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THE SYRIAN ISMĀ'ĪLĪS
AT THE TIME OF THE CRUSADES

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Ph.D.
(in Oriental Studies)

in

the University of Durham

by

NASSEH AHMAD MIRZA

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August 1963

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My acknowledgments are due in the first place to Mr. 'Arif Tāmir, who lent me almost all his manuscript collection for the purposes of this thesis; the frequent references throughout the text to these sources are the measure of my indebtedness. To Mr. F.R.C. Bagley of Durham University, who supervised my research for four years with a degree of patience which I was far from deserving, I owe more than it is possible for me to express. To Professor B. Lewis of London University, Dr. S. Trimingham of Glasgow University, Dr. S. Stern of Oxford University and Mr. I.J.C. Foster, Keeper of Oriental Books in the Oriental Section of the University Library, Durham, I also owe thanks for valuable help. Lastly it would be ungracious of me not to recognize my debt to my Druze friends, and in particular Mr. Anwar al-Khalīl.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION.

After the conquest of Northern Syria and Damascus by Sunnī Saljūqs, which was completed between A.D. 1071 and 1079, and the collapse of the Ismā'īlī Fāṭimid Empire in Egypt in A.D. 1171, the followers of the Bāṭinī Islām in Syria no longer had a powerful government to protect them. The most vigorous branch of the Ismā'īlīs now came to be that of the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs, who under the leadership of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ founded a community and a state at Alamūt in Northern Irān whence they challenged the political domination of the Saljūqs and the spiritual domination of the Sunnī Muslims. From Irān fearless and highly intelligent dā'īs (propagandists) carried the Nizārī teaching to Syria and quickly won over the local Ismā'īlī communities to the new movement.

These communities will form the subject of this thesis. They are well-known in the history of the Crusades under the name "Assassins".⁽¹⁾ The medieval Arabic historians called

(1) The term "Assassin" was not used until the fourteenth century. It is believed that it was derived from hashshāsh which is an Arabic word meaning a person who consumes hashīsh, (a narcotic drug); see, Bernard Lewis, "The Sources of the History of the Syrian Assassins" in Speculum 1952, p.475; Sylvestre de Sacy, "Mémorial of the Dynasty of the Assassins and on the Origin of their Name", contained in Joseph von Hammer, History of the Assassins, tr. from German by O.C. Wood, London 1835, pp.227-240.

them "Hashīshiyūn" or more usually "Bāṭinīs".⁽¹⁾ Before these communities are discussed something must be said about their origins.

Ismā'īlīsm is one of the branches of the Shī'a, the movement in support of 'Alī which goes back to the time when Prophet Muḥammad died without designating his successor. The Muslims were divided on the question who should be the leader of the community of the believers after the Prophet. The problem had a largely political aspect but later on gave rise to religious differences. The party led by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb who became the second Caliph after Abū Bakr believed that only the believers themselves had the right to decide who should be the Imām (leader) of the community and the successor (Khalīfa) of Prophet Muḥammad as its political and religious head. The decision must be taken in accordance with the Ijmā' (Consensus of the community). To the Muslims, Muḥammad was Prophet, Prince, Judge, Legislator and Temporal and Spiritual Leader. The supporters of the most generally accepted traditions or "Sunna" came to be known as the Sunnīs and were able to enforce their point of view.

The election of Abū Bakr to succeed Muḥammad deprived the

(1) A Bāṭinī in Arabic means the one who believes in the bāṭin (inner, esoteric) meaning of the apparent text. According to the Ismā'īlīs the sacred books have both exoteric and esoteric meanings. In most cases they attribute more value to the bāṭin (esoteric), which led them to be called Ahl al-Bāṭin (the people who believe in the esoteric interpretation).

latter's cousin and son-in-law 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib of the Caliphate. 'Alī's supporters were to be known as Ahl al-Naṣṣ wa al-Ta'yīn (the people of designation and appointment) or as 'Alī's Party (Shī'at 'Alī). They believed that the leadership belonged to 'Alī who, they said, had been designated by Muḥammad to be his successor.

The institution of the Imamate (al-Imāmah) or spiritual and temporal leadership also raised intricate problems for the Shī'is (Shī'a) themselves and later on led to many divisions and subdivisions among them. Some of the Shī'is did not consider it necessary that the Imām after 'Alī should be a son of Fāṭima, the wife of 'Alī and the beloved daughter of the Prophet. They were known as the Ḥanafīya.⁽¹⁾ 'Alī himself held the Imamate from A.D. 656 to 661 when he was murdered. His eldest son al-Ḥasan waived his right to the Caliphate which had passed into the power of the Umayyad ruler of Syria Mu'āwīya ibn Abī Sufyān. The Shī'is consider al-Ḥasan to have been the second Imām after 'Alī.⁽²⁾ However, the second son

-
- (1) The Ḥanafīya were the followers of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīya (d. A.D. 700-1), a son of 'Alī by another wife and half-brother of his sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn by his wife Fāṭima.
- (2) In most of the Ismā'īlī sources al-Ḥasan's name is mentioned in the genealogical charts of the Imāms as the second Imām. In recent Ismā'īlī works al-Ḥasan is not mentioned as the second Imām and he is considered as being only one of the Ashbāḥ al-Khamsa (the five shadows), namely the Prophet, 'Alī, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Fāṭima. This means that the seventh Imām and the Qā'im al-Muntaẓar (seventh and last Imām of the Cycle) was Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il and not his father Ismā'il ibn Ja'far al-Ṣādiq - see, Bernard Lewis, The Origins of Ismā'ilism, (Cambridge 1940), pp.37-41.

of 'Alī, al-Ḥusayn, rose to defend his right to the Caliphate against Mu'āwiyah's son al-Yazīd. It was al-Ḥusayn's name that history has immortalised as the Martyr of Karbalā'. He was killed while fighting with a small band of loyal supporters against al-Yazīd's troops. To the Shī'īs the date of his death, namely 10th Muḥarram A.H. 61 (October A.D. 680) is a day of intense grief and sorrow. Al-Ḥusayn was succeeded by his son 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn (A.D. 680-713), who was followed by his son Muḥammad al-Bāqir who held the Imamate for nineteen years.

It was during the Imamate of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, who succeeded his father Muḥammad al-Bāqir in A.D. 732, that the first main split among the Shī'īs took place. Ja'far is well-known in the annals of Islamic history as a philosopher and an authority on jurisprudence. After his death in A.D. 765 his son Ismā'il was not recognised by a large group of the Shī'īs who held that Ismā'il had been disinherited by his father, and they proclaimed his younger brother Mūsā to be the successor of Ja'far in the Imamate. The followers of Mūsā are well known as "Ithna'ashariya" or Twelver Shī'īs. They were given this name because they believe that their twelfth Imām from the line of Mūsā named Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī disappeared about A.D. 874 without leaving a successor. They furthermore believe that their Imām Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī will

"return" as Mahdī again to fill the earth with justice. They are known also as Ahl al-Ghayba wa al-Rajʿa (i.e. Believers in the "Absence" and "Return" of the Imām).

The followers of Ismāʿīl who came to be known later as the Ismāʿīlīs held to the principle that the Imamate could not go from one brother to another and that it should remain only in the ʿUqb (progeny of the Imām). After Ismāʿīl ibn Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq the Imamate thus passed to his son Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, the first of those who are known as Hidden Imāms. From the general literature nothing is known about Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl beyond the fact that he existed. The known facts about the period of the Hidden Imāms and especially its later stages can be interpreted in so many different ways, that contradictory inferences may be drawn.

As the ʿAbbāsids tightened their grip, the Imāms found it necessary to go into hiding while their followers began to practise what was called among the Shīʿīs al-taqīya (suppression or concealment of one's religious beliefs). During the Imamate of the Hidden Imāms, the Ismāʿīlī dāʿīs (propagandists) began to extend their activities to Persia, Syria, al-Yaman and over North Africa. The Hidden Imāms chose Salamīya in Syria as a place where they might hide from the eyes of the ʿAbbāsid authorities. In A.D. 902 the

Imām 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī⁽¹⁾ was invited to come to North Africa where Abū 'Abdullāh al-Shī'i, an Ismā'īlī dā'i from al-Yaman, had been paving the way for the first Ismā'īlī Caliphate, known in the annals of history as the Fāṭimid Caliphate. 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī left Salamīya just before it was pillaged by members of the fanatical sect of the Qarmāṭians (Qarāmiṭa),⁽²⁾ whose precise relationship with the Ismā'īlīs is

- (1) a. The 'Abbāsids attempted to prove that the genealogical descent of al-Mahdī from the line of 'Alī and Fāṭima was not genuine. In A.D. 1011 the Manifesto of Baghdād was published by a group of Jurists and others, denouncing the falsehood of Fāṭimid claims. B. Lewis arrived at the conclusion that 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī was not a Fāṭimid, while his "son" Muḥammad al-Qā'im and the rest of the Fāṭimid Imāms were of genuine genealogical descent. Al-Mahdī was, according to B. Lewis, an Imām Mustawda' (trustee Imām) who handed the Imamate to the Imām Mustaqarr (a real or innate Imām) Muḥammad al-Qā'im. See B. Lewis The Origins of Ismā'īlism, pp.72.
- b. Muḥammad K. Ḥusayn believes that al-Mahdī was the real Imām and a Fāṭimid. See Sīrat al-Ustādh Jawzar (ed. M.K. Ḥusayn and M.A. Sha'īra (Egypt 1954), pp.167-169); Ibn Khaldūn ('Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad), al-'Ibar wa-Dīwān al-Mubtada' wa'l-Khabar, Būlāq 1867, Vol. 3, p.360.
- (2) The Qarmāṭians were able to seize power in Bahrain, and from there they conducted a series of raids on the lines of communications of the 'Abbāsīd Empire. It is quite possible that they took their name from that of one of their leaders, Ḥamdān Qarmāṭ. See von Wilferd Madelung's article, "Fatimiden und Bahrainqarmaten" in Der Islam, Band 34 September 1959), pp.44-52; 'Arif Tāmīr, "al-Ismā'īliya wa al-Qarāmiṭa", in al-Machriq, (July-October, 1959), pp.566-569.

uncertain but who were separate from and, for the most part, hostile to the Fāṭimids.

Setting out for North Africa, ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī experienced many difficulties in Egypt, but overcame them and went further south and then further west where he was captured by some Berbers. Then another tribe of Berbers, the Kitāma, who had already been mobilized by Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Shīʿī against the Sunnī rulers, the Aghlabids of al-Qayrawān, rallied to his cause and rescued him, after several years captivity in A.D. 909. Al-Mahdī then proceeded to the City of al-Raqqāda, which had been founded by the Aghlabids, six miles south of al-Qayrawān. In A.D. 910 he proclaimed himself Caliph. During his reign he made two attempts in A.D. 914 and 920 to conquer Egypt, where his troops were able to occupy al-Fuṣṭāṭ and Alexandria; but they were forced later to withdraw.⁽¹⁾

During the reign of the next Fāṭimid Caliph, Muḥammad al-Qāʿim, (A.D. 934-945) the Fāṭimids made another assault on Egypt and also conquered Morocco from the Idrīsids. Al-Qāʿim's reign was marked by a large number of revolts. He was

(1) In A.D. 926 ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī had taken up his residence in the new city that he had founded on the Tunisian coast and named after himself, al-Mahdiyya. It was founded in 300/912 and took four years to build. The date of its completion is reported by the well-known geographer Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī in his Muʿjam al-Buldān, Beirut, 1955, Vol. 5, p.231 to be Dhū al-Qaʿda 303/July 916.

succeeded by his son al-Manṣūr (A.D. 945-952) who was able to re-establish the Fāṭimid rule over the provinces which had been under the Fāṭimid sovereignty during the reign of ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī and Muḥammad al-Qāʾim. In A.D. 951 al-Manṣūr ordered the Qarmatians to return the celebrated Black Stone, al-Ḥajar al-Aswad, which they had removed from Makka after sacking the Holy City in A.D. 930.

During the reign of the fourth Caliph al-Muʿizz li Dīn-i-Allāh al-Fāṭimī (A.D. 952-975), the Fāṭimids conquered Egypt and also annexed Sicily. After conquering Egypt, al-Muʿizz founded (the great City of Mars) al-Qāhira, or Cairo. The circuit of Cairo was traced by Jawhar al-Ṣiqillī,⁽¹⁾ the valiant and devout Commander of the Fāṭimid army, and the walls were completed before the arrival of the Imām al-Muʿizz from al-Mahdīya. Al-Muʿizz is described, even by historians inimical to his dynasty, as a wise, energetic and chivalrous sovereign

(1) a. Jawhar al-Ṣiqillī known as Abū al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd Allāh, was born in Sicily. His father brought him to al-Qayrawān where he sold him as a slave to the fourth Fāṭimid Caliph al-Muʿizz li Dīn-i-Allāh. See the article on "Ghāzi Jawhar Fāṭih Miṣr" (invader Jawhar, the Conqueror of Egypt) in the Ismāʿīlī periodical Jannat al-Āmāl (the Paradise of Hopes) presented to H.H. Aghā Khān III in Bombay January 1936, probably written in A.D. 1886.

b. Al-Maqrīzī says that Jawhar was a Greek slave, al-Khiṭaṭ al-Maqrīzīya, published in Egypt in 1324/1906, Vol. II, pp.205.

and an accomplished scholar, well versed in science and philosophy and a munificent patron of arts and learning; and it was he who founded the well-known College-Mosque of al-Azhar as a centre of the Ismā'īlī missionary activity (da'wa).⁽¹⁾

Al-Mu'izz was succeeded in A.D. 975 by his son al-'Azīz who was known also as Nizār.⁽²⁾ Al-'Azīz improved the conditions of the army left by al-Mu'izz. It was divided into two main sections: the eastern army, mainly composed of the Turkish and Daylamite (Persian) elements, and the western army composed of tribes from North Africa, mostly Kitāma Berbers. Later on, differences between the Turkish and Berber elements led to the weakening of the Fāṭimid army. Al-'Azīz was able to annex Damascus after defeating its Turkish Commander, Aftagīn, and his Qarmaṭian allies.

Under the sixth Fāṭimid Caliph, al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allāh (A.D. 996-1021), Aleppo submitted to the rule of a Fāṭimid governor. Before the end of his reign, however, the Fāṭimid army split into two hostile groups. One was known as the Maghāriba (those from the west) and led by Ibn 'Ammār, the chief of Banū Kitāma tribe; the other as the Mashāriqā (those from the east, mainly Turks and Daylamites) and led by the Grand Wazīr Burjuwān. The latter had been appointed to be Grand Wazīr during the reign of al-Ḥākim's father, the Caliph al-'Azīz.

(1) During the reign of al-'Azīz (A.D. 975-996) al-Azhar Mosque was turned into a great centre of learning.

(2) In two Syrian Ismā'īlī MSS. borrowed from a modern Ismā'īlī historian, Mr. 'Arif Tāmīr, the name of the fifth Fāṭimid Caliph is given as al-'Azīz Nizār, or Nizār al-Manṣūr. See Appendix I.

Burjuwān was later accused of trying to stage a "coup d'état" against al-Ḥākim and was consequently dismissed. After a night tour in the mountain al-Muqaṭṭam near Cairo in A.D. 1021, al-Ḥākim disappeared in mysterious circumstances. His sister Sitt al-Mulūk ordered the name of his son al-Zāhir to be proclaimed as heir to the throne. She herself took charge of the Caliphate because al-Zāhir was under age.

The disappearance of al-Ḥākim led to a serious split among the Ismā'īlīs. A large number of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs withdrew from the main Ismā'īlī da'wa, and came to be known as the Druzes (Arabic, al-Durūz), after the name of a Persian missionary, al-Darazī. Most of their beliefs were based on the teachings of another missionary, Ḥamza ibn 'Alī.⁽¹⁾ The Druzes claimed that the divine spirit was lodged in al-Ḥākim (al-ḥulūl), and that he was only temporarily in a state of "Concealment".⁽²⁾

Al-Zāhir 'Alī, the seventh Fāṭimid Caliph, succeeded al-Ḥākim, but did not live long and died in the thirty-first year of his age. He was succeeded by his son al-Mustanṣir, who was then only seven years old, and whose reign of 60 years

(1) Ḥamza ibn 'Alī was the missionary who brought with him what is known as Mithāq Walī al-Zamān, (the covenant of the ruler of the world); this Mithāq contains a number of pledges of allegiance to the new da'wa. See, The Druze MSS. in the British Museum, Or. 6852, 1435, 5634.

(2) A different form of ghayba (absence) from that believed in by the Twelvers (Ithnā 'aṣharīs). See, Silvestre de Sacy, Exposé de la Religion des Druzes, 2 vols., (Paris, 1838), Tome I, pp.387-390, Tome II, pp.101-110.

was the longest of any Muslim ruler. In it came the culminating point of the power and glory of the Fāṭimid dynasty, which, despite the loss of almost the whole of North Africa, still included Tripoli and Barqa (Cyrenaica), Egypt, Sicily, various portions of Syria, and the shores of the Red Sea. For forty weeks in the year A.D. 1060 Baghdād itself, under the command of a Shīʿī general, al-Basāsīrī, acknowledged al-Mustanṣir as Caliph. A powerful new Sunnī empire, however, had been founded in Irān by the Saljūq Turks, who conquered ʿIrāq, Aleppo (A.D. 1070), much of Asia Minor (A.D. 1075). Meanwhile the Fāṭimid regime had been weakened by famines and by factional strife in the army; but order was restored by an energetic Army Commander (Amīr al-Juyūsh), Badr al-Jamālī, by origin an Armenian slave, who held office from A.D. 1073 till his death in A.D. 1094 and effectively controlled the government of Egypt.

After the death of the Caliph al-Mustanṣir, there were two parties, one following Nizār, the eldest son of al-Mustanṣir, and the other following al-Mustaʿlī, the second son. The latter was supported by his brother-in-law al-Afdal, who was the Commander-in-Chief (Amīr al-Juyūsh) having succeeded his father Badr al-Jamālī in that office. Al-Afdal was able to raise al-Mustaʿlī to the Caliphate. He pursued Nizār to Alexandria and was able to arrest him and put him in prison with his family. There were many who thought that Nizār died in prison at Alexandria. A section of the Ismāʿīlīs, however, recognised the Imamate of Nizār and his successors and refused to recognise the Imamate of al-Mustaʿlī; they came to be known as

the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs. They quickly developed a powerful movement under the leadership of the Persian dā'ī Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ, and refused to submit to the authority of the Sunnī Saljūq rulers of Persia, 'Irāq and Syria. In A.D. 1090 Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ established himself on the craggy peak of Alamūt (Eagle's nest) in the Elburz mountains of Daylam in Northern Persia, whence he ruled the surrounding district and other Ismā'īlī communities in Persia (especially in Qūhistān in south eastern Persia). From Alamūt the Nizārī movement spread to Syria.

The activities of the Fāṭimids in Syria had not been merely military. Salamīya in Syria had been one of the chief centres of the earliest Ismā'īlī movement (see p. 5 above), and the Ismā'īlī beliefs had continued to win many Syrian supporters. It is reported that al-Mustanṣir had in A.D. 1051 sent his chief dā'ī (dā'ī al-du'āt) al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shirāzī to Aleppo (Ḥalab) to carry on the preaching of the da'wa and various activities against the 'Abbāsids. (1)

The first emissaries from Alamūt arrived in Syria at the beginning of the twelfth century A.D. to find the general situation there quite favourable for their activities. The Muslim world was divided internally and threatened with dangers from within as well as from without. The Saljūqs were no longer a unified strong power, and their empire was disintegrating into several petty states. There were perpetual rivalries between the Great Saljūqs, the Dānishmands, the

(1) 'Ārif Tāmir, 'Alā Abwāb Alamūt, Ḥarīṣa, Lebanon 1959, p.7.

Artuqids of Diyār Bakr, the house of Tutush son of Alp Arslān and ruler of Syria, and between the latter's two sons, Ridwān at Aleppo and Duqāq at Damascus. Moreover the Frankish Crusaders had established themselves in Syria and Palestine in A.D. 1098-99, and minor Arab dynasties such as Banū ʿAmmār of Tripolī and the Banū Munqidh of Shayzar were able in this general situation to maintain a precarious independence.⁽¹⁾

During the Caliphate of al-Mustaʿlī and his son al-Āmir, the Fāṭimids continued to be an effective force in the Muslim world, and still had followers in Syria. Abū al-Fidāʾ, prince of Ḥamā in the early fourteenth-century, tells us that in the year 490/1107 Ridwān, the Saljūq ruler of Aleppo, pronounced the khutba (Friday Sermon) in the name of al-Mustaʿlī,⁽²⁾ but later, perceiving the serious repercussions of accepting Fāṭimid suzerainty, again pronounced it in the name of the ʿAbbāsīd Caliph. After the murder of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Āmir in A.D. 1130, alleged to have been perpetrated by the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs, the Fāṭimids in Egypt suffered from another

(1) H.A.R. Gibb, The Damascus Chronicle of Crusades, London 1932, pp.7-40.

(2) Ibn al-ʿAdīm (ʿUmar b. Aḥmad Kamāl al-Dīn), Zubdat al-Ṭalāb min Taʾrīkh Ḥalab, ed. Sāmī Dahhān, Damascus 1954, Vol. II, p.128; Abū al-Fidāʾ, Taʾrīkh, Cairo, A.H. 1325, Vol. II, p.209.

internal split which helped the Nizārīs to win more followers in Syria.⁽¹⁾ But although the Nizārī da'wa in Northern Syria became effective during the reign of the local Saljūq ruler Riḍwān (A.D. 1095-1113), and later in Southern Syria during the rule of Tughtigin (A.D. 1104-1128) the Turkish aṭābeg of the Saljūq prince Duqāq at Damascus, the Nizārīs were not able to gain permanent control over any territory till many years later when they transferred their activities to the highlands between Latakia (al-Lādhīqīya) and Ḥamā.

Under the leadership of the dā'i al-Ḥakīm al-Munajjim (the physician-astrologer), who appeared in Aleppo at the beginning of the twelfth century A.D., the Ismā'īlīs successfully carried on their da'wa in Aleppo under the protection of Riḍwān. Probably this ruler was influenced by motives of political expediency; he wished to use them against hostile neighbouring Amīrs. Most of the sources state that the murder at Ḥimṣ in May, A.D. 1103 of Janāḥ al-Dawlah, a former guardian

(1) A. Ibn al-Qalānisī does not state that the Bāṭinis were behind the murder. See, Ibn al-Qalānisī, Dhail Ta'rīkh Dimashq (continuation of History of Damascus), ed. H. Amedroz, Leyden, 1908, p.228. B. Lewis, "The Ismā'īlīs and the Assassins", History of Crusades, (Philadelphia 1955), Vol. I, pp.118-119; S.M. Stern, "The Succession to the Fāṭimid Imām al-Amīr, the claims of the later Fāṭimids to the Imamate and the Rise of the Ṭayyibī Ismā'īlīsm", Oriens, IV (1951), pp.193-255.

(atābeg) of Riḍwān, was perpetrated by Ismāʿilīs working for him.⁽¹⁾ Riḍwān is said by some to have had some Ismāʿilī convictions, but this on the whole seems unlikely.⁽²⁾ However, the Ismāʿilīs were able to establish a dār al-daʿwa (house for preaching), and Aleppo became their centre and base for further activities.

Al-Ḥakīm al-Munajjim died in A.D. 1103 and was succeeded by another Persian dāʿī (missionary) Abū Ṭāhir al-Sāʿigh, the goldsmith. Abū Ṭāhir followed the policy of the Persian Ismāʿilīs in trying to seize and acquire strongholds in districts inhabited by sympathetic populations. From Aleppo he concentrated his activities in the highlands between the Orontes (al-ʿAṣī river) and Aleppo known as Jabal al-Summāq, which had been affected by Ismāʿilism and other Shīʿī elements.⁽³⁾

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- (1) ʿAzīmī, "La Chronique Abrégée" (ed. C. Cahen, J.A. 1938, Vol. CCXXX), p.375; Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, (ed. Tornberg, Leyden, 1851-76, X, XI, XII), Vol. X, p.273; "Bustān al-Jāmiʿ" (ed. C. Cahen, B.E.O. De I. F.D.) Vol. VII-VIII, p.116; B. Lewis, "Three Biographies from Kamāl al-Dīn", Mélanges Köprülü (Ankara, 1953).
- (2) Another Riḍwān, who is mentioned by ʿĀrif Tāmīr, was an Ismāʿilī dāʿī at the time of Sinān. See Sinān and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Beirut, 1956), p.30. David Schafner, Relations of the Orders of the Assassins with the Crusades during the twelfth century: typed thesis, Department of History, University of Chicago, 1939, p.14.
- (3) B. Lewis says that the hidden imām stayed in Jabal al-Summāq for a while in the late-ninth century A.D. "The Ismāʿilītes and the Assassins", A History of Crusades, (ed. K.M. Setton, Philadelphia, 1955), Vol. I, p.112.

Political authority in the upper Orontes valley was then shared between Janāḥ al-Dawlah of Ḥims, (murdered in May, A.D. 1103), the Munqidhites of Shayzar, and Khalaf ibn-Mulā'ib of Afāmiya (Qal'at al-Muḍīq), who had been appointed governor by the Fāṭimids. The latter, who was probably a Musta'li Ismā'ili, seems to have refused to cooperate with Abū Ṭāhir, and he too was murdered on Feb. 3, A.D. 1106 after some sort of "coup d'état" in the town itself. The murder of Khalaf and the subsequent seizure of the citadel and the town of Afāmiya by Abū Ṭāhir were achieved with the help of an Ismā'ili dā'ī from Sarmin near Aleppo who was residing in Afāmiya and was called Abū al-Fath.⁽¹⁾

Shortly after the capture of the citadel and town, Abū Ṭāhir arrived to take charge of the place. This attempt on the part of the Ismā'ilis to make Afāmiya their stronghold

(1) On the murder of Khalaf ibn Mulā'ib, see: Ibn al-Qalānisi (ed. H.F. Amedroz, Leyden, 1908), p.149; (Extracts tr. H.A.R. Gibb), pp.72-73); Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rīkh, (Leyden edition), Vol. 8, p.283; al-ʿAzīmī, (ed. C. Cahen, "La Chronique abrégée d'al-ʿAzīmī", in J.A. CCXXX (1938), p.378; Ibn al-ʿAdīm (ed. Sāmī al-Dahhān, Vol. 2, Damascus, 1952, pp.151-152. See also, Hönigsmann article "Shayzar" and Soberheim article "Homs" in Encyclopaedia of Islam; see the introduction to An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades, translated by P.K. Hitti, Columbia University Press, 1929, pp.5-6; F.A. Ridley, "The Assassins", London 193? (n.d.), p.183 where the author states that Abū al-Fath was the nephew of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ.

did not succeed. The Frankish regent of Antioch, Tancred, chose the occasion to besiege Afāmiya. Abū al-Faṭḥ, however, was able to keep things under control; and the rulers of Shayzar and Hamā promised him help. Tancred had to lay off the siege. A few months later, Tancred got a promise from Muṣṭab ibn Mulāḥib, brother of the murdered Khalaf, that he would attack Afāmiya again, and they captured it in September A.D. 1106. Abū al-Faṭḥ and three of his companions were put to death, while Abū Ṭāhir ransomed himself from captivity and returned to Aleppo. (1)

Before the death of their patron Riḍwān, the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs succeeded in eliminating the powerful Saljūq amīr of Mosul, Mawdūd, who commanded a force which had been sent from the east to assist the Muslims in Syria. Most of the sources are agreed that he was murdered by Ismāʿīlī fidāʾīs (devotees). In the general Arabic sources we find almost identical information about the arrival of Mawdūd in Syria, why he came, and what happened between him and the Franks; they state that the murder took place in 507/1113 at Damascus, Mawdūd being stabbed to death while he was entering the Great Mosque with his host Tuḡtigin. There is no clear evidence to show

(1) B. Lewis, "Three Biographies", pp.326, 329, 332-336; Ibn al-Qalānīsī, p.149, tr. Gibb, pp.73-74; M. Defrémery, "Ismaéliens de Syrie", in J.A., III, 380-384; Kamāl al-Dīn. Ibn al-ʿAdīm, ed. Sāmī Dahhān, Damascus, 1952, Vol. II, pp.151-2.

who was responsible for the murder and what was the motive behind it; but Ibn al-Athīr and William of Tyre suggest that Ṭughtigīn had a hand in it. There was more than one reason to make the rulers of Damascus and Aleppo jealous of an ambitious, powerful leader coming from the east. At the same time the Syrian Ismāʿilīs also had their reasons to try to eliminate the Amīr Mawdūd. Ibn al-Qalānisi tells us that Ṭughtigīn gave Mawdūd too lavish a welcome and this might perhaps give another clue to the case. Ṭughtigīn might have tried to raise the jealousy of Riḍwān in Aleppo by giving the Saljūq general a big welcome.⁽¹⁾ Already Ṭughtigīn had been trying to belittle the importance and prestige of Riḍwān. By behaving in that way he probably succeeded in planting seeds of jealousy in the heart of Riḍwān, who could count on the Ismāʿilī fidāʾīs. Jealousy and fear of the influence of the newcomer from the east undoubtedly influenced the Muslim rulers in Syria; though it looks as if most of the general Arabic sources try to conceal the differences and enmities among the Muslim rulers themselves by blaming the Ismāʿilīs for most of the murders. This and other murder cases need to be carefully

(1) Ibn al-Qalānisi, p.187 (tr. Gibb, pp.137-142; al-ʿAzīmī in J.A. CCXXX (1938), p.382; Anonymous Bustān al-Jamīʿ (ed. Cahen), Une Chronique Syrienne du VIe - XII siècle: "Le Bustān al-Jamīʿ" B.E.O.I.F.D., VII-VIII (1937-38), p.117. For other sources and B. Lewis's views on the case see, "The Ismāʿilites and the Assassins", History of the Crusades, Vol. I, p.113.

investigated in the light of the possible benefits which the murder of a particular individual might have brought to other individuals. The general tendency among the medieval Arabic sources is to attribute most murders to the Bāṭinīs. This tendency should be borne in mind by historians in their researches into the events of that period.

The death of Riḍwān on Dec. 10, A.D. 1113, deprived the Ismāʿīlīs of a strong friend. Although he did not give his Ismāʿīlī friends any castle, Riḍwān was always ready to protect them in Aleppo, in spite of the pressure put on him by the Great Saljūq Ṣultān Muḥammad ibn Malik Shāh (A.D. 1105-1118), who strongly disapproved of Riḍwān's friendly relations with the Ismāʿīlīs. An abortive attempt on the life of a wealthy Persian, Abū Ḥarb ʿĪsā ibn Zayd, in A.D. 1111, caused a wave of anger among the Sunnī and Shīʿī inhabitants of Aleppo against the Ismāʿīlīs which was followed by a general attack on them. Riḍwān could not overlook the popular outburst (against the Ismāʿīlīs), especially as he himself was suspected of having a hand in the attempt to assassinate Abū Ḥarb. Riḍwān, who was permanently on bad terms with his Saljūq cousins, died a natural death in A.D. 1113, and was succeeded by his young son Alp Arslān, whose inexperience led him to fall completely in the hands of his eunuch attendant Luʿluʿ. During the short reign of Alp Arslān the Ismāʿīlīs were able to acquire another fortress outside Balis on the road from Aleppo to Baghdād. Alp Arslān seems at first to have followed his father's policy

in his relations with the Ismā'ilīs, but later he was induced by the Saljūq Ṣultān Muḥammad's envoy Sa'id ibn Badī' to take action against the Ismā'ilīs. Ibn Badī' was also the prefect (ra'īs) of Aleppo and commander of the militia. A warrant for the execution of Abū Ṭāhir and other leaders of the Ismā'ilīs was issued and the populace of Aleppo set about massacring all whom they could catch. The Ismā'ilīs either went underground or, as ibn al-Qalānisī says, fled to the protection of the Franks. However, they were still powerful in Northern Syria and began to turn their attention to the south. (1)

Although the Ismā'ilīs had been banished, the new authorities in Aleppo were considered by their neighbours to have Shī'i tendencies on account of the influence of Persians in the city. The lack of a strong prince with a strong army left Aleppo powerless to do more than defend its own walls.

It was when Aleppo was seized by the Artuqid⁽²⁾ prince

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- (1) Ibn al-Qalānisī, pp.189-190, (tr. Gibb, pp.145-148); Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, X, 349 (RHC, Or. I, 291); Defrémery, "Ismaéliens de Syrie", in J.A. III, 387-395. On the unsuccessful attempt of the Ismā'ilīs to seize Shayzar, see also 'Usāma, ed. Hittī, pp.153, (no date given for the coup at Shayzar).
- (2) The Artuqids were a Turkish dynasty which ruled the whole of Diyār Bakr, either independently or under Mongol protectorate, from the end of the eleventh century to the fourteenth century A.D. See - C. Cahen's article, "Artuqid" in Encycl. of Islām, 2nd ed.

named Balik (Belik) in A.D. 1123 that the Ismā'īlī power in the city began to decline. The new ruler arrested the agent of Bahrām, the chief dā'ī, and ordered the expulsion of the Ismā'īlīs in A.D. 1124.

Under the leadership of another Persian chief dā'ī, Bahrām of Astarābād, the Ismā'īlīs continued their vigorous efforts to consolidate their position, this time in Southern Syria. Although this Bahrām enjoyed the support of Īl-Ghāzī, the Artuqid ruler of Mardīn (A.D. 1102-1122), he was obliged to look for another centre for his activities instead of Aleppo where the people were hostile to the Ismā'īlīs. Īl-Ghāzī provided Bahrām with a recommendation to Ṭughtigīn of Damascus who received him graciously. More than one reason made Ṭughtigīn treat Bahrām well. Damascus was being threatened by the Franks in A.D. 1125, and even before Bahrām's appearance in that city towards the end of A.D. 1126, Ismā'īlī warriors from Ḥimṣ and other places had taken part alongside of Ṭughtigīn's troops in an unsuccessful attack on the Franks.

Bahrām who, in the words of ibn al-Qalānīsī, stayed secretly as an Ismā'īlī chief dā'ī in various parts of Syria, was able to acquire a position of power in Damascus where he carried on many activities. Ibn al-Qalānīsī, who is our main source on the Ismā'īlī activities in Damascus, goes on to say that Bahrām was helped by the wazīr Abū 'Alī Ṭāhir ibn Sa'id al-Mazdagḥānī who was not himself an Ismā'īlī. Ṭughtigīn was

persuaded by his wazīr to hand over to the Ismā'īlīs in November, A.D. 1126, the frontier fortress of Bānyās (Banū 'Āṣ), which was menaced by the Franks. Ṭughtigīn hoped to make good use of the Ismā'īlī energies on the one hand, and to avoid any danger from them on the other. Bahrām re-fortified the castle and gathered all his followers around him. In 522/1128, according to ibn al-Qalānisī, the activities of Bahrām and his followers became so formidable that nobody dared to say a word about it openly. Soon the Ismā'īlīs began to terrorize the neighbourhood. Ṭughtigīn became anxious about their activities, but could not find a suitable opportunity to take action against them.

Ibn al-Qalānisī always puts the blame on the wazīr al-Mazdagḥānī, whereas ibn al-Athīr puts it squarely on Ṭughtigīn, attributing his action in large measure to the influence of ʿĪl-Gḥāzī who had helped Bahrām in Aleppo.

From Bānyās, Bahrām and his followers raided extensively, and may have captured some other places. But Bahrām, who was suspected of having killed Barq ibn Jandal, one of the tribal chieftains in Wādī al-Taym, was unlucky this time. In an attack against the tribes living in the region of Ḥāṣbayyā at the western front of Mount Hermon which was inhabited mostly by Druzes, Nuṣayrīs and Bedouin tribes, Bahrām was surprised by a counter-attack led by Ḍaḥḥāk, the brother of Barq ibn Jandal,

in the course of which he was killed and his head and hand were sent to Egypt.⁽¹⁾

The death of Bahrām was the beginning of the downfall of the Ismāʿīlī movement in Damascus. He had played the most important role in organizing the Ismāʿīlīs in various parts of Syria, especially in the south. He is alleged to have had a hand in the murder of Aqsunqur al-Bursuqī at Moṣul in November A.D. 1126, who was stabbed to death on the day of his return from Aleppo where he had installed his son ʿIzz al-Dīn Masʿūd as governor of the city.⁽²⁾

Bahrām's position in Bānyās was taken over by another Persian called Ismāʿīl al-ʿAjāmī, who was also supported by the wazīr al-Mazdagḥānī. The two main personal enemies of al-Mazdagḥānī were the chief of the police (raʾīs al-Shurṭa), Yūsuf ibn Fīrūz, and the chief of the security forces (raʾīs al-Shiḥna), ibn al-Ṣūfī. These two were always encouraging

(1) Ibn al-Qalānīsī (ed. Amedroz 1908), pp.215, 221-222 (tr. Gibb, pp.179-180, 187-191); Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, X, 445-446, 461-462 (RHC, Or. I, 366-368, 383-384). Al-ʿAẓīmī mentions an interesting story about how Bahrām took Bānyās, while Ṭuḡtigin took Palmyra, pp.397, 400-401. See also the other sources listed by B. Lewis, "The Ismāʿīlites and the Assassins", History of the Crusades, Vol. I, p.117.

