ISMAILI LITERATURE

Farhad Daftary
Ismaili Literature
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A Bibliography of Sources and Studies

Farhad Daftary

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The Institute of Ismaili Studies
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1. Occasional papers or essays addressing broad themes of the relationship between religion and society in the historical as well as modern contexts, with special reference to Islam.
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3. Editions or translations of significant primary or secondary texts.
4. Translations of poetic or literary texts which illustrate the rich heritage of spiritual, devotional and symbolic expressions in Muslim history.
5. Works on Ismaili history and thought, and the relationship of the Ismailis to other traditions, communities and schools of thought in Islam.
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This book falls into category seven listed above.

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To my colleagues and students at
The Institute of Ismaili Studies
Preface

I started to compile a bibliography of Ismaili sources and studies more than three decades ago when I began my research on the history of the Ismailis. By then, publications in this field of Islamic studies had already grown significantly since the 1920s and 1930s when Louis Mascignon (1883–1962) and Asaf A.A. Fyzee (1899–1981) made the earliest attempts to take stock of modern scholarship on the Ismailis. The rapid increase in the number of Ismaili-related publications since the middle of the twentieth century is, indeed, a reflection of the impressive progress of modern Ismaili studies during that period. Aspects of the progress made in the field have been recorded, partially but on a regular basis, in the Index Islamicus, conceived by James D. Pearson (1911–1997), and its continuation in the Quarterly Index Islamicus, while Nagib Tajdin attempted a sketchy and uncritical compilation in his A Bibliography of Ismailism (1985).

As is now well-known, modern scholarship in Ismaili studies has been almost exclusively due to the recovery and study of an increasing number of Ismaili manuscript sources preserved privately in India, Central Asia, Syria and Yemen, amongst other regions. The improvement in our knowledge of Ismaili texts and in their recovery may be readily traced by a comparative analysis of A Guide to Ismaili Literature (1933), compiled by W. Ivanow (1886–1970) partially on the basis of the medieval Fihrist al-Majdū', and its second revised edition,
Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey (1963) with I.K. Poonawala’s monumental Bio-bibliography of Ismā’īlī Literature (1977), which identifies some 1,300 titles attributed to more than 200 authors. It may be noted here that the present bibliography relates only to ‘published’ primary sources, by or about the Ismailis (Chapter 3), as well as secondary studies (Chapter 4) and as such, it complements the works of Ivanow and Poonawala which refer mostly to unpublished Ismaili texts. A most valuable undertaking accomplished by Professor Poonawala is the identification of the locations of the various manuscripts of each text.

The coverage of secondary studies in the present bibliography is not limited to Ismaili history and thought, although these areas do represent its focus. Ismailism is defined rather broadly here to cover what some scholars designate more specifically as Fatimid studies, including Fatimid political history, institutions, art and archaeology. In addition, certain peripheral yet highly relevant subjects and areas of study have been covered to various extents, notably the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ and their Rasā’il as well as the Cairo Geniza documents and the Druzes who originally split away from the Ismailis in the time of the Fatimid Ismaili caliph-imam al-Ḥākim (d. 411/1021). In the case of the Druzes, particular emphasis has been placed on major monographs and publications related to the earlier history of this community in Fatimid times (but without covering the Druze writings which are not always readily accessible) together with the earliest studies of the orientalists who sometimes also covered the Ismailis in their investigations of the Druzes. Druze studies are currently experiencing a breakthrough as attested by two recent bibliographies compiled by Samy S. Swayd (1998) and Talal Fandi and Ziyad Abi-Shakra (2001). A selection of recent publications on Imāmī Shi‘ism, covering the early history and teachings of the Shi‘i imams recognized by the Ismailis, as well as some major genealogical works and biographical dictionaries, are also included.

An attempt at comprehensive coverage of Arabic, Persian and Tajik (Cyrillic) publications has been made. Similarly, all major publications in the main European languages, especially English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian, have been included, in addition to a selection in other languages such as Dutch and Polish. The coverage of publications in Urdu and Turkish is less certain. With few
exceptions, publications in Gujarātī and other Indian languages have been excluded, although a selection of the religious literature of the Khojas, the gināns, in English translation has been included. Ismaili publications in South Asian languages would indeed require a separate annotated bibliography. Also excluded is most of the literature of a popular or polemical kind produced by different Ismaili groups as well as numerous ‘open letters’ and legal proceedings of court cases.

Chapter 4: Studies, with few exceptions deals exclusively, or at least primarily, with books, contributions to collective volumes, articles, encyclopedia articles, etc., on the Ismailis. Consequently, chapters or sections on Ismailis appearing in single-authored books devoted to other Islamic subjects have not been covered. A selection of Ismaili-related theses is covered in Chapter 5. The system of transliteration used in this book for the Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu scripts, as well as the Cyrillic characters, is essentially the same as that adopted in the second edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, with the usual modifications.

It remains for me to express my gratitude to a number of colleagues and friends who assisted me in various ways in this endeavour. Sophia Vasalou, my research assistant in 2002, meticulously and tirelessly checked the bibliographical details of the entries which I had not undertaken myself, at the British Library, the SOAS Library, and other libraries in Oxford and Cambridge; without her, this bibliography would have contained many (perhaps even more) errors. Samer F. Traboulsi checked a selection of my Arabic entries using the collections of the American University in Beirut and Princeton University, while Dr Leila R. Dodikhudoeva did the same in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Dushanbe for the entries in Russian and Tajik, transcribed in Cyrillic; I would like to thank them both very sincerely. I am also grateful to Dr Sergei Andreyev who called my attention to a number of Russian publications, and to Alnoor Merchant, Senior Librarian and Keeper of the Ismaili Collection at our Institute, for his help throughout the years.

I received valuable comments and suggestions from Professor W. Madelung; as always, I remain very grateful to him. I would also like to thank Kutub Kassam and Patricia Salazar of the editorial team at the Institute’s Department of Academic Research and Publications who helped in various ways to improve this work. Finally, I am indebted
to Julia Kolb who produced the earlier drafts of the bibliography and to Nadia Holmes who meticulously prepared its final typescript for publication. Needless to reiterate that the inclusion of any item in this bibliography does not necessarily imply its endorsement by the author or The Institute of Ismaili Studies.

F.D.

July 2004
# Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AIEO</td>
<td>Annales de l’Institut d’Études Orientales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Annales Islamologiques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI(U)ON</td>
<td>Annali dell’Istituto (Universitario) Orientale di Napoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEO</td>
<td>Bulletin d’Études Orientales</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIE</td>
<td>Bulletin de l’Institut d’Égypte</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIFAO</td>
<td>Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale du Caire</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSO(A)S</td>
<td>Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Les Cahiers de Tunisie</td>
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<td>DDI</td>
<td>Dānishnāma-yi Djahān-i Islām [Encyclopaedia of the World of Islam], ed., S.M. Mīrsalīm et al. Tehran: Encyclopaedia Islamica Foundation, 1375 Sh./1996-</td>
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<td>DIFM</td>
<td>Darülfünnun Ilāhiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası (Istanbul)</td>
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EJ Eranos Jahrbuch


IA   İslâm Ansiklopedisi. İstanbul, 1940–86.

IA2  Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi. İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988–.


IC   Islamic Culture


IJMES International Journal of Middle East Studies


JA   Journal Asiaticque

JASB Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal

JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society

JBBRAS Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society

JESHO Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient

JIMMA Journal, Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs

JIS Journal of Islamic Studies

JRCA Journal of the (Royal) Central Asian Society

JRAS Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society

JSS Journal of Semitic Studies


NP   Nâme-ye Pârsî: Quarterly of the Center for Expansion of Persian Language and Literature

MW   The Muslim World

NS   New Series


REI  Revue des Études Islamiques

RIS  F. Sezgin, et al. (ed.), Rasâ’il Ikhwân aṣ-Ṣafâ’ wa-Khillân

RSO Rivista degli Studi Orientali


SI Studia Islamica


WI Die Welt des Islams

WO Die Welt des Orients


ZDMG Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
Ismaili History and its Literary Sources

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

Early Shi‘ism

At least during the first three centuries of their history, Muslims lived in an intellectually dynamic and fluid milieu. The formative period of Islam was, indeed, characterized by a multiplicity of communities of interpretation and schools of thought, representing a diversity of views on the major religio-political issues faced by the early Muslims after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad in 11/632. At the time, the Muslims were confronted by many gaps in their religious knowledge and understanding of Islam, revolving around issues such as the unity and attributes of God, nature of religious authority and definitions of true believers. Different religious communities and schools of
thought, which were later enumerated in heresiographical writings, elaborated their doctrines in stages and eventually acquired their distinctive identities and names. In terms of political loyalties, which remained closely linked to theological perspectives, pluralism in early Islam ranged from the stances of those later designated as Sunnis, who endorsed the historical caliphate and the authority-power structure that had actually evolved in the nascent Muslim community (umma), to various religio-political opposition communities, notably the Khawārij and the Shi‘a, who aspired towards new orders.

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

Before long, however, the Shi‘a disagreed among themselves regarding the precise definition and composition of the ahl al-bayt, causing internal divisions within Shi‘ism.

Initially, for some fifty years, Shi‘ism represented a unified community with limited membership comprised mainly of Arab Muslims. The Shi‘a had then recognized successively ʿAlī and his sons al-Ḥasan (d. 49/669) and al-Ḥusayn (d. 61/680) as their imams. This situation changed with the movement of al-Mukhtār who, in 66/685, briefly launched an open revolt in Kūfa, the cradle of Shi‘ism, against the
Umayyads. Aiming to avenge al-Ḥusayn's murder, al-Mukhtār organized his own Shi‘i movement in the name of ‘Ali’s third son and al-Ḥusayn’s half-brother Muḥammad, known as Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya (d. 81/700), as the Mahdi, ‘the divinely-guided one’, the messianic saviour imam and restorer of true Islam who would establish justice on earth and deliver the oppressed from tyranny. The new eschatological concept of imam-Mahdi proved particularly appealing to the mawālī, the non-Arab converts to Islam who under the Umayyads (41–132/661–750) were treated as second-class Muslims. As a large and underprivileged social class aspiring to the establishment of a social order based on the egalitarian precepts of Islam, the mawālī provided a significant recruiting ground for any movement opposed to the exclusively Arab hegemony of the Umayyads and their social structure. Starting with the movement of al-Mukhtār that survived his demise in 67/687, however, the mawālī became particularly drawn to Shi‘ism and played a key role in transforming it from an Arab party of limited membership and doctrinal basis to a dynamic movement. Henceforth, different Shi‘i communities and lesser groups, consisting of both Arabs and mawālī, came to coexist, each with its own line of imams and elaborating its own ideas. The Prophet’s family, whose sanctity was supreme for the Shi‘a, was still defined broadly in its tribal sense to include not only all major branches of the extended ‘Alid family – descendants of his sons al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya – but also members of other branches of the Prophet’s clan of Banū Ḥāshim. It was not until after the Abbasid revolution that the ahl al-bayt came to be defined more narrowly to include only certain ‘Alids.

It was under such circumstances that the Shi‘ism of the later Umayyad period developed mainly in terms of two branches or trends, the Kaysāniyya and the Imāmiyya, each with its own internal groupings. In time, another ‘Alid movement led to the foundation of a third major Shi‘i community, the Zaydiyya. There were also those Shi‘i ghulāt, individual theorists with often small followings, who existed within or on the margins of the major Shi‘i communities. A radical branch, in terms of both doctrine and policy, evolved out of al-Mukhtār’s movement accounting for the bulk of the early Shi‘a until shortly after the Abbasid revolution. This branch, comprised of a number of interrelated groups recognizing various ‘Alids and other Hāshimids as their imams, was generally designated as the
Kaysāniyya by heresiographers who were responsible for coining the names of many of the early Muslim communities. The Kaysānī groups drew mainly on the support of the mawālī in southern Iraq, Persia and elsewhere. Many of the Kaysānī doctrines were propounded by the ghulāt amongst them, who were accused by the more moderate Shi’is of later times of ‘exaggeration’ (ghuluww) in religious matters. In addition to their condemnation of the early caliphs before ‘Alī, the commonest feature of the ideas propagated by the early Shi‘i ghulāt was the attribution of superhuman qualities, or even divinity, to imams. The Kaysāniyya also pursued an activist anti-establishment policy against the Umayyads, aiming to transfer the leadership of the Muslim umma to ‘Alids. By the end of the Umayyad period, the main body of the Kaysāniyya, known as the Hāshimiyya, had transferred their allegiance to the Abbasids, descendants of the Prophet’s uncle al-‘Abbās, who had been cleverly conducting an anti-Umayyad campaign on behalf of an anonymous member of the ahl al-bayt with much Shi‘i appeal.

In the meantime, there had developed another major branch of Shi‘ism, later designated as the Imāmiyya. This branch, the early common heritage of the Ismailis and the Twelvers, had acknowledged a particular line of Ḥusaynid ‘Alids, descendants of al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, as imams and remained completely removed from any political activity. Indeed, the Imāmiyya adopted a quiescent policy in the political field while doctrinally they subscribed to some of the radical views of the Kaysāniyya, such as the condemnation of ‘Alī’s predecessors as caliphs. The Imāmiyya, who like other Shi‘is of the Umayyad times were centred in Kūfa, traced the imamate through al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī’s sole surviving son ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 95/714), with the honorific title of Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (the Ornament of the Pious). But it was with Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn’s son and successor Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. ca. 114/732) that the Ḥusaynid line of ‘Alid imams and the Imāmī branch began to acquire prominence among the early Shi‘a. The Imam al-Bāqir, too, refrained from political activity and concerned himself with the religious aspects of his imamate. In particular, he elaborated the rudiments of some of the ideas which later became the legitimate principles of Imāmī Shi‘ism. He is also credited with introducing the important principle of taqiyya, or precautionary dissimulation of one’s true religious belief under adverse circumstances, which was
later adopted widely by both the Ismailis and the Twelvers. In spite of many difficulties, al-Bāqir succeeded during his imamate of some twenty years in increasing his following. It was, however, during the long and eventful imamate of al-Bāqir’s son and successor, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, that the Imāmiyya expanded significantly and became a major religious community with a distinct identity. The foremost scholar and teacher of the Ḥusaynid line of imams, al-Ṣādiq acquired prominence rather gradually during this turbulent period in early Islam when the Umayyads were finally uprooted by the Abbasids.

The Abbasid revolution marked a turning point in early Islamic history, ushering in many socio-political and economic changes, including the disappearance of distinctions between the Arab Muslims and the *mawālī*. But the Abbasid victory proved a source of deep disillusionment for all Shiʿa who had expected an ‘Alid to succeed to the caliphate after the demise of the Umayyads. The Shiʿa were further disappointed when the Abbasids, soon after seizing the caliphate in 132/750, began to persecute their former Shiʿi supporters as well as many of the ‘Alids. In fact, the Abbasid caliph became in due course the spiritual spokesman of Sunni Islam. It was under such circumstances that many Shiʿis, including those Kaysānīs who had not joined the Abbasid party, rallied to the side of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, who had gradually acquired a widespread reputation as a religious scholar. He was a reporter of *ḥadīth* and was later cited as such even in the chain of authorities accepted by Sunnis. He also taught *fiqh* or jurisprudence and has been credited, after the work of his father, with founding the Imāmī Shiʿi school of religious law or *madhhab*, named Jaʿfari after him. By the final decade of his imamate, al-Ṣādiq had gathered a noteworthy group of religious scholars and associates around him which included some of the most eminent jurists, traditionists and theologians of the time, such as Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/795), the foremost representative of Imāmī *kalām* or scholastic theology. As a result of the intense intellectual activities of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq and his circle, the Imāmī Shiʿis came to possess a distinctive body of ritual as well as theological and legal doctrines. Above all, they now elaborated the basic conception of the doctrine of the imamate (*imāma*), which was essentially retained by later Ismaili and Twelver Shiʿis. This doctrine enabled al-Ṣādiq to consolidate Shiʿism, after its numerous earlier defeats, on a quiescent basis, as it no longer required the imam to rebel.
against actual rulers to assert his claims. The last imam recognized by both the Twelvers and the Ismailis, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq died in 148/765. The dispute over his succession led to historic divisions in Imāmī Shiʿism, also marking the emergence of independent Ismaili groups.³

**Origins and early development of the Ismaili Daʿwa**

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

The pre-Fatimid period of Ismaili history in general and the opening phase of Ismailism in particular remain rather obscure in Ismaili historiography. It is highly probable that the early Ismailis, conducting a revolutionary movement in an extremely hostile environment, did not produce any substantial volume of literature, preferring instead to propagate their doctrines mainly by word of mouth. The modern recovery of Ismaili literature has confirmed this suspicion. In addition, much of the meagre literature of the early Ismailis was evidently discarded or subjected to revisions in the Fatimid period. Nevertheless, a small collection of early Ismaili doctrinal works has survived to the present day. These include fragments of the *Kitāb al-rushd waʾl-hidāya*, attributed to the *dāʿī* Ibn Ḥawshab, better known as Manṣūr al-Yaman (d. 302/914); the *Kitāb al-ʿālim waʾl-ghulām* of Manṣūr al-Yaman’s son Jaʿfar (d. ca. 346/957), who is also credited with compiling the *Kitāb al-kashf*, a collection of six short treatises. The religious texts of the Ismailis produced in later times are themselves invaluable for tracing their early doctrinal history. There
are also those brief but highly significant historical accounts of specific early Ismaili events, notably the *Istitār al-imām* of the *dāʾi* Ahmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nīsābūrī (d. after 386/996), dealing with the settlement of the early Ismaili Imam ʿAbd Allāh in Salamiyya and the flight of ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī, the founder of the Fatimid caliphate, from Salamiyya to North Africa. However, for the initial phase of Ismaili history, the brief accounts of the earliest Imāmī Shiʿi heresiographers al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī (d. after 300/912) and Saʿd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qummī (d. 301/913–14), who were much better informed than Sunni heresiographers about the internal divisions of Shiʿism, remain our main sources of information. The anti-Ismaili polemical writings, too, despite their malicious intentions, serve as important sources on aspects of early Isma'ilism. In this context, particular mention should be made of the highly influential works of Ibn Rizām and the Sharīf Abu'l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, better known as Aḥū Muḥsin, who flourished in the 4th/10th century. Their refutations of the Ismailis have not been recovered, but they were widely available to several generations of Muslim scholars and historians who have preserved them fragmentarily. In modern times, after the pioneering efforts of W. Ivanow (1886–1970), S.M. Stern (1920–1969) and W. Madelung produced ground-breaking studies on early Isma'ilism. However, scholars still disagree on certain aspects of the early Ismaili *da'wa*, and some of the outstanding issues may never be resolved due to a lack of reliable sources.

According to most sources, both Ismaili and non-Ismaili, the Imam al-Ṣādiq had originally designated his second son Ismāʿīl, the eponym of the Ismāʿīliyya, as his successor to the imamate by the rule of the *naṣṣ*. There cannot be any doubt regarding the historicity of this designation, which provides the basis of the Ismaili claims. However, matters are rather confused as Ismāʿīl apparently predeceased his father, and three of al-Ṣādiq's sons simultaneously laid claim to his heritage. According to the Ismaili religious tradition and as reported in some of its sources, Ismāʿīl survived his father and succeeded him in due course. But most non-Ismaili sources relate that he died before his father, the latest date mentioned being 145/762–63. These sources also add that during Ismāʿīl's funeral procession in Medina, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq made several attempts to show the face of his dead son to witnesses, though some of the same sources also state that Ismāʿīl was
later seen in Baṣra. At any rate, Ismāʿīl was not present in Medina or Kūfa on Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq’s death in 148/765 when three other sons, ʿAbd Allāh al-Afṭaḥ (d. 149/766), Muḥammad al-Dībāj (d. 200/815) and Mūsā al-Kāẓim (d. 183/799) laid open claims to the imamate. As a result, al-Ṣādiq’s Imāmī Shiʿi following split into six groups, two of which may be identified as proto-Ismailis or earliest Ismailis. These splinter groups, based in Kūfa and supporting the claims of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar and his son Muḥammad, had evidently appeared in the lifetime of the Imam al-Ṣādiq, but they separated from other Imāmīs only in 148/765.

One of these groups denied the death of Ismāʿīl and awaited his return as the Mahdi, as did another Imāmī group now believing in the Mahdiship of al-Ṣādiq himself. The members of this group, designated as ‘al-Ismāʿiliyya al-khāliṣa’ or the ‘Pure Ismāʿiliyya’ by al-Nawbakhtī and Saʿd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qummī, held that the Imam al-Ṣādiq had announced Ismāʿīl’s death merely as a ruse to protect him against Abbasid persecution as he had been politically active against them. Indeed on the basis of sketchy biographical details available on Ismāʿīl, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that he had close ties with the more activist circles of the Imāmiyya. Evidently, there were also contacts between Ismāʿīl and Abu’l-Khaṭṭāb al-Asadī, the most prominent of all early Shiʿi ghulāt who was for a while in the entourage of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq before being repudiated by him for his extremist views. Soon afterwards in 138/755, Abu’l-Khaṭṭāb and a number of his followers were attacked and killed in the mosque of Kūfa where they had gathered for rebellious purposes. Ismāʿīl’s association with Abu’l-Khaṭṭāb is also alluded to in an obscure Persian treatise called Umm al-kitāb, which states that the Ismaili religion (madḥhab) was founded by the disciples of Abu’l-Khaṭṭāb. However, Abu’l-Khaṭṭāb is generally condemned as a ‘heretic’ in the Ismaili literature of the Fatimid times. The second proto-Ismaili splinter group, known as the Mubārakiyya, affirmed Ismāʿīl’s death in the lifetime of his father and now recognized his eldest son Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl as their imam. It seems likely that the Mubārakiyya, derived from Ismāʿīl’s epithet al-Mubārak, ‘the blessed one’, were originally supporters of Ismāʿīl before acknowledging his son Muhammad as their imam. Be that as it may, Mubārakiyya – a term coined later by heresiographers – was, thus, one of the original names of the nascent Ismāʿiliyya.
As in the case of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar, little is known about the life and career of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, the seventh imam of the Ismailis. The relevant biographical information contained in early Ismaili sources has been reproduced by the dāʿī Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn in his ʿUyūn al-akhbar. After the recognition of the imamate of his uncle Mūsā al-Kāẓim, soon after al-Ṣādiq’s death, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl left Medina, seat of the ‘Alids, and went into hiding, marking the initiation of the dawr al-satr, or the period of concealment, in early Ismailism which lasted until the foundation of the Fatimid state and the emergence of the Ismaili imams from their concealment. Henceforth, Muḥammad acquired the epithet of al-Maktūm, ‘the hidden one’, in addition to al-Maymūn, ‘the fortunate one’. Nevertheless, Muḥammad maintained his contacts with the Kūfan-based Mubārakiyya from different localities in Iraq and Persia. He died not long after 179/795, during the caliphate of the Abbasid Hārūn al-Rashīd (170–193/786–809).

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

Drawing on different categories of sources, including the Ismaili literature of the early Fatimid period, the heresiographical works of Imāmī scholars and even the anti-Ismaili treatises of polemicists, especially the works of Ibn Rizām and Akhū Muḥsin, modern scholarship
has to a large extent succeeded in clarifying the circumstances leading to the emergence of the Ismaili movement in the 3rd/9th century. It is certain that for almost a century after Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, a group of leaders, well placed within the earliest Ismailis, worked secretly for the creation of a unified, revolutionary Shiʿi movement against the Abbasids. Initially attached to one of the earliest Ismaili groups, and in all probability the imams of that obscure group issued from the Mubārakiyya who maintained continuity in the imamate in the progeny of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, these leaders did not openly claim the Ismaili imamate for three generations. They had, in fact, hidden their true identity in order to escape Abbasid persecution. ‘Abd Allāh, the first of these hidden leaders, had organized his campaign around the central doctrine of the majority of the earliest Ismailis, namely the Mahdīship of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl.

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

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

The efforts of ʿAbd Allāh and his successors began to bear fruit in the 260s/870s, when numerous dāʿīs appeared in southern Iraq and adjacent regions. In 261/874 Ḥamdān Qarmat was converted to Ismailism by the dāʿī al-Ḥusayn al-Ahwāzī. Ḥamdān, in turn, organized the daʿwa in the Sawād of Kūfa, his native locality, and in other districts of southern Iraq. His chief assistant was his brother-in-law ʿAbdān. A learned theologian, ʿAbdān was responsible for training and appointing numerous dāʿīs, including Abū Saʿīd al-Jannābī, who later founded the Qarāmiṭa state of Baḥrayn. The Ismailis of southern Iraq became generally known as the Qarāmiṭa, after their first local leader. This term was soon applied to other Ismaili communities not organized by Ḥamdān and ʿAbdān. At the time, there was a single Ismaili movement directed from Salamiyya in the name of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl as the Mahdi. In fact, in order to prepare the ground for the emergence of the Mahdi, in 277/890 Ḥamdān established a dār al-hijra, or abode of migration, near Kūfa, where his followers gathered weapons and other provisions. The abode was to serve as the nucleus of a new society for the Ismailis. Later, similar dār al-hijras were established for the Ismaili communities of Yaman, Baḥrayn and North Africa. The Ismailis (Qarmatīs) now referred to their movement simply as al-daʿwa (the mission) or al-daʿwa al-hādiya (the rightly guiding mission), in addition to using expressions such daʿwat al-ḥaqq (summons to the truth) or ahl al-ḥaqq (people of the truth). Aside from the narratives traceable to Ibn Rizām and Akhū Muḥṣin, valuable details on the history of the early Ismaili (Qarmatī) movement in Iraq are related by al-Ṭabarī who had access to Qarmatī informants.
In the meantime, the Ismaili *daʿwa* had appeared in many other regions in the 260s/870s. Centred on the expectation of the imminent return of Muhammad b. Ismāʿīl as the Mahdi who would establish justice in the world, the revolutionary and messianic Ismaili movement appealed to underprivileged groups of different social strata; and it achieved particular success among those Imāmī Shiʿis who had been disillusioned with the quietist policies of their imams and were, furthermore, left without a manifest imam after al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (d. 260/874). The *daʿwa* in Yaman was initiated by Ibn Ḥawshab, later known as Manṣūr al-Yaman, where he arrived in 268/881 accompanied by his collaborator ‘Ali b. al- Faḍl. By 293/905, when ‘Alī occupied Ṣanʿāʾ, the Ismaili *dāʿī*s were in control of almost all of Yaman. South Arabia also served as a base for the extension of the *daʿwa* to other regions such as Yamāma, Bahrayn and Egypt as well as Sind. By 280/893, on Ibn Ḥawshab’s instructions, the *dāʿī* Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Shīʿī was already active among the Kutāma Berbers of the Lesser Kabylia mountains in the Maghrib. And in 273/886, or a few years later, Abū Saʿīd al-Jannābī was sent to Bahrayn by Ḥamdān and ʿAbdān; he rapidly won converts there from among the bedouins and the Persian emigrants.¹⁴

In a chapter on the Ismailis, added to his *Siyāsat-nāma* shortly before his assassination in 485/1092, the Saljūq vizier Niẓām al-Mulk provides important details on the early *daʿwa* in Persia and Khurāsān. It was in the same decade of 260s/870s that the *daʿwa* was taken to the region of the Jibāl in Persia by Khalaf al-Ḥallāj, who established his base of operations in Rayy where an important Imāmī community already existed. Under Khalaf’s successors as chief *dāʿī*s of the Jibāl, the *daʿwa* spread to Qumm, another major Imāmī centre of learning, Iṣfahān, Hamadān and other towns of that region. Ghiyāth, the third *dāʿī* of the Jibāl, extended the *daʿwa* to Khurāsān and Transoxania on his own initiative. Ghiyāth’s chief deputy was the learned theologian Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, who in time became the chief *dāʿī* of Rayy, his native land. Abū Ḥātim further extended the *daʿwa* to Adharbāyjān, in north-western Persia, and to various parts of Daylam in the Caspian region of northern Persia. He succeeded in converting several Daylamī amirs. But the Ismaili *daʿwa* was officially established in Khurāsān only during the last decade of the 3rd century/903–12 by Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Khādīm, who set up his secret headquarters at
Nishāpūr. A later chief ḍāʿī of Khurāsān, al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Marwazi, was an eminent amir in the service of the Sāmānids, and he succeeded in extending the daʿwa to Harāt, Ghūr, Maymana and other localities in eastern Iranian lands under his control. Al-Ḥusayn al-Marwazi’s successor as chief ḍāʿī of Khurāsān was the Central Asian Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasafi, who introduced a form of Neoplatonism into Ismaili thought. He moved his base of operations to his native town of Nakhshab (Arabic, Nasaf) and then to Bukhārā, the Sāmānīd capital. Al-Nasafi’s success in Transoxania was crowned by his conversion of the Sāmānīd amir Naṣr II b. Aḥmad (301–331/914–943), as well as other dignitaries at the Sāmānīd court. But in 332/943, in the aftermath of the revolt of the Turkish soldiers who deposed Naṣr, al-Nasafi and his close associates were executed in Bukhārā. Their co-religionists too were persecuted under Naṣr’s son and successor Nūḥ I (331–343/943–954), who called for a jihād or religious war against the Qarmaṭī ‘heretics.’ Despite these setbacks, the daʿwa survived in Khurāsān and Transoxania under the leadership of other ḍāʿīs, including especially Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī.\\15\\

Meanwhile, by the early 280s/890s, a unified Ismaili movement had replaced the earlier Ismaili splinter groups. But in 286/899, soon after ʿAbd Allāh, the future Fatimid caliph al-Mahdī, had succeeded to leadership in Salamiyya, Ismailism was rent by a major schism.\\16\\

Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ now noticed significant changes in the doctrinal instructions he received from Salamiyya, and dispatched ʿAbdān there to investigate the matter. In due course, Ḥamdān found out that instead of advocating the Mahdiship of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, the new leader claimed the imamate for himself and his predecessors, the very central leaders of the Ismaili daʿwa in the dawr al-satr. Refusing to accept this doctrinal change, Ḥamdān and ʿAbdān renounced their allegiance to the central leadership of Ismailism and suspended their daʿwa activities. Soon after, ʿAbdān was murdered at the instigation of the ḍāʿī Zikrawayh b. Mihrwayh, and Ḥamdān disappeared. Evidently, as reported by Ibn Ḥawqal, Ḥamdān later changed his mind, joined the faction loyal to ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī and surfaced as a ḍāʿī in Egypt with a new identity, calling himself Abū ʿAlī.\\17\\

ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī’s reform is explained in the above-mentioned letter he later sent to the Ismailis of Yaman, in which an attempt is made to reconcile his reform with the actual course of events in
pre-Fatimid Ismaili history. He explains that as a form of *taqiyya* the central leaders of the early *daʿwa* had assumed different pseudonyms, such as al-Mubārak and al-Maymūn, also assuming the rank of the *ḥujja*, proof or full representative, of the absent Imam Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. It is further explained that the earlier propagation of the Mahdiship of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl was itself another dissimulating veil, and that this was in reality a collective code-name for every true imam in the progeny of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq.

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

Abū Saʿīd was murdered in 300/913 and, subsequently, several of his sons rose to leadership of the Qarmaṭi state in Bahrayn. Under his youngest son Abū Ṭāhir Sulaymān (311–332/923–944), the Qarmaṭis of Bahrayn became infamous for their regular raids into Iraq and their pillaging of the Meccan pilgrim caravans. Abū Ṭāhir’s ravaging activities culminated in his attack on Mecca during the pilgrimage season in 317/930, when the Qarmaṭis committed numerous desecrating acts and dislodged the Black Stone (*al-ḥajar al-aswad*) from the corner
of the Ka‘ba and carried it to al-Aḥsā‘, their new capital in eastern Arabia. Sunni polemicists who condemned the entire Ismaili movement as a conspiracy to destroy Islam, capitalized on these events and alleged that Abū Ṭāhir had secretly received his instructions from ‘Abd Allāh al-Mahdī who was then reigning as the first Fatimid caliph-imam in Ifrīqiya. Modern scholarship has shown, however, that the Qarmaṭīs of Bahrayn were at the time, like other Qarmaṭī communities, still predicting the imminent appearance of the Mahdi and did not acknowledge the first Fatimid caliph, or any of his successors, as their imams. This also explains why after sacking Mecca, Abū Ṭāhir recognized the expected Mahdi in a young Persian, to whom he handed over the rule in 319/931. The Persian Mahdi embarked on strange behaviour, he abolished the sharīʿa and Islamic worship, and as he started to execute the notables of Bahrayn, too, Abū Ṭāhir admitted that the Mahdi had been an impostor and had him killed. The obscure episode of the ‘Persian Mahdi’ seriously demoralized the Qarmaṭīs. Subsequently, the Qarmaṭīs of Bahrayn reverted to their former beliefs and their leaders, once again, claimed to be acting on the orders of the hidden Mahdi. They eventually returned the Black Stone to Mecca in 339/950, for a large ransom paid by the Abbasids and not, as alleged by anti-Ismaili sources, in response to the Fatimid caliph’s request.

