴

[۱۵] آنکس که خدای بشناخت که آفریده گار و روزی دهنده اوست به هیچ حال او را به کنار نهد [31a] و دیگری را می پرستد.

[۱۶] این جماعت به حجت بالله خدای با همه عاقلان و ناظران عالم دورست کرده باشند. خلائق عالم خدانشناسی و خدادانائی⁴⁵ و خداخوانی این جماعتند. و دیگرانرا هست عجب بالله خدای دوست کرده باشند که نه خدای را می شناسند و نه خدای را می خوانند چگونه خدانشناسی این جماعت باشند.

[۱۷] خداپرست آنان باشند که خدا را خود شناسند چنانچه در پیش برفت که به تقوای هر دو مقاتل محقه و مبطله انکار بمعرفت این طایفه در همه جهان کسی نتواند کردن که اگر بر غم شما مسلم دارند که خدانشناسی به مجرد نظر هر ناظرست کسی را بر این جماعت چون انکار توان کرد که این جماعت نیز ناظرند.

[۱۸] پس اگر مسلم دارند که چون خلاف در میان ناظران در شناخت حق سبحانه و تعالی واقع گشت از حاکم **نا که بر** است و این حاکم حق سبحانه و تعالی است. ﴿إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ﴾.⁴⁶

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ VS شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

God bears witness that there is no god but He—and the angels, and men possessed of knowledge—upholding justice; there is no god but He, the All-mighty, the All-wise.

⁴⁴ occurs ten times in the Qur'an; though the entire phrase is not Qur'anic.

⁴⁵ Reading خدادانائی

⁴⁶ Q12:40; 6:57 and 12:67.

مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءَ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

That which you serve, apart from Him, is nothing but names yourselves have named, you and your fathers; God has sent down no authority touching them. **Judgment belongs only to God**; He has commanded that you shall not serve any but Him. That is the right religion; but most men know not.

قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِهِ مَا عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ يَقْضُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَاصِلِينَ

[۱۹] و از قبل او در میان خلق پیغمبر هر دوره و امام وقت که محق و رهنمای قومی هر روز گاریست که در این معرفت باور او کردن و بقول سبحانه و تعالی و خلیفه او که رساننده قول اوست. خدا را شناسند و این اختلاف به حکم ایشان ﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا﴾.⁴⁷ و در این مشاجرت تسلیم بخدا و خلیفه اش باز گذارند دیدارست که این مذهب کیست و چون دورست شد به برهان قاطعه خدائی و ﴿حُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةِ﴾⁴⁸ الهی ﴿وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْ نَّشَاءُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾⁴⁹ که این طایفه [31b] محقه خداشناسی به حقیقت هم این طایفه باشند. و سلام ﴿أَفَمَن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَن يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّنْ لَا يَهْدِي إِلَّا أَن يَهْدِيَ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ﴾.⁵⁰

Say: 'I stand upon a clear sign from my Lord, and you have cried lies to it. Not with me is that you seek to hasten; **the judgment is God's alone**. He relates the truth, and He is the Best of deciders.'

وَقَالَ يَا بَنِيَّ لَا تَدْخُلُوا مِن بَابٍ وَاحِدٍ وَادْخُلُوا مِنْ أَبْوَابٍ مُّتَفَرِّقَةٍ وَمَا أُغْنِي عَنْكُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ مِن شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَحْكُمْتُمْ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَعَلَيْهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

He also said, 'O my sons, enter not by one door; enter by separate doors. Yet I cannot avail you anything against God; **judgment belongs not to any but God**. In Him I have put my trust; and in Him let all put their trust who put their trust.'

⁴⁷ Q4:65. But no, by thy Lord! they will not believe till they make thee the judge regarding the disagreement between them, then they shall find in themselves no impediment touching thy verdict, but shall surrender in full submission.

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

⁴⁸ Q6:149. Say: 'To God belongs the **argument conclusive**; for had He willed, He would have guided you all.'

قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ فَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

⁴⁹ Q6:83. That is Our argument, which We bestowed upon Abraham as against his people. We raise up in degrees whom We will; surely thy Lord is All-wise, All-knowing.

وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْ نَّشَاءُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

⁵⁰ Q10:35 Note variance in text

افمن يهدى الى الحق **حق** ان تتبع امن لا يهدى الا ان يهدى فمالكم كيف تحكمون

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَّن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ أَفَمَن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَن يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّنْ لَا يَهْدِي إِلَّا أَن يَهْدِيَ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

Say: 'Is there any of your associates who guides to the truth?' Say: 'God -- He guides to the

[۲۰] توقع آنست که این شرح از سر الفاف اتفاق **خالصاً**⁵¹ بوجه الکریم. تا امل کنند و آنچه ایشان را باشد بر سبیل افادت و استفادت جواب شانی که درمذهب ایشان راه آن ندهد که در این طریق شنوند و جواب نویسند خدای تعالی یاری کناد و اهل حق را نصرت⁵² دهداد و مستضعفان را از وسواس ﴿الَّذِي يُوسِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ﴾⁵³ خلاصی دهداد. بمنه و طوله علی ما ﴿يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ﴾⁵⁴ و ﴿بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ﴾⁵⁵. و السلام.

truth; and **which is worthier to be followed** -- He who guides to the truth, or he who guides not unless he is guided? What then ails you, how you judge?"

⁵¹ Q16:66. And surely in the cattle there is a lesson for you; We give you to drink of what is in their bellies, between filth and blood, **pure** milk, sweet to drinkers.

وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً نُسْقِيكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهِ مِنْ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ لَبَنًا خَالِصًا سَائِغًا لِلشَّارِبِينَ

⁵² The scribe might have begun to write *yārī* but changed his mind and struck out the **یا**.

⁵³ Q114:5-6. Who whispers in the breasts of men **الَّذِي يُوسِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ** of jinn and men **مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ**

⁵⁴ Q42:29. And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth and the crawling things He has scattered abroad in them; and **He is able to** gather them whenever **He will**.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَثَّ فِيهِمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ

⁵⁵ Q35:31 (also 17:30; 17:96; 42:27). And that We have revealed to thee of the Book is the truth, confirming what is before it; God is aware of and **sees His servants**.

وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ

In the name of God, the Kind, the Merciful.

[1] Scholars of Qazwīn, “may God guide them on the straight path (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*)” (paraphrases Q5:16) and “gather them onto the commands of piety (*kalimatihi ilā al-taqwā*),” (from Q48:26) you know that from the time of maturity to this moment no one has endured more difficulties on the path of the Hereafter [described in] the Qur’ān (*rāh-i ākhirat āz Qur’ān*). During this time of ten or eleven years, thirteen times I have taken to the road to the Ḥijāz [for ḥajj (pilgrimage)] and have suffered many difficulties. Leaving the pleasures and lusts in the place of delights, “the dwellings which you love” (Q9:24) in the face of this threat (*tahdīd*) and guarding against this promise (*wa’id*) “then wait until God brings about His decision” (Q9:24). The attainment of the promise, “and whosoever desires the world to come and strives after it as he should, being a believer—their striving shall be acceptable.” (Q17:19). Furthermore, “should he die as a exile from home for God and His Messenger, His reward becomes due and sure with God” (Q4:100) To such an extent that I was desirous of death and took steps in that direction; “if you assert that you are the friends of God, apart from other men, then do you long for death, if you speak truly” (Q62:6). Such calamities came upon me that I was near the threshold of death that I was content and happy [29a] that no trace of thought entered my heart.

[2] The purpose of this story is that, since I went to Gilān, I joined [and undecipherable] a group from this faction and was humbled to be among the accomplished and associates of this faction. From opposition and long-standing rancour, that with God is the seeker (*bā Allāh al-ṭālib*), with reluctance, I observed them and for a period of a few months, in the manner of striving for a time (*mujidd-i mudat*), I disputed with them. When I realised that I was drowning in the sea of error (*daryā-yi dhalālat*), they took me by the hand and brought me out of the disquiet of darkness (*ḥairat-i zulmat*) and by the decree of Divine Light (*bā qaḍā-yi nūr-i ilāhi*) brought me out where “God is the Protector of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light” (Q2:257).

[3] They have separated idolatry (*shamanī*) from belief (*mu’taqad*) and that which after it has come to their awareness is cut it off. They have written in response that they have removed all the people, from top to bottom (*pāya āz sar* lit. foot from head) in the way of words and actions (*ikfā’*) and in manner of guidance (*irshād*) have been provided proof—the proof of God, He is the Certitude (*al-Mūqin wa al-Mu’in*).

[4] First, it is clear that between this faction and other factions there is difference and disagreement. Let us begin with that which has happened.

[5] We say there is a God, all the different factions (*jumla-yi ṭawa’if-i mukhtalifah*) agree on this. We say He is One, on this too there is agreement. Every other faction and we say that this Unique God must be known and the knowledge of God (*ma’rifat*)—it is also agreed—can be known through the intellect (*‘aql*) and contemplation (*nazar*) that without intellect (*bī-khiradī*) there is not a grain of knowledge can be known such that up to this point there is agreement between us and them. That which is different between this community and them is that we say the intellectual and contemplator (*‘āqil wa nāzīr*) along with intellect and contemplation, needs authoritative teaching (*ta’līm*) to know God, Mighty and Exalted. As God, Mighty and Exalted, has said—this word of God, in the lifetime of every deputy of His, the Mighty and Exalted, has

been conveyed to the people. [29b] ‘I am setting in the earth a viceroy’ (Q2:30) as also “We have sent among you, of yourselves, a Messenger, to recite Our signs to you and to purify you, and to teach you the Book and the Wisdom, and to teach you that you knew not.” (Q2:151). The wisdom (*hikmat*) of this is: “Call thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and good admonition, and dispute with them in the better way” (Q16:125).

[6] I emphasise that it is obligatory upon us and all humanity to accept this wisdom which is the way of knowledge of God (*ṭarīq-i maʿrifat-ast*) by the command of God (*ba-farmān-i khudāi*) from the prophet of God who is the guide of the people in every age (*rahnāmā-yi qawmī-yi har rūzgār-ist*). “Verily, thou art only a warner, and a guide to every people.” (Q13:7) By the word of God, God is known; and the knowledge of God is also obtained from God. “Say: ‘He is God, One, God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and equal to Him is not any one’” (Q112:1-4). “I Myself have chosen you; therefore listen to this revelation” (Q20:13). “Verily I am God; there is no god but I” (Q20:14).

[7] We are the truthful faction (*nahnu īn ṭāʾifah muḥiqqah*) in the knowledge of God (*Ḥaqq*), Glorified and Exalted, in this manner. The belief of the other factions are also based on this that God (*Ḥaqq*), Glorified and Exalted, has created us and given us a head, eyes, heart and knowledge (*khirad*) and opened up the way of right and wrong (*rāh wa chāh* lit. path and pit) such that as we look at the sky and the earth and every creature (*gūna-yi gūna-yi khalqān*) and come to know God. The limit of knowledge about God (*ḥadd-i khudāshanāsī*) which the prophet of God who is the vicegerent of God has required (*ḥājat-ist*), by the Book which he has brought, has two aspects.

