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# Alamūt, Ismailism and Khwāja Qāsim Tushtarī's *Recognizing God*

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## Abstract

Drawing extensively on the testimony of the Persian historians of the seventh-eighth hijri centuries (corresponding to the thirteen-fourteenth centuries of the Christian era), this article sketches a detailed picture of several personalities involved in founding the nascent Ismaili state centred at Alamūt in the fifth/eleventh century. This background sets the stage for analyzing a new manuscript source documenting Ismaili history and thought of this period, Khwāja Qāsim Tushtarī's *Recognizing God* (*Ma'rifat-i Khudāy ta'ālā*). After outlining and amending previous scholarship on this author and surveying the text's extant manuscript and lithographic sources, the article analyzes the historical references, focusing on the figure of Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, and examining the evolution of the Ismaili leadership structure. It argues for a likely date of composition between 525/1131 and 533/1139, making Tushtarī's *Recognizing God* one of the oldest Ismaili texts from Alamūt still in existence.

## Keywords

Ismaili – Alamūt – Qāsim Tushtarī – Ḥasan-i Sabbāḥ – Saljūq – Ra'īs Muẓaffar – *mukhī* – Ginān – Girdkūh – Sanjar

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\* This article is dedicated to the memory of the late Mukhi Kanji Ramji and his son, the late Vazir Alidina Kanji, originally from Sāmāghoghā, near Mundrā in Kachchh, and later of Zanzibar, East Africa. I would like to gratefully acknowledge Dr. Hermann Landolt, Dr. Faquir M. Hunzai, and Andriy Bilenky who read a draft of this article and gave valuable feedback and comments, as well as the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, which generously provided access to copies of two manuscripts of Khwāja Qāsim Tushtarī's work.

## A Background: “Bravo the Commander, Bravo the One Commanded!”

In his *Cream of Chronicles* (*Zubdat al-tawārīkh*), the Īlkhānid historian Abū l-Qāsim Kāshānī (d. ca. 738/1337), tells the tale of a seemingly unassuming schoolteacher named Dihkhudā.<sup>1</sup>

The Saljūq Empire had reached the pinnacle of its glory, both in the extent of its territory and the might of its military. Amīr Yūrantāsh, one of Sulṭān Malikshāh's (d. 485/1092) commanders, had been granted some land near the castle of Alamūt, south of the Caspian Sea, where he used to graze his herds. Dihkhudā had recently moved to nearby Andijrūd after his stay in the bustling town of Qazwīn. The depth of his humility and ardor of his piety soon earned him the respect and affection of people in those parts, who came to him in droves to benefit from his wisdom.

Word of the teacher's talents reached the ears of Yūrantāsh, who entrusted his children to the schoolmaster's tutelage. After some time, a learned scholar from Qazwīn came to visit Yūrantāsh, who proudly introduced his offspring. The scholar grilled them about language and etymologies, grammar and declension and was taken aback by the acuity of their responses. “Their teacher must be a brilliant and cultivated man,” he insisted.

Yūrantāsh called for Dihkhudā, who provided learned responses to all the Qazwīnī scholar's queries, without any hesitation. When the scholar applauded his genius, Dihkhudā suggested to them, “If you were to free me from my present duties, and were to allow those workers who need to learn reading and writing to busy themselves in this, the benefit would be multiplied many times over.”<sup>2</sup> Yūrantāsh suggested, “Why don't you go up to the castle? There you'll find vacant residences and good-for-nothing scoundrels aplenty!” So on the eve of Wednesday, 6 Rajab 483/4 September 1090, Dihkhudā ascended the castle, which was governed on behalf of

1 The following translation cum paraphrase is drawn from Kāshānī, *Zubdat*, pp. 139-141; with clarifications drawn from Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, pp. 103-107, and Juwaynī, *Jahāngushāy*; Juwaynī, *World-Conqueror*, vol. 2, pp. 669-671. Neither of the latter provide the full details found in Kāshānī's narrative.

2 The reading in the Persian edition is difficult to decipher. Rather than اگر مارا بحال خود ... مشغول نکردندی, for the translation, the negative particle has been moved so as to read اگر مارا بحال خود نگذاشتندی ... مشغول کردندی.

[the Saljūq Sulṭān] Malikshāh by an 'Alid named Mahdī.<sup>3</sup> After some time teaching the residents, Dihkhudā informed the commander, Mahdī, that he was the new owner of the castle.

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Kāshānī does not provide any details of poor Mahdī's reaction, but one can imagine a startled commander astonished by the audacity of this upstart. Calling on his guards to arrest the impudent schoolteacher, he would have been dismayed to realize that they obeyed Dihkhudā, not him. While Mahdī was aware that the Ismailis had many supporters in the region, and he himself, along with many residents of the castle, had been approached earlier by a certain Ḥusayn of Qā'in to support the cause of the Fāṭimid Caliphs in Cairo, he probably had no idea that virtually all the residents of Alamūt had already accepted Ismailism, and that Dihkhudā was, in fact, none other than the famous Ḥasan-i Sabbāḥ, the very fugitive for whom the sulṭān's vizier, Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092) was searching.

A bewildered and captured Mahdī would have been even more confused when the simple but apparently magnanimous schoolteacher wrote him a draft for three thousand gold dinars for the purchase of the castle. As Kāshānī, along with the other Īlkhānid historians Juwaynī (d. 681/1283) and Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 718/1318), informs us:

Because of the extent of his simplicity, piety, modesty and sanctity, Ḥasan used to write documents that were brief and laconic, with no hint of ostentatious pomp, to the extent that this draft read:

Governor MZ, may God protect him, shall pay the sum of three thousand gold dinars to Mahdī the 'Alid for the purchase of the castle of Alamūt, and shall not keep him waiting too long. Peace be upon Muḥammad the Chosen and his Family. God suffices us and is the best of advocates.

Although the baffled Mahdī took the draft, our historians tell us that he couldn't believe that this piece of paper "from some obscure schoolteacher" would attract any attention from "Governor MZ," the powerful Ra'īs Muẓaffar who, as the deputy of Prince Amīrdād Ḥabashī of the mighty Saljūq empire,

3 The edited text of Kāshānī, *Zubdat*, p. 140 reads ثلاث واربعمائة, i.e., 403, which is an error, as the manuscript used by the editor, a facsimile edition of which is provided with the edition, has ثلاث وثمانين واربعمائة, i.e., 483, *ibid.* p. 60.

was ruler of Dāmghān and the castle of Girdkūh.<sup>4</sup> Some time later, however, it so happened that Mahdī the ‘Alid was in Dāmghān and in straitened circumstances, so he decided he may as well try his luck and took the promissory note to Ra’īs Muẓaffar. To his amazement, the powerful governor reverently kissed the piece of paper on which the humble schoolteacher had written, producing the gold forthwith. “*Zahī āmir wa zahī ma’mūr!*” declared the ‘Alid, “Bravo the commander, bravo the one commanded!”