In Yaman, by 291/904, or perhaps earlier, Ibn Ḥawshab’s collaborator, the dā‘ī ‘Alī b. al-Faḍl displayed signs of disloyalty. In 299/911, after occupying Ṣanʿā‘, Ibn al-Faḍl openly renounced his allegiance to ‘Abd Allāh al-Mahdī and declared war on Ibn al-Ḥawshab, who remained loyal to the Fatimids until his death in 302/914. On Ibn al-Faḍl’s demise in 303/915, the Qarmaṭī movement in Yaman disintegrated rather rapidly. In Persia, Qarmaṭism spread widely after 286/899. The dā‘īs of the Jibāl did not generally recognize ‘Abd Allāh al-Mahdī’s imamate, and awaited the return of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl as the expected Mahdi. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, too, like Qarmaṭīs elsewhere, prophesied the Mahdi’s advent for the year 316/928 on the basis of certain astrological calculations. As Abū Ḥātim’s predictions did not materialize, he encountered hostilities from his co-religionists and was obliged to seek refuge with an amir in Ādharbāyjān, where he died in 322/934. Later, as attested by coins dating from 343/954–55, some rulers of Ādharbāyjān and Daylam, belonging to the Musāfirid (or Sallārid)
dynasty, adhered to Qarmaṭism and recognized Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl as the Mahdi. In Khurāsān and Transoxania, as well, dissident Qarmaṭism persisted after the establishment of the Fatimid state. The dā‘ī al-Nasafī affirmed the Mahdiship of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl in his major treatise, Kitāb al-maḥṣūl, which acquired a prominent status within the Qarmaṭī circles of different regions.¹⁸

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

The early Ismailis elaborated the basic framework of a system of religious thought which was further developed or modified in the Fatimid period. As only a handful of Ismaili texts have survived from this period, and as the literature of the Qarmaṭīs has disappeared almost completely, it is not possible to trace the development of early Ismaili thought in any great detail. It is nevertheless possible to convey in broad terms the distinctive intellectual traditions and the central teachings of the early Ismailis, as expounded by the unified Ismaili movement during 261–286/874–899. Subsequently, the early doctrines were further developed, modified, or even discarded,
by the Ismailis of the Fatimid times while the Qarmaṭīs followed a separate course. Central to the early Ismaili system of thought was a fundamental distinction between the exoteric (ẓāhir) and the esoteric (bāṭin) aspects of the sacred scriptures and religious commandments and prohibitions. Accordingly, the Ismailis held that the Qurʾan and other revealed scriptures, and their laws (sharīʿas), had their apparent or literal meaning, the ẓāhir, which had to be distinguished from their inner meaning hidden in the bāṭin. They further held that the ẓāhir, or the religious laws enunciated by prophets, underwent periodical changes while the bāṭin, containing the spiritual truths (ḥaqāʾiq), remained immutable and eternal. These truths, indeed, represented the message common to the religions of the Abrahamic tradition, namely, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. However, the truths hidden in the bāṭin of these monotheistic religions had been veiled by different exoteric laws or sharīʿas as required by different temporal circumstances. The hidden truths were explained through the methodology of tāʾwil or esoteric interpretation, which often relied on the mystical significance of letters and numbers. In every age, however, the esoteric truths would be accessible only to the elite (khawāṣṣ) of humankind as distinct from the ordinary people (ʿawāmm), who were only capable of perceiving the apparent meaning of the revelations. Consequently, in the era of Islam, the eternal truths of religion could be explained only to those who had been properly initiated into the Ismaili daʿwa and as such recognized the teaching authority of the Prophet Muḥammad and, after him, that of his waṣī, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, and the rightful imams who succeeded him; these authorities were the sole possessors of tāʾwil in the era of Islam. The centrality of tāʾwil for the Ismailis is attested by the fact that a good portion of the literature produced by them during the early and Fatimid times, notably the writings of Jaʿfar b. Mansūr al-Yaman, is comprised of the tāʾwil genre which seeks justification for Ismaili doctrines in Qurʾanic verses.

Initiation into Ismailism, known as balāgh, was gradual and took place after the novice had taken an oath of allegiance known as ʿahd or mīthāq. There were, however, no fixed seven or more stages of initiation as claimed by the polemicists. The initiates were obliged to keep secret the bāṭin imparted to them by a hierarchy (hudūd) of teachers. Such ideas provide the subject matter of the Kitāb al-ʿālim waʾl-ghulām, one of the few surviving early Ismaili texts attributed to
Ja’far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman. By exalting the bāṭin aspects of religion, the Ismailis came to be regarded by the rest of the Muslim community as the most representative of the Shi‘is propounding esotericism in Islam and, hence, their common designation as the Bāṭiniyya. This designation was, however, used in a derogatory sense accusing the Ismailis of generally ignoring the ẓāhir, or the sharī’a. The available evidence, including the fragmentary texts of the Ismaili oath of allegiance,20 clearly show that the early Ismailis were not exempted in any sense from the commandments and prohibitions of Islam. Indeed, early Ismaili teachings accorded equal significance to the ẓāhir and the bāṭin and their inseparability, ideas that were further elaborated in the Ismaili teachings of the Fatimid period. Such generalized accusations of ibāḥa or antinomianism against the Ismailis seem to have been rooted in the polemics of their enemies, who also blamed the entire Ismaili movement for the anti-Islamic views and practices of the Qarmaṭīs.

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

According to their cyclical view, the Ismailis held that the religious history of humankind proceeded through seven prophetic eras (dawrs) of various durations, each one inaugurated by a speaker or enunciator (nāṭiq) of a divinely revealed message which in its exoteric (ẓāhir) aspect contained a religious law (sharī’a). The nāṭiqs of the first six eras of human history were Adam (Ādam), Noah (Nūḥ), Abraham (Ibrāhīm), Moses (Mūsā), Jesus (ʿĪsā) and Muhammad. These nāṭiqs had announced only the outer (ẓāhir) aspects of each revelation with its rituals, commandments and prohibitions, without
explaining details of its inner (bāṭin) meaning. Each nāṭiq was, therefore, succeeded by a spiritual legatee (waṣī), also called the ‘silent one’ (sāmit) and later the ‘foundation’ (asās), who explained to the elite the esoteric truths (ḥaqāʾiq) contained in the bāṭin dimension of that era’s message. Each waṣī was, in turn, succeeded by seven imams, also called atimmāʾ (singular, mutimm), who guarded the true meaning of the sacred scriptures and laws in their żāhir and bāṭin aspects. The seventh imam of every era would rise in rank to become the nāṭiq of the following era, abrogating the shariʿa of the previous era and enunciating a new one in its place. This pattern would change only in the seventh, final era of history. As the seventh imam of the sixth era, the era of the Prophet Muḥammad and Islam, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl was initially expected to return as the Mahdi (or qāʾim) as well as the nāṭiq of the seventh eschatological era when, instead of promulgating a new law, he would fully divulge to all humankind the esoteric truths of all the preceding revelations. He would, thus, unite in himself the ranks of nāṭiq and waṣī, being also the last of the imams as the eschatological Imam-Mahdi. In the final, millenarian age, the ḥaqāʾiq would be completely freed from all their veils and symbolisms; there would no longer be any distinction between the żāhir and the bāṭin in that age of pure spirituality. On his advent, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl would rule in justice before the physical world is consummated. This original cyclical view of religious history was modified after ʿAbd Allāh al-Madhī’s doctrinal reform, which allowed for more than one heptad of imams in the era of Islam. Recognizing continuity in the imamate, the advent of the seventh era now lost its earlier messianic appeal for the Fatimid Ismailis, for whom the final eschatological age, whatever its nature, was postponed indefinitely into the future; while the functions of the Mahdi who would initiate the Day of Resurrection (qiyāma) at the end of time, were to be similar to those envisaged by other Muslim communities. On the other hand, the Qarmaṭīs of Bahrayn and elsewhere continued to consider Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl as their Mahdi who on his reappearance as the seventh nāṭiq was expected to initiate the final age.21

The cosmological doctrine of the early Ismailis, which was evidently propagated orally, has been reconstructed from the fragmentary evidence preserved in later Ismaili texts by S.M. Stern and H. Halm.22 This doctrine, representing a gnostic cosmological myth, was
evidently espoused by the entire Ismaili (Qarmaṭī) movement until it was superseded by a new cosmology of Neoplatonic provenance. According to this doctrine, through His intention (irāda) and will (mashi’a), God first created a light (nūr) and addressed it with the Qur’anic creative imperative kun (Be!). Through duplication of its two letters, kāf and nūn, the name acquired its feminine form Kūnī. On God’s command, Kūnī created from its light Qadar, its male assistant. Kūnī and Qadar were, thus, the first two principles (aṣlān) of creation. It was out of the original heptad of consonantal letters of Kūnī-Qadar, also called the higher letters (al-ḥurūf al-ʿulwiyya), interpreted as the archetypes of the seven nāṭiqs and their messages, that all other letters and names emerged; and with the names there simultaneously appeared the very things they symbolized. The doctrine explained how God’s creative activity, through the intermediary of Kūnī and Qadar, brought forth the beings of the spiritual world, also accounting for the creation of the lower physical world which culminated in the genesis of Man. The early cosmology also had a key soteriological purpose. Man, who appears at the end of the process of creation, is far from his origins and his Creator. This cosmology, thus, aimed at showing the path for removing this distance and bringing about Man’s salvation. This could be achieved only if Man acquired knowledge (gnosis) of his origin and the causes for his distance from God, a knowledge that had to be imparted from the above by God’s messengers (nāṭiqs), as recognized in the Qur’an, and their legitimate successors in each era of human history.

The Fatimid period in Ismaili history

The Fatimid period represents the ‘golden age’ of Ismailism, when the Ismailis possessed an important state of their own and Ismaili scholarship and literature attained their summit. The foundation of the Fatimid caliphate in 297/909 in North Africa indeed marked the crowning success of the early Ismailis. The religio-political da’wa of the Ismāʿīliyya had finally led to the establishment of a state or dawla headed by the Ismaili imam. In line with their universal claims, the Fatimid caliph-imams did not abandon their da’wa activities on assuming power. They particularly concerned themselves with the affairs of the Ismaili da’wa after transferring the seat of their state to
Egypt. The *daʿwa* achieved particular success outside the domains of the Fatimid state, and, as a result, Ismailism outlived the downfall of the Fatimid dynasty and caliphate in 567/1171, also surviving the challenges posed by the Sunni revival of the 5th-6th/11th-12th centuries. Be that as it may, Cairo, founded by the Fatimids upon their conquest of Egypt in 358/969, became the headquarters of the complex hierarchical Ismaili *daʿwa* organization in addition to serving as the capital of the Fatimid state. In Egypt, the Fatimids patronized intellectual activities. They founded major institutions of learning and libraries in Cairo, and the Fatimid capital soon became a flourishing centre of Islamic scholarship, sciences, art and culture, in addition to playing a prominent role in the Indian Ocean as well as the Mediterranean trade and commerce. All in all, the Fatimid period marked not only a glorious age in Ismaili history, but also one of the greatest eras in Egyptian and Islamic histories – a milestone in the development of Islamic civilizations.

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

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

As a rare instance of its kind in Ismaili literature, for the Fatimid period we also have a few historical works written by Ismaili authors. These include al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān’s Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa (Commencement of the Mission), completed in 346/957, the oldest known historical work in Ismaili literature covering the background to the establishment of the Fatimid state; and Ibn al-Haytham’s Kitāb al-munāẓarāt on the first year of Fatimid rule in North Africa which was recently brought to light. There are also a number of short treatises on specific Ismaili events, such as the dāʿī al-Nīsābūrī’s Istitār al-imām. The Fatimid caliph-imams are, of course, treated by the dāʿī Idrīs in volumes 5–7 of his ‘Uyūn al-akhbār. Aside from strictly historical sources, Ismailis of the Fatimid period produced a few biographical works of the sīra genre with great historical value. Amongst the extant examples in this category, mention may be made of the Sīras of the chamberlain Jaʿfar b. ‘Ali; the courtier Jawdhar, and the chief dāʿī al-Muʿayyad fiʾl-Dīn
al-Shīrāzī. A wide variety of archival documents, such as treatises, letters, decrees and epistles (sijillāt) of historical value issued through the Fatimid chancery of state, or dīwān al-inshā‘, such as al-Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya, and the documents included in Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl’s Majmū‘at al-wathā‘iq al-Fāṭimiyya (1958) and in S.M. Stern’s Fāṭimid Decrees (1964), have survived directly or been preserved in later literary sources, notably in al-Qalqashandi’s encyclopedic Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā. The Geniza documents, consisting of thousands of letters, contracts, petitions, etc., written in Judaeo-Arabic and recovered in an old synagogue in Cairo in 1890, should also be mentioned in this context. Studied extensively by S.D. Goitein (1900–1985), Cl. Cahen (1909–1991) and others, they provide an invaluable source of information on the socio-economic and cultural life of Fatimid Egypt.

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

Ibn Zūlāq (d. 386/996) is one of the earliest Fatimid chroniclers whose works have been lost completely. The tradition of Fatimid historiography was maintained by al-Musabbihī (d. 420/1030), an official in the service of the Fatimids who may have been an Ismaili himself. He produced a vast history of Fatimid Egypt and its ruling dynasty, but only a small fraction of the fortieth volume of his Akhbār Miṣr has survived in a unique manuscript. Amongst other Fatimid chroniclers whose works have not survived directly, mention may be made of Muḥammad b. Salāma al-Quḍā‘ī (d. 454/1062), al-Murtaḍā al-Muḥannak (d. 549/1154) and Ibn al-Ma‘mūn al-Baṭā‘īḥī (d. 588/1192). Portions of these Fatimid chronicles have been preserved by later Egyptian historians, notably al-Maqrizī. Indeed, the only extant contemporary account of the Fatimids is the history of Yahyā b. Sa‘īd al-Anṭākī (d. 458/1066). Amongst later Egyptian historians, who were mostly functionaries in Fatimid administration, mention should be
made of Ibn al-Ṣayrafī (d. 542/1147), a prolific writer who headed the Fatimid chancery of state for more than four decades. A history written by Ibn al-Ṣayrafī has not survived, but two of his other works on Fatimid viziers and institutions have been preserved. During the 7th/13th century, after the demise of the Fatimids, several other histories of the dynasty were written, such as the Akhbār mulūk Banī ’Ubayd of Ibn Ḥammād (d. 628/1231), a Berber qāḍi of North Africa, and the history of the Fatimid and Ayyūbid dynasties by Ibn al-Ṭuwayr (d. 617/1220), a high-ranking official of the later Fatimids. Ibn Ṣafir (d. 613/1216), a secretary in the chancery of the early Ayyūbids, produced a universal history in terms of dynasties, with a section on the Fatimids. However, the most extensive history of Fatimid Egypt produced in the 7th/13th century under the early Mamlūks is the Akhbār Miṣr of Ibn Muyassar (d. 677/1278), which has survived in an incomplete form.

The Fatimids were treated in a number of regional chronicles and in several universal histories written by Egyptian authors of the later Mamlūk period. Ibn ‘Idhārī, a Maghribi historian who died after 712/1312, included an important account of the early Fatimids in his chronicle of Ifrīqiya entitled al-Bayān al-mughrib. Ibn al-Dawādārī, an Egyptian historian and a Mamlūk officer, produced an extensive universal history in 736/1335, Kanz al-durar, of which the sixth part is devoted to the Fatimids. Ibn al-Dawādārī has preserved extracts from the anti-Ismaili polemical work of the Sharīf Akhū Muḥsin, as well as the history of Ibn Zūlāq and other earlier sources. More extensive paraphrases from Akhū Muḥsin, as well as a detailed history of the Fatimids, are contained in the encyclopedic Nihāyat al-arab of al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333). Later, Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470) wrote a voluminous history of Islamic Egypt, al-Nujūm al-zāhira fi mulūk Miṣr wa’l-Qāhira, which includes an elaborate account of Fatimid Egypt. There were other Egyptian historians, such as Ibn al-Furāt (d. 807/1405), writing on the Fatimids. However, the only Sunni author to have produced a separate and substantial history of the Fatimids was Taqi al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Ali al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), the dean of the medieval Egyptian historians. He produced an extensive account of the Fatimid dynasty in his Ittiʿāẓ al-ḥunafāʾ. In his topographic work, al-Mawāʾiz wa’l-iʿtibār bi-dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa’l-āthār, generally known as the Khiṭaṭ, too, al-Maqrīzī provides many details on the
Fatimids and their achievements. In both these works, al-Maqrīzī has preserved substantial quotations from Ibn Zūlāq, al-Muḥannak, al-Musabbiḥ, Ibn al-Ṭuwayr and many other earlier authorities whose writings have been lost. Finally, al-Maqrīzī compiled a biographical dictionary, Kitāb al-muqaffā al-kabīr, with many entries on persons connected to Fatimid Egypt.

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

In modern times, Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (1808–1899) was the first European orientalist to have produced an independent history of the Fatimids, Geschichte der Faṭimiden Chalifen (1880–81), based on Arabic chronicles, but without using any Ismaili sources. Several subsequent works on the Fatimids, such as S. Lane-Poole’s History of Egypt in the Middle Ages (1901), De Lacy O’Leary’s A Short History of the Fatimid Khalifate (1923), and G. Wiet’s early publications, were all written before the modern advances in Ismaili studies and as such were based exclusively on hostile Sunni sources. Meanwhile, with the initiation of modern scholarship in Ismaili studies, a number of specialists began to investigate the religious dimensions of the Fatimids and the religio-political milieu in which they rose to power. In this context, particular mention should be made of B. Lewis’s The Origins of Ismāʿīlism: A Study of the Historical Background of the Fāṭimid
Caliphate (1940) and W. Ivanow’s Ismaili Tradition Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids (1942). It was under such circumstances that Zāhid ‘Ali (1888–1958), a learned Ismaili Bohra, produced the first history of the Fatimids in Urdu, *Taʾrīkh-i Fāṭimiyyīn-i Miṣr* (1948), using his ancestral collection of Ismaili manuscripts. In the meantime, Egyptian authors themselves had started to compose histories of the Fatimids, starting with Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan (1892–1968), who in 1932 published his doctoral thesis on the Fatimids, *al-Fāṭimiyyūn fī Miṣr*, and in the subsequent editions of this book also drew on Ismaili sources. The progress made since then is amply reflected in the much more comprehensive *al-Dawla al-Fāṭimiyya fī Miṣr* (1992; rev. ed., 2000), written by Ayman Fuʿād Sayyid, the dean of contemporary Egyptian historians who has edited numerous Arabic texts on the Fatimids. A number of Egyptian scholars have also written biographies of individual Fatimid caliph-imams. Meanwhile, Western scholarship in Fatimid studies has continued unabated, after the earlier studies of P. Casanova (1861–1926) and M. Canard (1888–1982) who contributed the entry ‘Fāṭimids’ to the revised edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, as reflected in a growing number of articles and monographs devoted to different aspects of Fatimid history or Ismaili teachings and activities under the Fatimids. In the latter category, special mention should be made of the contributions of H. Halm, who fully uses Ismaili and non-Ismaili sources in his historical studies, and P.E. Walker, who has produced major work on aspects of Ismaili thought in the Fatimid age. Amongst other contemporary scholars who are specifically contributing to Fatimid studies, mention may be made of the Tunisian scholars F. Dachraoui and M. Yalaoui, as well as M. Brett, Y. Lev and Th. Bianquis, while I.K. Poonawala has concerned himself, after the pioneering work of Asaf A.A. Fyzee (1899–1981), with Ismaili jurisprudence under the Fatimids. At the same time, Jonathan M. Bloom and other art historians have been investigating aspects of Fatimid art and architecture, after the initial studies of K.A.C. Creswell (1879–1974), P. Balog (1900–1982), E.J. Grube and others. Much new research in Fatimid-Ismaili studies found expression in the papers presented at an international colloquium, *L’Égypte Fatimide, son art et son histoire*, held in Paris in 1998.

The ground for the establishment of the Fatimid state was meticulously prepared by the *dāʾī* Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Shīʿī (d. 298/911),
who had been active among the Kutāma Berbers of the Maghrib since 280/893. Meanwhile, after leaving Salamiyya, the Ismaili Imam ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī had arrived in Egypt in 291/904, where he spent a year. Subsequently, he was prevented from going to the Maghrib because the Aghlabid rulers of the region had discovered the Ismaili imam's plans and were waiting to arrest him. ʿAbd Allāh instead headed for the remote town of Sijilmāsa, in southern Morocco, where he lived quietly for four years (292–296/905–909), maintaining his contacts with Abū ʿAbd Allāh who had already commenced his conquest of Ifriqiya with the help of his Kutāma soldier-tribesmen. By 296/908, this Kutāma army had achieved much success signalling the fall of the Aghlabids. On 1 Rajab 296/25 March 909, Abū ʿAbd Allāh entered Raqqāda, the royal city outside of the Aghlabid capital of Qayrawān, from where he governed Ifriqiya as al-Mahdī's deputy, for almost a whole year. In Ramaḍān 296/June 909, he set off at the head of his army for Sijilmāsa to hand over the reins of power to the Ismaili imam himself. ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī was acclaimed as caliph in a special ceremony in Sijilmāsa on 7 Dhu’l-Ḥijja 296/27 August 909. With these events the dawr al-satr in early Ismailism had also ended. ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī entered Raqqāda on 20 Rabī’ II 297/4 January 910 and was immediately acclaimed as caliph there. An eyewitness account of the establishment of Fatimid rule is contained in Ibn al-Haytham’s Kitāb al-munāẓarāt. The Ismaili Shiʿi caliphate of the Fatimids had now officially commenced in Ifriqiya. The new dynasty was named Fatimid (Fāṭimiyya) after the Prophet’s daughter Fāṭima to whom al-Mahdī and his successors traced their ‘Alid ancestry.

The Fatimids did not abandon their Ismaili daʿwa on assuming power, as they entertained universal aspirations aiming to extend their rule over the entire Muslim community. However, the first four Fatimid caliph-imams, ruling from Ifriqiya, encountered numerous difficulties while consolidating their power with the help of the Kutāma Berbers who were converted to Ismailism and provided the backbone of the Fatimid armies. In particular, they confronted the hostility of the Khārijī Berbers and the Sunni Arab inhabitants of Qayrawān and other cities of Ifriqiya led by their Mālikī jurists, in addition to their rivalries and conflicts with the Umayyads of Spain, the Abbasids and the Byzantines. Under these circumstances, the Ismaili daʿwa remained rather inactive in North Africa for some
Fatimid rule was established firmly in the Maghrib only under al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh (341–365/953–975), who succeeded in transforming the Fatimid caliphate from a regional state into a great empire. He was also the first Fatimid caliph-imam to concern himself significantly with the propagation of the Ismaili daʿwa outside the Fatimid dominions, especially after the transference of the seat of the Fatimid state in 362/973 to Egypt, where he founded Cairo as his new capital city. The daʿwa policy of al-Muʿizz was based on a number of religio-political considerations. In particular, he was apprehensive of the success of the Qarmaṭī propaganda in the eastern regions, which not only undermined the efforts of the Fatimid Ismaili dāʿīs operating in the same lands, notably Iraq, Persia and Transoxania, but also aroused the general anti-Ismaili sentiments of the Sunni Muslims who did not distinguish the Ismailis from the Qarmaṭīs who had acquired a reputation for extremism and lawlessness. Al-Muʿizz’s policies soon bore fruit as the Ismaili daʿwa and Fatimid cause were reinvigorated outside the Fatimid state. However, he was only partially successful in undermining the Qarmaṭīs and their daʿwa activities. Most notably, Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī (d. after 361/971), the dāʿī of Sīstān, Makrān and Khurāsān, who had earlier belonged to the dissident faction, transferred his allegiance to the Fatimids; and, consequently, many of his followers in Persia and Central Asia acknowledged the Fatimid caliph-imam. Ismailism also acquired a permanent stronghold in Multān, Sind, where an Ismaili principality was established for a few decades.

The caliph-imam al-Muʿizz permitted the assimilation of the Neoplatonic cosmology elaborated by the dāʿīs of the Iranian lands into the teachings of the Fatimid daʿwa. Henceforth, this Neoplatonized cosmology was advocated by the Fatimid dāʿīs in preference to the earlier doctrine of creation. In the course of the 4th/10th century, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasafī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī set about harmonizing their Ismaili Shiʿi theology with Neoplatonic philosophy which led to the development of a unique intellectual tradition of philosophical theology in Ismailism. These dāʿīs wrote for the educated classes of society and aimed to attract them intellectually. This is why they expressed their theology, always revolving around the central Shiʿi doctrine of the imamate, in terms of the then most intellectually fashionable terminologies and themes. After
the initial efforts of al-Nasafi and al-Rāzī, the Iranian dāʿīs elaborated complex metaphysical systems of thought with a distinct Neoplatonized emanational cosmology. In this cosmology, fully elaborated in al-Sijistānī’s Kitāb al-yanābīʿ and other works, God is described as absolutely transcendent, beyond being and non-being, and thus unknowable. Here, the Neoplatonic dyad of universal intellect (ʿaql) and universal soul (nafs) in the spiritual world replace Kūnī and Qadar of the earlier cosmology; and the emanational chain of creation is traced finally to Man, while recognizing that God created everything in the spiritual and physical worlds all at once. These dāʿīs also expounded a doctrine of salvation as part of their cosmology. In their soteriology, the ultimate goal of salvation is the human soul’s progression towards its Creator in quest of a spiritual reward in an eternal afterlife. This, of course, would depend on guidance provided by the authorized sources of wisdom in every era of history.

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

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

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

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

The Ismailis had high esteem for learning and elaborated distinctive traditions and institutions of learning under the Fatimids. The Fatimid daʿwa was particularly concerned with educating the Ismaili converts in esoteric doctrine, known as the ḥikma or ‘wisdom.’ As a result, a variety of lectures or ‘teaching sessions’, generally designated as majālis (singular, majlis), were organized. The private lectures on Ismaili esoteric doctrine, known as the majālis al-ḥikma or ‘sessions of wisdom’, were reserved exclusively for the Ismaili initiates who had already taken the oath of allegiance and secrecy. The lectures, delivered by the dāʾī al-duʿāt at the Fatimid palace, were approved beforehand by the imam. Only the imam was the source of the ḥikma; and the dāʾī al-duʿāt or chief dāʾī, commonly called bāb (the gate) in Ismaili sources, was the imam’s mouthpiece through whom the Ismailis received their knowledge of esoteric doctrines. Many of these majālis were in due course collected and committed to writing, such as al-Nuʿmān’s Taʾwīl al-daʿāʾim and the Majālis al-Mustanṣiriyya delivered by al-Malīji. This Fatimid tradition of learning culminated in the
Majālis al-Mu‘ayyadiyya of the dā‘ī al-Mu‘ayyad fīl-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 470/1078). Another of the main institutions of learning founded by the Fatimids was the Dār al-‘Ilm, the House of Knowledge, sometimes also called the Dār al-Ḥikma. Established in 395/1005 by the caliph-imam al-Ḥākim (386–411/996–1021), a variety of religious and non-religious subjects were taught at this academy which was also equipped with a major library. Many Fatimid dā‘īs received at least part of their training at the Dār al-‘Ilm.28

Information on the structure and functioning of the Ismaili da‘wa organization were among the most guarded secrets of the Ismailis. The religio-political messages of the da‘wa were disseminated by networks of dā‘īs within the Fatimid dominions as well as in other regions referred to as the jazā‘ir (singular, jazīra, ‘island’). Each jazīra was placed under the charge of a high-ranking dā‘ī referred to as ḥujja; and every ḥujja had a number of dā‘īs of different ranks working under him. Organized in a strictly hierarchical manner, the Fatimid da‘wa was under the overall supervision of the imam and the dā‘ī al-du‘āt, or bāb, who acted as its administrative head. The da‘wa organization developed over time and reached its full elaboration under the caliph-imam al-Mustanṣir. It was, however, in non-Fatimid regions, the jazā‘ir, especially Y aman, Persia and Central Asia, that the Fatimid da‘wa achieved lasting success.29 The da‘wa was intensified in Iraq and Persia under al-Ḥākim. Foremost among the dā‘īs of this period was Ḥamīd al-Dīn al- Kirmānī (d. after 411/1020). A learned philosopher, he harmonized Ismaili theology with a variety of philosophical traditions in developing his own metaphysical system, presented in his Rāḥat al-ʿaql, completed in 411/1020. In fact, al-Kirmānī’s thought represents a unique tradition within the Iranian school of philosophical Ismailism. In particular, he expounded a modified cosmology, replacing the Neoplatonic dyad of intellect and soul in the spiritual world by a system of ten separate intellects in partial adaptation of al-Fārābī’s Aristotelian cosmic system.30 Al-Kirmānī’s cosmology, however, was not adopted by the Fatimid da‘wa; it later provided the basis for the fourth and final stage in the evolution of Ismaili cosmology at the hands of Ṭayyibī dā‘īs of Y aman. The Fatimid caliph-imam al-Ḥākim’s reign also coincided with the opening phase of what was to become known as the Druze religion, founded by a number of dā‘īs who had come to Cairo from Persia and Central Asia,
notably al-Akhram, and al-Darazī. These dāʾīs proclaimed the end of the historical era of Islam and advocated the divinity of al-Ḥākim. Al-Kirmānī was officially invited to Cairo around 405/1014 to refute the new extremist doctrines from a theological perspective. He wrote several treatises in defence of the doctrine of imamate in general and al-Ḥākim’s imamate in particular, including *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, the *Risālat mabāsim al-bishārāt* and *al-Risāla al-wāʾiza*. In fact, the doctrine of the imamate provided an essential subject matter for a number of doctrinal treatises written by the Ismaili authors of different periods.

The Ismaili daʿwa activities outside the Fatimid dominions reached their peak in the long reign of al-Mustanṣir (427–487/1036–1094), even after the Sunni Saljūqs replaced the Shiʿī Būyids as overlords of the Abbasids in 447/1055. The Fatimid dāʾīs won many converts in Iraq and different parts of Persia and Central Asia. One of the most prominent dāʾīs of this period was al-Muʿayyad fi’l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī who after his initial career in Fārs, in southern Persia, settled in Cairo and played an active role in the affairs of the Fatimid dawla and Ismaili daʿwa. In 450/1058, al-Mustanṣir appointed him as dāʾī al-duʿāt, a post he held for twenty years, with the exception of a brief period, until his death in 470/1078. He has left an invaluable account of his life and early career in his *Sīra*, which reveals this dāʾī’s central role as an intermediary between the Fatimids and the Turkish military commander al-Basāsīrī who briefly led the Fatimid cause in Iraq against the Saljūqs. Al-Basāsīrī seized Baghdad in 450/1058 and had the khutba read there for one whole year for al-Mustanṣir before he was eventually defeated by the Saljūqs. Al-Muʿayyad established closer relations between Cairo and several jazīras, especially Yaman where Ismailism had persisted in a dormant form throughout the 4th/10th century. By the time of al-Mustanṣir, the leadership of the daʿwa in Yaman had fallen into the hands of the dāʾī ʿAli b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī, an important chieftain of the Banū Ḥamdān in the mountainous region of Ḥarāz. The dāʾī ʿAli al-Ṣulayḥī rose in Ḥarāz in 439/1047, marking the effective foundation of the Ṣulayḥid dynasty ruling over different parts of Yaman as vassals of the Fatimids until 532/1138. On ʿAli’s death in 459/1067, Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī was appointed as chief dāʾī of Yaman while ʿAli’s son Aḥmad al-Mukarram (d. 477/1084) succeeded his father merely as head of the Ṣulayḥid state. The
Lamak had earlier spent five years in Cairo, staying and studying with the chief dāʿī al-Muʿayyad at his residence at the Dār al-ʿIjm. From the latter part of Aḥmad al-Mukarram’s reign, during which time the Śūlayḥids lost much of Yaman to Zaydīs there, effective authority in the Śūlayḥīd state was transferred to al-Mukarram’s consort, al-Malika al-Sayyida Ḥurra (d. 532/1138). She played an increasingly important role in the affairs of the Yamanī daʿwa culminating in her appointment as the ḥujja of Yaman by al-Mustanṣir. This represented the first assignment of a high rank in the daʿwa hierarchy to a woman. These events, and the Śūlayḥīds in general, are treated in ʿUmāra al-Yamani’s Taʾrīkh al-Yaman, and in the seventh volume of the dāʿī Idrīs’s ‘Uyūn al-akhbār. The Śūlayḥīds also played an active part in the renewed efforts of the Fatimids to spread the daʿwa on the Indian subcontinent. The Ismaili community founded in Gujarāt by dāʿīs sent from Yaman in the second half of the 5th/11th century evolved into the modern day Ṭayyibī Bohra community.

Meanwhile, the Ismaili daʿwa had continued to spread in many parts of the Iranian world, now incorporated into the Saljūq sultanate. By the early 460s/1070s, the Persian Ismailis in the Saljūq dominions were under the leadership of ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAṭṭāsh who had his secret headquarters in Iṣfahān, the main Saljūq capital. He was also responsible for launching the career of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ who in due course led the Ismaili daʿwa in Persia. In Badakhshān and other eastern parts of the Iranian world, too, the daʿwa had continued to spread after the downfall of the Sāmānids in 395/1005. One of the most eminent dāʿīs of al-Mustanṣir’s time, Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. after 462/1070) played an important part in propagating Ismailism in Central Asia as the ḥujja of Khurāsān; he also spread the daʿwa to Ṭabaristān and other Caspian provinces. It was mainly during his period of exile in Yumgān that Nāṣir extended the daʿwa throughout Badakhshān while maintaining his contacts with the dāʿī al-Muʿayyad and the daʿwa headquarters in Cairo. It was during those years in the midst of the Pamir mountains that Nāṣir produced the bulk of his poetry as well as his theological-philosophical writings, including the Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn, his last known work completed in 462/1070 at the request of his Ismaili protector and amir of Badakhshān, Abuʾl-Maʿālī ʿAlī b. al-Asad. The Ismailis of Badakhshān, now divided between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, and their offshoot groups in the Hindu Kush region,
situated in Hunza and other northern areas of Pakistan, regard Shāh Nāṣir-i Khusraw as the founder of their communities. By the time the Qarmatī state of Baḥrayn was finally uprooted in 470/1077–78 by the local tribal chieftains, other Qarmatī groups in Persia, Iraq and elsewhere too had either disintegrated or switched their allegiance to the Ismaili da’wa of the Fatimids. There was now, once again, only one unified Ismaili da’wa under the supreme leadership of the Fatimid caliph-imam.

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

Al-Mustanṣir, the eighth Fatimid caliph and eighteenth Ismaili imam, died in Dhu’l-Ḥijja 487/December 1094, a few months after Badr al-Jamālī. Thereupon, the unified Ismaili da’wa split into two rival factions, as al-Mustanṣir’s son and original heir-designate Nizār was deprived of his succession rights by al-Afḍal who quickly installed Nizār’s younger half-brother to the Fatimid throne with the title of al-Musta’lī biʾllāh (487–495/1094–1101). The two factions were later designated as the Nizāriyya and Musta’liyya after al-Mustanṣir’s sons who claimed his heritage. Al-Afḍal immediately obtained for al-Musta’lī the allegiance of the notables of the Fatimid court and most leaders of the Ismaili da’wa in Cairo who also recognized al-Musta’lī’s imamate. Nizār refused to pay homage to al-Musta’lī and fled to Alexandria where he rose in revolt, but was defeated and killed in 488/1095. The
The imamate of al-Mustaʿlī was recognized by the Ismaili communities of Egypt, Yaman and western India. These Ismailis who depended on the Fatimid regime later traced the imamate in the progeny of al-Mustaʿlī. The bulk of the Ismailis of Syria, too, joined the Mustaʿlī camp. On the other hand, the Ismailis of Persia who were then already under the leadership of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ supported the succession rights of Nizār. The Central Asian Ismailis seem to have remained uninvolved in the Nizārī-Mustaʿlī schism for quite some time.