(2) Ibn al-Qalānīsī, p.214 (tr. Gibb, pp.177-8). Al-ʿAẓīmī, p.397; "Kamāl al-Dīn" (RHC, Or. III), pp.653-656); Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, Mirʾāt az-Zamān (A.H. 495-654), edited by J.R. Jewet, Chicago 1907, p.71, with date 519/1125.

Tāj al-Mulūk Būrī, the son and successor of Ṭughtigīn, to rid himself of the Ismāʿīlīs. Būrī's first step in September A.D. 1129 was suddenly to have their protector al-Mazdagḥānī murdered as he sat in council at Damascus. This was followed by chaotic disorders; the militia (al-aḥdāth - youth-brigades) together with the mob are said to have killed ten thousand of the Ismāʿīlīs and their supporters. A manumitted slave, Shādhilī al-Khādim, was among those who were crucified. Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī says that in 523/1129 al-Mazdagḥānī had even entered into relations with the Ismāʿīlīs of al-Qadmūs.⁽¹⁾ The accounts given by other sources are nearly similar to that of ibn al-Qalānisī except that ibn al-Athīr claims that al-Mazdagḥānī was negotiating with the Franks to betray Damascus and obtain Tyre in its stead. They had agreed, he says, on a Friday when the Ismāʿīlīs were to rise and help the Franks to capture Damascus. Ibn al-Athīr goes on with his unconfirmed story to say that Būrī heard of the conspiracy, summoned al-Mazdagḥānī and killed him. This was followed by a general attack on the Ismāʿīlīs in Damascus during which six thousand people were slain.⁽²⁾

(1) Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, Mirʾāt az-Zamān (A.H. 495-654), ed. J.R. Jewet, Chicago 1907, p.128.

(2) Ibn al-Qalānisī, pp.223-224 (tr. Gibb, pp.192-194). Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, X, 461-463 (RHC, Or. I, 384-385); William of Tyre, XIV, 19.

After the massacre of the Ismā'īlīs in Damascus, Būrī and his chief supporters took rapid precautions against possible retaliatory assassination. The Ismā'īlī da'wa under 'Alī ibn Wafā', who succeeded Bahrām in Damascus became very weak. However, Būrī was attacked by two Persian Ismā'īlī fidā'īs, who according to ibn al-Qalānisī were believed to have been sent from Alamūt for that purpose. The two men, he says, arrived in Damascus disguised as Turkish soldiers and later were able to enter the service of Būrī. Their opportunity to do what they had come for occurred when Būrī was on his way home from the bath. His bodyguards left him, and the two men attacked him on Thursday, 5 Jumādā al-Ākhīra 525 / 7 May 1131 wounding him in two places. The two fidā'īs were killed immediately. Būrī lived till 21 Rajab, 526 / 9 June 1132, when he died of a festering wound.

Most of the sources agree that the fidā'īs came from the east. The Ismā'īlīs in Syria were in no position to take action against Būrī, and it is of course possible that this murder was planned at Alamūt. Ibn al-Athīr, however, does not state that the fidā'īs came from the east, but merely says that the Bāṭinīs took vengeance against Būrī. Ibn al-Qalānisī does not even discuss the possibility that the fidā'īs might have come from any place other than Alamūt. It is possible, however, that the Ismā'īlīs in Damascus in spite of their weakened position after the massacre were still able to organize the

murder of Būrī, and the motive of avenging the massacre would be strongest in the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. Būrī could not know or detect every Ismā'īlī in the city; some of them may have survived the massacre to take vengeance on him.

Admittedly Ibn al-Qalānisī had the best opportunities to collect information about conditions in Damascus, but it may be asked whether or not he is sincere in his reports. Was there anything for the Sunnī authorities to gain from accusing the Ismā'īlīs of Alamūt of organizing the plot? Was it their policy to convince the Muslim rulers that the main centre of danger was Alamūt? The explanations of the historians cannot be accepted without question.

Būrī's rule in Damascus had not been without troubles and signs of unrest. He even arrested his wazīr Ibn al-Ṣūfī in 525/1131. More than one source says that Būrī began his reign following the steps of his father, but shortly afterwards went astray. He was doubtful about the loyalty of his supporters. It is outside the sphere of this study to analyse the internal situation in Damascus in Būrī's time, but there is more than one reason to believe that Alamūt was not the only source of danger to his authority.⁽¹⁾

(1) Ibn al-Qalānisī, p.230 (tr. Gibb, pp.202-204); Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, X, 471-473; Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, p.83; al-ʿAzīmī, p.404; Bustān, p.122; Anonymous Syriac Chronicle, p.273; Michael the Syrian, Chronique III, 240.

After their two setbacks, in Aleppo and Damascus, the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs turned their attention towards Jabal Bahrāʿ, between Ḥamā and the sea, where they had been quietly trying to consolidate their position. In less than twenty years after the massacre of A.D. 1129 at Damascus, they were able to secure a number of strongholds which gave them virtual control over extensive territories between Miṣyāf in the east and al-Kahf in the west.⁽¹⁾ Although Miṣyāf was not always the permanent residence of the chief dāʿī, nevertheless it was the most important Ismāʿīlī stronghold, being situated not far from the main Syrian cities.

The acquisition of Qadmūs in A.D. 1132-1133, and Miṣyāf in A.D. 1140-1141, provided the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs with a territorial nucleus for the Amirate which they were soon to establish and which was to last more than a century,⁽²⁾ reaching its peak under the leadership of their greatest chief

(1) Miṣyāf is about 25 miles west of Ḥamā and was the capital city of the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs. It is known under different spellings - Miṣyād, Miṣyāf, Miṣyāt ... See, E. Hönigmann, article "Maṣyād" in the Encyclopaedia of Islam O.E.; Van-Berchem, in J.A. ser. 9, IX, (1897), pp.455-457; P.K. Hitti, Kitāb al-Iʿtibār by Usāma ibn Munqidh, Princeton, 1930, p.149.

(2) On the acquisition of Miṣyāf, Qadmūs and other strongholds see, B. Lewis, "The Ismāʿīlites and the Assassins", in A History of the Crusades, Vol. I, (ed. Marshall W. Baldwin, Philadelphia 1955), pp.119-120.

dā'ī, Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, known as the Old Man of the Mountain (Shaykh al-Jabal).⁽¹⁾

Although little is known of the period preceding the arrival of Sinān as the viceroy sent by Alamūt in or about A.D. 1162, we have information that Sinān succeeded Ṣārim al-Dīn known as Abū Muḥammad.⁽²⁾

Abū Muḥammad is said to have arrived from Alamūt during the last years of the reign of Riḍwān of Aleppo (A.D. 1105-1113). It is doubtful whether Abū Muḥammad lived so long. However, we can safely say that Abū Muḥammad played the most important part in the successful Ismā'īlī attempts to establish themselves in Jabal al-Summāq, and later in Jabal Bahrā' to the north-west of the first.

The following chapters will be concerned with the history of the Ismā'īlīs after they had established themselves in Mişyāf and the other neighbouring strongholds. An outline of the political history of the Amirate of Mişyāf, especially under the leadership of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, is given in Part One, and an attempt is made to survey their beliefs and

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- (1) The full name of Sinān, and other biographical details of him, will be discussed in the next chapter. See W. Ivanōw, article, "Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān", in E.I., 1st ed.
- (2) 'Ārif Tāmir, Sinān wa Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, Beirut, 1956, pp.29-31; C. Deffrémery from Dhahabī, "Nouvelles Recherches sur les Ismaéliens de Syrie", in Journal Asiatique, Ser. 5, III (1854-5), p.400.

organization in Part Two.

Adequate information is available in the general Arabic sources about the political and military history of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs in this period. A considerable amount of research has been done in recent years by Prof. B. Lewis, W. Ivanow, Dr. S. Stern, Dr. M.G.S. Hodgson, Prof. Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn and other scholars into the origins, beliefs and organization of the Ismā'īlīs in North Africa and Egypt and in Irān (the so-called "Assassins" of Alamūt). The Ismā'īlīs in Syria, however, have formed the subject of only one specific work, namely an article by Stanislas Guyard about Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, entitled "Un Grand Maître des Assassins", which was published in the Journal Asiatique (Paris, 1877).⁽¹⁾

Practically all those who have done research on the Syrian Ismā'īlīs relied mainly on non-Ismā'īlī sources, which are in general hostile to the Ismā'īlīs. Many causes make it difficult to rely on Ismā'īlī sources. These are not readily available and even scholars who are Ismā'īlīs have not had full access to them. Moreover, the Shī'ī sources in general, and the Ismā'īlī sources in particular, are mostly doctrinal and not historical. The Shī'ī Muslims did not in general enjoy political protection as the Sunnīs did, and this was a very important factor in the lagging of the Shī'īs behind the Sunnīs in historical writing. The only period when a Shī'ī sect did

(1) For the sources of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs, see B. Lewis, "Sources for the history of the Syrian Assassins" in Speculum, XXVII, Oct. 1952.

enjoy full political protection was during the Fāṭimid Caliphate, under which most of the Ismā'īlī literature was written.

In the following chapters, and especially when dealing with the beliefs and organization of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs, a number of Syrian Ismā'īlī writings are made use of. Brief summaries of the content of four manuscripts are given in a separate appendix. One of these manuscripts, treated in Appendix I, is one of our main sources on the doctrines of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. The original copy was written by the well-known Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Firās, author of the Manāqib of Sinān. Its title is Kitāb Sullam al-Ṣu'ūd ilā Dār al-Khulūd (the ladder of ascent to the house of eternity). Its views, though influenced by some Ṣūfī ideas, are still generally accepted by both the Nizārī Syrian Ismā'īlīs in Salamīya and al-Khawābī, and by the other Ismā'īlī groups in Miṣyāf and Qadmūs.

Before this introductory chapter is concluded, it must be mentioned that the Ismā'īlī religious beliefs cannot be understood without an understanding of the meaning of the Imamate (al-Imāmah - the office of the Imām) and the true position of the Imāms. These are treated in more detail in the chapter concerning the beliefs and organization of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. For the time being it is enough to say that in spite of the changes in Ismā'īlī doctrines which took place in Irān and Syria in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A.D., the fundamental ideas about the Imamate remained unchanged.

For the Ismā'īlīs the existence of the manifest Imām in person is indispensable for the existence of the world. The succession of the Imamate, which is treated as a Nūr (divine light) passing from one Imām to the other, is eternal, and it will endure till the day of judgment.⁽¹⁾ This Imamate must remain in the Ahl al-Bayt (House of the Prophet), and the Imāms, according to the Ismā'īlīs, are the Ūlū al-Amr (holders of authority)⁽²⁾ mentioned in the Qur'ān, IV: 59.

The other important point in the Ismā'īlī doctrines is their belief that the Sharī'a (divinely revealed law) has both ẓāhir (exoteric) and bāṭin (esoteric) meanings. To believe in the esoteric interpretation of the Sharī'a does not mean to abandon the Sharī'a as it was revealed by the Prophet. Under the rule of the Fāṭimid Caliphate, the ẓāhir of the Sharī'a was regularly enforced. In a country dominated by Sunnī Muslims, like Egypt, it was necessary to keep to the ẓāhir. But, in Irān, or in Syria, where the Ismā'īlīs had to live with other extreme Shī'ī elements, certain changes were introduced into the Ismā'īlī doctrines, and the bāṭin of the religious doctrines was adopted accordingly. This made the Ismā'īlī religious ideas more difficult for the public to understand, but thanks to the spiritual attractions of their appeal and the efficiency

(1) Precious Pearls, Ismailia Association, Pakistan, 1955, pp.2-4.

(2) Qur'ān, IV: 62, "Obey God, His Apostle and those amongst you who hold authority".

of their organization, they were able, nevertheless, to win more and more followers to their side. Ismā'īlism has always survived because of its flexibility and power of adaptation to the process of historical evolution.

PART ONE

AN OUTLINE OF THE POLITICAL HISTORY
OF THE
AMIRATE OF MIṢYĀF

CHAPTER II

THE PRINCIPALITY OF MIṢYĀF⁽¹⁾ UNDER SINĀN

(a) Introductory

After the death of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Mustansir in A.D. 1094, the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlīs were divided into two main divisions:

1 - the Musta'liīs and 2 - the Nizārīs.

1 - The Musta'liīs or Western Ismā'īlīs differed from the Nizārīs concerning the succession to al-Mustansir (A.D. 1035-1094), the former recognizing his son Aḥmad al-Musta'li (A.D. 944-1101) and the latter recognizing Nizār, his elder brother. After the murder of their second Imām, al-Āmir ibn al-Musta'li in A.D. 1130, the Musta'liīs split into two main groups. Those who followed al-Ḥāfiẓ, a cousin of al-Āmir, were known as the Ḥafizīs, and Ḥafizī Imāms remained in power in Egypt until the overthrow of the Fāṭimid dynasty by Saladin.

The second group of the Musta'liīs, known as the Ṭayyibīs, were to become the more important. They held that the 21st Imām, al-Ṭayyib ibn al-Āmir, went into hiding in A.D. 1130 and

(1) Miṣyāf here is the form of Excess (Mubālagha) derived from the second form verb Ṣayyafa (to pass the summer).

The generality of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs of today differ in the way they pronounce Miṣyāf, but practically all of them give the relative adjective (Nisbah) to Miṣyāf as Miṣyātī and the name of its inhabitants as Maṣāyitah. Cf. Yāqūt (b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Rūmī), Muʿjam al-Buldān (Beirut, 1955, Vol. 5, p.144; Max von Berchem - "Epigraphie des Assassins de Syrie", in J.A., Mai-Juin, 1897, p.458.

was succeeded by an unknown number of Hidden Imāms who were represented by dā'īs. The sub-sects of the Musta'lis differ on questions about the legitimacy of the dā'īs, the virtual heads of the community. One of these Ṭayyibī sub-sects is known nowadays as Dāwūdī Bohoras⁽¹⁾ and has become numerous and influential in Western India.

The Bohoras recognized the succession of the Fātimid Imāms up to al-Ṭayyib ibn al-Āmir, and consider that since his occultation (istitār) in A.D. 1130, the Imāms have been represented by a Dā'ī Muṭlaq ("absolute" dā'ī). Although a dā'ī cannot have the same religious status as the Imām, he is infallible (ma'ṣūm) in all matters of doctrine and law. The 51st dā'ī of the Dāwūdīs (called the Mullajī Ṣāhib) is Abū Muḥammad Ṭahir Sayf al-Dīn, who lives in Bombay.⁽²⁾ The authorized legal text of the Musta'lis is the Da'ā'im al-Islām of Qādī al-Nu'mān (d. 363/974), the chief Qādī of the

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- (1) The Dāwūdīs chose Dawūd ibn Quṭb Shāh as dā'ī in Gujarāt in A.D. 1588. The term Bohora, by which they are generally known, was originally a Hindu caste designation, said to be derived from "trade"; but the Bohora tradition is that they are so-called because they consisted of several sects or paths, in Gujarātī, bahu rah.
- (2) The other main group of the Musta'lis chose Sulaymān ibn al-Ḥasan as their dā'ī and are known as Sulaymānīs. Their present "absolute" dā'ī lives in al-Yaman but has a representative in India at Baroda. The Dā'ī Muṭlaq, who is called 'Alī ibn al-Husayn, resides at Najrān in Arabia. See - A. Tāmīr's article "Furū' al-Shajara al-Ismā'īliya al-Imāmiya", in al-Machriq, (May - June) 1957, pp.585-587; A.A.A. Fyzee, "A Chronological List of the Imāms and Dā'īs of the Musta'lian Ismā'īlīs, in J.B.B.R.A.S., 1934, pp.45-56.

Fāṭimid Imām (Caliph) al-Muḥizz (d. 365/976). They follow the religious teachings as handed to them through the works of Qādī al-Nuḥmān and other great Ismāʿīlī writers of the Fāṭimid period. This is why the Mustaʿlīs were to be referred to as Aṣḥab al-Daʿwa al-Qadīma, (the followers of the Old Preaching).⁽¹⁾

2 - The Nizāris, also known as the Eastern Ismāʿīlīs, regarded Nizār ibn al-Mustansir and his descendants as their legitimate Imāms; but in fact, up to the appearance of the Imām Ḥasan ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām (peace be on his mention) in Alamūt in A.D. 1162, the authority among them was exercised by their chief dāʿīs, Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ and his successors.

Under the leadership of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ (A.D. 1090 - 1124)⁽²⁾ who acted as the ḥujjat (proof or evidence) of the Imām, and his two successors Buzurg-Ummīd (A.D. 1124-1138) and the latter's son Kiyā Muḥammad (A.D. 1138-1162), the Nizārī daʿwa assumed several new features. These changes were shown in

(1) Daʿāʾimu'l - Islām of Qādī al-Nuḥmān b. Muḥammad, Vol. I, ed. A.A.A. Fyzee, Cairo, 1951.

(2) An English translation of three articles on the life of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ and the Imām Ḥasan ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām, taken from the Ismāʿīlī periodical "Jannat al-Āmāl", appears in Appendix II of this work. On the early life of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ, see ʿAṭā-Mālik Juwainī, The History of the World Conqueror, translated by J.A. Boyle, Manchester University, 1958, pp.666-671.

the extent to which use was made of the ta'wīl al-bāṭinī (allegorical interpretation) of the sacred sources. This did not represent a complete break with the old teachings of the Ismā'īlī da'wā, since the bāṭinī interpretation had long been one of the fundamental Ismā'īlī doctrines; but the ways in which they put into practice both the bāṭin and the ẓāhir (esoteric and exoteric meaning) of their religious beliefs was modified to a great degree by the new circumstances.

Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ's doctrine of ta'lim (instruction) and the need for a mu'allim (instructor) in the person of the Imām led to severe criticism among Muslim theologians, especially the well-known theologian al-Ghazzālī (A.D.1058-1112). This new doctrine of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ transformed the early Ismā'īlī "rational" attitude in interpreting and independently deducing the meaning of the sacred sources into what might be called a "guided rationalism".⁽¹⁾ Thus the way was prepared for the appearance of the new Imām to guide his followers in both their spiritual and their temporal lives.

The uncertain circumstances which accompanied the accession of Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām to the Imamate have raised many doctrinal problems. The stories given in non-Ismā'īlī

(1) An account of the beliefs of the Ismā'īlīs appears in Part II of this work. On al-Ghazzālī's denunciation of the Bāṭinī Ismā'īlīs, see Die Streitschrift des Gāzālī gegen der Bāṭinījja - Sekte, tr. by I. Goldziher (Leiden, 1918); M.G. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins, The Hague, 1955, pp.54-56 and 126-131.

sources range from aspersions that he was the illegitimate son of a descendant of Nizār named Ḥasan, to the suggestion that he was the real son of the chief dā'ī Kiyā Muḥammad, who up to his death in 558/1162 was ruling in Alamūt in the name of the Imām of the line of Nizār.⁽¹⁾

Such allegations about the authenticity of the Imamate of Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām were similar to those which had been made about 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī, the founder of Fāṭimid Caliphate.

"The two main reasons that confused the simple-minded people about Ḥasan's accession to the Imamate" states the author of Jannat al-Āmāl, "were the following: first, the three Imāms after Nizār were given the same title, with the result that they were thought to be one Imām. The second reason, and perhaps the more important, was that the chief dā'ī Kiyā Muḥammad did have a son called Ḥasan and that this Ḥasan claimed to be an Imām during the lifetime of his father, but, after being rebuked by his father, he repented and asked the real Imām, Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām, for forgiveness which was granted."

(1) Due to the secretive nature of the Ismā'īlī da'wā in Persia and the lack of Ismā'īlī sources dealing with the Qiyāma period, one is bound to consult non-Ismā'īlī sources which tend to be hostile to the Ismā'īlīs. 'Aṭā Mālik Juwaynī, had full access to the Ismā'īlī sources after the capture of Alamūt by the Mongols, but was objective enough not to stray from the path of the true facts recorded in the sources that were at his disposal. See Juwaynī's story about Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām in The History of the World Conqueror, ... pp.686-694.

But the fabricated stories about the authenticity of the Imamate of Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām implied two things which no believing Nizārī would have admitted: firstly that a devoted Ismā'īlī dā'ī was conspiring against his Imām, while the other Ismā'īlī dā'īs were ignorant of the situation; or, secondly, that the Ismā'īlīs were ready to accept an infringement upon the most fundamental principles of their religion and Imamate. Both possibilities are categorically denied by early and modern Ismā'īlī sources. (1)

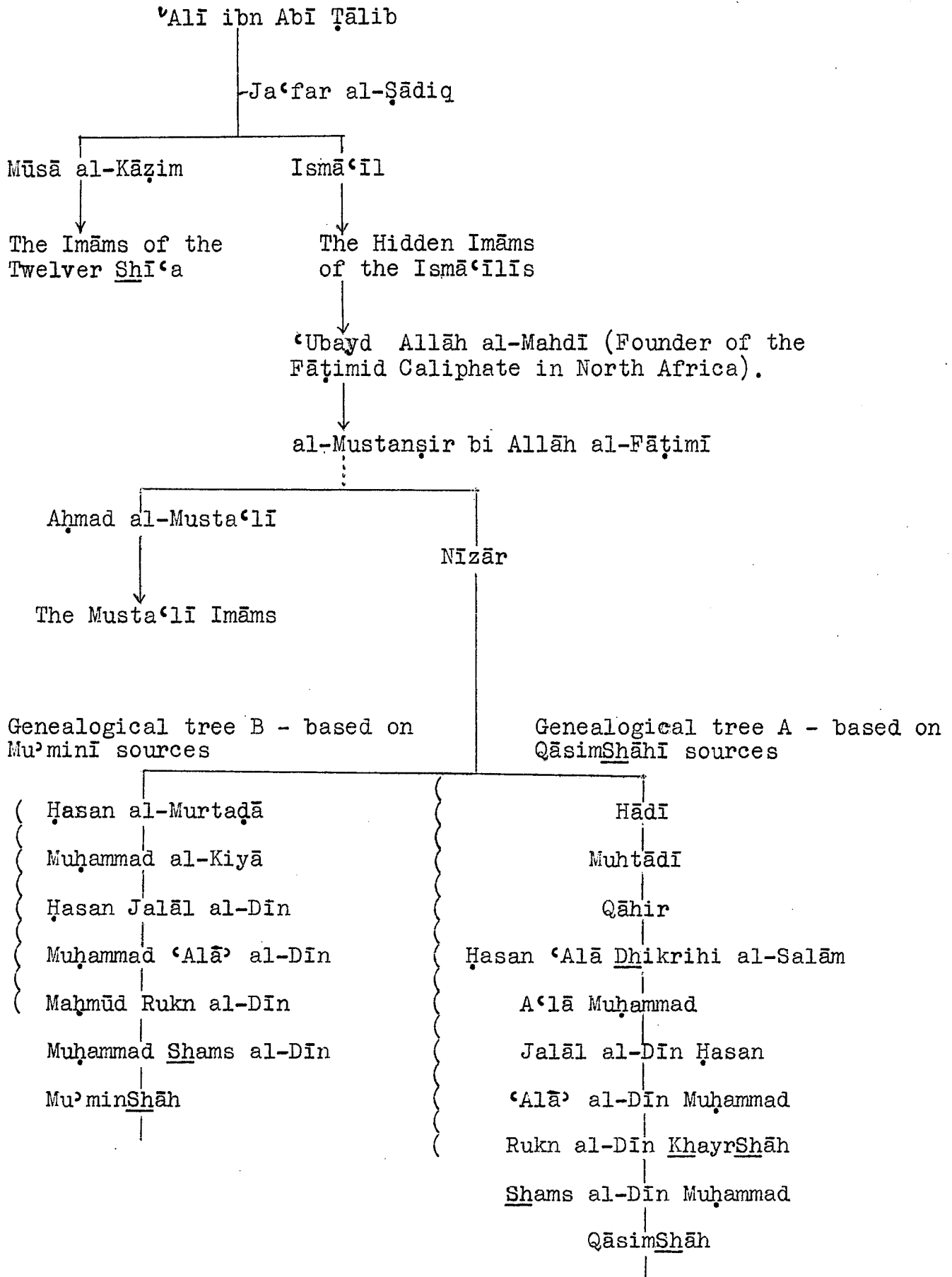
Most of the Syrian Ismā'īlī sources make no mention of the name of Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām in their genealogical trees of the Nizārī Imāms. This gives us an explanation of the different course the Syrian Ismā'īlīs began to adopt under Sinān which ultimately led either in A.D. 1310 or 1320 to the first grave split in the ranks of Nizārī Ismā'īlī movement. (2)

In the year 559/1164, Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām exercised his rights as the Imām of the Ismā'īlīs to proclaim

(1) Jannat al-Āmāl, pp.58-59; Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Tārīkh al-Da'wa al-Ismā'īliyya (Damascus 1953), pp.203-205, 207-208; M.C. Defrémery, "Documents sur l'Histoire des Ismaéliens ou Bathiniens de la Perse," ... J.A., Ser. V, Tome XV (1860) pp.195,208, where Kiyā Muhammad denies being an Imām and punishes those who believed in the Imamate of his son.

(2) After the death in A.D. 1310 or 1320 of the Nizārī Imām Shams al-Dīn Muhammad, his followers split into two groups. One followed his son Qasim Shāh, and became known as Qasim-shāhīs, in modern time as Aghā Khānīs, and the other group followed his other son Mu'min Shāh and were to be known as Mu'minīs (al-Mu'miniya). Cf. 'Arif Tāmīr, "Furū' al-Shajara ... " al-Machriq, 1957, pp.590-594; W. Ivanow, "A Forgotten Branch of the Ismā'īlīs," J.R.A.S., 1938, pp.57-79.

GENEALOGY OF THE NIZĀRĪ IMĀMS AT ALAMŪT



the Qiyāma ("resurrection") in Alamūt. The proclamation of the Qiyāma gave the Ismā'īlīs the right to cease observing certain rules of the Sharī'a which according to them were no longer binding on the Ahl al-Baṭīn (the followers of the esoteric interpretation of the sacred laws). This move by the Imām Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām had serious repercussions, not only among the Sunnī and Shī'ī Muslims of Persia, but also the Ismā'īlīs of Syria, as will be seen later. (1)

The other important step taken by Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām was his decision to send one of the most powerful and energetic dā'īs to be his deputy in Syria. This new representative of Alamūt was able to reorganise the Ismā'īlī da'wa in Syria which had been seriously weakened by both internal and external factors. It was thanks to him that the Ismā'īlīs were able to stand on their feet again and force the Sunnī Muslims and the Crusader Christian leaders to acknowledge the Ismā'īlī da'wa as a power to be reckoned with. This great leader, whose personality dominated the scene in Syria and who will be the main figure in the rest

(1) For the names of the Imāms between Nizār ibn al-Mustansir and Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām, see the two main genealogical trees A and B of the Nizārī Imāms of Alamūt, facing this page. See also the Syrian Ismā'īlī MS. II, Appendix I, which so far as I know is one of the very few Syrian Ismā'īlī MSS that agree with the present official genealogical tree of the Imāms of Alamūt. For a non-Ismā'īlī point of view see, 'Aṭā-Mālik Juwaynī, The History of the World Conqueror, tr. Boyle, p.694; M. Defremery, "Histoire des Seljoukides ..." J.A. 4e Ser. T. XIII, Jan. 1849, pp.39-43.

of this chapter, was Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān.

(b) The Early Life and Career of Sinān

Although precise details of the early life of Sinān and the circumstances of his appointment as chief dā'ī, first in 'Irāq and later in Syria, are still difficult to establish, they are no longer a complete mystery since a certain amount of information can be pieced together from various sources.

Reading through the literature on Alamūt, one finds ample information about the activities of the Ismā'īlīs in Persia, but very little about Sinān and the Syrian Ismā'īlīs except short passages in Arabic chronicles and cursory allusions from the Western Crusader Chronicles.

The Syrian Ismā'īlī sources give some useful historical material about Sinān's early life and about the Syrian Ismā'īlīs in general, but their dates are generally not correct. Any researcher into this field has to try to reconcile the different versions as stated by Ismā'īlī and non-Ismā'īlī sources. The recent researches of Bernard Lewis have, however, thrown some new light on this problem.⁽¹⁾

W. Ivanow states in his article in the Encyclopaedia of Islam (1st ed.), that Abū al-Ḥasan Sinān ibn Sulaymān ibn

(1) B. Lewis published four main articles in connection with the Syrian Ismā'īlīs: "Sources for the History of the Syrian Assassins," Speculum (Oct. 1952); Three Biographies,... (Istanbul, 1953); "Saladin and the Assassins," BSOAS, XV/2 (1953), pp.239-245; A History of the Crusades, Vol. I, ed. K.M. Setton (Phil. 1955), pp.99-132.

Muḥammad was born at a place near Baṣra, educated in Persia and appointed by the Imām Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām in 588/1163 as head of the Syrian Ismā'īlī (Nizārī) community; and the available Ismā'īlī and non-Ismā'īlī sources do not disagree on this point. The famous historian, Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-'Adīm, provides some brief but valuable information about Sinān's life and quotes a story believed to have been told by Sinān himself describing his journey to Syria.⁽¹⁾

As regards the date of Sinān's birth and the question of whether his appointment as "deputy" in Syria took place before or after his arrival in Syria, there seems to be no certain information. Fortunately, however, a number of Syrian Ismā'īlī manuscripts have recently been brought to light and these give Sinān's age at the time of his death as 58 or 60 years; i.e. he was born either in 530/1135, or 528/1133, the latter date being the more probable.⁽²⁾

For it was a traditional Ismā'īlī rule that appointments

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- (1) W. Ivanow, "Rashīd al-Dīn Sinān," in the E.I. (1st. ed.); A History of Crusades, ed. K.M. Setton, ... Vol. 1, p.121.
- (2) 'Arif Tāmīr, who relies on an unpublished MS. in his possession entitled Fuṣūl wa Akhbār (chapters and traditions) and also on other Syrian MSS., states that Sinān lived 58 years. This MS., which is believed to have been compiled by an Ismā'īlī writer called Nūr al-Dīn Aḥmad, either in the 7th or 8th century A.H., seems to be of a considerable historical value, and will be published by 'Arif Tāmīr. See his novel Sinān and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Beirut 1956), pp.32-33; Mustafā Ghālib in Ta'rīkh al-Da'wa al-Isma'īliya (Damascus 1953) p.210, gives the date of Sinān's birth as 528/1133; but does not specify his sources. However, it seems that he drew his materials on Sinān from the following three Ismā'īlī MSS., Kitāb al-Bustān, by al-Dā'ī Ḥasan ibn Shams al-Dīn, pp.263-264; Kitāb al-Mithāq, by the Syrian dā'ī 'Abd al-Malik, pp.14-16; and Kitāb Bayt al-Da'wa, pp.102-103.

to the "higher grades" (Ar. marātib ʿulyā) were preferably made from among those who were not less than forty years old. This customary rule was not based solely on the consideration that leaders ought to possess maturity and experience; but also on the fact that the Ismāʿīlīs regard the numbers forty, twelve, seven, five and four as having certain symbolical meanings.

Only scanty information is available about Sinān's birth place and parents. The geographer Yāqūt (ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Rūmī) states that he was a native of ʿAqr al-Sūdān,⁽¹⁾ a village between Wāsiṭ and Baṣra which was inhabited mostly by extreme Shīʿī sects. The statements from the non-Ismāʿīlī sources about the environment in which Sinān spent his early years suggest that his parents were Twelver Shīʿīs. Syrian Ismāʿīlī sources confirm that Sinān was in charge of the Ismāʿīlī daʿwa in ʿIrāq up to the time of his appointment as deputy of the Imām of Alamūt in Syria, but do not give any hint that he was a Twelver Shīʿī by origin. Some of these sources state that he had family connexions with the Ismāʿīlī Imāms; whilst others go so far as to suggest that he was himself the real Imām.⁽²⁾

(1) Yāqūt (ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Rūmī) al-Ḥamawī, Muʿjam al-Buldān (Beirut 1374/1955) Vol. 4, p.137; M.G.S. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins. p.186; A History of the Crusades Vol. 1, p.120.

(2) A. Tāmir, "Mazyad al-Hillī al-Asadī," (b. in Hillah A.H. 538, d. in Miṣyāf) al-Machriq, 1956, pp.449-455, and 466-484; "Sinān Rāshid al-Dīn or Shaykh al-Jabal," al-Adīb, (May 1953) pp.43-45; "Al-Amīr Nazyad al-Hillī al-Asadī," al-Adīb, (August, 1953): Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Tārīkh al-Daʿwa (Damascus 1953), pp.210-214.

Before his first appointment as dā'ī in the district of Baṣra in 'Irāq, Sinān is reported to have taken a full course on Ismā'īlī theology and philosophy at the madrasa (centre for religious teaching) of the Imām Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī, surnamed al-Qāhir (the conqueror) at Alamūt. (1)

What Sinān did in Alamūt besides studying Ismā'īlī doctrines and what was really happening at that time in the heart of that great Ismā'īlī stronghold cannot be ascertained. The only thing that is almost certain is that during his stay in Alamūt he met the future Imām Ḥasan II ('Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām), who later sent him to Syria to succeed the chief dā'ī Abū Muḥammad. (2)

Sinān was transferred to Syria not long after his first appointment as dā'ī in the district of Baṣra, believed to have taken place around 556/1160. Kamāl al-Dīn gives an interesting

(1) Al-Qāhir is generally referred to as Ḥasan I. For further detail on his genealogical tree see Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Tārīkh al-Da'wā ... pp.203-208; The Syrian Ismā'īlī MS. No. 1 in Appendix 1, entitled Asāmī Khulafā' Fāṭima Ridwān Allāh 'Alayhim ... p.249; On madrasa, see Ernest Diez's article, "Masjid," in the New Encyclopaedia of Islām, pp.383-388.

(2) There is a possibility that Sinān was appointed by the Imām Ḥasan I (Al-Qāhir), and that the appointment was later confirmed by his son Ḥasan II ('Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām), after the latter's succession to the Imamate. Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, Mir'āt az-Zamān (A.H. 495-654), ed. J.R. Jewet, Chicago 1907, p.269, states that Sinān came to Syria during the Imamate of Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad II (A.D. 1166-1210).

description of the various stages of Sinān's journey to Syria. Sinān is reported to have travelled via Mōsul in northern Irāq and Raqqā on the border between Syria and Irāq, until he reached Aleppo, then under the rule of Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Zangī (541-570 / 1146-1174).

Aleppo was at that time still accessible to Ismāʿīlī dāʿīs who used to enter the city often disguised as merchants. Sinān did not have any difficulty in finding his contacts in the capital of the Zangids, and if 558/1162 was actually the date of his arrival he probably had the good fortune to arrive when Nūr al-Dīn was absent from the city warring against the Franks. Sinān may have stayed for some time familiarizing himself with the affairs of the Ismāʿīlīs in Northern Syria, until fresh orders reached him from Alamūt to move to the Ismāʿīlī strongholds in central Syria.⁽¹⁾

Abū Firās ibn Qādī Naṣr ibn Jawshan, a native of al-Maynaqa ⁽²⁾ writing in 724/1324, states that Sinān arrived in

(1) B. Lewis, "Three Biographies", pp.327-328, 336-344; S. Guyard, "Un Grand Maître des Assassins au temps de Saladin", in J.A., Paris, 1877, pp.353-356; Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Tārīkh al-Daʿwa p.210.

(2) Al-Maynaqa is also pronounced al-Mānīqa. The Arabic script confuses the reader, because the letter (n) could be taken either preceding the letter (ī), in which case the word is al-Mānīqa, or following the letter (ī), making it al-Maynaqa. Even at the present time the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs are not unanimous about the name. Those of Miṣyāf and Qadmūs spell it al-Mānnīqa (with shaddah on the 'n'), while the Ismāʿīlīs of Salamīya and al-Khawābī spell it al-Maynaqa (with a fatha on the 'n' and sukūn on the yāʾ). For further explanations of the word consult, S. Guyard, "Un Grand Maître," J.A. 1877, p.38. A.M. Mohl, "Lettre de M. Catafago", J.A. Ser. IV, 1848, pp.489,493.