The Fāṭimid caliphate was the apogee of Ismaili political successes.<sup>5</sup> At the height of power, the Ismaili caliph eclipsed his ‘Abbāsīd and Umayyad rivals, claiming dominion over all of North Africa, Egypt, Sicily, the Red Sea coast of Africa, Yemen, Syria, Palestine, and the Hijaz with the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. As the above account illustrates, the Fāṭimids also had faithful supporters in their rivals’ domains, and some areas of significant Ismaili presence had managed to carve out independently administered polities, loyal to the Imam in Egypt. The caliph al-Mustaṣṣir bi-llāh (d. 487/1094) was the last Imam before a disastrous split was to divide the caliphate in two, one part loyal to his elder son Nizār, “al-Muṣṭafā li-Dīn Allāh,” and later administered from Alamūt in Iran, and the other part loyal to his younger son Aḥmad, “al-Musta’lī bi-llāh,” and administered from Cairo.<sup>6</sup>

In the reign of the Imam al-Mustaṣṣir, the Ismaili *da‘wa* or “Invitation” had a capable leader in its eastern regions in the person of ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh (fl. 5th/11th c.), headquartered in Iṣfahān. The prominent annalist, Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), describes him as “an eloquent litterateur and skilled calligrapher, a quick-witted and nimble thinker, and a virtuous man.”<sup>7</sup> However, this Sunni historian bemoaned Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh’s “love for [the Ismaili] school of thought.”<sup>8</sup> One of Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh’s protégés, Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (d. 518/1124), rose to prominence

4 Additional details about Amīrdād Ḥabashī can be found in Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Ibar*, p. 156. For further references, see also Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties*, pp. 179f.; Juwaynī, *Jahāngushāy*, vol. 2, pp. 2f., 305; Juwaynī, *World-Conqueror*, vol. 1, p. 278; Bosworth, “The Political and Dynastic History,” vol. 5, pp. 142f.; C.E. Bosworth, “Khwarazmshahs: i. Descendants of the line of Anuštigin,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. With regard to the word Amīrdād used as a title equivalent to Mīrdād and Dādbik, see Qazwīnī, “Muqaddima,” in Juwaynī, *Jahāngushāy*, p. 11, and Rawandī, *Ta’rīkh-i Ijtīmā’ī-yi Īrān*, part 2, p. 1263.

5 On the Fāṭimids, see Daftary, *The Ismā’īlīs*, pp. 144-255; Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*.

6 Throughout this paper, when the words Ismaili and Ismailism are used in the context of the environment after the split in the leadership of the Fāṭimid empire, the Nizārī branch of the community is meant.

7 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, p. 67.

8 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, p. 67.

and was designated the *ḥujja* or “proof” of al-Mustanṣir, the rank immediately below the Imam in the Ismaili religious hierarchy.<sup>9</sup>

With the death of al-Mustanṣir in 487/1094, the vizier and commander of the armies, al-Afḍal (d. 515/1121), placed his brother-in-law, al-Mustanṣir's younger son Aḥmad, on the throne, in place of the designated successor, Nizār.<sup>10</sup> The eastern Ismailis and their leaders, out of reach of the Fāṭimid armies, supported the cause of Nizār and broke away from Cairo. The castle of Alamūt, purchased by Dihkhudā, i.e., Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, at a cost of 3000 gold dinars, was to become the headquarters of the Nizārīs. Over one-and-a-half centuries later, ‘Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī, Hülāgū Khān's attendant and historian, who visited the celebrated library of Alamūt, “the fame of which had spread throughout the world,”<sup>11</sup> informs us of the multitudes of Ismaili religious books he found there, indicating that there had been substantial literary production. However, in 654/1256 the community was dealt a stunning blow when the Mongol hordes swept through the Near East and destroyed their capital. Juwaynī condemned the library to be burned, saving only copies of the Qurʾān and a few other treatises.<sup>12</sup> Consigned to a fate similar to that of their books, the Ismailis themselves were also hunted down and slaughtered indiscriminately. So complete was this devastation that it was long assumed that the community, and virtually all of its literature, had ceased to exist.

The short text analyzed in this study is a work by Khwāja Qāsim Tushtarī, untitled but on the subject of *Recognizing God*, may He be exalted (*Maʿrifat-i*

9 Ḥasan's contemporary, Abū l-Maʿālī writes in 485/1092 that he was distinguished, along with Nāṣir-i Khusraw, as *ṣāhib-i jazīra*, i.e., as a *ḥujja* in the Ismaili hierarchy. See Abū l-Maʿālī, *Bayān al-adyān*, p. 55. This source fills a lacuna in our knowledge about Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's rank in the Ismaili hierarchy as reflected in standard sources, such as Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*. Thus, Ḥasan is reverentially referred to in the Ismaili sources not so much by his name, but as Sayyidnā, “our master,” a practice echoed by the non-Ismaili Persian historians such as Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh (d. 718/1318). A work entitled *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikāyāt wa baḥr al-akḥbār*, also known as the *Siyāḥatnāmah-yi Nāṣir*, sheds some light about later traditions in this regard. This Badakhshānī collection, primarily about the peregrinations of Ḥakīm Nāṣir-i Khusraw, is of unknown provenance but seems to draw from the *Silk-i guhar rīz* (apparently composed in approximately 1246/1831, this date varying slightly in different manuscripts) and was itself copied in 1337/1918, allowing us to date it within about a century. The text was published in a rather poor edition in Cyrillic script in Khorog, Tajikistan in 1991. The *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikāyāt* preserves an oral tradition indicating that it was the Imam and Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh who bestowed the title of Bābā Sayyidnā on Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ. Gulamadov, “The Hagiography of Nāṣir-i Khusraw,” p. 252.

10 Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, p. 241.