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

The irregular proclamation as imam of al-Ḥāfiẓ, whose father (Abu'l-Qāsim Muḥammad b. al-Mustanṣir) had not been imam previously, caused a major split in the Mustaʿlī Ismaili community. As in the case of the Nizārī-Mustaʿlī schism, the Mustaʿlī daʿwa headquarters in Cairo endorsed the imamate of al-Ḥāfiẓ, who claimed al-Āmir had personally designated him. Therefore, it was also acknowledged by the Mustaʿlī Ismailis of Egypt and Syria as well as a portion of the
Mustaʿlīs of Yaman. These Ismailis, who recognized al-Ḥāfiẓ and the later Fatimid caliphs as their imams, became known as the Ḥāfiẓiyya. On the other hand, the Ṣulayḥid queen of Yaman, al-Sayyida Ḥurra, who had already drifted away from Cairo, upheld al-Ṭayyib’s cause and recognized him as al-Āmir’s successor to the imamate. As a result, the Musta’li community of the Ṣulayḥid state, too, recognized al-Ṭayyib’s imamate. These Musta’li Ismailis of Yaman, with some minority groups in Egypt and Syria, initially known as the Āmiriyya, became later designated as the Ṭayyibiyya. The Ismaili traditions of the earlier times were maintained during the final decades of the Fatimid dynasty. These included the appointment of chief dāʿīs as administrative heads of the Ḥāfiẓī da’wa, the regular holdings of the majālis al-ḥikma, and the activities of the Dār al-ʿIlm, which was moved to a new location in Cairo in 526/1132. The Ḥāfiẓī theologians of this period must have, therefore, concerned themselves with literary activities. However, after the demise of the Fatimid dynasty and caliphate, there were no longer any Ḥāfiẓī communities left in Egypt or elsewhere to preserve their literature. The extant anonymous al-Qaṣīda al-Shāfiya, originally composed by a Ḥāfiẓī poet, may be a sole exception.

The Ayyūbid Šalāh al-Dīn, who had acted as the last Fatimid vizier, ended Fatimid rule on 7 Muḥarram 567/10 September 1171, when he had the khuṭba read in Cairo in the name of the reigning Abbasid caliph al-Mustaḍīʾ. A few days later, al-ʿĀḍid (555–567/1160–1171), the fourteenth and final Fatimid caliph, died after a brief illness. The Fatimid dawla had, thus, ended after 262 years.37 On the collapse of the Fatimid caliphate, Egypt’s new Sunni Ayyūbid masters began to persecute the Ismailis, also suppressing the Ḥāfiẓī da’wa organization and all the Fatimid institutions. The immense treasures of the Fatimids and their vast libraries were pillaged or sold. For a while longer, however, certain direct descendants of al-Ḥāfiẓ and a few false pretenders claimed the imamate of the Ḥāfiẓīs. Some of them led revolts which received limited support in Egypt. Al-ʿĀḍid had appointed his eldest son, Dāʿūd, as his heir apparent; and, after al-ʿĀḍid, the Ḥāfiẓīs recognized him as their next imam. But Dāʿūd, like other members of the Fatimid family, had been placed in permanent captivity in Cairo. In 569/1174, a major conspiracy to overthrow Šalāh al-Dīn and restore Fatimid rule was discovered in Cairo. The chief conspirators included ‘Umāra, the famous Yamanī poet and historian, a former chief dāʿī as
well as several Ismaili jurists and Fatimid commanders. ʿUmāra and several others were executed on Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s order. A few more minor revolts, led by Fatimid pretenders or Ismailis, occurred during the final decades of the 6th/12th century. After Dāʾūd b. al-ʿĀḍid (d. 604/1207), his son Sulaymān (d. 645/1248), conceived secretly in prison, was evidently acknowledged as the imam of the Ḥāfizī Ismailis.

The Ḥāfiziyya had disintegrated almost completely in Egypt by the end of the 7th/13th century, when the Fatimid prisoners were finally released by the Mamlūks who had succeeded the Ayyūbids. In Yaman, the Zurayʿids of ʿAdan and some of the Hamdānids of Ṣanʿāʾ had adhered to Ḥāfizī Ismailism until the Ayyūbid conquest of southern Arabia in 569/1173. The main source for the history of the Zurayʿids, who also acted as the chief dāʿīs of the Ḥāfizī daʿwa, is the Taʾrīkh al-Yaman of ʿUmāra al-Yamānī, who personally knew some members of the dynasty. The Ḥāfizīs may still have enjoyed some prominence in Yaman by the beginning of the 7th/13th century when the fifth dāʿī of the Ṭayyibīs, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 612/1215), found it necessary to write a polemical work, Tuḥfat al-murtād, refuting the claims of al-Ḥāfiz and his successors to the imamate and defending the legitimacy of the Ṭayyibī daʿwa. For all practical purposes, on the collapse of the Fatimid caliphate, Mustaʿlī Ismailism survived only in its Ṭayyibī form.

The Yamanī and Indian phases of Ṭayyibī Ismailism

The Ṭayyibī Ismailis recognized al-Āmir’s infant son, al-Ṭayyib, as their imam after al-Āmir, rejecting the claims of al-Ḥāfiz and the later Fatimids to the imamate. Ṭayyibī Ismailism found its permanent stronghold in Yaman, where it received the initial support of the Ṣulayḥids. The Ṭayyibīs divide their history into succeeding eras of concealment (satr) and manifestation (kashf or zuhūr), during which the imams are concealed or manifest. The first era of satr, coinciding with the pre-Fatimid period in Ismaili history, ended with the appearance of ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī. This was followed by an era of zuhūr which continued in the Fatimid period until the concealment of the twenty-first Ṭayyibī Imam al-Ṭayyib, soon after al-Āmir’s death in 524/1130. Al-Ṭayyib’s concealment, it is held by the Ṭayyibīs, initiated another era of satr, during which the Ṭayyibī imams have all remained
hidden (mastûr) from the eyes of their followers; and the current satr will continue until the appearance of an imam from al-Ṭayyib’s progeny. The current period of satr in Ṭayyibi Ismailism has, in turn, been further divided into a Yamanî phase, extending from 526/1132 to around 997/1589, when the Ṭayyibis were split into Dâ’ûdi and Sulaymânî factions, and an Indian phase, covering essentially the history of the Dâ’ûdi Ṭayyibî da’wa during the last four centuries. There were essentially no doctrinal differences between the two Ṭayyibî communities, which were to follow separate lines of dâ’îs.

The history of the Yamanî phase of Ṭayyibî Ismailism is essentially a history of the activities of the various dâ’îs and their relations with the Zaydis and other local dynasties of medieval Yaman. The literary sources for this phase have been fully discussed in the relevant sections of A. Fu’ād Sayyid’s bio-bibliographical survey of the sources on Yaman’s Islamic history. For the earliest period in Ṭayyibî history, the chief authority is once again ‘Umâra al-Yamanî’s Ta’rîkh al-Yaman. Ismaili historiography on the subject, as expected, is rather meagre with the major exception of the works of the dâ’î Idrîs ‘Imâd al-Dîn (d. 872/1468). The still unpublished Tuhfât al-qulûb of the dâ’î Ḥâtim b. Ibrâhîm al-Ḥâmidî (d. 596/1199) is another important source on the history of the early Ṭayyibî da’wa in Yaman. Professor Abbas Hamdani has prepared a critical edition of the Tuhfât, which will be published in the near future.

Idrîs ‘Imâd al-Dîn b. al-Ḥasan remains our major source on the history of Ṭayyibî Ismailism in medieval Yaman. He hailed from the prominent Banû al-Walîd clan of Quraysh, who led the Ṭayyibî da’wa in Yaman for more than three centuries. In 832/1428, Idrîs succeeded his uncle, ‘Ali b. Ābd Allâh b. ‘Ālî al-Walîd, as the nineteenth dâ’î muṭlaq of the Ṭayyibis. Idrîs, who took special interest in the affairs of the da’wa in Gujarât, was also a warrior and participated in several battles against the Zaydis. Idrîs produced three extensive historical works. As the head of the Ṭayyibî da’wa, Idrîs was very well-informed about the affairs of the Ismaili community in Yaman. He also has extensive quotations from numerous Ismaili sources and archival documents which have not survived. In the seventh and final volume of his ‘Uyûn al-akhbâr, he provides valuable information on the Sulayhîds and the da’wa in Sulayhîd Yaman, as well as on the later Fatimids and the opening phase of Ṭayyibî Ismailism. His second
historical work, *Nuzhat al-afkār*, deals especially with the history of the Ismaili *daʿwa* in Yaman from the collapse of the Sulayhid dynasty in 532/1138 until 853/1449. In the *Nuzhat al-afkār*, which is still in manuscript form, particular attention is paid to the Ṭayyibī *daʿwa* in India and the relations between the Ṭayyibī communities of Yaman and India. Thirdly, in the *Rawḍat al-akhbār*, which is a continuation of the previous history, Idrīs relates the events of his own time, from the year 854/1450 to 870/1465. This is also an important source on the history of the Tāhirīds (858–923/1454–1517) who ruled over Yaman after the Rasūlīds (626–858/1229–1454) and were allied with the dāʿī Idrīs. The recently published *Rawḍat al-akhbār* is also an important autobiographical source on Idrīs’s career. Ḥusayn F. al-Hamdānī was the first modern scholar to indicate the importance of Idrīs’s historical works for studying Ismailism in Yaman while also pointing out their occasional biases.⁴⁰

The history of the Indian phase of Ṭayyibī Ismailism, too, revolves around the activities of different dāʿīs, in addition to the polemical accounts of various disputes and minor schisms in the Dāʿūdī Bohra community arising mainly from competing claims to the leadership of the *daʿwa*. A number of Dāʿūdī dāʿīs and authors have produced historical works on the Ṭayyibī *daʿwa* in India, some of which have been written in a form of Arabicized Gujarātī, i.e., Gujarātī transcribed in Arabic script, adopted as the language of the Dāʿūdī *daʿwa* and Bohras. The majority of the Ismaili sources produced in South Asia, however, mix legend and reality rather indiscriminately. As a result, the history of Ṭayyibī Ismailism in India, especially for the earlier centuries, remains shrouded in mystery. Among the few accurate Ismaili histories produced in India, is the *Muntazaʿ al-akhbār*, in two volumes, written in Arabic by Quṭb al-Dīn Sulaymānjī Burhānpūrī (d. 1241/1826), a Dāʿūdī Ṭayyibī Bohra with a high rank in the *daʿwa* organization. The first volume of this work deals with the history of the twenty-one imams recognized by the Ṭayyibī Mustaʿlīs, and the second volume covers the history of the Ṭayyibis and their (Dāʿūdī) dāʿīs until 1240/1824. Another noteworthy history of Ismailism in South Asia is the *Mawsim-i bahār* of Muḥammad ʿAlī b. Mullā Jīwābẖāʾī Rāmpūrī, a functionary of the Dāʿūdī *daʿwa* who died in 1315/1897 or a year later. This three-volume work, in Arabicized Gujarātī and drawing on the *Muntazaʿ al-akhbār* and a number of earlier sources
which have not survived, is considered by the Dāʾūdī Bohras as an authentic source of their history. The first volume on the stories of the prophets and the second volume on the imams were completed during 1302–11/1885–93, after the third volume on the history of the dāʾīs in Yaman as well as the daʿwa in India from its origins until the time of the author. The third volume was compiled in 1299/1882 and lithographed shortly afterwards.

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

In modern times, a number of Dāʾūdī Bohras, who account for the overwhelming majority of the Ṭayyibī Ismailis, have written on various aspects of their community. But historical works of any value have remained rather few in number. The Gulzare Daudi (1920), written by Mullā Abdul Husain, a Dāʾūdī functionary who became a dissident, served as one of the most popular and influential books in English on Ṭayyibī Ismailism in India. Several other Dāʾūdī authors, such as Hasan Ali Badripresswala Ismailji and Najm al-Ghani Khan, wrote historical works in Gujarātī or Urdu. The late Zāhid ʿAlī produced in Urdu the fullest contemporary account of the Ṭayyibī doctrines in his Hamāre Ismāʿīlī madhab (1954). Several members of the distinguished al-Hamdānī family, descendants of Muḥammad ʿAlī b. Fayḍ Allāh al-Yaʿbūrī al-Hamdānī (d. 1315/1898), a prominent
Dāʾūdī scholar from Sūrat, have written on Ṭayyibī Ismailism and on the daʿwa in India. Muḥammad ‘Ali’s grandson Ḥusayn b. Fayḍ Allāh al-Hamdānī (1901–1961) and the latter’s son Abbas Hamdānī have also made their family collections of Ismaili manuscripts available to libraries and scholars at large. Asaf A.A. Fyzee (1899–1981), a learned Sulaymānī Bohra, produced pioneering work on Ismaili jurisprudence – a field of enquiry later adopted by I.K. Poonawala, himself from another learned Bohra family. With a few exceptions, notably John N. Hollister’s The Shiʿa of India (1953), Western scholars and Ismaili specialists have not produced major works on Ṭayyibī Ismailism. On the other hand, a number of dissident Dāʾūdīs, led by Asghar Ali Engineer, who have been involved in various reformist groups organized against the dāʿī and his policies have written on Bohra institutions and practices.41

The Ṭayyibī daʿwa, as noted, survived the downfall of the Fatimids, because from early on it had developed independently of the Fatimid state. It received its initial support from the Șulayḥīd queen, al-Sayyida Ḥurra, who had been looking after the affairs of the Mustaʿlī daʿwa in Yaman with the help of the dāʿī Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī (d. ca. 491/1098) and then his son Yahyā (d. 520/1126). It was soon after 526/1132 that the Șulayḥīd queen broke her relations with Cairo and declared Yahyā’s successor al-Dhuʾayb b. Mūsā al-ʿWādiʿī as the dāʿī muṭlaq, or dāʿī with absolute authority, to lead the affairs of the Ṭayyibi Mustaʿlī daʿwa on behalf of their concealed Imam al-Ṭayyib. This marked the foundation of the Ṭayyibi daʿwa independently of the Șulayḥīd state as well. On al-Dhuʾayb’s death in 546/1151, Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmidī succeeded to the leadership of the Ṭayyibi daʿwa as the second dāʿī muṭlaq. The Ṭayyibi daʿwa spread successfully in the Ḥarāz region of Yaman even though it did not receive the support of any Yamanī rulers after the death of the Șulayḥīd queen in 532/1138.42 After Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī (d. 557/1162), the position of dāʿī muṭlaq remained hereditary among his descendants until 605/1209 when it passed to ‘Ali b. Muḥammad b. al-Walid of the Banū al-Walid al-Anf family of the Quraysh and remained in this family, with minor interruptions, until 946/1539. During the Yamanī period, the Ṭayyibis maintained their unity in Yaman and won an increasing number of converts in western India.

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

The Ṭayyibī daʿwa organization has drawn on Fatimid antecedents with certain modifications. As in the case of imams, every dāʿī muṭlaq has appointed his successor by the rule of the naṣṣ. The Ṭayyibī dāʿīs in Yaman were among the most educated members of their community; many became outstanding religious scholars and produced the bulk of the classical Ṭayyibī literature related to the haqāʾiq. The dāʿī muṭlaq was normally assisted in the affairs of the daʿwa by several subordinate dāʿīs designated as maʾdhūn and mukāsir. Meanwhile, the Yamanī dāʿī muṭlaqs had maintained close relations with the Ṭayyibī community of western India. There, the Ismaili converts,
mostly of Hindu descent, were known as Bohras, a name believed to have been derived from the Gujarātī term vohorvū meaning 'to trade', since the da’wa originally spread among the trading community of Gujarāt. The Ismaili Bohras of Gujarāt were persecuted under the Sunni sultans of the region from 793/1391, obliging them to observe taqiyya in the guise of Sunnism. With the establishment of Mughal rule in 980/1572, however they began to enjoy a certain degree of religious freedom in India and conversions to Sunni Islam ceased.

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

In 1200/1785, the headquarters of the Dā’ūdī da’wa was transferred to Sūrat, where the forty-third dā’ī, ‘Abd ‘Alī Sayf al-Dīn (1213–1232/1798–1817), founded a seminary known as Sayfī Dars, also Jāmi‘at Sayfiyya, for the education of Dā’ūdī scholars and functionaries. This seminary, with a major library, has continued to serve as an institution of traditional Islamic learning for the Dā’ūdī Bohras. Since 1232/1817, the office of the dā’ī muṭlaq of the Dā’ūdī Ṭayyibīs has remained among the descendants of Shaykh Jiwanjī Awrangbādī, while the
community has experienced intermittent strife and crisis rooted in opposition to the dāʿī’s authority. The present dāʿī muṭlaq of the Dāʿūdī daʿwa, Sayyidnā Muhammad Burhān al-Dīn, succeeded his father Sayyidnā Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn (1333–1385/1915–1965) as the fifty-second in the series. The total Dāʿūdī population of the world is currently (2004) estimated at around 900,000 persons, located mainly in India. Since the 1920s, Bombay (Mumbai), with its largest single concentration of Bohras, has served as the permanent administrative seat of the Dāʿūdī dāʿī muṭlaq. The Ṭayyibī Bohras, together with the Nizārī Khojas, were also among the earliest Asian communities to settle, during the nineteenth century and subsequently, in East Africa. Their settlement received particular encouragement from Sultan Saʿīd (1220–1273/1806–1856), of the Āl Bū Saʿīd dynasty of ʿUmān and Zanzibar, who aimed to expand his trade relations with India. In time, the Indian Ismaili traders, who had originally emigrated to Zanzibar, the sultan’s capital since 1256/1840, moved to the growing urban centres of East Africa. But from the early 1970s, due to the anti-Asian policies of Ugandan and other African governments, many Ismailis left Africa for the West.

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

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

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

The Nizārī Ismailis of the Alamūt period did, nevertheless, maintain a sophisticated intellectual outlook and a literary tradition, elaborating their teachings in response to changing circumstances. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ himself was a learned theologian and was credited with founding an impressive library at Alamūt. Later, other major Nizārī fortresses in Persia and Syria were equipped with significant
collections of books, documents and scientific instruments. In the doctrinal field, only a handful of Nizārī works have survived directly from that period. These include the *Haft bāb-i Bābā Sayyidnā*, or the *Seven Chapters of Bābā Sayyidnā*, two honorific titles reserved for Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. This is an anonymous work written around 596/1200, several decades after Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s death in 518/1124. There are also those Ismaili works written during the final decades of the Alamūt period and attributed to Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), who spent some three decades in the Nizārī fortress communities of Persia. Among the Ismaili corpus of al-Ṭūsī’s works, mention should be made of the *Rawdat al-taslīm*, which is the single most important source on the Nizārī teachings of the Alamūt period. A few Nizārī texts, which are not extant otherwise, have been fragmentarily preserved in the *Kitāb al-milal wa’l-niḥal* of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s contemporary, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), the famous heresiographer and theologian who was influenced by Ismaili ideas if not an Ismaili himself, as well as in some post-Alamūt Nizārī writings. Al-Shahrastānī himself wrote several works, including a partial Qur’an commentary called *Mafātīḥ al-asrār wa-maṣābīḥ al-abrār*, and a philosophical treatise in refutation of Ibn Sinā’s metaphysics, *Kitāb al-muṣāraʿa*, using Ismaili ideas and the methodology of *ta’wil* or esoteric interpretation.

The Nizārī Ismailis of the Alamūt period, too, maintained a historiographical tradition in Persia. They compiled chronicles in the Persian language recording the events of their state according to the reigns of the successive lords of Alamūt. This historiographical tradition commenced with the *Sargudhasht-i Sayyidnā*, covering the biography of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, designated as Bābā and Sayyidnā (‘our master’) by the contemporary Nizāris, and the events of his rule as the first lord of Alamūt. The reign of Ḥasan’s successor, Kiyā Buzurg-Umīd (518–532/1124–1138), was covered in another chronicle known as the *Kitāb-i Buzurg-Umīd*. The chronicle of Buzurg-Umīd’s son and successor, Muḥammad (532–557/1138–1162), was compiled by a certain Dīkhkūdā ʿAbd al-Malik Fashandī, who was also the commander of the Nizārī fortress of Maymūndiz, near Alamūt. The events of the Nizārī state during the later Alamūt period, when the imams themselves were leading the affairs of their community, were recorded by other official chroniclers, such as Raʿīs Ḥasan Munshī Bīrjandī who
was also a poet and secretary (*munshi*) to Shihāb al-Dīn Mašūr, the Nizārī chief in Qhīstān during the first half of the 7th/13th century.

All the Nizārī chronicles, kept at Alamūt and other strongholds in Persia, perished in the period of Mongol rule. However, some of these chronicles and other Nizārī documents, such as the *fuṣūl* or epistles of the lords of Alamūt, were seen and used extensively by three Persian historians of the Ilkhānid period, namely, ‘Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 681/1283), Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh (d. 718/1318), and Abu’l-Qāsim ‘Abd Allāh Kāshānī (d. ca. 738/1337). The Ismaili histories of these authorities remain our main sources on the Nizārī *da’wa* and state in Persia during the Alamūt period. Having joined the entourage of Hūlegū, Juwaynī accompanied the Mongol conqueror on his military campaigns against the Nizāris in 654/1256; he also participated in the peace negotiations between Hūlegū and the Nizārī Imam Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh. Juwaynī received permission to visit the Alamūt library before the destruction of that fortress by the Mongols. As a result, he succeeded in saving a number of what he called ‘choice books’, including the *Sargudhasht-i Sayyidnā*, and used these Ismaili sources in writing his history of Ḥasan-i Sābbāh and his successors at Alamūt, who he labelled the *da’wa* of the ‘heretics’ (*malāḥida*) and the ‘new preaching’ (*da’wat-i jadīd*). He composed this account soon after the fall of Alamūt and added it to the end of his *Taʾrīkh-i jahān-gushā* on Mongol victories, completed in its present form in 658/1260. Juwaynī’s history of the Persian Nizāris, permeated with invective and curses against them, is preceded by sections relating to the earlier history of the Ismailis, a pattern adopted by later Persian historians. Rashīd al-Dīn’s history of the Ismailis is contained in the second volume of his vast *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* (*Collection of Histories*) completed in 710/1310. More detailed than Juwaynī’s account, Rashīd al-Dīn doubtless had direct access to the same Ismaili sources in addition to his predecessor’s work. Rashīd al-Dīn quotes more extensively from the Nizārī chronicles and also displays a sense of relative objectivity rarely found in other Sunni historians writing on the Ismailis. Few details are known about the life of Kāshānī, a Persian (Twelver) Shi’ī historian belonging to the Abū Ṭāhir family of leading potters from Kāshān. It is known, however, that he was associated with Rashīd al-Dīn and was probably involved in producing parts of the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*, although his claim to the entire authorship of that work is
very doubtful. At any rate, he included a section on the Ismailis in his *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*, a general history of the Muslim world until the demise of the Abbasids. Kāshānī’s account, which came to light in 1964, is the fullest of the three sources.

Later Persian historians who produced summary accounts of Ḩasan-i Ǧabbāḥ and his successors, based themselves mainly on Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn, occasionally drawing also on sources of legendary nature. Amongst such authors writing general histories with sections devoted to the Ismailis, the earliest and perhaps the most famous is Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī (d. after 740/1339), who benefited from the patronage of Rashid al-Dīn himself. In 730/1330, he completed his *Taʾrīkh-i guzīda*, a general history of Islam and the dynasties ruling over Persia, with a section on the Fatimids and the Ismailis (*malāḥida*), and dedicated it to Rashid al-Dīn’s son and successor as Īlkhānid vizier, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad. Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī included a section on the lords of Alamūt also in his versified history, *Ẓafar-nāma*, recently published for the first time.

Among later Persian chroniclers writing on the Ismailis, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū (d. 833/1429), court historian of the Tīmūrid ruler Shāhrukh (807–850/1405–1447), is one of the most important. In 826/1423, he began to compile a vast universal history, *Majmaʿ al-tawārīkh*, at the request of Shāhrukh’s son Bāysunghur (d. 837/1433), a patron of poets and of the arts. In the third volume of his history, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū devoted an extensive section to the Fatimids and the Nizārī state of Persia, following closely the account of Rashīd al-Dīn. Muḥammad b. Khwāndshāh, known as Mirḵhwānd (d. 903/1498), is a later historian of note who wrote a detailed account of the Persian Nizāris of the Alamūt period, which was first published in Paris in 1813. This represented one of the earliest accounts of the Persian Ismailis made accessible to European orientalists. Mirḵhwānd’s grandson, Ghiyāth al-Dīn b. Humām al-Dīn Muḥammad, known as Khwānd Amīr (d. 942/1535–36) also wrote on the Ismailis in his own general history which was completed in 930/1524. The Nizārī rulers of Alamūt continued to be treated, in later medieval times, and to various extents, by Persian historians such as Qāḍī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ghaffārī (d. 975/1567).

Another category of literary sources on the Persian Nizāris of the Alamūt period are the contemporary chronicles of the Saljūqs. ‘Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Kātib al-Īṣfahānī (d. 597/1201) was evidently
the author of the earliest Saljūq history with references to the Nizāris, Nuṣrat al-fatra, which has survived only in an abridgement compiled in 623/1226.51 Mention should also be made of Zahir al-Dīn Nishāpūri’s (d. 582/1187) Saljūq-nāma, composed around 580/1184 and used by many later chroniclers; the Akhbār al-dawla al-Saljūqiyya, written around 622/1225 and ascribed to Šadr al-Dīn ‘Ali al-Ḥusaynī, and al-Rāwandī’s Rāḥat al-ṣudūr, a history of the Great Saljūqs completed around 601/1204 with many references to the Persian Nizāris.52 The medieval regional histories of Daylam and other Caspian provinces in northern Persia, starting with Ibn Isfandiyār’s Taʾrīkh-i Ṭabaristān written in 613/1216–17,53 provide another category of historical sources on the Persian Nizāris. Finally, both Syrian and Persian Nizāris are treated in many general histories of the Muslim world by Arab authors, most notably in al-Kāmil fi’l-taʾrīkh of Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233) whose biography of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ is independent of the official Sargudhasht-i Sayyidnā, compiled at Alamūt perhaps on the basis of an autobiographical account.

The Nizāris of Syria produced their own religious literature, including numerous poetical works in Arabic, during the Alamūt period.54 This literature has not been sufficiently studied in modern times, as the relevant manuscript sources are not readily accessible. The Syrian Nizāris have also preserved many of the Ismaili texts of the Fatimid period, works of al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, Jaʿfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman and others. The Persian Nizāri works of the Alamūt period were evidently not translated into Arabic in Syria, and, similarly the religious literature of the Syrian Nizāris was not rendered into Persian. Nor did the Syrian Nizāris compile official chronicles like those produced by their Persian co-religionists. Amongst the few surviving Syrian Nizāri works, a special place is occupied by the Faṣl min al-lafz al-sharif, which includes a biographical account of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān (d. 589/1193), the most famous dāʾī of the community, in addition to sayings attributed to him. This hagiographic work containing various anecdotes based on the oral tradition of the Syrian Nizāris, may have been compiled much later by the dāʾī Abū Firās Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maynaqī (d. 937/1530 or 947/1540), or possibly by another Syrian Abū Firās who lived two centuries earlier. The main literary sources on the history of the Syrian Nizāris, from the arrival of the first dāʾīs dispatched from Alamūt in the earliest years of the 6th/12th century until the complete
subjugation of the Nizārī castles by Mamlūks in 671/1273, are the local histories of Syria as well as general Arab chronicles. Amongst the relevant authorities, the most important are Ibn al-Qalānisī (d. 555/1160), the Damascene chronicler, Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660/1262), the historian of Aleppo, and Ibn al-Jawzī’s grandson known as Ṣibt (d. 654/1256). Of particular interest here are also works of several lesser known historians, notably al-ʿAẓīmī (d. after 556/1161). For the later decades, the histories of Abū Shāma (d. 665/1267) and Ibn Wāṣil (d. 697/1298), amongst others, are of significance.

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

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

By 487/1094, Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, as noted, had emerged as the leader
of the Persian Ismailis. As an Ismaili Shiʿi, he could not tolerate the anti-Shiʿi policies of the Saljūqs, who as the new champions of Sunni Islam aimed to uproot the Fatimids. Ḥasan's revolt was also an expression of Persian 'national' sentiments, as the alien rule of Saljūq Turks was greatly detested by the Persians of different social classes. This may explain why he substituted Persian for Arabic as the religious language of the Persian Ismailis, accounting also for the popular success of his movement. It was under such circumstances that in al-Mustanṣir’s succession dispute, Ḥasan supported Nizār’s cause and severed his relations with the Fatimid regime and the daʿwa headquarters in Cairo which had lent their support to al-Mustaʿlī. By this decision, Ḥasan founded the independent Nizārī Ismaili daʿwa on behalf of the Nizārī imam who then remained inaccessible; and, as a result, the Nizārī daʿwa survived the downfall of the Fatimid dynasty, similarly to the subsequent fate of the Ṭayyibī daʿwa in Yaman.

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

From early on in the Alamūt period, outsiders had the impression that the Persian Ismailis had initiated a ‘new preaching’ (al-daʿwa al-jadīda) in contrast to the ‘old preaching’ (al-daʿwa al-qadīma) of the Fatimid times. The ‘new preaching’ did not, however, represent any new doctrines; it was merely a reformulation of the old Shiʿi doctrine
of *taʿlīm*, or authoritative teaching by the imam. It was mainly Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ himself who restated this doctrine in a more rigorous form in a theological treatise entitled *al-Fuṣūl al-arbaʿa*, or *Four Chapters*. This treatise, originally written in Persian, has been preserved only fragmentarily by al-Shahrastānī and our Persian historians. The doctrine of *taʿlīm*, emphasizing the autonomous teaching authority of each imam in his own time, became the central doctrine of the Nizāris who, henceforth, were designated as the Taʿlīmiyya. The intellectual challenge posed to the Sunni establishment by the doctrine of *taʿlīm*, which also refuted the legitimacy of the Abbasid caliph as the spiritual spokesman of all Muslims, called forth the reaction of the Sunni establishment. Many Sunni scholars, led by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), attacked the Ismaili doctrine of *taʿlīm*. It is to be noted that the Nizāris, as a matter of general policy, do not seem to have responded to these polemics.

By 489/1096, when the fortress of Lamasar was seized, Ḥasan had acquired or built numerous mountain strongholds in Rūdbār, Daylamān, the centre of Nizāri power in northern Persia. Meanwhile, the Ismailis had come to possess a network of fortresses and several towns in Quhistān, in south-eastern Khūrāsān, which remained the second most important territory of the Nizāri state in Persia. Later, the Nizāris acquired Girdkūh and other fortresses in the regions of Qūmis, Arrajān and Zagros. In the opening years of the 6th/12th century, Ḥasan began to extend his activities also to Syria by sending Persian *dāʿīs* from Alamūt, led by al-Ḥakīm al-Munajjim (d. 496/1103). In Syria, the *dāʿīs* confronted many difficulties in the initial phases of their operations in Aleppo and Damascus; and it took them several decades before they succeeded in various ways to acquire a network of castles, collectively referred to in the sources as the *qilāʿ al-daʿwa*, in the Jabal Bahrāʾ (present-day Jabal Anṣāriyya), a mountainous region between Ḥamā and the Mediterranean coastline in central Syria. These castles included Qadmūs, Kahf and Maṣyāf, which often served as the headquarters of the chief *dāʿī* of the Syrian Nizāris. There, the Nizāris confronted the enmity of various local Sunni rulers as well as the Crusaders who were active in adjacent territories belonging to the Latin states of Antioch and Tripoli. By the final years of Hasan’s life, however, the anti-Saljūq revolt of the Nizāris had lost its momentum, much in the same way that the Saljūqs under Barkiyāruq (d. 498/1105)
and Muḥammad Tapar (d. 511/1118) had failed in their prolonged military campaigns to uproot the Persian Ismailis from their mountain strongholds. Ismaili-Saljūq relations had now entered a new phase of ‘stalemate.’

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

The fourth lord of Alamūt, Ḥasan II to whom the Nizārīs refer with the expression ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām (on his mention be peace), succeeded to leadership in 557/1162 and, soon after, declared the qiyāma or resurrection initiating a new phase in the religious history of the Nizārī community. On 17 Ramaḍān 559/8 August 1164, in the presence of the representatives of different Nizārī territories who had gathered at Alamūt, he delivered a sermon in which he proclaimed the qiyāma, the long awaited Last Day. About two months later, a similar ceremony was held at the fortress of Muʾminābād, near Birjand, and the earlier khutba and message were read out by Raʾīs Muẓaffar, the muḥtasham in Quhistān. There, Ḥasan II’s position was more clearly equated with that of al-Mustanṣir as God’s caliph (khalīfa) on earth, implicitly claiming the status of imam for the lord of Alamūt. Ḥasan II relied heavily on Ismaili taʾwil and earlier traditions,
interpreting *qiyāma* symbolically and spiritually for the Nizāris. Accordingly, *qiyāma* meant nothing more than the manifestation of unveiled truth (*ḥaqīqa*) in the person of the Nizārī imam; it was a spiritual resurrection only for those who acknowledged the rightful imam of the time and were now capable of understanding the truth, the esoteric and immutable essence of Islam. It was in this sense that Paradise was actualized for the Nizāris in this world. They were now to rise to a spiritual level of existence, transcending from *zāhir* to *bāṭin*, from *shari‘a* to *ḥaqīqa*, or from the literal interpretation of the law to an understanding of its spirituality and the eternal truths of religion. On the other hand, the ‘outsiders’, the non-Nizāris who were incapable of recognizing the truth, were rendered spiritually non-existent. The imam proclaiming the *qiyāma* would be the *qāʾim al-qiyāma*, ‘lord of resurrection’, a rank which in Ismaili religious hierarchy was always higher than that of an ordinary imam.