[8] [First if] God is attained in this way by the autodidacts (*khud-khiradmandān* lit. self-intellectuals) that they look at the sky and the earth and say that “there is a Creator for this creation”; they did not deny us (*mā-rā nīz chashm nadūkhta-and* lit. they have not stared at us) and in this thought there is no distance (*āz īn naẓar miyān na-dāshta*); [30a] [between us in that] when we looked at the sky and the earth and we came to know that this creation has a Creator (*īn ṣanʿ-ā ṣāniʿ-ī-hast*). Then according to their *fatwā* (legal opinion) we are knowers of God (*khudāshanās bāshīm*). Those who are the enemies of the knowers of God are not knowers of God (*khudānashanās*) and are infidels (*kāfir*). In this way, their *fatwās*, on the knowledge of God, cannot reject this truthful faction known as the Ismailis; and this truthful faction can reject them.

[9] In the second aspect, knowledge of God attained by the word of God (*ba-qawl-i khudā*) and that word of God is conveyed to the people of the time (*mardum-i rūzgār*) by the truthful one of the age (*muḥiqq-i rūzgār*) and this is obligatory on the scholars (*khiramandān*).

[10] In the knowledge of the Mighty Lord (*Rabb al-ʿazzat*), if in both aspect and discourses (*muqallat*)—the truthful discourses (*muqallāt-i muḥiqqah*) and the false discourses (*muqallāt-i mubaṭillah*)—this community (*jamāʿat*) can be contradicted when the truthful one of this truthful faction is certain and excellent in both discourses, then which truthful one is there who is more certain such that the enemies of this community who repeat that ‘the scholars know that there is God’ or that ‘they listen to the truthful messengers (*paigambarān-i ṣādiq*)’?

[11] ??? This community **does not say** that they say: the existence of God the Glorious (*dar hasti-yi ḥaqq-i subḥānah*) is proven in the authoritative teaching of the teacher (*ba taʿlīm-i muʿallim ḥājatist*) by the verse: **If thou askest them, ‘Who created you?’ they will say,**

‘God.’ (Q43:87). ‘Come now to a word common between us and you, that we serve none but God, and that we associate not aught with Him, and do not some of us take others as Lords, apart from God.’ And if they turn their backs, say: ‘Bear witness that we are Muslims.’ (Q3:64)

[12] The disagreement is this that, it is heard said that Yazdān and Ahriman are God. However, their belief is that they are two. God, the Mighty and Exalted, has negated this: “Take not to you two gods” (Q16:51). Others say that there is a God; however, three in [One]. Do not consider in thirds [lit. Do not approach thirds]. Some say there is a sun and moon. Do not [30b] take the sun and moon. Some say God exists. “Many gods at variance, or God the One, the Omnipotent?” (Q12:39). On this, all those in Islam know that God exists; however, one says [God is] visible; one says [God is] not visible; one says He who is on the Throne (*‘arsh*); one says He who is on the carpet (*farsh*); one says He from whom are good and evil; one says good is from Him and evil from the creation (*khalq*); one says He is exempt from good and bad actions (*āz af’āl nīk wa bad munazzah ast*).

[13] Now, all know that God exists, no one says there is no God. Then there is no division in that God exists or not; nor do they have gods but God (*na khudā-yi-rā ba-khudā midarānd*). Now, since in the knowledge of God (*ma’rifat*) this division has appeared, I emphasise that there must be a sovereign (*hākim*) and this sovereign, Himself, is God, the Exalted and Sanctified. As God the Mighty said “Verily I am God; there is no god but I” (Q20:14).

[14] From God, the Mighty, that Book was promulgated which is His Word, Mighty and Exalted, by the command of the prophets. (Q5:44) A Light and Book Manifest whereby God guides (Q5:15-16). O Messenger, deliver that which has been sent down to thee from thy Lord. (Q5:67). God bears witness that there is no god but He (Q3:18). We say it is obligatory upon us and all others and the guardians of that world (*nāzirān-i ān ‘ālam*). The acceptance of this proof of God (*guwāhī-yi Haqq*) Glorified and Exalted, in the knowledge of Him, the Exalted, from the deputy of His, the Exalted, and to know God by the Word of God (*ba qawl-i khudā khudā-yi rā shanākhtan*) and in all the world, from the East to the West, outside of these [meaning God and the Prophet] [and the] truthful faction (*tā’ifah muhiqqah*), there is no other person who claims this, nor is there such a *da’wa* (summons). Praise be to God who revivifies His religion.

[15] That person who knows God, that He is the Creator and is his Provider (*rūzī dihandah ū-st*), will never turn away from Him (*ū-rā ba-kinār nanihad* Lit. will not set Him aside) [31a] and worship another.

[16] This community, by the proof of God (*hujjat billāh* Lit. Proof with God) have set aright (*dūrust karda bāshand*), about God, all the wise men and guardians of the world (*hama-yi ‘āqilān wa nāzirān-i ‘ālam*). Out of the people of the world, the acquainted of God (*khudāshanāsī*), the knowers of God (*khudādānā-yi*) and the callers God (*khudākhwānī*) are from this community. There are others, by the wonder of God (*‘ajb billāh*), who see themselves as friends of God but do not know (*na khudā-yi-rā mishanāsand*) God and do not call on God (*na khudā-yi-rā mikhwānand*) then how could they be among the knowers of God (*khudāshanāsī*) in this community?

[17] The followers of God (*khudāparast*) are those that know God Himself (*khudā-rā khūd shanāsand*) such that it is put forward that in piety in both paths of truth and falsehood, there is no one in the world who can reject the knowledge of God of this community. That if there is certainty in your concern (*āgar bar gam-i shumā musallam dārand*) that knowledge of God is

through individual consideration of every observer (*ba mujarrad-i nazar-i har nāzir-ist*), then no one can not reject this community since this community are also observers (*nāzirand*).

[18] Then if they are certain that difference has come among the observers in knowing God, the Glorious and Exalted, they must turn to the sovereign and the sovereign is God, the Glorious and Exalted. **Judgment belongs only to God** (Q12:40; 6:57 and 12:67).

From Him, among the creation, there is a prophet in every era and the imam of the time (*imām-i waqt*) who is truthful and a guide for the people in every age, that in this knowledge of God, belief in Him and the word of the Glorious and Exalted and his deputy (*khalīfa*), he sent, is His word. They know God and this difference is by their command: **But no, by thy Lord! they will not believe till they make thee the judge regarding the disagreement between them, then they shall find in themselves no impediment touching thy verdict, but shall surrender in full submission** (Q4:65). In this quarrel, submission is seen to be returned to God and his deputy, then what is [who are] this creed (*madhhab*)? Since it is correctly based on the convincing proof of God and **Divine convincing proof** (*ḥujjat al-bāligatu ilahī*) (Q6:149). **And that is Our argument, which We bestowed upon Abraham as against his people. We raise up in degrees whom We will; surely thy Lord is All-wise, All-knowing** (Q6:83). That this truthful faction (*ṭā'ifa-yi muhiqqa*) [31a] that knows God, in reality (*ḥaqīqat*), is also this faction. **Peace which is worthier to be followed —He who guides to the truth, or he who guides not unless he is guided? What then ails you, how you judge?** (Q10:35).

[20] The meaning is that, this commentary from the commencement of entanglement (*āz sar-i alfāf*) is purified (*itifāq khālīṣā*) by God, the Noble. They must act, in speech and action to the answer from God (*jawāb-i shānī*) that their creed does not allow (*rāh-i ān nadihad* Lit. does not give way), that they hear or write in a this manner. God, the Mighty helps, and aids the people of Truth (*āhl-i ḥaqq*), and saves the weak ones from the whispering [of] **“Who whispers in the breasts of humans. Of jinn and humans”** (Q114:5-6). From Him and turn to Him who **has the power over all He wishes** (Q42:29) and **sees His servants** (Q17:30; 17:96; 35:31; 42:27).

Peace

T-II. Hikāyat-i Sayyid-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw

Institute of Ismaili Studies Persian MS 32 tract 57 folios 114b-118b.

Authorship: Unknown

Karim Javan Handlist No: 57 MSS. No: 32¹:

Title: Hikāyat-i Sayyid Nāṣir Khusraw [Sayyidnā?]

حکایت سید ناصر خسرو [سیدنا؟]

Author: Anon

Content: This is a text both interesting and ambiguous. At the beginning, it says that this is a story that Hasan heard from Nasir-i Khusraw (which cannot be true). But the rest of the story looks very similar to the story of Hasan Sabbah himself, and his visit to Egypt. Making it more complicated, in another stage, the narrator speaks about events after Hasan's lifetime, up to when 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām announced the qiyāma. In a way this account presents unique information about one of the most ambiguous and important episodes of Nizari Ismaili history, when the Nizari da'wa began. It has a full account about how Imam Hadī was brought to Alamut and how he and the next Imams lived there, until when Hasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām was announced as the Imam. However, it is very difficult to determine to what extent we should trust its information.

Volume: N/A

Incipit: *haḍrat-i sayyidnā qaddasa sirrahū bi raḥīqān farmūda ki nāṣir khusrw* (sic)

حضرت سیدنا قدس سره به رفیقان فرموده که ناصر خسرو به من حکایتی کرد

Copyist: Ishāq Ghufrānī²

Date: Undated

Physical Description: Fol. 114b—118b; in black ink, Nasta'liq (very crude); Folio size: 18 x 15 cm; text size: 16.5 x 11.5 cm; 14 line per page; bound in thick parchment and cardboard.

References: Poonawala (p. 353, no: 281)

Studies: None

¹ Javan. *Catalogue*, p. 67

² Badakhchani gives the copyist's name as Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ghufrānī. HB. p. 40

اللهم ی مولانا

حکایت سید ناصر خسرو

[۱] حضرت سیدنا، قدس الله سره، با رفیقان فرموده که: «ناصر خسرو بمن حکایتی کرد با شما رفیقان باز گوئیم.» فرمود که: «سید ناصر خسرو گفت که: «مرا یقین بود که امام بحق مستنصر بالله است، اما خواستم که از داعیان ایشان بشنوم و با ایشان مجارات برآورم. از بلخ بدیار مصر رفتم. مدت ششماه در مصر بودم مستنصر بالله را نتوانستم دید. روزی بر در دکان رفیق نشسته بودم، باوی گفتم: «ششماه است در این شهرم خلیفه را ندیده ام.» گفت: «ایشان در هفته یکبار از قلعه قاهره بیرون می آیند جهت امور پادشاهی. و از سلاطین و امرا و غیره چندان جمع می شوند که هر کس ایشان را نتواند دید. اما هر سال در نوروز یکبار در رود نیل، که مولانا حاکم باغات ساخته و اشجار نشانده، بچشن میروند و یک هفته آنجا می باشند. و سلاطین و امرا که از جانب می آیند خلعت میدهند و باز گشته بشهر می آیند. در آن محل ایشان [115a] می توان دید.»