Miṣyāf where he stayed for some time without revealing his real identity; and that later he went to Baṣṭiryūn, a village near al-Kahf, the castle which was the residence of the Ismā'īlī chief dā'ī, Abū Muḥammad. According to Abū Firās, Sinān had to wait seven years, at the end of which, while Abū Muḥammad on his deathbed, Sinān forwarded to him his credentials as the new leader.

If Abū Firās's account of Sinān's arrival at Miṣyāf and the incidents which preceded his ultimate assumption of the leadership is correct, the possibility arises that Sinān was sent to Syria by the father of Ḥasan II (ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām) and subsequently confirmed or appointed as chief dā'ī by his son. This would lead to the assumption that Sinān arrived in Syria earlier than 558/1161-2; say some time around 552/1157, a date coinciding with an earthquake during which Sinān was injured. Many sources for this period report that a grave earthquake took place in Syria around 551/1156 destroying the main Syrian cities. But having no evidence to show how far the Imāms of Alamūt were exercising their powers before 558/1162, we are inclined to accept the possibility that Sinān was only appointed after the succession of Ḥasan II (ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām) in 558/1162. The earthquake, however, may have taken place not in 552/1157 (as stated by the Arabic sources of the time), but later when Sinān had already assumed the leadership. Abū Firās may have committed a mathematical error in stating that Sinān stayed seven years in Syria before declaring his true mission. The

problem arises as to whether Sinān was appointed prospective chief dā'ī in Syria before he went there. The fact that he did not report to Abū Muḥammad on arrival of his visits to the Ismā'īlī groups is suspicious. Was he waiting for further developments in Alamūt? Or, wisely, was he only secretly making some preliminary study of the situation in Syria? At any rate, it would seem probable that Sinān arrived in Syria in 558/1162, and that after his preliminary investigations he took over from Abū Muḥammad in 560/1164.⁽¹⁾

(c) The Death of Abū Muḥammad and the Accession of Sinān

The death of Abū Muḥammad brought to an end the life of a leader whose name and activities remain obscure in the history of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. Presumably he played a leading part in the endeavours of the Ismā'īlīs to consolidate their position in Aleppo and Jabal al-Summāq⁽²⁾ - endeavours which had not been noticeably successful, whence the lack of information about him and the mission of Sinān whose energy and strength of character had recommended him to the Imām as likely to be a successful missionary. Even when, after the massacre of the Ismā'īlīs at

(1) See notes on Abū Firās's book, Sullam al-Ṣu'ūd ilā Dār al-Khulūd, in Appendix I; S. Guyard, "Un grand maître des Assassins", J.A. 1877, pp.357-358; M.C. Defrémery, "Nouvelles recherches sur les Ismaéliens de Syrie", J.A. Ser. V, 1855, pp.5-7.

(2) On Jabal al-Summāq, see Yaqūt (b. 'Abd Allāh al-Rūmī), Mu'jam al-Buldān, ed. Wüstenfeld, 1278/1866, Vol. 4, p.816.

Damascus in 523/1129, the Ismā'īlīs launched their third and successful attempt to seize castles in central Syria, only the names of apparently junior Ismā'īlī dā'īs are mentioned by the sources, while Abū Muḥammad seems to remain behind the scenes. (1)

During the last decade of Abū Muḥammad's leadership, weakness, disorganization and disunity manifested themselves in the Syrian Ismā'īlī community. Many Ismā'īlīs emigrated to the neighbouring cities of Ḥamā, Ḥims, and Aleppo, not only in order to strengthen their da'wa, but also to earn a living; for the Ismā'īlī territory was not fertile, and they lived mostly on their cattle. This situation was worsened when, around 546/1151, the Frankish Count of Tripoli, Raymond II, was murdered, in consequence of which the Templars, a militant Christian Order

(1) The non-Ismā'īlī sources are unlikely to have known the activities of the chief Ismā'īlī agents. The following are the four main fortresses that were either captured or bought by the Ismā'īlīs.

1. Al-Qadmūs. This fortress was sold by Sayf al-Dīn ibn 'Amrūn to the Ismā'īlī dā'ī Abū al-Faṭḥ in 527/1132.
2. Kharibah. It is about 12 miles north east of al-Qadmūs, and was captured from the Franks in 531/1136.
3. Al-Kahf. One of the most important Ismā'īlī strongholds. It was acquired in 530/1135/6.
4. Miṣyāf. It was captured in 535/1140 from a governor appointed by Banū Munqidh.

On the other Ismā'īlī strongholds see:

S. Guyard, "Un Grande Maître" ... J.A. 1877, pp.350-351;
M.C. Defremery, "Nouvelles Recherches sur les Ismaéliens"...
J.A. (May - June 1854), pp.411-417;

C. Cahen, La Syrie de Nord à l'époque des Croisades, (Paris, 1940), pp.353-354;

A Critical edition of an unknown source for the life of al-Malik al-Zāhir Baibars, by Abdul 'Azīz al-Khowayter (Ph.D. thesis London 1960) Vol. 3, p.1217, where it is stated that 'Alam al-Dawla Yūsuf Ibn Muḥriz surrendered al-Qadmūs to the Ismā'īlīs in 523/1128.

founded in A.D. 1117, raided Ismā'īlī territory and compelled the inhabitants to pay a tribute.⁽¹⁾ Another factor which weakened the Ismā'īlī da'wa was the personal disputes among the Ismā'īlīs, which added to the complexity of the problem to be faced by the successor of Abū Muḥammad.⁽²⁾

The most important events after Sinān's assumption of the leadership arose from his efforts to consolidate the position of the Ismā'īlīs and to solve their manifold internal problems. The principal aim of his external policy was to defend Ismā'īlī territory against hostile Muslim and Frankish neighbours. Another question which needs consideration is that of Sinān's relations with Alamūt, especially after the proclamation of the Qiyāma by Ḥasan II ('Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām) in 560/1164; there may have been some connexion between this and an episode involving a group of Ismā'īlī extremists in Northern Syria called the Ṣufāt ("pure").

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- (1) The annual tribute exacted from the Ismā'īlīs by the Templars is estimated to have been 2000 gold pieces. For the sources dealing with the murder of Raymond II, see A History of the Crusades, ed. K.M. Setton, (Phil. 1955), p.120. Abū Muḥammad's burial place is believed by the local Ismā'īlīs to be 5 miles east of al-Qadmūs.
- (2) The Ismā'īlī sources do not indicate clearly the differences among the Ismā'īlīs, but an indirect hint to that effect is reported in the form of letters or instructions being sent by the Imāms of Alamūt, asking their followers to unite and to drop their differences ... etc. One of these letters is reported by an Ismā'īlī dā'ī named as Ibrāhīm ibn al-Fawāris. The manuscript was compiled in 890/1485. See M. Ghālib, Tārīkh al-Da'wa ... pp.199-201, where the letter is reproduced.

Sinān's Efforts to Consolidate the Ismā'īlī Position

After his accession to the leadership, Sinān found himself facing many grave problems. To protect his people was not so easy as to win their love and admiration during his early years in Syria. The pious 'Irāqī Shaykh (al-Shaykh al-'Irāqī) of yesterday, the teacher of the children, the renderer of medical treatment for sufferers, and the austere and ascetic man of religion living by prayer and meditation, had now to concentrate on the practical needs of his people and save them from becoming an easy prey to their enemies.

In order to meet the dangers from outside, Sinān began reorganizing his men and choosing the most eligible and devoted to form the core of his fidā'īs. (devotees). Thanks to his strong personality and incisive intellect, he was able to smooth away the internal dissension which had been jeopardising Ismā'īlī unity at the beginning of the second half of the twelfth-century A.D.

In almost all these objectives, and in securing his own position, Sinān was successful. He had his fidā'īs trained in various languages and in the art of collecting secret information from the courts of kings and princes. He organized an elaborate communication system, making full use of pigeons and coded messages by which the commanders of the various Ismā'īlī strongholds were kept informed about his plans and about possible threats to any of the widely scattered

Ismā'īlī fortresses. (1)

Besides organizing and training the various groups of his fidā'īs, Sinān also rebuilt two Ismā'īlī castles which had fallen into ruin, either through natural calamities or through assaults by enemies. These were at al-Raṣāfah, which is less than four miles south of Miṣyāf, and al-Khawābī, which is about four miles south of al-Kahf. Sinān also looked to the north and by a military stratagem captured al-'Ullayqa, which is less than eight miles north east of the impregnable and well known Frankish castle al-Marqab. (2)

The key strongholds which gave Sinān an excellent strategic position were Miṣyāf, al-Kahf, al-Qadmūs and al-'Ullayqa. Miṣyāf, being on the eastern fringe of Jabal Bahrā', (3) served as a window on the Muslim principalities of Ḥamā and Ḥims. As for al-Kahf, the centre of the previous chief dā'ī, it became the fortress from which Sinān was able to keep an eye on Ṭartūs (Tortosa or Antartus), and other Frankish strongholds to the

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- (1) Pigeons for delivering both urgent and ordinary messages were widely used by the Fāṭimids. See Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, Ṭarīkh al-Dawla al-Fāṭimīya, Cairo, 1958, p.295.
- (2) Al-Marqab was in the hands of the Hospitallers, and was used by the Franks as a key point for staging their attacks on the Muslim principalities. For the exact geographical locations of the Ismā'īlī and Frankish castles, consult the attached map.
- (3) On Jabal Bahrā', see René Dussaud, Topographie Historique ... Paris, 1927, p.146ff.

south west of his territory. Al-Qadmūs was his forward post in the west and al-ʿUllayqa that in the north west.⁽¹⁾

Relations with Alamūt

Neither in the internal problems of the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs under Sinān, nor in the relations with Saladin and the Franks, does it appear from the available evidence that Alamūt played any important role. There is a report that Sinān received direction from Alamūt regarding the case of Khawājā ʿAlī, who tried to take over the leadership in succession to Abū Muḥammad without having been designated by the Imām of Alamūt, and the subsequent murder of Khawājā ʿAlī at the instigation of two prominent members of the community, Abū Mansūr ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Shaykh Abū Muḥammad, and al-Raʿīs Fahd. Later Alamūt sent instructions to Sinān to put the murderer to death and to release Fahd. It is also reported that Ḥasan II (ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām) instructed Sinān to abide by the rules of the Qiyāma and to watch the activities of the Muslim princes.⁽²⁾

(1) The Syrian Ismāʿīlī dāʿī Nūr al-Dīn Aḥmad (717-749/1317-1348), in his Fuṣūl wa Akhbār, p.164, reports that Sinān used to spend his weekdays moving between the four castles, namely, al-Kahf, Miṣyāf, al-Qadmūs and al-ʿUllayqa, and also that Sinān used to pay secret visits to Shayzar, Ḥama, Ḥims, and other Syrian districts. See ʿArif Tāmīr, Sinān wa Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, (1956), p.33, and his article, "Ḥaqīqat Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ", in al-Machriq (March - April 1957), pp.132-133.

(2) These reports are quite probable since Sinān was at the beginning of his career in Syria.
Cf. M.C. Defrémery, "Recherches sur les Ismaéliens," J.A. (Janvier 1955), pp.7,11,38.

The sources say practically nothing about the role of Alamūt in Sinān's relations with the Muslims and the Franks, but it cannot be inferred from this silence that there was a serious separatist movement against Alamūt on the part of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. This silence could be interpreted in various ways. The authorities at Alamūt might have had full trust in Sinān's ability to run the affairs of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs, and consequently have seen no need to intervene. Alternatively the reason might simply be that the chroniclers lacked information, since secretiveness was the rule among the Ismā'īlīs.

But the question which puzzled the chroniclers and still confronts the Ismā'īlī student is not that of Sinān's political relationships to Alamūt, but that of his religious status among his Syrian followers. Abū Firās's Manāqib, in which he pours lavish praise on Sinān's heroism, telepathic powers and wisdom, do not justify the inference that Sinān was regarded as an Imām.⁽¹⁾ In fact Abū Firās refers to him as the "deputy" (nā'ib) of the Imām of Alamūt, and if he ascribes to Sinān certain miraculous actions, this may be explained by the Ismā'īlī belief that a trusted servant of the Imām, who stands as his evidence, could become a recipient of al-ta'yīd (spiritual help from the Imām) which would confer upon him some of the Imām's supernatural

(1) According to the Ismā'īlīs, the Imām is the sole spiritual and temporal head of the community and he can interpret the Qur'ān and the Sharī'a in general. He combines all the qualities of Plato's philosopher king and al-Fārābī's Chief of the Virtuous City. See Chapter V in Part Two.

powers. As for the Ismā'īlī sources which contain aphorisms (fuṣūl) or "noble utterances" attributed to Sinān, it must be borne in mind that practically all these sources were compiled during the fourteenth and fifteenth century A.D., when the Syrian Ismā'īlīs followed a different line of Imāms of that of the Persian Ismā'īlīs, and had become influenced by the Ṣūfī writings of Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240), Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī (d. 672/1273), Ibn al-Fārid (d. 632/1235) and others. Although some Ṣūfī ideas are criticized by Ismā'īlī writers, Ṣūfī terms and phraseology were nevertheless widely used by the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. Abū Firās, in his book Sullam al-Ṣu'ūd ilā Dār al-Khulūd, states that the Ṣūfīs should be recognized as wise men and recipients of the "light" of the Prophet.⁽¹⁾ Another point which might have added to the confusion regarding the status of Sinān was the title mawlā (lord), which was not necessarily given exclusively to Imāms; great poets and philosophers - such as Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī— and other chief dā'īs who came after Sinān also received this

(1) In the Syrian Ismā'īlī MS. three aphorisms or chapters (Fuṣūl) are headed as "the noble words", with the first one clearly indicated to be from the "noble words" of Sinān and the others are without any reference to Sinān. For the first chapter (Faṣl), see: S. Guyard, Fragments Relatifs ... XXII (1874) pp.17-19; by same author "Un grand maître", J.A. 1877, anecdotes, 7, 12, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23, where Abū Firās' views on Sinān are studied; Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Firās, Sullam al-Ṣu'ūd chapter 1, Bk. 3, pp.208-213 (excerpts from the MS. in Appendix 1).

honorific appellation.⁽¹⁾ The fact that Sinān was addressed as al-mawlā is not necessarily an indication that he was an Imām.

Recently, however, the Ismā'īlī historian 'Ārif Tāmīr has published several articles in support of the view that Sinān was considered by his followers to be an Imām, and even to be the "Seventh Imām" of the series of Imāms beginning with the Fāṭimid Imām al-Mu'izz (A.D. 952 - 976).⁽²⁾ Besides the fourteenth and fifteenth century A.D. Ismā'īlī writings, 'Ārif Tāmīr has made use and published in these articles works of a poet named Mazyad al-Ḥillī al-Asadī, who is believed to have been the friend and the poet-laureate of Sinān, and who in his panegyrics addresses Sinān with titles usually reserved for the Imāms. To quote 'Ārif Tāmīr, "Sinān is considered to be one of the Imāms who lived in Syria and took Miṣyāf as their "house of emigration" (dāran li-hijratihi: c.f. 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī in Ifrīqīyā). He was variously called Abū al-Ḥasan

(1) The great Sūfī poet, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī (604-672/1207-1273) who is revered by the Ismā'īlīs, was given the title mawlā. See 'Ārif Tāmīr, "Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī. Ḥal-Adīb, (March 1956), p.47.

(2) The doctrine of the Seventh Imām and his special status belongs to the pre-Fāṭimid period. The Ismā'īlīs believe that our worldly life is divided into seven epochs, each being started with a prophet and his asās (base or foundation). Between one epoch and the other there are seven Imāms, and the last Imām of the last epoch is believed to be the one who proclaims the Great Qiyāma (Resurrection). For more details see Chapter V in Part Two.

Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥasan al-Nizārī, or Rāshid al-Dīn, or Sinān, or Ra's al-Umūr, and he was the son of the Imām Ḥasan al-Alamūtī the master of the castles of Ṭāliqān in Persia." 'Arif Tāmīr continues, "Sinān said that he had received the office of Imamate from Ḥasan and he would hand it over to Ḥasan."⁽¹⁾

This means that in the opinion of 'Arif Tāmīr the Imām of the Qiyama, Ḥasan II (ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām, A.D. 1162-1166), and his successor Muḥammad II (known as Aʿlā Muḥammad or Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad, A.D. 1166-1210), were only "trustee" Imāms (Aʿimmah Mustawdaʿūn) like Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ and his son ʿAbdallah during the period of the Hidden Imāms. According to 'Arif Tāmīr, the successor to Sinān in the Imamate was Ḥasan III (Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan, A.D. 1210-1221).⁽²⁾

The non-Ismāʿīlī sources do not provide any help on the question whether Sinān was considered to be an Imām; and with a few exceptions such as the Spanish Muslim traveller Ibn Jubayr, who alleges that Sinān was treated as God, and the biographer Ibn Khallikān, who calls the Ismāʿīlīs of Syria

(1) 'Arif Tāmīr's articles: "Sinān Rāshid al-Dīn"... in al-Adīb (Aug. 1953) pp.53-56, and two other articles on Mazyād al-Ḥillī al-Asadī in al-Machriq (1956), pp.449-455 and 466-484. Also consult the genealogical tree (A and B) - facing page 40.

(2) In the genealogical tree (B), which in large represents the Syrian Ismāʿīlī genealogical trees until the second half of the 19th century A.D., the names Ḥasan II and Muḥammad II, do not appear. It is only at the time of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III, that the genealogical tree of the Muʾminī and Qāsim Shāhī Ismāʿīlīs meet again.

"Sinānīs", the other Arabic sources give him the title of Muqaddam (Commander), Ra'īs (chief) or Ṣāhib (master) of the da'wa or of the Hashīshīya.⁽¹⁾

In general both the Arabic and the Western sources share the opinion that the Syrian Ismā'īlīs did remain dependent on Alamūt. In theory, Sinān was the deputy of Alamūt; in practice, he was probably quite independent.

The Episode of the Ṣufāt

The Ṣufāt (plural of Ṣafī "pure") has a wide meaning in Arabic and evokes historical memories - e.g. of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (Brethren of purity). "Purity" may mean purity of thought, or sincerity as regards fellowmen, or resignation and purity of intention. Among the early Ismā'īlīs, and also among the Qarmatians, the terms Ṣufāt ("Pure"), Asfiā' (chosen), and Ṣafā' ("purity" or "sincerity") were widely used.⁽²⁾

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- (1) A - The Travels of Ibn Jubayr, (English translation by R.J.C. Broadhurst, London 1952, pp.264-265; Ibn Khallikān's Biographical Dictionary, (Eng. tr.) by Baron MacGuckin de Slane, Vol. 3, p.239.
 B - On the titles given to Sinān, see, Sibt ibn al-Jawzī, Mir'āt az-Zamān, ed. J.R. Jewet, Chicago, 1907, p.269; "Bustān al-Jāmi'", ed. C. Cahen, in B.E. De I.F.D., Vol. VII-VIII, 1937-1938, p.151; Ibn al-Athīr (ʿAlī Ibn Muḥammad), al-Kamil ... Cairo, 1884-5, Vol. 12, p.31; Abū Shāma, Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn, Cairo, 1287/1870, Vol. 1, p.258.
- (2) ʿArif Tāmir, "Ḥaqīqat Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'," in al-Machriq (March-April 1957) p.135; M.C. Defrémery, "Essai sur l'Histoire des Ismaéliens ou Batinien de la Perse, plus connus sous le nom d'Assassins," Journal Asiatique, Tome VII, (Sept. - Oct. 1856), p.372, where it is reported that the Qarmatians did commit certain actions similar to those (discussed further) of the Ṣufāt.

These motives of "purity", "sincerity" and "brotherhood" led to the composition of the Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (Treatises of the Brethren of Purity), whose teachings based on reconciling philosophy and religion had challenged by implication the claim of the 'Abbāsids to politico-religious supremacy. The ideas of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' concerning human relations probably retained great influence among the later Ismā'īlīs; and these ideas together with the changes in the Ismā'īlī da'wa after the proclamation of the Qiyāma by Ḥasan ('Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām) in 560/1164 must have caused a great deal of religious confusion among the unprepared followers of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī movement in Syria.

Some of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs followed the opinion which was adhered to during the Fāṭimid period that mere knowledge of the bāṭin (esoteric or inner meaning) of the Sharī'a does not necessarily absolve the believers from its ẓāhir (exoteric obligations).⁽¹⁾

On the other hand among the Syrian Ismā'īlīs in Jabal al-Summāq were some who did take an extreme line and adhered to the belief that the exoteric rules of the Sharī'a were no longer to be observed after the abrogation of the taqīya (dissimulation) resulting from the proclamation of the Qiyāma at Alamūt, ignoring

(1) Often we find in the Syrian Ismā'īlī writings questions and answers on the problem whether fasting should be observed in Ramadān. Precedents from early Ismā'īlī practices are given for or against.

that it was more of a spiritual Qiyāma than a physical one; and to celebrate this new freedom these extremists, the non-Ismā'īlī sources tell us, held festivities alleged to have been accompanied by unrestricted licence.

The sources mentioning the episode of the Ṣufāt ("pure") state that the Ismā'īlīs committed all sorts of forbidden actions; but with the exception of Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-'Adīm, they do not state that Sinān was responsible for the alleged orgies in Jabal al-Summāq. Nor is there in these sources any mention of the role of Alamūt in this matter.

Kamāl al-Dīn relates that a certain Shaykh from the district of al-Jazr said that Sinān had told the Ismā'īlīs to live together in "purity" to help one another, and to co-operate in the full sense of the word. The people of al-Jazr went to Jabal al-Summāq and said that they had been ordered to live together in "purity" ... and so on. Kamāl al-Dīn ends his account with a statement that Sinān summoned these people to the fortresses where he punished them and put some of them to death.

The anonymous chronicle al-Bustān al-Jāmi', and Ibn Jubayr in his travels (Rihla), also mention these events, and the Bustān gives the date as 561/1165.⁽¹⁾ It certainly appears that the Ṣufāt must have committed some actions forbidden by the Sharī'a,

(1) Kamāl al-Dīn, MS. 1936 (Blochet, Vol IV (1896), p.147-148); The Travels of Ibn Jubayr ... by R.J.C. Broadhurst, (London 1952), pp.260,264; "Bustān al-Jāmi'," ed. C. Cahen ... p.136; B. Lewis, "Three Biographies" ... p.338.

but the accounts and explanations of hostile historians should not be accepted without caution.

The date 572/1176/7 which Kamāl al-Dīn gives for the episode of the Ṣufāt seems more probable than the date 561/1165 given by the Bustān. In 572/1176 Sinān was preoccupied with external problems, and he must have wanted to settle this internal Ismāʿīlī dispute before any outside power could intervene. Probably at the request of Sinān the regent of Aleppo, Saʿd al-Dīn Gūmūsh̄tigīn, who was friendly with the Ismāʿīlīs, dissuaded Nūr al-Dīn Zangī's young son and successor al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ to withdraw his army which he had already sent on a punitive expedition against the Ismāʿīlīs, and Sinān was able to settle the problem without outside intervention.

Sinān's Relations with Saladin

During a siege of Jaʿbar⁽¹⁾ in A.D. 1146, the Turkish ruler of Mosul and Aleppo, ʿImād al-Dīn Zangī, had been murdered by his slave-troops (mamlūks), and had been succeeded by his son, Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd Zangī, who had maintained his father's efforts to defend Syria against the Crusaders.

After the fall of Edessa to ʿImād al-Dīn Zangī in December A.D. 1144, the Crusaders had launched their second Crusade (A.D. 1146 - 1149), which had ended in a complete failure.

(1) Jaʿbar is situated on the Euphrates River, and belonged to a descendant of the ʿUqaylid Sālim ibn Mālik. See Ibn al-Athīr, in Recueil des Historiens des Croisades - Historiens Orientaux, Paris, 1872, Tome 1, p.451; Yāqūt, Muʿjam al-Buldān, ed. Wüstenfeld, Vol. II, p.84.

In March A.D. 1154, Nūr al-Dīn had captured Damascus, and from then onwards Egypt had been the decisive factor in his relations with the Crusaders.

In Egypt, the wobbling Fāṭimid regime had reached its final stage. The death of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Fā'iz in 556/1160 had been followed by a disastrous struggle for the Wazirate during which the Fāṭimid commander Shāwar had sought help from Nūr al-Dīn, who had sent the Kurdish governor of Hims, Shīrkūh, on his first Egyptian campaign. Shīrkūh, who was the uncle of Saladin, had restored Shāwar to power (May A.D. 1164), but Shāwar had refused to pay the promised tribute, and had appealed to the Franks for help. Shāwar had been able to continue his vacillating policy for a few years, but in A.D. 1167 Nūr al-Dīn had made a second intervention in the affairs of Egypt, followed by a third in A.D. 1168; and on this occasion the Fāṭimid territories had been overrun by Shīrkūh, who had died soon afterwards leaving his nephew Saladin (Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn) ibn Yūsif as the Wazīr of Egypt.

While his master Nūr al-Dīn was living, Saladin had been mainly occupied in establishing control over Egypt, eradicating the Fāṭimid power and planning continued war against the Crusaders.

Although the relations between Sinān and Nūr al-Dīn had been tense, both on account of Nūr al-Dīn's suspicions that

the Syrian Ismā'īlīs were collaborating with the Crusaders, and on account of their unfriendly activities in Aleppo and their ceaseless efforts to seize more strongholds, Nūr al-Dīn had not undertaken any major offensive operation against the Ismā'īlīs, though there are reports that threatening letters were exchanged between him and Sinān, and rumours that he was planning shortly before his death to invade the Ismā'īlī territory.⁽¹⁾

The deaths of Nūr al-Dīn and the King of Jerusalem Amalric I, son of Fulk, in A.D. 1174, gave Saladin his opportunity; and on an urgent appeal from the commandant at Damascus, he entered Damascus on Tuesday, 30 Rabī' II 570/27 Nov., 1174, claiming to have come to protect Nūr al-Dīn's eleven year old son and successor al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, against aggression from his cousins who ruled Mosul (al-Mawṣil).⁽²⁾

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- (1) Ibn Khallikān, Biographical Dictionary ... Vol. 3, p.340-341, where he gives a threatening letter from Sinān to Nūr al-Dīn in answer to a previous letter from the latter. It is more probable that this letter was sent to Saladin, but this does not discount the probability that there were threatening letters between the two leaders. The Arabic sources state that Nūr al-Dīn was preparing before his death to march against Saladin. See: Ibn al-ʿAdīm ... Zubdat al-Ṭalab ... ed. Sāmī Dakhān ... 1954, p.340; Abū Shāma (Shihāb al-Dīn...) Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn ... Cairo 1287/1870-71, Vol. I, pp.228-230; B. Lewis, "Three Biographies," p.338.
- (2) Ibn Shaddād (Bahā' al-Dīn), "al-Nawādir al-Sultānīya," in Rec. Des. Hist. Des. Croisades, Historiens Orientaux, 1884, Tome 3, p.58; "Ibn al-Athīr" in Rec. Hist. Des. Croisades, Hist. Orientaux, 1872, p.615.

Two Abortive Attempts on the Life of Saladin

From Damascus Saladin marched northward to Hims which he captured without its castle, and proceeded to Aleppo which he besieged for the first time.

It was during this siege that Sinān, in answer to an appeal from the Regent of Aleppo Sa'd al-Dīn Gümüştigīn, sent his fidā'īs to kill Saladin. This attempt which took place in Jumādā II 570/Dec. - Jan. 1174/5 was foiled by an Amīr named Naṣiḥ al-Dīn Khumartakīn, whose castle of Abū Qubays⁽¹⁾ was close to the Ismā'īlī territory and who was able to recognize the desperados.

The second attempt took place more than a year later on 11 Dhū al-Qa'da 571/22 May, 1176, when Saladin was besieging 'Azāz, north of Aleppo. Thanks to his armour of chain-mail, Saladin escaped with only slight injuries.⁽²⁾

The question arises as to the motive for these two attempts on Saladin's life. Was it, as most of the general Arabic sources state, that Gümüştigīn had instigated Sinān to take action against Saladin? It seems unlikely that Sinān would have acted merely as a protégé of the rulers of Aleppo, obeying

(1) On Abū Qubays see Yāqūt, ed. Wüstenfeld, Vol. 1, p.102.

(2) For more details on the actual attempts see Abū Shāma (Shihab al-Dīn ...), Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn ... Cairo 1287/1870-71, Vol. 1, pp.239-240, 258; "Ibn al-Athīr," in Rec. Des. Hist. Des Croisades, Hist. Or. Paris 1872, Tome 1, p.673; "al-Bustān al-Jāmi'" ed. C. Cahen p.141, where the Bustān confuses the two attempts. See B. Lewis "Saladin and the Assassins," in BSOAS, XV, 1953, pp.239-240, where the sources on both attempts are given.

their orders or accepting their bribes to commit an act which might have endangered the whole safety of his people. On the other hand they may well have been influenced by consideration of Saladin's general policy, which from the time when he overthrew the Fāṭimid Caliphate was quite probably biased against all the Ismā'īlīs.

Although the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs to whom Sinan belonged considered the Fāṭimid Caliphs after al-Mustanṣir (d.1094) to be usurpers, Saladin's gross ill-treatment of the Fāṭimid family caused indignation and anger among all the Ismā'īlīs, whether Nizārīs or Musta'īlīs. Saladin had also embarked on a systematic campaign to suppress Ismā'īlīsm in Egypt, destroying the rich Fāṭimid libraries, exterminating the Ismā'īlī system, and introducing Sunnī institutions. Moreover, it was Salādin's manifest ambition to recreate a Syro-Egyptian state under his rule; and the rise of a strong anti-Ismā'īlī ruler in Syria was bound to be a source of anxiety to the Syrian Ismā'īlīs.

The unknown author of Bayt al-Da'wa states that Sinān had earlier sent one of his fidā'īs named Ḥasan al-ʿIkrimī al-ʿIrāqī to Egypt where he left a knife with a threatening letter near Saladin's bed.⁽¹⁾ Such reports in the Ismā'īlī sources about fidā'īs being sent to threaten Saladin shed a light on a letter from Saladin to Nūr al-Dīn (drafted by al-Qādī al-Fadīl) concerning a pro-Fāṭimid plot against him in Egypt, in 569/1173. The

(1) See Mustafā Ghālib, Taʾrīkh al-Da'wa, ... p.211.

letter also adds that the conspirators in this plot appealed to Sinān for help.⁽¹⁾

B. Lewis has suggested that Sinān's attempted assassination of Saladin was prompted by the latter's aggression against the Ismā'īlīs in 570/1174-5. In that year, according to Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, a militant Sunnī order called the Nabawīya raided the Ismā'īlī centres of al-Bāb and Buzā'a, and Saladin took advantage of the resultant confusion to send a raiding party against the Ismā'īlī villages of Sarmin, Ma'arrat Maṣrīn and Jabal al-Summāq, which were looted.

That this action stimulated Sinān to attempt the assassination seems unlikely, since Sinān's decision must have been made before these events took place (1st attempt - Jumādā II 570/ Dec. 1174 - Jan. 1175). No doubt they confirmed Sinān's belief that Saladin was a menace to Ismā'īlī existence in Syria, and they may have led to the second attempt on 11 Dhū al-Qa'da 571/ 22 May 1176.⁽²⁾

Abū Firās mentions the raid of the Nabawīya on the Ismā'īlīs, but adds that they were soundly defeated.⁽³⁾ For

(1) Abū Shāma, Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn ... Vol. 1, p.221; Ibn al-Athīr (ʿAlī Ibn Muḥammad), al-Kāmil, Cairo 1884-85, Vol. II, pp.149-150; Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt al-Aʿyān - Arabic text, (3 vols.) Cairo 1299/1881, Vol. 2, p.89.

(2) B. Lewis, "Saladin and the Assassins," (BSOAS, 1953, XV/2), pp.241-2.

(3) S. Guyard, "Un grand maître" ... J.A. 1877, anecdote X, pp.418-419.

all these reasons Sinān would have had strong motives to join hands with the rulers of Aleppo and Mosul against Saladin.

The Siege of Miṣyāf

Having twice defeated the rulers of Mosul and forced the rulers of Aleppo to seek a peace treaty, Saladin, after capturing 'Azāz on 14 Dhū al-Ḥijja 571/24 June 1176, marched against the Ismā'īlī territories. On his way to Miṣyāf, he encamped near Aleppo, where the daughter of Nūr al-Dīn came out to see him; and on her demand he presented her with the town of 'Azāz. Saladin entered Ismā'īlī territory during the summer which was the best time to attack such inaccessible places. The actual siege of Miṣyāf most probably took place in Muḥarram 572/July 1176, but does not seem to have lasted more than one week. Apparently Sinān was out of Miṣyāf during the siege, and this absence of the defending leader might have been expected to make the other's task easier; but surprisingly Saladin withdrew after only a few minor skirmishes with the Ismā'īlīs.

The reasons for Saladin's withdrawal from Miṣyāf are explained differently by the sources. But practically all the chroniclers agree that the withdrawal was brought about through the good offices of the Prince of Ḥamā, the maternal uncle of Saladin, Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Takash; though it is not clear whether Saladin or Sinān requested the mediation of the Prince of Ḥamā. According to the Ismā'īlī author, Abū Firās,

Saladin woke up suddenly to find on his bed a dagger with a threatening letter; and partly out of fear, partly out of gratitude to Sinān for not having killed him when he could, and partly on the advice of his uncle "Taqī al-Dīn" (sic: ? Shihāb al-Dīn), Saladin sought peace with Sinān.⁽¹⁾

Among the other sources dealing with Saladin's withdrawal from the Ismā'īlī territories, Ibn Abī Tayy, quoted by Abū Shāma, gives the most reasonable explanation of Saladin's withdrawal from Mişyāf. He states that Frankish military movements in the south near Ba'labak in the Biqā' valley convinced the Sunnī leader that the threat from the Franks was more urgent and important. At the same time, the prince Shihāb al-Dīn al-Hārimī of Ḥamā must have had good reasons to avoid provoking the anger and enmity of his Ismā'īlī neighbours in the west; and some sort of a settlement which might qualify to be called a peace treaty between Sinān and Saladin may have been arranged on Saladin's initiative.⁽²⁾ Whatever were the real

(1) Abū Firās tells stories showing the telepathic powers of Sinān and how miraculously he was able to evade being captured by Saladin's forces etc. See S. Guyard, "Un grand maître" ... J.A. (1877) pp.458-62. Earlier Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ actually did introduce a knife by the bed of the Saljūq Ṣultān Sanjar. See; M. Defrémery, "Histoire des Seldjoukides. Ext. du Tārīkh-Guzideh," J.A. 4e ser. T. 13, pp.32-34; M. Ghālib, Tārīkh al-Da'wa, ... p.213.

(2) Abu Shāma, Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn ... Vol. I, p.261; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil ... ed. J.C. Tornberg, Leiden - Uppsala, 1851-1876, Vols. (10-11), p.289; B. Lewis, "Saladin and the Assassins," ... pp.240-241.

reasons for the withdrawal, it is clear that Saladin, probably under the influence of his uncle Shihāb al-Dīn, and as Ibn al-Athīr says because of the weariness of his troops, did decide to reach some sort of an agreement or a settlement with the Ismā'īlīs.

Although the sources have not recorded the terms of the settlement, it seems almost certain that the two leaders must have agreed to some form of "peaceful-co-existence".

The Ismā'īlī sources go so far as to say that Ismā'īlī fidā'īs took part in the historic and glorious battle of Ḥiṭṭīn near Ṭiberias (Ṭabarayyā) in 583/1187 when Saladin won his most celebrated victory over the Franks. Following this victory Jerusalem and other important Frankish strongholds surrendered.

It is not known in what capacity the Ismā'īlīs took part in the battle of Ḥiṭṭīn; but the 17th century Christian Patriarch and chronicler al-Duwayhī in his Ta'rīkh al-Azminah covering the period A.D. 1095-1699, states that the Frankish leaders captured in Jabal Ḥiṭṭīn were taken to the Ismā'īlī castles. (1)

Although hostilities between Sinān and Saladin appear to have ceased after the latter's withdrawal from Miṣyāf, the

(1) Le Patriarche Stéphane al-Duwayhī, "Ta'rīkh al-Azminah (A.D. 1095-1699)" translated into Arabic by Ferdinand Taoutel, S.J. in al-Machriq, 44, (1950) p.88; Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Ta'rīkh al-Da'wa ... p.213, where the author says that Saladin's nephew Muḥammad was in command of the Ismā'īlī "contingent" (firqah) that took part in the battle of Ḥiṭṭīn.

relations between the Ismā'īlīs and the rulers of Aleppo entered upon a difficult period. A wazīr of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, called Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ṣāliḥ ibn al-ʿAjamī, was assassinated on August 31, A.D. 1177, and this murder was attributed to the Ismā'īlīs. Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ held an inquiry in which it was alleged that Sa'd al-Dīn Gümüştigīn had sent forged letters to the Ismā'īlīs urging them, in the name of al-Ṣāliḥ, to perpetrate the murder. Gümüştigīn was found guilty and ultimately ruined by his enemies.