11 Juwaynī, *Jahāngushāy*, vol. 3, pp. 269f.; Juwaynī, *World-Conqueror*, vol. 2, p. 719.

12 Juwaynī, *Jahāngushāy*, vol. 3, pp. 186f., 269f.; Juwaynī, *World-Conqueror*, vol. 2, pp. 666, 719.

*Khudāy ta'ālā*). It is one of only a handful of works hitherto discovered that may be dated to the early Alamūt period. The people, background, and themes mentioned by Kāshānī in the foregoing historical excursion shed much light on the provenance, content and significance of this text, and we shall have occasion to return to them. Following the *Background* provided in Section A, Section B proceeds with an examination of previous *Scholarship* that led to the discovery of this author and his writings. Section C continues by surveying the extant *Manuscript and Lithograph Sources* for *Recognizing God* and its contents in the context of the “new Invitation” to the Ismaili faith inaugurated by the Fāṭimid Imam al-Mustaṣfir bi-llāh (d. 487/1094) and championed by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (d. 518/1124). Section D continues by analyzing the *Historical References* in the text, particularly those relating to a figure named Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad. Section E discusses the *Evolution of the Ismaili Leadership Structure*, and Section F, on *Dating Khwāja Qāsim Tushtarī's Recognizing God*, argues that it was likely composed between 525/1131 and 533/1139.

## B Scholarship: “Apparently a Real Ismaili”

For centuries after Alamūt's fall to the Mongols, the Ismailis were little heard from, and what people knew of them was largely derived from the works of their opponents. In the summer of 1914, however, Ivan Ivanovich Zarubin (d. 1964), the leading Russian authority on the languages of the Pamirs, set out on an ethnographic and linguistic expedition to the remote, mountainous region of the Pamir Okrug, or what was to become the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast.<sup>13</sup> While in Shughnān and Wakhān, he collected a handful of Persian texts belonging to the Ismailis of that region, which he donated two years later to the Asiatic Museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences.<sup>14</sup> Along with items contributed by Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Semenov (d. 1958) shortly afterwards, this tiny acquisition of fewer than twenty genuine items formed, at the time, the West's largest collection of Ismaili manuscripts.<sup>15</sup>

In this small collection was the text, *The Mine of Mysteries* (*Ma'dīn al-asrār*), an epistle that was to become the first genuine Ismaili work in Persian prose ever published.<sup>16</sup> Datable to after the death of Fakhr al-Dīn 'Alī b. Ḥusayn Wā'iz

13 Bergne, *The Birth of Tajikistan*, p. 143.

14 Ivanow, “Ismailitica,” p. 3.

15 Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, p. 29.

16 Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (attrib.), *Ma'dīn al-asrār*. The attribution of the text to Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (d. after 960/1553) is Ivanow's. In his 1947 translation of the work, p. x, Ivanow

Kāshifī (d. 939/1533), whose poetry it quotes, the text refers to several works from Alamūt, indicating that at least some of these must have survived.<sup>17</sup> In referring to Alamūt here and elsewhere in this paper, we do not necessarily specify the castle itself, but also include the various territories administered from the central headquarters.

In listing the poets alluded to in *The Mine of Mysteries*, in his 1922 edition Wladimir Ivanow (d. 1970), who was to spend his life studying Ismailism, writes about the author of a single couplet quoted in the text, “Khawājah Qāsim Tushtarī, whom I could not trace anywhere.”<sup>18</sup> His 1933 *Guide to Ismaili Literature* provided no additional information, referred readers to his 1922 edition, and glossed Qāsim Tushtarī's name with the comment, “apparently a real Ismaili.”<sup>19</sup> The new 1947 translation and 1949 edition of *The Mine of Mysteries* in the series of the Ismaili Society likewise added no new details about this personality.<sup>20</sup> However, in his 1960 edition, Ivanow writes, “In 1950 a learned Ismaili friend in Dar es Salaam, British East Africa, was very kind as to send us

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mentions coming into contact with “many Ismailis from Hunza, Chitral and a few from Shughnān and other districts of Badakhshān,” one of whom claimed to be familiar with the text, and mentioned that the real title was *Maʿdin al-ḥaqāʾiq*. “His testimony,” Ivanow complains, “did not inspire much confidence, and I would hesitate to accept his statement until it is supported from reliable sources.” However, in his *Ismaili Literature*, 2nd amplified ed. (Tehran, 1963), pp. 107-108, he lists the title as *Maʿādin al-asrār*, which is the plural of the title I have come across in some manuscripts, such as an uncatalogued volume containing the date Dhū l-Qaʿda 5, 1280 AH (=1864 CE), a copy of which is in the collection of the Research Unit of the Institute of Ismaili Studies in Khorog (which was formerly a unit of ITREC-Tajikistan), with the (temporary) folder number 175, and the title *Maʿdin al-asrār*.

- 17 W.L. Hanaway, “Ṣafī,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. As Ivanow himself notes, the reference to a certain Ḥakīm Thanāʾī, whose poetry is also quoted in the *Maʿdin*, is rather ambiguous, Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (attrib.), *Shinākht-i imām—1947*, p. 3. Thanāʾī's identification with the poet of the same name (d. 996/1588) who was patronized by the Mughal emperor Jalāl al-Dīn Akbar is possible, but speculative. For information and sources on the latter, see Rasūlī, “Thanāʾī Mashhadī”. The poem quoted in the *Maʿdin*, “*Qasīda-yi Sikandar*,” cannot be from the *Iskandar-nāma* of the Mughal poet, which is in the form of a *mathnavī*. The precise identity of this Ḥakīm Thanāʾī is therefore still an open question.
- 18 Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (attrib.), “*Shinākht-i imām—1922*,” ed. pp. 6, 19, trans. p. 36. Quotation amended to render the poet's name in Latin script.
- 19 Ivanow, *Guide*, p. 118.
- 20 Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (attrib.), *Shinākht-i imām—1947*, p. 36; Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (attrib.), *Shinākht-i imām—1949*, p. 17.



a valuable manuscript containing a collection of 16 Ismaili works (662 pages).<sup>21</sup> This manuscript had another copy of this work, which allowed Ivanow to produce a third edition of the text. The new manuscript, however, referred to the author of the single couplet as Khwāja Qāsim Turshīzī, rather than Tushtārī, bringing into confusion the area with which he was associated. As explained below, we have no definitive information linking him to one or the other locale, and so for the sake of expediency his toponymic surname (*nisbah*) will be left as Tushtārī.