[۲] سید ناصر می گوید که: «دو ماه دیگر تحمل کردم تا نوروز شد. رفتم بر سر راه بایستدم تا محل که **برآمدند** لشکر بسیار در خدمت بودند، چون رسیدند ناگاه جانب من نگاه کردند. **یکی از** مردم لشکر که در خدمت بودند فرمود که: «فلان شخص نگاهدار تا محلی که از تو طلب داریم.» آنشخص مرا به خانه خود برد تا وقت آن رسید مولانا مستنصر لذکره السلام باز گشته. و همراه آن شخص رفتم و بر سر راه ایستادم.

[۳] مولانا مستنصر لذکره السلام رسید. ایشان را چنان دیدم که از سلطنت و پادشاهی ملول شده اند. بدر دکان رفیق روغنگر رسیدند. عنان اسب را کشیده رفیق را فرمودند که: «دبه روغن مرا بیاور.» آن رفیق در دکان دویده و دبه روغن را بیاورد و به دست آن حضرت داد. ایشان این رباعی را فرمودند

در مسجد و بتخانه و میخانه منم در هر دو جهان حدیث افسانه منم

به چند که عقل کل غلام در ماست با این همه مستنصر دیوانه منم

و آن دبه روغن را بر سر مبارک خود ریختند، و جامه های پادشاهانه، که در نوروز پوشیده بودند، چرب ساختند و سواران و مردمان که در رکاب ایشان بودند چرب شدند. اکثر لشکر از ایشان برگشتند. و منافقان ایشان را دیوانه خواندند.

[۴] بعد از آن، چون بخانه آمدند، بنده ناصر را بخواندند و بنواختند و منشور روند که در دیار بلخ و کابل و بدخشان به دعوت مشغول باشم.

[۵] چون چند گاه برآمد مولانا مستنصر ولایت را به پسران خود قسمت کرد. مصر و نواحی را [115b] بمستعلی داد. و ولایت مغرب را بمولانا نزار لذکره السلام که فرزند منصوب بودند. فرمودند که: «با یکدیگر اتفاق کنید و عداوت مکنید.» و انتقال فرمودند.

[۶] بعد از چند گاه چون بیشتر خاصان رجوع بمولانا نزار میکردند، منافقان و غمازان و غرض گویان مستعلی را گفتند: «اگر تو این برادر خود را همچنین گذاری زود باشد که شهر مصر از تصرف تو بیرون رود و شکر به برادر تو جمع شود. مستعلی کسی نزد مولانا نزار فرستاد و پیغام داد که: «سخن همانست که پدر ما فرموده که تو پادشاه و من لشکرکش و خدمت کار تو. مصلحت اینست که بشهر آئی و بجای پدر بنشینی.» چون فرستاده بخدمت مولانا نزار آمد و پیغام که داشت عرضه کرد مولانا نزار لذکره السلام فرمودند با خاصان خود که: «بر قول مستعلی اعتماد نیست، و خلاف سخن خود خواهد کرد اما مصلحت آنست که برویم به مصر.» تشریف فرمودند و بعد از چند روز که در مصر بودند مستعلی کسی به خدمت ایشان فرستاد که: «تو این مشقت و محنت دنیا را به من گذار و به حجره خود رو و در حجره بنشینی.»

[۷] مولانا نزار به حجره خود آمدند. و بعد از آن حسن سعید را، که از خادمان خاص مولانا مستنصر لذکره السلام بود، و در خدمت ایشان می بود، فرمودند که: «مولانا مستنصر لذکره السلام در فلان تاریخ و روز کاغذی نوشته و سر بمر کرده و به تو سپرده برجا داری؟» گفت: «آری.» فرمودند که: «بیاور حسن سعید کاغذ را به خدمت مولانا [116a] آورد. مولانا نزار آن کاغذ را بشکافتند، و باز کردند مولانا مستنصر لذکره السلام بخط مبارک خود نوشته بودند که: «فرزند منصوب من نزار است. هر کس راه حق میخواهد متابعت او کند.» حسن سعید سجده کرد و گفت: «مطیع و مامورم به هر چه فرمان دهی.»

[۸] مولانا نزار لذکره السلام فرمودند که: «می روی و ده سراسب میخری و ایشان را واژگونه نعل می بندی، و نماز شام حاضر می سازی.» حسن بعد بموجب فرموده ده سراسب خرید و ایشان را واژگونه نعل بسته بخدمت مولانا لذکره السلام آورد. آن حضرت با دو فرزند خویش و حسن سعید، در همان شب، از مصر بیرون آمده بجانب رود نیل بخانه راهب تشریف بردند. راهب در پس در آمد و گفت: «تو مولانا نزاری؟» گفت: «آری.» گفت: «با دو فرزند؟» گفت: «آری.» گفت: «حسن سعید در خدمت شما است؟» فرمودند: «آری.» راهب در خانه را **بگشود**. گفتند: «ترا از کجا معلوم شد که من نزارم با فرزندان خود؟» راهب گفت که: «بعضی مواضع این نواحی را مولانا مستنصر باقطاع بمن داده بود، و مرا فرموده بودند که: «در فلان شب مولانا نزار با فرزندان خود و حسن سعید بمقام تو خواهند آمد در متابعت او تقصیر نکنی. و من شب تا این ساعت انتظار میکشیدم، اگر نمی آمدید مرا شکی می شد. اکنون بهر چه میفرمایید؟؟؟ کی **دارم**.» مولانا نزار فرمودند که: «چند روز اینجا خواهیم ماند. اسرار ما را از مردم پنهان می باید داشت.»

[۹] بعد از چند روز عزیمت ببه‌غداد فرمودند، از آنجا روانه شدند. چون یکچند برآمد مستعلی خبر یافت [116b] که ایشان در بغدادند. کسی نزد خلیفه فرستاد که: «برادرم نزار با فرزندان خود بدان دیار آمده است، باید که او را بدینجانب فرستید و الا که اهماًل نمائید لشکر بر سر بغداد آورده انواع خرابی نماییم. چون این خبر ببه‌غداد رسید، مولانا نزار با مصر رفته. و چون بولایت خوزستان رسیدند، مولانا هادی را، که فرزند حقیقی ایشان بود، و حسن سعید را در خدمت ایشان بقلعه الموت نزد سیدنا قدس الله روحه فرستادند؛ و خود به مصر رفتند. مستعلی علیه اللعنه، مولانا نزار را شهید کرد. در مصر دو گروه پدیدار آمد و فتنه عظیم برخاست، و یک گروه که بر جانب مولانا نزار بودند در مصر میگردیدند و عادل حق الاهل میگفتند.

[۱۰] بعد از آنکه مولانا هادی عظیم الموت فرمودند. چون بنواحی آنجا رسیدند حسن سعید را فرستادند و سیدنا را از آمدن خود خبر دادند، و فرمودند که سیدنا را بگویی که: «اسرار ما را از خلائق مخفی دار که صلاح کل عالم در آن است.»

[۱۱] سیدنا چون خبر یافت به استقبال بیرون آمد و با رفیقان فرمودند که: «مرد سیدیست از کعبه می آید. چون مولانا بقلعه آمدند غیر از سیدنا و حسن سعید از احوال ایشان کسی اطلاع نداشت. و سیدنا بامر و فرمان ایشان کار میکرد و رفیقان بفرمان سیدنا کار میکردند.

[۱۲] و چون یک چندی برآمد سیدنا در خدمت مولانا بود، مولانا فرمودند که: «بعد از تو خلاف خواهد بود.» حضرت **سیدنا؟؟؟ متفکر** شدند و از خدمت بیرون آمدند [117a] و آن روز تا شب در اندیشه و فکر بودند. و دیگر روز بخدمت رفته سجود کردند و گفت: «یا مولانا بر من ظاهر بسازید سری که بود.» مولانا با سیدنا فرمودند. سیدنا از خدمت بیرون آمد و طشت و کاردی طلب فرمودند. و چهار پسر داشتند و هر کدام را جداگانه بدست مبارک خود سر در طشت بردند. و با رفیقان فرمودند که: «چهار پسر خود را بدان جهت کشتم که فرزند مولانا **نزار** را که امام به حق است طلب دارید تا گمراه نشوید.»

[۱۳] و بعد از آن، چون محل آن رسید که با محل کرامت روند، به موجب فرمان مولانا، کیا بزرگ امید را بجای خود نشانند. و کیا بزرگ امید هم بفرمان مولانا کار میکرد. چون کیا بزرگ امید انتقال کرد، کیا محمد که پسر او بود به جای او نشست. و او را از حقیقت حال و اسرار مولانا وقوف بر اصل نبود.

[۱۴] مولانا هادی که به قلعه آمده بود، با مردم میفرمود که: «به متعلمی سیدنا آمده‌ام.» و رساله‌ای ترتیب داد که متعلمان را متعلمی چون می باید کرد. و بعد از ایشان چون مولانا مهتدی فرمودند که من معلمی‌ام، و رساله‌ای ترتیب دادند که معلمی چون می باید کرد و معلم را پدر جماعت بچه طریق باید بود. و بعد از آن در دیگر جامه مولانا قاهر لذکره

السلام فرمودند که **من حجت امام**. و رساله‌ای ترتیب دادند که «**هر چه هست این امام است**». و اثبات امامت فرمودند، **سیدنا میفرماید** که این است: سه شب که اهل ظاهر میگویند که **پیش** طلوعی قیامت سه شب خواهد بود که آن ظهور خداوند لذکره السلام است.

[۱۵] و بعضی رفیقان را معلوم بود [117b] که امام مولانا قاهر است. و کیا محمد این معنی را استماع ننموده از آنجا که جهل جلی او بود. در فطرت **؟؟؟** سرشته بود منکر ذات امام بود. و در امام بشک بود، تا آنکه یک روز، مولانا با هیجده رفیق **با خود ؟؟؟** [scan not clear at margin] تشریف برده بودند، آن بدبخت از عقب رفته و جمعی را از ملاعین همراه برده، آن حضرت را با هیجده رفیق که در خدمت ایشان بودند شهید کردند.

[۱۶] خاتون قیامت در آنوقت حامله بودند. آن بدبخت خاتون را به خانه خود برده، گفت: «چون حمل خاتون بسر آید، اگر پسر باشد بکشند.» و در این محل عورت او نیز حامله بود. قضا و چنین تقدیر شد که حمل خاتون و عورت او بیکراز بسر رسید. و حمل خاتون خود همان خداوند برد که ظهور فرمودند؛ و عورت آن بدبخت دختر آورده. عورت او چون مومن بود؛ و دختر خود را نزد خاتون برده در کنار او نهادند؛ و حضرت را بر کنار آن عورت نشانند. و خبر بدان بدبخت بردند که خاتون دختر آورده؛ و آن حضرت را پسر خود تصور میکرد.

[۱۷] تا در محل انتقال سیدنا، رفیقان بایشان گفتند که: «فرموده بودی که قایم بشما نمایم.» فرمودند که: «از امر و اشارت مولانا چنان شنیدم که: کیا بزرگ امید را به جای خود نصب کنیم اما بشما نشان بدهیم که قایم چه کسی باشد. اول آن است که: چون به کتابخانه درآید زهراب پاشد. دویم آنکه: در شکارگاه به یک ضرب شمشیر دو جانوار را به دو نیم خواهد کرد. سیم آنکه: در حال نزاع کیا محمد، موزه پوشیده باشد، و نارنجی در دست خود داشته باشد، و از این دست بدان دست [118a] میانداخته باشد.»