The other main event affecting the relations between Sinān and the rulers of Aleppo was the burning of the markets at Aleppo in 575/1179-80. The fires broke out in several places and were attributed to arson by the Ismā'īlīs in revenge for seizure of their stronghold al-Hajīrah by al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ in A.D. 1179/80.⁽¹⁾

The Murder of Conrad of Montferrat

The assassination of the Marquis Conrad of Montferrat in April A.D. 1192 was one of the most important murders of which the Ismā'īlīs were accused during the period of Sinān's leadership. For not only Sinān, but, according to most of the sources,

(1) On the murder of Shihāb al-Dīn ... ibn al-ʿAjamī see: Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Histoire D'Alep, tr. Blochet, in Revue de l'Orient Latin, Paris, 1895, Tome IV, p.148; Al-Taʾrīkh al-Manṣūrī - by Abū al-Fadāʾil Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Hamawī - published in facsimile by P. Gryaznevich, Moscow 1960, p.88(b); A History of the Crusades, Vol. 1, ed. K.M. Setton, Phil. 1955 p.125.

also Saladin and Richard I Coeur de Lion, had a hand in it. The Marquis was attacked twice, first when he was leaving a friend's house and again fatally in the Church of Tyre. The two murderers, who were disguised as Christian monks and well trained to speak the Frankish language, confessed (according to the chronicler Bahā' al-Dīn ibn Shaddād) that they had been sent by the King of the English to assassinate Conrad, who by virtue of being the husband of Isabella daughter of Amalric I, had been chosen as the successor to the kingdom of Jerusalem. The Syriac chronicler Bar Hebraeus also mentions this confession, but gives the Franks an implied rebuke for having believed that the King of the English was the instigator; he and the Frankish chroniclers put the blame squarely at the door of Sinān. Ibn al-Athīr states that Saladin wrote to Sinān asking him to kill the King of the English, and adding that if Conrad were also killed then a sum of 10,000 dinars would be paid; but Sinān did not find it in his interest to assassinate both Frankish leaders and only had Conrad murdered.

Imād al-Dīn denies Saladin's responsibility on the ground that Conrad was the enemy of the King of the English and had been in communication with Saladin. It is conceivable that the murder of Conrad and the resultant increased suspicion among the Franks towards the Ismā'īlīs may have been advantageous to Saladin, and it is possible that the two fidā'īs may have named

the King of the English as the instigator in order to whitewash Sinān and Saladin.⁽¹⁾

A possible indication of Saladin's complicity in this murder is the fact that when King Richard I Coeur de Lion entered into negotiations with Saladin, the truce terms on which they agreed were extended at Saladin's request to cover the Ismā'īlī territories.⁽²⁾

Abū Firās relates that Sinān helped Saladin when he needed help, and sent two fidā'īs to murder Conrad.⁽³⁾ The interests of the Ismā'īlīs was to sow suspicion in both the Muslim and the Christian camps, and as Bernard Lewis says, "the murders of Ibn al-'Ajamī and of Conrad of Montferrat are good examples."⁽⁴⁾

- (1) Ibn Shaddād (Bahā' al-Dīn), Al-Nawādir al-Sulṭāniya wa al-Maḥāsīn al-Yūsufiyya, Cairo 1346/1927, p.202; "Le Chronicon Syriacum" de Barhebraeus, (Arabic trans.) by Ishāq Armalé, in al-Machriq, July - Dec. 1949, p.458; Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, XII, p.51; 'Imād al-Dīn (al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī ...), al-Fath al-Quṣṣī fī al-Fath al-Qudsī, Cairo, 1321/1903, pp.303-304; A History of the Crusades, Vol. 1. ... p.126. On the views of the Franco-Syrian chroniclers see René Grousset, Histoire des Croisades et du Royaume Franc de Jerusalem (3 vols.) Paris 1934, Vol. III, pp.90-93, where the author reports Conrad's rejection of Sinān's demand that he should surrender an Ismā'īlī vessel captured by his supporters; W.B. Stevenson, The Crusades in the East, Cambridge 1907, p.281.)
- (2) Abū Shāma (Shihāb al-Dīn ...), in Recueil des Historiens des Croisades - Historiens Orientaux, Paris, 1808, Tome V, p.77; B. Lewis, Saladin and the Assassins, ... p.244.
- (3) S. Guyard, "Un grand maître" ... J.A. 1877, (Arabic text), pp.463-465.
- (4) A History of the Crusades, Vol. I, p.127.

Sinān and the Crusaders

Most of the strongholds which the Ismā'īlīs seized or bought in Jabal Bahrā' had previously been in the hands of the Crusaders; and many of the most important Frankish castles were situated very close to the Ismā'īlī fortresses.

In A.D. 1142 or 1145, the lord of Tripoli gave to the Hospitaller Order the fortress known in the medieval Arabic sources as Ḥiṣn al-Akrād or Qal'at al-Ḥiṣn (Krak des Chevaliers), 25 miles south of Miṣyaf, and a few years later there are reports of fighting between the Ismā'īlīs and the Franks over the fortress of Maynaqa. (1)

Although Defrémery suggests that the Frankish raids on the Ismā'īlī territories were in reprisal for the murder of the Count of Tripoli in A.D. 1151 (mentioned on page 48) and that they ceased after the Ismā'īlīs had agreed to pay a yearly tribute to the Templar Order, it is quite possible that when Sinān succeeded Abū Muḥammad, the Ismā'īlīs had been fighting with the Franks somewhere in the county of Tripoli. (2)

Realizing the danger of being nearly surrounded by both Muslim and Frankish hostile forces, Sinān attempted to reach a settlement with the Franks. His efforts were made difficult by the fact that the two Frankish Orders, and especially the

(1) C. Cahen, La Syrie du Nord ... pp.179,511.

(2) M. Defrémery, "Recherches sur les Ismaéliens," ... J.A. May-June 1854, pp.420-21; The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, by A. Asher, London 1840-1, p.50.

Templars, more often than not conducted their affairs independently of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The Negotiations with Amalric I

Sinān sought a rapprochement with the Frankish kingdom of Jerusalem hoping to be absolved from paying the yearly tributes to the Templars. The negotiations with the King of Jerusalem, Amalric I, son of Fulk, (A.D. 1163-1174), began some time in A.D. 1172 or 1173, and they were successful. Amalric agreed that the tribute to the Templars should be cancelled. But this did not please the Templars, who caused Sinān's ambassador to be murdered on his way back from Jerusalem.⁽¹⁾

"Sinān's Offer to Embrace Christianity"

The chronicler William of Tyre, in attempting to blame the Templars for depriving the Franks of a strong ally, states that Sinān's embassy proposed to embrace Christianity.⁽²⁾

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- (1) "Ta'rīkh al-Azminah," Arabic tr. by Ferdinand Taoutel, S.J., in al-Machriq, 44, 1950, p.67; Thomas Keightley, The Crusaders, (London, 1833), Vol. II, pp.140-141, where the author states that Amalric was engaged to reimburse the Templars out of his own revenues.
- (2) Guillaume de Tyr - "Histoire des Croisades," in Collection des memoires relatifs à l'histoire de France, ed. M. Guizot, 31 vols. (Paris 1823-1835), III, pp.296-299; Jacques de Vitry, "Histoire des Croisades," in Collection des memoires relatifs à l'histoire de France, Vol. XXII, p.50; Charles E. Nowell, The Old Man of the Mountain, Speculum - Oct. 1947, pp.505-506, where the author tries to link the alleged Ismā'īlī move towards embracing Christianity with the reforms in the Ismā'īlī beliefs introduced by the Imām Ḥasan II, 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām.

It is probable that the Ismā'īlī embassy mentioned to the King something about the relationship between their religious views and Christian beliefs. They would have emphasized their high regard for Jesus (ʿIsā) as being both a Prophet and a Nātiq ("speaker or addresser").⁽¹⁾ For as will be seen later, the Ismā'īlīs believe that God has been sending, since the beginning of the human world, a succession of prophets for the guidance of human beings who are always in need for such guidance. According to them, religions evolve from one another and each represents a certain stage in the chronic evolution.

After the death of Amalric I, in A.D. 1174, and the withdrawal of Saladin's army from their territories, the Syrian Ismā'īlīs seem to have thrown their weight on the side of Saladin in his wars against the Franks. The reason for this was that the hostile attitude of the Templars and the Hospitallers towards the Ismā'īlīs in disregard of the official policy of Jerusalem, and the aggressiveness of the Hospitallers who in A.D. 1186 set up their military headquarters at al-Marqab, less than 13 miles northwest of al-Qadmūs, left Sinān with no alternative other than to ally himself with Saladin.⁽²⁾

(1) According to the Ismā'īlīs, Muḥammad, Jesus and Moses were Nātiqs ("Speakers") and each had an Asās (base or foundation). Concerning these terms see Part Two, Chapter V and Appendix I.

(2) C. Cahen, La Syrie du Nord ... pp.514ff.

Only after the death of Sinān was a new move made towards improving relations between the Ismā'īlīs and the Franks. It is reported that the successor to the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the husband of the widow of Conrad of Montferrat, Henry of Champagne, then visited the Ismā'īlīs on his way from Acre to Antioch.⁽¹⁾

The Death of Sinān

The great Ismā'īlī leader Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, whose nickname Shaykh al-Jabal used to be mentioned in frightened whispers at the courts of kings and princes, died in 589/1193. The well-known Sunnī author Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī gives the date of his death as 588/1192 and describes him as a man of knowledge, statecraft and skill in winning men's hearts. The Bustān al-Jāmi' states that the Chief of the Ismā'īlīs Sinān died in 589/1193 and was succeeded by "an ignorant person" named Naṣr al-ʿAjamī. Bar Hebraeus also relates that Sinān died in A.D. 1193 and was succeeded by a certain man whose name was Naṣr. He adds that the Sinān's followers did not believe that he was really dead. Other sources state that Sinān had been treated by his followers as God, and Ibn Khallikān, as already mentioned, refers to his sect being called by his name, namely al-Sinānīya.⁽²⁾

(1) R. Grousset, Histoire des Croisades ... Paris 1934, Vol. III, pp.91,133.

(2) Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, ... p.269; Le "Chronicon Syriacum" de Barhebraeus, (Ar. Translation), in al-Machriq (July-Dec.1949) pp.461-62; The Travels of Ibn Jubayr, (Eng. trans. by R.J.C. Broadhurst), 1952, pp.264-65); Ibn Khallikān ... Wafayāt al-Aʿyān - Arabic text. Cairo 1299/1881, Vol. II, p.521; Jannat al-Amāl, p.61, where it is stated that Sinān died six months after the death of Saladin on the 4 March 1193.

Although the Ismā'īlī sources are mostly doctrinal, they contain certain clues to the history of the movement. Some of these sources include Sinān in the genealogical tree of the Imāms.⁽¹⁾ The Syrian Ismā'īlī dā'ī Nūr al-Dīn Aḥmad (d.749/1384), after giving a description of the way in which Sinān used to spend his days and of his physical characteristics, continues: "he was handsome, middling in height, having wide black eyes, set in a ruddy face tending to brown, eloquent in expression, powerful in argument, sharp of vision, swift in improvisation, and unmatched in the principles of philosophy and in the sciences of allegorical interpretation, poetry and astronomy (al-falak)".⁽²⁾

In the non-Ismā'īlī sources, there are indications that Sinān was buried at al-Kahf or al-Qadmūs; but 'Arif Tāmir states in an article that his grave is in Jabal Mashhad, where Sinān used to spend much of his time praying and practising astronomy.⁽³⁾

Among the Syrian Ismā'īlīs of today, echoes of Sinān's miracles still reverberate, especially at Mişyāf and al-Qadmūs,

(1) MS.2, p.96, Appendix 1; 'Arif Tāmir, "Sinān Rāshid al-Dīn"... in al-Adīb (May 1953), pp.43-46.

(2) 'Arif Tāmir, Sinān wa Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, ... p.23, where he quotes from the Ismā'īlī MS. Fuṣūl wa Akhbār ... p.164.

(3) M.C. Defrémery, "Recherches sur les Ismaéliens" ... pp.9, 31-33; S. Guyard, "Un grand maître" ... p.372; 'Arif Tāmir, "al-Amīr Mazyad al-Hillī al-Asadī," al-Adīb, August 1953, p.55.

whose inhabitants, unlike the majority of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs, regard Sinān as an Imām.

CHAPTER III

THE SYRIAN ISMĀ'ĪLĪS FROM THE DEATH OF SINĀN TO THE FALL OF ALAMUT.

Sinān died leaving his people with ample memories of his greatness, wisdom and heroism. A very capable successor was needed to fill his place, but it seems from the scanty materials recorded by historians on the post-Sinān period that the Ismā'īlīs did not again enjoy strong leadership like that of Sinān. This did not, however, seriously handicap their efforts to preserve their independence for more than half a century to come. The main objective of the Ismā'īlīs was to maintain some sort of balance of power between the Franks and the Muslims, which they were able to do until finally they were obliged to submit to the Mamlūk Sultān al-Zāhir Baybars. Among the sources that deal with the activities of Sinān's successors, the general Arabic histories are mainly occupied with the many problems which followed the death of Saladin arising from internal difficulties in the Ayyūbid kingdom and from the revival of the power of the Franks and their new attempt to consolidate their grip on the Syrian coast-lands; consequently they hardly mention the activities and names of Sinān's successors. Fortunately the names of some of them have come to us through a new source, namely inscriptions found on buildings in the various Ismā'īlī centres. These inscriptions and the general Arabic histories, especially a historian from central Syria known as Ibn Wāṣil and the author of al-Ta'rīkh

al-Manṣūrī, provide us with the bulk of the available information on this period.⁽¹⁾

(a) The Situation Confronting Sinān's Successors.

The immediate successor of Sinān on whose identity the sources are not unanimously agreed, but whose name most probably was Naṣr al-ʿAjamī,⁽²⁾ had as mentioned in the previous chapter to face a difficult and intricate situation. The Syrian Ismāʿīlīs needed to continue their balancing acts between the Muslim and the Frankish powers, who always constituted a potential threat to the existence of their relatively small principality.⁽³⁾ Adding to the complexity of the situation was that both the Ayyūbids and the Franks were disunited among themselves; and this led the Ismāʿīlīs to follow a piecemeal policy in their relations with the two powers.

(1) On the inscriptions see: M. Van Berchem, "Epigraphie des Assassins ..." in J.A., 1897, pp.453-501; al-Taʿrīkh al-Manṣūrī, by Abu al-Faḍāʾil M. ibn al-Ḥamawī, pub. in fac. by P. Gryaznevich, Moscow 1960. Ibn Wāṣil, Mufarrij al-Qulūb fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb - the materials of this source are scattered in various MSS. found in Paris (Bibl. Nat., Arabe, 1702 and 1703), Camb. no. 1709), Iṣṭanbūl in Mullā Chalabī library no. 119.

(2) Abū Manṣūr ibn Muḥammad is named as Sinān's successor by Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil, "Histoire des Sultans Mamlouks," par E. Blochet, in Patrologia Orientalis, XII, XIV, Paris 1919-1920, vol. XII, part 1, p.516. See also M. Defrémery, in J.A. V, p.31, n.2. There is no doubt that this Abū Manṣūr is the same man as Naṣr al-ʿAjamī. In a letter dated 1/9/62, ʿĀrif Tāmīr states that Abū Manṣūr was the nephew (on the mother's side) of Sinān's predecessor Abū Muḥammad.

(3) See M. Kurd ʿAlī, Khiṭaṭ al-Shām, Damascus, 1927, vol. 2, p.7.

When Sinān died the Ismāʿīlīs were on cordial terms with the Ayyūbids; but after the death of Saladin and the partitioning of the Ayyūbid empire among his sons and his brother al-ʿAdil (596-615/1200-1218), Sinān's successors seem to have found that the Ayyūbids were in no position to come to their rescue in the event of serious conflict with their neighbours, the Franks. The Ismāʿīlīs therefore played for time in their relations with the Franks and especially with the two Orders, the Hospitallers and the Templars. This state of affair may explain the obscure circumstances under which the Ismāʿīlīs became tributaries to the Hospitallers. According to a report, the Hospitallers attacked the Ismāʿīlīs in 624/1226/7 in consequence of the Ismāʿīlīs' refusal to pay tribute to them.⁽¹⁾ However, the Ismāʿīlīs seem to have become involved in the internal quarrels of the Franks, for as soon as they settled a problem with a Frankish power, a rival Frankish power would try to retaliate against the Ismāʿīlīs on the ground that they were used by the former power. A good example of this is the story found in the Crusader sources of how the French King Philip Augustus sent in A.D. 1195 fifteen assassins to kill Richard Coeur de Lion at Chinon. This story might well be considered to have nothing to do with

(1) Al-Taʿrīkh al-Manṣūrī, ... Moscow 1960, p.166b, where the author only implies that the Ismāʿīlīs became tributary to the Hospitallers. See, "History of Crusades, ..." ed. K.M. Setton, Vol. I, pp.128-9.

the Ismā'īlīs; but there are other stories blaming the Hospitallers for the murder of Raymond son of Bohemond IV of Antioch by the Ismā'īlīs in A.D. 1213, and alleging that Ismā'īlīs were used by the Emperor Frederick II to murder Duke Ludwig of Bavaria in A.D. 1231. All these stories indicate that the Ismā'īlīs were not able to keep out of the internal rivalries among the Franks.⁽¹⁾

As regards relations with the Ayyūbids, it can be said that the post-Sinān period is characterized by peaceful relations between the Ismā'īlīs and the generally tolerant Ayyūbid rulers. Whenever a Muslim leader questioned the tactics of the Ismā'īlīs in their dealings with the Franks, the Ismā'īlī reply was generally as follows. It was the Muslim prince of Ḥimṣ who during the first decade of the sixth century A.H. had followed a policy of appeasement with the Franks in Tripoli, the result of which had been the loss of many strategic strongholds to the Franks such as Ḥiṣn 'Akkār, and the district of Buḡay'ah, and the virtual abandonment of Miṣyāf, al-Kahf and Ḥiṣn al-Tūfān to Frankish domination. This had continued until 535/1140 when the Ismā'īlīs seized Miṣyāf from the Munqidhites. Nobody except the Ismā'īlīs had ever seriously challenged the Franks in Jabal Bahrā', and if the Ismā'īlīs were sometimes obliged to make concessions or friendly overtures to the Franks, only the divided Muslims

(1) Charles E. Nowell, "The Old Man of the Mountain", in Speculum, 1947, pp.510-12.

could be blamed for that, and not the Ismā'īlīs who were unable to afford a major military conflict with their powerful neighbours. With their limited manpower, the Ismā'īlīs had to rely on threatening their potential enemies with political assassination, or on paying tribute when such threats were of no avail, as was the case with the Templars and later also with the Hospitallers. (1)

The most important development in this period was the move made by the Imām in Alamūt towards establishing friendly relations with the Sunnī Muslim world and especially with the Caliphate in Baghdād. Before this move and its effects on the status of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs vis-à-vis the Ayyūbids are discussed, a brief word must be said about the identities and dates of Sinān's successors. Not much can be added to the scanty information gathered by the nineteenth century researchers.

A young Syrian Ismā'īlī historian of today, Muṣṭafā Ghālib, gives the names of some dā'īs not mentioned by the non-Ismā'īlī sources, but these may possibly be names either of junior dā'īs or of dā'īs belonging to a later period with which we are not

(1) M. Kurd 'Alī, Khiṭaṭ ... Damascus 1927, Vol. 1, p.294; al-Ta'rīkh, al-Manṣūri, Moscow 1960, p.226a where the Ayyūbid ruler of Hims, al-Malik al-Mujāhid Shīrkūh II (581-637/1185/6-1239/40), is reported to have marched against the Ismā'īlīs and the Franks.

The murder of the ruler of Khilāt, Sayf al-Dīn Bektīmūr, by the Ismā'īlīs in Jumādā 1 589/May 1193 is an indication that the Ismā'īlīs were very anxious to keep on good relations with the successors of Saladin. Sayf al-Dīn is reported to have taken advantage of Saladin's death to annex Mardīn and Tarōṭash. See, Abū Shāma (Shihāb al-Dīn ...) in Rec. Hist., Paris 1808, Tome V, p.107.

concerned. They are Shaykh Dabbūs, Ḥasan al-Muʿaddil, Shams al-Dīn ibn ʿAlī, Muḥammad al-Rammah and Abū Yazīd al-Sarmīnī. (1)

The names of the dāʿīs who followed Sinān's immediate successor Naṣr al-ʿAjamī and the approximate dates of their reigns can, however, be ascertained by collating al-Taʾrīkh al-Manṣūrī, Ibn Wāṣil, al-Nasawī and, as mentioned above, the various inscriptions found in the Ismāʿīlī strongholds. The author of al-Taʾrīkh al-Manṣūrī states that in 619/1222 the master (ṣāḥib) of the Ismāʿīlī strongholds in Syria, Asad al-Dīn, died and was succeeded by his brother Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn; and that the latter on his death was succeeded by his brother Tāj al-Dīn who was later dismissed (ʿuzila) and recalled by Alamūt to be replaced by Majd al-Dīn, who according to the author was "of a good character". (2)

Unfortunately, the picture given by the author of al-Taʾrīkh al-Manṣūrī is somewhat confusing, for it does not state on what date this Tāj al-Dīn was recalled to Alamūt. All we know is that the deaths of Asad al-Dīn and of his

(1) M. Ghālib, Taʾrīkh al-Dawā ... Damascus, 1953, p.216, where the author states that he found in the MS. al-Mithāq, a letter sent by Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III to his followers in Jabal al-Summāq confirming the appointment of Shams al-Dīn ibn ʿAlī as his chief dāʿī in Syria. The names of the other dāʿīs mentioned in the text were given in a letter from M. Ghālib dated 13/1/1961. See ʿArif Tāmīr's article on Sinān in al-ʿAdīb, May 1953, p.45, where he also mentions Shams al-Dīn ibn ʿAlī as the dāʿī of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III in Syria.

(2) Al-Taʾrīkh al-Manṣūrī ... Moscow 1960, pp.143a, 143b.

successor and brother Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn followed by the recall of their brother and successor Tāj al-Dīn must have taken place before 624/1226-7, when, according to the same author, the Syrian Ismāʿilīs were under Majd al-Dīn.⁽¹⁾ Thus at least we can be sure that Tāj al-Dīn who, as we know from other sources, was the chief dāʿī in A.D. 1239-40, is unlikely to be the same Tāj al-Dīn mentioned in al-Taʿrīkh al-Manṣūrī; this leaves the possibility that the author may have meant Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥasan ibn Masʿūd who, as known from the inscription of Miṣyāf, was the Ismāʿilī chief dāʿī in Syria in 620/1222-3 and is stated by Nasawī to have been in Persia in 624/1226.⁽²⁾ Kamāl al-Dīn, as the inscription of Miṣyāf states, was therefore the chief of the Syrian Ismāʿilīs during the early years of the reign of the Imām ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad III (A.D. 1221-1255). The Syrian Ismāʿilī leaders who came after Kamāl al-Dīn were Majd al-Dīn, reported to have been in power in A.D. 1226/7; Sirāj al-Dīn Muẓaffar ibn al-Ḥusayn A.D. 1227 and 1238; Tāj al-Dīn Abū al-Futūḥ ibn Muḥammad A.D.

(1) Al-Taʿrīkh al-Manṣūrī Moscow, 1960, p.164a.

(2) Muḥammad Nasawī, Histoire du Sultan Djelal ed-Dīn Mankobirti, tr. O. Houdas, Paris 1891-95, Tome 9, p.132; M. Max Van Berchem, "Epigraphie ..." in J.A., 1897, pp.486-87. According to ʿĀrif Tāmir, in a letter dated 1/9/62, Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Masʿūd was the younger brother of Khawājā ʿAlī (discussed on page 52).

1239/40 and 1249; and the contemporary of the fall of Alamūt, Radī al-Dīn Abū al-Maʿālī A.D. 1258-⁽¹⁾ 61 (?)

(b) The Repercussions in Syria of the Rapprochement between the Persian Ismāʿīlīs and the Caliphate.

After the death in 607/1210 of Aʿlā Muḥammad II, who during his Imamate of forty-four years had followed his father's teachings of the "Great Qiyāma", emphasizing the theory of taʿwīl at the expense of formal worship, the Imamate of Alamūt passed to his son Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III.⁽²⁾ He did not wait long before attempting in 608/1211-12 to patch up the differences between the Ismāʿīlīs and the Sunnī Muslim world. Jalāl al-Dīn's action, which took the shape of ordering his followers to observe the fundamental religious rites and external ceremonies of Islām, appears to have been primarily a tactical move

(1) M.M. Van Berchem in J.A. 1897, Ser. 9, pp.455-57, 467, 482, 488, 498-99; al-Taʾrīkh al-Mansūrī ... Moscow 1960, p.164a; A History of the Crusades, Vol. I, p.127; M.G. Hodgson, The Order 1955, pp.246-7.

(2) On account of lack of Ismāʿīlī sources on the "Great Qiyāma", scholars have had to rely on non-Ismāʿīlī sources, which despite bias and prejudice are useful for those knowledgeable in esoteric Ismāʿīlī teachings. No authentic Ismāʿīlī account of the Qiyāma has yet come to light, nor indeed any genuine Ismāʿīlī work belonging to that period except for the supposed epistle of Muḥammad II to be edited by W. Ivanow at some future date, and some materials believed to belong to that period produced in M. Hodgson's Order App. I, pp.279-324.

necessitated by the political circumstances of the period.⁽¹⁾

The news of the changes in Alamūt was generally welcomed in the Muslim world and especially at the court of 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-Nāṣir (A.D. 1180-1225), who not only had Shī'ī sympathies but also his own political reasons for accepting Ismā'īlī friendship at a time the ambitious Khawārizmīs were trying to dominate him and to acquire a position like that held by the Saljūqs before them. Moreover, the fearful shadow of Jingīz Khān (A.D. 1162-1226) loomed threateningly from the east, and although the common danger did not bring all the conflicting powers to end their differences, it did contribute to the mutual desire of the Ismā'īlīs and the Caliphate to bury their old grievances.⁽²⁾

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- (1) The restoration of the Sharī'a by Jalāl al-Dīn is widely reported in the sources, which with one or two exceptions date it as taking place in 608/1211-12. See: Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, Mir'āt al-Zamān ed. J.R. Jewet, Chicago 1907, p.363; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil ... Cairo 1884-85, Vol. 12, p.115; Ibn al-'Adīm, "Histoire d'Alep", tr. Blochet, R.D.O.L., Paris 1897, Tom V, p.47; Abu Shāma (Shihāb al-Dīn) in Rec. Hist. Paris, 1808, Tom V, p.159 where the date is given as 609/13; 'Atā'-Mālik Juwainī, The History of the World Conqueror, tr. J.A. Boyle, 1958, p.159; Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, tr. E. Blochet in Patrologia Orientalis, part I, Vol. 12, p.517; Max Van Berchem ... in J.A. 1897, pp.475-77, where he quotes Ibn Wāṣil and other sources.
- (2) Besides being mentioned as pro-Shī'ī, al-Nāṣir is known to have been tolerant in matters of religion. See: Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, Mir'āt ... ed. Jewet, Chicago 1907, p.363, where it is stated that in 607/1210/11 al-Nāṣir issued to every religious sect a licence written by his own hand; M. Nasawī, Histoire du Sultan Djelal ed-Dīn Mankobirtī, tr. O. Houdas, Paris, 1891-95, pp.11-12, al-Ta'rīkh al-Mansūrī ... (Moscow 1960), p.132b; Ibn Wāṣil also states that al-Nāṣir was pro-Shī'ī and sympathetic to the Imāmīs, i.e. Twelvers; M. Van Berchem ... in J.A. 1897, p.492.

How far the policy of Jalāl al-Dīn, who was called "Naw-Musulmān," represented a genuine conviction, and what were his real feelings when he replaced the bāṭinī teachings with formal ones, are still subjects of mystery and controversy. It is important to note that there were several good reasons beside the political motive for Jalāl al-Dīn to bring his community out of its isolation from the Muslim world. Jalāl al-Dīn may well have considered that no matter how justified Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ had been in putting his trust in the dagger as well as the pen, the practice of assassination, together with the changes which had taken place in the Ismā'īlī movement after it had come under the control of revolutionary-minded leaders, and the proclamation of the Qiyāma which Jalāl al-Dīn may very probably have regarded as premature, had all tended to diminish the appeal of both the social and religious ideas of Ismā'īlism, which under the Fāṭimids had been on the verge of replacing the rigid dogmatic tenets of Sunnism. He must have perceived the vulnerability of Ismā'īlism to hostile propagandists who found it an easy object for all sorts of accusations, associating Ismā'īlī ideas with the extreme beliefs of the Qarmatians and of anti-Muslim sects such as the Khurramites, and bluntly asserting that Ismā'īlism had deviated from the path of Islām.⁽¹⁾

(1) Most of the Muslim sources associated the Ismā'īlī movement in Persia with practically all the heresies of pre-Islamic and early Islamic Persia, i.e. the Manichaeans, Mazdakites, Zindīqs, Rawandīs, Khurramites, Qarmatians, etc. e.g.

Thus, Jalāl al-Dīn may have believed that in shifting towards greater use of the ẓāhir of the Sharī'a, he would not breach the fundamentals of Ismā'ilism in the ẓāhir or the bāṭin; and that by utilizing the principle of taqīya he would be able to avoid introducing any innovation into the established Ismā'ilī religious beliefs when he called upon his followers in Persia and Syria to give up the exemptions allowed to them after the proclamation of the Qiyāma. In order that the Ismā'ilīs might reap the maximum political advantage from this move, Jalāl al-Dīn sought recognition by the Caliph al-Nāṣir who was the symbolic head of the Sunnī Muslim community. Al-Nāṣir was willing to respond.⁽¹⁾

Continued from p.87

Muḥammad al-Shahrastānī, Kitāb al-Milal wa al-Niḥal, ed. Rev. W. Cureton, London 1846, part one, p.147; Ibn Khaldūn ('Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥ.), K. al-'Ibar wa Dīwān al-Mubtada' wa al-Khabar (7 vols.), Bulāq 1867, vol. 4, p.93; Niẓām al-Mulk, Siyāsatnāmeḥ, tr. H. Darke, London 1960, Chapters 43-47, pp.193-245.

- (1) Although it is evident that Jalāl al-Dīn modified the teachings of the Qiyāma and restored the ẓāhir of the Ismā'ilī beliefs in his move towards Orthodoxy, the stories that he burnt some Ismā'ilī books and cursed his predecessors to satisfy the doubting 'Ulamā' (learned men) of Qazwīn seem to be somehow exaggerated. It is true that armed with the taqīya an Ismā'ilī can pretend to practise some rites which he inwardly considers valueless, but the practise of taqīya would not go so far as to have an Imām like Jalāl al-Dīn attack the fundamental Ismā'ilī belief in the eternal institution of the Imamate and in the divinely sanctioned nature of every act of an Imām. See 'Aṭā M. Juwainī tr. J.A. Boyle, 1958, pp.698-99. "The Ta'rikh-i Guzida of Ḥamdu'llāh Muṣṭawfī-i-Qazwīnī" compiled in 730/1330, ed. E.G. Brown and R.A. Nicholson in E.J.W. Bibb Memorial Series, XIV, 2, London 1930, p.129; M.D. Defremery, "Ismā'eliens de Syrie", in J.A. 1855, pp.38-41.

Al-Nāṣir's Ambassador in Aleppo

Besides giving to the mother of Jalāl al-Dīn and her retinue precedence over other Muslim princes when on her pilgrimage to Makka, the Caliph blessed the marriage of Jalāl al-Dīn himself to the sister of Kaikā'ūs, the governor of Jīlān (Gīlān); it is reported that the celebrations for the marriage were continued for a whole week in all parts of his country, by order of al-Nāṣir. (1)

Having helped Jalāl al-Dīn to establish good relations with various neighbouring Muslim princes, al-Nāṣir now sent his ambassador to accompany Jalāl al-Dīn's special emissary to Syria. They called at the court of the son of Saladin and ruler of Aleppo, al-Malik al-Zāhir Ghāzī (582-613/1186-1216), and according to al-Dhahabī they asked him to kill the resident Ismā'īlī dā'ī in Aleppo and install Jalāl al-Dīn's emissary in his place. Unfortunately this story is not confirmed by any other sources, and indeed the circumstances surrounding the mission of Jalāl al-Dīn's delegates to his Syrian followers are still shrouded with mystery. It is certain, however, that the Syrians did in some way or other receive orders from their Imām at Alamūt to abide by the formal rules of the Sharī'a, and that there was a noticeable amelioration of their relations with

(1) H. Mustawfī, "Histoire des Seldjoukides, Extraite du Ta'rīkh-i Guzīdeh" Traduite et accompagnée de notes, par M. Defrémery, in J.A. 1849, 4e ser. T. XIII, pp.43-45; 'Aṭā Mālik Juwainī ... tr. J.A. Boyle 1958, pp.701-705; Jannat al-Āmāl, article, Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III in Appendix II.

the Ayyūbids and especially with al-Zāhir Ghāzī of Aleppo.⁽¹⁾ It appears that even before the accession of Jalāl al-Dīn to the Imamate the Ismā'īlīs had friendly relations with the successors of Saladin, who at the time of his death was still maintaining his entente cordiale with their great leader Sinān. There was a difference, however, between having a peaceful agreement with the Ayyūbids and being considered to have rejoined the Muslim world. After Jalāl al-Dīn's change of policy with regard to the Muslim world, not only could the Ismā'īlīs count on military help from the Ayyūbids when in distress, but their leaders began to be called by titles usually held by orthodox Muslim leaders.⁽²⁾ A further proof of the new place held by the Ismā'īlīs in Syrian affairs is the report of Ibn Wāṣil that the Qādī of Sinjār, Badr al-Dīn, in 637/1239-40 took refuge with the Ismā'īlīs while they were under the leadership

(1) M. Deffrémery, "Ismaéliens ..." in J.A. 1855, pp.38-40. The author makes use of both Abū al-Maḥāsīn and al-Dhahabī. Dhahabī mentions the order to kill the resident Ismā'īlī dā'ī in Aleppo. The statement deserves consideration, for it is possible that some Ismā'īlīs there did not want to put the wheel back and give up the exemptions permitted during the Qiyāma - a possibility which recalls the episode of the Ṣufāt (see p.57-60 above). Furthermore, M. Ghālib suggests that Jalāl al-Dīn may have visited his followers in Syria, and if he really did, this may well indicate that there was some resistance to his new move by Ismā'īlī extremists in Northern Syria. See M. Ghālib, Ta'rīkh al-Da'wa ... Damascus, 1953, p.216.

(2) M.V. Berchem, "Epigraphie" in J.A. 1897, p.499, where the author suggests that the words al-dunyā and al-dīn in titles held by Ismā'īlī chiefs after 608/1211-12 are a sign of rapprochement between them and Baghdād.

of the chief dā'ī Tāj al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn Abū al-Futūḥ ibn Muḥammad.⁽¹⁾

A Test for Ismā'īlī-Ayyūbid Friendship.

With the exception of the reported raid on the Ismā'īlī territory in A.D. 1210 by the King of Jerusalem⁽²⁾ and the murder of Raymond son of Bohemond IV (A.D. 1187-1223), the Ismā'īlīs seem to have kept themselves aloof during the three Crusades which followed Saladin's capture of Jerusalem in A.D. 1187. This is not surprising when we consider that two of these Crusades, the fourth A.D. 1202-04 and the fifth A.D. 1218-1221, had no great local significance. The fourth Crusade was diverted to Constantinople and the fifth ended in a series of truces with the Ayyūbids, especially al-Mālik al-ʿĀdil who had been able to re-unite almost the entire realm of his brother Saladin.