In his 1963 work, *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey*, an amplified second edition of his *Guide to Ismaili Literature* published in 1933, under the heading of Qāsim Tushtārī (to which he adds the more familiar pronunciation “Shushtārī”), Ivanow writes, “another poet *apparently* from the same [Alamūt] period. Very short quotations of his poetry appear in early Nizari works. So far nothing could be found to supply more precision concerning his biography.”<sup>22</sup> The allusion to “works” (plural) is noteworthy, and likely reflects Ivanow’s belief, noted in the same bibliography, that Qāsim Tushtārī was cited in the *Five Discourses (Panj sukhan)* of the Imam ‘Abd al-Salām b. al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh of Anjudān (d. 900/1494).<sup>23</sup> This matter will be taken up in section C of this paper. In his 1977 *Biobibliography of Ismaili Literature*, I.K. Poonawala attributes to Khwāja Qāsim Tushtārī (whose *nisba* is modified from the form found in the manuscripts to the more familiar though unattested variants “Shūshtārī” and “Tustārī”) a “collection of poems,” noting that “Ivanow states that his poems are frequently cited in the Nizārī works.”<sup>24</sup> These statements, of course, must be nuanced, as only a lone couplet of the author is hitherto known to exist, and this is quoted in a single Nizārī work, datable, at the earliest, to the tenth/sixteenth century. Had he composed other works of poetry, one imagines that they may have been collected in the seven-volume *Poems of the Resurrection (Dīwān-i qā’imīyyāt)*, of which only two volumes appear to have survived.<sup>25</sup> The majority of poems in this poetic omnibus are by Ṣalāh al-Dīn Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, but the poetry of several other Ismaili poets has also been

21 Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (attrib.), *Shinākh-t-i imām*—1960, p. 4. Dares-salam modified to Dares Salaam.

22 Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature*, p. 134.

23 Ibid. 140. For more information on this text, see Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, pp. 25, 120f.

24 Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, p. 263.

25 Badakhshani, “Preface,” pp. 7-9.

incorporated.<sup>26</sup> In 2007, I identified a previously unknown prose work of Qāsim Tushtarī, the treatise *Recognizing God*, which is analyzed here.<sup>27</sup>

### C Manuscript and Lithograph Sources: “The Fashioner of ‘Arabī Footwear”

The primary manuscript used to reconstruct the epistle is an uncatalogued item with accession number 15048 in the collection of the Institute of Ismaili Studies. It is a paper copy produced, I’m told, from photographs taken in 1979 of a manuscript, the original of which was apparently in the possession of an unidentified Ismaili in Iran. Handwritten English numbers from 41 through 46 occur as later additions on the bottom of what appears to be the verso of each page, suggesting that this is an extract from a larger volume. The extract available to me, unfortunately, does not include a colophon or other information that would allow us to identify the scribe or the year it was copied. However, there is another item at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in precisely the same handwriting that does have a colophon. We can safely presume that manuscript خ, used in Jalal Badakhchani’s critical edition of the *Poems of the Resurrection (Dīwān-i qā’imīyyāt)* of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib (d. 645/1246), was produced by one and the same hand. An image of the last page of خ, reproduced in Badakhchani’s edition, indicates that the scribe was Muḥammad Ḥusayn ibn Marḥūm Mirzā ‘Alī “the fashioner of ‘Arabī footwear” of Sidih, who completed it on Tuesday, the 25th of the month of Muḥarram, 1101 AH,” which corresponds to 1689 CE.<sup>28</sup> The Imam

26 Kadkanī, “*Qā’imīyyāt*,” pp. 19–21. Badakhchani provides the various forms of the name as they appear in different sources, “Preface,” in *Dīwān-i qā’imīyyāt*, pp. 10f. For greater specificity, I have opted to include Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, as attested to in Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Sayr ū sulūk*, ed. p. 6, trans. p. 30, and supported not only in other works of Ṭūsī, but in Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh’s *Jāmī’ al-Tawārīkh*, as cited by Badakhchani. While “Kātib” is included in the name recorded in the publication of the *dīwān*, this form does not appear to be attested in the sources cited by Badakhchani, though Ṭūsī does refer to him as *malik al-kuttāb*.

27 Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, pp. 13, 26, 72, 87–90, 95, 120.

28 Badakhshānī, “*Muqaddima-yi muṣaḥḥih*,” p. cxxviii. The comprehensive *Ānandrāj* dictionary provides the following explanation for ‘*arabī*, which makes sense in this context: «ونیز عربی نوعی از پافزار که تمام پارامپوشد و آن را اجلاف ولایت میپوشند از اهل زبان بتحقیق پیوسته. سیف.»

Pādshāh [Shād, pseud.], *Farhang-i Ānandrāj*, vol. 4, p. 2906, s.v. ‘arabī.

Nizār b. Khalil Allāh ‘Alī (d. 1134/1722) would therefore have been the reigning leader of the community at the time of its transcription. Notably, the scribe indicates that he copied the *Dīwān* from a manuscript dated Jumādā I 855 AH, or 1451 CE. I have encountered a number of uncatalogued texts in the same handwriting, and it is clear that this Muḥammad Ḥusayn from Sidih in southern Khurāsān, a village between Qā’in and Bīrjand that still has a significant Ismaili population, had a wealth of written materials at his disposal. With a few exceptions, each page of the manuscript contains thirteen lines of text in fairly clear, though inelegant, handwriting.

MS 15048 is supplemented by MS 814, which was originally housed at the Ismaili Society in Mumbai (where it seems to have had the accession number 376, as noted on the last page of the manuscript), and is now in the collection of the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. It is possible that this is the text that was available to Ivanow, and led to the conflation of its contents with another work. In his *Ismaili Literature*, in describing a treatise entitled *Five Discourses Uttered by Shāh Islām (Panj sukhan ki Ḥaḍrat-i Shāh Islām farmūda and)*, Ivanow writes that the work is:

an instructive opuscle of 30 small pages, dealing with the virtues appropriate to good believers. References to *fuṣūl-i mubārak*, to (Ḥasan) ‘alā dhikri-hi’s-salām, Bābā Sayyid-nā, *Faṣl-i Fārsiyān*, poets Qāsim Tushtarī, Thanā’ī, and a certain Fakhru’l-muḥaqqiqīn Sharafu’d-Dīn Muḥammad.<sup>29</sup>

This is actually a misreading. In MS 814, the *Five Discourses* is immediately followed by *Recognizing God*, with no physical indication of the commencement of a new text. The same confusion arises in the lithograph described below. This sequence likely existed in an early manuscript tradition and later proliferated. It is not reflected in manuscript 15048, where the text begins with the traditional *Allāhumma Mawlānā*, “O Allah, Our Lord,” which commonly marks the beginning of Nizārī Ismaili works in the Persian manuscript tradition.