[۱۸] تا آنکه حضرت بده سالگی بظاهر رسیدند؛ کیا محمد در کتابخانه بود، که حضرت از در آمده، بر کتابها زهراب **پاشیدند**. آن وعده سیدنا **باطرار** خطور کرد؛ اما چندان اعتماد نبرد. تا بعد از دو سال در سال دیگر، در شکار بودند که گور پیدا شد آبستن بود. حضرت اسب بآن گور دوانید، و بیک ضرب شمشیر او را **زد و بچه او را** که در شکم بود به دو نیم کرد. و چون وعده ظاهر شد.

[۱۹] و رفیقان دانستند که امام ایشان اند. و منتظر می بودند که دیگرچه واقع می شود. تا آنکه یک روز، اکثر رفیقان در حضور کیا محمد بودند، و او با رفیقان از این اسرار حکایت میکرد که: «من آن وعده ها که سیدنا قدس الله روحه کرده بر پسر خود می بینم.» رفیقان گفتند: «آن پسر تو نیست.» در این سخن بودند که مولانا از در آمدند؛ موزه پوشیده بودند؛ و نارنج در دست مبارک خود گرفته داشتند، و برانداخته از این دست بآن دست میگرفتند. کیا محمد را یقین شد

که هر چه هست ایشانند. پس دست در دامن مولانا زد که: «خداوند بر من رحمت کن» مولانا فرمودند که: «تو اهل رحمت نیستی.» گفت: «بر سر کرم تو اعتماد است.» مولانا گفت که: «آن هیجده رفیق که با پدرم شهید کرده نمیگذارند که من بر تو رحمت کنم.» موزه مبارک خود بر سر او نهادند در حال جان بداد.

[۲۰] رفیقان بظهور خداوند شادمانی کردند و جشنی ساختند. و **حز می نمودند**: «سیدنا قدس الله روحه میفرماید که آن امید که بخدا میداری درست اینجا معلوم میشود که رضای برادر مومن رضای خداوند است تقدس ذکره.»

[۲۱] مولانا همه را توفیق [118b] دهد و اتفاق رضاجوئی برادر مومن ارزانی داراد

والسلام

Oh God! Oh Our Lord

Story of Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw

[1] Ḥaẓrat Sayyidnā, may God sanctify his tomb, said to the *Raḥīqān*: “Nāṣir-i Khusraw had told me a story, I will repeat to you” He said: “Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw said: “I had certainty that Mustanṣir bi’llāh is the true imam; however, I wished to listen to and challenge (*mujārāt barāwaram*) his *dā’īs*. I went from Balkh to Egypt. I had been in Egypt for six months but had not been able to see Mustanṣir bi’llāh. One day I was sitting at the door of a friend’s shop, I said to him: “I have been in this city for six months and have not seen the *khalifa*.” He said: “Once a week he comes out of the palace to deal with affairs of state. So many sultans, amirs and others gather that no one is able to see him. However, every year during Nawrūz he goes to the festival at the River Nile, where Mawlānā Ḥākim constructed gardens and planted trees, and remains there for a week. The sultans and amirs who go to him are given robes of honour and they return to the city. In that place [115a] he can be seen.”

[2] Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw said: “I endured another two months until Nawrūz arrived. I went to a place on the road where many of the troops in attendance pass by and as they pass, occasionally, they would look in my direction. One of the troops in attendance said keep that person in a place until we call for him. A man took me to his house until time came for Mawlānā Mustanṣir, peace be on his mention, to return. I went with this man and stood along the road.

[3] Mawlānā Mustanṣir, peace on his mention, arrived; he seemed to me tired of the duties of sultanate and kingship. He went to the door of the shop of an oil-seller (*raḥīq-i rawgangar*). Stretched out on the horse he ordered the *raḥīq*: “Bring me a container of oil.” That *raḥīq* ran into the shop and brought a container of oil and gave it to His Majesty who recited this quatrain:

In the mosque, idol-temple (*but-khāna*) and tavern am I
In both the worlds, the account of mystery (*ḥadīth-i aḥsāna*) am I
In as much the Universal Intellect (*‘Aql-i Kull*) is a servitor of our threshold
With all this I, Mustanṣir, ecstatic am I (*diwāna manam*)

He poured that container of oil on the blessed head and the royal robes he had worn for Nawrūz were covered in oil; the riders and people who were in the procession were covered in oil. Most of the army withdrew from him and the hypocrites called him mad.

[4] After that when he came to the house, he called for, praised and appointed this servant, Nāṣir, to carry out the *da’wa* in the regions of Balkh, Kabul and Badakhshan.

[5] When the time came Mawlānā Mustanşir divided the imperial realm (*wilāyat*) between his sons. Cairo and the environs [115b] he gave to Musta'li and the regions of the Maghrib to Mawlānā Nizār, peace be on his mention, who was his designated son (*farzand-i manşūş*). He commanded: "Be in harmony with each-other and do not go into enmity!" and he passed away.

[6] After some time when many of the nobles went over to Mawlānā Nizār; the hypocrites, detractors and conspirators said to Musta'li: "If you let this brother of yours be this way, soon the city of Cairo will be out of your possession and will join your brother." Musta'li sent a person to Mawlānā Nizār with a message: "Everyone says our father commanded that you would be the ruler and I would be the commander of the forces in your service. The greater good is that you come to the city and take father's place." When the messenger came to Mawlānā Nizār and presented the message, Mawlānā Nizār, peace be on his mention, said to his nobles: "Musta'li's words cannot be relied on and while it is contrary to my own thoughts, however, the greater good is that we go to Cairo." He came to Cairo and after a few days Musta'li sent a man to him with a message: "Leave this worldly drudgery and tribulation to me and recede to your sanctuary (*hajrat*) and stay there."

[7] Mawlānā Nizār went home and called Ḥasan Sa'īd who was a royal slave (*āz khādīmān-khāşş*) of Mawlānā Mustanşir, peace be on his mention, and was now in his service. He asked: "Mawlānā Mustanşir, peace be on his mention, on a certain date and day had written a letter, put his seal on it and had given it to you. Do you have it?" He said: "Yes."

He commanded: "Bring it." Ḥasan Sa'īd brought the letter to Mawlānā Nizār. [116a] Mawlānā Nizār tore open the letter and gave it back. Mawlānā Mustanşir, peace be on his mention, had written in his own blessed hand: "My designated son (*farzand-i manşūş*) is Nizār. Whoever wishes for the path of Truth (*rāh-i Haqq*) should obey him."

Ḥasan Sa'īd prostrated before him and said: "I obey and am at your command in whatever you order."

[8] Mawlānā Nizār, peace be on his mention, ordered: "Go and buy ten horses, shoe them backwards and come for the evening prayer." Ḥasan, as ordered, bought ten horses, shod them backwards and brought them to Mawlānā Nizār, peace be on his mention. That evening, His Lordship along with his two sons and Ḥasan departed from Cairo towards the Nile and arrived at the house of a hermit (*rāhib*).

The hermit came out and said: "Are you Mawlānā Nizār?"

He said: "Yes."

He said: "With two children?"

He said: "Yes."

He said: "Is Ḥasan Sa'īd with you?"

He said: "Yes."

The hermit went into the house; [Nizār] asked him: “How did you come to know that I am Nizār with my children?”

The hermit said: “Mawlānā Mustanşir had given part of this district as an *iqṭāʿ* to me and had instructed me that: ‘on a certain night Mawlānā Nizār with his children and Ḥasan Saʿīd will come to your place; do not hesitate in obeying him!’ I have been waiting this evening to this hour. If you had not come, I would have become suspicious. Now whatever you command I will obey.”

Mawlānā Nizār said: “We wish to stay here for several days. Our secret must be kept from the people.”

[9] After some days they set out for Baghdad, however, after a little while Mustaʿlī came to know [116b] that they were in Baghdad. He sent someone to the caliph [with a message:] “My brother Nizār with his children has come to that region. You must send him here. If you do not act, we will send our army and ruin Baghdad.” When this news reached Baghdad, Mawlānā Nizār went to Egypt, when he reached the district of *Khūzistān*, he sent Mawlānā Hādī, who was his own son, with Ḥasan Saʿīd, who accompanied him to the fortress of Alamūt to Sayyidnā, God sanctify his soul, and himself went to Cairo. Mustaʿlī, may he be cursed, martyred Mawlānā Nizār. In Egypt two groups appeared and a great chaos ensued. One of the groups turned towards Mawlānā Nizār in Cairo and were called “the just on behalf of the family” (*ʿādil-i ḥaqq al-āhl*).

[10] After Mawlānā Hādī headed to Alamūt and arrived in a district there, he sent Ḥasan Saʿīd to inform Sayyidnā of his arrival and instructed him to tell Sayyidnā: “Keep our secret from the people; this is for the good of all the world (*ṣalāḥ-i kull-i ʿālam*).”

[11] When he received the news, Sayyidnā went out to meet him and told the *Raḥīqān*: “This man, a sayyid, has come from the Kaʿba.” When Mawlānā came to the fortress, no one other than Sayyidnā and Ḥasan Saʿīd were informed of the situation. Sayyidnā acted in accord with his *commands and decrees (amr wa farmān)* and the *Raḥīqān*, [in turn,] acted in accord with Sayyidnā’s *decrees (farmān)*.

[12] Once when Sayyidnā was with Mawlānā—Mawlānā said that after you there will be discord. Ḥaẓrat Sayyidnā was bewildered by this. He left [117a] and that day and night was distressed and in contemplation. Later he went [to Mawlānā Hādī], made a prostration and said: “Oh Mawlānā, disclose the secret to me.” Mawlānā told Sayyidnā. He came away and asked for a basin and a dagger. He had four sons; separately he cut off each one’s head with his blessed hand. He proclaimed to the *Raḥīqān*: “I killed my four sons because you should seek after the son of Mawlānā who is the true imam (*imām-i ḥaqq*) and should not go astray.”

[13] When the time (*maḥill*) came, **by a miracle** (*maḥall-i karāmat*), he appointed Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd in his place in accord with the **command** (*farmān*) of Mawlānā. Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd also acted in accord with the **command** (*farmān*) of Mawlānā. When Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd passed away, his son, Kiyā Muḥammad, took his place. He was not aware of the true circumstances and secrets of Mawlānā (*ḥāl wa āsrār-i Mawlāna waqūf bar āṣl nabūd*).

[14] Mawlānā Hādī when he came to the fortress had told the people: “I have come to instruct Sayyidnā.” He put together a treatise on how to instruct the teachers. After him Mawlānā Muhtadī said: “I am a teacher.” He put together a treatise for the teachers to follow and on how the teacher should act as father to the community (*jama‘at*). After that in another **embodiment** (*jāma*) Mawlānā Qāhir, peace be on his mention, said: “I am the *Ḥujjat* of the Imam.” A treatise was put together that **“all that is — it is the imam”** (*har chi hast īn imāmist*). The evidence of imamate he said, Sayyidnā had proclaimed, is this, three nights that the exotericists (*āhl-i dhāhir*) say that **after** the rising of the Resurrection (*tulū‘-yi-qiyāmat*) are the three nights of manifestation of the Lord, peace be on his mention (*khudāwand li-dhikrihi-l-salām*).”