Thus the murder of Raymond in A.D. 1213 in Ṭartūs (already mentioned on page 48) came as a sudden breach of the peace which the Ismā'īlīs had been enjoying in their territory. Bohemond IV, father of the murdered prince, laid siege to their fortress al-Khawābī in 611/1214-15, and the Ismā'īlīs appealed

(1) M.V. Berchem, "Epigraphie" in J.A. 1897, p.467.

(2) M. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins, 1955, p.220, where it is reported that in A.D. 1210 the King of Jerusalem was raiding the Ismā'īlī territory.

for help to the ruler of Aleppo al-Mālik al-Zāhir (d. 613/1216-17). An army was sent and the Ismā'īlīs were rescued.⁽¹⁾

Unfortunately the general Arabic sources do not explain the motives behind the murder of Raymond, nor the evident reluctance of Bohemond IV to fight a general war with al-Zāhir, the Ayyūbid ruler of Aleppo. Some information, however, is available in Western sources which, despite the inconclusive nature of their stories, give clues to the circumstances of the murder. They say that the murder was arranged by the Knights Hospitallers, who were then friendly with the Ismā'īlīs but hostile to Bohemond IV, and that the latter was not ready to come into a major conflict with al-Zāhir, who was a useful ally to Bohemond in his Armenian wars.⁽²⁾

(1) Ibn al-ʿAdīm, "Histoire d'Alep.", tr. Blochet, in Revue de l'Orient Latin 1897, Tome V, p.48, states that al-Zāhir sent a force 200 strong to help the Ismā'īlīs and at the same time sent another force to Latakia to keep the Franks occupied and stop the Count of Tripoli from attacking al-Khawābī. He also adds that al-Zāhir's force was ambushed and 30 of its horsemen were captured. For other versions of this incident see Abū Shāma (Shihāb al-Dīn ...) in Rec. Hist. 1808, Tome V, p.159; Defrémery, "Ismaéliens de Syrie ..." in J.A. 1855, pp.41-43; A History of the Crusades, Vol. I, p.128.

(2) It is noticeable that in their series of raids on the districts of Ḥamā and Ḥims between 600/601-1203/1204, the Hospitallers converging on these districts from Ḥiṣn al-Akrād and al-Marqab do not seem to have had any conflict with the Ismā'īlīs whose castles must have overlooked the movements of the Hospitallers towards the two main cities in central Syria. See al-Duwayhī, "Ta'rīkh al-Azminā", in al-Machriq 1950, p.99; Al-Ta'rīkh al-Manṣūri... Moscow 1960, p.123a; W.B. Stevenson, The Crusaders in the East, Cambridge 1907, p.300; Ibn al-Athīr, Rec. Des Hist. ... Paris 1887, Tome II, part 1, p.105, where he reports incursions by the Franks of Tripoli and Ḥiṣn al-Akrād in the district of Ḥims in 604/1207-08.

Al-Ẓāhir's enthusiastic response to the Ismā'īlī call for help may be an indication that Jalāl al-Dīn's reversion to orthodoxy did not pass unrewarded. At the same time his policy was not wholly beneficial to the Ismā'īlīs.

The Other Side of the Coin.

Jalāl al-Dīn's move, as has been seen, was welcomed by the Caliph of Baghdād al-Nāṣir and by most of the Muslim rulers of the time, and it strengthened the Ismā'īlī diplomatic position. On the other hand, it contributed to the weakening of the cohesive force (ʿaṣabiya) of his followers in both Persia and Syria, who must have been confused by the reversal of the teaching of the Qiyāma. It cannot be taken for granted that all the contemporary Ismā'īlīs would understand the subtleties of taqīya, which means believing in something while practising something else. Most of them could certainly not differentiate between a tactical and a strategic move. This confusion was probably one of the factors which caused dissension among the Ismā'īlīs regarding the doctrine of ẓāhir and bāṭin and subsequently brought about the split among the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs during the first decade of the thirteenth-century A.D. For the split was not only a matter of following two different lines of Imāms, but was centred from the beginning on religious doctrines and practices. One branch, the Mu'minīs (see p.39), believed in the necessity of adhering to the ẓāhir of the da'wa

and they followed the Shāfi'ī (Sunnī) school of law and still do so today.⁽¹⁾

The other branch, the Qāsim Shāhīs, who till the second half of the nineteenth-century were of little significance, held firmly to the belief that the taqiya is only a method of self-protection and remained secretly attached to the teachings of the Qiyāma throughout the long periods of Mamlūk and Ottoman rule in Syria.

It would be interesting to know what were the immediate reactions of the Ismā'īlīs to Jalāl al-Dīn's policy of introducing external observance of the Sharī'a. Were there any signs of opposition to it among the Syrian Ismā'īlīs? Unfortunately there is no adequate documentary evidence. All we know is al-Dhahabī's story (discussed on page 99) in which it is stated that Jalāl al-Dīn's ambassador asked al-Zāhir of Aleppo to kill the resident Ismā'īlī dā'ī so that he himself might take his place. While not much reliance can be placed upon such an unconfirmed story, it perhaps suggests that the Syrian Ismā'īlīs did not unanimously approve the virtual

(1) Ibn Wāṣil states that following the orders of Jalāl al-Dīn the Syrian Ismā'īlīs upheld the rules of the Sharī'a and followed the Shāfi'ī school. This is interesting in view of the fact that those modern Syrian Ismā'īlīs who do not recognize the Imamate of the Aghā Khān follow the Shāfi'ī school. See Max von Berchem, "Epigraphie" in J.A. 1897, p.475 where a passage from Ibn Wāṣil is reproduced.

annulment of what may have seemed to many of them as their due reward after the proclamation of the Qiyāma in 559/1163-4. The Ismā'īlīs must have faced a serious dilemma. How could they reconcile the order of the Imām to give up privileges conferred on them by another Imām with the belief in the infallibility of both ? It is true that highly learned Ismā'īlīs will make use of esoterism to find a solution, but they only constituted a small fraction of the Ismā'īlī community. Moreover, it is not likely that every Ismā'īlī was farsighted enough to see the political advantages of Jalāl al-Dīn's efforts to find a *modus vivendi* with Orthodox Islām as symbolized by the Caliphate in Baghdād. Besides these considerations, which on account of the lack of information can only be conjectural, it seems probable that the easing of relations between the Ismā'īlīs and the other Muslim communities opened the way to many Ismā'īlīs to move from their secluded castles to the main cities, where they became absorbed and assimilated into the mass of the Muslim population. This did not take place during the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn, but began at the turn of the thirteenth century A.D. and continued during the following centuries when the Ismā'īlīs ceased to possess the sense of unity which had earlier been promoted by their life in castles surrounded by hostile elements. ⁽¹⁾

(1) From the fourteenth century onwards the Ismā'īlīs suffered at the hands of their neighbours the Nuṣayrīs with whom they shared similar views on many doctrinal questions. By then they were no longer independent and had to rely on the Mamlūk and later on the Ottoman rulers of Syria for protection against Nuṣayrī attacks.

(c) The Ismā'īlīs and the Leaders of the Sixth and the Seventh Crusades.

With the exception of King Louis IX of France (St. Louis, A.D. 1226-1270), who led the seventh Crusade and was defeated and captured in Egypt at the battle of al-Manṣūrā, the leaders of the thirteenth-century Crusades resorted to diplomatic manoeuvres and negotiations rather than warfare. In these manoeuvres the Ismā'īlīs were not forgotten, or rather they did not forget to take advantage of favourable circumstances. They sought new sources of income and, as in their negotiations with St. Louis which are discussed below, tried to find ways of throwing off the burdens of tribute imposed on them by the Orders.

Majd al-Dīn Receives the Envoys of Frederick II
(A.D. 1194-1250)

When Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor, King of Sicily, and by virtue of his marriage to Isabella in A.D. 1225 King of Jerusalem, set out in A.D. 1228 for the Holy Land, the leadership of the Ismā'īlīs had already passed from Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Mas'ūd, who was recalled by Alamūt some time before 624/1226, to Majd al-Dīn.⁽¹⁾ (See pages 83-84).

(1) While Kamāl al-Dīn is mentioned in the inscription of Miṣyāf and fixed by al-Nasawī to have been the leader of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs around 620/1222, Majd al-Dīn is only mentioned by the author of al-Ta'rīkh al-Manṣūrī as the leader of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs in 624/1226. See Max von Berchem, "Epigraphie" in J.A. 1897, pp.482, 486-487; al-Ta'rīkh al-Manṣūrī Moscow 1960, pp.164a-164b.

According to al-Ta'rikh al-Manṣūrī, a messenger from Frederick II, who was then still in Italy, arrived in the Ismā'īlī territories in 624/1226-7, following the receipt of a message from them. The messenger brought with him a gift of approximately 80,000 dīnārs which was supposed to be sent on to the Persian Ismā'īlīs, but when Majd al-Dīn declared that the road to Alamūt was unsafe because of the presence of the Khwarizmīs and other hostile elements, the gifts were left to Majd al-Dīn, who following the Ismā'īlī custom gave the messenger his shirt as a sign of protection and friendship.⁽¹⁾

Frederick's initiative in seeking the friendship of the Ismā'īlīs was part of the policy which he adopted in his Crusade. For in his dealings with the Muslims he preferred diplomacy to battle, and he was able to achieve the return of Jerusalem to the Christians through a treaty (signed on the 18th Feb. 1229) with the Ayyūbid al-Malik al-Kāmil ibn al-^ḥAdil (615-635/1218-1238).⁽²⁾

Effects of Over-Confidence.

Frederick II's gifts and friendly overtures to the

(1) Al-Ta'rikh al-Manṣūrī Moscow 1960, pp.164a-166b, where it is stated that Majd al-Dīn had already sent emissaries to the Saljūq Sultān of Rūm, 'Alā' al-Dīn Kai Kubād (616-643/1220-1236) demanding 2,000 dīnārs which had formerly been sent to Alamūt ...

(2) On the surrender of Jerusalem to Frederick II, see Ibn al-Athīr ('Alī), al-Kāmil Cairo 1884-85, Vol. 12, p.187; al-Ta'rikh al-Manṣūrī ... Moscow 1960, p.181b; Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī, "Extracts from 'Iqd al-Jumān", in Rec. des Hist. des Croisades, Hist. Or. 1887, Tome II, part 1, p.186.

Ismā'īlīs in 624/1226-7 did much to promote Ismā'īlī self-confidence. Naturally this did not please the Hospitallers, who kept a watchful eye on Frederick II's activities. Thus again the Ismā'īlīs had to suffer as a result of the constant tug of war between rival Christian powers. The new Pope Gregory IX (A.D. 1227-1241) objected to Frederick II's policies and excommunicated him just three weeks after he had sailed from Brindisi on 8 Sept. A.D. 1227 for the Holy Land. The Hospitallers did not wait long to show the Ismā'īlīs that friendship with Frederick II would not give effective protection. They sent a demand for tribute which was rejected by the Ismā'īlīs, who found it absurd to pay a mere military Order when they were receiving gifts from a great Emperor like Frederick II. An attack was then launched by the Hospitallers, who captured a great deal of booty without occupying any Ismā'īlī castle. The author of al-Ta'rīkh al-Mansūri, which is our main source on this incident, does not state whether the Ismā'īlīs were already paying tribute before the Hospitallers' attack. Indeed the text reads as if the Ismā'īlīs had already ceased paying tribute to the Hospitallers after their deal with Frederick II, and that this had led the Hospitallers to ask for the resumption of payments.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, the fact that the

(1) Al-Ta'rīkh al-Mansūri ... Moscow 1960, p.166b. A History of the Crusades ... ed. K.M. Setton, Vol. I, pp.128-29.

Hospitallers during their raids into the Ḥamā and Ḥims districts made no incursions into the land of the Ismāʿilīs suggests that there may have been some sort of an agreement between the two neighbouring powers.

As for their relations with Frederick II, the Ismāʿilīs were not able to take advantage of their friendship with this great Emperor, who by the standards of his time may be loosely described as an enlightened liberal. His affairs in Europe did not leave him much time for the Holy Land, and the only further mention of his name in connection with the Ismāʿilīs is not a very authenticated accusation that he employed Ismāʿilī fidāʿīs to murder the Duke of Ludwig of Bavaria in A.D. 1231.⁽¹⁾

Consultation with Aleppo.

The Ismāʿilīs evidently did not wish to keep their relations with Frederick II secret from the ruler of Aleppo al-ʿAzīz (d. 634/1236-7), son and successor of their previous ally al-Ẓāhir. The author of al-Taʿrīkh al-Manṣūrī states that in 625/1227-8 they sent to Aleppo a messenger named Abū Manṣūr ibn al-Zubād, who informed al-ʿAzīz about Frederick's friendly overtures and added that the Ismāʿilīs would be ready to fight on the side of the Aleppines against Frederick II in case they wanted to go to war against him; but if they were unable to take any action against the Franks, then the Ismāʿilīs would like

(1) Charles E. Nowell, "The Old Man of the Mountain", in Speculum, Oct. 1947, p.511.

to know so that they might improve their relations with Frederick II.⁽¹⁾

This report makes the foreign policy of the Ismā'īlīs at that time more intelligible. Their purpose was evidently to maintain peaceful relations with both the Franks and with the neighbouring Muslim powers, on the understanding that they were ready to side with the Muslims if and when they could count on their help. In other words, the Ismā'īlīs would only seek to make arrangements with the Franks as long as the Muslim powers were not ready to enter into any major conflict with the Franks.

The Ismā'īlī Mission to St. Louis at 'Akkā.

It is quite probable that when St. Louis returned to 'Akkā in May A.D. 1250, after ransoming himself from his captors in Egypt, the Ismā'īlīs were still under the leadership of Tāj al-Dīn, whose name is mentioned in the inscription on the enceinte of Miṣyāf dated Dhū al-Qa'da 646/Feb. - March 1249. He had succeeded Sirāj al-Dīn Muẓaffar, who according to Nasawī had in 626/1228 sent a letter to the Sultan of Rūm 'Alā' al-Dīn Kaikubād telling him that Jalāl al-Dīn Mankubirtī had been defeated and killed (which was not the case).⁽²⁾ This Sirāj al-Dīn Muẓaffar was still the leader of the Ismā'īlīs in Ramaḍān 635/ Aug. - Sept. 1237, when according to the inscription

(1) Al-Ta'rikh al-Manṣūrī Moscow 1960, p.170b.

(2) Sirāj al-Dīn must have been the successor of Majd al-Dīn who (as stated in page) received the envoys of Frederick II, in 624/1226-7. See M. al-Nasawī, Histoire du Sultan Djelal ed-Dīn Mankubirtī, tr. O. Houdas Paris 1891-95, Vol. 9, pp.167-168.

of al-Kahf he ordered the building of a bath-house there.⁽¹⁾

By putting out feelers to St. Louis for finding a solution to his difficulties with the two military Orders at this time, the Ismā'īlī chief dā'ī must have reckoned how much St. Louis would be in need of new allies after his defeat at al-Manṣūrā.⁽²⁾ But, as St. Louis's biographer and secretary De Joinville, who is our main source, tells us, the Grand Masters of the two Orders succeeded in foiling the attempts of the Ismā'īlīs to persuade St. Louis to assume responsibility for providing the Hospitallers and Templars with the amounts levied upon the Ismā'īlīs by these neighbouring Christian Orders as tribute. De Joinville states that when St. Louis received the Ismā'īlī mission, he was asked whether he was acquainted with their leader, and replied that he was not but had heard about him. The Ismā'īlīs then asked St. Louis why he did not follow the example of the Emperor of Germany, King of Hungary, and Sulṭān

(1) Max von Berchem, "Epigraphie" in J.A. 1897, pp. 455-56, 488, 498-499.

(2) It is reported in the western sources that in A.D. 1236-7 the chief dā'ī of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs sent agents to kill King Louis IX, but later changed his mind and sent new agents to warn the French King, who sent them back with gifts to their chief dā'ī. If this is true, then it would have been another factor encouraging the Ismā'īlīs to present demands to St. Louis whom they had already tested. See M. Defrémery, "Ismaéliens de Syrie" in J.A. 1855, p. 42; Charles E. Nowell, "The Old Man of the Mountain" in Speculum, Oct. 1947, p. 512.

of Babylon (Egypt) in paying them subsidies, or alternatively order the Hospitallers and the Templars to stop exacting tribute from the Ismā'īlīs. St. Louis, perhaps partly out of fear, partly in order to have time to consult the two Orders, asked the Ismā'īlī delegate to come back later in the evening, and when they did so they found the two Grand Masters of their redoubtable neighbours waiting for them. They were forced to promise that they would repudiate what they had said in the morning, and this they reluctantly did. When they came for another meeting the next morning, they were rebuked by the two Grand Masters on the ground that their message had been hostile in its meaning, and were ordered to return with letters and gifts to the King. This they did after fifteen days, bringing with them their leader's shirt and ring which he sent as a token of friendship and sincerity, together with other gifts.⁽¹⁾

A Friar among the Ismā'īlīs.

In response to this friendly step by the Ismā'īlīs, St. Louis sent an envoy to them, the friar Yves le Breton, who is reported to have been able to speak and read Arabic. His report on the mission and on what he saw and heard while staying among the Ismā'īlīs is the most important source of information about the relations between the Ismā'īlīs and St.

(1) For further details see Ville Hardouin and De Joinville, Memoirs of the Crusades, tr. by Sir Frank Marzials, pub. by J.M. Dent and Sons, 1908, rep. 1911, 1915, p.248; René Grousset, Histoire des Croisades, Paris 1934, Vol. III, p.517.

Louis. The friar and the returning Ismāʿīlī ambassadors carried with them gifts sent by St. Louis, which were of such a nature that it may be inferred that the Ismāʿīlīs did after all get some reward for their venture, even though they failed to rid themselves of the tributes paid to the Orders. Friar Yves took advantage of his meetings with the Ismāʿīlī chief dāʿī to discuss with him various doctrinal questions. The conclusions reached by Yves about Ismāʿīlī religious beliefs bear some truth as far as generalities are concerned; but he seems to have become confused on the subject of their doctrines regarding Prophet Muḥammad and his cousin ʿAlī. He simply says that they followed the religion of ʿAlī as if each had a religion of his own. It is true that by the middle of the thirteenth-century A.D. the Ismāʿīlīs were beginning to be influenced by views of their Nuṣayrī neighbours concerning rebirth or metempsychosis, but as regards Muḥammad and ʿAlī the Ismāʿīlīs, whether during the Faṭimīd period or in the later stages of their history, held to the view that the Prophets were the medium of revelations and the Imāms the interpreters of these revelations. They were thus complementary to one another, and there is no point in discussing who is above the other, the Prophet or the Imam. One important development in the beliefs of the Ismāʿīlīs which ought to be mentioned is that with the passing of the years, and after the declaration of the Qiyāma in Alamūt, the doctrine of the Imamate

had come to hold a more central position in their religious literature and thought; but this has nothing to do with choosing between Muḥammad and ʿAlī. Friar Yves, however, is unlikely to have been able to grasp the Ismāʿīlī concepts of Muḥammad and ʿAlī, especially when according to his own statement he doubted the authenticity of Muḥammad's mission.⁽¹⁾ This does not impair the value of the information which he brought as an eye witness. Yves tells about the reverence which the contemporary Ismāʿīlīs accorded to St. Peter as one of the series of Abel, Noah and Abraham. This belief, with some modification, is no doubt in accord with the Ismāʿīlī doctrine which states and reaffirms the Qurʾānic belief that religions, and particularly the Semitic ones, are a chronological extension of one another.⁽²⁾

Yves's mission had considerable political significance; for as already mentioned, St. Louis was interested in finding new allies for his next attempt to realize the objectives of his Crusade. He had already opened negotiations with the

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- (1) Dante (A.D. 1265-1321) speaks in similar terms about Muḥammad and ʿAlī, who according to him, sow scandal and schism in the world. See Dante's Vision of Hell, tr. by Rev. Henry Francis Cary, 1906, p.150.
- (2) Ismāʿīlī doctrines regarding Muḥammad's mission vis-à-vis the missions of the other prophets are discussed in more detail in Chapter V.

Mongols in the winter of A.D. 1248-49, and in A.D. 1252 he sent the friar William of Rubruquis to the Court of the Great Khān hoping to profit from the work of the early Nestorian Christian missions in the Far East. His efforts, however, produced no substantial results. He was unable to realize the dream of forming a Mongol-Crusader alliance. Had he been successful in establishing a military link with the Mongol armies which were soon to face the new emerging power of the Mamlūks in Egypt, the course of Middle Eastern history would have been changed. In A.D. 1254, partly because of domestic affairs in France, and partly because of the unwillingness of the rival Christian powers to join him in his efforts to consolidate the Christian position in the Holy Land, St. Louis sailed back from 'Akkā to France. The Ismā'īlīs and the local Christian powers whom he left on their own behind him were very weak and in no position to resist by themselves the future victor in the struggle between the Mamlūks and the Mongols.

(d) The Fall of Alamūt and its Effect on the Syrian Ismā'īlīs.

More than two and a half centuries before Hūlagū crossed the Oxus on his way to give the final blow to the Persian Ismā'īlīs, Hasan al-Ṣabbāḥ had completed the organization of a body of fidā'īs who had frustrated the attempts of powerful enemies to crush their movement. Their final collapse at the hands of the Mongols came after nearly half a century of negotiations with the threatening forces of the Mongols.

The alliance between Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III (d. A.D. 1221) and the 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-Nāṣir (d. A.D. 1225) might have led to a unified Muslim front strong enough to face any Mongol threat; but the ambitious Sultān of Khwārizm, Muḥammad 'Alā' al-Dīn ibn Tukush (d. 617/1220), caused the Ismā'īlī Imām and the 'Abbāsīd Caliph to look towards establishing good relations with the Mongols, despite their reputation for brutality and ruthlessness.⁽¹⁾

After the death of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III in 618/1221, the Imamate passed to his young son 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad III (618-653/1221-1255). During the first decade of his reign the Ismā'īlīs were involved in quarrels with the new and vigorous Khwārizm Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Mankobirtī (617-628/1220-1231), which were enhanced by the murder of a Khwārizmī governor named Urkhān in 624/1226 and by the Ismā'īlī action in giving refuge to the Khwārizmī prince Ghiyāth al-Dīn when he fled from his brother Jalāl al-Dīn Mankobirtī. These disputes were eventually settled in a peace treaty between the two powers.⁽²⁾

(1) Ḥasan III is reported to have been the first ruler to have sent ambassadors to Jingīz Khān (d. 624/1227) proclaiming his respect to the formidable nomad Emperor. See Juwainī ('Atā Mālik), The History of the World Conqueror, tr. J.A. Boyle, 1958, pp.701-704.

(2) On the circumstances of the murder of Urkhān in 624/1226, and the consequences of the Ismā'īlī refusal to hand back to Jalāl al-Dīn his brother Ghiyāth al-Dīn to whom they had given refuge, see al-Naṣawī, Histoire Du Sultan Djelal ed-Dīn French tr. by O. Houdas, Tome 9, p.27; M. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins, pp.251-256.

With the crushing of the Khawārizmī power by the Mongols and the death of Jalāl al-Dīn Mankobirtī in 628/1231, Khurāsān and much of northern Persia became virtually a province of the Mongol empire, and the eyes of the Ismāʿīlīs were henceforward focussed upon the Mongols. During the next two decades the Mongols did not pursue a vigorous policy in Persia, though they extended their influence into Asia Minor and sent a powerful army under Bātū Khān which conquered Russia (A.D. 1237-1242) and laid the foundation of the future empire of the "Golden Horde".⁽¹⁾

Following the accession of the Great Khān Mangū in 649/1251, however, the Mongols decided in a general council to complete their conquests by sending two expeditions, one to the east and the other to the west. The western expedition was entrusted to Hūlāgū, brother of Mangū Khān. After a lengthy march which

(1) Under 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad III, who witnessed the early Mongol incursions but did not live to see the final collapse of Alamūt, the Ismāʿīlīs are reported to have in 636/1238 sought the help of the Kings of Europe, to avert the gathering storm of the Mongols, but without avail. See L. Lockhart, The Legacy of Persia, ed. by Reuben Levy, Oxford 1953, p.340; Cambridge Medieval History, p.641.

started in A.D. 1252, Hūlāgū crossed the Oxus in A.D. 1256. All local princes paid homage to him except the new Ismā'īlī Imām Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, who had succeeded in 653/1255. The Mongols then attacked the Ismā'īlī strongholds and besieged the fortresses Alamūt and Maymūdīz; but after long negotiations with the Mongols Khūrshāh surrendered himself to Hūlāgū, who is said to have treated him well.

It was agreed that he should be allowed to set out on a journey to see the Mongol Great Khān and that Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh should give orders to the commanders of all the Ismā'īlī castles in Persia and in Syria to surrender to the Mongols. Rukn al-Dīn set out on his journey, but in 654/1256 was murdered by his Mongol guards.⁽¹⁾

The Disheartened Syrian Ismā'īlīs.

The news of what befell their brethren in Persia, where

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- (1) Various reasons may explain the Mongol attack against the Ismā'īlīs: the instigation of the Supreme Qādī of Qazwīn Shams al-Dīn, the reports of an Ismā'īlī attempt in 652/1254 to assassinate Mangū Khān, together with the intention of the Mongols to crush any force which might stand in their face once they had begun their march. See Juwainī (ʿAṭā - Mālik) tr. J.A. Boyle, who was charged by Hūlagū to inspect the library of Alamūt (surrendered in Nov. A.D. 1256) before setting fire to it. An interesting story perhaps derived from folklore tells how the Mongols hated all words beginning with the letter R, but this, even if true, may have had nothing to do with their decision. Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh only saw the last stage of the Mongol invasion. See Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb (Faḍl Allāh), "Introduction à l'histoire des Mongols" par E. Blochet, E.J.W. Gibb. Series XII, Leyden 1910, p.61.

almost all the once impregnable strongholds - with the exception of a few such as Girdkūh and Lammasar⁽¹⁾ - were falling after hardly any resistance into the hands of the Mongols, must have had a tremendous impact upon the Syrian Ismā'īlīs and have greatly weakened their morale. They were now deprived of the moral leadership and occasional practical guidance formerly given to them from Alamūt; they entered now into another period of concealment during which their Imāms lived under a Ṣūfī garb moving between Adharbāyjān and Qūnya. This vacuum in leadership was one of the main reasons why the Ismā'īlīs henceforward often allowed the office of chief dā'i to be held by more than one leader. Moreover, these leaders were apparently selected by the local elders of the community instead of being appointed by the Imām, and the result was that the office of chief dā'i became a bone of contention among rival aspirants for the post. It was this situation, together with the existence of different views regarding various religious beliefs and practice, which led to the split of the Syrian

(1) The local commanders of Girdkūh and Lammasar refused to abide by their Imām's orders to surrender. Al-Juwainī accuses Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh of having secretly encouraged the remaining strongholds to resist the Mongols. It is thought that Mangū Khān refused to see Rukn al-Dīn and that the strongholds held out for a period lasting between six months and one year. See Juwainī (ʿAṭā Mālik) tr. J.A. Boyle p.723; M. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins, pp.269-70; Freya Stark, The Valley of the Assassins, London 1934, p.230; F.A. Ridley, The Assassins, London, n.d., p.106.

Ismā'īlīs into two groups each following a separate line of Imāms.

The Syrian Ismā'īlīs, however, escaped the fate which their Persian brethren had suffered at the hands of the Mongols. The sources report the surrender of four Ismā'īlī castles in Syria including the principal one Mişyāf. These reports, despite many loose ends, probably contain some truth; for it is not improbable that a few local Ismā'īlī governors acted on their own initiative and surrendered their castles. After all even the powerful Ayyūbid prince of Ḥamā had to flee the city, while the prince of Ḥims declared himself for the Mongols when the latter were approaching central Syria from Aleppo. Thus, weakened by the fall of Alamūt, and apparently not having a fully united front, the Syrian Ismā'īlīs had soon to face the new emerging power of the Bahrī Mamlūks of Egypt, whose greatest Sultān, Baybars, rose to power after the defeat of the Mongols in the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt in northern Palestine in 658/1260 as the unchallenged leader of Egypt and Syria.⁽¹⁾

(1) At the time of the Mongol invasion the Syrian Ismā'īlīs were under Radī al-Dīn Abū al-Ma'ālī, who is reported to have been the Ismā'īlī ambassadōr in Egypt in 655/1257. Ibn Muyassar reports the surrender of four Ismā'īlī castles to the Mongols, who evacuated them after their defeat at 'Ayn Jālūt in 658/1260. The local Ismā'īlī rulers who collaborated with the Mongols are said to have been put to death by their leaders. See M. Defrémery, "Ismaéliens de Syrie ..." in J.A. 1855, pp.48-49, who makes use of ibn Muyassar and al-Nuwayrī; S. Guyard, "Un Grand Maître" in J.A. 1877, pp.373-374, where Abū Firās in Anecdote 14 reports the return of Mişyāf to the Ismā'īlīs after the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt; M. Kurd 'Alī, Khiṭaṭ ... Damascus, 1927, Vol. 2, p.119.

CHAPTER IV

THE SYRIAN ISMĀ'ĪLĪS UNDER THE EARLY MAMLŪKS

The decisive defeat of the Mongol invaders who had earlier crushed the Ismā'īlī power in Persia (653/1256), sacked and occupied Baghdād (656/1258), and occupied Aleppo and Damascus (658/1260), was naturally welcomed by the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. They moved quickly after 'Ayn Jālūt to offer their friendship and help to the victorious Mamlūks under the new Sultān al-Malik al-Zāhir Rukn al-Dīn Baybars (658-676/1260-1277).⁽¹⁾

(a) The Internal Situation

Towards the end of the reign of Raḍī al-Dīn Abū al-Ma'ālī (d.A.D.1261/2?)⁽²⁾ the Syrian Ismā'īlī chief dā'ī contemporary with the fall of Alamūt, certain reports begin to suggest that there was now a joint leadership of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. This may

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- (1) At the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt, the Mamlūk Sultān was Quṭuz (d. 658/1260), while Baybars was in command of the Mamlūk vanguard. After chasing the Mongols, Baybars caused Quṭuz to be murdered by the Mamluk amīrs. With his power not yet consolidated in Syria, Baybars must have welcomed the help of the Ismā'īlīs, at least in this early stage of his career.
- (2) The name of Raḍī al-Dīn Abū al-Ma'ālī is variously given by the sources. Mufaḍḍal "Histoire des Sultans" par E. Blochet, Vol. XII, p.433, gives it as Riḍa or Raḍī al-Dīn ibn al-'Alī; Ibn Kathīr (al-Ḥāfiẓ), al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya, Cairo 1932, Vol. 13, p.256; simply calls him al-Riḍa; Ibn Muyassar cited by M. Defrémery, "Les Ismaéliens ..." in J.A. 1855, p.48, calls him Raḍī al-Dīn Abū al-Ma'ālī.

not have been an entirely new development, because the Ismā'īlī sources in their narratives of events after Sinān's times often bring more than one Ismā'īlī protagonist on to the scene. Such reports might be explained on the ground that these sources, which probably date from the 14th century A.D., could not differentiate between the leader and his aides or those dā'īs who were possibly sent by Alamūt as inspectors corresponding to the "Visitors" who were sent by the Grand Masters of the Hospitallers and Templars. (1)

A Successor for Raḍī al-Dīn

Following the death of Raḍī al-Dīn Abū al-Ma'ālī sometime during the years 659-660/1261-62, the post of the Syrian chief dā'ī passed to an aged dā'ī who probably was then more than eighty years old, a fact which in itself indicates that there was a division of opinion on the question who should be the leader. He is believed to have shared power with his predecessor for some time. He was to lead the Ismā'īlīs during a time when they were struggling to preserve their independence, which lasted only as long as the power threatening them was engaged on other fronts. The laqab (title) of this

(1) Cf. 'Arif Tāmīr, "Furū' al-Shajara" in al-Machriq, 1957, p.603 where the author makes use of the Ismā'īlī source Fuṣūl wa Akhbār and other sources; he states that during the reign of Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh the leadership of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs was held by al-Hasan al-Murṭadā al-Shīrāzī and his rafiq (comrade) 'Abd'al-'Azīz al-Zinjānī.

aged leader is variously given in the Arabic sources; in this present work he will always be designated as Najm al-Dīn al-Shaʿrānī.⁽¹⁾ He was later helped in his leadership of the Ismāʿīlīs by his son Shams al-Dīn and by his son-in-law Ṣārim al-Dīn Mubārak who is believed to have been the son of Raḍī al-Dīn Abū Maʿālī.⁽²⁾

How Many Strongholds?

It is very difficult to ascertain exactly how many strongholds the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs possessed. The castles scattered through the mountains stretching between Tripoli in the south and Latakia in the north were continually changing hands among Ismāʿīlīs, Franks and Muslim princes. The sources

(1) Makrīzī (Taḥī-Eddīn Aḥmad), Histoire des Sultans Mamelouks, tr. M. Quatrèmere, Paris 1837-45, Tome I, part 2, p.78; Mufaḍḍal ... Histoire Vol. XII, pp.433-34; al-Duwayhī, "Taʿrīkh ..." in al-Machriq, 1955, p.137, where the leader's names are given as Najm al-Dīn Ḥasan ibn al-Mashgharānī, a nisba referring to a small village near Ṣaidā in the Lebanon called Mashghar; M. Defrémery, "Ismaéliens de Syrie ..." in J.A. 1855, p.49; M. Van Berchem ... J.A. 1897, pp.495-97.

(2) With the exception of some not very clear passages in Ibn Wāṣil and al-Nuwayrī, the sources do not specifically state that Shams al-Dīn and Ṣārim al-Dīn were respectively the sons of Najm al-Dīn and Raḍī al-Dīn; nevertheless there are enough indications to make this appear quite plausible. See M. Van Berchem, "Epigraphie ..." in J.A. 1897, p.497; A.A. Khowaiter, A Critical Edition of an Unknown Arabic Source for the Life of al-Malik al-Zāhir Baibars ... Thesis presented for the Ph.D. London, 1960, Vol. 3, p.1174. Khowaiter's thesis is an edition of Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir based on a collation of the British Museum MS. and the longer Fātiḥ MS. in Iṣṭanbūl.

include as Ismā'īlī strongholds temporarily held fortresses which had some Ismā'īlī inhabitants, and raise the total number to seventy. It would appear, however, that from the time of Sinān and his successors right up to the time of Najm al-Dīn, the permanent Ismā'īlī strongholds which figured prominently in the course of events did not exceed nine. These were Mişyāf, al-Qadmūs, al-Kahf, al-Khawābī, al-Raṣāfa, al-Maynaqa, al-Ullayqa, al-Qulay'a, and Kharība.⁽¹⁾ With the exception of Kharība, all the other strongholds were involved in the negotiations between the Ismā'īlīs and Baybars, which suggests that the Ismā'īlīs had already lost Kharība at an earlier date, some time after the death of Sinān; and they had probably likewise already lost various other castles which were too far inside the Frankish or the Muslim territories to be still tenable by the now weakening Ismā'īlī principality. Thus, as the prospect grew darker, the Syrian Ismā'īlīs found themselves divided, weakened and disheartened by the fall of Alamūt. Their tactics when faced with the might of Baybars appear confused. Some of them endeavoured to seek accommodation with the Muslim principalities in Syria under the wing of Baybars, while others, mostly centred in al-Kahf and al-Khawābī,

(1) Ibn Taghrībirdī (Jamāl al-Dīn), Al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fi Mulūk Mişr wa al-Qāhira, Cairo, 1932, Vol. 7, p.103; M. Kurd, Alī, Khitāṭ ..., Vol. 6, p.262, Vol. 2, p.81; M. Defrémery, ... J.A. 1855, p.48.

insisted on a last-ditch struggle.

(b) The Last Ten Years of Precarious Independence

Baybars did not fail to exploit the internal weakness in the Ismā'īlī ranks. During the second year of his reign he took a step which served as an assertion of suzerainty over the Ismā'īlīs and also helped to make the split among the Ismā'īlīs wider; he appointed one of their messengers to be his deputy and to be successor to Raḍī al-Dīn as head of the Ismā'īlīs. Baybars is reported to have told the Ismā'īlī emissaries, who beside presenting gifts handed him a threatening letter from their leaders demanding restoration of the fiefs which they had held under the Ayyūbids, that their leader Raḍī al-Dīn Abū al-Mā'ālī had already died. One of the emissaries named Jamāl al-Dīn Thābit was given a diploma conferring on him the authority; he went back, to find Raḍī al-Dīn still alive. He kept his assignment secret for ten days, at the end of which Raḍī al-Dīn in fact died and he took his place; but the Ismā'īlīs refused to recognize his leadership, and consequently he was killed.⁽¹⁾ Ismā'īlī sovereignty was again challenged by Baybars in 659/1260-61 when he assigned their territories to the Ayyūbid prince of Ḥamā, al-Malik al-Manṣūr II (642-683/1244-1285).⁽²⁾ These early steps taken by Baybars at

(1) Mufaḍḍal ..., "Histoire ..." Vol. XII, p.433 dates this episode in 659/1260-61; A.A. Khowaiter, A Critical Ph.D. Thesis, London, 1960, Vol. I, pp.259-261.