Ḥasan II’s son and successor Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad devoted his long reign (561–607/1166–1210) to a systematic elaboration of the *qiyāma* in terms of a doctrine. The exaltation of the autonomous teaching authority of the present imam now became the central feature of Nizārī thought; and *qiyāma* came to imply a complete personal transformation of the Nizāris who were expected to perceive the imam in his true spiritual reality. Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad also made every Nizārī imam potentially a *qāʾim*, capable of inaugurating an era of *qiyāma*. In the spiritual world of resurrection, there would remain only three categories of persons, ranked in terms of their relationship to the Nizārī imam. These include the ‘people of opposition’ (*ahl-i taḍādd*), the non-Nizāris who exist only in the realm of appearances (*zāhir*) and are spiritually non-existent. Secondly, there are the ordinary followers of the Nizārī imam, the ‘people of gradation’ (*ahl-i tarattub*), who have penetrated the *shari‘a* to its inner meaning. However, they have access only to partial truth, as they still do not fully understand the *bāṭin*. Finally, there are the ‘people of union’ (*ahl-i waḥdat*), the Nizārī super-elite, or the *akhaṣṣ-i khāṣṣ*, who perceive the imam in his true spiritual reality as the epiphany (*maẓhar*) of the word (*kalima*) of God; only they arrive at the realm of *ḥaqīqa*, in a sense the *bāṭin* behind the *bāṭin*, where they find full truth and as such, enjoy salvation in the paradisal state actualized for them in this world. Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad also explicitly affirmed the Nizārid
Fatimid descent of his father and, therefore, of himself. He explained that Hasan II was in fact an imam and the son of a descendant of Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir who had earlier found refuge in Alamūt. Henceforth, the Nizārīs recognized the lords of Alamūt, beginning with Hasan II, as their imams.⁶⁵

Meanwhile, the Syrian Nizārīs had entered into an important phase of their own history under the leadership of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, their most famous leader who had been appointed as chief dāʿī in Syria by Hasan II soon after his own accession in 557/1162. Sinān reorganized and strengthened the Syrian Nizārī daʿwa, also consolidating their network of fortresses in the Jabal Bahrāʾ. Furthermore, he organized an independent corps of fidāʾīs, designated more commonly in Syria and in the Arabic sources as fidāwīs (fidāwiyya), self-sacrificing devotees of the community who were sent on dangerous missions to remove selected enemies who had posed serious threats to the survival of the Nizārīs in particular localities. Aiming to safeguard his community, Sinān entered into intricate and shifting alliances with the major neighboring powers and rulers, notably the Crusaders, the Zangids and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. The Syrian Nizārīs had intermittent conflicts with the Templars and the Hospitalers, Frankish military orders which often acted independently in the Latin East. The only one of the Syrian dāʿīs to act somewhat independently of Alamūt, Sinān evidently taught his own version of the doctrine of qiyāma. He led the Syrian Nizārīs for almost three decades to the peak of their power and fame until his death in 589/1193.⁶⁶

Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad’s son and successor, Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan (607–618/1210–1221), was concerned largely with redressing the isolation of the Nizārīs from the larger world of Sunni Islam. Consequently, he publicly repudiated the doctrine of qiyāma and ordered his followers to observe the sharīʿa in its Sunni form, inviting Sunni jurists to instruct his people. Indeed, Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan did his utmost to convince the outside world of his new policy. In 608/1211, the Abbasid caliph al-Nāṣir acknowledged the imam’s rapprochement with Sunni Islam and issued a decree to that effect. Henceforth, the rights of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan to Nizārī territories were officially recognized by the Abbasid caliph, as well as the Khwārazm Shāhs, who were then establishing their own empire in Persia as successors to the Saljūqs, and by other Sunni rulers. The Nizārīs evidently viewed Jalāl al-Dīn
Hasan’s declarations as a restoration of taqiyya, which had been lifted in the qiyāma times; the observance of taqiyya could imply any type of accommodation to the outside world as deemed necessary by the infallible imam. Be that as it may, the Nizārī imam had now successfully achieved peace and security for his community and state.

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

It is mainly through al-Ṭūsī’s extant Ismaili writings, notably the Rawdat al-taslīm, that we have an exposition of the Nizārī thought of the Alamūt period, especially as it developed after the declaration of the qiyāma. Al-Ṭūsī explained that qiyāma was not necessarily a final, eschatological event, but a transitory condition of life when the veil of taqiyya would be lifted so as to make the unveiled truth accessible. In the current cycle of history, however, the full qiyāma, or Great Resurrection (qiyāmat-i qiyāmāt) would still occur at the end of the era initiated by the Prophet Muḥammad. The identification between sharīʿa and taqiyya, implied by the teachings of Ḥasan II, was now made explicit by al-Ṭūsī who also identified qiyāma with ḥaqīqa. Thus, the imposition of the Sunni sharīʿa by Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan was presented as a return to taqiyya, and to a new period of satr or concealment, when the truth (ḥaqīqa) would be once again concealed in the bāṭin of religion. The condition of qiyāma could, in principle, be granted by
the current Nizārī imam at any time, because every imam was potentially also an *imām-qāʾim*. In his integrated theological presentation, human life could alternate between periods of *qiyāma*, when reality is manifest, and *satr*, when it would be concealed requiring the observance of *taqiyya*. In this sense, the term *satr* was redefined to imply the concealment of the religious truths and the true spiritual reality of the imam, and not just the physical inaccessibility of the imam, as had been the case in the pre-Fatimid and early Alamūt times. The teachings of the late Alamūt period brought the Nizārīs even closer to the esoteric traditions more commonly associated with Sufism.

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

In the meantime, the Syrian Nizārīs had been led by other *dāʿīs* after Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān. From the time of the Imam Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan’s rapprochement with Sunni Islam, relations between the Syrian Nizārīs and their Muslim neighbours had improved significantly, while periodic encounters of different kinds continued with the Franks. The last important encounter between the Nizārīs and the Crusaders, who still held the Syrian coastline, occurred in the
early 650s/1250s in connection with embassies exchanged with Louis IX, the French king better known as St. Louis (d. 1270), who led the Seventh Crusade (1248–1255) to the Holy Land. John of Joinville (d. 1317), the king’s biographer and secretary, has left a valuable account of these dealings, including a curious disputation between an Arabic-speaking friar and the chief dāʿī of the Syrian Nizārīs. Subsequently, the Nizārīs collaborated with the Mamlūks and other Muslim rulers in defeating the Mongols in Syria. Baybars, the victorious Mamlūk sultan, now resorted to various measures for bringing about the submission of the Nizārī strongholds in Syria. Kahf was the last Nizārī outpost there to fall in 671/1273. However, the Syrian Nizārīs were permitted to remain in their traditional abodes as loyal subjects of the Mamlūks and their Ottoman successors. Having lost their political prominence, the Nizārīs henceforth lived secretly as religious minorities in numerous communities scattered in Syria, Persia, Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

**Nizārī Ismailism of the post-Alamūt period**

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

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

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

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

The Nizāris of Persia and adjacent regions did not produce any doctrinal works during the earliest post-Alamūt centuries. Only the versified works of Ḥakīm Sa‘d al-Dīn Nizārī Quhistānī (d. 720/1320), a poet and government functionary from Bīrjand in south-eastern Khurāsān, remain extant from that period. He was perhaps also the first post-Alamūt Nizārī author to have chosen verse and Sufi forms of expression to conceal his Ismaili ideas, a model adopted by later Nizārī authors in Persia. The revival of the daʿwa activities during the Anjudān period also encouraged the literary activities of the community, and a number of better educated Persian Nizāris began to produce the first doctrinal works of the period. The earliest amongst these authors were Abū Isḥāq Quhistānī (d. after 904/1498), and Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (d. after 960/1553), a dāʿī and poet who visited the contemporary Nizārī imam in Anjudān. The writings of these authors contain important historical references as well. Amongst later authors, mention may be made of the poet Imām Qulī Khākī Khurāsānī (d. after 1056/1646) and his son ‘Alī Qulī, better known as Raqqāmī Khurāsānī; they, too, resorted to poetry and Sufi expressions. More doctrinal works by Persian Nizārī authors appeared during the 13th/19th century and later times, marking a modern revival
in Nizārī literary activities. This revival was encouraged by the Nizārī imams following the transference of their residence to India. Amongst such works written in Persian mention may be made of the Risāla dar ḥaqīqat-i dīn and the Khiṭābāt-i ʿāliya of Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh al-Ḥusaynī (d. 1302/1884), the eldest son of Āqā ‘Ali Shāh, Āghā Khān II, and the works of Muḥammad b. Zayn al-ʿAbidin, known as Fidāʾī Khurāsānī (d. 1342/1923), who was also the only Persian Nizārī author of modern times to have written a history of Ismailism, Hidāyat al-muʾminīn al-ṭālibīn, a work permeated with anachronisms and inaccuracies. The Nizāris of Persia did not attract the attention of Persian historians of the post-Alamūt period until modern times. Only a few chroniclers writing during the first three post-Alamūt centuries, including Sayyid Ẓahīr al-Dīn Marʿashī (d. after 893/1488) and other historians of the Caspian region, occasionally have important references to the Persian Nizāris. It was after the middle of the 12th/18th century, when the Nizārī imams had acquired political prominence in Persia, that the chroniclers of the Zand and Qājār dynasties there, such as Aḥmad ʿAli Khān Vazīrī Kirmānī (d. 1295/1878), Riḍā Qulī Khān Hidāyat (d. 1288/1871) and Muḥammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk Sipihr (d. 1297/1880), made frequent references to those imams and their activities.

The Nizārī Ismailis of Badakhshān and the adjacent areas in the upper Oxus have retained their distinctive literary tradition, drawing on the Persian Ismaili literature of different periods with particular reference to the writings of Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. after 462/1070) as well as the Sufi traditions of Central Asia. Consequently, the Badakhshānī Nizāris have preserved and transmitted the anonymous Umm al-kitāb, which does not contain any specific Ismaili ideas, the genuine and spurious writings of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, all written in Persian, as well as the Nizārī literature of later times representing the coalescence of Nizārī Ismailism and Sufism; they have also preserved many anonymous works as well as the writings of the great mystic poets of Persia, who are regarded as their co-religionists. The Nizāris of these remote regions in the Pamirs do not seem to have produced many noteworthy authors in the post-Alamūt period, with some exceptions such as Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī (d. after 856/1452); but they have preserved the bulk of the Ismaili literature of different periods written in Persian elsewhere. These manuscript sources have been held in
numerous private collections, especially by the local religious leaders known as *khalīfīs*, in Shughnān, Rūshān, Ishkāshīm and other districts of the Gorno-Badakhshān province of Tajikistan. The Nizārīs of Afghan Badakhshān, too, have extensive collections of manuscripts, about which information is not readily available. The Nizārīs of Hunza, Chitral, and the districts of Gilgit, now all situated in northern areas of Pakistan, have preserved a selection of Persian Nizārī works, although they themselves speak a host of local languages and dialects such as Burushaski and Wakhi rather than Persian. This literature was originally made available to them by their Badakhshānī neighbours, who themselves speak a number of local dialects, like Shughni, in addition to a Tajik version of Persian. The Ismailis of Badakhshān do not seem to have compiled histories of their community, but there are references to Ismailis in a few local histories of the region.

The Syrian Nizārīs, who adhered almost entirely to the Muḥammad-Shāhī branch of Nizārī Ismailism until the 13th/19th century, developed their own limited literature in Arabic. As they also preserved some of the Ismaili works of the Fatimid period, certain earlier Ismaili traditions continued to be represented in the Nizārī texts of the Syrian provenance. The most famous Syrian *dāʿī*-author of this period was Abū Firās Shīhāb al-Dīn al-Maynaqī, who died in 937/1530 or ten years later. However, the attribution by ʿĀrif Tāmir of a number of Ismaili works, such as the *Kitāb al-īḍāḥ*, to this author, has proven incorrect. The Nizārīs of Syria were evidently not persecuted by the Ottomans, who mention them and their castles in their land registers of the region. In fact, the Syrian Nizārīs did not attract much outside attention until the early decades of the nineteenth century, when they became entangled in recurrent conflicts with their Nuṣayrī neighbours. It was around the same time that European travellers and orientalists began to make references to them. In the 1840s, the Syrian Nizārīs successfully petitioned the Ottoman authorities for permission to restore Salamiyya, then in ruins, for the settlement of their community. Meanwhile, the Syrian Nizārīs belonging to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line had not heard, since 1210/1796, from their last known imam, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, who lived in India. As they failed to locate him, the majority of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārīs of Syria transferred their allegiance in 1304/1887 to the Qāsim-Shāhī line, then represented by Aga Khan III. An Ismaili minority, centred in Maṣyāf
and Qadmūs, remained loyal to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line, and are still awaiting the reappearance of their imam. In modern times, ‘Ārif Tāmir (1921–1998), a Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī, and Muṣṭafā Ghālib (1923–1981), a Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī, have written extensively on the history of the Syrian Nizārī Ismailis in addition to producing editions (alas often defective) of many Arabic Ismaili texts.

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

Drawing mainly on the gināns and their oral traditions, the Nizārī Khojas and related communities like the Imām-Shāhīs compiled a few historical works in Gujarātī during the nineteenth century. There also appeared the Noorum Mobin (1935) of Alimahomed J. Chunara (1881–1966), which was treated for several decades as the quasi-official history of the Nizārī Khojas. In more recent times, a number of Khojas have studied various aspects of their Satpanth tradition and its literature. Foremost among such scholars, mention should be made of Azim Nanji, Ali S. Asani, Aziz Esmail, Zawahir Moir (Noorally) and Tazim Kassam. At the same time, several European scholars, notably Françoise Mallison and Dominique-Sila Khan, have contributed to
this field of South Asian religious studies from social and anthropological perspectives. All in all, numerous aspects of Nizārī Ismailism of the post- Alamūt period remain obscure; and modern scholars, after the initial efforts of W. Ivanow, have not produced major studies dealing with this phase of Ismailism. As noted, further progress here would require studying the individual Nizārī communities and their separate literary and intellectual traditions.

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

In the aftermath of the Mongol debacle, contrary to Juwaynī’s claim, the Nizārī Ismailis of Persia survived the downfall of their state. Many migrated to Badakhshān and Sind, where Ismaili communities already existed. Other isolated Nizārī groups soon disintegrated or were assimilated into the religiously dominant communities of their locality. The centralized daʿwa organization also disappeared, to be replaced by a loose network of autonomous dāʿīs and pīrs in the regions. Under these circumstances, scattered Nizārī communities developed independently while resorting to taqiyya and different external guises. Many Nizārī groups in the Iranian world, where Sunnism prevailed until the rise of the Safawids, disguised themselves as Sunni Muslims. Meanwhile, a group of Nizārī dignitaries had managed to hide Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh’s minor son, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, who succeeded to the imamate in 655/1257. Shams al-Dīn was taken to Ādharbāyjān, in north-western Persia, where he and his next few successors to the imamate lived clandestinely. Certain allusions in the unpublished versified Safar-nāma (Travelogue) of the contemporary poet Nizārī Quhistānī indicate that he may have seen the Nizārī imam in Tabrīz in 679/1280. Shams al-Dīn, who in certain legendary accounts has been confused with Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī’s spiritual guide Shams-i Tabrīz, died around 710/1310. An obscure dispute over
his succession split the line of the Nizārī imams and their following into the Qāsim-Shāhī and Muḥammad-Shāhī (or Muʿmin-Shāhī) branches. The Muḥammad-Shāhī imams, who initially had more followers in Persia and Central Asia, transferred their seat to India in the 10th/16th century and by the end of the 12th/18th century this line had become discontinued. The sole surviving Muhammad-Shāhī Nizārīs, currently numbering about 15,000, are to be found in Syria where they are locally known as the Jaʿfariyya. The Qāsim-Shāhī community has persisted to the present time, and their last four imams have enjoyed prominence under their hereditary title of Āghā Khān (also Āqā Khān and Aga Khan). It was in the early post-Alamūt times that Persian Nizārīs, as part of their taqiyya practices, disguised themselves under the cover of Sufism, without establishing formal affiliations with any of the Sufi ṭarīqas then spreading in Persia and Central Asia. The practice soon gained wide currency among the Nizārīs of Central Asia and Sind as well.

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

By the middle of the 9th/15th century, Ismaili-Sufi relations had
become well established in the Iranian world. Indeed, a type of coalescence had emerged between Persian Sufism and Nizârî Ismailism, two independent esoteric traditions in Islam which shared close affinities and common doctrinal grounds. As an early instance of this coalescence, mention may be made of the celebrated Sufi mathnawî poem, *Gulshan-i râz* (*The Rose-Garden of Mystery*), composed by the Sufi master Maḥmûd-i Shabistarî (d. after 740/1339), and its later commentary, *Baʿḍî az taʾwîlāt-i Gulshan-i râz*, by an anonymous Persian Nizârî author. Among other examples, Central Asian Nizârîs consider ʿAzîz al-Dîn Nasafî (d. ca. 661/1262), a local Sufi master, as a co-religionist, and they have preserved his treatise *Zubdat al-ḥaqâʾiq* as an Ismaili work. Owing to their close relations with Sufism, the Persian-speaking Nizârîs have also regarded several of the great mystic poets of Persia, such as Sanâʿî, ʿAṭṭâr and Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî, as their co-religionists. The Nizârî Ismailis of Persia, Afghanistan and Central Asia have preserved their works and continue to use their poetry in their religious ceremonies. Soon, the dissimulating Persian Ismailis adopted the more visible aspects of the Sufi way of life. Thus, the imams appeared to outsiders as Sufi masters or pîrs, while their followers adopted the typically Sufi appellation of disciples or murîds. By then, the Nizârî imams of the Qâsim-Shâhî line had emerged in the village of Anjudān, in central Persia, and initiated the Anjudân revival in Nizârî Ismailism. With Mustanṣîr bi’llâh (II) (d. 885/1480), who carried the Sufi name of Shâh Qalandar, the Qâsim-Shâhî imams became definitely established in the locality where a number of their tombs are still preserved. Taking advantage of the changing religio-political climate of Persia, including the spread of ʿAlid loyalism and Shiʿi tendencies through Sunni Sufi orders, the imams successfully began to reorganize and reinvigorate their daʿwa activities to win new converts and reassert their authority over various Nizârî communities, especially in Central Asia and India where the Ismailis had been led for long periods by independent dynasties of pîrs. The imams gradually replaced these powerful autonomous figures with their own loyal appointees who would also regularly deliver the much needed religious dues to the imam’s central treasury.

The Anjudân period witnessed a revival in the literary activities of the Nizârîs, especially in Persia, where the earliest doctrinal works of the post-Alamût period were now produced. In the context of
Nizārī-Sufi relations during the Anjudān period, valuable details are preserved in a book entitled *Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī*, containing the religious admonitions of Imam Mustaṣir bi’llāh (II). In this book, later translated into Gujarātī for the benefit of the Khojas, the Nizārīs are referred to with common Sufi expressions such as *ahl-i ḥaqīqat*, or the ‘people of the truth’, while the imam is designated as *pīr* or *murshid*. The imam’s admonitions start with the *sharīʿat-ṭarīqat-ḥaqīqat* categorization of the Sufis, describing *ḥaqīqat* as the *bāṭin* of *sharīʿat* which could be attained only by the believers (*muʾmins*). The *Pandiyāt* further explains, in line with the earlier Nizārī teachings of the *qiyaṣma* times, that *ḥaqīqat* consists of recognizing the spiritual reality of the imam of the time.\(^7\) The Nizārīs now essentially retained the teachings of the Alamūt period, especially as elaborated after the declaration of the *qiyaṣma*. The current imam retained his central importance in Nizārī doctrine, and the recognition of his true spiritual reality remained the prime concern of his followers.\(^8\)

The advent of the Safawids and the proclamation of Twelver Shiʿism as the state religion of their realm in 907/1501, promised more favourable opportunities for the activities of the Nizārīs and other Shiʿi communities in Persia. The Nizārīs were, in fact, now able to reduce the intensity of their *taqiyya* practices. However, this new optimism was short-lived as the Safawids and their *sharīʿat*-minded ‘ulamāʾ soon suppressed all popular forms of Sufism and those Shiʿi movements which fell outside the confines of Twelver Shiʿism. The Nizārīs, too, received their share of persecutions. Shāh Ṭāhir al-Ḥusaynī (d. ca. 956/1549), the most famous imam of the Muḥammad-Shāhī line whose popularity had proved unacceptable to the founder of the Safawid dynasty, was persecuted in Shāh Ismāʿīl’s reign (907–930/1501–1524). However, Shāh Ṭāhir fled to India in 926/1520 and permanently settled in the Deccan where he rendered valuable services to the Niẓām-Shāhs of Aḥmadnagar. It is interesting to note that from early on in India, Shāh Ṭāhir advocated Twelver Shiʿism, which he had obviously adopted as a form of disguise. He achieved his greatest success in the Deccan when Burhān Niẓām-Shāh, after his own conversion, proclaimed Twelver Shiʿism as the official religion of his state in 944/1537. Shāh Ṭāhir’s successors as Muhammad-Shāhī imams continued to observe *taqiyya* in India under the cover of Twelver Shiʿism.\(^9\) In this connection, it is to be noted that in the *Lamaʿāt al-ṭāhirīn*, one
of the few extant Muḥammad-Shāhī texts composed in India around 1110/1698, the author (a certain Ghulām ‘Ali b. Muḥammad) conceals his Ismaili ideas under the double cover of Twelver Shi‘i and Sufi expressions; he eulogizes the Ithnā‘asharī imams whilst also alluding to the Nizārī imams of the Muḥammad-Shāhī line.

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

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

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

In the meantime, with the fortieth Qāsim-Shāhī imam, Shāh Nizār (d. 1134/1722), the seat of this branch of the Nizārī daʿwa, then representing the only branch in Persia, was transferred from Anjudān to the nearby village of Kahak, in the vicinity of Qumm and Maḥallāt, effectively ending the Anjudān period in post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismailism.
By the middle of the 12th/18th century, in the unsettled conditions of Persia after the demise of the Safawids and the Afghan invasion, the Nizārī imams moved to Shahr-i Bābak in Kirmān, a location closer to the pilgrimage route of Khojas who then regularly travelled from India to see their imam and deliver the religious dues, the dassondh or tithes, to him. The Khojas were by then acquiring increasing influence in the Nizārī community, both in terms of their numbers and financial resources. Soon, the imams acquired political prominence in the affairs of Kirmān. The forty-fourth imam, Abu’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī, also known as Sayyid Abu’l-Ḥasan Kahakī, was appointed around 1170/1756 to the governorship of the Kirmān province by Karīm Khān Zand (1164–1193/1751–1779), founder of the Zand dynasty in Persia; earlier the imam had been the beglerbegi or governor of the city of Kirmān. It was in his time that the Niʿmat Allāhī Sufi order was revived in Persia. Imam Abu’l-Ḥasan had close relations with Nūr ‘Alī and Mushtāq ‘Alī Shāh among other Niʿmat Allāhī Sufis then active in Kirmān. On Abu’l-Ḥasan’s death in 1206/1792, his son Shāh Khalīl Allāh succeeded to the Nizārī imamate and eventually settled in Yazd. Shāh Khalīl Allāh was murdered in 1232/1817, and was succeeded by his eldest son Ḥasan ‘Alī Shāh, who was later appointed to the governorship of Qumm by Fatḥ ‘Alī Shāh (1212–1250/1797–1834) and also given properties in Mahallāt. In addition, the Qājār monarch of Persia gave one of his daughters in marriage to the youthful imam and bestowed upon him the honorific title of Āghā Khān (Āqā Khān), meaning ‘lord’ or ‘master’ – this title has remained hereditary among Ḥasan ‘Alī Shāh’s successors. This Nizārī imam, who maintained his own close relations with the Niʿmat Allāhī Sufi order, has left a valuable autobiographical account of his early life and career in Persia in a work entitled ʿIbrat-afzā. Ḥasan ‘Alī Shāh was appointed to the governorship of Kirmān in 1251/1835 by the third Qājār monarch, Muḥammad Shāh. Subsequently, after some prolonged confrontations between the imam and the Qājār establishment, Āghā Khān I, also known as Āghā Khān Mahallātī, left Persia permanently in 1257/1841. After spending some years in Afghanistan, Sind, Gujarāt and Calcutta, the imam finally settled in Bombay in 1265/1848, marking the commencement of the modern period of Nizārī Ismailism. As the spiritual head of a Muslim community, Āghā Khān I received the full protection of the British
establishment in India. The Nizārī imam now launched a widespread campaign for defining and delineating the distinct religious identity of his Khoja following. The Nizārī Khojas were not always certain about their religious identity as they had dissimulated for long periods as Sunnis and Twelver Shi‘is, while their Satpanth tradition had been influenced by Hindu elements. With the help of the British courts in India, however, the Āghā Khān’s followers were, in due course, legally defined as Shi‘i Imāmī Ismailis. In the event, the bulk of Khojas reaffirmed their allegiance to Āghā Khān I and acknowledged their Ismaili identity while minority groups seceded and joined Twelver Khoja and other communities.

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

Aga Khan III died in 1376/1957 and was succeeded by his grandson, known to his followers as Mawlana Hazar Imam Shah Karim al-Husayni. The present, Harvard-educated imam of the Nizārī Ismailis, the forty-ninth in the series, has continued and substantially expanded the modernization policies of his predecessor, also developing numerous new programmes and institutions of his own which
are of wider interest to Muslims and Third World countries at large. He has created a complex institutional network generally referred to as the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), which implements projects in a variety of social, economic and cultural areas. In the field of higher education and educational institutions, his major initiatives include The Institute of Ismaili Studies, founded in London in 1977 for the promotion of general Islamic as well as Ismaili studies, and the Aga Khan University, set up in Karachi in 1985. More recently, he established in Tajikistan the University of Central Asia to address the specific educational needs of the region's mountain-based societies.

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

Notes

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


9. Idris ‘Imād al-Din, *‘Uyūn*, vol. 4, pp. 351–356; see also his *Zahr al-
maʿānī, pp. 204–208.


18. For surveys of the Qarmatīs and the relevant sources, see W. Madelung, “Fatimiden und Bahrainquarmaten”, Der Islam, 34 (1959), pp. 34–88; English trans., “The Fatimids and the Qarmaṭīs of Bahrayn”, in MIHT, pp. 21–73; W.


20. See H. Halm, “The Ismaʿīlī Oath of Allegiance (ʿahd) and the ‘Sessions of Wisdom’ (majālis al-ḥikma) in Fatimid Times”, in MIHT, pp. 91–98.


40. Al-Hamdānī, al-Ṣulayḥiyyūn, p. 5.


57–67.


72. This schism was first brought to the attention of modern scholars in W. Ivanow’s “A Forgotten Branch of the Ismailis”, *JRAS* (1938), pp. 57–79. See also ʿĀrif Tāmir, “Furūʿ al-shajara al-Ismāʿīliyya al-Imāmiyya”, *al-Mashriq*, 51 (1957), pp. 581–612.


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


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

Ismaili Studies: Medieval Antecedents and Modern Developments

Ismaili historiography and the perceptions of the Ismailis by others, in both Muslim and Christian milieus, as well as stages in modern Ismaili studies have had their own fascinating evolution, of which we shall present a brief survey here. In the course of their history the Ismailis have often been accused of various heretical teachings and practices and, at the same time, a multitude of myths and misconceptions circulated about them. This state of affairs reflected mainly the unfortunate fact that the Ismailis were, until the middle of the twentieth century, perceived, studied and judged almost exclusively on the basis of evidence collected or often fabricated by their enemies. As the most revolutionary wing of Shi’ism with a religio-political agenda that aimed to uproot the Abbasids and restore the caliphate to a line of ‘Alid imams, the Ismailis from early on aroused the hostility of the Sunni establishment of the Muslim majority. With the foundation of the Fatimid state in 297/909, the Ismaili challenge to the established order had become actualized, and thereupon the Abbasid caliphs and the Sunni ‘ulamā’ launched what amounted to nothing less than a widespread and official anti-Ismaili propaganda campaign. The overall objective of this systematic and prolonged campaign was to
discredit the entire Ismaili movement from its origins so that the Ismailis could be readily condemned as *malāhid*a, heretics or deviators from the true religious path.

Sunni polemicists, starting with Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Rizām al-Ṭā‘ī al-Kūfī, better known as Ibn Rizām, who lived in Baghdad during the first half of the 4th/10th century, now began to fabricate evidence that would lend support to the condemnation of the Ismailis on specific doctrinal grounds. Ibn Rizām’s anti-Ismaili tract, *Kitāb radd ‘alā l-Ismā‘īliyya* (or *al-Naqḍ ‘alā l-bāṭiniyya*), does not seem to have survived, but it is quoted by Ibn al-Nadīm in his catalogue of Arabic books, *al-Fihrist*. More importantly, it was used extensively a few decades later by another polemicist, the Sharīf Abu’l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. ‘Ali, an ‘Alid from Damascus better known as Akhū Muḥṣin, whose own anti-Ismaili work, consisting of historical and doctrinal parts written around 372/982, has also not survived. However, the Ibn Rizām and Akhū Muḥṣin accounts have been preserved fragmentarily by several later historians, notably al- Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333), Ibn al-Dawādārī (d. after 736/1335), and al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) who was the first authority to have identified Ibn Rizām as the principal source of Akhū Muḥṣin while condemning both writers as unereliable.1 The polemicists concocted detailed accounts of the sinister teachings and practices of the Ismailis, while refuting the ‘Alid genealogy of their imams, descendants of the Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) and the last of the early Shi‘i imams recognized jointly by the Ismaili and the Twelver (Ithnā‘asharī) Shi‘is. Anti-Ismaili polemical writings provided a major source of information for Sunni heresiographers, such as al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037), who produced another important category of writing against the Ismailis.2 On the other hand, the Imāmī Shi‘i heresiographers al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī (d. after 300/912) and Sa‘d b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Qummī (d. 301/913–14), who were better informed than their Sunni counterparts on the internal divisions of Shi‘ism, were notably less hostile towards the Ismaili Shi‘is.3 In fact, these earliest Imāmī heresiographers provide our main source of information on the opening phase of Ismailism.

A number of polemicists fabricated travesties in which they attributed a variety of shocking beliefs and practices to the Ismailis; these forgeries circulated widely as genuine Ismaili treatises and were used as source materials by subsequent generations of polemicists
and heresiographers. One of these forgeries, the anonymous *Kitāb al-siyāsa* (*Book of Methodology*), acquired wide popularity as it contained all the ideas needed to condemn the Ismailis as heretics on account of their libertinism and atheism. Akhū Muḥsin claims to have read this book and quoted passages from it; the same book, or another forgery entitled *Kitāb al-balâgh* was seen shortly afterwards by Ibn al-Nadīm who mentions it in his *al-Fihrist* completed in 377/987. The heresiographer al-Baghdādī even claims that the *Kitāb al-siyāsa* was sent by ʿAbd Allāh (ʿUbayd Allāh) al-Mahdī (d. 322/934), the founder of the Fatimid dynasty, to Abū Ṭāhir al-Jannābī (d. 332/944), the leader of the Qarmaṭī state in Baḥrayn. By this claim al-Baghdādī not only attempted to accord authenticity to this forgery, but also made the Qarmaṭīs subservient to the Fatimids in order to defame all Isma'ilis. This book, which has survived only fragmentarily in later Sunni sources, and was partially reconstructed by S.M. Stern, is reported to have candidly expounded the procedures that were supposedly followed by Ismailī *dāʿīs* for winning new converts and instructing them through some seven stages of initiation or *balâgh* leading ultimately to unbelief and atheism. Needless to add that the Ismaili tradition knows of these fictitious accounts only from the polemics of its enemies. The anti-Ismaili polemical and heresiographical traditions, in turn, influenced the Muslim historians, theologians and jurists who had something to say about the Ismailis.

The Sunni authors, who were generally not interested in collecting accurate information on the internal divisions of Shi'iism and treated all Shi'i interpretations of Islam as ‘heterodoxies’ or even ‘heresies’, also readily availed themselves of the opportunity of blaming the Fatimids and indeed the entire Ismailī community for the atrocities perpetrated by the Qarmaṭīs of Baḥrayn who, in 317/930, attacked Mecca, massacred the pilgrims there and then carried away the Black Stone (*al-ḥajar al-aswad*). The Qarmaṭīs, it may be recalled, seceded from the rest of the Iṣmāʿīliyya, in 286/899, and never recognized continuity in the imamate which was the central doctrine of the Fatimid Ismailis. They continued to await the return of their seventh and last imam, Muḥammad b. Iṣmāʿīl, as the initiator of the final era of history. At any rate, the dissemination of hostile accounts and misrepresentations contributed significantly to turning the Sunni Muslims at large against the Ismailis.
By spreading defamations and forged accounts, the anti-Ismaili authors, in fact, produced a 'black legend' in the course of the 4th/10th century. Ismailism was now depicted as the arch-heresy, ilḥād, of Islam, carefully designed by a certain ʿAbd Allāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ or some other non-ʿAlid impostors, or possibly even a Jewish magician disguised as a Muslim, aiming at destroying Islam from within. By the 5th/11th century, this fiction, with its elaborate details and stages of initiation, had been accepted as an accurate and reliable description of Ismaili motives, beliefs and practices, leading to further anti-Ismaili polemics and heresiographical accusations as well as intensifying the animosity of other Muslim communities towards the Ismailis. It is interesting to note that the same 'black legend' served as the basis of the famous Baghdad manifesto issued in 402/1011 against the Fatimids. This declaration, sponsored by the reigning Abbasid caliph al-Qādir (381–422/991–1031), was essentially a public refutation of the ‘ʿAlid ancestry of the Fatimid caliphs. The same was reiterated in a second anti-Fatimid document sponsored in 444/1052 by the Abbasid caliph al-Qāʾim (422–467/1031–1075).