[15] Some of the *Raḥiqān* knew [117b] that the imam is Mawlānā Qāhir. Kiyā Muḥammad had not heard this matter (*ma‘nī*) such that he was ignorant of him (*jahal-jali-yī ‘ū būd*). He was by nature opposed to the essence of the imam (*dhāt-i imām*). He was suspicious of the imam such that one day when Mawlānā arrived with eighteen companions; that unfortunate pursued the companions and treated them as the accursed (*malā‘īn*). They martyred His Majesty and the eighteen companions who were with him.

[16] The Lady of the Qiyāmat (*khātūn-i Qiyāmat*) was pregnant at the time; that unfortunate (*badbakht*) took the Lady to his own house and said: “When the pregnant Lady delivers if the child is male he is to be killed.” In that house, his own wife was also pregnant. By destiny and Divine decree (*qadhā wa chunīn taqdīr shud*) the pregnant Lady and his wife both gave birth at the same time. The pregnant Lady carried that very Lord (*ham-ān khudāvand*) who became manifest (*ki dhuhūr farmūdand*) and the wife of that unfortunate had a daughter. Since she was a believer, she brought her own daughter and placed her next to the Lady and His Majesty was placed next the woman. That unfortunate was informed that the Lady gave birth to a girl and His Majesty was portrayed as his own son.

[17] At the time of the passing of Sayyidnā, the *Raḥiqān* said to him: “You had proclaimed that ‘I will guide you to the Qā‘īm.’”

He said: “By order and direction of Mawlānā, I have heard, that I must appoint Kiyā Buzurg Ummīd in my place; however, I will give you indication of who the Qā‘īm is. First, when he will enter the library, **he will urinate** (*chun ba kitābkhāna dar āyad zahrāb pāshad*). Second, during a hunt he will split two animals in half with a single stroke of a sword. Third, during the controversy of Kiyā Muḥammad (*dar ḥāl-i nizā‘-yi Kiyā Muḥammad*) he will be wearing boots and

have an orange in his hand and will be throwing the orange from one hand to the other.” [118a]

[18] When His Majesty was ten years old, he became outwardly manifest (*ba-dhāhir rasidand*). Kiyā Muḥammad was in the library, when His Majesty entered through the door and **he urinated on the books**. That prophecy of Sayyidnā came to pass; however, he did not believe it. After another two years, when hunting, a pregnant wild ass appeared; His Majesty chased after it and struck it with his sword and cut the foal which was in the belly into two and so the [second] prophecy became apparent.

[19] The Rafiqān knew he was the imam and were awaiting what else would happen. One day, many Rafiqān were in the presence of Kiyā Muḥammad and he was telling them of these mysteries that “I see Sayyidnā’s prophecies, may God sanctify his soul, in my own son.” The Rafiqān said: “This is not your son.”

As they were in this conversation, Mawlānā came through the door and was wearing boots and had an orange in his blessed hand and was throwing it from one hand to the other. Kiyā Muḥammad became certain of **all that is—he is (*har chi hast ishānand*)**. He took Mawlānā’s skirt in his hand and said: “My Lord (*Khudāwand*) have mercy on me.”

Mawlānā replied: “You are not of the people of mercy.”

He said: **“I commit myself to your generosity (*bar sar-i karam-i tu ītmādist*).”**

Mawlānā said: “Because of those eighteen companions whom you martyred along with my father it is not possible for me to have mercy on you.”

He crushed his head with his blessed boot and Kiyā Muḥammad died immediately.

[20] The Rafiqān celebrated the manifestation of the imam (*dhuhūr-i khudāwand*) and organised a feast. **They exclaimed:** “Sayyidnā, may God sanctify his soul, had proclaimed that ‘the hope that you have from God will be known when the pleasure of the brother-believer (*riḍāi-yi birādar-mu’min*) is the pleasure of the imam (*riḍāi-yi khudāwand*), may God sanctify his mention.”

[21] May Mawlānā grant everyone Divine guidance (*tawfiq*) and harmony (*ittifāq*) to seek the pleasure of the brother-believer.

Peace!

T-III. *Dawr-i Kashf wa Dawr-i Satr*

Institute of Ismaili Studies Persian MS 32 tract 56 folios 112b-114b.

Authorship: Unknown

Karim Javan Handlist No: 56 MSS. No: 32¹:

Title: [*Dawr-i Kashf wa Dawr-i Satr* دور كشف و دور ستر]

Author: Anon

Content: This is a very short *risāla* on *satr* and *kasf*. (sic) It could be a letter as well, written by a *da'ī* or another dignitary. There are some quotations from 'Alā Dhikri al-Salām, Hasan Sabbah in the text on this subject.

Volume: N/A

Incipit: *aṣḥāb-i da'wat-i muḥiqq-i rūzigār rā ma'lūm ast ki dar waqt-i*

اصحاب دعوت محقق روزگار را معلوم است که در وقت دور كشف و دور ستر

Copyist: Ishāq Ghufrānī²

Date: Undated

Physical Description: Fol. 112b—114b; in black ink, Nasta'liq (very crude); Folio size: 18 × 15 cm; text size: 16.5 × 11.5 cm; 14 line per page; bound in thick parchment and cardboard.

References: None

Studies: None

¹ Javan. *Catalogue*. p. 66

² Badakhchani gives the copyist's name as Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ghufrānī. HB. p. 40

اللهم یا مولانا

[۱] اصحاب دعوت محق روزگار را معلوم است که در وقت دور کشف و دور ستر و تقیه مولانا لذکره السلام حکمتهای حقیقی و اسرار الهی باشد که عقل و وهم و حس [113a] هیچ خلق او را که آن نتواند کرد و هنگام ظهور شکلی و معنوی را زمانی معین بعلم عالم و صفات باشد. مثالش آنکه چون آفتاب بر عالم جسمانی غایب بود ماه و ستارگان هر یکی را در حد خود روشنای باشد و بوقت طلوع آفتاب، ماه و ستارگان نور ندهند یعنی همه اصحاب مراتب پوشیده باشند و نور ندهند و باشد که دعوت مبارک از زبانهای خلق باز پوشند چنانچه **بروزگار** مولانا علی لذکره السلام سلمان کشف دعوت نمی فرمود. درین عهد بزرگوار با این همه حجتهای الهی که با بندگان دعوت تقریر کرده اند، گنجهای روحانی سر بگشاده.

[۲] نمی باید که بندگان دعوت را شبهه باشد و **بجمل و حرز** حرکاتی پیش گیرند که **باید** کار مخالفان باشد و بیدنامی و **دشمنی، گامی** و خلل دین و دنیا باز گردد که حکم ستر و تقیه را **عبد الله حاکم حنا حق صاحب قوف** اراست. پس واجب آنست که بندگان دعوت حکم ستر و تقیه خداوند حق را نگاه دارند و **پی** امر بزرگوارش اظهار کشف روا ندارند و با جماعت او باشند و بصواب **دید [۱] ار می** ناقص خود حاکمی و معلمی **نا ندازند** تا از استقامت در ضلالت نیفتد که معرفت امام زمان به ملاقات جسمانی تعلق ندارد و همه روزگار هر وقت که شخص امام از چشم خلق مستور بوده باشد بزرگان **دین [113b]** دعوت حق بموجب نص قرآن با متعلمان تقریر کرده اند و ایشان را با خود نگذاشته تا شک و شبهه حجاب اعتقادشان نشود و شیاطین الجن و الانس در لباس دعوت خود را باز نتوانند **نمود** و جماعت را از روزگار مولانا **علی لذکره** السلام ضعیفانرا شبهتها **رد می** نموده است.

[۳] و نادانان نه امام را امام تصور کرده اند و غیبت حضور مبارکش کنند و سابقان از وجه حقیقت و یگانگی و موحدان او را بنور او می شناسند و همه روزگارشان ساعات **فجرست** و از کشف و تقیه **فارقتند** چنانکه یکی از اهل حقیقت گوید: حضور [و] غیبت شکلی بهیچ باز **مبند** به **پیش** مرد قیامت چه غیبت چه حضور

[۴] اگر کسی را معرفت حقیقی حاصل نباشد و پیوسته ملازم و مجاور و خدمتگار امام زمان باشد و رسم صورت او را معین **دارد** تا بخداوند حق مصافت دور باشد چنانکه فرموده اند **کَمَا قَرِيبٌ مِّنَّا بَعِيدٌ مِّنَّا وَ كَم بَعِيدٌ مِّنَّا قَرِيبٌ مِّنَّا**

یعنی گر در یمنی که با منی پیش منی **که** نزد منی چو پی منی در یمنی. علی لذکره السلام میفرماید که من نزدیک دوستان خودم بهر جا که مرا طلبند آنجا باشم دوستان من می باید که با یکدیگر متفق باشند و **بسخن دونان** مبالغات نکنند و بدانند که نیکی چیست و بدی چه تا پس از آن در نیکی کردن جهد نمایند و از بدی کردن **تبرا** نمایند نیکی ظاهر آن است که کسی مولانا را دوست دارند و نیکی [114a] حقیقی آنکه کمال سرمدی جاودانی لایزالی حاصل آید آنست که بفرمان

بود و بفرمان بسته بود و بفرمان کرده شود و هر چه خواه گیرد بدین محض آنکه نعوذ بالله که بفرمان کرده نشود به چه خواه گیر پس هر چه بهوا و مراد خود کنیم هیچ کار نخواهد آمدن و همان چیز که چون بفرمان کنیم دین باشد .

[۵] علی ذکره السلام میفرماید که اگر کسی دعوی کند که معرفت من خدای تعالی خالص است باید که عملش هم **اورا** خالص بود و چون این دعوی کند عملشها برآزای این هر دو مرتبه بسوی او خالص بود او را تعالی و تقدس شناسند و هیچ دیگر نه او را خواهد و هیچ دیگر نه آنکس که اینچنین بکند و باین مرتبه بزید او از دنیا **برسته** باشد و بآخرت پیوسته و از دوزخ **برسته** و به بهشت رسیده و از خودی و نیستی خود باز رسته باشد و به هستی او عز و علا **بست** و **باقی ببقاء باقی** شود . بدان بنزدیکان نتوانند پیوست و تا از خودی خود **نبرد** با **وحی** او نرسد .