(2) M. Defrémery, "Recherches ..." J.A. 1855, p.49.

a time when he was still busy chasing the Mongols out of Syria, reducing the Ayyūbid princes to vassalage and getting ready for his offensives against the Franks, were a clear indication to the Ismāʿīlīs of what lay ahead. However, they seem to have persisted in a policy alternating between blandishment and occasional protestations that they would not be an easy prey. This policy appears to have worked as long as Baybars was preoccupied with more direct threats to his domination. The Ismāʿīlīs were at first able to retain their fiefs and certain privileges which they held under the Ayyūbids.

In an effort to ease their tense relations with Baybars, the Ismāʿīlīs sent in 661/1262-3 a delegation to him headed by two sons of their leaders. They brought with them gifts, and Baybars, who was then busy dealing with the Franks in Palestine and the Ayyūbids in al-Karak, gave them a fair welcome.⁽¹⁾

A Prejudicial Step

In 664/1265 Baybars ordered that customs duties be levied on gifts to the Ismāʿīlīs from kings of the Franks and the Yaman landed from ships entering ports in his (Baybars's) territory. His purpose in taking this prejudicial step against the Ismāʿīlīs was not only to acquire more revenues for his expensive wars but also to show, both to the Ismāʿīlīs and

(1) The two sons are believed to have been Shams al-Dīn ibn Najm al-Dīn al-Shaʿrānī and Ṣārim al-Dīn ibn Raḡī al-Dīn Abū al-Maʿālī. See M. Defrémery, "Recherches ..." in J.A. 1855, p.50; M. Van Berchem, "Epigraphie ..." in J.A. 1897, p.497.

to the kings who sent them presents, that he was powerful enough to ignore Ismāʿīlī threats.⁽¹⁾ Although not the first nor the last anti-Ismāʿīlī measure taken by Baybars before the final showdown, this move was of considerable importance. Perhaps at this stage the question may be raised, what were the motives of Baybars's drive to reduce the power of the Ismāʿīlīs? At first these would appear to have been mainly economic and strategic. This opinion is strengthened by the fact that Baybars was not a champion of Islām like Saladin with whom historians often compare him. But it must not be forgotten that although Baybars may not have had any religious zeal against the Ismāʿīlīs, he probably foresaw that by crushing their power he would gain the sympathy of the Sunnī Muslims, who already admired him for his victories against the Mongols and the Franks. After all, Baybars's first move on taking power had been to gain legality for his régime by recognizing the ʿAbbāsid Caliph in Cairo as supreme head of the Muslims. As a shrewd leader he would not overlook the advantages of gaining the support of the conservative religious circles even if he was not necessarily a religious man himself. Moreover a powerful ruler like Baybars would not be expected to tolerate the existence of an Ismāʿīlī principality inside what he considered to be his own dominions.

(1) A.A. Khowaiter, A Critical ... Ph.D. Thesis, London, 1960, Vol. I, p.258; Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī, "Extracts from the Book of ʿIqd al-Jumān," Rec. Des. Hist. Hist. Or., 1887, Tome II, part 1, p.223.

It has been alleged that the Ismā'īlīs provoked him either by sending threatening letters or by helping the Franks, but this was probably a reaction on their part to Baybars's challenge to their independence. Although the Ismā'īlīs may have foolishly tried to intimidate Baybars, they did their best to win his friendship. They helped him against the Mongols, and they showed their readiness to attack the Franks whenever Baybars's armies were in their neighbourhood to support them if necessary. (1)

The Ismā'īlīs Become Tributary to Baybars

Following the truce concluded in 664/1265-6 between Baybars and the Hospitallers, the terms of which stipulated that the latter must renounce the tribute which they used to levy upon the Ismā'īlīs and other Muslim rulers in the districts of Ḥamā and Ḥims, the Ismā'īlīs hastened to show their gratitude to Baybars for having comprised them in his truce with the Hospitallers. The sources report the arrival of their emissaries in March A.D. 1267 carrying with them tributes to Baybars which they said had previously been paid to the Hospitallers. (2)

(1) A.A. Khowaiter, A Critical ... Vol. I, p.261.

(2) Most of the Arabic sources report how the Ismā'īlīs became tributary to Baybars, but Maqrīzī strikes a different note in suggesting that the Ismā'īlīs were genuinely interested in playing a part in Baybars's Jihād against the Franks, while the other sources picture the Ismā'īlīs as only doing what they were forced to do in order to escape the wrath of the Sultan. See Maqrīzī (Ṭakī-Eddīn ...) Histoire ... Tome I, part 2, p.40; M. Defremery, "Recherches ..." in J.A. 1855, p.56.

This occurred after the time when Baybars is reported to have reproached the Ismā'īlīs, who sent emissaries to him while he was besieging Ṣafad in 664/1266, for having helped the Franks by paying to them tributes which ought to have been paid to the Muslims.⁽¹⁾

By consenting to pay tribute to Baybars, the Ismā'īlīs moved far towards passing under the suzerainty of the Mamlūk Sultān, while retaining a semi-autonomous status. Throughout the few years which preceded their final subjugation, Baybars tried to secure more control over them, while they awaited any chance to relax his grip on them.

Najm al-Dīn's Costly Misjudgment

Early in 668/1270 Baybars passed through the Ismā'īlī territory on his way from the Hospitallers' castle al-Marqab to another of their castles Ḥiṣn al-Akrād. Najm al-Dīn, possibly encouraged by the knowledge that Baybars was now occupied with the movements of the Mongols in northern Syria, and by the news of St. Louis's fresh efforts to organize another crusade which might threaten Egypt and give effect to the dreams of a Frankish-Mongol alliance, did not follow the example of other amīrs in paying homage to Baybars when he was encamped in the vicinity of Ḥiṣn al-Akrād. Such action on the part of Najm al-Dīn at a time when Baybars was at the zenith of his power was bound to lead to serious consequences. The great Mamlūk Sultān

(1) A.A. Khowaiter's edition of Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, A Critical
... Vol. I, p.262.

considered it an act of defiance to his authority and reacted by depriving Najm al-Dīn and the latter's son Shams al-Dīn of his recognition as the chiefs of the Ismā'īlīs. In theory this meant that the Ismā'īlī chiefs were deposed, but in fact Baybars was at this stage more interested in keeping the Ismā'īlīs as dependent vassals rather than in resorting to an outright conquest of their lands. Moreover, by taking this formal step Baybars left the door open for negotiations with the deposed leaders and the local commanders of Ismā'īlī strongholds who might be prepared to come under his wing voluntarily.⁽¹⁾

The Appointment of Ṣārim al-Dīn

Although, as Maqrīzī states, Ṣārim al-Dīn Mubārak, the governor of Ḡullayqa, had been incurring the dissatisfaction of Baybars by his friendly relations with the Franks, arrangements were made through the good offices of either the governor of Ṣahyūn or the Ayyūbid ruler of Ḥamā, al-Manṣūr, for a visit of Ṣārim al-Dīn to Baybars; and on his arrival at the court of the latter he was provided with a Ṭablkḥāna (salute of drums to show that he was being treated with great honour).⁽²⁾

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- (1) Maqrīzī (Takī-Eddīn...), Histoire ... Tome I, part 2, p.79, states that besides not presenting himself at the court of Baybars, Najm al-Dīn sent a mission demanding from the Sultān a reduction in the tributes imposed on the Ismā'īlīs. See M. Defrémery, "Recherches ..." in J.A. 1855, p.57.
- (2) It is likely that the ruler of Ḥamā played the main role in bringing Ṣārim al-Dīn into favour with Baybars; for he is known to have enjoyed the respect both of the Ismā'īlī leaders and of Baybars. It is interesting to remember that almost a century earlier another ruler of Ḥamā, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥārimī, (discussed on p.67) had succeeded in settling the conflict between Sinān and Salādin. See, Maqrīzī, Histoire ... Tome I part 2, p.79; M. Defrémery, "Recherches ..." pp.57-58.

Şārim al-Dīn was designated as Baybars's deputy, and the title ṣāhib was conferred on him. He was to rule over the Ismā'īlī strongholds with the exception of Mişyāf, which Baybars wanted to be entrusted to one of his amīrs 'Izz al-Dīn al-ʿAdīmī. (1)

As to Najm al-Dīn, he refused for a while to surrender his castles but later became convinced that it would be useless to face the consequences of remaining adamant; he therefore presented himself at Baybars's court asking for forgiveness. Baybars evidently felt sympathy for the ninety year old leader and appointed him co-ruler with Şārim al-Dīn; both Ismā'īlī leaders were to pay an annual tribute to the Sultān's treasury; and Najm al-Dīn's son Shams al-Dīn was kept in Baybars's court as a hostage. (2) The aged Najm al-Dīn must have been satisfied with the results of his visit to Baybars, who for his part won another success in his policy of bringing the Ismā'īlīs under his domination through negotiation rather than by force.

Şārim al-Dīn Overplays his Hand

The arrangement did not, however, last long. The first to fall into disfavour with Baybars was Şārim al-Dīn. The

(1) Makrīzī, Histoire ... Tome I, part 2, pp.79-80 states that the Ismā'īlī strongholds left under Şārim al-Dīn were al-Kahf, al-Khawābī, al-Maynaqa, al-Ullayqa, al-Qadmūs, and al-Raşāfa.

(2) According to Makrīzī, ... Histoire ... Tome I, part 2, p.80: the annual payment by Najm al-Dīn was to be 20,000 (silver pieces), and that of Şārim al-Dīn 2,000 (dīnārs).

Ismā'īlī governor of Mişyāf refused him entrance while declaring willingness to surrender this once a great fortress, the principal stronghold of the Ismā'īlīs, to the deputy of Baybars. Burning with anger on account of this slight, Şārim al-Dīn found a chance of having the gates of Mişyāf opened to 'Izz al-Dīn, and then stormed into the place where he massacred those who had decided to reject him in favour of Baybars's deputy. On hearing this news Baybars ordered al-Manşūr, the prince of Ḥamā, to move against Mişyāf and install 'Izz al-Dīn as its governor. He made it clear to the Ayyūbid prince that he would not tolerate any leniency in punishing the defiant Şārim al-Dīn, whose withdrawal made it possible for the ruler of Ḥamā to take the fortress without any resistance. He was also able to have Şārim al-Dīn seized and sent to Baybars who banished him to Cairo. All these events - Najm al-Dīn's re-instatement, Şārim al-Dīn's attempt to establish himself in Mişyāf around the middle of Rajab 668/8 - 10 March, 1270, and finally Şārim al-Dīn's withdrawal and capture - must have taken place during the same year. (1)

(1) Ibn al-Shihna (Abū al-Walīd ...), *Rawḍat al-Manāẓir fī Akhbār al-Āwā'il wa al-Āwākhir*, contained in the margin of Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* ... Cairo, 1884-85, Vol. 12, pp.153-54; Abū al-Fidā' (Ismā'īl ibn 'Alī ...), *Ta'rīkh* ... Cairo 1286/1869, Vol. 4, p.6; Makrīzī, *Histoire* ... Paris, 1837-45, Tome I, part 2, pp.79-83; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya*, Cairo A.H. 1351; M. Defrémery, "Recherches ..." in *J.A.* 1855, pp.58-60.

(c) The Final Subjugation of the Ismāʿīlīs

With the capture of Ṣārim al-Dīn Mubārak, it seemed as if the Ismāʿīlīs would enjoy the sole leadership of Najm al-Dīn, who almost succeeded in reaching a settlement with Baybars. However, a foolish attempt by the Ismāʿīlīs of al-ʿUllayqa to join hands with Bohemond IV of Tripoli, and the arrest in February A.D. 1271 of two Ismāʿīlī fidāʾīs believed to be planning to assassinate Baybars, put an end to all hopes that Najm al-Dīn might remain the deputy of the Mamlūk Sulṭān in the Ismāʿīlī territories. Baybars took swift action, ordered that al-ʿUllayqa should be besieged, and held Najm al-Dīn and his son Shams al-Dīn responsible for the behaviour of the Ismāʿīlīs of ʿUllayqa.

The Fall of al-ʿUllayqa

The death of St. Louis in August A.D. 1270, while preparing in Tūnis for another attempt to regain the Holy Land, enabled Baybars to turn his attention towards settling accounts with the Ismāʿīlīs as well as with the Templars and the Hospitallers and the Mongols. It is nevertheless remarkable that he kept up the policy of trying to bring the Ismāʿīlīs under his domination by methods which were essentially peaceful, though often accompanied by threats, and by promises and rewards for those Ismāʿīlīs who proved amenable.

Most of the sources suggest that the fall of ʿUllayqa was preceded by negotiations between its inhabitants and Baybars. Ibn Kathīr goes so far to state that Baybars did not honour his

word when the Ismā'īlīs finally surrendered their stronghold. The author states that Baybars promised the inhabitants of al-ʿUllayqa to grant them fiefs in Cairo and to free "their father" (possibly meaning Ṣārim al-Dīn); also that when they agreed to surrender on the 11 Shawāl 669/23 May 1271, Baybars had them arrested and sent to Cairo as prisoners.⁽¹⁾ From now on the Ismā'īlīs either agreed to surrender to Baybars's deputies, or had to face military assaults on their castles.

The Surrender of the Remaining Castles

Najm al-Dīn al-Shārānī made a last attempt to save his position as Baybars's deputy in the fortresses of al-Kahf, al-Qadmūs, al-Maynaqa, al-ʿUllayqa, al-Khawābī, and al-Ruṣāfa which he was governing in the name of the Mamluk Sulṭān against an annual payment of 100,000 dirhams.⁽²⁾ He visited Baybars while the latter was laying siege to the renowned Hospitallers's castle, Ḥiṣn al-Akrād, and pleaded for his suspected son Shams al-Dīn. Najm al-Dīn succeeded in obtaining the release of his son, but not in regaining the autonomous independence of the

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- (1) Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya ... Cairo, A.H. 1351, p.259; Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir's Biography, a Ph.D. Thesis by A.A. Knowaiter, London, 1960, Vol. I, p.265; M. Defrémery, "Recherches..." in J.A. 1855, pp.60-61.
- (2) Al-Dhahabī (Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad), Duwal al-Islām - Ḥaydarābād, A.H. 1364-65, Vol. 2, p.129; M. Kurd ʿAlī Khīṭaṭ ... Damascus, 1927, Vol. 2, p.129; al-Duwayhī, "Ta'rīkh ..." in al-Machriq, 1950, p.137.

Ismā'īlīs under his own leadership. He was made to accompany Baybars to Egypt, while Shams al-Dīn was entrusted with the task of persuading the remaining Ismā'īlī castles and especially al-Kahf to surrender to Baybars.⁽¹⁾

With the single exception of al-Kahf, all these castles did surrender to Baybars with hardly a fight, mainly because they were now deprived of a strong leadership, while Baybars was scoring victory after victory against both the Franks and the Mongols. The local Ismā'īlī governors accordingly found it prudent to accept whatever promises were given to them by Baybars in return for their submission.

Within less than one month from the fall of al-ʿUllayqa on 23 May 1271, al-Raṣāfa fell to the deputies of Baybars. During the same year the inhabitants of al-Khawābī were persuaded to surrender to the Mamlūk authorities by two leading Ismā'īlī officials (the wālī of the daʿwa and the nāẓir) who had been arrested by the amīrs of Baybars in Sarmīn.⁽²⁾

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- (1) The date of Najm al-Dīn's visit to Baybars while the latter was besieging Ḥiṣn al-Akrād must have been some time between the beginning of the siege on 9 Rajab 669/21 Feb. 1271 and the fall of the castle on 24 Shaʿbān 669/7 April 1271. See Maḳrīzī, Histoire Paris 1837-45, Tome I, part 2, pp.87-99; Abū al-Fidāʾ (Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAlī ...) Taʾrīkh ʿairo 1286/1869, p.6; al-Duwayhī, "Taʾrīkh ..." in al-Maḥriq 1950, p.137.
- (2) On the surrender of al-Khawābī see A. Khowaiter's edition of Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, A Critical Ph.D. thesis, London, 1960, Vol. 3, p.1201; M. Defrémery, "Recherches".... in J.A., 1855, p.64.

In the meantime, Shams al-Dīn seems to have entertained the idea of regaining some power. Before he had brought about the surrender of the castles, al-Qulay^{ṭa}, al-Maynaqa, and al-Qadmūs, he wrote to Baybars demanding certain territorial privileges, including the possession of al-Qulay^{ṭa}, in return for the surrender of the other Ismā^ʿīlī castles. His demands seem to have been initially accepted; but when he ordered al-Kahf to surrender, its inhabitants refused. This angered Baybars, who held Shams al-Dīn responsible for the intransigence of the inhabitants of al-Kahf and laid siege to the place. Shams al-Dīn, seeing no hope in his dreams of power, again surrendered himself to Baybars on 26 Ṣafar 670/30 October 1271, and was apparently well received at first. Before long, however, Baybars learnt of a plot by the inhabitants of al-Kahf to assassinate his amīrs and he then caused Shams al-Dīn to be arrested and deported to Egypt.⁽¹⁾ Meanwhile, on 30 Ṣafar 670/7 October 1271, four days after Shams al-Dīn had given himself up to Baybars, the latter's deputies took possession of al-Qulay^{ṭa}, leaving only three strongholds in the hands of the Ismā^ʿīlīs; and the prince of Ḥamā, al-Manṣūr II (d. A.D.1284-5), soon persuaded them to surrender these. During the first

(1) It is suggested that Shams al-Dīn himself informed Baybars about the plan of the Ismā^ʿīlīs of al-Kahf to assassinate his amīrs, with the hope of gaining his favour. See A. Khawaiter's thesis, London 1960, Vol. I, p.266; M. Defrémery, "Recherches", p.63.

week of Dhū al-Qaʿda 671/20-26 May 1273, al-Maynaqa and al-Qadmūs capitulated to Baybars; and less than two months later, on 22 Dhū al-Hijja 671/9 July 1273, the gates of the once redoubtable Ismāʿīlī stronghold al-Kahf were opened to Baybars's troops led by the amīr Jamāl al-Dīn Aqūsh. The whole of the Ismāʿīlī territories in Syria were now under Mamlūk control.⁽¹⁾

(d) In the Service of the Mamlūks

Unfortunately, insufficient materials remain to give a clear view of the terms of the Ismāʿīlī surrender to Baybars. All we can do is peer myopically into the scanty data and try to find links between the few reported events. One thing which is certain is that the Ismāʿīlīs, whether willingly or unwillingly, began to serve the Mamlūks; this is not only substantiated by near-contemporary historical sources, but also corroborated by stories still current among the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs. These stories have been transmitted through books of a folkloric character, which try to glorify the heroic actions of those Ismāʿīlīs who worked for Baybars as informers in the camps of

(1) Although the sources give a rather vague indication that the surrender of the Ismāʿīlīs was unconditional, it is possible that certain rights and privileges were left to them. The very fact that they were allowed to remain in their castles constituted a major concession which probably carried with it other rights. See A. Khawaiter's thesis, A Critical... London 1960, Vol. 3, pp.1215-1217; Abū al-Fidāʾ (Ismāʿīl ...) Taʾrīkh ... Cairo 1325/1907, Vol 4, p.7; al-Qalqashandī, Subh al-Aʿshā, Cairo 1924, pp.146-147; M. Defrémery, "Recherches ..." in J.A., 1855, pp.64-65.

the Franks and Mongols, or who took part in battles between the Mamlūks and their enemies and especially in the capture of the remaining Frankish fortresses such as al-Marqab (taken in 684/1285 by al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalawūn A.D. 1279-90), and 'Akkā (taken in 690/1291 by al-Ashraf Khālīl A.D. 1290-93). Such glorification is certainly exaggerated, but these stories corroborate the reports that the Ismā'īlīs entered the service of Baybars and his successors.⁽¹⁾

On the other hand, the more reliable sources state that Ismā'īlī fidā'īs were used by Baybars and his successors as an instrument with which to threaten their enemies with assassination. In some cases attempts to eliminate particular rulers may have been motivated by the mutual interest of both the Ismā'īlīs and the Mamlūks. An example is the attempt made in A.D. 1271 on the life of the governor of Baghdād 'Aṭā Mālik al-Juwaynī who was then serving the Mongols, and with whom the Ismā'īlīs had an account to settle. It is not clear, however, whether there was any such mutual interest in the celebrated attempt by the Ismā'īlīs to assassinate another of Baybars's enemies, namely Prince Edward of England. He had landed at 'Akkā on 9 May 1271 with hopes of strengthening the local Franks and reviving St. Louis's dream of a military alliance between

(1) See Ibn al-Shiḥnah, Rawḍat ... Cairo, 1884-85, Vol. 12, pp.159-161; M. Ghālīb, Ta'rīkh al-Da'wa ... Damascus 1953 pp.224-25; Michael Labbād, al-Ismā'īliyyūn ... Damascus 1962, p.105.

the Franks and the Mongols. On 16 June 1272 a fidā'ī disguised as a native Christian made an unsuccessful attempt on the life of the English Prince, who escaped death by the skin of his teeth.⁽¹⁾

Other cases of assassinations and adventurous actions undertaken by the Ismā'īlīs during the early Mamlūk period are cited in the histories of the time. Some of these cases would appear to have been independent moves by the Ismā'īlīs, others to have been sponsored by the Mamlūk Sultāns. Beside accounts of these sporadic actions, there are reports indicating that the Mamluk Sultān Qalawūn in his peace treaty with the Frankish Princess of Ṣūr and Beirut in 684/1285 stipulated that Ismā'īlī fidā'īs in his service should not be bound in the same way as his regular forces to desist from hostile action; but he promised that they would not threaten the Princess's life.⁽²⁾

Among the sources which threw light on the tangled relations between the Ismā'īlīs and the early Mamlūks, the most comprehensive and illuminating is the account given by the celebrated Moroccan traveller Ibn Baṭūṭa. He names the castles

(1) P. Isac Armalé, "Le Chronicon Syriacum de Barhaebreus" (Arabic tr.) in al-Machriq, March-April 1956, p.148; Badr al-ʿAynā, "Muntakhabāt ..." in Recueil des Hist. des Croisades ... Paris, 1887, Tome II, part 1, p.247.

(2) P. Ishac Armalé, "Le Chronicon Syriacum de Barhaebreus" in al-Machriq 1956, p.398; D.M. Defrémery, "Recherches", in J.A., 1855, pp.69-70.

that were still in the hands of the Ismā'īlīs at the time of his visit in the early part of the fourteenth-century A.D., and after mentioning that nobody was allowed to enter their castles states that "they", i.e. the fidā'īs were the "arrows" (sihām) used by the Mamlūk Sulṭān al-Malik al-Nāṣir (who ruled intermittently between A.D. 1293 and 1340; 1293-4, 1298-1308, and 1309-40) against his enemies in 'Irāq and other places. Each fidā'ī entrusted with the task of assassinating one of the Sulṭān's enemies "would receive his blood money (dīya) which would be paid to him personally if he should return safely or to his children if death should befall him."⁽¹⁾

Although the later destiny of the Ismā'īlīs is outside the sphere of this study, it may be stated here that during the rest of the Mamlūk period and almost the whole of the Ottoman period they seem to have played no significant role on the political scene. As already mentioned (see p.93-94), in the early fourteenth-century A.D. they split into two groups, each following a different line of Imāms. Numerically preponderant were the followers of Mu'min Shāh, son of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, the

(1) The castles that Ibn Baṭūṭa claims were in the possession of the Ismā'īlīs were al-Qādmūs, al-Maynaqa, al-'Ullayqa, Miṣyāf, and al-Kahf. See Voyages D'Ibn Batoutah, Texte Arabe Accompagné d'une Traduction, par M.C. Defrémery et Dr. B.R. Sanguinetti, Paris, 1853, Tome I, pp.166-176; M. Defrémery, "Recherches," in J.A. 1855, pp.70-73.

first Imām after the fall of Alamūt in A.D. 1256.⁽¹⁾ Towards the end of the nineteenth-century, however, several factors led most Mu'minīs to seek the leadership of the other line of Imāms descending from Qāsim Shāh. One of these, Hasan 'Alī Shāh entitled Aghā Khān, was obliged to leave his native Irān in 1842 for India, where he settled permanently. He and his successors attained considerable influence in their new land of refuge (dār al-Hijra).⁽²⁾ One of the main factors which led to the weakening of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs was their tendency to become dispersed in the country's main cities, where most of them were assimilated into the predominant Sunnī communities. This tendency resulted from the recurrent attacks launched against them by their numerically stronger neighbours the Nuṣayrīs, who on more than one occasion occupied Miṣyāf and al-Qadmūs and did not withdraw until ordered to do so by the

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- (1) A view which has considerable support among modern researchers on the Ismā'īlīs is that all the Syrian Ismā'īlīs broke away from the general movement which was still active in various parts of Persia, Ādharbāyjān, and Asia Minor. See 'Ārif Tāmīr, "Furū' al-Shajara ..." in al-Machriq 1957, pp.581, 591, 595.
- (2) For a more detailed view on the circumstances which led the first Aghā Khān, Hasan 'Alī Shāh, to leave Persia for India see John N. Hollister, The Shī'a of India, London, 1953, pp.364-77; M.S. Guyard, "Un Grand Maître", in J.A. 1877, pp.378-86.

Ottoman authorities.⁽¹⁾ The most devastating Nuṣayrī attacks took place between 1803 and 1809; they led to the virtual evacuation of most of the Ismāʿīlī villages. Moreover, since 1210/1795, there had been a complete loss of contact between the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs and the Imām of the Muʿminī line Muḥammad Bāqir Shāh, who was living in India and was thought to have gone into concealment. In the course of the nineteenth-century the position of the Ismāʿīlīs improved considerably, and with the permission of the Ottoman authorities

- (1) The first important Nuṣayrī attack on the Ismāʿīlīs took place in A.D. 1569 when many of their castles were occupied by the invaders. During the second attack in A.D. 1703 the Nuṣayrī tribe of Raslān known as al-Rasālina occupied Miṣyāf for about 8 years and perpetrated widespread massacres. In both cases the Ottoman authorities helped the Ismāʿīlīs to regain their castles. In A.D. 1591 we hear of the Ismāʿīlīs driving the Nuṣayrīs from al-Qādmūs with their own forces. Another important series of Nuṣayrī attacks on the Ismāʿīlīs took place between A.D. 1803 and 1809 when the Ismāʿīlī amīr of Miṣyāf, Muṣṭafā Muḥim, was killed by the Nuṣayrīs; the chief dāʿī, al-Shaykh Sulaymān Haydar, then left with many of the Ismāʿīlīs of the territory to settle in Hims, Hamā, Aleppo and Damascus. For more details see Muḥammad Amīn Ghālib al-Ṭawīl, Taʾrīkh al-ʿAlawīyīn, Latakia, 1924, pp.276-77, 370; ʿArif Ṭāmir, "Furūʿ al-Shajara ..." in al-Machriq, 1957, p.591.

they rebuilt in 1845 the town of Salamīya,⁽¹⁾ which once again became their chief centre: but they still lacked the guidance of an Imām. This led them to send a delegation in 1885 to India, where they gave allegiance to the then young Imām of the line of Qāsim Shāh, Muḥammad ʿAlī Shāh al-Ḥusaynī known as Aghā Khān III, whose Imamate lasted from 1885 until 1957. On his death Aghā Khān III left a written will designating his grandson Karīm ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī, known as Aghā Khān IV, to succeed him as the 49th Imām. Today about 40,000 Syrian Ismāʿīlīs give allegiance to Aghā Khān IV, while about 10,000

(1) Following some internal strife among the Ismāʿīlīs of Miṣyāf and al-Qadmūs which resulted in the murder by some Ismāʿīlīs from Miṣyāf of a certain Tāmir Mīrzā cousin of the leader of the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs, amīr Ismāʿīl, the latter in 1843 applied for and secured a permission from the Ottoman authorities to rebuild Salamīya. He was also allowed to search all over Syria for Ismāʿīlī families and to encourage the Ismāʿīlīs to return to Salamīya. In 1850 the Ottoman authorities declared that all those who returned to Salamīya would be exempted from military conscription and that their amīr, i.e. Ismāʿīl, was free at any time to seek the return of any Ismāʿīlī who might wish to settle in Salamīya. What is interesting is that most of the early settlers carried the name (nisba) of the district from which they came. Among the founding families whose descendants are still living in Salamīya are the ʿAkkārīs, Ṣahyūnīs, Jandalīs ... etc. (nisba to ʿAkkār, Ṣahyūn and al-Jandalīya). At present the population of Salamīya, which is predominantly Ismāʿīlī, exceeds 16,000.

belong to other Ismā'īlī denominations, namely the Mu'minīs and the Ṭayyibīs. (1)

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- (1) Concerning the return of the Ismā'īlīs to Salamīya, my main materials come from interviews with several elderly Ismā'īlīs in the town and its dependent villages who belong to the third generation since the resettlement and still have the stories of their fathers' and grand-fathers' returns fresh in mind.

ʿArif Tāmīr states that the original motive of the Syrian Ismā'īlī delegation to India was to search for a descendant of the Imām Muḥammad Bāqir, and that it was after arriving in India that they decided to recognize a descendant of Qāsim Shāh as their Imām. See his article "Furū' al-Shajara" in al-Machriq, 1957, pp.590-593.

PART TWO

BELIEFS AND ORGANIZATION

CHAPTER V

THE UNIVERSAL DIVINE ORDER

(a) Introductory.

Throughout the mediaeval history of Islām, it is difficult to distinguish between political and religious movements. Two categories of movements, however, are clearly recognizable: the first concerned primarily with achieving political power but using religion as a cover, and the second concerned primarily with religious belief, but involved in politics on account of persecution by more powerful groups and on account of the need for political protection to ensure free propagation of that particular doctrine. It is to the second category that the Ismā'īlī movement belongs; for although political considerations and human circumstances exercised considerable influence upon the development of the doctrines of the Ismā'īlī movement, which like other Shī'ī movements appears, from the historical point of view, to have had its origin in the constitutional problem after the death of the Prophet, nevertheless Ismā'īlism was able to provide in its early period a religious philosophy based on the belief in an Eternal Order, which itself springs from their belief in One God, His Apostles, and their revealed Books. This might appear very similar to the traditional Muslim view, were it not for the Ismā'īlī doctrine that obscure passages in the Qur'ān, and irrational forms of worship, must have some inner sense; and that this inner sense was revealed to 'Alī

as the Waṣī (Executor) or the Asās⁽¹⁾ (Foundation) of the Prophet Muhammad, and was transferred after 'Alī's death by a chain of hereditary Imāms descending from 'Alī and his wife Fāṭima, the Prophet's beloved daughter. Each of these Imāms is believed to have passed on the ʿilm, which in the terminology of the Ismāʿīlīs means the divine science of religion and is to them the only right and reliable version of Islām. Moreover, the Ismāʿīlīs asserted that the revelation sent down through the Prophet Muhammad was only one of the series of revelations already sent down through the previous great Prophets who are called Nāṭiqs (Speakers or Revealers): namely Adam, Noah, Moses, Abraham and Jesus, each of whom had an Asās to succeed him. This meant, in the belief of the Ismāʿīlīs, that no one religion can claim the monopoly of truth, and that the works of the Great Prophets who are mentioned in the Qurʾān and the Christian and Jewish scriptures are complementary to one another; if they seem to have some differences, this will be explicable as the result of the different circumstances under which each of these

(1) A study of Ismāʿīlī semantics shows that Imāms contemporary to any of the Prophets are designated in the sources by several names: Asās, ṣāmiṭ ("silent" during the life of the Prophet), and frequently during the Fāṭimid period waṣī (executor). Throughout the present work the term Asās is used, unless it is necessary to quote the others. Cf. W. Ivanow, A Brief Survey of the Evolution of Ismāʿīlism, Leiden, 1952, pp.50-58, who states that the term ṣāmiṭ was dropped during the Fāṭimid period and replaced with the term waṣī.

Prophets came to reveal his particular Sharī'a, i.e. religious path appropriate for his time. This basic doctrine, from which spring all the beliefs and philosophy of Ismā'ilism, will be referred to in this chapter as the doctrine of the universal divine order. In the remaining two chapters the principles which the Ismā'ilīs derived from it will be discussed.

It will first be necessary, however, to examine briefly the important links between Ismā'ilī and Greek thought. The Ismā'ilīs considered that the Greek philosophers had taken important steps towards reaching the desired knowledge and truth; from them the Ismā'ilīs drew most of their technical terms, the use of dialogues in preaching their doctrines, and the foundations of their own philosophical system. Philosophy helped the Ismā'ilīs to expound a universal belief, and played a major rôle in the building up of their doctrine of the existence of a universal divine order into an elaborate theory which combined the views of their own and of the pre-Islamic religions, mainly Judaism and Christianity, with ethics, logic and other human sciences.⁽¹⁾

(1) During the last hundred years more and more Ismā'ilī materials have come to light, making it possible for several Islamists to give a fairer and more objective view of the Ismā'ilī movement, which had previously been known only through materials collected from works of authors hostile to it. The comprehensiveness and universal outlook of the Ismā'ilī teachings made it easy for such hostile authors to associate Ismā'ilism with any "heretical" movement showing traces of analogous opinions.

The Ismā'īlī System of Philosophy.

Although the philosophy of Ismā'īlism was developed in conjunction with their doctrine of the Imamate, to such an extent that the Ismā'īlī sources associate their philosophy with the inner meaning of the Qur'ān and other religious scriptures, the circumstances of the time favoured the growth of philosophical thought among Muslims generally, and not only among the Ismā'īlīs.

In the pre-Islamic era the two Empires, the Byzantine and the Persian, had been centres of considerable philosophical activity influenced mainly by the works of ancient Greek philosophers, especially the Neo-Platonists, and also, it would seem, by philosophical ideas which reached Persia from India. Philosophical thought was stimulated by the controversy among the Christians regarding the nature of Jesus Christ. Nestorian and Jacobite Christians, living mainly in Mesopotamia and Syria, took the most active part in these theological arguments, which spread through various parts of the Byzantine Empire.⁽¹⁾ Such was the state of these countries when they were conquered by armies of Arabs only recently converted to the new religion of Islām. Moreover, it was not long before the Muslims themselves began to form differing views on various questions concerning the nature of God, the creation and nature of the world, and the problem of evil.

(1) Al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal wa'al-Niḥal, Cairo 1948, Vol. II, p.37.

In the early period of theological controversy among the Muslims, conservative elements, i.e. the Traditionists, were able to contain the differing views within limits set by the literal interpretation of the ḥadīth; but with the wave of translations of Greek philosophical works promoted by the early 'Abbāsid Caliphs and especially al-Ma'mūn (A.D. 786-833), the gate of philosophical thought was opened, and Islām, like Christianity and Judaism in earlier times, had to face its challenge. The efforts of the Muslim 'ulamā' to stem the spread of philosophical ideas only achieved partial success. Progress in Islamic theology was slowed down but not stopped; at the same time the legal side of Islām was developed on a fuller scale.

As for the philosophers of Islām, their achievements cannot be studied here; but they may be divided into categories in accordance with the main conclusions which they reached. Those of the first category, among whom the outstanding figure is al-Kindī (d. 257/870), studied philosophy and came to the conclusion that the Sharī'ah is superior to philosophy. Those of the second category, notably al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), while not rejecting the Sharī'ah, went on to the task of reconciling the wisdom revealed by God to man through the Prophet with the wisdom achieved through human reasoning.⁽¹⁾ It is with the

(1) Al-Fārābī's Ārā' Ahl al-Madinat al-Fāḍila (Opinions of the inhabitants of the Virtuous City) is the best example of his attempt to reconcile between the Islamic teachings

ideas of the second category that Ismā'īlī philosophical thought has much in common. However, the view of the Ismā'īlīs differed from that of the other Muslim philosophers, in that it sprang from their belief in a universal divine and moral law governing the universe. Philosophy to them was not merely an individual pursuit of knowledge, undertaken independently from pure love of wisdom; nor was it to be used solely as a weapon in their polemical arguments with their opponents, though one can easily find evidence to show that in the charges and counter-charges exchanged between the Fāṭimids and the 'Abbāsids philosophical interpretations were often used by Ismā'īlī dā'īs in support of their views on doctrinal issues. The main purpose of their philosophical endeavour was to work out not only the allegorical interpretation (ta'wīl) of the revelations of the series of Prophets, but also a complete religious system which would make intelligible the ḥaqā'iq (truths) of the missions of the Prophets and thereby open the only way to salvation.