Manuscript 814 has 114 unnumbered pages, which, for the sake of expediency and easy reference, have been counted for this article. *Recognizing God* occupies pages 50 through 68. Page 97 indicates that copying was completed on Wednesday, the first day of the month of “Qurbān” (i.e., Dhū l-ḥijja), in 1313 AH (= May 14, 1896 CE), which the scribe identifies as the “Year of the Dog” (*sāl-i sag*). On pages 104-105, the scribe provides the date as Friday, the third

29 Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature*, p. 140. “Dealng” emended to “dealing,” “‘ala dhikri-hi l-salām” to “‘alā dhikri-hi l-salām” and stray quotation mark after *Faṣl-i Fārsiyān* removed. Ivanow’s interpolation of Ḥasan before the benediction ‘alā dhikri-hi l-salām is unnecessary and, given the dating of the missive, appears incorrect.

day of the month of Dhū l-qa'da, under the sign of Aries (*ḥaml*), 1313 (= April 17, 1896 CE), again identified as the "Year of the Dog." The hand of a new scribe is apparent beginning on page 110, and the date, in yet another hand, appears on page 113 as the nineteenth of the month of Muḥarram, under the sign of Taurus, 1354 (= April 23, 1935). There appears to be some confusion in the dating, as the Chinese Year corresponding with 1313/1896 would have been the Year of the Monkey rather than the Year of the Dog, which would next occur in 1315/1898. It is also unusual that the date appearing on pages 104-105 is earlier, rather than later, than the date found on page 97, as Dhū l-qa'da is the month immediately preceding Dhū l-ḥijja. It is possible that the "Month of Sacrifice" (*māh-i qurbān*) meant something different to the scribe than the common meaning of the term as Dhū l-ḥijja, the month of the Muslim Feast of Sacrifice, commonly known as ʿĪd al-aḏḥā, or ʿĪd-i qurbān.

The scribe gives his name as Sayyid Shā[h] ʿIsmat [A]llāh<sup>30</sup> of Ishkāshim. There are currently two towns of this name in Badakhshān, facing one another across the River Panj, one being in Afghanistan and the other in Tajikistan. The population of both towns, which are the capitals of their respective districts of the same name, is predominantly Ismaili. In 2006, His Highness the Aga Khan IV, Imam of the Ismailis, and President Emomali Rahmonov of Tajikistan inaugurated a bridge connecting Tajikistan and Afghanistan at Ishkāshim, the fourth such bridge after the opening of similar structures at Tem, Darwāz and Langar.<sup>31</sup> Most of the pages have between 9-11 lines of text, in fairly legible handwriting.

In 1962, Ḥājī Qudrat Allāh Beg ibn Maḥabbat Allāh released a lithographed edition of the *Haft Bāb* of Abū Ishāq Quhistānī.<sup>32</sup> The book, published in Gilgit, Pakistan, also contained a number of shorter works, including the aforementioned *Five Discourses* (*Panj sukhan*). As in manuscript 814, the *Five Discourses* is immediately followed, without separation, by *Recognizing God* and so the two are identified as a single text.

Copies of Qudrat Allāh Beg's publication are extremely rare. A search of WorldCat, the world's largest union catalogue, itemizing the holding of 72,000 libraries in 170 countries and territories, shows that at the time of this writing not a single one of them held it in their collections. It is also not mentioned in Farhad Daftary's bibliographical survey *Ismaili Literature* and no copy exists

30 In manuscripts produced in some parts of the Pamirs, the letter ه or "hā" is commonly omitted in word-final position. Similarly, the initial ا or *alif* is frequently not written when it is silent (*ḥamzat al-waṣla*).

31 See His Highness the Aga Khan IV, "Remarks".

32 Quhistānī, *Haft bāb*.

in the Institute of Ismaili Studies Library in London. This handsomely written lithograph provides the third source for the text.

## D Historical References: “The Truth was with Them, Not with You”

In his *Ismaili Literature*, Ivanow tentatively makes our author, Khwājah Qāsim, a contemporary of Raʿīs Ḥasan, placing him in the first half of the seventh/thirteenth century.<sup>33</sup> His hunch was a bit late, but not too far off the mark. There are a number of details in the text of *Recognizing God*, including references to historical personalities and quotations of poetry, that suggest that it may have been composed sometime between 525/1131 and 533/1139. It would therefore be one of the earliest documents from Alamūt still in existence.

In addition to the Prophet and the Imams, including Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (§5), three other figures are mentioned in the work. One is Ḥakīm Sanāʿī. This is the pen-name of the sixth/twelfth-century savant Majdūd ibn Ādam, who is named in §4 and §7. Poetic quotations from his magnum opus, *The Orchard of Reality* (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa* also known as *Fakhrī-nāma* and *Ilāhī-nāma*), appear throughout *Recognizing God*.<sup>34</sup> The latest recension of *The Orchard of Reality* was the unredacted version prepared shortly before 525/1131, the approximate year in which Sanāʿī is believed to have passed away.<sup>35</sup> *Recognizing God* would therefore have been completed after that date.

The second figure mentioned is Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad, whose poetry is quoted in §7. With a dearth of sources, it was not yet possible to identify with certainty who this may be. However, it is conceivable that he was the same person as an Ismaili inviter (*dāʿī*) with a similar name, a certain Kiyā Fakhr-Āwar of Asadābād. According to Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī, Barkiyāruq (d. 498/1105), the Saljūq claimant to the throne, “was favorably inclined toward the lovers

33 Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature*, p. 134. One instance where such a quotation occurs is in Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (attrib.), *Shinākht-i imām—1960*, ed. p. 20; Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (attrib.), *Shinākht-i imām—1947*, trans. p. 36. Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, p. 263. Raʿīs Ḥasan Munshī Bīrjandī was a poet and the secretary (*munshū*) of the Nizārī chief (*muḥtasham*) Shihāb al-Dīn Manṣūr in Quhistān at this time. See Daftary, *Ismaili Literature*, pp. 47f.

34 For a detailed analysis of the poetry in Khwāja Qāsim’s *Recognizing God*, with a particular focus on the role of Sanāʿī, see Shafiqe N. Virani, “Persian Poetry, Sufism and Ismailism: The Testimony of Khwājah Qāsim Tushtarī’s *Recognizing God*,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, forthcoming.