By the end of the 5th/11th century, the widespread anti-Ismaili campaign of the Sunni authors had been astonishingly successful throughout the central Islamic lands. The revolt of the Persian Ismailis led by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (d. 518/1124) against the Saljūq Turks, the new overlords of the Abbasids, called forth another vigorous Sunni reaction against the Ismailis in general and the Nizārī Ismailis in particular. The new literary campaign, accompanied by military attacks on Alamūt and other Nizārī strongholds in Persia, was initiated by Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092), the Saljūq vizier and virtual master of their dominions for more than two decades. Niẓām al-Mulk himself devoted a long chapter in his Siyāsat-nāma (The Book of Government) to the condemnation of the Ismailis who, according to him, aimed ‘to abolish Islam, to mislead mankind and cast them into perdition’.

However, the earliest polemical treatise against the Persian Ismailis and their doctrine of taʿlīm, propounding the necessity of authoritative teaching by the Ismaili imam, was written by no lesser a figure than Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), the most renowned contemporary Sunni theologian and jurist. He was, in fact, commissioned by the Abbasid caliph al-Mustaẓhir (487–512/1094–1118) to write a treatise in refutation of the Bāṭinīs – another designation,
meaning ‘esotericists’, coined for the Ismailis by their enemies who accused them of dispensing with the ẓāhir, or the commandments and prohibitions of the sharīʿa, because they claimed to have found access to the bāṭin, or the inner meaning of the Islamic message as interpreted by the Ismaili imam. In this widely circulating book, completed around 488/1095 and generally known as al-Mustaẓhirī, al-Ghazālī fabricated his own elaborate ‘Ismaili’ system of graded initiation leading to the ultimate stage (al-balāgh al-akbar) of atheism.10 Subsequently, al-Ghazālī wrote several shorter works in refutation of the Ismailis, and his defamations were adopted by other Sunni writers who, like Niẓām al-Mulk, were familiar with the earlier ‘black legend’ as well. It is interesting to note that the Nizāris never responded to al-Ghazālī’s polemics, but a detailed refutation of the Mustaẓhirī was much later written in Yaman by the fifth Ṭayyibi Mustaʿlī dāʿī who died in 612/1215.11 In any case, Sunni authors, including especially Saljūq chroniclers, participated actively in the renewed propaganda against the Ismailis, while Saljūq armies failed to dislodge the Nizāris from their mountain fortresses.

By the opening decades of the 6th/12th century, the Ismaili community became divided and embarked on its own internal, Nizārī versus Mustaʿlī, feuds. It is reported that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ sent secret agents to Egypt to undermine the Mustaʿlī dāʿwa there, while the Mustaʿlī Ismailis, now supported by the Fatimid state, initiated their own campaign to refute the claims of Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir (d. 488/1095) to the Ismaili imamate. In one anti-Nizārī polemical epistle, al-Hidāya al-Āmiriyya, issued in 516/1122 by the Fatimid caliph al-Āmir (495–524/1101–1130), the Nizārī Ismailis of Syria were for the first time referred to with the abusive designation of ḥashīshiyya, without any explanation.12 This term was later applied to Syrian Nizāris by a few Sunni historians, notably Abū Shāma (d. 665/1267) and Ibn Muyassar (d. 677/1278), without accusing them of actually using ḥashīsh, a product of hemp.13 The Persian Nizāris, too, were designated as ḥashīshīs in some Zaydi Arabic sources written in northern Persia during the Alamūt period.14 It is important to note that in all the Muslim sources in which the Nizāris are referred to as ḥashīshīs, this term is used only in its abusive, figurative sense of ‘low-class rabble’ and ‘irreligious social outcast’. The literal interpretation of the term for the Nizāris as users of ḥashīsh is rooted in the fantasies of medieval Europeans and
their ‘imaginative ignorance’ of Islam and the Ismailis. At any event, the Fatimids and the Syrian Nizārīs soon found a common enemy in the Christian Crusaders, who arrived in the Holy Land to liberate their co-religionists. The Crusaders seized Jerusalem, their primary target, in 492/1099, and subsequently, they founded four principalities in the Near East and engaged in extensive military and diplomatic encounters against the Fatimids in Egypt and the Nizārī Ismailis in Syria, with lasting consequences in terms of the distorted image of the Nizārīs in Europe.

The Syrian Nizārīs attained the peak of their power and fame under the leadership of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, who was their chief dāʿī for some three decades until his death in 589/1193. It was in the time of Sinān, the original ‘Old Man of the Mountain’ or ‘Le Vieux de la Montagne’ of the Crusader sources, that occidental chroniclers of the Crusades and a number of European travellers and diplomatic emissaries began to write about the Nizārī Ismailis, designated by them as the ‘Assassins’. The very term Assassin, evidently based on the variants of the Arabic word ḥashīshī (plural, ḥashīshiyya) that was applied to the Nizārī Ismailis in a derogatory sense by other Muslims, was picked up locally in the Levant by the Crusaders and their European observers. At the same time, the Frankish circles and their occidental chroniclers, who were not interested in collecting accurate information about Islam as a religion and its internal divisions despite their proximity to Muslims, remained completely ignorant of Muslims in general and the Ismailis in particular. It was under such circumstances that the Frankish circles themselves began to fabricate and put into circulation both in the Latin Orient and in Europe a number of tales about the secret practices of the Ismailis. It is important to note that none of the variants of these tales are to be found in contemporary Muslim sources, including the most hostile ones, produced during the 6th/12th and 7th/13th centuries.

The Crusaders were particularly impressed by the highly exaggerated reports and rumours of the Nizārī assassinations and the daring behaviour of their fidāʾīs, the self-sacrificing devotees who carried out targeted missions in public places and normally lost their own lives in the process. It should be recalled that in the 6th/12th century, almost any assassination of any significance committed in the central Islamic lands was readily attributed to the daggers of the Nizārī fidāʾīs. This
explains why these imaginative tales came to revolve around the recruitment and training of the \textit{fidāʾī}s; for they were meant to provide satisfactory explanations for behaviour that would otherwise seem irrational or strange to the medieval European mind. These so-called Assassin legends consisted of a number of separate but interconnected tales, including the ‘paradise legend’, the ‘ḥashīsh legend’, and the ‘death-leap legend’.\textsuperscript{15} The legends developed in stages, receiving new embellishments at each successive stage, and finally culminated in a synthesis popularized by Marco Polo (d. 1324). The famous Venetian traveller added his own original contribution in the form of a ‘secret garden of paradise’, where bodily pleasures were supposedly procured for the \textit{fidāʾī}s with the aid of ḥashīsh by their mischievous and beguiling leader, the Old Man, as part of their indoctrination and training.\textsuperscript{16}

Marco Polo’s version of the Assassin legends, offered as a report obtained from reliable contemporary sources in Persia, was reiterated to various degrees by subsequent European writers, such as Odoric of Pordenone (d. 1331), as the standard description of the ‘Old Man of the Mountain and his Assassins’. Strangely enough, it did not occur to any European that Marco Polo may have actually heard the tales in Italy after returning to Venice in 1295 from his journeys to the East – tales that were by then widespread in Europe and could already be at least partially traced to European antecedents on the subject – not to mention the possibility that the Assassin legends found in Marco Polo’s travelogue may have been entirely inserted, as a digressionary note, by Rustichello of Pisa, the Italian romance writer who was actually responsible for committing the account of Marco Polo’s travels to writing. No more can be said on this subject given the present state of our knowledge, especially as the original version of Marco Polo’s travelogue written by Rustichello in a peculiar old French mixed with Italian has not been recovered. In this connection, it may also be noted that Marco Polo himself evidently revised his travelogue during the last twenty years of his life, at which time he could readily have appropriated the Assassin legends regarding the Syrian Nizārīs then current in Europe. In fact, it was Marco Polo who transferred the scene of the legends from Syria to Persia. The contemporary historian ‘Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 681/1283), an avowed enemy of the Nizārīs who accompanied the Mongol conqueror Hülegü to Alamūt in 654/
1256 and personally inspected that fortress and its library before their destruction by the Mongols, does not report that he discovered any ‘secret garden of paradise’ there, as claimed in Marco Polo’s famous account.

Different Assassin legends or components of particular tales were ‘imagined’ independently and at times concurrently by different authors, such as Arnold of Lübeck (d. 1212) and James of Vitry (d. 1240), and embellished over time. Starting with Burchard of Strassburg who visited Syria in 570/1175 as an envoy of the Hohenstaufen emperor of Germany, European travellers, chroniclers and envoys to the Latin East who had something to say about the ‘Assassins’ participated, as if in tacit collusion, in the process of fabricating, transmitting and legitimizing the legends. By the 8th/14th century, the legends had acquired wide currency and were accepted as reliable descriptions of secret Nizārī Ismaili practices, in much the same way as the earlier ‘black legend’ of Sunni polemicists had been accepted as accurate explanation of Ismaili motives, teachings and practices. Henceforth, the Nizārī Ismailis were portrayed in medieval European sources as a sinister order of drugged assassins bent on indiscriminate murder and terrorism.

In the meantime, the word ‘assassin’, instead of signifying the name of the Nizārī community in Syria, had acquired a new meaning in French, Italian and other European languages. It had become a common noun designating a professional murderer. With the advent of this usage, the origin of the term was soon forgotten in Europe, while the ‘oriental sect’ designated by that name in the Crusader sources continued to arouse interest among Europeans, mainly because of the enduring popularity of the Assassin legends which had indeed acquired an independent mythical life of their own. In this connection, mention should be made of Denis Lebey de Batilly’s book, the first Western monograph devoted entirely to the subject. Having become apprehensive of the existence of would-be assassins in the religious orders of Christendom, after the 1589 stabbing of Henry III of France by a Jacobian friar, the author had set out to compose this short treatise on the true origin of the word assasin and the history of the sect to which it originally belonged. Needless to add that this work represented a confused medley of a number of European accounts with Marco Polo’s narrative. Henceforth, a number of European philologists and
lexicographers began to collect the variants of the term ‘assassin’, such as assassini, assissini and heysessini, occurring in medieval occidental sources, also proposing many strange etymologies. By the 12th/18th century, numerous etymologies of this term had become available, while the Ismailis in question had received a few more notices from the pens of travellers and missionaries to the East. In sum, by the beginning of the 13th/19th century, Europeans still perceived the Ismailis in an utterly confused and fanciful manner. 18

The orientalists of the nineteenth century, led by Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838), began their more scholarly study of Islam on the basis of the Arabic manuscripts which were written mainly by Sunni authors. As a result, they studied Islam according to the Sunni viewpoint and, borrowing classifications from Christian contexts, treated Shi‘ism as the ‘heterodox’ interpretation of Islam by contrast to Sunnism which was taken to represent ‘orthodoxy’. It was mainly on this basis, as well as the continued attraction of the seminal Assassin legends, that the orientalists launched their own study of the Ismailis. Nevertheless, Étienne M. Quatremère (1782–1857), one of the most learned orientalists of the period, did manage to produce a number of historical studies on the Fatimids. It was left for de Sacy, however, to finally solve the mystery of the name ‘Assassin’ in his famous Memoir; 19 he also produced important studies on early Ismailis as background materials for his major work on the Druze religion, Exposé de la religion des Druzes (1838). Although the orientalists correctly identified the Ismailis as a Shi‘i Muslim community, they were still obliged to study them exclusively on the basis of the hostile Sunni sources and the fictitious occidental accounts of the Crusader circles. Consequently, the orientalists, too, tacitly lent their own seal of approval to the myths of the Ismailis, namely, the anti-Ismaili ‘black legend’ of the medieval Sunni polemicians and the Assassin legends of the Crusaders.

Indeed, de Sacy’s distorted evaluation of the Ismailis, though unintentional, set the frame within which other orientalists of the nineteenth century studied the medieval history of the Ismailis. The orientalists’ interest in the Ismailis had now received a fresh impetus from the anti-Ismaili accounts of the then newly-discovered Sunni chronicles which seemed to complement the Assassin legends contained in the occidental sources familiar to them. It was under such circumstances that misrepresentation and plain fiction came to
permeate the first Western book devoted exclusively to the Persian Nizāris of the Alamūt period written by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856). This Austrian orientalist-diplomat endorsed Marco Polo’s narrative in its entirety as well as all the medieval defamations levelled against the Ismailis by their Sunni enemies. Originally published in German in 1818, this book achieved great success in Europe and continued to be treated as the standard history of the Nizārī Ismailis until the 1930s. With rare exceptions, notably the French orientalist Charles F. Defrémery (1822–1883) who produced valuable historical studies on the Nizāris of Syria and Persia, the Ismailis continued to be misrepresented to various degrees by later orientalists such as Michael J. de Goeje (1836–1909), who made valuable contributions to the study of the Qarmaṭīs of Bahrayn but whose incorrect interpretation of Fatimid-Qarmaṭī relations was generally adopted. Orientalism, thus, gave a new lease of life to the myths surrounding the Ismailis; and this deplorable state of Ismaili studies remained essentially unchanged until the 1930s. Even an eminent scholar like Edward G. Browne (1862–1926), who covered the Ismailis rather tangentially in his magnificent survey of Persian literature, could not resist reiterating the orientalistic tales of his predecessors on the Ismailis. As a result, Westerners continued unwittingly to refer to the Nizārī Ismailis as the Assassins, a misnomer rooted in a medieval pejorative neologism.

The breakthrough in Ismaili studies had to await the recovery and study of genuine Ismaili texts on a large scale – manuscript sources which had been preserved secretly in numerous private collections. A few Ismaili manuscripts of Syrian provenance had already surfaced in Paris during the nineteenth century, and some fragments of these works were studied and published there by Stanislas Guyard (1824–1884) and other orientalists. At the same time, Paul Casanova (1861–1926), who produced important studies on the Fatimids and the Nizārī coins, was the first European orientalist to have recognized the Ismaili affiliation of the Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, a portion of which had found its way to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Earlier, the German orientalist Friedrich Dieterici (1821–1903) had published many portions of the Rasā’il, with German translation, without recognizing their Ismaili connection. More Ismaili manuscripts preserved in Yaman and Central Asia were recovered in the opening decades
of the twentieth century by Giuseppe Caprotti (1869–1919), Ivan I. Zarubin (1887–1964) and others. In particular, a number of Nizārī texts were collected from Shughnān, Rūshān and other districts of Badakhshān (now divided by the Oxus River between Tajikistan and Afghanistan) and studied by Aleksandr A. Semenov (1873–1958), the Russian pioneer in Ismaili studies from Tashkent. The Ismaili manuscripts of Central Asian provenance found their way to the Asiatic Museum in St. Petersburg, now part of the collections of the Institute of Oriental Studies there. However, by 1922, when the first Western bibliography of Ismaili writings was prepared by the foremost French pioneer in Shiʿi and Ismaili studies, Louis Massignon (1883–1962), knowledge of European libraries and scholarly circles about Ismaili literature was still very limited.

Modern scholarship in Ismaili studies was actually initiated in the 1930s in India, where significant collections of Ismaili manuscripts have been preserved by the Ismaili Bohra community. This breakthrough resulted mainly from the pioneering efforts of Wladimir Ivanow (1886–1970), and a few Ismaili Bohra scholars, notably Asaf A.A. Fyzee (1899–1981), Ḥusayn F. al-Hamdānī (1901–1962) and Zāhid ʿAlī (1888–1958), all of whom based their original studies on their family collections of manuscripts. Asaf Fyzee, who studied law at Cambridge University and belonged to the most learned Sulaymānī Tayyibī family of Ismaili Bohras in India, in fact, made modern scholars aware of the existence of an independent Ismaili school of jurisprudence. Among his numerous publications on the subject, Fyzee produced a critical edition of al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān’s major work, Daʿāʾim al-Islām, which served as the legal code of the Fatimid state and is still used by the Ṭayyibi Ismailis of India, Pakistan, Yaman and elsewhere. Ḥusayn al-Hamdānī, belonging to an eminent Dāʾūdī Tayyibī family of scholars with Yamanī origins and who received his doctorate from London University, was a pioneer in producing a number of studies based on Ismaili sources, calling the attention of modern scholars to the existence of this unique literary heritage. Zāhid ʿAlī hailed from another learned Dāʿūdī Tayyibī family of scholars with Yamanī origins and who received his doctorate from Oxford University, where he produced a critical edition of the Diwān of the Ismaili poet Ibn Hānī as his doctoral thesis. He was also the first author in modern times to have produced in Urdu, on the basis
of a variety of Ismaili sources, a scholarly study of Fatimid history and a work on Ismaili doctrines.\footnote{32}

Wladimir Ivanow, who eventually settled in Bombay after leaving his native Russia in 1917, collaborated closely with the above-mentioned Bohra scholars and succeeded, through his own connections within the Khoja community, to gain access to Nizārī literature as well. Consequently, he compiled the first detailed catalogue of Ismaili works, citing some 700 separate titles which attested to the hitherto unknown richness and diversity of Ismaili literature and intellectual traditions. The initiation of modern scholarship in Ismaili studies may indeed be traced to the publication of this very catalogue in 1933, which provided a scientific frame for further research in the field.\footnote{33} In the same year, Ivanow founded in Bombay the Islamic Research Association with the help of Fyzee and other Ismaili friends. Several Ismaili works appeared in the series of publications sponsored by the Islamic Research Association which was subsequently transformed into the Ismaili Society of Bombay. Ismaili scholarship received a major impetus through the establishment in 1946 of the Ismaili Society under the patronage of Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh, Aga Khan III (1877–1957), the forty-eighth imam of the Nizārī Ismailis. Ivanow played a crucial role in the creation of the Ismaili Society whose various series of publications were mainly devoted to his own monographs as well as editions and translations of Persian Nizārī Ismaili texts.\footnote{34} He also acquired a large number of Persian and Arabic manuscripts for the Ismaili Society’s Library, which were transferred to The Institute of Ismaili Studies Library in London during the early 1980s.

By 1963, when Ivanow published a revised edition of his Ismaili catalogue, many more sources had become known and progress in Ismaili studies had accelerated considerably.\footnote{35} In addition to many studies by Ivanow and the Bohra pioneers in the field, numerous Ismaili texts now began to be critically edited by other scholars, preparing the ground for further progress in this relatively new area of Islamic studies. In this connection, particular mention should be made of the Ismaili texts of Fatimid and later times edited together with French translations and analytical introductions by Henry Corbin (1903–1978), published simultaneously in Tehran and Paris in his ‘Bibliothèque Iranienne’ series;\footnote{36} and the Fatimid texts edited by the Egyptian scholar Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn (1901–1961) and
published in his ‘Silsilat Makhṭūṭāt al-Fāṭimīyyīn’ series in Cairo.\textsuperscript{37}

It is interesting to note that it was in Cairo, the capital city founded by the Fatimids, that Paul Kraus (1904–1944), another pioneer in the field, kindled Corbin's interest in Ismailism, as M. Kāmil Ḥusayn was to do for Wilferd Madelung who, later, studied also under Rudolf Strothmann (1877–1960), an important German authority on Shi’i and Ismaili studies.

Meanwhile, a number of Russian scholars, notably Andrey E. Ber-
etel’s and Lyudmila V. Stroeva (1910–1993), had maintained the earlier interests of their compatriots in Ismaili studies. In Syria, ‘Ārif Tāmir (1921–1998), who belonged to the small Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī community there, made the Ismaili texts of Syrian provenance available to scholars, as did his Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī compatriot Muṣṭafā Ghālib (1923–1981). A number of European scholars, such as Marius Canard (1888–1982) and several Egyptians including Ḥasan Ḥasan (1892–1968), Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (1911–1967), Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn Surūr (1911–1992) and ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Mājid (1920–1999) made further contributions to Fatimid studies.\textsuperscript{38} Ivanow himself as well as Bernard Lewis had earlier produced important studies on the Ismaili background to the establishment of Fatimid rule.\textsuperscript{39} At the same time, Yves Marquet embarked on a lifelong study of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ and their Rasāʾil. Subsequently, Alessandro Bausani (1921–1988) and his student Carmela Baffioni, among others, contributed to the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ studies, while Abbas Hamdani expounded his own distinct views in a body of articles. Concentrating his research on the authorship and dating of the Rasāʾil, Professor Hamdani has essentially maintained that these epistles were composed by a group of Ismaili dāʿīs just prior to the foundation of the Fatimid caliphate in 297/909.\textsuperscript{40} There are other scholars, however, like I.R. Netton, who dispute the Ismaili origin of the Rasāʾil.\textsuperscript{41}

By the mid-1950s, progress in the field had already enabled Marshall G.S. Hodgson (1922–1968) to produce the first scholarly and comprehensive study of the Nizārī Ismailis of the Alamūt period, albeit mistitled as The Order of Assassins (1955). Soon, others representing a new generation of scholars, notably Samuel M. Stern (1920–1969) and Wilferd Madelung, produced pathbreaking studies, especially on the early Ismailis and their relations with the dissident Qarmaṭīs.\textsuperscript{42} A number of Stern’s major Ismaili articles, together with
some of his unpublished work, were collected in his *Studies in Early Iṣmāʿīlism* (1983). Professor Madelung clarified many obscure aspects of early Iṣmāʿīlism in two seminal articles, and, among his many later contributions to the field, he summed up the current state of research on Iṣmāʿīlī history in his article ‘Iṣmāʿīliyya’, written for the new edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Progress in Iṣmāʿīlī studies has proceeded at a rapid pace during the last few decades through the efforts of yet another generation of scholars such as Pio Filippiani-Ronconi, Iṣmāʿīl K. Poonawala, Heinz Halm, Paul E. Walker, Azim Nanji, Thierry Bianquis, Michael Brett, Yaacov Lev, Ayman Fuʿād Sayyid, Farhat Dachraoui and Mohammed Yalaoui, some of whom have devoted their attention mainly to Fatimid studies. The progress in the recovery and study of Iṣmāʿīlī literature is well reflected in Professor Poonawala’s monumental *Biobibliography of Iṣmāʿīlī Literature* (1977), which identifies some 1300 titles written by more than 200 authors. This progress has received further impetus from the recovery, or accessibility, of yet more Iṣmāʿīlī manuscripts. For instance, hundreds of Iṣmāʿīlī manuscripts preserved by the Nizāris of Tajik Badakhshān were recovered during 1959–63, and in the 1990s many more manuscripts were identified in Shughnān and other districts of the same region through the efforts of The Institute of Iṣmāʿīlī Studies. Many Iṣmāʿīlī texts have now been published in critical editions, while numerous secondary studies of Iṣmāʿīlī history and thought have been produced by at least three successive generations of scholars. Meanwhile, the Satpanth Iṣmāʿīlī tradition of the Nizārī Khojas, as reflected in the gīnān literature, has provided yet another highly specialized area within Iṣmāʿīlī studies. In particular, A. Nanji and Ali Asani have made valuable contributions here. There are also those newcomers to the field, such as Pieter Smoor, Daniel de Smet, Christian Jambet, Michel Boivin and Paula Sanders, who are already making contributions to different aspects of Iṣmāʿīlism.

Scholarship in Iṣmāʿīlī studies is set to continue at an ever greater pace as the Iṣmāʿīlis themselves are becoming increasingly interested in studying their literary heritage and history – a phenomenon attested by the growing number of Iṣmāʿīlī-related doctoral dissertations written in recent decades by Iṣmāʿīlis. In this context, a major contribution is made by The Institute of Iṣmāʿīlī Studies, established in London in 1977 by H.H. Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, the present imam of the
Nizārī Ismailis. This institution is already serving as the central point of reference for Ismaili studies while making its own contributions through various programmes of research and publications. Amongst these, particular mention should be made of the monographs appearing in the Institute’s ‘Ismaili Heritage Series’ which aims to make available to wide audiences the results of modern scholarship on the Ismailis and their intellectual and cultural traditions; and the ‘Ismaili Texts and Translations Series’ in which critical editions of Arabic and Persian texts are published together with English translations and contextualizing introductions.15 Numerous scholars worldwide participate in these academic programmes, as well as in the recently initiated series devoted to the Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ (critical edition and English translation), and many more benefit from the accessibility of the Ismaili manuscripts held at the Institute’s library, representing the largest collection of its kind in the West.16 With these modern developments, the scholarly study of the Ismailis, which by the closing decades of the twentieth century had already greatly deconstructed and explained the seminal anti-Ismaili legends of medieval times, promises to dissipate the remaining misrepresentations of the Ismailis rooted either in hostility or the imaginative ignorance of earlier generations.

Notes


8. W. Ivanow produced a number of pioneering studies on this “black legend”, see especially his *The Alleged Founder of Ismailism* (Bombay, 1946).


24. Freya Stark (1893–1993), the celebrated traveller to the Alamūt valley entitled her travelogue *The Valleys of the Assassins* (London, 1934), where she also cited von Hammer as a main authority on the Nizārī Ismailis (p. 228). Also, Professor Bernard Lewis, who has made valuable contributions to Ismaili studies, persistently designated the Nizāris as the Assassins; see his “The Sources for the History of the Syrian Assassins”, *Speculum*, 27 (1952), pp. 475–489; reprinted in his *Studies in Classical and Ottoman Islam* (London, 1976), article VIII, and *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam* (London, 1967), which has been translated into a number of European languages, always retaining variants of the name Assassins, such as *Les Assassins* (Paris, 1982), *Die Assassinen* (Frankfurt, 1989) and *Gli assassini* (Milan, 1992).


30. Subsequently, these collections were made available to scholars at large. Asaf Fyzee donated some 200 manuscripts to the Bombay University Library; see M. Goraiwala, A Descriptive Catalogue of the Fyzee Collection of Ismaili Manuscripts (Bombay, 1965), and A.A.A. Fyzee, “A Collection of Fatimid Manuscripts”, in N.N. Gidwani, ed., Comparative Librarianship: Essays in Honour of Professor D.N. Marshall (Delhi, 1973), pp. 209–220. Husayn al-Hamdani also donated part of his family’s manuscript collection to the Bombay University, which remains uncatalogued, while a portion remains in the possession of his son, Professor Abbas Hamdani, who has generously made these texts accessible to scholars. The Zāhid ʿAlī collection of some 226 Arabic Ismaili manuscripts was donated in 1997 to The Institute of Ismaili Studies; see D. Cortese, Arabic Ismaili Manuscripts: The Zāhid ʿAli Collection in the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies (London, 2003).
36. This series was launched with Abū Yaʾqūb al-Sijistānī’s Kashf al-
37. The first text to be published here was *al-Majālis al-Mustanṣiriyya*, ed., M.K. Ḥusayn (Cairo, [1947]); as shown by S.M. Stern, this represents the collected lectures that Abu’l-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Ḥākim b. Wahb al-Malijī delivered as the *majālis al-ḥikma* in the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Mustanṣir’s time.


45. These series were launched, respectively, with P.E. Walker’s *Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī: Intellectual Missionary* (London, 1996), and Ibn al-Haytham’s *Kitāb al-munāẓarat*, ed. and tr., W. Madelung and P.E. Walker as *The Advent of the Fatimids: A Contemporary Shi’i Witness* (London, 2000).

The Ismailis have produced a relatively substantial and diversified literature on a variety of subjects and religious themes in different periods of their history. These texts range from a few historical and biographical works of the sīra genre, legal compendia, poetry, and treatises on the central Shi‘i doctrine of the imamate, to complex esoteric and metaphysical works culminating in the gnostic system of the Ismaili ḥaqāʾiq, with its cyclical history, cosmology, eschatology, soteriology, etc. From early on, a good portion of the Ismaili literature related to taʾwīl, esoteric or allegorical interpretation of the Qur’anic passages and prescriptions of the shari‘a. Some of the dāʿīs of the Iranian lands, such as Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī, Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw elaborated a distinct Shi‘i intellectual tradition amalgamating their Ismaili theology (kalām) with a variety of philosophical traditions.

After the classical texts of the Fatimid period, produced mainly by the Ismaili dāʿīs, works on the ḥaqāʾiq occupied a central place in the literary activities of the Ṭayyibi Ismailis of Yaman, who maintained many of the Fatimid traditions, while the Nizārī Ismailis concerned themselves more particularly with the doctrine of taʿlīm, or authoritative guidance of their imam, and ideas related to the declaration of qiyāma, or spiritual resurrection, in their community. In later medieval times, the Nizārīs of the post-Alamūt period often adopted
Sufi idioms and poetic forms for expressing their Ismaili ideas. At the same time, the Nizārīs of the Indian subcontinent elaborated a distinct literary tradition, in a variety of Indian languages, in the form of devotional hymns known as *gināns*.

Many of the Ismaili manuscript resources, written mainly in Arabic and Persian languages, have been recovered, edited, translated and published since the middle of the twentieth century. These publications provide the subject matter of Section A of this chapter. It is to be noted that only published works are included here; for other Ismaili titles which remain unpublished, the reader should consult I.K. Poonawala’s *Biobibliography of Ismāʿīlī Literature* (1977). Full details of the collective volumes in which some of the Ismaili texts have been published are cited in “Collective Ismaili Works” in Section B of this chapter. For other full references, see Chapter 4: Studies. With the major exception of the Syrian Nizārīs, the Nizārī authors of the post-8th/14th-century period named in Section A belong to the Qāsim-Shāhī, as distinct from the Muḥammad-Shāhī (Muʿmini), branch of Nizārī Ismailism.

In addition to covering a number of anonymous and pseudo-Ismaili works (Section C), and the publications related to the *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ* (Section D), the final part (Section E) of this chapter is devoted to a selection of published works on Ismailis written by non-Ismaili Muslim authors. The Ismailis are treated rather pejoratively in numerous medieval works of Muslim heresiographers, polemicists, theologians, jurists and historians who were mostly of Sunni persuasion. Only a selection of the most important publications in this category are covered in this chapter. Medieval Europeans, especially chroniclers of the Crusades and travellers, too, have made brief and passing, often fanciful, references to the Ismailis, notably to the Syrian Nizārīs. These works provide another suitable field of bibliographical study but are excluded from our coverage.
A. Works by Ismaili Authors

**Abu’l-Fawāris Aḥmad b. Yaʿqūb**
(d. ca. 411/1020), **Ismaili dā‘i in Syria**


A theological work containing replies to sixteen questions dealing with various aspects of the imamate.

**Abū Firās Shihāb al-Dīn b. al-Qāḍī Naṣr al-Maynaqī**
(d. 937/1530 or 947/1540), **Nizārī dā‘i in Syria**

- *Faṣl min al-lafẓ al-sharīf*, see Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān
- *Kitāb al-īḍāḥ*, see Abū Tammām, *Kitāb al-shajara*

A short theological treatise on *tawḥīd*, the creation, the soul, eschatology (*maʿād*) and the Ismaili oath (*ʿahd*) of allegiance.

**Abū Ḫātim al-Rāzī, see al-Rāzī, Abū Ḫātim**

**Abu'l-Haytham Aḥmad b. Ḥasan Jurjānī, Khwāja**
(fl. 4th/10th century), **Persian Ismaili author**


This *Qaṣīda*, in eighty-two verses in response to questions, deals with a variety of theological and philosophical subjects.
Abū Isḥāq (Ibrāhīm) Quhistānī  
(d. after 904/1498), Nizārī dāʿī in Persia


One of the earliest doctrinal texts produced during the Anjudān revival in Persian Nizārī Ismailism. After an autobiographical bāb, this work in seven chapters (haft bāb) deals with the seventy-two erring sects, the Ismailis as the only salvaged community, prophethood, the revelation of the Qurʾan and its esoteric interpretation (taʾwīl), imamate, era of concealment (satr), resurrection (qiyāmat), eschatology (maʿād), spiritual and physical worlds, hierarchy of ranks from mustajib to imam, etc.

Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī (al-Sijzī), see al-Sijistānī, Abū Yaʿqūb

Abū Tammām [Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Nīsābūrī]  
(fl. 4th/10th century), Ismaili (Qarmatī) dāʿī in Khurāsān


The first part of the Kitāb al-shajara is comprised of a heresiography of the seventy-two erring sects in Islam in its third chapter on Satan. Other chapters of the first part relate to the following classes of beings: angels, jinn, devils and humans. The text of the second part, as edited by Tāmir, starts in the middle of the section on devils and continues to a discussion of humans in potentiality and actuality. Abū Tammām’s heresiography, as edited by Madelung and Walker on the basis of its single known manuscript, contains information on the following
communities: Muʿtazila (six sects), the Khawārij (fourteen sects), Ḥadithiyya or asḥāb al-ḥadīth (four sects), Qadariyya or Mujbira (five sects), Mushabbiha (thirteen sects), Murjiʿa (six sects), Zaydiyya (five sects), Kaysāniyya (four sects), ʿAbbāsiyya (two sects), Ghāliya (eight sects), and Imāmiyya (five sects). Abū Tammām’s descriptions of eight sects are unique, and for several others add much to known details about them; see Walker, “An Ismaʿili Version of the Heresiography of the Seventy-two Erring Sects”, in MIHT, pp. 161–177.

Abu’l-Maʿālī Ḥātim b. ʿImrān (or Maḥmūd) b. Zahrā (d. 497 or 498/1103–5), Syrian Ismaili author

  A theological treatise on prophetic eras and religious duties with their esoteric interpretations (taʾwil).

Āghā Khān Maḥallātī, Ḥasan ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1302/1885), Nizārī imam

  This biography of the first Āghā Khān, the forty-sixth (Qāsim-Shāhi) Nizārī imam, written in the manner of an autobiography, was evidently compiled in India by Mīrzā Aḥmad Viqār b. Viṣāl Shīrāzī (d. 1298/1881) who stayed briefly with the imam in Bombay in 1266/1850. This work is particularly valuable for details relating to the Āghā Khān’s early life and the events leading to his conflict with the Qājār ruling establishment in Persia which culminated in his permanent settlement in British India in the 1840s.

ʿAlī b. Ḥanẓala b. Abī Sālim al-Maḥfūzī al-Wādiʿī al-Hamdānī (d. 626/1229), Ṭayyibī dāʾi muṭlaq in Yaman

Divided into four chapters, this work on the ḥaqāʾiq deals with tawḥīd, the creation, eschatology (maʿād) and other theological issues.

  
  This short versified work deals with tawḥīd, the creation, the seven spheres, eras of religious history and eschatology (maʿād), amongst other themes found normally in such Yamanī Ṭayyibī writings on the ḥaqāʾiq.

ʻAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd, see Ibn al-Walīd,

ʻAlī b. Muḥammad

ʻĀmir b. ʻĀmir al-Baṣrī
(d. after 700/1300), Syrian Ismaili poet

  
  A long didactic poem in 506 verses on Ismaili subjects related to the ḥaqāʾiq, including tawḥīd, the creation, cycles of prophethood, imamate and eschatology.

al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh, Abū ʿAlī Manṣūr
(d. 524/1130), Fatimid caliph and Mustaʿlī imam

  
  The Hidāya al-Āmiriya, based on the proceedings of a meeting held in Cairo at the Fatimid palace in 516/1122 and written down by Ibn al-Ṣayrafi (d. 542/1147), is a polemical epistle against the claims of Nizār b. al-Muṣṭaṣfīr (d. 488/1095) to the Ismaili imamate. This epistle is the
earliest official document upholding the rights of al-Āmir’s father, al-
Mustaʿlī, and refuting the claims of Nizār and his descendants to the
imamate; see S.M. Stern, “The Epistle of the Fatimid Caliph al-Āmir”,
pp. 20–31.

• Risālat iqāʿ ʂawāʾiq al-irghām, ed., Asaf A.A. Fyzee, together with al-
Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh’s al-Hidāya al-Āmiriya, pp. 27–39; reprinted in
Majmūʿat al-wathāʾiq al-Fāṭimiyya, ed., J. al-Shayyāl, text pp. 231–247,
analysis pp. 68–70.

This additional epistle against the Nizārī claims to the imamate was
written in refutation of a Nizārī reply produced in Syria to the earlier
al-Hidāya al-Āmiriya.

Badakhshānī, Sayyid Suhrāb Vali
(d. after 856/1452), Central Asian Nizārī author

• Sī va shish ʂahīfa, ed., Hūshang Ujāqī, with an English Foreword by W.
pp. 15 (English) + 84 (Persian).

Preserved by the Nizārīs of Central Asia and in some of its manu-
scripts referred to also as the Șahifat al-nāẓirīn, this work is a typical
representation of the Badakhshānī Nizārī tradition. It deals with the
creation, prophethood, revelation (tanzīl) and its esoteric interpreta-
tion (taʾwīl), resurrection (qiyāmat) and eschatology (maʿād), salva-
tion, Paradise and Hell, with scattered references to Nāṣir-i Khusraw
and his teachings.

al-Bharūchī (or al-Bharūjī), Ḥasan b. Nūḥ al-Hindī
(d. 939/1533), Ṭayyibī Bohra author in India

• Kitāb al-azhār wa-majmaʿ al-anwār, vol. 1, ed., ʿĀdil al-ʿAwwā, in his
Muntakhabāt Ismāʿiliyya, pp. 181–250; for part of vol. 6, see Ibn al-
Haytham, Kitāb al-munāẓarāt.

Part of a seven-volume anthology of Ismaili literature compiled be-
tween 931/1524 and 933/1527. The first volume of the Kitāb al-azhār
deals with prophethood, imamate and aspects of the Ismaili daʿwa; see
Bīrjandī, Raʾīs Ḥasan b. Ṣalāḥ Munshī
(fl. 7th/13th century), Persian Nizārī historian and poet


A poem in praise of *fidāʾīs* who killed Atabeg Qizil Arslān, governor of Ādharbāyjān, in 587/1191. Other poems of Raʾīs Hasan, who served also as secretary (*munshī*) to the muḥtasham Shihāb al-Dīn Manṣūr and other Nizārī governors in Quhistān, are scattered in Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī’s *Faṣl dar bayān-i shinākht-i imām*.

Burhānpūrī, Quṭb al-Dīn Sulaymānji
(d. 1241/1826), Dāʿūdī Bohra author in India


A partial edition covering the first part of the second volume of the *Muntazaʿ*, from the time of the first Ṭayyibi dāʿī muṭlaq al-Dhuʿayb (d. 546/1151) to the Dāʿūdī-Sulaymānī schism in the Ṭayyibī daʿwa and the period of the twenty-seventh Dāʿūdī dāʿī muṭlaq Dāʿūd b. Quṭbshāh (d. 1021/1612). Part of a two-volume history of the Ismaili daʿwa from earliest times until 1240/1824.

al-Dādikhī, Qays b. Manṣūr
(d. 655/1257), Syrian Nizārī author


A short treatise on esoteric interpretations (*taʾwīl*) of certain Qur’anic verses and Ismaili teachings related to the number seven.

Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Ismāʿīl b. Hibat Allāh b. Ibrāhīm
(d. 1184/1770), Sulaymānī Ṭayyibī dāʿī muṭlaq in Yaman


Part of a commentary of the Qur’an composed by the thirty-third
Sulaymānī dāʿī, who was a learned religious scholar and made some original contributions to Ṭayyibī Ismaili thought.

Fidāʾī Khurāsānī, Muḥammad b. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Dīzābādī (d. 1342/1923), Persian Nizārī historian and poet


A history of Ismailism from its origins to modern times; the final sections on the Āghā Khâns were evidently added in Bombay around 1328/1910 by a certain Mūsā Khān Khurāsānī (d. 1937) who was in the service of the imams. Copies of this work, permeated with errors, have been preserved by the Nizārīs of Badakhshān in present-day Tajikistan and Afghanistan; see F. Daftary, “Fedāʾī Korāsānī”, in *EIR*, vol. 9, p. 470.


Fidāʾī was also a poet and composed a large number of poems in different forms such as *mathnawī*, *qaṣīda* and *ghazal*. This *mathnawī* of 169 verses is in praise of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.

al-Ḥāmidī, Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 596/1199), Ṭayyibī dāʾī muṭlaq in Yaman


Contains selections in 18 chapters from the dāʾī al-Muʿayyad fiʾl-Dīn al-Shirāzīʼs (d. 470/1078) *al-Majālis al-Muʿayyadiyya* on theological and other themes as well as esoteric interpretation (taʾwil) of the Qurʾān.

- *Majālis Sayyidnā Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī*, excerpt, ed. and

Excerpt from the 117th *majlis* on Ismaili imams.


  Divided into 18 sections, this is another Yamanī Ṭayyībī work on the ḥaqāʾiq dealing with the creation, the spheres, eschatology and other standard themes.


    A brief philosophical work on the rational soul.


    A brief *urjūza* on cosmogony and eras of prophets, from Ādam to Ibrāhīm.
Hasan Kabir al-Din, Pir
(d. ca. 875/1470), Satpanth Nizari preacher-saint in India


(d. 518/1124), Ismaili daji and founder of the Nizari da’wa and state in Persia


Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s major theological treatise, *al-Fuṣūl al-arba‘a*, written originally in Persian, has not survived directly, but it has been preserved fragmentarily by Ḥasan’s contemporary al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), in his heresiographical work written around 521/1127. This treatise was also seen and paraphrased by a number of Persian historians who had access to Nizārī Ismaili sources of the Alamūt period which have not survived. In the *Fuṣūl*, Ḥasan restated the Shi‘i doctrine of *ta’līm*, establishing a logical basis in four propositions for the necessity of an authoritative and trustworthy teacher (*muʿallim-i ṣādiq*) as the spiritual guide of mankind, who would be none other than the Ismaili imam of the time.

The authorship of this reply (javāb), allegedly written by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ to the brief letter (ruqʿa) of the Saljūq sultan Malik Shāh (465–485/1073–1092), is very doubtful. In this letter, the author after relating some biographical details including his travel to Egypt where he encountered the animosity of the Fatimid vizier, Badr al-Jamālī (d. 487/1094) but was protected by the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Mustanṣir (d. 487/1094), defends his religious beliefs. Above all, the author rejects the idea that he is propagating a new religion.

- **Sargudhasht-i Sayyidnā.** This anonymous work was the official Nizārī account of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s biography (sargudhasht) and reign, and its first part may have been autobiographical. The Sargudhasht has not survived, but it was seen by Juwaynī, Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī, who used and paraphrased it in writing their accounts of the life and career of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ as part of their Ismaili histories. Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī have fuller quotations from this work; see Juwaynī, Taʾrīkh-i jahān-gushā, vol. 3, pp. 186–216; tr., Boyle, vol. 2, pp. 666–683; Rashīd al-Dīn, Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh: qismat-i Ismāʿīliyān, pp. 97–134, and Kāshānī, Zubdat al-tawārīkh: bakhsh-i Fāṭimiyān va Nizārīyān, 2nd ed., pp. 133–168.

**Ibn Hāniʾ al-Andalusī, Abu’l-Qāsim Muḥammad (d. 362/973), Ismaili poet in the Maghrib**


The first great poet of the Maghrib, and a devout Ismaili, Ibn Hāniʾ eventually became the chief court poet to the Fatimid caliph-imam...
al-Muʿizz. Most of his collected poems are in praise of the Fatimids, notably al-Muʿizz himself, also defending the rights of the Fatimids against the claims of the Abbasids and the Umayyads of Spain. Ibn Hāniʿ was murdered on his way to Egypt in 362/973.

Ibn Ḥawshab (Manṣūr al-Yaman), Abuʾl-Qāsim al-Ḥasan b. Farah (Faraj) (d. 302/914), early Ismaili dāʿī in Yaman


One of the earliest Ismaili texts, this exegesis of the Qurʾan has survived only fragmentarily. This work also makes references to the reappearance of Muḥammad b. Iṣmāʿīl as the Mahdi and the seventh nāṭiq, which was the central doctrine of the bulk of the Iṣmāʿīliyya in pre-Fatimid times.

Ibn al-Haytham, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Jaʿfar b. Aḥmad al-Aswad (fl. 4th/10th), Ismaili dāʿī in North Africa


This work, on the first year of Fatimid rule in Iṣrāʾīliyya, has been preserved in the sixth volume of al-Bharūchī’s Kitāb al-azhār, still in manuscript form. Composed around 334/945, it is a personal memoir of Ibn al-Haytham, a scholar from Qayrawān, who reconstructs his encounters and conversations with the Ismaili dāʿīs Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Shīʿī and his brother Abuʾl-ʿAbbās which took place between Rajab 296/March 909 and Rabiʿ II 297/January 910. This work also contains many biographical details on Ibn al-Haytham, who hailed from a Zaydi family and then converted to Iṣmāʿīlī (Twelver) Shiʿiism before eventually becoming an Ismaili and a prominent dāʿī.
Ibn al-Walid, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan (d. 886/1481), Yamanī Ṭayyibī author


  A collection of 28 poems, each consisting of 29 verses, in praise of the Prophet Muḥammad and dealing additionally with various religious matters.

Ibn al-Walid, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad (d. 612/1215), Ṭayyibī dāʿī muṭlaq in Yaman


  A detailed refutation, in two volumes, of Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī’s polemical work, *Faḍāʾiḥ al-Bāṭiniyya*, better known as al-Muṣṭafāzhīrī, written around 488/1095 against the Ismailis.


  A collection of over 100 poems in praise of dignitaries and dāʿīs of the Ṭayyibī da’wa, also covering a variety of themes such as a refutation of the Ḥāfiẓī claims to the Ismaili imamate and descriptions of the ḥajj.


  Divided into three main parts, this theological work deals with tawḥīd and the creation, the spiritual world, and esoteric interpretations of certain Qur’anic verses related mainly to eschatology.


  This work on the ḥaqqāʾiq in 33 chapters deals with numerous standard themes such as tawḥīd, cosmology, hierarchy of the Ismaili daʿwa, eschatology, speaker-prophets (nuṭaqāʾ) and imams, Muḥammad b.
Ismāʿīl, reward and punishment of the believers and their opponents.

  Strothmann does not mention the author’s name, treating this treatise as anonymous, but Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, p. 159 (no. 12) attributes it to ‘Ali b. Muḥammad al-Walīd.

  A short treatise on the creation, ranks in the Ismaili hierarchy, eschatology and the imamate of al-Ṭayyib, the twenty-first and last manifest imam of Ṭayyibī Musta’lis.

  A brief commentary on the *Qaṣīdat al-nafs* of Ibn Sīnā (d. 429/1037), a poem on the relationship between soul and body.

  A polemical work defending the claims of al-Ṭayyib to the Ismaili imamate against those of the Ḥāfiẓī faction of the Mustaʿlī daʿwa.

  A compendium of Ismaili doctrines in 100 sections (i’tiqāds) intended for ordinary believers. The themes covered include cosmogony, prophethood, imamate, eschatology, religious practices, esoteric interpretations of the *sharīʿa*, and the necessity of observing *taqiyya*.

**Ibn al-Walīd, al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad**
(d. 667/1268), Ṭayyibī Ḍaltiesī muṭlaq in Yaman

  A compendium of responses to 25 theological questions from an
Ismaili perspective. This excerpt relates to the ninth question on Adam and his fall.


Divided into five chapters (*faṣls*) and preceded by an introduction on *tawḥīd*, this short treatise summarizes Ismaili doctrines of the early Yamanī Ṭayyibī tradition; it deals with cosmogony, origination of the spiritual universe and its corresponding ranks in the physical world, creation of man, eschatology (*maʿād*) and the advent of the *qāʾim*, the imamate and the opponents of the imam, etc.

**Idrīs b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Walīd, ‘Imād al-Dīn (d. 872/1468), Ṭayyibī dāʾī muṭlaq and historian in Yaman**


This work divided into 21 chapters (*bābs*) and completed in 838/1435 represents the zenith of the Yamanī Ṭayyibī tradition of compiling compendia of esoteric Ismaili doctrines, drawing on the writings of the major authors of the Fatimid period, such as Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī, al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān and Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī.


A history of the Ṭayyibī daʿwa in Yaman from 853/1449 to 870/1465.

Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2002. pp. x + 109 (English) + 44 (Arabic) + 397 (Arabic).

Parts of a comprehensive, seven-volume history of the Ismaili da’wa from its beginnings until the opening phase of the Ṭayyibi da’wa in Yaman and the subsequent demise of the Fatimid dynasty in 567/1171; see Poonawala, Biobibliography, pp. 170–172. This is also an important history of the Prophet Muḥammad, the early Shi’i imams, and the Fatimids and their state.

Imām Shāh, Imām al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (d. 919/1513), founder of the Imām-Shāhī Satpanth community in India

  This important ginān has been preserved and recorded in three separate versions attributed to Pīr Shams al-Dīn, Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn and Imām Shāh. This ginān presents the imam as the long-awaited saviour of a Vaishnavite tradition concerning the ten descents (*dasa avatāra*) of the Hindu deity Vishnu through the ages.


Jaʿfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, Abuʾl-Qāsim (d. ca. 346/957), Ismaili dāʿī and author in North Africa


One of the earliest Ismaili texts and an important source on pre-Fatimid Ismaili teachings and practices. This work is essentially the presentation of a series of personal encounters between various seekers of the spiritual truth and other individuals who act as their guides.

- **Kitāb al-farāʾiḍ wa-ḥudūd al-dīn**, extract, see al-Mahdi bi’llāh, Kitāb arsalahu ...


A collection of six short treatises, written separately in pre-Fatimid times but attributed to Jaʿfar, who apparently acted only as the compiler of the collection. Compiled probably during the reign of the second Fatimid caliph-imam al-Qāʾim (322–334/934–946), this work contains allegorical exegesis of the Qurʾan, in some passages in cipher, as well as allusions to early Ismaili doctrines, such as the expectation of the return of the Mahdi or qāʾim as the seventh nāṭiq.


The Sarāʾir al-nuṭaqāʾ and Asrār al-nuṭaqāʾ are two separate but closely related works edited together here by M. Ghālib. The Sarāʾir and its later expanded version, the Asrār, contain esoteric interpretations of mythological figures, and stories of the prophets (nuṭaqāʾ) recognized in the Qurʾan and their eras. The Asrār also upholds the legitimacy of Iśmāʿīl b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq’s claim to the imamate.

al-Jawdharī, Abū ʿAlī Manṣūr al-ʿAzīzī (d. ca. 386/996), Fatimid functionary and author in North Africa

- **Sīrat al-ustādh Jawdhar**, ed., Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn and Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī Shaʿīra. Silsilat makhtūṭāt al-Fāṭimīyīn,
This is the biography of Jawdhar, the eunuch (ustādh) and courtier who served the first four Fatimid caliph-imams and died in 363/973; it was compiled by Jawdhar’s private secretary Abū ʿAlī Manṣūr al-ʿAzīzī al-Jawdharī, who was named after his master, in the time of the Fatimid caliph-imam al-ʿAzīz (365–386/975–996). This is an important source for early Fatimid history and the inner workings of the Fatimid court.

Khākī Khurāsānī, ʿImām Qulī
(d. after 1056/1646), Persian Nizārī poet

  Part of Khākī’s collection of popular ghazals which occasionally also contain rural forms of the Khurāsānī dialect spoken in north-eastern Persia.
  A lengthy qaṣīda of 980 verses on the recognition of the imam, salvation and other religious themes.
  A qaṣīda of 79 verses on Adam and Satan, eras in religious history, piety, etc.

Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī, Muḥammad Riḍā b. Khwāja Sulṭān Ḥusayn Ghūriyānī
(d. after 960/1553), Persian Nizārī dāʿī and poet

- Faṣl dar bayān-i shinākht-i imām, ed. and English trans., Wladimir Ivanow, in his Ismailitica, in Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,

Composed around 952/1545, this work contains a summary of the author’s views on the imamate and other Nizārī teachings of the Anjudān period.


This is apparently a plagiarized version of Abū Ishāq Quhistānī’s Haft bāb, wrongly attributed to Nāṣir-i Khusraw; see W. Ivanow, Ismaili Literature, pp. 142–143.


In his poetry, Khayrkhwāh adopted the pen-name (takhalluṣ) of Gharībī, after Mustanṣir bi’llāh (III) also known as Gharib Mīrzâ (d. 904/1498), a contemporary Nizārī imam. In the Risāla, Khayrkhwāh expounds his ideas on the status and attributes of the ranks of pīr and ḥujjat, also providing autobiographical details and relating how he travelled to Anjudān to see the Nizārī imam.

al-Kirmānī, Ḥamīd al-Dīn Ahmad b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. after 411/1020), Ismaili dāʿī in Persia and Iraq


A work on the nature of the soul and prophethood refuting the Persian physician and philosopher Abû Bakr Muḥammad b. Zakariyyâʾ al-Râzî’s (d. 313/925) al-Ţibb al-rūḥānî, which had been earlier refuted by Abû Ḥâtim al-Râzî (d. 322/934) in his Aʿlām al-nubuwwa.


In this work, divided into ten bābîs, al-Kirmâni acts as an arbiter, from the point of view of the Fatimid Ismaili daʿwa, in a controversial theological debate among Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasafî (d. 332/943), Abû Ḥâtim al-Râzî (d. 322/934) and Abû Yaʿqûb al-Sijistâni (d. after 361/971), and preserves fragments of al-Nasafî’s Kitâb al-maḥṣūl and al-Sijistâni’s Kitâb al-nuṣra, which have not survived. In many instances, al-Kirmâni upholds the views of al-Râzî, as expressed in his Kitâb al-iṣlâh which is extant, against those of al-Nasafî and al-Sijistâni.


A collection of eleven short Risâlas, starting with al-Durriyya and ending with al-Kâfiyya. The attribution of two other Risâlas usually included in this collection (Khazâʾîn al-adilla and Risâla fiʾl-radd ʿalâ man yunkîr al-ʿâlam al-rūḥānî) to al-Kirmâni are doubtful. For English summaries of these epistles, see H. Haji, A Distinguished Dâʿî, pp. 22–67.


On the literal and esoteric meanings of tawhîd.
A brief treatment of correspondences among coexisting realms so as to reconcile multiplicity of the creation with *tawḥīd*.

A short epistle in refutation of those who hold that substance is eternal and form is temporal.

A short treatise on the divine command, the commander and the commanded. Here, al-Kirmānī also refutes the doctrine of *amr* discussed by al-Sijistānī in the 28th chapter of his *Kitāb al-maqālīd*, which still remains in manuscript form.

An epistle on the suitable time for starting the fast of Ramaḍān, defending the Fatimid practice of relying on astronomical calculations in preference to sighting of the new moon.

On the literal and esoteric meanings of terms related to eternity. In this epistle, al-Kirmānī also refutes al-Sijistānī’s ideas as elaborated in the 21st chapter of his *Kitāb al-maqālīd*.

A series of questions and answers in refutation of a work wrongly attributed to al-Sijistānī.

A short work on esoteric interpretation (ta’wil) of night and day, written in 399/1009, in reply to a question raised by al-Kirmānī’s deputy in Jiruft, Kirmān.


Composed in 405–406/1014–1016 in Egypt, this work deals with the imamate in general and al-Ḥākim’s imamate (386–411/996–1021) in particular.


This epistle, written in 408/1017 in Egypt, aims to refute the views of al-Ḥasan al-Akhram (d. 408/1018), one of the founders of the Druze movement, on al-Ḥākim’s divinity.


A polemical treatise written against the Zaydī Imam Abu’l-Ḥusayn al-Muʿayyad biʾllāh Aḥmad al-Butḥānī al-Hārūnī (d. 411/1020). It was sent to al-Kirmānī’s deputy, ʿAbd al-Malik al-Māzīnī, in Kirmān, Persia.


A treatise on the imamate in two parts (maqālas), each subdivided into seven maṣābīhs. The ultimate aim of this treatise, composed around 404/1013, is to defend the legitimacy of al-Ḥākim’s imamate. This work also contains quotations from Hebrew and Syriac writings in Arabic script.


Completed in 411/1020 for advanced adepts, this work contains al-Kirmānī’s metaphysical system, representing a unique syncretic tradition within the Iranian school of philosophical Ismailism. Al-Kirmānī was fully acquainted with Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophies as well as the metaphysical systems of Muslim philosophers, notably al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), known as the ‘second teacher’ (al-muʿallim al-thānī) of philosophy in the Islamic world after Aristotle, and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), or Avicenna of the medieval Europeans. He harmonized Ismaili theology with a diversity of philosophical traditions in elaborating his own system expounded in the Rāḥat al-ʿaql, which is comprised of seven ramparts (suwar). In his cosmology, al-Kirmānī replaced the Neoplatonic dyad of intellect (ʿaql) and soul (nafs) in the spiritual world, adopted by al-Sijistānī and other Ismaili predecessors, by a system of ten separate intellects, in partial adaptation of al-Fārābī’s school of philosophy. Al-Kirmānī’s cosmology was later adopted by the Ṭayyibī daʿwa in Yaman. The Rāḥat al-ʿaql and its sources are thoroughly studied in D. de Smet, La Quiétude de l’intellect.


The attribution of this short work, on the seven cycles of prophethood, to al-Kirmānī is probably incorrect.


A short treatise on the necessity of maintaining balance between the exoteric (ẓāhir) and esoteric (bāṭin) dimensions of religion. The first part deals with prophethood, imamate, the creation, religious hierarchy, esoteric interpretation of the shariʿa, while the second part relates to the pillars of Islam.
al-Mahdī bi’llāh, Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh (‘Ubayd Allāh) (d. 322/934), Fatimid caliph and Ismaili imam


In this letter, sent to the Ismaili community in Yaman, al-Mahdī explains his genealogy and claim to the imamate as well as the *taqiyya* practices used by the central leaders of the early Ismaili daʿwa. The text of this letter, in paraphrased form, is preserved in Jaʿfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman’s *Kitāb al-farāʾiḍ wa-ḥudūd al-dīn*, still in manuscript form.

al-Majdūʿ, Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Rasūl (d. 1183 or 1184/1769–71), Dāʾūdī Bohra author in India


Divided into 12 chapters, this is the earliest known catalogue of Ismaili literature. Commonly known as the *Fihrist al-Majdūʿ*, it summarizes some 250 Ismaili works, and it served as the basis for W. Ivanow’s *A Guide to Ismaili Literature*.

al-Malījī, Abu'l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Ḥākim b. Wahb (fl. 5th/11th century), Fatimid chief *qāḍī* in Egypt


These 35 weekly lectures, containing sermons of al-Mustanṣir on different topics, were delivered by al-Malījī during 451/1059. Before Stern correctly identified the author of this work, in his “Cairo as the Centre
of the Ismāʿīli Movement”, pp. 439–440, different individuals such as the Fatimid vizier Badr al-Jamālī (d. 487/1094) had been named as its author by various scholars.

**Mazyad b. Ṣafwān b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥillī al-Asadī, al-Amīr (d. 584/1188 or 592/1196), Syrian Nizārī poet**


Originally belonging to the Banū Asad of Iraq before settling in Maṣyāf, the amir Mazyad’s collected poems here are in the form of 33 *qaṣīdas* on a variety of ethical and religious subjects.

**Maḥṣūr al-Yaman, see Ibn Ḥawshab**

**al-Muʿayyad fī-l-Dīn al-Shirāzī, Abū Naṣr Hibat Allāh b. Abū ʿImrān Mūsā (d. 470/1078), Ismaili chief dāʿī and poet**


  A brief *qaṣīda* in defence of Ismailis, also containing esoteric interpretation (*taʾwil*) of certain Ismaili teachings.


  Collected poems in praise of the Fatimid caliph-imams, also dealing with *tawḥīd*, esoteric interpretation of the Qurʾan and other religious themes.


  Sermons on Paradise, the *walāya* of ʿAlī, *tawḥīd*, guidance of the imams and on certain *ḥadīths*.

Muḥammad ʿAlī b. Mullā Jiwābhāʾī Rāmpūrī
(d. 1315 or 1316/1897–1899), Dāʾūdī Bohra functionary and historian in India

- *Mawsim-i bahār fi akhbār al-ṭāhirin al-akhyār*, lithographed, Bombay: Matba’at Ḥayдарī Ṣafdarī, 1301–11/1884–93. 3 vols. (in Gujarati written in Arabic script). The first two volumes were reprinted in Bombay in 1335/1916–17 and thereafter; the third volume was reprinted only in the final decades of the twentieth century in Bombay.

A three-volume history of Ismailism, with volume two on the Ismaili imams until al-Ṭayyib, and volume three (completed in 1299/1882 and lithographed first soon afterwards) on the daʿwa in Yaman and
Gujarāt from its origins until the author’s time. This history draws on the Muntaza’ al-akhbār of Burhānpūrī and a number of earlier sources, some of which have not survived.

Muḥammad b. Saʿd (or Aḥmad) b. Dāʿūd al-Rafna (d. ca. 854/1450), Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī dāʾī in Syria


A brief treatise on Ismaili doctrine.

al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh, Abū Tamīm Maʿadd (d. 365/975), Fatimid caliph and Ismaili imam


A compilation of prayers, one for each day of the week. These prayers are traditionally attributed to al-Muʿizz.


This epistle is addressed to Bishop Paul of Damietta. The attribution of this work to al-Muʿizz may be doubtful.

The attribution of this letter to al-Muʿizz is doubtful. The author of this letter, sent to al-Ḥasan al-Aʿṣam around 363/973, reproaches the Qarmatī leader for having deviated from the creed of his forefathers. Al-Aʿṣam made this letter public and denounced the Fatimids before attacking Egypt in 363/974.


This Sijill, sent in 354/965 to the dāʿī of Sind, Ḥalam, who established an Ismaili state in Multān, explains the taqiyya practices of the early Ismaili imams before the foundation of the Fatimid state. This document, reasserting the ʿAlid genealogy of the Fatimid caliphs, represents the earliest Ismaili refutation of the myth of Ibn al-Qaddāḥ that portrayed a certain non-ʿAlid (ʿAbd Allāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ) as the progenitor of the Fatimid caliphs.

al-Mustanṣir bi’llāh, Abū Tamīm Maʿadd
(d. 487/1094), Fatimid caliph and Ismaili imam


A collection of 66 Sijills addressed, from 445/1053 to 489/1096, mainly by al-Mustanṣir to the Šulayḥids who propagated the Ismaili daʿwa in Yaman on behalf of the Fatimids. Ḥusayn F. al-Hamdānī has edited five additional Sijillāt in his al-Ṣulayḥiyyūn, pp. 302–307 and 319–320.

Mustanṣir bi’l-lāh [II] b. Muḥammad b. Islām Shāh
(d. 885/1480), Nizārī imam

- Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī, ed. and English trans., Wladimir Ivanow as Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi or “Advices of Manliness”. Ismaili Society Series A, no. 6. Leiden: Published for the Ismaili Society by E.J. Brill, 1953. pp. 19 (English) + 97 (English) + 102 (Persian).

Containing the sermons or religious admonitions of the thirty-second
(Qāsim-Shāhī) Nizārī imam, this is one of the earliest doctrinal works produced during the Anjudān revival in Persian Nizārī Ismailism. These sermons or advices (pandiyāt) to the true believers seeking exemplary standards of chivalry (jawānmardī) were evidently compiled by an anonymous Nizārī author during the imamate of Mustanṣir bīllāh’s son and successor ‘ʿAbd al-Salām Shāh. The Nizārī Khojas, who have preserved Sindhi (Khojki) and Gujarāti versions of the Pandiyāt, maintain that this book was sent to the Indian subcontinent for their religious guidance. This work preserves important evidence on Nizārī-Sufi relations during the early Anjudān period in Nizārī history.

Nāṣir-i Khusraw, Ḥakim Abū Muʿīn Nāṣir b. Khusraw b. Ḥārith Qubādiyānī Marwazī (d. after 462/1070), Persian poet, traveller and Ismaili dāʿī in Khurāsān


Partial editions and translations of the Dīwān

- Dīwan-i Nasir-i Khusraw, containing only the Portions Prescribed for the M.A. Examination of the Calcutta University, ed., Āqā Muḥammad


Comprising more than 10,000 verses (bayts), the poems collected in Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s Dīwān are primarily odes composed in the qaṣīda form. They relate to a wide range of ethical, theological and philosophical themes; several qaṣīdas are autobiographical.

**Other works by Nāṣir-i Khusraw**


This concise work represents Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s responses to a series of thirty questions on theological and philosophical topics, with special reference to the human soul, its relation to the world of nature and its quest for salvation.


Divided into 100 chapters, this is another work on philosophical theology. Here, Nāṣir-i Khusraw paraphrases many of the ideas found in Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī’s *Kitāb al-yanābīʿ*.


This is a commentary, on Khwāja Abū’l-Haytham Jurjānī’s *Qaṣīda*, composed by Nāṣir-i Khusraw in 462/1070 at the request of his patron and amir of Badakhshān, Abū’l-Maʿālī ‘Alī b. al-Asad. In this, the latest known work of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, the author attempts to harmonize the “two wisdoms” (*ḥikmatayn*), philosophy and religion, or more specifically Ismaili gnosis.

- *Rawshanāʾī-nāma*, ed. and German trans., Hermann Ethé, in his “Nāṣir Chusraw’s Rūšānāināmā oder Buch der Erleuchtung”, in *ZDMG*,
Composed around 440/1048, this *mathnawi* poem deals with *tawhīd*, soul (*nafs*), and a number of other theological as well as ethical themes.

- *Risāla dar javāb-i navad va yak faqara as'ala-yi falsafī va manṭiqī va ταβī'ī va nahvī va dīnī va ta'wīlī*, ed., N. Taqāvī et al., in Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s *Dīwān*, pp. 561–583, with subsequent reprints.

An abridged version of Nāṣir Khusraw’s *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn*.


The attribution of this brief astronomical treatise in seven chapters (*faṣls*) to Nāṣir-i Khusraw is very doubtful.


This *Saʿādat-nāma* is wrongly attributed to Nāṣir-i Khusraw. It was apparently composed by another Nāṣir, better known as Sharīf-i Iṣfahānī, who died in 735/1334.

- *Safar-nāma*, ed. and French trans., Charles Schefer (1820–1898) as


The *Safar-nāma* is the account of Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s seven-year journey (437–444/1045–1052) to many parts of Central Asia, Persia, Near East, and Fatimid Egypt, where he furthered his education as an Ismaili dā‘ī. He presents a vivid account of the splendour of Fatimid Cairo, in the reign of al-Mustanṣir, with its royal palaces, gates, gardens and shops.


A short Ismaili treatise on *tawḥīd*, God’s word (*kalima*), the soul (*nafs*), the intellect (*‘aql*), *nāṭiq, asās, imām*, and reward and punishment in the hereafter.

Divided into 51 sections (guftārs), this work contains esoteric interpretations of a range of religious commandments such as prayer, fasting, hajj, etc. This is Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s major work on taʾwīl, preserved and read widely by the Nizārī Ismailis of Central Asia.


Composed in 453/1061, this is one of Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s most important philosophical works dealing with a variety of metaphysical topics, with special reference to the voyage of the soul from the physical world in quest of salvation to the spiritual world. Here, Nāṣir also refutes the transmigration of souls (tanāsukh).

**al-Nīsābūrī, Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm (or Muḥammad)**
(d. after 386/996), Persian Ismaili dāʿī and author


An important historical source, authorized by the Fatimids themselves, this work deals with the settlement of the early Ismaili Imam ʿAbd Allāh in Salamiyya in the 3rd/9th century, and the eventful journey of ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī, another early imam and the future founder of the Fatimid state, from Syria to North Africa.


Composed in the reign of the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Ḥākim (386–411/996–1021), this short treatise argues for the legitimacy of the imamate and its necessity. Defining the imamate as the foundation of religion, the author resorts to a variety of arguments for establishing his thesis, ranging from the ten categories of the philosophers to several metaphors from minerals, plants and animals.

This work, on the attributes and functions of an ideal dāʿī which has not survived directly, is preserved at the end of Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmīdī’s Tuḥfat al-qulūb, still in manuscript form, and also in the second volume of al-Bharūchī’s Kitāb al-azhār.

Nīshāpūrī, Muḥammad b. Surkh
(fl. 4th/10th century), Persian Ismaili author


This is another commentary using Ismaili taʾwīl, other than Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s much more detailed Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn, on Khwāja Abu’l-Haytham Jurjānī’s Qaṣīda by one of his disciples.

Nizārī Quhistānī, Ḥakīm Saʿd al-Dīn b. Shams al-Dīn
(d. 720/1320), Nizārī poet and dāʿī in Persia


Composed in 710/1310, this mathnawi poem of 576 verses (bayts) contains many Ismaili ideas.


Containing more than 10,000 verses (bayts) in ghazal form, Nizārī’s collected poems contain numerous Ismaili ideas expressed in Sufi terminologies.