Having come to the conclusion that the revelations of the Prophets were interconnected, and that this stemmed from the fact that God has always been willing to give more opportunities

Continuation of footnote from p.139

(mainly from the Shī'ī viewpoint) and Greek philosophy. His description of the Chief of his Virtuous City synthesizes Shī'ī views of the Imām with Plato's view of the Philosopher King. Al-Fārābī presented his views with great ability. Although he was strongly influenced by Plato's ideas, his Virtuous City is superior to Plato's Republic in the sense that it is a Universal City, and not a mere Greek city-state divided into classes.

to human beings for seeing the truth, the Ismā'īlīs proceeded to draw a parallel between what they call ḥudūd 'ālam al-dīn (principles of religious obligation, or ranks of the Ismā'īlī hierarchy in this lower world), and the heavenly or cosmic principles; and it is here that they were inspired by Greek philosophy. For the first heavenly principle initiated by God's command (al-amr), which the Ismā'īlīs equated with the Nāṭiq or Prophet, had already been enunciated by Greek philosophers. The poet-philosopher Xenophanes (about 536 B.C.) is said to have been the first to express the idea of a divine intellect regulating the world. This was later affirmed by the philosopher-teacher of Pericles, Anaxagoras (500-428 B.C.), who put forward clearly the idea that the affairs of the world are arranged by a supreme intellect. These ideas about the cosmos were later developed by other Greek philosophers, especially the Neo-Platonists who during the period from the first century B.C. to the sixth century A.D. came to form the most influential school of thought in the Greco-Roman world. Translations of some of their works played a major role in the development of both Christian and Islamic theology.⁽¹⁾

(1) Although ideas derived from Plotinus (c.205-262 A.D.) and his Neo-Platonist successors had more influence than those of Plato himself on the Ismā'īlī philosophy, Plato's name is more often mentioned and praised in most of the Ismā'īlī MSS. This similarity between his world of Ideals and the Ismā'īlī belief in the existence of heavenly principles is apparent. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Firās, in his Sullam al-Ṣu'ūd ... (c. 14th century A.D., Syrian MS. described in Appendix I), allocates a whole section to praising Plato and endorsing the opinion of the Druzes that Plato was able to see the divine light. See M.K.

Having reached the conclusion that there is a parallelism between the higher cosmic principles and the spiritual hierarchy of Nāṭiq, Asās and Imām, the Ismā'īlīs centred their discussions on the status and functions of these various figures, hūdūd al-dīn (holders of religious ranks) as they are called, and their relations to one another. This caused great intellectual difficulty to the Ismā'īlī authors, as can be seen in the occurrence of inconsistencies and obscurities in their texts. However, the Ismā'īlīs never ceased their efforts to develop their doctrine of the universal divine order; since God is beyond the comprehension of the human mind, it was essential that believers should be able to take hold of the rope (ḥabl) of God, i.e. attach themselves with the strong bond of faith to the guidance of the Prophet and the Imāms, which will lead them towards the absolute truth and enable them to see the light of the eternal divine wisdom.⁽¹⁾

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Ḥusayn, Sīrat al-Ustādh. Jawzar, Cairo 1954, pp.176-177; Ibn Taymīya (Aḥmad Taqī al-Dīn), al-Nubūwāt, Cairo 1346/1927, pp.80-84.

- (1) The items of evidence drawn from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth in the support of the Ismā'īlī beliefs not only refer to the designation of 'Alī and his descendants as custodians of the Shari'a left by the Prophet, but also indicate that the revelations of Islam formed a continuation of the previous ones. Although the historicity of some of the sayings ascribed to the Prophet may be questioned, they are very valuable because they attest the universalism of the Ismā'īlī teachings. The following Qur'ānic verses are valued highly by the Ismā'īlīs: III:33-34, "Verily God has chosen Adam and Noah; and Abraham's descendants and 'Imrān's descendants above the people of the world one after another ... etc." Also, II: 156; XXI: 73, and many other passages. On the sayings of the Prophet in which he indicated that 'Alī was his executor and the holder of a

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The Ismā'īlī Theory of Creation.

Although the origin of the evolution of the universe had already been discussed by earlier Ismā'īlī dā'īs, much more developed views were formed under the Fāṭimids; and these will be taken here as the starting point of a study of Ismā'īlī teachings on this vital subject. During the Fāṭimid period there arose a group of the best and most learned dā'īs in Ismā'īlī history, who not only provided the Fāṭimid Caliphate with works on Law and Jurisprudence, but also produced excellent treatises on the philosophy of the Fāṭimid da'wa. The importance of these writings is enhanced by the fact that their authors used to secure the permission of their very scholarly Fāṭimid Imāms before releasing their works for the use of the public or for reading in private assemblies held in the Hall of Wisdom (Dār al-Ḥikma). These works accordingly have an official and authoritative character unlike works from other periods of Ismā'īlī history, where the possibility that certain authors may be expressing individual opinions, complicates the task of scholars. The writings of the Fāṭimid period possess clarity and precision, in contrast with the obscurity which clouds the literature ascribed to dā'īs of the earlier period of Satr (occultation or concealment), when authors often deliberately confused issues by

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position in relation to him similar to that of Hārūn to Moses, see M.A. al-Ṭawīl, Ta'rikh al-ʿAlawīyīn, Latakia 1924, pp.59-61, 71.

veiling their real meaning with vague metaphorical and philosophical terms, in order to avoid attracting the attention of their enemies. Lucidity of expression, on the other hand, characterizes the Fāṭimid authors led by the Golden Triangle, al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d. 363/974), Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. 410/1019?) and al-Muʿayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 470/1077), whose efforts both in organizing the daʿwa and in expounding its ideas played a major part in enabling the Fāṭimid Caliphate to bring most of the Muslim world under its banner.

The Belief in the Seven Cycles (al-Adwār al-Sabʿa).

According to the Ismāʿīlīs, the religious history of mankind dates from the first Prophet, Adam, and is divided into seven recurring cycles (adwār) in all of which the zāhir (outer meaning) of the respective Prophet's Sharīʿa has been in force, culminating in the zāhir of the Sharīʿa of Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets. (1)

The first cycle was started by Adam, who is considered to be the first Nāṭiq (Revealer of a Sharīʿa) and is equated with the first cosmic principle, i.e. the Universal Intellect. He and each of the successive Nāṭiqs had an Asās (Foundation), who

(1) The first seven cycles or epochs form a sbprt of an introduction to the coming of the great Qiyāma ("resurrection") whose upholder, the Qaʿim, will embody both the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul.

is equated with the second cosmic principle, the Universal Soul, and is believed to have been in charge of the interpretation of the religion revealed through the respective Nāṭiq.⁽¹⁾ Between each Nāṭiq and the next Nāṭiq there were seven Imāms, who could be either "actual" (mustaqarr) or "trustee" (mustawda) Imāms. While each of these cycles is considered to be complete in itself, yet they are connected with each other by the last Imām of each group of seven, who is generally called Imām Qā'im or muqīm (i.e. he who prepares the way for the coming new cycle). The functions and status of the three highest ranks in the Ismā'īlī hierarchy, i.e. the Nāṭiq, Asās and Imām, in relation to one another are of great importance; for they represent and stand for intelligent and creative principles, not abstract and static ideas. The Ismā'īlī dā'īs, and especially those of the Fāṭimid period, devoted most of their efforts in expounding this theory of the seven cycles; they seem to have succeeded only in clarifying the general principles of the theory, but not its further implications. Besides conflict of views concerning the identity of the closest disciples and companions of the first five Nāṭiqs (which being a pre-Islamic issue does not matter very much),

(1) In the Ismā'īlī sources the first, second and remaining cosmic principles receive various names. The Universal Intellect is generally referred to as al-ʿaql al-kull, al-qalam (the pen), al-sābiq (the Preceder), and other names. The Universal Soul is called al-nafs al-kull, al-lawḥ, (the Tablet), al-munba'ath al-awwal (the first emanation).

there was the problem of the status of the seventh Imām of the post-Islamic group of seven, who is supposed to be the seventh Nāṭiq.

This problem gave rise to serious differences among the early Ismāʿīlīs; differences which may have had a rôle in the secession of the Qarmaṭians who are believed to have considered the seventh Nāṭiq, i.e. Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, as the Qāʾim al-Muntazar (the expected Messiah).⁽¹⁾

The Fāṭimids belittled these early Ismāʿīlī doctrines in which special status is given to Imāms who come seventh in their respective groups of seven. They considered all the Imāms after the Prophet Muḥammad as naturally equal, on the ground that they all possessed the divine inspiration. Moreover, the moderate Fāṭimid elements always resisted pressure by extreme elements to adopt their view that since the end of the seven cycles the Imāms participate in the Universal Soul.⁽²⁾

(1) The Ismāʿīlī sources differ as to the identity of the last Nāṭiq. This arises from the problem whether to begin counting the list from ʿAlī himself or from his successor. However, there is a wide measure of agreement that Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl (d. 198/813?) was the seventh Imām and was consequently given the name of the seventh Nāṭiq. See W. Ivanow, "Ismāʿīlīs and Qarmaṭians", in B.B.R.A.S. 1954, pp.78-80.

(2) The movement led by Ḥamza ibn ʿAlī and Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Darazī, who were among the dāʿīs of al-Ḥākim (A.D.996-1020), called for the elimination of the intermediaries between God and the Imām, i.e. al-Ḥākim. This was because Ḥamza considered al-Ḥākim to be the epitome of both the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul. The Druze sources elevate Ḥamza himself to the rank of the Intellect (ʿaql), and

To facilitate comprehension of the theory of the seven cycles, a table is given below showing the names of the Nāṭiq and Asās of each cycle based on a collation of various Ismā'īlī sources. (1)

Table One

<u>Cycle</u>	<u>Nāṭiq</u>	<u>Asās</u>
First	ADAM	ABEL (succeeded by Seth)
Second	NOAH	SHEM
Third	ABRAHAM	ISHMAEL
Fourth	MOSES	AARON (succeeded by Joshua)
Fifth	JESUS	PETER
Sixth	MUHAMMAD	ʿALĪ
(Seventh	MUHAMMAD IBN ISMĀʿĪL	NO ASĀS)

(1) The names of the muqīms are not included because the sources are very confused on this subject. However, it is worth mentioning that ʿArif Tāmīr, in a letter dated 18.2.1963, says that most of the Ismāʿīlī sources state that Abū Tālib, the father of ʿAlī, was the Imām muqīm of the sixth cycle.

Applying their doctrine of allegorical interpretation (ta'wil), the Ismā'īlīs attempted to interpret the accounts of the expulsion of Adam, the Forbidden Tree, Noah and the Deluge ... etc., as passed to us through the Scriptures, in an effort to give plausible explanations of what they considered to be symbolic stories. This method of allegorical interpretation helped them to find out the baṭin (esoteric meaning) of the sacred Books, which was used to support their belief in the interdependence of the missions of the Prophets, who were not accidentally chosen as the media of revelations, but were particular men sent by God to deal with particular situations. The allegorical interpretation of the story of Noah is most interesting, for in it the Ismā'īlī sources try to show that what is meant by the Ark of Noah is simply his mission and its interpreter, the Asās, whose descendants, the Imāms, not only led the believers but also served as a link connecting the missions of all the Prophets and prepared the way for the Qā'im.⁽¹⁾

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Ismā'īl ibn Muḥammad al-Tamīmī (one of their principal authors) to the rank of Soul (nafs). See Ḥamza's Mithāq Walī al-Zamān, MS. Or. 6852 (B.M.), Fol. 154; M.K. Ḥusayn, Sirat al-Ustadh Jawzar, Cairo 1954, pp.19-22, 90; Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, Tā'rikh Cairo, 1958, pp.350-54.

- (1) Allegorical interpretations of the stories of the pre-Islamic Prophets are found in most of the Ismā'īlī sources. Cf. Manuscript 3, al-Risāla ... pp.228-230 (described in Appendix I); B. Lewis, "An Ismā'īlī Interpretation of the Fall of Adam", B.S.O.S., IX, 1938, pp.692-94; S. Guyard, Fragments p.28; Reuben Levy; "The Account of the

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ʿArif Tāmīr, however, states that after Abraham the daʿwa took a new line, those in charge of the daʿwa being not the "actual" Imāms descended from Ishmael but the "trustee" Imāms descended from Isaac, whose descendants remained in charge of the daʿwa right down to the coming of the Prophet Muḥammad, when the last "trustee" Imām Baḥīrā (the Nestorian Monk whom Muḥammad is said to have met) handed the affairs of the daʿwa to the actual Imāms represented in the muqīm Abū Ṭālib and his son ʿAlī, the Asās of the Prophet.⁽¹⁾

At this stage, we might ask ourselves why certain numbers like seven, twelve etc. hold special significance in the eyes of the Ismāʿīlīs. Although there may be certain connections with pre-Islamic doctrines that give importance to particular numbers, the direct answer lies in the cardinal Ismāʿīlī religious belief that nothing has been created without purpose, and that God or the Supreme Originator has left us the chance to see the truth by examining and studying the universe, the

Continued from p.

Ismāʿīlī Doctrines in the Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh of Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh -" in J.R.A.S., part III, London, 1930, pp.528-29.

- (1) The Imām muqīm is the one who prepares the way for the coming of the new cycle, the Imām mustaqarr is the one who is able to name his "real" or "actual" successor, while the Imām mustawdaʿ is only a "trustee" Imām who represents the "actual" Imām, i.e. the mustaqarr, under circumstances when the Imām mustaqarr is in a state of concealment. See al-Juwainī, The History ... tr. J.A. Boyle, 1958, pp.646-647; A. Tāmīr, "Ḥaqīqat ..." in al-Machriq 1957, pp.143-44; M. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins, 1955, pp.161, 169-72, 230.

elements of which are in complete harmony with one another, thus indicating that there is a coherent plan in the creation of the universe. Thus the Ismā'īlīs found a recurrence of number seven in the number of the heavens, the planets, the days of the week, the openings in the human head (i.e. eyes, ears, nostrils and mouth) and regarded it as a phenomenon of great importance. This contributed much to their interest in astronomy, mathematics and music, which were essential subjects for their high-ranking dā'īs who were in charge of preaching and spreading the teachings of the da'wa.⁽¹⁾

Al-Kirmānī's Ten Intellects.

The Ismā'īlī dā'ī, al-Kirmānī, ḥujja of the Fāṭimid Imām al-Ḥākim, may be considered to have played the most important rôle in giving precision to Ismā'īlī philosophical doctrines and religious teachings. In expounding the Ismā'īlī belief that nothing was created by accident and that all creations whether the heavenly or worldly have a sense of purpose, al-Kirmānī provides elaborate theories in which he attempts to explain the Ismā'īlī doctrines on the origin of the world. He first of all sets about proving the exclusive unity of God by following the

(1) It is probable that all the Muslim authors who were interested in astronomy, and especially the Ismā'īlīs and Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', made use of the works of Ptolemy and other ancient astronomers. See R. Levy, The Social Structure of Islām, Cambridge, 1957, pp.474-78; W. Ivanow, Brief Survey.... 1952, pp.48, 56, 59, where the author states that the special significance given to certain numbers by the Ismā'īlīs might be of Persian origin.

line that He is not to be measured in earthly terms, nor to be compared with any power known to human beings. When al-Kirmānī states that God is above all definitions of existence (ays) and non-existence (lays), he simply means that God is beyond human minds. Consequently a way is needed to lead humanity to God, and al-Kirmānī's Ten Intellects constitute the medium through which one can seek the recognition of those religious truths which centre around the divine secret (sirr) received by 'Alī from Muḥammad. (1)

The first Intellect, which is also the "first cause" (al-ʿilla al-ūlā), came into being not by the process of fayḍ (2) ("grace", literally "overflowing") as the philosophers say, but by what he calls the power of al-ibdāʿ (origination), and God is its Mubdiʿ (Originator). From the first Intellect, which is

- (1) Together with the Shīʿīs, some of the early Ṣūfīs adhered to the belief that the Prophet disclosed certain divine secrets (sirr) to 'Alī. See Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. A.D. 1234), Kitāb ʿAwārif al-Maʿārif, contained on the margin of al-Ghazzālī's Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn, Cairo 1939, Vol. I, pp.220-225, where the author quotes various prominent Ṣūfī Shaykhs such as Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd (d. 298/910) and a tradition ascribed to the Prophet stating that the word udhn, mentioned in the Qurʾān (69:12), meaning ear or perception, was none but the attentive ear of 'Alī which received the divine knowledge or secret from God through His Prophet Muḥammad.
- (2) This term fayḍ, which is used by al-Fārābī, suggests the outpouring or emission of sunlight and not the overflowing of water from a vessel. Al-Kirmānī seems to have avoided this term because of its ambiguity, since it might imply the incapacity of that vessel to contain the "light" or the water.

equated with the Nāṭiq or Prophet, the second Intellect proceeded by means of the faculty of emanation (bi quwwat al-inbi'āth), and thus it is called by al-Kirmānī "the first emanation" (al-munba'ath al-awwal). The following eight Intellects, which emanated successively one from another and are thus called the second munba'ath and so forth, are equated with the rest of the ḥudūd of the world of religion, namely the Imām, bāb, ḥujja and four ranks of dā'īs, starting with the dā'ī who possesses powers to preach and ending with the dā'ī whose powers are limited. Each of these ḥudūd aspires to reach the perfection of the one higher to him, who is the cause of his existence.⁽¹⁾

In attempting to find in what way al-Kirmānī's theory of the Ten Intellects differs from that of the earlier Ismā'īlī dā'īs, we find that besides substituting the first, second and third Intellects for what the earlier dā'īs knew as Universal Intellect, the Universal Soul, and the Primal Matter, he applies the word qalam (pen) to both the first and second Intellect and reserves the word lawḥ (tablet) for the third Intellect, thus

(1) For more details on the functions of the bāb (gate to the da'wa or the Imām), ḥujja and other members of the Ismā'īlī hierarchy, see the following chapter.

A table of the Ten Intellects may be consulted in al-Kirmānī's Raḥat al-'Aql, ed. M.K. Ḥusayn, Cairo 1952, p.24, where the author draws a parallel between the fourth-ninth Intellects and the six planets, namely Jupiter, Mars, The Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon.

differing from the earlier Ismā'īlī dā'īs who equated the Universal Intellect with the qalam and the Universal Soul with the lawḥ. Such slight differences in terminology do not necessarily mean that there are major differences between al-Kirmānī and the earlier dā'īs, for it is evident that in the Ismā'īlī sources such terms as qalam, sābiq, first mubdi', Universal Intellect etc. have the same meaning and are equated with the Prophet. The same could be said about the Universal Soul which is called variously first munba'ath, lawḥ, tālī etc., all these being equated with the executor of the Prophet, 'Alī.⁽¹⁾

The main aim of all Ismā'īlī dā'īs is to prove the existence of the universal divine order, with the purpose of affirming their doctrine that the question of the succession to the Prophet is a pre-determined divine act which is above tribal or communal differences or allegiances. It was their belief that, after the death of the Prophet, Muslims must seek the guidance not only of the silent Qur'ān, but also of the "speaking" Qur'ān, that is 'Alī and his descendants who hold the office of the Imamate in unbroken succession.⁽²⁾

(1) Al-Kirmānī, Raḥat al-ʿAql, ed. M.K. Ḥusayn, Cairo 1952, pp.24-26; 'Arif Tāmīr, "Ḥaqīqat ..." in al-Machriq 1957, p.143; "al-ʿAqīda fī Shi'r Mazyad ..." in al-Machriq 1956, pp.477-482.

(2) As to how the universe was created, an earlier great Fāṭimid dā'ī, al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, states that it was created at once when God uttered the command "Be" (kun). Al-Nu'mān adds that the Qā'im existed before time, space, heaven and earth, implying that the Qā'im is above everything in the physical world. Al-Nu'mān's theory of creation is contained in his treatise called al-Mudhhiba, pp.225-247, 278-281, (see MS.3 in Appendix I, pp.180-82); Jawād Muscatī, Life and Lectures of al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, Karachī, 1950, p.162.

(b) Spiritual Trends in Syrian Ismā'īlīsm under the Alamūt Imamate.

Although Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ's military leadership was an important factor in the establishment of the Nizārī da'wa in Alamūt, its success was mainly due to his work in revitalizing the Ismā'īlī doctrine of the Imamate after the split in the movement following the death of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Mustanṣir (pp.34-36 above). While the Fāṭimid Caliphate under the Musta'lis tended to become a merely secular power and lost much of its spiritual force, the Nizārī Imamate emerged with a powerful spiritual appeal. Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ now turned to use not only the historical, philosophical, religious and exegetic arguments of earlier dā'īs demonstrating the necessity of an Imām descended from 'Alī, but also logical propositions in support of the doctrine of al-ta'ālīm (necessity of infallible teaching or instruction by an Imām). He argued that since God is just, He must (logically) in every age send an infallible "teacher", i.e. the Imām, whose teachings are the only way to truth and will lead ultimately to unification of the various faiths. As regards the function of reason, Ḥasan implied that its main use is to help the seeker of truth to know or "recognize" the true Imām descended from 'Alī through Nizār. Naturally many orthodox Muslim heresiologists and theologians set out to disprove Ḥasan's doctrines; but the question who came off better in these controversies is immaterial. What matters is that the campaign directed from Alamūt by Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ won over the

Persian and the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs to his cause. His achievement, when he had to face the powerful and hostile Saljūqs and at the same time compete with the Mustaʿlī Fāṭimids in Egypt, is most impressive, not only from the political and military but also from the religious viewpoints; for the secession of the Nizārī daʿwa from the main Fāṭimid daʿwa was essentially a religious movement. It was not merely the matter of following different lines of Imāms that distinguished the dynamic and revolutionary Nizārī daʿwa from the frozen Fāṭimid daʿwa under the Mustaʿlī Imāms; Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ went further and pushed the Ismāʿīlī doctrines another step forward, without caring what would be the reaction of the orthodox Muslims as did the Fāṭimids. It must not be thought, however, that the new trend adopted by the Nizārī daʿwa meant relinquishing the basic and essential principles of Ismāʿīlism; for although the name of Alamūt conjures up a revolutionary image, the Ismāʿīlīs in both Persia and Syria continued under Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ and his two successors to practise Islām in the same way as it was practised by the Fāṭimids. All that Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ did, besides uniting and safeguarding the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs, was to prepare the way for the coming of the new Imām who would proclaim the Qiyāma.⁽¹⁾

(1) According to the Ismāʿīlīs, one of the main purposes of the Prophets was to pave the way for the appearance of the Qāʾim of their respective cycle. This belief may account for the comparison made between the mission of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ and that of Jesus. See al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal wa al-Niḥal, ed. Rev. W. Cureton, London 1846, part I, pp.150-152; M. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins, pp.170-292.

The Initiation of a New Cycle.

While certain changes have been introduced into the Ismā'īlī da'wa under Hasan al-Sabbāh and his two successors, the proclamation of the great Qiyāma by Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām on the 17 Ramaḍān 559/8 August 1164 meant the beginning of a new era in its religious development. This Qiyāma⁽¹⁾ meant that Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām initiated a new cycle (dawr) and uncovered additional doctrines, hitherto hidden under the veil of taqīya. These new doctrines emphasized the theory of ta'wīl at the expense of formal worship. By taking this step, Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām seems to have assumed the role of an Imām who not only interprets the revelations sent to the Prophet, but also carries his interpretations from the realm of theory into that of practice. Thus, as the initiator of the Qiyāma and the doctrines ensuing from it, Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām was to become the custodian of human salvation and what may be called the visible expression of the two cosmic principles, the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul, which are equated with the Prophet and the Asās.

But what did the introduction of these doctrines mean in practice to the Ismā'īlīs in Persia and particularly in Syria? From the limited information which is available, it appears that the Qiyāma was considered to be strictly spiritual, signifying that those who accepted it would henceforth receive the haqā'iq

(1) Not to be confused with the Sunnī meaning of the term, which is "bodily resurrection".

of Ismā'īlīsm directly from their infallible source, the Imām who possesses the knowledge of the highest sciences. Gone were the days when one of the essential duties of the Ismā'īlīs was to refrain from divulging their religious secrets; for they had entered the period of al-Kashf (unveiling of religious truths by the Imām). This put an end to ritual duties such as fasting, which had hitherto been considered obligatory, even though their true significance had been allegorical. Here lies the fundamental clue to the understanding of the teachings of the Qiyāma, which emphasized the inner spiritual rather than the outer material aspect. If the Ismā'īlīs literally ate and drank on the 17 Ramaḍān A.H. 559, they did this to celebrate the great event in their history which had elevated them to such a high spiritual level that the outward obligations of the Shari'a had become secondary to the much more advanced obligations of the Qiyāma.⁽¹⁾

Among the Syrian Ismā'īlīs who lived far away from Alamūt

(1) See 'Aṭā Mālik al-Juwainī ... pp.695-96; Ḥamdu'llāh Mustawfī-i-Qazwīnī ... Vol. XIV, p.129; M.C. Defrémery, "Récit de la ..." in J.A. 1860, pp.197-98. As regards Ismā'īlī sources on the Qiyāma, we can rely only on the Haft Bāb-i-Bābā Sayyidnā, which is believed to have been written about A.D. 1200. See MS. 5, pp.14-15; M. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins, p.197.

in a different environment, the teachings of the Qiyāma were probably not fully understood by all. It is reported, however, that Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, in his role as the representative of the Imām, held festivities a few years later to celebrate the occurrence of the Qiyāma. This may perhaps even been after the death of Ḥasan ḤAlā Dhikrihī al-Salām in 561/1166.⁽¹⁾ Although no known Syrian Ismāʿīlī source directly refers to the Qiyāma, traces of its teachings are found in most of the Syrian Ismāʿīlī writings, especially when they are concerned with Ismāʿīlī eschatological ideas. Moreover, a certain emphasis on self-knowledge, self-purity and self-discovery, as constituting important steps towards seeing the truth in the person of the Imām, is noticeable in all of the Syrian Ismāʿīlī manuscripts, which categorically and repeatedly assert that the Imām, being guided by divine providence and being the visible expression of God's Will on earth, presents the only direct road leading to absolute truth and final salvation.⁽²⁾

A clearer and a more specific indication of the influence of the Qiyāma teachings on the Syrian Ismāʿīlī writings is to be seen in their attempts to justify - and it almost seems, apologize for - the abolition of the outward (zāhir) rituals of the Sharīʿa.

(1) See Chapter 2, pp. 52-53; M.G. Hodgson, The Order p.197.

(2) M.S. Guyard, Fragments relatifs p.204.

In one of the Syrian manuscripts, the author, after giving the spiritual or allegorical interpretation of fasting, ablution etc. states that the abolition (naskh) of the ẓāhir of the Sharīʿa does not belittle, but enhances, its importance.⁽¹⁾ Another sign of the influence of the Qiyāma teachings on the Syrian writings is the apparent multiplicity of the views expressed in them. Although the Qiyāma may have helped to simplify the Ismāʿīlī hierarchy, it had certainly brought forth deeper and more complicated religious doctrines which were bound to be interpreted in several different ways by the Ismāʿīlīs, thus widening the gap between the religious views of the learned ʿālims and those of the laymen. It is quite possible that such a divergence of views lay at the root of the episode of the Sufāt (pp.57-60 above), who may have wanted to see the reward of the Qiyāma realized in terms of the material needs of their daily life. This misunderstanding of the spiritual aims of the Qiyāma, which very likely were only understood by the most learned dāʿīs, may together with political considerations have been the factor which prompted the grandson of Hasan ʿAlā Dhikrihī al-Salām to reinstate the observance of the ordinary

(1) Although the original date of the second and the third of the following manuscripts cannot be precisely determined, it seems almost certain that they were compiled after the Qiyāma. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Firās, Sullam al-Ṣuʿūd ... p.238; Kitāb Tāj al-ʿAqāʿid, pp.56-65; MS. 5, p.14; MS. 6, p.98.

rituals of the Sharīʿa.⁽¹⁾

Popular Leanings Towards Metempsychosis.

While the new doctrines which came in with Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ's daʿwa and the proclamation of the Qiyāma may be viewed as no more than independent interpretations of certain basic Ismāʿīlī theological beliefs, differing from the traditional Fāṭimid doctrines only in degree and in application but not in essence, some but not all of the Syrian Ismāʿīlī sources tell stories of a wholly new phenomenon, namely the existence of belief in metempsychosis or transmigration of souls. These Syrian Ismāʿīlī authors must have been influenced by interpretations widely held among the Ismāʿīlī common people as regards the purpose of human existence and the fate of the soul after death. These popular interpretations, though not exactly the same as those of the Nuṣayrīs and the Druzes, share one common characteristic. All these Muslim groups were dissatisfied with the orthodox beliefs of the three great Semitic religions concerning the after-life and the future destiny of the soul, and sought to quench their thirst for answers to these human questions by searching in this present life instead of relying on the usual stories about the after-life which only state that it is there but do not elaborate on it. Thus to the Druzes

(1) See above, chapter III, pp.85-88 . For a detailed view of the teachings of the Qiyāma and its effects on the Ismāʿīlī hierarchal order, M.G. Hodgson's The Order ... pp.172-79, may be consulted.

the answer to the question why an infant is born crippled or otherwise disabled is not to be found simply by saying that it is because of human sins or faults as the Christian believes, nor by merely saying with resignation that it is God's Will as the orthodox Muslim does. To reconcile their beliefs in predestination and God's intervention in our affairs with their belief in the justice of the punishment we receive, the Druzes state that an infant's being born crippled is to be explained as a penalty for past evil deeds in a previous life; he is thus justly punished for his own deeds, and not merely as a lesson for others on account of his parents' faults or those of humanity at large. However, the Druzes imply in their writings that after a series of births there will ultimately be a time when the soul, having undergone full purification, will be raised to a higher world where it will receive final judgment. This, briefly, is an example of the Druzes' way of answering these questions.⁽¹⁾ As for the Nuṣayrīs, their views on questions

(1) The Druzes found in rebirth, or what is generally referred to as reincarnation, a rational explanation for the state of new born infants. They tend to give empirical, rather than theological or metaphysical, arguments in support of their views. Although reincarnation is a central belief in all ancient religions of India - Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism - the Druzes seem to have adopted it independently as a tangible answer to their queries about the soul after death, punishment for evil deeds, reward of good deeds etc. See Rev. J. Wartabet, Researches into the Religions of Syria, London 1860, pp.301-307, where he makes use of the following Druze sources: Kitāb Kashf al-Ḥaqā'iq; Kitāb Sabab al-Asbāb; Majrā al-Zamān.

of the soul's destiny, future reward and punishment appear naïve and unsupported by any philosophical theory. To them wicked souls simply degenerate and will be restored to life after death in the form of brutes, while righteous souls will be embodied in the form of humans enjoying a better status and environment.

The Syrian Ismāʿīlīs, on the other hand, do not seem to have held uniform opinions on the above mentioned questions. Looking at a number of their sources which are ascribed to periods ranging from that of Sinān until the fourteenth century A.D., one discerns a rather indecisive attitude towards the question of rebirth. Most of these sources, when speaking of the souls of those who recognized the Imām of their time, seem to take a view similar to that of the Fāṭimid chief dāʿī al-Muʿayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, who asserts categorically the doctrine of the non-existence of another form of earthly life beyond death. Even Abū Fīrās, who in his Manāqib tells several anecdotes which suggest a belief in the return of certain souls to earth in one form or another, dismisses the theory of rebirth in his more serious work Sullam al-Suʿūd, where he states that human bodies deserve only one soul, thus contradicting the reincarnation theory which implies that one human being may have two souls.⁽¹⁾ It is when they speak of the destiny of the souls

(1) See Jawād Muscatī, Life and Lectures of al-Muʿayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, Karachī, 1950, pp.95-120; Abū Fīrās's anecdotes (19-26), in S. Guyard, "Un Grand Maître ..." pp.437-445; Sullam al-Suʿūd, p.149.

of those who failed to recognize the Imām, and are thus qualified as living the life of ignorance, that the Ismāʿīlī sources seem to vary in their explanations, which range from giving these souls a chance to recognize the Imām by being born again after death to simply treating them as non-existent or as not deserving that their destiny should be examined. Abū Firās admits that wicked souls share some common characteristics with the souls of animals, but he does not indicate clearly that they will return after death to become animals. These wicked souls, he states, will settle in dark heavenly bodies which lie between the luminous and noble heavenly bodies and the earth.⁽¹⁾ In this belief that wicked souls have a chance to reform themselves the Ismāʿīlīs differ from the Druzes, who came to the conclusion that those who refused to follow the daʿwa of al-Ḥākim in its early years would never have a chance to rectify their mistakes.⁽²⁾ In Ismāʿīlī sources which have any bearing on this question, stories suggesting a belief in transmigration are generally of a symbolic nature with only peripheral value;⁽³⁾ whereas in

(1) S. Guyard, Fragments p.71; Abū Firās, Sullam al-Suʿūd, p.179.

(2) H. Lammens, Beliefs ... Eng. tr. by Sir E.D. Ross, London, 1929, pp.165-66; Ḥasan (Ibrāhīm Ḥasan), Taʾrīkh al-Dawla al-Fāṭimīya, Cairo 1958, pp.356-359.

(3) It is interesting to compare what al-Dhahabī (Muḥammad ...) in Taʾrīkh al-Islām, Cairo 1947-49, Vol. I, pp.195-199, says about the souls of the prophets and how they are lodged by God in green birds, with Abū Firās's ninth anecdote in which Sinān is reported to have conversed with the soul of al-mawla (lord) Ḥasan which appeared in a form of a green bird. See S. Guyard, "Un Grand Maître", pp.437-38, 482.

the Druze sources belief in metempsychosis is clearly of cardinal importance. The Ismā'īlī sources seem to be most concerned with that which lies beyond this life. The soul to them is only passing a test in this life before qualifying to merge with the Universal Soul, or according to some of them with the Universal Intellect. In fact the Ismā'īlī authors take a rather optimistic view of human life, and while not minimizing the severity of future punishment of evil deeds, they often seem to imply that vengeance could not be compatible with God's mercy. If wrong-doers are to be exposed and humiliated, this will be done primarily in order that evil may be defeated and that the world may thus become a better place.⁽¹⁾

(1) In his Sullam al-Ṣu'ūd, pp.148-49, Abū Firās gives the views of what he calls the men of wisdom, i.e. Plato and some learned Muslims, on the transmigration of souls (tanāsukh). He quotes several Qur'ānic verses (IV: 59, VI: 38, XL: 11) which are used by certain Muslims in support of their belief in metempsychosis. Abū Firās then quotes the Qur'ānic verse (XLIV:56), which cancels the previous verses, in justification of his own rejection of metempsychosis.

CHAPTER VI

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DA'WA

The Ismā'īlī movement undoubtedly owed much of its success to its efficient and competent missionaries, who are referred to in the general Arabic sources as dā'īs and in some of the Ismā'īlī sources as 'ulamā' (sing. 'ālīm ; learned man or teacher). However, these terms were loosely used, and the word dā'ī could be applied to any active supporter of the rights of 'Alī's heirs to the spiritual and temporal leadership of the Muslims.

How much is known about the activities of these dā'īs whose main task was to spread and preach the Ismā'īlī doctrines considered by the 'Abbāsids and the Saljūqs as a threat to their domination? By whom were these dā'īs appointed, and what were the status and functions of their various ranks? Unfortunately most of the Ismā'īlī sources tend to give a rather ideal or Utopian picture of the Ismā'īlī organization, which they consider to be the embodiment of history; and all that is available to supplement them is very scrappy information provided by the general Arabic sources. All these Ismā'īlī sources, irrespective of the periods in which they were written, give similar descriptions of the top level of Ismā'īlī leadership and of the officialdom of the da'wa, in which the Imām, who does not himself usually preach, is assisted by twelve of his disciples who should be fully qualified to carry on the propaganda in

the twelve "climes" (Jazīra, pl. Juzur).⁽¹⁾ The number of these twelve disciples was sometimes increased to twenty four, divided evenly between those who preach the ẓāhir of the da'wa and those who have custody of its bāṭin. Among these twelve or twenty four, the Ismā'īlī sources mention two high dignitaries who together with the Nāṭiq, Asās and the Imām constitute the five "ranks of the religion" (ḥudūd al-dīn). The first of the two high dignitaries is the one who receives instructions directly from the Imām; he is usually given a title held by the Imām. Thus he is called in the pre-Fāṭimid sources the ḥujja, or "evidence", of the Imām, who in his turn is the ḥujja of God. The Fāṭimid sources call him the bāb (gate) of the Imām, who in his turn is considered to be the bāb of the City of Knowledge, i.e. of the Prophet Muḥammad.⁽²⁾ In fact these two terms are quite interchangeable and need not constitute a serious hindrance to understanding the order of the Ismā'īlī hierarchy. However, it is noticeable that the term

(1) Literally "island". Apparently the Ismā'īlī authors meant by "jazīra" a region comparable with an ecclesiastical province. The regions were delimited in accordance with the language or race of their inhabitants - Persians, Arabs, Berbers, etc. See, S.M. Stern, J.R.A.S., 1961, pp.24,28.