35 J.T.P. de Bruijn, “Sanāʿī,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.; J.T.P. de Bruijn, “Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa wa šarīʿat al-ṭarīqa,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Regarding the difficulty of establishing a precise date for Sanāʿī’s death, considerations for the most likely year, and the state of the poem at the time of Sanāʿī’s passing, see de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, pp. 23-25, 81, 86.

of [the Imam] Nizār (d. after 488/1095) and maintained good relations with the Ismaili comrades (*rafiqān*). Because of the goodness of their character and conduct, neither did he deny their creed nor hate them.”<sup>36</sup> He was particularly keen on having their support in his succession struggle against his half-brother Muḥammad Tapar (d. 511/1118), with whom the Ismailis had stormy relations.<sup>37</sup> Among Barkiyāruq’s Ismaili courtiers was Kiyā Fakhr-Āwar, whom our Persian historians tell us “used to speak words of the Invitation (*sukhan-i da‘wat*),” suggesting that he was an authorized inviter (*dā‘ī*). They also tell us that the vizier ‘Abd al-Jalīl Dihistānī had Fakhr-Āwar killed without Barkiyāruq’s permission, apparently sometime after 494/1101, when Barkiyāruq’s forces bested Muḥammad Tapar’s in Hamadān.<sup>38</sup> Fakhr-Āwar’s period of activity and his having been an Ismaili inviter (*dā‘ī*) suggest that he might have been the same person who wrote the poetry cited by Khwāja Qāsim.

The third figure is Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, whom Khwāja Qāsim Tushtarī invokes with tremendous reverence. He advocates for this figure in §8, and cites his poetry, with the pen-name Qāsim, in §10. I have come across many poems in uncatalogued Persian Ismaili manuscripts with the pen-name Qāsim or Qāsimī (837/1433). These cannot be traced in the published *Dīwān* of the well-known mystic poet Qāsim-i Anwār, who used these pen-names and who is mentioned in fairly early Ismaili works.<sup>39</sup> It is therefore possible that these scattered poems were composed by Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad “Qāsim” or, for that matter, by Qāsim Tushtarī. While §10 only refers to the poet as “the aforementioned master” (*khwāja-yi mushār ilayh*), the individual most recently cited in the text is Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad. Moreover, Ḥakīm Majdūd ibn Ādam, who is also mentioned earlier, went by the penname Sanā‘ī, not Qāsim, so the reference cannot be to him.<sup>40</sup> Khwāja Qāsim Tushtarī identifies Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad “Qāsim” by a string of laudatory epithets: “the true teacher (*mu‘allim-i šādiq*), Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, the pride of those who realize the truth and leader of the people of certainty (may his virtues be increased

36 This and the remainder of the paragraph are based on a composite of the narratives of Kāshānī, *Zubdat*, p. 119 and Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, pp. 155f.

37 Muḥammad b. Malik Shāh, commonly known as Muḥammad Tapar, was particularly active in his attacks on the Ismailis, see Daftary, “Ḥasan-i Šabbāh,” pp. 190f., 198f. Ismaili impressions of Muḥammad Tapar are preserved in the Alamūt period text, *Malik-i Sīstān*, of which I have prepared a critical edition and translation, forthcoming.

38 On Dihistānī, see C.E. Bosworth, “Dehestānī, A‘azz-al-MolkNezam-al-Dīn (sic) Abu’l-Maḥāsen ‘Abd-al-Jalīl b. ‘Alī,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

39 Qāsim-i Anwār, *Kulliyāt-i Qāsim-i Anwār*. Qāsim-i Anwār’s name is found in Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (attrib.), *Shinākht-i imām*—1960, p. 13; Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (attrib.), *Shinākht-i imām*—1947, p. 29; See also Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, pp. 104, 118.

40 On Sanā‘ī’s “Names, pen names and epithets,” see de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, pp. 19–22.

and his blessings last!).” With a fair degree of confidence, we can identify Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, who was clearly alive at the time Qāsim-i Tushtarī wrote *Recognizing God*, as the son of the aforementioned Raʿīs Muẓaffar, whom he eventually succeeded as the governor of the castle of Girdkūh.<sup>41</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī’s accounts of Rāʿīs Muẓaffar and his son, Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad are pivotal in dating *Recognizing God*, and equally for shedding light on the context of the early history of the Ismailis in the Alamūt period, particularly at Girdkūh. In all likelihood, their information when discussing these events draws directly from Ismaili sources, including *The Exploits of Sayyidnā [Ḥasan-i Sabbāḥ] (Sargudhasht-i Sayyidnā)*. The critical editions of both texts, unfortunately, reflect the lacunae and corruption of the manuscripts.<sup>42</sup> Juwaynī’s much briefer version of the events adds little in terms of content, unfortunately. When collated, however, Rashīd al-Dīn’s and Kāshānī’s texts can be reconstructed to provide a coherent account, and so a composite translation of the narrative is provided hereunder.<sup>43</sup> The key figures in this narrative are the following:

*Sulṭān Malikshāh* (r. 465-485/1072-1092)—the deceased ruler of the Saljūq empire.

*Sulṭān Barkiyāruq* (r. 485-498/1092-1105)—Sulṭān Malikshāh’s eldest son and successor as Great Saljūq Sulṭān. He was favorably disposed toward the Ismailis.

*Sulṭān Muḥammad Tapar* (r. 498-511/1105-1118)—Another son of Sulṭān Malikshāh and Barkiyāruq’s younger half-brother, who challenged him

41 Another less likely identification is the contemporary ‘Alid poet, Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad Nāṣir. In his short *mathnawī*, the satirical cum panegyric *Memoirs of Balkh (Kār-nāma-yi Balkh)*, Sanāʿī alludes to a number of his contemporary poets, one being this Sharaf al-Dīn, whom Sanāʿī singles out for extensive praise and lauds as “the lamp of the Prophet’s descendants” (*shamʿ-i nabīragān-i rasūl*). Sanāʿī composed an ode in his honor. One of this Sharaf al-Dīn’s own odes is preserved in Muḥammad ‘Awfī’s (d. after 630/1233) *Essences of Intellects (Lubāb al-albāb)*, which was apparently completed in 618/1221. It is also possible that Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, the son of Raʿīs Muẓaffar, and the Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad Nāṣir celebrated by Sanāʿī are the same person. ‘Awfī, *Lubāb al-albāb*, pp. 267-270; see also de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, pp. 56, 194, 261 n101; de Blois, *Persian Literature*, pp. 420f.; J. Matīnī, “‘Awfī, Sadīd-al-Dīn,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*; Jawid A. Mojaddedi, “Ḥallāj, Abu’l-Muḡīṭ Ḥusayn,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

42 The manuscript of Rashīd al-Dīn’s work that Hodgson used for his brief section on Raʿīs Muẓaffar was equally laconic and led to certain misinterpretations, see *Order of Assassins*, index, q.v. Muẓaffar, Raʿīs, of Gird Kūh and also Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, p. 321.