[۶] سیدنا قدس الله **روحنه** میفرماید که بهر حال از جماعت امام باید بودن که اگر کسی **بخود و اینک** باو کارهای نیک کند چون از جماعت امام نباشد نیامرزشدش و کارهای بد کرده باشد و چون از جماعت **امام** بود بیامرزشدش و این از جماعت بودن این میخواهند که بشنوند و در میان با ایشان باشند و نشینند و بدل مولانا را دانند که کجا است نعت بالله اینکس چون از جماعت نتواند بودن از جماعت بودن این میخواهند که همچنانکه بزرگان دین اند [114b] اندیشه گفتار و کردار و اقوال و اعمال در امر و فرمان خداوند خود آراسته دارند اینکس همچنان کند تا از جماعت باشد و اگر نه نتواند بودن، **آهوی** مشکین نگردد گر به کز **بهر بهر** ناگهان دزدیده در دکان عطاران شود، بدل و همه اعضا از جماعت باید بودن

[۷] آنگاه چیز دیگر در حاجت میخواهیم از **نو** داری ما را راه راست و توفیق دهی ما را در فرمان برداران از آنکس براه راست بدارد و ما **همه** ضعیفترین و ذلیلترین و عاجزترین **همه** خلقان
یا علی مدد

Oh God! Oh Our Lord

[1] The people of the rightful *da'wa* of the age (*aṣḥāb-i da'wat-i muḥiqq-i rūzgār*) know that in the era of disclosure (*kashf*) and the era of concealment (*satr*) and dissimulation (*taqiyya*) of *Mawlānā*, on whose mention be peace, wisdom of reality (*ḥikmat-hā-yi ḥaqīqī*) and divine secrets (*āsrār-i illahī*) can not be apprehended through the intellect (*'aql*), conjecture (*wahm*) and perception (*ḥiss*) [113a] of each creature (*khalq* here = person). The duration of the form and essence of manifestation (*ḥanḡām-i zuḥūr-i shaklī wa ma'nawī*) is fixed in time by universal knowledge and attributes (*'ilm-i 'ālam wa ṣifāt*). Its similitude is that when the sun is concealed (*ghāyib*), the moon and stars, each within their own limits are luminous. When the sun is risen, the moon and stars do not give light—that is all the people of gradations (*aṣḥāb-i marātib*) are concealed and do not emit light. The blessed *da'wa* is masked on the tongues of the people (*khalq*) in the way that *Salmān*, during the lifetime of *Mawlānā 'Alī*, peace be on his mention, did not disclose the *da'wa*. In that great era (*'ahd-i buzurgwār*), all the divine proofs (*ḥujjat-hā-yi illahī*) which were established with the servants of the *da'wa*, became spiritual treasures (*qanjhā-yi rūḡhānī*).

[2] The servants of the *da'wa* (*bandagān-i da'wat*) should not have any doubts or take refuge in foolishness, that the efforts of the opponents (*mukhālifān*), or that disrepute, misfortune, and confusion in religion and the world (*khalal-i dīn wa dunyā*) return—when 'Abd Allāh, the governor of Truth (*ḥākim-i ḥaqq*), the master of the path (*ṣāhib-i qūf*) orders the command of concealment and dissimulation (*ḥukm-i satr wa taqiyya*).³ Then it is obligatory for the servants of the *da'wa* to observe the order of the concealment and dissimulation of the Lord of Truth (*khudāwand-i ḥaqq*) and without the command of his learned ones must not unveil the disclosure (*aẓhar-i kashf*). They should be [one] with his *jamā'at* (community). For the benefit of the visual encounter (*dīdārī*) they should not be deficient in self control and knowledge so that deviation does not come about (*istqāmat dar ḡalālat ni-uftad*) since the knowledge of the imam of the age (*ma'rifat-i imām-i zamān*) is not dependent on the physical encounter (*mulāqāt-i jismānī*). In every age at every time when the person of the imam is concealed from the eyes of the people (*khalq*), the learned of the faith [113b] of the *da'wa* of Truth (*buzurgwār-i dīn-i da'wat-i ḥaqq*) by means of proofs from the Qur'ān (*naṣṣ-i qur'ān*) have explained (*taqrīr kardi-and*) to the scholars. They did not accept them (the scholars) among themselves until doubt no longer veiled their belief, and the wicked demons and humans (*shiyātīn al-jinn wa'l-ins*)—in the cloak of their own *da'wa* could not again appear and the doubts of group of weak ones from the era of *Mawlānā 'Alā dhikri-hi'l-salām*⁴ were refuted.

[3] The ignorant (*nādānān*) did not recognise the imam as imam (*na imām rā imām taṣawwur kardi-and*) and speak ill of his holy presence (*ghībat-i ḡuzūr-i mubārakish kunand*). Those who went before (*sābiqān*), by way of truth, unity and who believe in the Oneness of God (*muwaḡḡidān*) know him through his Light (*ba-nūr-i ū-rā mī shanāsand*). All their lives/eras are

³ This passage is difficult to decipher and the meaning is unclear. Reading as *ḥākim-i ḥaqq*

⁴ Reading *Mawlānā 'Alā dhikrihi'l-salām* instead of *Mawlānā 'Alī li-dhikrihi'l-salām* given the context the imam *Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām* is most likely intended and not 'Alī. It is possible that a scribe, not fully versed with Arabic, may have interpolated the preposition *li* which then results in the two prepositions 'alā and *li* (on and upon) and since the reading *Mawlānā 'Alī li-dhikrihi'l-salām* is viable, later copyists maintained such a reading.

the hour of dawn (*sā'at-i fajrist*) and are free from disclosure and dissimulation (*āz kashf wa taqīya fāriḡhand*) as one of the people of Truth has said:

The manifestation and occultation are never bound
In the presence of the Man of Resurrection
what is occultation and what is manifestation
Ḥuṣūr [wa] ḡhaybat shaklī ba-hīch bāz maband
Ba pīsh-i mard-i qiyāmat chi ḡhaybat wa chi ḡṣūr

[4] If one has not attained the knowledge of Truth (*ma'rifat-i ḡaqīqī*) s/he must follow the courtier (*mulāzim*), officer (*mujāwir*) and servant (*khidmatḡār*) of the imam of the time. His manner of appearance is determined as the Lord of Truth (*khudāwand-i ḡaqq*) opens up the era (*muṣāfat-i dawr*) as it has been decreed: "that which is close to us yet far from us, just as it is far from us yet is close to us." That is: If you are on the right hand, you are with me, in front of me, and near me, similarly behind me on the right side.

'*Alā li-dhikri-hi'l-salām*⁵ proclaimed that: "I am near to my friends; where ever they seek me I am there. My friends are those who unite with each other and pay no heed to the words of the despicable. They know what is good and what is bad such that they strive to do good (*dar nīkī kardan jīḡad numāyand*) and abjure doing bad (*az badī kardan tabarrā numāyand*)." Goodness is the manifestation of the person who loves Mawlānā. [114a] True goodness (*nīkī-yi ḡaqīqī*) which attains perfection of perpetual everlasting eternity (*sarmadī-yi jāwidānī-yi lā-yazālī*) is that which is by the *farmān* (command [of the imam]), is tied to the *farmān* and done in accord with the *farmān*. Whatever is done for one's own desires, we seek refuge in God, and is not in accord with the *farmān*—then whatever we do according to our own desire and wish, nothing will come of it; and what we do in accord with the *farmān* is religion (*dīn bāshad*).

[5] '*Alā li-dhikrihi'l-salām* declared that: "If a person claims that knowledge from God, the Exalted (*ma'rifat min khudā-i ta'ālā*) is pure (*khālīṣ*) then it is necessary that her/his action also be pure. Since s/he makes this claim, her/his actions, on account of the two stations (*martaba* [i.e. this world and the next]), will be pure for her/him and s/he will apprehend the Exalted and Sanctified and will not need another; no one who will do the same and will attain this station. S/he will be released from this world and bound to the next (*ākhirat*); and released from hell and attain heaven. S/he will be liberated from selfhood (*khūdī*) and non-existence of the self (*nīstī-yi khūd*); and her/his being (*ḡastī*) will be in the Glorious and Exalted ('*azz wa 'alā*) and by Eternal Truth will persist [eternally] (*bā ḡaqq-i baḡā'ī bāḡī shawad* lit. remaining with the one who remains). That is why, the near ones (*nazdīkān*) cannot be adhered to. Until the selfhood of the self (*khūdī-yi khūd*) is annihilated, the revelation can not be reached."

[6] Sayyid-na, may God sanctify his soul, decreed that: "In every situation one must be with the *jamā'at* of the imam. That if a person, on their own and with them [*jamā'at*] does good works but is not from the *jamā'at* of the imam do not have compassion towards them; if the person has done bad works but is from the *jamā'at* of the imam be compassionate towards them. Being with the *jamā'at*, they want to hear, be and remain among them, and in their heart know where Mawlānā is. This person who can not be from the *jamā'at*, we seek refuge in God, wants to be with the *jamā'at* in the manner of the learned of the faith (*buzurgwār-i dīn*); [114b] s/he aligns with the *farmān* of the Lord (*khudāwand*) in speech and works and words and actions; this person does this till s/he is with the *jamā'at*. If unable to be so, a musk deer does not become a cat in as much as the sea of seas (*bahr-i bahr*) does not all of a sudden stealthily become a

⁵ See note 2.

perfumery shop (*dukān-i ‘aṭṭārān*). He must be with the *jamā‘at* in heart and body (*ba-dil wa hama ā‘dā* lit. by heart and every member of the body).”

[7] Out of need we beseech that you grant us the right path and divine guidance (*rāh-i rāst wa tawfīq*).

Grant us the ability to carry out the *farmān* in the way of that person who is on the right path.

We are the most feeble ones (*ḍa‘īftarīn*), most contemptible (*ḍalīltarīn*) and most powerless (*‘ājiztarīn*) of creatures.

O ‘Ali, Help! (*Yā ‘Alī Madad*)

Appendix 4a: “Digital Humanities at the End of the World: Methodology and Workflows in the Study of Islamic History and Eschatology”

Refers Back to [Part One:4 Structure and Content of Ilkhanid Histories of Nizari Ismailism](#) p. 184

Appendix 4b: Narrative Segments in Ilkhanid Accounts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ

Refers Back to [Part One:4-III-A. The Chronological Narrative](#) pp 218ff

and [Part One:5-I. Comparison of Ilkhanid Account Narratives of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ](#) pp 237ff

This is a tabulation of the narrative segments which make up the account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ in the three Ilkhanid chronicles. The account was divided into 27 episodes (Sec); the narrative segments which make up these episodes are placed in a sequential order (Seq) such that the relative location of each narrative is synoptical shown in the row as it occurs in the three Ilkhanid chronicle accounts (J-TRG, JT, ZT).