(2) Jawād Muscati ... Selections from Qazī Noaman's Kitāb al-Himma ... Karachī 1950, p.42; Life and Lectures of Al-Mu'ayyad-Fid-Dīn ... Karachī 1950, p.162. According to a Shī'ī ḥadīth (tradition), the Prophet Muḥammad said: "I am the City of Knowledge and 'Alī is its bāb".

bāb was used in the Fāṭimid period when the Imāms were acknowledged rulers of a great sovereign state, while the term ḥujja was used when the Ismāʿīlī Imāms were somehow behind the scene; a state of affairs in which the term ḥujja, meaning "evidence" or "proof", may have been more appropriate for the trusted first auxiliary of the Imām. Thus during the period of satr preceding the rise of the Fāṭimids it is reported that each one of the Imāms had three or four ḥujjas⁽¹⁾ who used to argue and act for them, while under the Fāṭimids the term bāb was given to the head of the daʿwa known in the general historical works as the chief dāʿī. The bāb was then assisted by a council of twelve ḥujjas and had representatives in all the regions where the Fāṭimid daʿwa was active. Whenever the bāb did not simultaneously hold the office of chief qāḍī, he was considered under the Fāṭimids as second in rank to the chief qāḍī.⁽²⁾

(a) Alamūt and the Militant Nizārī Revolutionary Organization

Although Ismāʿīlī dāʿīs had been active in north west Persia and in Khurāsān and Transoxania since the ninth-century A.D.,⁽³⁾ those who worked for Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ's daʿwa found

(1) Ibn Khaldūn (ʿAbd al-Raḥmān...) al-ʿIbar ... Būlāq 1867, Vol. 4, p.30; ʿArif Tāmir, "Ḥaqīqat..." in al-Machriq, 1957, p.135.

(2) Al-Maqrīzī, Khiṭaṭ ... Vol. 2, p.226. For the various ranks of dāʿīs working for the bāb, see Al-Kirmānī, Raḥat al-ʿAql, ed. M.K. Ḥusayn ... p.24.

(3) S.M. Stern, "The Early Ismāʿīlī Missionaries in North-West Persia and Khurāsān and Transoxania" in B.S.O.A.S, Vol.XXIII, part 1, 1960, pp.56,60,77-82.

themselves facing quite different problems. With the Ismā'īlīs becoming established in various strongholds surrounded by much more numerous enemies, most dā'īs now had to act also as military commanders, ready to repulse any invading army sent by the powerful Saljūq Sultāns and other enemies. Consequently, in appointing dā'īs, Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ took account of their potentialities not only as persuasive preachers but also as military commanders. He also, it seems, sought to make use of the abilities of his followers generally; and the task of assessing these abilities was facilitated by the nature of their life in castles. Drawing into his hands all the reins of his immense office as the representative of the Imām, Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ completely re-organized the da'wa, making sure that every individual possessing desired qualifications should take some part in his new organization. He himself ranked as the head of the da'wa, with titles such as shaykh, ḥujja, sayyidnā (our master), etc. Second in rank came three senior dā'īs, who were in charge of the three main outlying districts, namely Khūzistān, Qūhistān and Syria. These three dā'īs were in principle responsible to Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ, although in practice, and especially in later periods, they often acted on their own initiative rather than on any standing orders or dispatched instructions. A good example is Sinān, who himself was provincial chief dā'ī in Syria, the only difference being that he represented an Imām holding actual control of the da'wa (see

pp.38,44,46,53), whereas Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ had acted in the name of the hidden Imām. The great dāʿīs were highly qualified men, capable of administering the affairs of their districts, preaching the Ismāʿīlī principles, and understanding the minds of the people with whom they had to deal. As a rule they were chosen by the Imām or his representative, but we have no records showing how they were appointed.

Third in the officialdom of the daʿwa ranked the ordinary dāʿīs, who must have been quite numerous. From them Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ and his successors drew those dāʿīs whose responsibility was to preach and also those who were sent on special political missions, e.g. to negotiate with a ruler or to try to convert a prince. They were divided into first and second grades, dāʿīs in the first grade having a better chance to be promoted by the head of the daʿwa to a higher rank.⁽¹⁾

The fourth rank of the daʿwa consisted of the rafiqs (comrades). Having joined the Ismāʿīlī daʿwa, they received a substantial degree of indoctrination before taking the oath in the presence of the chief dāʿī, to whom they owed absolute obedience in both religious and temporal matters. Their

(1) It is quite possible that they included the various ranks of dāʿīs mentioned in the Fāṭimid sources, such as the maʿdhūns (authorized preachers), and the junior dāʿīs who were not authorized to preach but were charged with attracting prospective converts to their senior dāʿīs.

promotion would depend on how much progress they had made in learning the religious secrets of the da'wa.

Following the rafiqs in rank came a section of the Ismā'īlīs whose name left fearful echoes in the courts of the most powerful rulers. These were the fidā'īs, who pledged themselves to strike against any actual or potential threat to their da'wa. They were directly responsible to the Imām or his hujja, to whom absolute obedience was essential if they were to prove their devotion and loyalty to the da'wa as personified in its head, who initially was Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ himself. Although they were not initiated in the da'wa as were the dā'īs and the rafiqs, they were aware of basic Ismā'īlī principles, e.g. that this present life is nothing but short dreams during which the soul passes what may be considered as a test determining its position in the after-life. It is thus quite intelligible that they became inflexibly devoted to their cause and ready to dedicate their lives to fulfilling the orders of their leader. They were well trained in the art of accomplishing their tasks; the course which they had to take in the training centre at Alamūt included the study of foreign languages and of other peoples' religious beliefs, so as to enable them to fit into the environment in which their targets lived.⁽¹⁾ These fidā'īs did not need to be drug-crazed

(1) See E.G. Brown, A Literary History of Persia from Firdawsī to Sa'dī, London, 1906, p.206.

before obeying their leader absolutely. They served as the guardians of their fellow-believers and as deterrents to enemies wishing to take advantage of the Ismā'īlīs's lack of great armies. Their incredible bravery has led interested historians to see a clue to what is called their blind obedience to their leader. On the ground that they are referred to in some of the general Arabic sources as hashīshīya - which may not necessarily have meant "eaters of hashīsh" (narcotic herb), the term "Assassins" came to be applied in histories of the Crusades to the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs in both Persia and Syria.⁽¹⁾

The sixth and seventh classes of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ's da'wa are sometimes treated as one. They consisted of the beginners or aspirants (lāṣiqs), who were not permitted to preach, and the rest of the community such as the peasants and the businessmen. Among the sixth class were the mustajībs (those who had "responded" sufficiently to proceed into the stages of indoctrination). The mustajībs came second to the lāṣiqs, and it seems as if they were themselves divided into senior and junior mustajībs, the former belonging to the sixth class and the latter to the seventh class, i.e. the rest of

(1) The term has already been discussed briefly on pp.1-2. It may possibly have originated from other, somewhat similar Arabic names by which the Ismā'īlī fidā'īs were known, e.g. ḥassāsūn ("perceptive ones"), ḥassāsūn ("night patrols" or "watchmen"), or simply from their association with Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ or one of the Ismā'īlī Imāms called Ḥasan. See 'Ārif Tāmīr, Sinān ... pp.27-28; "The Ismā'īlites and the Assassins", in A History of the Crusades, p.99.

the community.

This division of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs into seven classes seems to have been in use under the successors of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ. During the post-Qiyāma period there was a tendency to divide all living humans into three categories, namely the people of the spiritual unity (ahl al-waḥda or al-Qiyāma), the people of order (ahl al-tarātub), and the people of contradiction (ahl al-taḍādd). Possibly the people of the spiritual unity included the top people in the officialdom of the Nizārī daʿwa. This levelling of human beings had only a symbolical character, however, and did not alter the basic system under which Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ organized his followers. (1)

(b) The Autonomy of the Syrian Daʿwa under Sinān

Up to the time of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, the Syrian Ismāʿīlī daʿwa was run by provincial dāʿīs such as al-Ḥakīm al-Munajjim, Abū Tāhir, Bahrām and Abū Muḥammad. These dāʿīs seem to have been completely dependent upon Alamūt; for example, to avenge the massacre of the Ismāʿīlīs in Damascus in A.D. 1129 (discussed earlier on p.25), two fidāʿīs were sent from Alamūt to assassinate Tāj al-Mulūk Būrī, the Turkish aṭābeg

(1) The main sources for the post-Qiyāma period is Rawḍat al-Taslīm ascribed to Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭuṣī, which has been studied by W. Ivanow in J.R.A.S. 1931. See particularly p.546, where the three categories of people are mentioned, and p.556, where new names are given for functionaries in the Nizārī daʿwa, such as bāb al-bāṭin (gateway to the esoteric meaning), zabān-i-ʿilm (tongue of knowledge), al-ḥujja al-aʿẓam (the greatest ḥujja) and dast-i-qudrat (hand of power).

of Damascus, who was held responsible for the massacre.

Sinān, who possessed outstanding abilities as an organizer and leader, was the ḥujja of the Imām of the Qiyāma who had sent him to lead the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs.⁽¹⁾ He successfully transformed the Syrian daʿwa from a weak one, depending mainly on the help of Alamūt and the occasional patronage of a local ruler, into a powerful agency having its own fortresses and its own corps of fidāʾīs, who were trained in a special centre believed to have been situated in the renowned Ismāʿīlī castle al-Kahf.⁽²⁾ Sinān had also his own dāʿīs to assist him and a large number of rafiqs who used to accompany him on his frequent visits to the various Ismāʿīlī castles. The Syrian daʿwa under his leadership was no longer just a branch. It could be classified as a virtually autonomous daʿwa, with its territory and headquarters and its own hierarchy of dignitaries headed by Sinān.⁽³⁾

(1) This may account for the elevation of Sinān's spiritual status. It is interesting to recall here how the chief dāʿī of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥākim, Ḥamza ibn ʿAlī, assumed the title of al-ʿaql (intellect) when al-Ḥākim was elevated to a higher status.

(2) Michael Labbād, al-Ismāʿīlīyūn ... pp.61-62.

(3) The inadequate materials on the organization of the daʿwa given in the Syrian Ismāʿīlī sources can only be supplemented to a small extent by the also meagre information found in the general Arabic sources. However, the general shape of the organization is clear, as it was based on the mother organization in Alamūt. See S. Guyard, "Un Maître ..." pp.358,366,370; ʿArif Tāmīr, Sinān ... pp.25,33.

Sinān's successors seem to have turned again to Alamūt, even though they inherited from Sinān a well organized da'wa, which had firmly established itself in Syria. Until A.D. 1256 they were appointed by the Imām in Alamūt and were responsible directly to him, which suggests that they held the rank of hujja, a rank second to that of the Imām. These hujjas or chief dā'īs were assisted by a number of dā'īs who carried such titles as naqīb (officer), janāḥ ("wing") and nāẓir (keeper or inspector); during the post-Sinān period a dā'ī appointed to be commander of a castle would be called wālī.⁽¹⁾

(1) S. Guyard, *Fragments ...* pp.37-38; M. Max van Berchem, *"Epigraphie ..."* pp.456,488,495, where the names of the chief dā'īs appear on the inscriptions preceded by the title al-Mawlā al-Ṣāhib and other honorific titles such as Tāj al-Dīn (crown of religion), Majd al-Dīn (glory of religion) etc. On the term nāẓir, which is incidentally still used in the present day Syrian Ismā'īlī hierarchy, see text, p.125.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters an attempt has been made to throw some light on the political history, beliefs, and organization of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. The reader will have remarked the frequent recourse to anti-Ismā'īlī sources, which despite the biased picture they present are quite indispensable.

Such a situation makes one wonder whether wholly objective historiography can ever be realized, or whether it is an unattainable ideal of perfection. There can be no doubt that simply to assemble materials and assess them at their ostensible value is not enough. No historian who aims at truth can afford to neglect the constant factor of human predilection and prejudice in his sources. Contemporary sources, in particular, are nearly always more biased than later ones, because their writers were actively or emotionally involved in the events which they describe. A methodology whereby the influence of human factors can be estimated is essential, because uncritical and unimaginative use of sources will give only an imperfect approximation of the truth. Such a methodology, without losing itself in vague conjecture, would have to admit the validity of a reasoned use of a priori criteria in the assessment of source-materials. Lack of insight resulting from failure to use such criteria has been responsible for much misrepresentation of history - including the history of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs.

APPENDIX I

NOTES ON FOUR SYRIAN ISMĀʿILĪ MANUSCRIPTS

(a) First Manuscript

Description

The MS., which is $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches broad, is written in a naskhī script and begins on page 417. More than one copyist seems to have taken part in writing it, and it contains several different works. The first, covering pages 110-201, begins with a poem praising the Fāṭimid Imāms and ends with stories concerning the life of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. Then on page 202 there is a sermon for the ʿId al-Fiṭr (Breaking the Fast), which ends on page 217 where the copyist gives the date of the writing as 1263/1846. On pages 218-239 there is another sermon, the copyist of which gives his name as al-Shaykh Khidr ibn al-Shaykh Ḥaydar and states that it was completed in 1262/1845. Pages 240-252 contain what the author calls the "blessed genealogical tree from Adam until al-Qāʾim", with a brief biographical note on each of the Imāms from ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib down to the first of the Imāms after the fall of Alamūt in A.D. 1256. This is followed by a work entitled Kitāb al-Dustūr wa Ṭalab al-Muʾminīn ilā al-Ḥuḍūr, which begins on page 263 and ends on page 366 and contains a statement by the copyist, Muḥammad ibn al-Shaykh ʿAlī al-Ḥāj, giving the date of writing as 1211/1796.

• There are no mentions of the dates of the original works.

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- (1) These manuscripts belong to Mr. ʿĀrif Tāmīr and could be consulted. Refer to the Secretary, Ismāʿilī Supreme Council, Salamīya, Syria.

The only clues that can be obtained are from the literary style and from the biographical work on the Imāms. These suggest that the date may be taken as sometime during the second half of the 14th century A.D. The manuscript ends with a poem in the rajaz metre in which the author traces the lineage of the Imāms back to the beginning of Human life; he calls this poem Urjūzat al-Nasab (the rajaz poem of the lineage).

Observations:

Among the works in this manuscript, the biographical notes on the Ismāʿīlī Imāms (pages 240-252) contain more historical material than the others, which are mainly doctrinal and very largely duplicated in other Ismāʿīlī MSS. The author, whose name and date of writing are unknown, follows his account of the Fāṭimid period with a brief biographical note on each of the Nizārī Imāms whose identity until the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III (A.D. 1210-1221) remains a subject of much controversy. On pages 249-50 the author gives the names of three mastūr (concealed) Imāms who came between Nizār and Ḥasan ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām (d. A.D. 1166). They are, the author states, al-Ḥādī, al-Mahdī and al-Qāʿim. This is the only available Syrian MS. which gives the same genealogical tree of the Nizārī Imāms as the one adopted by the modern Aghā Khānī Ismāʿīlīs; for most of Syrian Ismāʿīlī MSS. have been copied by Muʾmini Ismāʿīlīs, who believe that between Nizār and Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III there were only two Imāms (Ḥasan and Muḥammad).

Second Manuscript

Description

This manuscript of 251 pages is entitled Kitāb Sullam al-Ṣuʿūd ilā Dār al-Khulūd (The ladder of ascent to the house of eternity). The author is the well known Ismāʿīlī dāʿī Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Firās, the same who wrote the Manāqib of Sinān Rāshid al-Dīn which is dated 724/1324. The copyist's name and his date of writing are missing because the last page of the MS. is lost; it could be presumed, however, that the copy dates from the nineteenth-century, as do most of the Syrian Ismāʿīlī manuscripts. It is written in a clear naskhī script and has an average size of 9 by 6½ inches.

Observations:

The author divides his work into three books, with each book containing a number of chapters (faṣl). Each book corresponds to one stage which the believer must pass in order to reach ultimately through the second grade to the highest grade, where the human soul is raised through knowledge of the Imāms to the nearest position to the "eternal light", which results in the possession of eternal happiness. This third "grade", which corresponds to the third book in the manuscript, is described by the author as the highest of the three grades; the first two books or two "grades" are said to serve only as an introduction to the third.

The first book, which is divided into twelve chapters, is called Kitāb al-Nufus (The Book of Souls, pages 1-76). Here the

author discusses the nature of the soul and describes how it is always striving to free itself from the body and thus draw nearer to the divine light (there is an evident affinity with Ṣūfī ideas). Then the author goes on to discuss al-idrāk (perception) connecting it with the functions and nature of al-nafs al-nāṭiqā (the "speaking" or rational soul) and al-nafs al-mujarrada (the "pure soul, or soul in itself").

In the second book, which is called Kitāb al-Anwār (The Book of Lights, pages 76-201), there is a much more conspicuous affinity with Ṣūfī ideas, indicating that by the 14th century A.D. the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs, having virtually lost contact with their Imāms, became more and more influenced by the Ṣūfī tendencies then prevailing in the general Muslim environment. In Kitāb al-Anwār, which is divided into 22 chapters, the author discusses the heavenly "lights" (nūr), stating that the luminous heavenly bodies have only temporal "lights" and like other higher "lights" are in need of the "first nūr" whose existence is self-evident (wājib al-wujūd).

In the third chapter Abū Firās discusses al-ʿaql ("intellect"), al-nafs (the soul), al-hayūlā (primordial matter) and the rest of the ḥudūd ʿulwīya (heavenly or cosmic principles). The author equates these ḥudūd ʿulwīya with the ḥudūd ʿālam al-dīn (the principles of religious observance, in our human world), i.e. the Prophet, Imāms etc. Study of the various ḥudūd is always held by Ismāʿīlī and Druze authors to be of great importance, for on it they build their argument that there

must be a universal divine order, the understanding of which is essential for anyone seeking the truth about human life in both worlds.

The rest of the second Book is devoted to a detailed study of the heavenly bodies treated in a similar manner to that of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (Brethren of Purity), with special stress on the influence of these heavenly bodies on the souls of human beings.

The third Book, called by the author Kitāb 'Ilm al-Ḥudūr (i.e. knowledge of ways in which the soul may come into the presence of the divine light), deals with the qualifications that the soul must possess before it can be eligible to receive the divine light through which eternal happiness is obtained. In the eight chapters which constitute the book various branches of this 'ilm are discussed. On pages 205-208, the 'ilm of the prophets is compared with the 'ilm of other men; here the author criticises the meanings given by the Ṣūfīs to the terms al-fanā' ("obliteration" of the self), and al-ḥulūl (incarnation). He then discusses several more Ṣūfī terms and practices, rejecting some and praising others. Some of the Sūfīs, he says, followed the road of ahl al-ḥikma (i.e. the ancient philosophers) and thus were able to reach the "source of the light" namely God. The concluding chapters expound the Ismā'īlī doctrine regarding passage from "darkness" to "light" which is not possible without knowledge of the Imām of the time,

this knowledge being the only safe path to paradise and the proximity of the Nūr al-Anwār, i.e. God.

Third Manuscript

Description

This manuscript of 293 pages is 7 inches long by $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches broad and is written in a clear naskhī script. It contains three separate works, each transcribed by a different copyist. The first, on pages 1-154, is entitled Risālaḥ Majmuʿa min Zubdat Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ wa Khillān al-Wafāʾ. On page 154 it is stated that the work was copied by al-Amīr Ḥasan ibn ʿUmar on Saturday, 24 Rabīʿ II 1241/5 December. 1825. From the bottom of page 154 to page 201, there is a qaṣīda ascribed to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and copied by the same Ḥasan ibn ʿUmar on Wednesday, 5 Jumādā I 1241/15 Dec. 1825. The third work (pages 201-292), al-Risāla al-Mudhhiba fi Funūn al-Ḥikma wa Gharāʾib al-Taʾwīl attributed to al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d. 363/973) and copied by ʿAlī ibn al-Shaykh Ḥaydar in 1241/1825. It consists mainly of sayings and discourses attributed to various Ismāʿīlī Imāms and their chief dāʿīs.

Observations:

Believing that the well-known Rasāʾil of Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ were composed by one of their Imāms of the Satr period during the ninth-century A.D., the Ismāʿīlīs have always attached great importance to that treatise; it is outside the sphere of this study to consider how much truth there may be in this belief.

Whatever their origin, the writings and teachings of Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' bear many similarities to those of the Ismā'īlīs, especially in their method of expounding principles on the two bases of esoteric interpretation of the religious texts and attestation by the Imāms and the Ahl al-Bayt (descendants of the Prophet).

Many studies have been made of the Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', and the contents of this Risāla need not be reviewed here. It does not introduce any new ideas but lays stress on those which lend support to the Ismā'īlī belief in the necessity and inevitability of leadership by the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt who alone can guide human beings to the ultimate truth. (See: Ismā'īl R. al-Fārūqī, "Ethics of The Brethren of Purity" in The Muslim World, Oct., 1960, pp.254-255; 'A. Tāmīr, "Ḥaqīqat Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'" in al-Machriq 1957, pp.129-135).

Following the qaṣīda attributed to ʿAlī (pages 154-201), the most important work in this manuscript is the Risāla al-Mudhhiba fī Funūn al-Ḥikma wa Gharā'ib al-Ta'wīl (pages 207-293), stated by the copyist to have been written by al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān in answer to some questions put to him by certain Ismā'īlī officials. There is no trace of this Risāla, however, either in the list of works by this celebrated Fāṭimid jurist and author in A.A. Fayzee's article, "Qāḍī an-Nu'mān ..." published in the J.R.A.S. 1934, pp.132, or in W. Ivanow's

Guide to Ismāʿīlī Literature, London 1933

If this Risāla is really the work of al-Nuʿmān, then it deserves to rank among the best of his writings. It is an elaborate treatise in which all the controversial tenets of Ismāʿīlism are discussed and the ḥudūd al-dīn (i.e. the functions of Nāṭiq, Imām, ḥujja etc. are put into perspective with clear indications of the status and functions of each. The Risāla contains, as do most of the Ismāʿīlī manuscripts, a description of the creation and the universe, understanding of which is essential to students of Ismāʿīlism.

The Risāla ends with a discussion of the organisation of the Ismāʿīlī daʿwa, a subject which is usually kept strictly confidential and only revealed to high-ranking Ismāʿīlī officials.

Fourth Manuscript

Description

This manuscript is six and a half by four and a half inches in size, is beautifully written in a naskhī script with the title, names of the Imāms and praises of God all in red ink while the text is in dark ink. It is entitled "Risālat al-Sayyid Muḥammad ibn ibn (son of the son of Zahra) daʿī Sarīmīn. It begins on page 10 and occupies 50 pages, with a qaṣīda in the remaining 43 pages written by the same copyist. On pages 61 and 62 the copyist gives his name as ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn and his date of writing as 20 Rabīʿ II

1206/15 Dec. 1791. The date of the original work can only be surmised; Sarmīn is known to have been one of the centres of Ismāʿīlī activity during the 12th and 13th century A.D., but there is no mention in the sources of any Ismāʿīlī dāʿī carrying the name of Zahra. Among the early settlers of Salamīya were the family of Zahra, whose descendants still live in Salamīya; they have not been able to give me any clue as to the date of the author's life, but they affirmed that they descend from his family. There is, however, another author from the Zahra family who wrote during the 6th/12th century (see Section B in this Appendix), and this might indicate that the work may have been compiled some time during the 12th or 13th century A.D.

Observation:

The author opens his Risāla with the basmala and praises of God. From page 19 onward he expounds the Ismāʿīlī belief, that God is beyond our comprehension in a way which gives proof of his ability to write on matters of Ismāʿīlī theology with a clear and far-reaching understanding. The functions and status of the Prophets and Imāms are explained with illustrations taken mostly from events after the advent of Islām. This is quite helpful because most of the Ismāʿīlī manuscripts are concerned mainly with pre-Islamic prophetic revelations, which although they help to understand the motives of the Ismāʿīlīs, do not have any historical value,

The author ends with discussions of the act of the Pool

of Khum (Ghadīr Khumm), where in the belief of all Shī'īs, the Prophet Muḥammad designated 'Alī as his successor; and of the Khuṭbat al-Wadā'ī, in which Muḥammad is believed to have implicitly and explicitly enjoined the Muslims to take 'Alī as their leader after his death.

(b) A List of other Syrian Ismā'īlī Manuscripts

A = Title, B = Author, C = Date, D = Number of pages.

First Manuscript

- (A) Sullam al-Irtiqā' ilā Dār al-Baqā'
- (B) Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Firās al-Maynaqī
- (C) 8th/14th century
- (D) 300 pages.

Second Manuscript

- (A) Risālat al-Asābī'
- (B) Qays ibn Mansūr al-Dādīkhī
- (C) 6th/12th century
- (D) 110 pages

Third Manuscript

- (A) Al-Uṣūl wa al-Aḥkām
- (B) Abū al-Ma'ālī Ḥātim ibn Zahra
- (C) 6th/12th century
- (D) 80 pages.

Fourth Manuscript

- (A) Risālat al-Nafs al-Nāṭiqā
- (B) Ḥasan al-Mu'addil
- (C) 7th/13th century
- (D) 50 pages.

Fifth Manuscript

- (A) Fuṣūl wa Akhbār
- (B) Nūr al-Dīn Aḥmad
- (C) 8th/14th century
- (D) 890 pages

Sixth Manuscript

- (A) Ṣūrat al-Ṭilāwa
- (B) Ascribed to Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān
- (C) 6th/12th century
- (D) 250 pages

Seventh Manuscript

- (A) Al-Alfāz al-Sharīfa
- (B) Ascribed to Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān
- (C) 6th/12th century
- (D) 180 pages

Eighth Manuscript

- (A) Al-Qānūn
- (B) Muḥammad Abū al-Makārim
- (C) 9th/15th century
- (D) 310 pages

APPENDIX II

FOUR BIOGRAPHIES FROM JANNAT AL-ĀMĀL⁽¹⁾

(1) ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn ʿAtṭāsh

Ibn Atṭāsh was one of the greatest Ismāʿīlī dāʿīs and possessed remarkable knowledge of religion and philosophy. His date of birth is unknown, but it is certain that he came in Ramadhān 484/1091 to Ray, where he met the dāʿīs Abū Naẓm, Abū Muʿmin and Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ, who were able with his help to spread the Ismāʿīlī beliefs in the various Persian regions and other countries. Besides his skill in propaganda, he was a great military leader and was able to capture many important places in Adharbāyjān and Syria. He also seized the castle of al-Firdaws (in Qūhistān) where he founded a school for the Ismāʿīlīs from which more than 30,000 are said to have graduated; this castle had been built by one of the Saljūq Sultāns. In the early years of the sixth century A.H., his dāʿīs took possession of a number of castles in Syria, among them al-Qadmūs and Bānyās, and in Persia Shīrkūh, Qāʾīn and others. During his life many Persian princes embraced Ismāʿīlīsm, and when the Saljūq Sultān Malik Shāh saw that Ismāʿīlīsm had spread through the "length and breadth" of the country, he feared for his sovereignty and began warring

(1) Concerning the source Jannat al-Āmāl, from which these articles were taken, see pp. 8, 36.

against the Ismā'īlīs. The war continued under Malik Shāh's successors and in the course of it 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Aṭṭāsh met his death.

(2) Hasan al-Ṣabbāḥ

The most famous of all Ismā'īlī dā'īs, Hasan ibn 'Ali b. Muḥammad b. Jā'far b. al-Ṣabbāḥ claimed descent from the Ḥimyarite rulers of al-Yaman. He was born in 432/1040 at Ray where in his early childhood his father provided him with elementary learning which he perfected by the time he was twelve years old. After that he devoted himself to studying the various sciences and arts. He lived during the reign of the Saljūq Sultān Malik Shāh who is said to have offered Hasan a good position in his court; but his chief minister Nizām al-Mulk, who is said to have been a friend of Hasan's school days, estranged Malik Shāh from Hasan. He left the service of the Sultān and at Isfahān met the great Ismā'īlī dā'ī Abū Naẓm whose eloquence and lucidity made a great impression on Hasan. As a result of his meetings with Abū Naẓm, Hasan acknowledged the primacy of the Ismā'īlī (Fāṭimid) Imamate and the truthfulness of the Ismā'īlī beliefs. Not long afterwards Hasan fell sick and was attended by Abū Naẓm. During his sickness he took a vow that if he were cured he would visit the Fāṭimid Imām al-Mustansir billāh, peace be on him; and after his recovery, he left for Egypt, meeting on his way al-Muballigh ("preacher") 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh, who gave

him a letter of introduction to Abū Dāwūd al-Miṣrī.

Ḥasan stayed eighteen months in Egypt, during which he was cared for by Abū Dāwūd. He had great difficulty in getting an audience with al-Mustanṣir, but at last he was granted the chance to see the Imām. After several meetings Ḥasan became fully initiated into Ismāʿīlīsm and gave allegiance to al-Mustanṣir; then, with the Imām's specific authority to propagate Ismāʿīlī doctrines in Irān, he returned from Egypt to his native country. Ḥasan was well qualified to preach Ismāʿīlīsm, having learnt the Ismāʿīlī principles and inner doctrines and successfully mastered the various branches of Ismāʿīlī science. In Irān he directed his efforts towards bringing about an ideological revolution in all parts of the country; but his efforts were disrupted by the death of al-Mustanṣir and the dissensions which broke out among the Ismāʿīlīs over the succession to the Imamate. Some supported the succession of his son Nizār, others that of another son al-Mustaʿlī. The latter succeeded to the Caliphate with the aid of the troop-Commander al-Afḍal, and his followers were called the Mustaʿlīs (al-Mustaʿlīya). Nizār's supporters were not strong enough to uphold his claim, even though he was in all probability the rightful future Imām, having been so designated by his father.

Ḥasan opposed the pretensions of al-Mustaʿlī and worked vigorously in support of what he believed to be the rightful

claim of Nizār whose headquarters were in the castle of Dimyāṭ. As a result of his activities he was arrested and cast into prison, from which Nizār helped him to escape. He then set out from Egypt to Qazwīn, calling the Ismā'īlīs on his way to support the Imamate of Nizār; and from Qazwīn he gained possession of the Daylamite fortress of Alamūt (in the neighbouring district of Rūdbār deep in the Alburz mountains). Ḥasan's aim was to conquer Irān, Baghdād and Aleppo.

It is related that Ḥasan used to drink in Alamūt a drink known as kanzukīn which was compounded of almonds, walnuts and other herbs. This drink was of a great help in stimulating the brain and strengthening the body, and in that period was only available at Iṣfahān.

While at Alamūt, Ḥasan secretly dispatched a letter to the devoted dā'ī Abū al-Ḥasan Sayyidī asking him to help in bringing to Alamūt the Imām al-Hadī (son of Nizār) and his mother, which he successfully accomplished. Apart from wars with the Saljūqs, Ḥasan devoted the rest of his life to spreading Ismā'īlīsm and teaching its laws and the details of its principles. Infraction of any of the Ismā'īlī laws deserved, in his view, severe punishment.

His victories in the wars were won because of his political insight and great wisdom and sublety. He continued to strengthen the Ismā'īlī da'wa and carried his piety and righteousness to such an extent that he ordered death for his son for

deviating from the true path. He made all the contemporary rulers realize that they should respect the Ismā'īlī movement. His reign at Alamūt lasted thirty-three years; he died in 518/1124 after having accomplished all his duties to the Ismā'īlī cause.

(3) Ḥasan II, 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām

Following the death of his father in A.D. 557/1162, Ḥasan succeeded to the Imamate in accordance with his father's designation. He made Alamūt the seat of his authority. Ḥasan was famed both as an unquestioned 'ālim and as a philosopher who had mastered all branches of the Qur'ānic sciences and the depths of philosophy of religion. He was particularly well versed in esoteric learning and in allegorical interpretation (ta'wīl) as well as in logic; grammar, jurisprudence and the ordinary Qur'anic interpretation (tafsīr). He used to hold regular meetings to deal with issues according to the text of the Qur'ān, and to elucidate doctrinal questions in a subtle and truthful form. He also made great efforts to purify corrupt beliefs. He was sought out by savants and missionaries who desired to listen to his pearls of discourse and elegant pronouncements.

During his reign Ismā'īlīsm spread in an unprecedented way. He possessed excellent human qualities in addition to his divine powers.

During his happy Imamate, his followers in Persia used to

hold a yearly celebration in commemoration of his ascent to the Imamate, and that day was called Yawm al-Qiyāmā. History shows us that there was rarely an Ismāʿīlī Imām in office who did not acquire enemies during his term of office; this being a characteristic since creation. During his reign his enemies spread false rumours that he was not a genuine descendant of Nizār, but these slanders were received by his followers with disgust and dissatisfaction. As for the Imām himself, he paid no attention to such slanders but continued to send orders (farmāns) to his governors and dāʿīs under his seal and signature which includes his family tree, thus ignoring the propaganda of his calumniators.

In 561/1166 he was stabbed in Lamasar by the traitor Ḥasan Nāmūr who was his brother-in-law. This Ḥasan Nāmūr was employed and paid by the Imām's enemies, who promised the murderer with a high rank if he could carry out the task of murdering the Imām, which he did on 6 Rabʿ I, 561/10 Jan. 1166. The Imām left behind him a son named Aḥlā Muḥammad who succeeded him in the Imamate. Some people suppose that the Imāms Muhtadī, Qāhir and Ḥasan were one and the same Imām because all three held the same title (laqab), but the truth is that each of the above mentioned held the Imamate for a certain time.

(4) Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III

Ḥasan III, became an Imām in 607/1210. Immediately after

his accession to the Imamate he turned his efforts to promoting ties of friendship between the Ismāʿīlīs and the other Muslim sects. During the second year of his reign he sent his mother and members of his household on pilgrimage to Makka, and on their way they were met with great honour by the governors of the provinces. In Baghdād they were much welcomed by the ʿAbbāsīd Caliph (al-Nāṣir) and were accommodated in the official guest house and other distinguished dwellings. Ḥasan III married the full-sister of Kaikāʾūs, the governor of Jīlān who became the mother of his son ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn. This marriage was celebrated for a week by order of the Caliph al-Nāṣir in all parts of his country. This demonstrative affection he inspired in the hearts of all royalty. He tried his best to strengthen the bonds of friendship with his neighbours. Whenever he heard of any dissension taking place in an Islamic country, he went himself to try to reconcile it. He used to send his ambassadors to make peace between the quarreling Muslim leaders. He was very fond of building and of improving the cultural life of cities, hence his concern to found mosques, takīyas (Ṣufī hospices), baths and caravansarais. He improved both the internal and external roads. His age was a golden age during which the Ismāʿīlīs lived in tranquility and happiness, and possessed a considerable influence in Adharbāyjān, Jīlān, Māzandarān, Qazwīn, Khūzistan, Luristan, Kurdistān, Kirmān, Shīrāz, Tabrīz, Baghdād, and Syria. He

had friendly relations with Uzbek the ruler of Adharbāyjān, whom he supported against the ruler of Persian 'Irāq, 'Nāṣir al-Dīn Minkulī, believing the former to be in the right.

In 618/1221 Ḥasan III was invited to a dinner party where some traitors conspired against him and put poison in his food. So he died leaving behind his 10 year old son 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad III.

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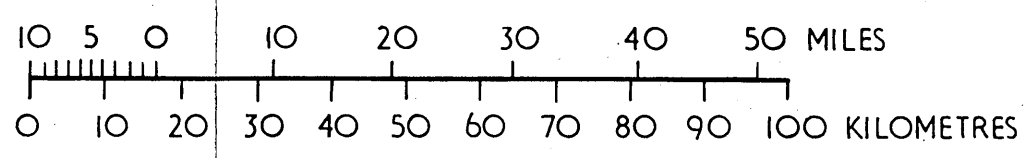
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SYRIA

AT THE TIME OF THE CRUSADES



ISMĀĪLĪ LOCALITIES UNDERLINED

— PERMANENT
--- TEMPORARY