43 Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh*, pp. 116-119; Kāshānī, *Zubdat*, pp. 151-155. Abridged in sections for brevity.

for the throne. He is praised in some Sunni historical sources for his attacks on the Ismailis.

*Sulṭān Sanjar* (r. 511-552/1118-1157)—Another son of Sulṭān Malikshāh, he defected from serving his half-brother Barkiyāruq to support his full brother Muḥammad Tapar's bid for power. First a subordinate sulṭān, he later went on to become the Great Sulṭān of the Saljūq Empire after Muḥammad Tapar's death. Initially very hostile to the Ismailis, against whom he led many military campaigns, he later had a rapprochement with them, apparently because of the conciliatory overtures of Ra'īs Muẓaffar.

*Ra'īs Muẓaffar* (d. ca. 533/1139)—A highly cultivated, prominent and wealthy official during the reign of Sulṭān Malikshāh. When the people of Iṣfahān found that he was Ismaili, he was forced to move to Dāmghān. There, he looked after the Saljūq Prince Amīrdād Ḥabashī, whose father, Altūntāq, had been a close friend of his. He went to great lengths to help the prince put his affairs in order. He was particularly fond of Prince Ismā'īl b. Amīrdād, and treated both father and son as if they were his own children. A benefactor and strong supporter of the Ismaili community, he later became Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāh's representative at the castle of Girdkūh.

*Ra'īs Sharaf al-Dīn* (fl. 5th-6th /11th-12th c.)—The son of Ra'īs Muẓaffar who was, like his father, a cultivated litterateur. He served at Alamūt until his father's passing at the age of over 100 years, and was then appointed as the head of the castle of Girdkūh.

*Amīrdād Ḥabashī* (d. 493/1100)—a Saljūq prince of Dāmghān with a high rank in Sulṭān Barkiyāruq's administration, but treated poorly by the sulṭān's entourage. He successfully petitioned Barkiyāruq to grant him the castle of Girdkūh. He held Ra'īs Muẓaffar in high regard, and was indebted to him in many ways.

*Prince Ismā'īl* (fl. 5th-6th/11th-12th c.)—the son of Amīrdād Ḥabashī, treated with great affection by Ra'īs Muẓaffar, who sought to cultivate in him appreciation for literature and the arts.

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With the death of Sulṭān Malikshāh, his sons Barkiyāruq and Muḥammad [Tapar] struggled for the throne and the crown, while the population rose up in tumult and sedition.<sup>44</sup>

44 Malikshāh died at the young age of thirty-seven during a hunting excursion around Baghdad.



At that time there lived a certain Ra'īs Mu'ayyad al-Dīn Muẓaffar b. Aḥmad b. Qāsim, the revenue commissioner (*mustawfī*) who was known by his *kunya*, or teknonym, as Abū l-Riḍā, Father of Riḍā.<sup>45</sup> During the reign of Sulṭān Malikshāh, he was the tax official (*ṣāhib-i kharāj*) in Iṣfahān, whence his family hailed. He had accepted the Invitation (*da'wat*) of the Nizārīs at the hands of 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Aṭṭāsh. However, when the people of Iṣfahān<sup>46</sup> discovered his faith, and branded him a heretic, he left to live in Dāmghān, purchasing estates and property in Qūmish, Māzandarān, 'Irāq and Khurāsān.

In the days of yore, the castle of Girdkūh was known as Gunbadān-dizh, the "Domed Fortress." It had been abandoned and had fallen into disrepair. A bit of building took place there sometime in the year 429/1038, when a cistern and a few dwellings fell under the sway of the Sulṭān. The Sulṭān entrusted them to Khurdak, one of his servants, who acted as an estate agent for Malikshāh and his cortege.

Amīrdād Ḥabashī, the son of Āltūntāq, who held a high rank in Barkiyāruq's administration, requested the Sulṭān to grant him Girdkūh. Accordingly, Malikshāh directed his notary to draw up the title deed. However, Khurdak threatened the notary, saying "I'll have your head if you dare write it." The notary thus stalled and delayed until the vizier, vexed and furious, demanded that he finish the task. He prepared the document, but for fear of Khurdak, fled immediately afterward. The very next day Barkiyāruq had Khurdak killed.

Amīrdād arrived at the foot of the castle in Jumādā 11 489 (May 1096). For a full week he tried in vain to explain the situation to the castellan, who was Khurdak's representative there, but to no avail. Stonewalled and frustrated, he turned back, only to return on 5 Rajab (twenty-ninth of June) with an army. By now, the castellan had heard of his master's death, and having no provisions in the castle anyways, descended peacefully, entrusting the premises to Amīrdād by the middle of Sha'bān (early August). Having appointed a custodian for the castle, Amīrdād went to Dāmghān and sent Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn Dāmghānī, the astronomer of the age, to set an auspicious date to begin construction.

Ra'īs Mu'ayyad al-Dīn Muẓaffar was a man of noble ancestry and glorious lineage. Such was his immense influence, wealth and power that many of the Saljūq princes were in the shade of his patronage and protection. This was particularly the case of Amīrdād Ḥabashī, the son of Āltūntāq, who was the Prince (*malik*) of Dāmghān. He was encompassed and enveloped in Ra'īs Muẓaffar's care. Most of his estates there were purchased with Ra'īs Muẓaffar's gold.