Sec	Seq	Description of Segment	TJG	JT	ZT
A	0	Title and Sources of Information			
A	1	Title	1	1	1
A	2	Juwayni plunders and torches the Library	2		
A	3	<i>Sarguzasht-i Sayyidnā</i> as Source	3	2	2
B	0	Ḥasan's Origins			
B	1	Yemeni origins [TJG: Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ born in Rayy]	4	4	4
B	2	poem [Boyle misread Khatlān ختلان instead of Gilān جیلان]	5		
B	3	Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's name	6	3	3
B	4	Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ rejects proposed genealogy	7	5	9
B	5	Origins and place of birth in Kūfa		6	8
B	6	search for knowledge; father's faith	8	7	10
C	0	Ḥasan becomes Ismaili			
C	1	<i>Da'i</i> Amīra Ḍarrāb	9	8	12
C	2	Nāṣir-i Khusraw		9	5
C	3	Abū 'Alī Simjūr		10	6
C	4	Naṣr II b. Aḥmad II + Bukharans		11	7
C	5	Truth in Islam		12	13
C	6	Ismailism = philosophy		13	14
C	7	Amīra's arguments wounded HS' belief		14	15
C	8	HS claimed "Ismailis die the death of heathens"		15	16
C	9	HS saw group of Ismailis drinking		16	17
C	10	Amīra's <i>ilzām</i>		17	18
C	11	proof of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far's imamate in books		18	19
C	12	hidden imams		19	20
C	13	illness + Divine conversion	10	20	21
C	14	<i>Da'i</i> Bū Najm Sarrāj	11	21	
C	15	<i>Da'i</i> Mu'min	12	22	22
D	0	Ḥasan goes to Egypt			
D	1	<i>Da'i</i> 'Aṭṭāsh + deputation	13	23	23

D	2	HS fell out with Niẓām al-Mulk			24
D	3	HS moves to Isfahan		24	25
D	4	Travel to Egypt	14	25	26
D	5	Niẓām al-Mulk on look out			27
D	6	departs Isfahan			28
D	7	Mayafariqin		26	29
D	8	debate on <i>ijtihād</i>		27	30
D	9	evicted from Mayyāfāriqin		28	31
D	10	route to Damascus		29	32
D	11	Aqsiz (Atsiz) at Damascus		30	33
D	12	route to Cairo		31	34
D	13	reception at Cairo		32	35
D	14	Cairo arrival date		33	36
E	0	Ḥasan in Egypt			
E	1	Mustanşir		34	37
E	2	number of years in Cairo	15	35	38
E	3	did not see Mustanşir	16	36	39
E	4	Mustanşir foretold HS great works + Nizaris will attain great renown		37	
E	5	jealousy of Badr and al-Must'alī + second naṣṣ to al-Musta'li	17	38	40
E	6	Badr all powerful		39	41
E	7	preaching for Nizār		41	42
E	8	Governorship of Damietta as prison		42	
E	9	Daylamis in Cairo		43	43
E	10	al-Must'alī wanted to send him off to Damietta		44	44
E	11	al-Mustanşir did not allow			45
E	12	miraculous collapse of tower		45	46
F	0	Ḥasan returns to Iran			
F	1	shipped off to west ends up in Syria	18	45	46
F	2	Mustanşir's miraculous prediction of stormy conditions		46	47
F	3	return trip to Iran	19	47	48
F	4	34 months in Egypt [or 35 months of which 18 months in Cairo]		48	49
F	5	Isfahan		49	
F	6	return trip to Iran		50	50
F	7	sent <i>da'is</i> to Alamut region	20	51	51
F	8	Niẓām al-Mulk and Bū Muslim Rāzī on look out	20	52	52
F	9	Rayy to Qazwīn		53	53

F	10	Governor of Alamut, 'Alawī evicts Ismailis from fortress	22	54	54
F	11	sent <i>da'is</i> to Alamut region		55	55
F	12	route to Alamut	23	56	56
F	13	Yuruntash's son protege of HS			58
G	0	Hasan at Alamut			
G	1	Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ enters Alamut	24	57	59
G	2	Eagle's Nest + chronogram 483	21	58	60
G	3	HS adopts name: Dihkhudā			61
G	4	poem			62
G	5	HS draws followers			63
G	6	Cheque to Rā'is Muẓaffar	25	59	64
G	7	'Alawī sceptical about HS's cheque for purchase of Alamut	26		65
G	8	HS evicted opponents from Alamut			66
G	9	rebuilt Alamut		60	67
G	10	stream runs through it [see I2]		61	68
G	11	sent off <i>da'is</i> from Alamut		62	69
H	0	Ta'lim			
H	1	Doctrine of <i>ta'lim</i>	27	63	70
H	2	intellect not enough to know God	28	64	71
H	3	HS set up syllogism to argue his position	29	65	72
H	4	reason insufficient to know God	30	66	73
H	5	reason insufficient to know God		67	
H	6	reason insufficient to know God		68	
H	7	argument against HS position	31		
H	8	example of individual access to Truth	32		
H	9	purpose of <i>ta'lim</i> to prevent use of intellect and acquisition of knowledge	33		
I	0	Expanding reach of the <i>Da'wa</i>			
I	1	consolidation of region of Alamut	34	69	74
I	2	channels for water [see G10]		70	75
I	3	1091-92 Ḥusayn Qā'inī to Quhistān as deputy	37	71	78
I	4	Ḥusayn Qā'inī successors		72	
I	5	Ḥusayn Qā'inī consolidates Quhistān		73	
J	0	Ismaili Threat -- Saljuq response			
J	1	Yuruntash's siege of Alamut	35	74	76
J	2	Baladat al-Iqbāl	36	75	77
J	3	Qizil-Sarūgh sent to besiege Nizaris in Quhistān	40	76	80

J	4	da'wa expanded	41		79
J	5	Arslān-Tāsh sent to besiege Alamut; 300 supporters to the rescue HS	38	77	81
J	6	after defeat of Saljuqs, booty brought up to the castle		78	82
J	7	Malikshāh perturbed	39	79	83
J	8	death of Malikshāh [cf 98]			84
K	0	Nizām al-Mulk Assassinated			
K	1	Nizām al-Mulk saw the threat of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's da'wa	42	80	85
K	2	organised fidā'is	43	81	
K	3	Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ sought volunteer to kill Nizām al-Mulk		82	86
K	4	Bū Ṭāhir Arrānī killed Nizām al-Mulk	44	83	87
K	5	first killing = Nizām al-Mulk		84	89
K	6	poem		85	88
L	0	Three School Fellows Story			
L	1	three school fellows		86	91
L	2	HS escapes to da'wa		87	92
L	3	HS escapes to Rayy		88	93
L	4	return from Egypt to Isfahan	45		
M	0	Second Story of Journey to Egypt and Back			
M	1	refuge ... Rā'is Abū al-Faḍl thought HS to be mad... begins to treat him	46	89	94
M	2	HS upon discovery of treatment, leaves Rā'is Abū al-Faḍl's home	47	90	95
M	3	Went to Egypt, returned to Alamut and began the <i>fitna</i> ; TJG: HS went to Kirmān	48	91	96
N	0	Deaths of Nizām al-Mulk (2.0) and Malikshah			
N	1	HS ordered Nizām al-Mulk's death	49	92	97
N	2	death of Malikshāh	50	93	98
N	3	poem		94	100
N	4	Saljuq realm into chaos	51	95	99
N	5	Rā'is Abū al-Faḍl at Alamut, apologises to Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ	52	96	102
N	6	Nizām al-Mulk's two sons attacked	53	97	103
O	0	Saljuqs in Chaos -- Ismailis become Powerful			
O	1	HS became powerful and support of the weak and marginalised			101
O	2	strategy of assassination	54	98	104
O	3	Upon Malikshāh's death—army dispersed; castles re-stocked		99	
O	4	castellans at Lamasar join Rafiqān		100	105
O	5	Rafiqān forces capture Andjarūd		101	106
O	6	Rafiqān battle for Ṭāliqān		102	107
O	7	Rafiqān attack Qazwīn		103	108

O	8	Rafiqān victorious		104	109
O	9	Rafiqān captured Pādishāh Shikhusraw		105	110
O	10	named individuals in fighting		106	111
P	0	Conquest of Lamasar			
P	1	castellans at Lamasar wanted to switch allegiance		107	112
P	2	da'wa flourished	61		
P	3	Lamasar; Buzurg Ummīd	62	108	113
P	4	renovations at Lamasar		109	114
P	5	consolidated Lamasar area		110	115
P	6	Buzurg Ummīd ruled Lamasar for 20 years	63		
Q	0	Conquest of Girdkūh			
Q	1	fear and danger for rulers near and far	55		
Q	2	chaos of wars between Bark-yāruq and Muḥammad b. Malikshāh	56	111	116
Q	3	Rā'is Muẓaffar an Ismaili		112	117
Q	4	Girdkūh given to Amīrdād by Bark-yāruq		113	118
Q	5	Girdkūh transferred to Amīrdād		114	119
Q	6	Rā'is Muẓaffar patronised by Saljuq amirs		115	120
Q	7	Opposition to Amīrdād at court		116	121
Q	8	Rā'is Muẓaffar adopted Amīrdād		117	122
Q	9	Girdkūh renovated and in Rā'is Muẓaffar's control	57	118	122
Q	10	Rā'is Muẓaffar declared his belief [heresy, etc]	58		
Q	11	death of Amīrdād		119	123
Q	12	dug wells 300 gaz deep	60	120	124
Q	13	Spent 75 000 dinars in service of the da'wa		121	125
Q	14	Rā'is Muẓaffar ruled Girdkūh for 40 years	59	122	126
R	0	Sanjar's Relations with Nizaris			
R	1	Sanjar at Girdkūh		123	127
R	2	Amīrs demanded Amīrdād's property		124	128
R	3	Rā'is Muẓaffar proclaims that Girdkūh residents subjects of the Sultan		125	129
R	4	Sanjar honoured Rā'is Muẓaffar and affirmed Girdkūh to him		126	130
R	5	Sanjar's relations with Nizaris; M b. Malikshāh's will to Sanjar			131
R	6	death of Rā'is Muẓaffar in 1105 [erroneous dating]		127	132
R	7	Rā'is Sharaf al-Dīn b. Muẓaffar ruler of Girdkūh—hereditary succession		128	133
S	0	Barkyaruq and the Nizaris			
S	1	Bark-yāruq's close relations with the Ismailis		129	134

S	2	Nizari dā'ī openly preaching at Bark-yāruq's court		130	135
S	3	dā'ī executed by wazīr who was assassinated in retaliation		131	136
T	0	Ismailis at Isfahan			
T	1	Ismailis in Isfahan		132	137
T	2	Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Malik 'Aṭṭāsh seized Shāhdiz		133	138
T	3	Ibn 'Aṭṭāsh set up as ruler of Shāhdiz		134	139
T	4	M b. Malikshah vs Nizaris		135	140
T	5	Ibn 'Aṭṭāsh issues <i>fatwā</i> that Nizaris subjects of the Saljuqs and a community among the Muslims		136	141
T	6	Shafī'ī 'alim opposed <i>ijmā'</i> to accept Nizaris because of their imam		137	142
T	7	Sultan intensified siege; offered Khan Alanjan		138	143
T	8	Ibn 'Aṭṭāsh killed; wazīr executed and purge of Saljuq leaders		139	144
T	9	List of other Nizari fortresses in contention		140	145
T	10	Nizaris attack Bayhaq and Rayy		141	146
U	0	Sanjar's Relations with Nizaris (2.0)			
U	1	Sanjar unable to overpower the Rafīqān; sent army to Quhistān; rejected overtures for peace; HS won over Sultan's courtiers; dagger in ground story; threat of dagger in heart; Sanjar afraid; inclined to peace; reason for good relations; Sanjar's <i>firman</i> s	75	142	147
V	0	Factionalism in HS's Family			
V	1	dā'ī Ḥusayn Qā'ini murdered; HS's son Ustād Ḥusayn executed for murder; a year later Zaydi claimant 'Alawi and son actually found responsible and executed for Ḥusayn Qā'ini's murder	64	143	148
V	2	Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ executed his son Muḥammad accused of drinking	66	144	150
V	3	claimed executions show <i>da'wa</i> not for his own purposes	67	145	151
V	4	at time of siege sent his wife and daughters to Girdkūh—set a pattern for other Ismaili leaders	68	146	152
V	5	HS adhered to <i>shari'a</i> ; no-one made/sold/consumed alcohol for 38 years of his reign [TJG: 35 years]	65	147	149
W	0	Saljuq Sieges of Alamut and Quhistani Fortresses			
W	1	'Alī Nustagīn to Sanjar complaining about Nizari power		148	153
W	2	siege of Alamut by Aḥmad b. Nizām al-Mulk under M b. Malikshāh	69	149	154
W	3	al-Mustaẓhir became caliph		150	155
W	4	famine at Alamut, Rafīqān ate grass; sent womenfolk elsewhere	70	151	156
W	5	8 year-siege of Rūdbār crops burnt	71		
W	6	strategy of assassination		152	157
W	7	Saljuq attack turned back by wind and sun in their faces	72	153	158
W	8	Saljuqs almost entered castle			159