• Safar-nāma, excerpts, in Chingiz G.A. Bayburdi, Zhizn’ i tворчество Nizārī. Selections, English trans., in N. Eboo Jamal, Surviving the
Mongols (with the original verses in the Persian translation of N. Eboo Jamal’s Surviving the Mongols, tr., F. Badra’i, as Baqā-ya ba’d az Mughūl).

A mathnawī poem of 1200 verses (bayts) describing Nizârī’s two-year (678–681/1280–1282) journey through Persia and Transcaucasia. This versified travelogue was evidently completed before Nizârī’s appointment in 694/1294 as court poet to ‘Alî Shâh, the Mihrabânîd governor of Qhîstân in eastern Persia.

al-Nu‘mân b. Muḥammad b. Manṣūr al-Tamîmî
al-Qayrawânî al-Maghribî, al-Qâḍî Abû Hanîfâ (d. 363/974),
Ismaili chief dâ’î and Fatimid chief qâḍî


Commissioned by the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Muʿizz and supervised
closely by him, the *Daʾāʾim al-Islām* was composed around 349/960 in two volumes, with volume one on 'ibādāt (acts of worship) and volume two on muʿāmalāt (worldly affairs and transactions). It served as the official, legal code of the Fatimid state. This work has continued to be used by the Ṭayyibi Ismailis of India and elsewhere as their principal authority in legal matters; see I.K. Poonawala, “al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān and Ismaʿili Jurisprudence”, in *MIHT*, pp. 117–143.


Completed in 346/957, this is the earliest known historical work in Ismaili literature covering the background to the establishment of the Fatimid caliphate. The *Iftitāḥ* was apparently partially based on the *Sīra* of the dāʿī Ibn Ḥawshab Maṣūr al-Yaman (d. 302/914), which has not survived. The *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa* is studied in T. Nagel, *Frühe Ismailiya und Fatimiden*.


Composed after 343/954, this legal work in refutation of Sunni schools of law is one of al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān’s extant polemical treatises.


This work, on Ismaili taʾwil of Qur’anic stories of prophets from Ādam to Mūḥammad, was translated into Persian by al-Muʿāyyad fī’l-Dīn al-Shirāzī under the title of *Bunyād-i taʾwil*, which is still in manuscript form. Only two copies of this Persian translation, belonging to the Hamdānī and Zāhid ʿAlī collections of Ismaili manuscripts, have come to light. The Hamdānī collection is now partly in the keeping of Professor Abbas Hamdani while the Zāhid ʿAlī collection is housed at The Institute of Ismaili Studies Library in London.

An abridgement of al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān’s *Kitāb al-īḍāḥ* on *fiqh*, which was composed before the *Da‘ā’im al-Islām* but has not survived directly. The *Iqtiṣār* was used later by al-Nu‘mān’s descendants as Fatimid chief judges (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*) in public sessions on law held in the mosques of Cairo.


Belonging to the *adab* genre in Arabic literature, on the code of conduct in different social contexts, this work explains proper behaviour towards the imam and in his presence. As a rare instance of its kind, in the final, fifteenth chapter, al-Nu‘mān explains the virtues and qualifications of an ideal *dāʾī*.


A collection of lectures and anecdotes on the activities of the first four Fatimid caliph-imams, this voluminous work also reports numerous conversations between al-Nu‘mān and the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Mu’izz on religious matters and affairs of the Fatimid state.


A short work written in reply to a certain Abu’l-Ḥasan al-Baghdādī, explaining the necessity of obeying the imam.

This work provides in typical Shi‘i fashion details on the virtues of the Prophet Muḥammad’s clan of Banū Hāshim, his family (ahl al-bayt), the first Shi‘i Imam ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, the ‘Alids and other Ṭālibids; and the impiety of the Banū Umayya and the Umayyad caliphs.


This is a philosophical work, in three chapters, in the form of answers to a number of questions on cosmology, eschatology, ranks of the Ismaili hierarchy, etc. The attribution of this work to al-Qāḍi al-Nu‘mān may be doubtful.


A collection of non-legal traditions (ḥadīths) compiled during the reign of al-Mu‘izz li-Dīn Allāh (341–365/953–975); it was revised and approved by the Fatimid caliph-imam himself. Divided into 16 parts, it contains about 1460 traditions, all of which, according to al-Nu‘mān, were well-known and authentic. Two-thirds of this work is related to the Imam ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, with the remaining portion dealing with the faḍā’il or virtues of the ahl al-bayt and the early imams up to Ja’far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765). The final parts (15–16) relate to the beginning of the Ismaili da’wa in North Africa and the appearance of ‘Abd Allāh al-Mahdī there. Many of the sources used by al-Nu‘mān in producing this compendium are no longer extant.


This is the esoteric counterpart to the Daʾāʾim al-Islām, based on al-Nu‘mān’s weekly lectures delivered as the majālis al-ḥikma. Divided into 12 parts (juzʾs), each subdivided into 10 lectures (majālīs), al-Nu‘mān here provides esoteric interpretation (taʾwil) of walāya, tāhāra, ṣalāt and other acts of worship (ʿibādāt).

Written in the time of the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Qāʾim (322–334/934–946) and dealing with the issue of the imamate, this versified treatise defends the rights of the Fatimids against the arguments forwarded by their Muslim opponents, including the Sunnis, the Muʿtazila, the Khārijīs, the Zaydīs and several other Shiʿi groups. With 2375 verses, this work is one of the longest arājiz in the history of Arabic literature.

Raqqāmī Khurāsānī, ʿAlī Qulī b. Imām Qulī Khākī Khurāsānī (fl. 11th/17th century), Persian Nizārī poet

Qaṣīda-yi dhurriyya, ed. and Russian trans., Aleksandr S. Semenov, in his “Ismailitskaya oda, posvyashchennaya Aliya-boga” [An Ismaili Ode dedicated to ‘Ali], Iran (Leningrad), 2 (1928), pp. 1–24; partial ed. and English trans., W. Ivanow, in his Ismailitica, pp. 73–76.

In some manuscripts, this Qaṣīda, comprised of a versified list of Nizārī imams, is attributed to Raqqāmī’s father Khākī Khurāsānī. It seems that a later poet has continued the list of the Nizārī imams beyond those living in the 11th/17th century, as the enumeration ends with Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh (1877–1957), who succeeded to the imamate in 1302/1885.

Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān b. Salmān (or Sulaymān) (d. 589/1193), Nizārī chief dāʿī in Syria

translation of this excerpt, fragment I, may be found in Jean Baptiste L.J. Rousseau’s “Extraits d’un Livre qui contient la doctrine des Ismaéliens” (1812), pp. 226–234.

This hagiographic text attributed to Sinān may have been compiled by the Syrian Nizārī dāʾī Abū Firās Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maynaqī (d. 937/1530 or 947/1540), or possibly by another Abū Firās who lived earlier. One of the earliest Ismaili works studied by the orientalists, the manuscript of this text (dated 724/1324) was discovered in Syria by Joseph Catafago, a dragoman at the Prussian consulate in Syria; see his “Lettre de M. Catafago à M. Mohl”, pp. 485–493.

al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥātim Aḥmad b. Ḥamdān (d. 322/934), Qarмаṭī (Ismaili) dāʾī in Persia


A work in defence of revelation and prophethood, and in refutation of the physician-philosopher Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Zakariyyāʾ al-Rāzī (d. 313/925), the Aʾlām is essentially a record of the disputation (munāẓara) held between the two Rhazes in Rayy in the presence of that city’s governor and other notables. This disputation is also reported in al-Kirmānī’s al-Aqwāl al-dhahabiyya, which states (pp. 2–3)
that it took place in the presence of Mardāwīj (d. 323/935), the founder of the Ziyārid dynasty of northern Persia with their capital at Rayy.


This book was composed to correct certain ideas expressed in the *Kitāb al-maḥṣūl* written by the Central Asian Qarmaṭī dāʿī Muḥammad b. Ahmad al-Nasafī who was executed by the Sāmānids in 332/943. The dāʿī al-Kirmānī defends Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī’s corrections of al-Nasafī’s views in his own *Kitāb al-riyāḍ*, which also contains fragments of al-Rāzī’s *al-Iṣlāḥ*. This work deals mainly with prophethood, specifically with the *nafaqāʾ*, from Adam to Jesus, and the laws enunciated by them; al-Rāzī also discusses the nature of the soul (*nafs*), cosmogony, types of matter, etc. This is one of the earliest extant Ismaili works manifesting Neoplatonic influences.


This is a lexicographical work on religious terms for the attributes of God, rituals, etc. The final section of this dictionary of Islamic technical terms deals with Muslim sects and schools of thought. As a rare instance of its kind in Ismaili literature, *al-Zina* is mentioned in Ibn al-Nadīm’s *al-Fihrist* and in Niẓām al-Mulk’s *Siyyāsat-nāma*, reflecting its ready availability to non-Ismaili milieus.
Şadr al-Dīn, Pīr (fl. end of 8th/14th century),
Satpanth Nizārī preacher-saint in India


  Professor A. Asani has refuted the traditional attribution of this lengthy poem of the ginān literature on the mystical path to Pīr Şadr al-Dīn, considering it rather as an anonymous composition in Hindu-stani emanating from the Qādirī Sufi circles of South Asia.


al-Shādilī al-Yamānī, Abū Manşūr,
Syrian Nizārī author


  Divided into seven sections (*mabāḥith*), this work deals with *tawḥīd*, the creation, imamate, ranks of the Ismaili hierarchy, etc. According to I.K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, p. 297, it is a plagiarized version of Abū Firās Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maynāqī’s *Risālat maṭāliʿ al-shumūs*. No biographical details are available on this author.
al-Shahrastānī, Abu’l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm (d. 548/1153), Ashʿarī (Ismaili?) theologian and heresiographer


The Majlis, al-Shahrastānī’s only extant treatise in Persian, was originally delivered as a sermon to a Twelver Shi‘i audience in Khwārazm around the year 540/1145. This work on the two worlds of order (amr) and creation (khalq), clearly reflects Ismaili perspectives, including the Neoplatonized Ismaili cosmology propounded by Abū Ya’qūb al-Sijistānī and other Ismaili dāʿīs operating in Khurāsān and Transoxania during the Fatimid period. This brief text of some thirty printed pages is also permeated with Qur’anic verses and hadīths for which al-Shahrastānī provides esoteric interpretations through the methodology of taʿwil.


This book represents an intellectual wrestling match (muṣāraʿa’) with Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), whose concept of the ‘necessary being’ (wājib al-wujūd) is refuted here on the basis of Ismaili ideas, especially the absolute transcendence of God beyond existence and comprehension by human reason. Al-Shahrastānī’s Ismaili thought is investigated in D. Steigerwald, La pensée philosophique et théologique de Shahrastānī.

A partial Qurʾan commentary bearing an Ismaili imprint. In this work, produced a few years before 540/1145, al-Shahrastānī fully employs the methodology of Ismaili *ta’wil*.

### Shahriyār b. al-Ḥasan
(fl. 5th/11th century), Ismaili *dāʾi* in Persia and Yaman


This epistle on the spiritual world, written as a reply to al-Sulṭān ʿĀmir b. Sulaymān al-Zawāḥī (d. 492/1099), a tribal leader in Yaman, is commonly but wrongly included in the collection of thirteen *Rasāʾil* attributed to Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī. After his initial career as a *dāʾi* in Persia, Shahriyār settled in Yaman serving the Ismaili Ṣulayḥids who recognized the suzerainty of the Fatimids.

### Shams al-Dīn, Pīr (fl. 7th/13th century),
Satpanth Nizārī preacher-saint in India


Shams al-Dīn b. Aḥmad (or Muḥammad) al-Ṭayyibī (d. 652/1254), Nizārī poet and dāʿī in Syria


A treatise on the rules for entering the Ismaili daʿwa and the attributes of the master (*murshid*) and disciple (*mustajib*), dedicated to the penultimate ruler of Alamūt, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad (618–653/1221–1255). The author evidently spent some time in Alamūt at the court of this Nizārī imam.

Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh al-Ḥusaynī, Pīr (d. 1302/1884), Persian Nizārī author


The writings of Pīr Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh, the eldest son of Āqā ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1302/1885), Āghā Khān II, the forty-seventh (Qāsim-Shāhī) Nizārī imam, represent the earliest examples of a modern revival in Nizārī Ismaili literary activities in Persian. In these sixty-four khiṭābāt or sermons written before 1298/1881, the author discusses *tawḥīd*, the attributes of God, prophethood, imamate, the origin of the Khoja community, esoteric interpretation (*taʾwīl*) of prayer, fasting, *ḥajj*, *jihād*, etc., the Nizārī-Mustaʿlī schism, imams of the Alamūt and post-Alamūt periods, genealogy of the Nizārī imams, virtues of a true believer (*muʾmin*), etc.

Intended for the general reader, this incomplete treatise contains a summary exposition of certain Ismaili teachings, with special reference to the doctrine of the imamate as well as ethical and mystical aspects of Ismailism.

**al-Sijistānī (al-Sijzī), Abū Yaʿqūb Isḥāq b. Aḥmad (d. after 361/971), Ismaili dāʿī in Khurāsān and Transoxania**


  In this work, comprising seven sections (*maqālas*), al-Sijistānī puts forward a variety of proofs for the necessity of prophecy (*nubuwwa*), also explaining different prophetic eras.


Originally written in Arabic, only this Persian paraphrase or translation of the text has survived. The Persian version, perhaps produced by Nāṣir-i Khusraw or the commentator of Abuʾl-Haytham Jurjānī’s *Qaṣīda*, has been dated to the 5th/11th century for linguistic reasons. The *Kashf al-maḥjūb* (*The Unveiling of the Hidden*) comprises seven chapters or discourses (*maqālāt*), each one subdivided into seven parts (*jastārs*), which are to be regarded as the most important sources of divine knowledge, or gnosis, which the book seeks to unveil. These discourses deal with *tawḥīd* and the stages of creation, namely, intellect, soul and nature as well as prophethood and resurrection (*qiyyāmat*).


  Composed in 17 chapters toward the end of his life, around 361/971, this is a polemical work which also presents a summary exposition of
Ismaili doctrine and preserves remnants of the mythological cosmology propounded by the early Ismailis, including the spiritual beings called *jadd*, *fatḥ* and *khayāl* which mediated between the spiritual and the physical worlds.


Composed around 350/961 and later paraphrased extensively in Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s *Khwān al-ikhwān*, this is an advanced text containing a corpus of philosophical and doctrinal material. It is organized as a collection of themes, each one being the subject of a separate section called *yanbūʿ* (plural, *yanābīʿ*), meaning wellspring or source. Some forty such themes are covered here, ranging from metaphysical proofs of the universal intellect and the universal soul, the transcendence of God and the nature of the creation, to religious doctrines concerning prophethood, angels, resurrection, and eternal reward and punishment. The primary theme of the *Kitāb al-yanābīʿ* is, however, the wellsprings of human knowledge and spiritual life in each era of religious history. Al-Sijistānī’s metaphysical system is investigated extensively by P.E. Walker in his *Early Philosophical Shiism* and other publications.


A short epistle revolving around eschatology (*maʿād*) and salvation.


Here, al-Sijistānī expounds in summary form the doctrines that are essential for achieving salvation, including beliefs in God, His angels, books, messengers, the Last Day, resurrection, etc.

A short treatise on numerous Ismaili concepts and terms such as intellect (*ʿaql*), soul (*nafs*), jadd, fath, khayāl, preceptor and followers (*sābiq* and *tālī*), the seven letters (*al-ḥurūf al-sabʿa*), etc.

al-Sijzī, Abū Yaʿqūb, *see* al-Sijistānī, Abū Yaʿqūb ʾIshāq

Sinān, Rāshid al-Dīn, *see* Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān b. Salmān

Sulaymān b. Ḥaydar, al-Shaykh (d. 1210/1795), Muḥammad-Shāhī, Nizārī dāʿī in Syria


In this *Qaṣīda* the imams of the Muḥammad-Shāhī (Muʿminī) branch of Nizārī Ismailism are listed until Muḥammad b. Ḥaydar al-Bāqir, the last known imam of this branch who lived in Awrangābād and was contemporary with the author. Subsequently, the bulk of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārīs switched their allegiance to the Qāsim-Shāhī line of Nizārī imams then represented by the Āghā Khāns. At present, the remnants of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārīs living in Maṣyāf, Qadmūs and a few surrounding villages in central Syria, are evidently awaiting the reappearance of their last known imam as the Mahdi.

al-Sulṭān al-Khaṭṭāb b. al-Ḥasan b. Abīʾl-Ḥifāẓ al-Ḥajūrī al-Hamdānī (d. 533/1138), Ṭayyibī Mustaʿlī dāʿī and poet in Yaman


In two parts, of which the first contains 26 poems in praise of the Fatimid imams and high dignitaries of the Ismaili *daʿwa* as well as theological and philosophical themes. The second part of the *Dīwān*,
recovered recently, has 31 poems in praise of the Šulayhid queen, al-Sayyida al-Ḥurra (d. 532/1138), the Banū Ḥāshim and various tribes, also containing biographical details on al-Khaṭṭāb himself.


This is the only work in Ismaili literature dealing with the important Islamic dogma of the inimitability (*iʿjāz*) of the Qurʾan, defended here primarily on the basis of the Ismaili views on prophethood. In the second part of this *Risāla* the author refutes the arguments of those who allege that the religious commandments of the *sharīʿa* are burdensome, affirming the Ismaili position of the Fatimid times that the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and esoteric (*bāṭin*) aspects of religion and the *sharīʿa* are complementary, and that both are indispensable.

al-Ṣūrī, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī (fl. 5th/11th century), Syrian Ismaili poet


A poem on *tawḥīd*, the creation, spiritual hierarchies, the prophets from Ādam to Muḥammad, etc.

Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn b. Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn (d. 1385/1965), Dāʿūdī Ṭayyibī dāʿī muṭlaq in India


In addition to the extensive corpus of the writings of Sayyidnā Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn, who led the Dāʿūdī Ṭayyibis for half a century (1333–1385/1915–1965) as their fifty-first dāʿī muṭlaq, this vast chrestomathy contains fragments and quotations from earlier Ismaili works.
Tamīm b. al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh, Amīr Abū ʿAlī (d. 375/985), Fatimid prince and poet


A collection of poems on love, gardens, enjoyments of life, etc. Many of the poems are in praise of the imams, especially the poet’s father al-Muʿizz (d. 365/975) and his younger brother al-ʿAzīz (d. 386/996), who succeeded to the Ismaili imamate and Fatimid caliphate. Occasionally, Tamīm’s panegyrics also contain references to Ismaili teachings under the Fatimids. Tamīm’s poems belong to different genres, including marthiyas or elegies on the premature deaths of his brothers, and on the violent deaths of some of his ʿAlid ancestors.

al-Ṭūsī, Naṣīr al-Dīn Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Muḥammad (d. 672/1274), Shiʿi theologian, philosopher and scientist


Divided into 20 chapters (faṣls), this is a work on eschatology and the origin and return of the human soul. Here, al-Ṭūsī elucidates the esoteric meanings and ethical underpinnings of eschatology as depicted in the Qur’an from Ismaili perspectives. The treatise was originally lithographed with some of al-Ṭūsī’s other works in Tehran in 1313/1895, and again in 1324/1906.


This short treatise was written at the fortress of Alamūt, or Maymūndiz, at the request of a noble lady (ḥaḍrat-i ʿulyā), from the household of the Nizārī Imam ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 653/1255), who wanted the author to compile a summary of the Fuṣūl-i mubārak, or epistles of an earlier Nizārī imam, and other Ismaili works. The four chapters
(faṣls) of this brief and elementary treatise deal with eschatology, attributes of an Ismaili muʿmin or believer, doctrine of solidarity and dissociation (tawallā and tabarrā), and the seven pillars of the sharīʿa and their esoteric interpretation (taʾwil) for the Ismailis.


A comprehensive treatise expounding the Nizārī teachings of the Alamūt period, especially following the declaration of qiyāma in 559/1164. Here, the author also elaborates the new doctrine of satr or concealment of the spiritual truth (ḥaqīqa) under the veil of the sharīʿa. Divided into 28 chapters or representations (taṣawwurūt), it deals with a variety of themes such as the Creator, cosmogony, nature of human existence, ethics, eschatology, prophethood and imamate.


- **Sayr va sulūk**, lithographed, Tehran, n.d.; also in Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī,
This is al-Ṭūsī’s spiritual autobiography in which he explains his conversion to Ismailism as well as the Nizārī Ismaili doctrine of taʿlīm, or authoritative teaching by the imam. Composed in the Nizārī strongholds of Quhistān, the work takes the form of an extended letter addressed to the chief of the dāʿīs, a dignitary called Muẓaffar b. Muḥammad. Al-Ṭūsī spent some three decades, from around 624/1227 to 654/1256, in the Nizārī fortress communities of Persia.

al-Yamānī, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad
(fl. 4th/10th century), Ismaili author


The autobiography of Jaʿfar b. ʿAlī, chamberlain to the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Mahdī (d. 322/934) that was compiled during the caliphate of al-ʿAzīz (365–386/975–996) by a certain Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Yamānī. It contains valuable details on al-Mahdī’s long journey (289–297/902–909) from Salamiyya in Syria to North Africa and his stay in Sijilmāsa, from where he was rescued by the dāʾī Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Shīʿī and taken to Raqqāda to be installed to the Fatimid caliphate. Jaʿfar b. ʿAlī had accompanied al-Mahdī on this fateful journey. Born in 260/874–75, Jaʿfar was an eyewitness to many important events in early Ismaili history.
B. Collective Ismaili Works


A collection of 23 documents issued by the Fatimid chancery of state (dīwān al-inshā‘) on behalf of various Fatimid caliph-imams; the majority having been preserved in Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Qalqashandī’s *Ṣubh al-a‘shā* (Cairo, 1332–38/1914–20). The Arabic texts and English translations of another ten Fatimid documents are contained in S.M. Stern’s *Fāṭimid Decrees: Original Documents from the Fāṭimid Chancery*.


• Two Early Ismaili Treatises: Haft babi Baba Sayyid-na and Matlubuʾl-muʾminin, ed., Wladimir Ivanow. Islamic Research Association [Series], no. 2. Bombay: A.A.A. Fyzee, 1933. pp. 9 (English) + 64 (Persian).

C. Anonymous Ismaili and Pseudo-Ismaili Works

This section also includes a selection of non-Ismaili works preserved and used by the Ismailis of Syria, India, Central Asia and elsewhere.

• Āfāq-nāma, in two parts, ed., A.E. Bertel’s, in Panj risāla, pp. 1–24. Contains ideas on the elements, senses, the creation, etc., attributed to Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw.

• Baʿdi az taʾwīlāt-i gulshan-i rāz, ed. and French trans., Henry Corbin, in his Trilogie Ismaélienne, Persian text pp. 131–161, translation as Symboles choisis de la “Roseraie du Mystère”, pp. 1–174. This may be identical with a work entitled Sharḥ-i gulshan-i rāz, attributed to Shāh Ṭāhir al-Ḥusaynī al-Dakkanī (d. ca. 956/1549), the thirty-first imam of the Muḥammad-Shāhī (or Muʾminī) Nizārī Ismailis; see Poonawala, Biobibliography, p. 274. A partial commentary, it comprises esoteric interpretations (taʾwilāt) of selected passages of the celebrated Sufi mathnawi, Gulshan-i rāz, composed by Maḥmūd-i Shabistārī (d. after 740/1339).

A form of the legendary biography of the Buddha was translated from Sanskrit into Middle Persian and then rendered into Arabic, probably in early Abbasid times. The Arabic version of Bilawhar and Būdhāsf, heroes of the story, provided the source for all other versions, including the Greek and the Christian legend of Barlaam and Joasaph (Josephat), (see Ernst Kuhn’s *Barlaam und Joasaph. Eine bibliographisch-literargeschichtliche Studie*, in *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philosophisch-philologische Klasse, Band XX, Munich, 1893. pp. 88). The full Arabic version of this work has been preserved by the Tayyibi Ismaili Bohras of South Asia and used in their curriculum on ethics; see al-Majdū, *Fihrist*, pp. 11–15.


These fragments on Ismaili doctrines contained in a manuscript recovered around 1809 from Maṣyāf in Syria by Jean Baptiste L.J. Rousseau (1780–1831), the French consul general in Aleppo, represent the earliest Ismaili source materials used by orientalists in Europe. Initially, French translations of some of the fragments were published, through the efforts of Silvestre de Sacy, in J.B.L.J. Rousseau’s “Extraits d’un Livre qui contient la doctrine des Ismaélis” (1812), pp. 222–249.

A treatise on the declaration of the *qiyāma* in 559/1164 at Alamūt, evidently witnessed by the author, as well as Nizārī teachings of the *qiyāma* times, wrongly attributed to Bābā Sayyidnā, viz., Hasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (d. 518/1124).


An eminent ghālī, al-Mufaḍḍal was a follower of the Imam Ja’far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) who later became an adherent of the Twelver Imāmī Imam, Mūsā al-Kāẓim (d. 183/799), during whose imamate he died. This is the most famous of the works attributed to al-Mufaḍḍal. Reporting certain views of Ja’far al-Ṣādiq, the *Kitāb al-haft* is essentially a Mufaḍḍalī-Nuṣayrī text which found its way to the Syrian Nizārī Ismailis who seized the Nuṣayrī fortresses of central Syria in the 6th/12th century. Subsequently, this book, also known to the Ṭayyibīs, came to be regarded by the Ismailis as belonging to their literature, even though it does not contain any Ismaili ideas.


An anonymous work, on cosmology, theology and imamate that has been incorrectly attributed to al-Kirmānī and, as such, included in the collection of the thirteen Rasā’il by him.


This is a chapter on early Ismaili history from an anonymous work, acquired in Syria, on seven stages of attainment in Ismailism.


A compendium of several *masāʾil* dealing with the creation, *qā’im*, eschatology, etc. Several of the *masāʾil* are drawn from Muḥammad
b. Tāhir al-Hārithī’s (d. 584/1188) well-known *al-Anwār al-latīfa*, a treatise on the Ṭayyibi *haqā‘iq*.


A treatise on intelligible beings, the soul (*nafs*), and the knowledge of self and God.


Five Persian treatises, permeated with Sufi ideas, preserved by the Nizārī Ismailis of Badakhshān in Central Asia. The manuscripts of the works, dated to the 7th/13th and later centuries and included in this collection, were for the most part acquired during 1959–63 from Tajik Badakhshān, where they are preserved in private libraries; see A. Bertel’s and M. Bokoev, *Alfavitniy katalog rukopisey*.


This versified work attributed in one of its Syrian manuscripts to Abū Firās Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maynaqi (d. 937/1530 or ten years later), may have been originally composed by a Ḥāfiẓī Musta‘lī poet and then revised by a Nizārī author; see W. Madelung’s reviews, in *ZDMG*, 118 (1968), pp. 423–427 and *Oriens*, 23–24 (1974), pp. 517–518. The *qaṣā‘id* deal with *tawḥīd*, God’s command (*amr*), the creation, cyclical conception of history and eras of different prophets from Ādam to Muḥammad, the hierarchy of ranks in the Ismaili *da‘wa*, etc. In verses 704–733 (ed. Makarem), 617–635 (ed. Tāmir) the names of different imams recognized by the Ḥāfiẓīs and the Nizārīs are enumerated,
indicating different Ismaili origins and authorships of the work.


The manuscript of these anonymous fragments on Neoplatonized cosmology and other Ismaili doctrines, preserved by the Syrian Nizāris, was acquired by an American missionary in Syria, Dr. Henry W. de Forest, and sent to Salisbury who translated them into English for the American Oriental Society.


On the creation of man, the apparent and hidden attributes and functions of various parts of the human body, and the requirements for an ethical life.


Written in archaic Persian and preserved by the Nizārī Ismailis of Central Asia, this work was originally produced in the 2nd/8th century in Arabic by the Mukhammadisa, an early group of Shīʿi ghulāt; see W. Madelung’s review, in *Oriens*, 25–26 (1976), pp. 352–358, and H. Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismāʿīliya*, pp. 142–168. It contains the discourses of the Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. ca. 114/732) in response to questions posed by an anachronistic group of disciples, including Jābir b. Ṭabd Allāh al-Anṣārī, Jābir al-Juʿfī and Muḥammad b. al-Mufaḍḍal. The *Umm al-kitāb*, which does not contain any Ismaili doctrines, was at some point adopted into Ismaili literature and found its way into private libraries of the Nizāris of Badakhšān.


Emphasizing the necessity of knowing the imam of the time (*imām-i zamān*) and expounding the esoteric interpretation (*taʿwil*) of
certain religious duties, this treatise contains separate sections on *tawḥīd*, prophethood (*nubuwwat*), imamate, commanding the right and forbidding the wrong, and solidarity (*tawallā*) with the prophet and the imams and dissociation (*tabarrā*) from their enemies and unbelievers.


A treatise on origination (*mabdaʾ*) and destination (*maʿād*) and the hierarchies of creation written by ʿAzīz al-Dīn Nasafī (d. ca. 661/1262) who, in line with the general Sufi tendencies of the period, dealt with metaphysical and cosmological teachings of various schools of Sufism and philosophy in a popular manner. In particular, Nasafī popularized some of the esoteric teachings of his Sufi master, Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥammūʾī (d. ca. 650/1252), who himself was a disciple of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 618/1221). The treatise, in two sections (*bāb*), opens with a discussion of three categories of people, *ahl-i sharīʿat*, *ahl-i ḥikmat* or *bāṭinīs*, and *ahl-i waḥdat* who profess the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), a central idea in this treatise. The Nizārī Ismailis of Central Asia regard this Sufi work as belonging to their literature as they consider ʿAzīz Nasafī a co-religionist.

### D. Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, by an Anonymous Group of Authors

Much controversy has surrounded the identity of the authors who have become famous as the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, usually translated as the “Sincere Brethren” or “Brethren of Purity”, and produced their encyclopedic work in Arabic entitled *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*, comprised of fifty-two epistles as well as their abridged versions. At any rate, modern scholarship has acknowledged the Ismaili affiliation of this group of learned authors who probably lived in Baṣra in the middle of the 4th/10th century. However, Professor Abbas Hamdani dates the composition of the *Rasāʾil* to the final decades of the 3rd/9th century, shortly before the foundation of the Fatimid caliphate in 297/909. The secondary literature on the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ and their *Rasāʾil* is rather extensive; see especially the publications of C. Baffioni, A. Hamdani, Y. Marquet, A.L. Tibawi and other relevant entries in Chapter 4: Studies.
Complete editions of the Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ


The Rasāʾil, numbering 52 and representing a compendium of a variety of sciences known at the time of their composition, are divided into four books or sections dealing with mathematical sciences (geometry, astronomy, music, logic, etc.), bodily and natural sciences, physical and intellectual sciences (cosmology, eschatology, etc.), and theological sciences. The authors of the Rasāʾil drew on diverse schools of Hellenistic wisdom, notably Neoplatonism, and a variety of other pre-Islamic sources and traditions, which they combined with Islamic teachings. The Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ attempted in an original manner to harmonize religion and philosophy for the ultimate purpose of guiding mankind to purify their soul and achieve salvation.

Original summaries of the Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ


An abridged version of selected portions of the Rasāʾil, produced by the same original Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ. The Jāmiʿa was intended for more advanced readers.


A further abridgement of *al-Risāla al-jāmiʿa* produced by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ.
Partial editions of the Rasāʾīl Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ


- **al-Hayawān wa-l-insān**, lithographed in Calcutta, 1263/1847; also lithographed in Lucknow, 1316/1899.


Partial translations of the Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ

Some of the following translations also include partial editions, in Arabic, of sections of the Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ.

English:

- Shiloah, Amnon. The Epistle on Music of the Ikhwān al-Safāʾ (Bagh-dad, 10th Century). Tel-Aviv University, Documentation and Studies, 3. Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University, 1978. pp. 73.


French:


• Marquet, Yves. *La philosophie des Ihwân al-Šafâ’* (1975), pp. 41–584; revised ed. (1999), pp. 41–584. For Y. Marquet’s other partial French translations of the *Rasâ’il*; see his entries listed in Chapter 4: Studies.


German:


Italian:


Persian:


Spanish:


Urdu:


**Other languages:**


**E. Selected Works by Non-Ismaili Muslim Authors**

ʿAbd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī al-Asadābādī, al-Qāḍī (d. 415/1024–25), Muʿtazīlī theologian and chief qāḍī in Rayy


The most prominent theologian of the late Muʿtazīlī school, ʿAbd al-Jabbār wrote his *Tathbīt*, on the miraculous proofs of Muhammad’s prophethood, in 385/995; it also contains polemical refutations of other religions as well as Ismaili and Imāmī Shi’ism. This section contains his refutation of the Ismailis, an extract from the *Tathbit dalāʾil nubuwwat Sayyidnā Muḥammad*, ed., ʿAbd al-Karīm ʿUthmān (Beirut:Dār al-ʿArabiyya, 1966–69), vol. 2, pp. 376–399, 594–609, as
well as valuable information on Ismaili dāʿīs and their activities in the author’s lifetime.

‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Ubayd Allāh al-ʿAlawī (fl. 3rd/9th century), Yamanī historian


This biography of the first Zaydī imam of Yaman, the Ḥasanid Yaḥyā b. al-Husayn al-Hāḍī ilāʾl-Ḥaqq (d. 298/911), composed by ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, contains excerpts on the Ismailis of Yaman.

al-Anṭākī, Abu’l-Faraj Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd (d. 458/1066), Melkite Christian physician and historian


The only extant contemporary account of the Fatimids is contained in the *Taʾrīkh* of al-Anṭākī, an Arab-Melkite Christian who spent the earlier part of his life in Fatimid Egypt and then migrated, in 405/1014 in the reign of al-Ḥākim, to Antioch where he composed his history of the Abbasid, Fatimid and Byzantine empires, covering the period 326–425/937–1033, as a continuation of Ibn al-Baṭrīq’s history.
al-Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir (d. 429/1037), Sunni theologian, jurist and heresiographer


This chapter on the Bāṭiniyya from al-Baghdādi’s well-known heresiographical work, written in the 420s/1030s, contains typical anti-Ismaili polemics. Al-Baghdādi had access to the anti-Ismaili treatises of Ibn Rizām and Akhū Muḥsin and also claims to have used an Ismaili book entitled *Kitāb al-siyāsa wa'l-balāgh*, which modern scholarship has shown to have been a cleverly produced travesty against the Ismailis. In line with a tradition established by anti-Ismaili polemicists, al-Baghdādi portrays Ismailism as a heretical movement designed to destroy Islam.

al-Bustī, Abu’l-Qāsim Ismāʿīl b. Aḥmad al-Jīlī (d. 420/1029), Muʿtazili Zaydī author


This is only a fragment of a work devoted entirely to refutation of the Ismailis. Written around 400/1009, it contains valuable quotations from Ismaili works, notably the lost *al-Maḥšūl* of the dāʿī Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasafī (d. 332/943). The author is also familiar with the writings of Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī (d. after 361/971), referred to as Khayshafūj, and several other Ismailis. A student of the Muʿtazili al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1024–25), al-Bustī also had access to Ibn
Rizām’s anti-Ismaili polemic and argues for a Qaddāḥid ancestry for the Fatimids in addition to tracing Ismailism to Iranian dualistic and Zoroastrian origins.

**al-Daylami, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan**
(d. after 707/1308), Zaydī author in Yaman


A portion of a larger work, *Kitāb qawā‘id Āl Muḥammad*, written against the Ismailis.


A polemical work written in 707/1308 by this relatively unknown Zaydī author against the Ismailis. Here, the origins of Ismailism are traced to Iranian and other non-Islamic sources while the Ismaili beliefs are refuted on the basis of a travesty called *Kitāb al-balāgh*, etc.

**al-Fazārī, Abu’l-Qāsim Muḥammad**
(d. 345/956), Sunni poet of Qayrawān


A minor Mālikī poet from Qayrawān, al-Fazārī wrote this poem in celebration of the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Manṣūr’s victory over the Nukkārī Ibāḍī Khārijī leader Abū Yazīd (d. 336/947), who revolted in North Africa with much initial success against the Fatimids. On other occasions, however, al-Fazārī composed verses against the Fatimids.
al-Ghazâlî, Abû Ḥâmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ţūsî (d. 505/1111), Sunni theologian, jurist and mystic


This work, written shortly before 488/1095 and commonly known as *al-Mustaẓhirî* after the Abbasid caliph al-Mustaẓhir (487–512/1094–1118) who commissioned it, is al-Ghazâlî’s major polemical treatise against the Ismailis (Bâṭiniyya), especially arguing against the doctrine of *taʿlîm* propagated by Ḥasan-i Șabbâḥ (d. 518/1124) and the early Nizârî Ismailis. This refutation has been studied in F. Mitha, *Al-Ghazâlî and the Ismailis*.


Another short anti-Ismaili tract.


Yet another polemical tract against the Taʾlîmiyya or Bâṭiniyya, as al-Ghazâlî referred to the Ismailis.
In the Ismaili section of his universal history to the year 830/1426, written for the Timurid prince Bāysunghur (799–837/1397–1433), Ḥāfiz-i Abrū draws extensively on the Ismaili history of Rashīd al-Dīn, adding nothing to the account of his predecessor; see F. Daftary’s review in Nashr-i Dānish, 6 (June–July, 1986), pp. 34–37. This edition includes parallel texts of the corresponding Ismaili sections from Rashid al-Dīn’s Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh and Kāshānī’s Zubdat al-tawārīkh.

Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, Muḥyiʾl-Dīn Abu'l-Faḍl ʿAbd Allāh (d. 692/1293), private secretary to Mamlūk sultans in Cairo

The earliest work in the topographical khīṭaṭ genre specifically on Cairo as opposed to Fustāṭ, with much on the Fatimid period, al-Rawḍa inspired al-Maqrīzī’s later work (al-Khiṭaṭ) on the subject.
Ibn al-ʿAdīm Kamāl al-Dīn Abu'l-Qāsim ʿUmar (d. 660/1262), historian of Aleppo and vizier to Ayyūbids


Ibn al-Dawādārī, Abū Bakr b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. after 736/1335), Egyptian historian


Ibn al-Dawādārī has devoted, in this sixth volume of his universal history, completed in 736/1335, large sections to the Fatimids in addition to preserving quotations and paraphrases from the lost anti-Ismaili treatise of the Sharīf Abu’l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. ʿAli, better known as Akhū Muḥsin (d. after 372/982).

Ibn Ḥammād (Ḥamādu) al-Ṣanhājī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. ʿAlī (d. 628/1231), Berber qāḍī and historian


Ibn Ḥammād wrote this brief history of the Fatimids, referred to as the ʿUbaydids, in 617/1220.
Ibn ‘Idhārī al-Marrākushī, Abu’l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad (d. after 712/1312), Maghribī historian


The first part of this work is a comprehensive history of Islamic Ifrīqiya from earliest times until 602/1205. A major source on the history of the Fatimids in North Africa, this work is based on a number of earlier sources, notably the chronicle of ʿArīb b. Saʿd (d. ca. 370/980), an Andalusian who wrote his own history of the Maghrib for the Umayyads of Spain.

Ibn al-Jawzī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAlī (d. 597/1200), Sunni jurist and historian


A portion of this Ḥanbalī jurist and anti-Shiʿi author’s universal history. Ibn al-Jawzī, too, used the Ibn Rizām and Akhū Muḥsin anti-Ismaili accounts.

Ibn Mālik al-Ḥammādī, see al-Ḥammādī al-Yamānī, Muḥammad b. Mālik

Ibn Mālik al-Ḥammādī al-Ḥammādī al-Yamānī, Muḥammad b. Mālik

Ibn Mālik al-Ḥammādī, see al-Ḥammādī al-Yamānī, Muḥammad b. Mālik

Ibn al-Ma’mūn al-Baṭāʾiḥī, Jamāl al-Dīn Abū ʿAlī Mūsā (d. 588/1192), Egyptian historian


Written by the son of the Fatimid vizier al-Ma’mūn (d. 519/1125), who succeeded al-Afḍal (d. 515/1121), this is a major source on the Fatimid
ceremonials and the caliph-imam al-Āmir’s reign (495–524/1101–1130). The fragments edited here are based mainly on later quotations of this lost history by al-Maqrīzī and al-Nuwayrī.

**Ibn Munqidh, Usāma (d. 584/1188), Syrian author and poet**


The famous memoirs of Usâma Ibn Munqidh, who personally knew the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Ḥāfiẓ (d. 544/1149) and the later Fatimid viziers Ibn al-Salār and ‘Abbās, contain important details on the closing phase of the Fatimid dynasty. Composed in 579/1183, the memoirs (which were discovered by H. Derenbourg in 1880 at the Escorial Library, Madrid) contain important information on the author’s stay...
in Fatimid Cairo during 539–549/1144–1154. In 549/1154, Usāma fled back to his native Syria in the aftermath of the Fatimid caliph al-Ẓāfir’s murder.

Ibn Muyassar, Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAli (d. 677/1278), Egyptian historian


A history of Egypt, covering portions of the events of the Fatimid caliphate during the period 439–553/1047–1158, with two fragments on the years 362–365 and 381–387 A.H. It is preserved in a unique and incomplete manuscript derived from a copy made by al-Maqrīzī in 814/1411 and now held at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Ibn Muyassar drew on earlier sources, like the histories of Ibn Zūlāq (d. 386/996) and al-Muḥannak (d. 549/1154), in addition to that of al-Musabbiḥī (d. 420/1030), which have not survived.

Ibn al-Nadīm, Abu’l-Faraj Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Warrāq al-Baghdādī (d. ca. 380/990), Imāmī Shīʿī author in Baghdad


This famous catalogue (*fihrist*) of Arabic books, completed in 377/987–88 with much encyclopedic information on the culture of medieval Islam and Muslim literary figures, contains valuable details on early Ismaili *da’wa* and *dā‘īs*, including direct quotations from Ibn
Rizām’s lost anti-Ismaili polemical treatise, entitled perhaps *Kitāb radd ‘alā’l-Ismā‘iliyya*.

**Ibn Qalāqīs, Abu’l-Faṭḥ Naṣr Allāh b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 567/1172), Egyptian author under the later Fatimids**


  Ibn Qalāqīs, who travelled extensively in Sicily and Yaman, praises numerous rulers and dignitaries in his collected poems, notably the later Fatimid caliph-imams and several of their viziers such as Ibn Maṣāl and Shāwar.


  Collection of letters written by Ibn Qalāqīs to some of his friends and Fatimid officials in Egypt and Yaman.

**Ibn Ruzzik, Ṭalāʾi‘i’, see Ṭalāʾi‘i‘ b. Ruzzik**

**Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, Tāj al-Ri’āsa Amīn al-Dīn Abu’l-Qāsim ‘Alī b. Munjib (d. 542/1147), Egyptian author and administrator under the Fatimids**


  A short history of the Fatimid viziers from Ibn Killis (d. 380/991) to al-Ma‘mūn al-Baṭā‘iḥī (d. 519/1125).


  A guide to chancery practices under the Fatimids dedicated to the Fatimid vizier Abū ‘Alī Aḥmad Kutayfāt (d. 526/1131). Ibn al-Ṣayrafī,
who may have been an Ismaili himself, worked in the Fatimid chancellery (*diwan al-inshā‘*), also heading it from 495/1102 until his death in 542/1147.

**Ibn Taghrībirdī, Abu’l-Maḥāsin Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf (d. 874/1470), Egyptian historian**


These parts cover the Fatimids in Ibn Taghrībirdī’s vast history of Egypt from 20/641 to his own times. Ibn Taghrībirdī manifests the anti-Fatimid biases of some of his sources, notably Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1234) and Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 654/1256).

**Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, al-Murtaḍā ʿAbd al-Salām b. al-Ḥasan al-Qaysarānī (d. 617/1220), Egyptian historian and official under the later Fatimids**


This portion of Ibn al-Ṭuwayr’s history of the Fatimids and the Ayyūbids, which has not survived directly, deals with aspects of Fatimid history, ceremonials and administration. It has been reconstructed by Professor Sayyid on the basis of later quotations, such as those in Ibn Khaldūn, al-Qalqashandī, al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrībirdī.

**Ibn Ẓāfir, Jamāl al-Dīn Abu’l-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Azdi (d. 613/1216), Egyptian historian and administrator under the Ayyūbids**

This extant portion of Ibn Ẓāfir’s history relates to the Fatimid dynasty, from al-Mahdī to al-ʿĀḍid.

Ibn al-Zubayr, al-Qāḍī al-Rashīd Abu’l-Ḥusayn ʿĀhmād
(d. after 461/1069)


A unique source on the material culture of Islamic history that contains details on gifts (*hadāyā*) and related correspondence exchanged between Muslim rulers, descriptions of celebrations, diplomatic visits and other special occasions as well as information on elaborate feasts, etc. The Fatimids of Egypt are treated extensively in this work. Most of the paragraphs on the Fatimids relate to their treasures, including especially the treasures taken from the Fatimid palace in Cairo during the rebellion of the Turkish soldiers in 460–61/1068–69 (paragraphs 372–414). The treasures of the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Muʿīz’s daughters ʿAbdā and Rāshida (paragraphs 355, 357), al-Mustanṣir’s mother (paragraphs 96, 100, 262, 391) as well as those of other female members of the Fatimid house are also discussed. No biographical details are available on the author of this book.

al-Janadī, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Yūsuf
(d. 732/1332), Sunni jurist and historian of Yaman


The *Kitāb al-sulūk* is al-Janadī’s only known extant work, which is an important biographical dictionary of the learned men of Yaman, preceded by a long introduction on the history of Yaman from early
Islamic times until 724/1323. The *Akbār al-Qarāmiṭa* is a portion of this historical introduction covering the activities of the Ismaili *daʿī* Ibn Ḥawshab Maṣḥūr al-Yaman (d. 302/914) and his collaborator ʿAlī b. al-Faḍl (d. 303/915), who later turned against the central leadership of the Ismaili *daʿwa* and started an abortive Qarmatī movement in Yaman. Al-Janadī reiterates the anti-Ismaili polemics and names Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ as the progenitor of the Fatimids.

Juwaynī, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭā-Malik b. Muḥammad (d. 681/1283), Persian historian and administrator under the Īlkhānid Mongols


Juwaynī composed his history of the Ismailis and included it in the third volume of his *Taʾrīkh-i jahān-gushā*, on the basis of the official Nizārī chronicles and other documents which he found in the famous library at Alamūt, shortly before its destruction by the Mongols in 654/1256. Juwaynī’s Ismaili history comprises parts devoted to early Ismailis, the Fatimids and the “new *daʿwa*” of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāh (d. 518/1124) and his successors at Alamūt, a model adopted later by Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī as well. The most valuable parts of all three histories, however, relate to the Nizārī Ismaili state of Persia, as all three historians of the Īlkhānid period made independent use of contemporary Nizārī source materials which have not survived.
Kāshānī (al-Qāshānī), Jamāl al-Dīn Abu’l –Qāsim ʿAbd Allāh b. ‘Alī (d. ca. 738/1337), Persian historian and administrator under the Ilkhānid Mongols


Kāshānī, an Imāmī Shiʿi historian who participated in the compilation of Rashīd al-Dīn’s Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh, had independent access to the Nizārī sources of the Alamūt period which have not survived; and his account of the Nizārī Ismaili state of Persia is more detailed than those produced by Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn; see F. Daftary’s review in Nashr-i Dānish, 8 (February-March, 1988), pp. 28–30. Kāshānī’s section on the Ismailis is contained in his Zubdat al-tawārīkh, a general history of the Muslim world dedicated to Öljeytü (703–716/1304–1316), the Mongol Ilkhānid ruler of Persia.

al-Khazrajī, Muwaffaq al-Dīn Abu’l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan (d. 812/1410), Yamanī historian


Drawing on earlier sources such as ‘Umāra al-Yamanī and al-Janadī, al-Khazrajī produced three historical works on Yaman, including this annalistic chronicle. The sixth chapter of al-ʿAsjad, edited here by S. Zakkār, deals with ʿAlī b. al-Faḍl (d. 303/915) and his Qarmaṭī movement in Yaman, closely following al-Janadī’s account.

al-Maqrīzī, Taqī al-Dīn Abu’l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. ʿAlī (d. 845/1442), Egyptian historian


This is a comprehensive and only independent history of the Fatimids by a Sunni author, who may have claimed Fatimid ancestry from Tamīm b. al-Mu’izz. Al-Maqrīzī, too, had access to the anti-Ismaili treatise of Akhū Muḥsin and identified Ibn Rizām as its source. The Itti’āz has survived only in the form of a musawwada, or first draft, in a single complete manuscript preserved in Istanbul.

Generally known as the *Khiṭat*, this is the most important medieval text of its genre on the history and historical geography of Islamic Egypt and topography of Cairo, with its palaces, mosques, convents, town quarters (*akhṭāṭ*), baths, etc. Much of it deals with Fatimid Cairo as well as Fatimid history and institutions, in addition to containing accounts of the Ismaili *da’wa* drawn evidently from genuine Ismaili works; see P. Casanova, “La doctrine secrète des Fatimides d’Égypte”. In addition to personal observations, the *Khiṭat* is based on a variety of sources, such as histories of al-Musabbiḥī and Ibn al-Tuwayr, which are otherwise lost. A comparison of the *musawwada*, or initial draft preserved at Khazīna Library attached to the Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul, with later manuscripts of the *Khiṭat* reveals how al-Maqrīzī greatly expanded this work over time. Some 170 manuscript copies of the *Khiṭat* are known to exist.


A biographical work containing about four hundred entries on individuals connected in various ways to the Fatimid state.

**Mīrkhwānd, Muḥammad b. Khwāndshāh**

(d. 903/1498), Persian historian


Mīrkhwānd included a relatively detailed account of the Fatimids and the Persian Nizārīs of the Alamūt period in his history, *Rawdat al-ṣafāʾ*. In this section, devoted to the lords of Alamūt, from Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ to Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh, the author also recounts a version of the tale of the three schoolfellows (Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, Niẓām al-Mulk and ʿUmar Khayyām), based on a spurious work, the *Waṣāya*, attributed to the Saljūq vizier Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092).
The amir al-Musabbiḥī, who may have been an Ismaili, produced a major history of Fatimid Egypt, covering the period 365–415/975–1025, of which only this small portion of the 40th volume (relating to 414–415 A.H.) has survived in a unique manuscript held at the Escorial Library, Madrid. The work has separate historical and literary parts. Later historians, such as Ibn Muyassar, Ibn Ẓāfir and al-Maqrīzī, have quoted from sections of this history which have not survived directly.

Niẓām al-Mulk, Abū ʿAlī Ḥasan b. ʿAlī Ṭūsī (d. 485/1092), Saljūq vizier


The Siyāsat-nāma, also known as Siyar al-mulūk, completed in 484/1091 with additions of eleven chapters (including that on the Ismailis) in the following year, comprises fifty chapters of advice to the Saljūq sultan Malik Shāh (465–485/1073–1092). The last eleven chapters, added shortly before the vizier’s assassination in 485/1092, focus on dangers which threatened the Saljūq state at the time, notably those emanating from certain Iranian movements and from the Ismailis in particular who are discussed in chapter 46. This chapter in the Siyāsatnāma provides an important source on the history of the early Ismaili (Qarmāṭī) daʿwa and dāʿīs in Persia and Central Asia, even though Niẓām al-Mulk was extremely hostile toward the Ismailis.

al-Nuwayrī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 733/1333), Egyptian historian


Like Ibn al-Dawādārī and al-Maqrīzī, but more extensively, al-Nuwayrī has preserved in this volume of his encyclopedic work substantial selections from the anti-Ismaili treatise of Akhū Muḥsin, who drew on Ibn Rizām.

This volume of al-Nuwayrī’s *Nihāyat al-arab* contains a long section on the Fatimids.

**al-Qalqashandi, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAlī (d. 821/1418), Sunni legal scholar and secretary in the Mamlūk chancery**


Completed in 814/1412, al-Qalqashandi has preserved in his encyclopedic secretarial manual, *Subḥ al-aʿshā*, the texts of numerous Fatimid decrees of different kinds, including caliphal edicts and diplomas of investiture. As such, the *Subḥ* is a major source of information on Fatimid administration, institutions and documents. This extract, on Fatimid administration, comes from the published edition of the *Subḥ* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1332–38/1914–20), vol. 3, pp. 468–528.

**Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, Faḍl Allāh b. ʿImād al-Dawla (d. 718/1318), Persian historian and vizier to Īlkhānid Mongols**


Rashīd al-Dīn made independent use of the Nizārī sources of the Alamūt period as well as Juwaynī’s history of the Ismailis. However, Rashīd al-Dīn’s own history of the Ismailis is fuller than that produced by Juwaynī; he is also more objective than his predecessor. Rashīd al-Dīn’s section on the Ismailis is contained in the second volume of his *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* completed in 710/1310. By contrast to Dabīr Siyāqī’s edition, which relates only to the history of the Nizārī Ismaili state in
Persia, Dānishpazhūh and Mudarrisī’s edition covers the earlier history of the Ismailis as well.

al-Ṭabarī, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr
(d. 310/923), Sunni historian


Al-Ṭabarī’s narrative of the opening phase of the Qarmaṭī (Ismaili) daʿwa in Iraq, cited here, is based on information supplied by Ismaili informants. Subsequent to this section, al-Ṭabarī provides further valuable details on early Ismaili activities in Iraq, Baḥrayn and Syria, including those of the dāʿī Zikrawayh b. Mihrawayh (d. 294/907) and his sons.

Ṭalāʾiʿ b. Ruzzīk, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ
(d. 556/1161), Fatimid vizier and poet of Armenian origins


Collection of poems in praise of the Imams ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī and their descendants by a Fatimid vizier who adhered to Twelver or possibly Nuṣayrī Shiʿism. Ṭalāʾiʿ was also a patron of poets and his retinue included ʿUmāra al-Yamānī amongst others.

Thābit b. Sinān
(d. 365/975–76), Sabean historian


Thābit and several of his relatives, all belonging to the learned Sabean
(Ṣābiʾa) family of scholars and secretaries in the service of the Abba-
sids in Baghdad, produced supplementary continuations of al-Ṭabarī’s
history. Thābit continued the narrative until the year 362/973 in his
own universal history which seems to be almost completely lost. In
this extant fragment, Thābit discusses the opening phase of the Ismaili
(Qarmaṭī) daʿwa in Kūfa, under the leadership of Ḥamdān Qarмаṭ, the
activities of Zikrawayh b. Mihrawayh, as well as those of the
Qarмаṭīs of Bahrayn.

 Ủyάra al-Yamanı, Abū Ḥamza Najm al-Dīn b. ʿAlī
d. 569/1174), Yamani historian and poet

• Taʿrikh al-Yaman, ed. and English trans., Henry C. Kay, in his Ya-
1–102, translation as The History of Yaman, pp. 1–137; reprinted (with
the same pagination), Farnborough, England: Gregg International
Muḥammad b. Ṭalib al-Akwaʿ al-Hīwāli. Sanaa: al-Maktaba al-Yamani-

Produced in 563/1167–68, at the instigation of al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil who
was at the time chief secretary to the Fatimid caliph al-ʿĀḍid and
subsequently a close companion of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (d. 589/1193), founder
of the Ayyūbid dynasty, ʿUmāra’s Taʿrikh covers the events in both
northern and southern Yaman during the Fatimid period. It is a major
and the earliest source on the Ṣulayḥids, an Ismaili dynasty ruling over
extensive parts of Yaman during 439–532/1047–1138, and on the south
Arabian (Ḥāfiẓī) Ismaili dynasty of the Zurayʿids of ʿAdan (473–569/
1080–1173). Later Yamanī historians, like al-Khazrajī (d. 812/1410), add
very little to ʿUmāra’s account of the Zurayʿids, some of whom were
personally known to him.

• Diwān and Memoirs entitled al-Nukat al-ʿaṣriyya fī akhbār al-wuzarāʾ
al-Miṣriyya, ed., Hartwig Deroebour, in his ʿOumāra du Yémen, sa
vie et son œuvre. Publications de l’École des Langues Orientales Vi-

Much information on ʿUmāra’s contemporaries, notably several Fatim-
id viziers, and on Fatimid court life, may be obtained from ʿUmāra’s
poems and Memoirs (al-Nukat al-ʿaṣriyya fī akhbār al-wuzarāʾ
al-Miṣriyya), covering the period 558–564/1162–1169. Adhering
nominally to the Shāfiʿī Sunni madhab, this Yamanī historian and poet emigrated to Egypt in 552/1157 and became an ardent supporter of the Fatimids, whom he eulogizes in his poetry in addition to the ahl-al bayt. ‘Umāra’s outward Shi‘i sympathies eventually endangered him; he was executed on Šalāḥ al-Dīn’s order in Cairo in 569/1174, on charges of involvement in a plot to restore the Fatimids to power.

**Umayya b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, Abu’l-Ṣalt al-Ishbīlī (d. 528/1134), Spanish Muslim scholar at the Fatimid court**


A poet and also a writer on medicine, astronomy, music, philosophy and literature, in this historical work Abu’l-Ṣalt describes his eyewitness observations for the years 489–506/1096–1112 in Fatimid Cairo, including the poets and scholars he saw there. Belonging to the circle of scholars under the Fatimid vizier al-Afdal’s patronage, Abu’l-Ṣalt later joined the Zīrid court where he dedicated his *al-Risāla al-Miṣriyya* to the Zīrid prince Yaḥyā b. Tamīm (501–509/1108–1116).

**Usāma b. Munqidh, see Ibn Munqidh, Usāma**

Yaḥyā b. Ḥamza al-Ḥasanī al-ʿAlawī, al-Muʾayyad bi’llāh (d. 749/1348), Zaydī imam and scholar in Yaman


Both these works are polemical tracts against the Ismailis.
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A

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Appendix

Genealogical Tables and Lists
I
Early Imāmī and Ismaili Imams

II
The Fatimid Ismaili Caliph-Imams
Nizārī Ismaili Imams
Qāsim-Shāhi Nizārī Imams

19. Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir bi’l-lāh (d. 488/1095)
20. al-Hādī
21. al-Muhtadi
22. al-Qāhir
23. Ḥasan II ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām (d. 561/1166)
24. Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad II (d. 607/1210)
25. Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III (d. 618/1221)
26. ‘Ala’ al-Dīn Muḥammad III (d. 653/1255)
27. Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh (d. 655/1257)
28. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. ca. 710/1310)
29. Qāsim Shāh
30. Islām Shāh
31. Muḥammad b. Islām Shāh
32. Mustanṣir bi’l-lāh II (d. 885/1480)
33. ‘Abd al-Salām Shāh
34. Gharīb Mīrzā (Mustanṣir bi’l-lāh III) (d. 904/1498)
35. Abū Dharr ‘Alī (Nūr al-Dīn)
36. Murād Mīrzā (d. 981/1574)
37. Dhu’l-Faqār ‘Alī (Khalīl Allāh I) (d. 1043/1634)
38. Nūr al-Dahr (Nūr al-Dīn) ‘Alī (d. 1082/1671)
39. Khalīl Allāh II ‘Alī (d. 1090/1680)
40. Shāh Nizār II (d. 1134/1722)
41. Sayyid ‘Alī (d. 1167/1754)
42. Ḥasan ‘Alī
43. Qāsim ‘Alī (Sayyid Ja’far)
44. Abu’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī (Bāqir Shāh) (d. 1206/1792)
45. Shāh Khalīl Allāh III (d. 1232/1817)
46. Ḥasan ‘Alī Shāh, Āghā Khān I (d. 1298/1881)
47. Āqā ‘Alī Shāh, Āghā Khān II (d. 1302/1885)
48. Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh, Aga Khan III (d. 1376/1957)
49. H.H. Shāh Karim al-Ḥusaynī, Aga Khan IV, the present ḥādir
imam
Muḥammad-Shāhī (Muʿminī) Nizārī Imams

19. Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir bi’llāh (d. 488/1095)
20. Ḥasan b. Nizār (d. 534/1139)
21. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan (d. 590/1194)
22. Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan b. Muḥammad (d. 618/1221)
23. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan (d. 653/1255)
24. Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad (d. 655/1257)
25. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd (d. ca. 710/1310)*
26. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Mu’min Shāh b. Muḥammad
27. Muḥammad Shāh b. Mu’min Shāh
28. Rukn b. Muḥammad Shāh
29. ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muʾmin Shāh b. Muḥammad
30. Rukn al-Dīn II b. ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn (d. 915/1509)
31. Shāh ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn II al-Ḥusaynī al-Dakkanī (d. ca. 956/1549)
32. Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥaydar (d. 1032/1622)
33. Muʿīn al-Dīn b. Ṣadr al-Dīn (d. 1054/1644)
34. ‘Azīz Shāh b. Muʿīn al-Dīn (Khudāybakhsh) (d. 1074/1663)
35. Ṣadr al-Dīn II b. ʿAzīz Shāh (d. 1127/1715)
36. Muʿīn al-Dīn II b. ‘Azīz Shāh (d. 1178/1764)
37. Ṣadr al-Dīn b. Muḥammad al-Muṭahhar (d. 1201/1786)
38. Ḥaydar b. ʿAzīz Shāh (d. 1201/1786)
39. Ḥaydar al-Bāqir, the final imam of this line

Some Muḥammad-Shāhī sources add the name of Aḥmad al-Qāʾim between the 24th and 25th imams.
IV

Ṭayyibī Mustaʿlī Dāʿīs

In Yaman

1. al-Dhuʿayb b. Mūsā al-Wādiʿī (d. 546/1151)
2. Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmidī (d. 557/1162)
3. Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī (d. 596/1199)
4. ʿAlī b. Ḥātim al-Ḥāmidī (d. 605/1209)
5. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 612/1215)
6. ʿAlī b. Ḥanẓala al-Wādiʿī (d. 626/1229)
7. Aḥmad b. al-Mubārak b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 627/1230)
8. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 667/1268)
9. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. al-Walīd (d. 682/1284)
10. ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Ḥanẓala (d. 686/1287)
11. Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. al-Walīd (d. 728/1328)
12. Muḥammad b. Ḥātim b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Walīd (d. 729/1329)
13. ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Walīd (d. 746/1345)
14. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib b. Muḥammad b. Ḥātim b. al-Walīd (d. 755/1354)
15. ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad b. Ḥātim b. al-Walīd (d. 779/1378)
16. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 809/1407)
17. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī b. al-Walīd (d. 821/1418)
18. ʿAli b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī b. al-Walīd (d. 832/1428)
19. Idrīs b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Walīd (d. 872/1468)
20. al-Ḥasan b. Idrīs b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Walīd (d. 918/1512)
21. al-Ḥusayn b. Idrīs b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Walīd (d. 933/1527)
22. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Idrīs b. al-Walīd (d. 933/1527)
23. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan (al-Ḥusayn) b. Idrīs b. al-Walīd (d. 946/1539)

In India

24. Yūsuf b. Sulaymān (d. 974/1567)
25. Jalāl b. Ḥasan (d. 975/1567)
26. Dāʿūd b. ʿAjabshāh (d. 997/1589 or 999/1591)
After the Dāʿūdī-Sulaymānī Schism

Dāʿūdī Dāʿīs: In India

27. Dāʿūd Burhān al-Dīn b. Quṭbshāh (d. 1021/1612)
28. Shaykh Ādam Ṣafī al-Dīn b. Ṭayyibshāh (d. 1030/1621)
30. ‘Alī Shams al-Dīn b. al-Ḥasan b. Idrīs b. al-Walīd (d. 1042/1632)
31. Qāsim Zayn al-Dīn b. Pirkhān (d. 1054/1644)
32. Quṭbkhān Quṭb al-Dīn b. Dāʿūd (d. 1056/1646)
33. Pirkhān Shujāʿ al-Dīn b. Ahmadi (d. 1065/1655)
34. Ibrahīm Wajīh al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Qādir Ḥakīm al-Dīn (d. 1168/1754)
35. Hibat Allāh al-Muʾayyad fiʾl-Dīn b. Ibrahīm Wajīh al-Dīn (d. 1193/1779)
36. ‘Abd al-Ṭayyib Zakī al-Dīn b. Ibrahīm Wajīh al-Dīn (d. 1200/1785)
37. Yusuf Najm al-Dīn b. ‘Abd al-Ṭayyib Zakī al-Dīn (d. 1213/1798)
40. Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn b. Shaykh Jiwanjī Awrangbādī (d. 1232/1821)
41. Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn b. ‘Abd ‘Ali Sayf al-Dīn (d. 1256/1840)
42. ‘Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn b. Ṭayyib Zayn al-Dīn (d. 1302/1885)
43. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Ḥusam al-Dīn b. Ṭayyib Zayn al-Dīn (d. 1308/1891)
44. Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn b. ‘Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn (d. 1323/1906)
45. Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn b. ‘Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn (d. 1333/1915)
46. Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn b. ‘Abd al-Husayn Ḥusam al-Dīn (d. 1385/1965)
47. Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn b. ‘Abd al-Husayn Ḥusam al-Dīn, the present dāʾī

Sulaymānī Dāʿīs: In India and Yaman

27. Sulaymān b. Ḥasan (d. 1005/1597)
28. Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān (d. 1050/1640)
29. ʿAli b. Sulaymān (d. 1088/1677)
30. Ibārāhm b. Muḥammad b. al-Fahd al-Makramī (d. 1094/1683)
31. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl (d. 1109/1697)
32. Hībat Allāh b. Ibārāhm (d. 1160/1747)
33. Ismāʿīl b. Hībat Allāh (d. 1184/1770)
34. al-Ḥasan b. Hībat Allāh (d. 1189/1775)
35. ʿAbd al-ʿAli b. al-Ḥasan (d. 1195/1781)
36. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAli (d. 1225/1810)
37. Yūṣuf b. ʿAli (d. 1234/1819)
38. al-Husayn b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 1241/1826)
39. Ismāʿīl b. Muḥammad (d. 1256/1840)
40. al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad (d. 1262/1846)
41. al-Ḥasan b. Ismāʿīl (d. 1289/1872)
42. Ahmad b. Ismāʿīl (d. 1306/1889)
43. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAli (d. 1323/1905)
44. ʿAli b. Hībat Allāh (d. 1331/1913)
45. ʿAli b. Muḥsin (d. 1355/1936)
46. ʿAbd al-ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 1357/1938)
47. Shīhāb al-Dīn Jalāl b. Nūḥ (d. 1358/1939)
49. al-Sharafi al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-Makramī (d. 1413/1992)
50. al-Ḥusayn b. Ismāʿīl al-Makramī, the present dāʿī

ʿAlawī (ʿAlawiyya) Dāʿīs: In India

27. Dāʿūd Burhān al-Dīn b. Quṭbshāh (d. 1021/1612)
28. Shāykh Ādam Ṣafī al-Dīn b. Ṭayyibshāh (d. 1030/1621)
29. Shams al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Ibārāhm (d. 1046/1637)
30. Zāki al-Dīn Ṭayyib b. Shāykh Ādam (d. 1047/1638)
31. Badr al-Dīn Ḥasan b. Wali (d. 1090/1679)
32. Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Ḫayyābāʾī b. Nūḥ (d. 1130/1718)
33. Muʿayyad al-Dīn Hībat Allāh b. Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn (d. 1151/1738)
34. Shihāb al-Dīn Jalāl b. Nūḥ (d. 1158/1745)
35. Nūr al-Dīn Nūrbhāʾī b. Shāykh ʿAli (d. 1178/1764)
36. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Shams al-Dīn b. Hībat Allāh (d. 1189/1775)
37. Shams al-Dīn Shāykh ʿAlī b. Shams al-Dīn (d. 1248/1832)
38. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Shams al-Dīn b. Shāykh ʿAlī (d. 1252/1836)
40. Amīn al-Dīn Amīr al-Dīn b. Najm al-Dīn (d. 1296/1879)
41. Fakhr al-Dīn Jīwābhāʾī b. Amīr al-Dīn (d. 1347/1929)
42. Badr al-Dīn Fidāʿ Alī b. Fakhr al-Dīn (d. 1377/1958)
44. Abū Ḥātim Ṭayyib Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn b. Nūr al-Dīn Yūsuf, the present dāʿī

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