W	9	Saljuq army defeated; Alī Nustagīn		154	160
W	10	Saljuq offensive 1109		155	161
W	11	betrayal of Amīr Ishāq		156	162
W	12				163
X	0	Theological Debates as part of Saljuq Siege Tactics			
X	1	theological debates at Alamut		157	164
X	2	siege of Lamasar then Alamut; M b. Malikshāh died—army dispersed; castles re-stocked	73	158	165
X	3	fortune has limited term; Mongols “more powerful” than Saljuqs took polity in one week where Saljuqs were unable	74		
X	4	theological debate at Lamasar		159	166
X	5	What is a Muslim debate		160	167
X	6	HS published epistle; imam = scholar; Nizaris community amongst Muslims		161	168
X	7	soldiers cursed Ismailis; Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ proclaimed that the curses should be on the rebels against Sultan		162	169
X	8	famine; hardship; endurance; Saljuqs salute the Nizaris; M b. Malikshāh’s death		163	170
X	9	siege lifted; Rafiqān attacked retreating forces		164	171
X	10	Nizaris extended rule		165	172
X	11	Sanjar re-affirmed peaceful relations		166	173
Y	0	Al-Afdal Assassination			
Y	1	Afḍal b. Badr assassinated		167	174
Z	0	Death and Succession of HS			
Z	1	Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ fell ill	76	168	175
Z	2	appointed Buzurg Ummīd to replace himself	77	169	176
Z	3	Bū ‘Alī Ardistānī on right - head of <i>da’wa</i> and <i>dīwān</i>	78	170	177
Z	4	Ḥasan b. Ādam-i Qaṣrānī on left	79	171	178
Z	5	Kiyā Bū Ja’far in front at head of forces	80	172	179
Z	6	Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ willed: cooperate till Imam comes	81	173	180
Z	7	death of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ	82	174	181
Z	8	Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ only came out of Alamut twice	83	175	182
Z	9	Nizari author-historian’s voice		176	183
Z	10	Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ’s fasting; reading; administering affairs of the polity	84	177	
Z	11	criticises Šabī	85		
ZA	0	List of Assassinations			
ZA	1	About list of assassinations			184
ZA	2	List of Assassinations		178	185

Genealogical Charts

SHĪ'Ī IMĀMS TO THE DEATH OF JA'FAR AL-ŞĀDIQ

Shī'ī Imāms	CE	AH
ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib	632-661	11-40
Al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī	661-669	40-49
Al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī	669-680	49-61
ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn	680-714	61-95
Muḥammad al-Bāqir	714-732	95-114
Ja'far al-Şādiq	732-765	114-148

ISMĀ'ĪLĪ IMĀMS TO THE EMERGENCE OF THE FĀṬIMIDS

Ismā'īlī Imāms	CE	AH
Ismā'īl al-Mubārak	d. after 754	d. after 136
Muḥammad al-Maktūm	?	?
ʿAbd Allāh	?	?
Aḥmad	?	?
Al-Ḥusayn	d. ca. 881	d. ca. 268
ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī	ca. 881-934	ca. 268-322

FĀṬIMID IMĀM-CALIPHS

Fāṭimids Imām Caliphs (fl. 909-1171/297-567)	Reign
Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh al-Mahdī bi’llāh	909-934/297-322
Abū’l-Qāsim Muḥammad al-Qā’im bi-Amr Allāh	934-945/322-334
Abū Ṭāhir Ismā’īl al-Manṣūr bi’llāh	945-952/334-341
Abū Tamīm Ma‘add al-Mu‘izz li-Dīn Allāh	952-975/341-365
Abū Manṣūr Nizār al-‘Azīz bi’llāh	975-996/365-386
Abū ‘Alī al-Manṣūr al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh	996-1021/386-411
Abū’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Zāhir li-‘Izāz Dīn Allāh	1021-1036/411-427
Abū Tamīm Ma‘add al-Mustanṣir bi’llāh	1036-1095/427-487
Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir bi’llāh	1095-1095/487-488
Al-Musta‘lī bi’llāh	1095-1101/487-495
Al-Āmīr bi-Aḥkam Allāh	1101-1130/495-524
Al-Ṭayyib => other hidden Ṭayyibī imams	1130-?/524-?
‘Abd al-Majīd al-Ḥāfiẓ	1130-1149/524-544
Al-Zāfir	1149-1154/544-549
Al-Fā’iz	1154-1160/549-555
Al-‘Āḍid	1160-1171/555-567
Dā’ūd => other Ḥāfiẓī imams	1171-1207/567-604

NIZĀRĪ ISMĀ‘ĪLĪ RULERS

Nizārī Ismā‘īlī Rulers	Reign
Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ	1090-1124/483-518
Buzurg Ummīd	1124-1138/518-532
Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd	1138-1162/532-557
Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām	1162-1166/557-561
Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad	1166-1210/561-607
Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan	1210-1221/607-618
‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad	1221-1255/618-653
Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh	1255-1256/653-654

NIZĀRĪ ISMĀʿĪLĪ IMĀMS

Nizari Imāms	Reign
Nizār b. al-Mustansir bi'llāh	1095-1095/487-488
al-Hādī	1095-?/488-?
al-Muhtadī	?
al-Qāhir	?-1164/?-559
Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām	1164-1166/559-561
Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad	1166-1210/561-607
Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan	1210-1221/607-618
'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad	1221-1255/618-653
Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh	1255-1257/653-655

SALJŪQS

Great Saljūqs (fl. 1040-1194/431-590)	CE	AH
Ṭughril Baig Muḥammad b. Mikā'il b. Saljuq	1040-1063	431-455
Muḥammad Alp Arslān b. Chaghrī Baig Dāwūd	1063-1073	455-465
Malikshāh b. Alp Arslān	1073-1092	465-485
Maḥmūd b. Malikshāh	1092-1094	485-487
Bark-yāruq b. Malikshāh	1094-1105	487-498
Malikshāh b. Bark-yāruq b. Malikshāh	1105-1105	498-498
Muḥammad Tapar b. Malikshāh	1105-1118	498-511
Aḥmad Sanjar b. Malikshāh	1118-1157	511-552
=>Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad Tapar b. Malikshāh	1118-1131	511-525
=>Dāwūd b. Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad Tapar	1131-1132	525-526
=> Ṭughril b. Muḥammad Tapar b. Malikshāh	1132-1135	526-529
=>Mas'ūd b. Muḥammad Tapar b. Malikshāh	1135-1152	529-547
=>Malikshāh b. Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad Tapar	1152-1153	547-548
=> Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad Tapar	1153-1159	548-554
Sulaymānshāh b. Muḥammad Tapar b. Malikshāh	1160-1161	555-556
Arslānshāh b. Ṭughril b. Muḥammad Tapar b. Malikshāh	1161-1176	556-571
Ṭughril b. Arslānshāh b. Ṭughril b. Muḥammad Tapar	1176-1194	571-590

‘ABBĀSID CALIPHS 11-13TH/5-7TH CENTURIES

‘Abbāsid Caliphs 11-13 th /5-7 th Centuries	CE	AH
‘Abdallāh b. al-Qādir, Abū Ja‘far al-Qā‘im	1031-1075	422-467
‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad, Abū’l-Qāsim al-Muqtadī	1075-1094	467-487
Aḥmad b. al-Muqtadī, Abū’l-‘Abbās al-Mustaẓhir	1094-1118	487-512
al-Faḍl b. al-Mustaẓhir, Abū Maṣṣūr al-Mustarshid	1118-1135	512-529
al-Manṣūr b. al-Mustarshid, Abū Ja‘far al-Rashīd	1135-1136	529-530
Muḥammad b. al-Mustaẓhir, Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Muqtafi	1136-1160	530-555
Yūsuf b. al-Muqtafi, Abū’l-Muẓaffar al-Mustanjid	1160-1170	555-566
al-Ḥasan b. al-Mustanjid, Abū Muḥammad al-Mustaḍī	1170-1180	566-575
Aḥmad b. al-Mustaḍī, Abū’l-‘Abbās al-Nāṣir	1180-1225	575-622
Muḥammad b. al-Nāṣir, Abū Naṣr al-Zāhir	1225-1226	622-623
al-Manṣūr b. al-Zāhir, Abū Ja‘far al-Mustanṣir	1226-1242	623-640
‘Abdallāh b. al-Mustanṣir, Abū Aḥmad al-Musta‘īm	1242-1258	640-656

MONGOL KHĀNS

Great Khāns	CE	AH
Chingiz Khān	1206-1227	602-624
Ögedei Khān b. Chingiz	1229-1241	626-639
Töregene Khātūn, widow of Ögedei as regent	1241-1246	639-644
Güyük Khān b. Ögedei	1246-1248	644-646
Oghul Ghaymish, widow of Güyük as regent	1248-1251	646-649
Möngke (Mangū) Khān b. Tuluy	1251-1259	649-657
Qubilay b. Tuluy	1260-1294	657-693
rival: Ariq Böke b. Tuluy (Mongolia)	1260-1264	658-662
Temür Öljeitü b. Chen-chin (Jim Gim) b. Qubilay	1294-1307	693-706
Qayshan Gülük (Hai-shan) b. Darmabala b. Chen-chin	1307-1311	706-711

ILKHANS

Ilkhāns	CE	AH
Hūlāgū b. Tuluy b. Chingiz Khān	1256-1265	654-663
Ābāqā b. Hūlāgū	1265-1282	663-681
Aḥmad Takūdār b. Hūlāgū	1282-1284	681-683
Arghūn b. Ābāqā	1284-1294	683-690
Gaykhatu b. Ābāqā	1291-1295	690-694
Baydū b. Tāraghay b. Hūlāgū	1295-1295	694-694
Maḥmūd Ghāzān b. Arghūn	1295-1304	694-703
Muḥammad Khudābanda Ūljāytū b. Arghūn	1304-1316	703-716
Abū Saʿīd b. Ūljāytū	1316-1335	716-735

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At a higher altitude with flag unfurled
We reached the dizzy heights of that dreamed of world

Encumbered forever by desire and ambition
There's a hunger still unsatisfied
Our weary eyes still stray to the horizon
Though down this road we've been so many times

The grass was greener
The light was brighter
The taste was sweeter
The nights of wonder
With friends surrounded
The dawn mist glowing
The water flowing
The endless river

Forever and ever

Excerpt from "High Hopes"
Pink Floyd, *The Division Bell*. (1994)
Lyrics by David Gilmour and Polly Samson