The powerful vizier, viceroys and grandees of the court treated Amīrdād poorly. All of them coveted his estates, fiefs, and wealth. He didn't have a warden

45 Kāshānī gives his name simply as Ra'īs Muẓaffar al-Dīn, the revenue commissioner.

46 Rashīd al-Dīn gives "the military."

who could look after and protect his interests at the Sulṭān's court when he was away. The Ra'īs had raised Amīrdād as his own child, and Amīrdād had grown up and flourished in his care. Amīrdād therefore entreated the Ra'īs to act in this capacity. Out of regard for Amīrdād, and feeling duty-bound to Amīrdād's father, the Ra'īs intervened to put these affairs in order. He incurred considerable expense at the court, and expended great efforts with Sulṭān Barkiyāruq and [the Sulṭān's] mother [the Saljūq princess Zubaydah Khātūn ibn Amīr Yāqūtī].<sup>47</sup> Āltūntāq's documents with signature were presented due to his immense efforts, and with the permission and command of the Sulṭān he brought back to life the desert wasteland of the Dādbikī family, put aright the anarchy of Amīrdād's servants and retinue, and set straight the crookedness of his chaotic affairs. Accordingly, he entrusted Ustād Muhadhhdhib al-Dīn Ardashīrī ibn Fādār, who was a vizier, viceroy and councilor, to be [Amīrdād] Ḥabashī ibn Āltūntāq's representative.

Ra'īs Muẓaffar treated Prince Ismā'īl, Ḥabashī's boy, as he would his own son, spending his days in raising him and cultivating in him grace, wisdom, and knowledge of literature and the arts. All his expenses and reparations for his servants and retinue he covered with his own personal funds. For these reasons Amīrdād was always abashed and humbled before him and would beg his indulgence. At the repeated entreaty of his son, Prince Ismā'īl, he sent him [to the Ra'īs] so that his circumcision (*tathīr*) could be performed, for which, in the end, Ra'īs Muẓaffar spent 30,000 dinars.

Amīrdād had instructed that the revenue from Dāmghān should be used to cover the expenditures and building of the castle, as well as the salaries of the servants and domestics. Ra'īs Muẓaffar went to Girdkūh as Ḥabashī's representative, also transferring all of his own treasures to the fortress.<sup>48</sup> He didn't even touch [Amīrdād's] funds from Dāmghān, but instead used his own personal assets to finance the expenses and building of the castle.

In the year 493/1100, Amīrdād was killed in Būzgān<sup>49</sup> at the hands of Buzghush-i Khāṣṣ.<sup>50</sup> In the same year, Ra'īs Muẓaffar dug a 300 cubit well in the hard rock within the rampart surrounding Girdkuh, but when he didn't

47 Barkiyāruq was only thirteen years old when he succeeded his father, Malikshāh, in 485/1092, and died in 498/1105, at the age of 25.

48 Rashīd al-Dīn, following Juwaynī, here indicates that the monies entrusted to him by Ḥabashī were transferred to the castle, while Kāshānī indicates that he had his own funds transferred. Given the following sentence, however, Kāshānī's reading is perhaps more likely.

49 A city between Herat and Nishapur in Khurasan.

50 On Buzghush, Sanjar and their engagements with the Ismailis, see D.G. Tor, "Sanjar, Aḥmad b. Malekshāh," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

reach water, he gave up. Years after he passed away, though, there was a mighty earthquake, and a spring gushed forth in the well.

In addition to the precious chattels, costly wares, exquisite rarities and valuable articles he sent to Alamūt, he also spent 36,000 gold dinars for the Nizārī Invitation (*daʿwat-i nizārīyya*), sent 12,000 dinars in cash to Alamūt, directed that 12,000 dinars be spent building a resthouse for travelers (*sarāy*), and spent 12,000 dinars on two wells, all of this above and beyond the restitution he made [to Mahdī the ‘Alid] for the purchase of Alamūt, when he received the draft of Sayyidnā [Ḥasan-i Sabbāḥ]. When Raʿīs Muẓaffar became master of the castle, he also gave Girdkūh to the Nizārīs. He remained there for 40 years at Ḥasan-i Sabbāḥ’s behest as his representative.<sup>51</sup> It was on account of the support and backing of an eminent and distinguished personality like Raʿīs Muẓaffar that the work of Ḥasan-i Sabbāḥ and his Invitation (*daʿwat*) flourished.

Once, when Sulṭān Sanjār was proceeding to [Persian] ‘Irāq from Khurāsān, Raʿīs Muẓaffar was eager to present himself in service before the Sulṭān with food, drinks and gifts, and arrived, intent on giving him an appropriate welcome. However, as the Sulṭān was preoccupied and pressed for time, he didn’t divert his attention to examining the fortress. When he arrived in [Persian] ‘Irāq and his nephew Mas‘ūd (r. as local sultan 529-547/1134-1152) [the son of his brother Muḥammad Tapar], who had staged an insurrection,<sup>52</sup> surrendered to him, the Sultan set out to return to Khurāsān once more.

As Sayyidnā [Ḥasan-i Sabbāḥ] had recommended, when the Sulṭān arrived in Dāmghān, the Raʿīs arranged a royal feast and sent a shower of precious gifts for all of his majesty’s commanders, viziers and courtiers, all of whom received presents according to their ranks.

Given his frailty and age, the Raʿīs had to be carried into the Sultan’s presence in a palanquin. The Sulṭān treated him with respect and tenderness, placing him at a higher position than all the ministers of the state. Speaking reproachfully to Raʿīs Muẓaffar, the vizier chided derisively, “For God’s sake, aren’t you ashamed in your old age to have bowed your head in submission and servitude to the heretics and because of your allegiance (*bay‘at*), to have offered Amīrdād’s wealth to them?”

Without giving it a second thought, the Raʿīs replied, “It is because I saw that the truth (*ḥaqq*) was with them, not with you. I certainly have no need of

51 This is Rashīd al-Dīn’s reading. Kāshānī tells us that Girdkūh was given up to the Nizārīs after the lords of the castle were killed, presumably fighting alongside their master, Amīrdād Ḥabashī.

52 This may refer to the defeat by Sulṭān Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad of his brother Mas‘ūd that took place at Asadābād in 514/1120. See Elton L. Daniel, “Asadābād,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed.

wealth or position. Look at the variety of exalted epithets and distinguished titles by which the Sulṭān's court addresses me in its correspondence, compared with how [the Ismailis] write to me without any pomp or ceremony. Had my submission to them been to seek wealth and position, I would have been much better off never distancing myself from the Sulṭān's palace.

He was a gifted writer. He called for the charters from the sulṭāns, placing them before the vizier, filled with all manner of titles and accolades. Meanwhile, the letters sent from Alamūt were extremely brief, bare and businesslike, written in the following manner: "May God grant Ra'īs Muḏaffar increased virtue. Do this or know that."

The vizier was taken aback and exclaimed: *aḥsanta farmān-dih wa farmān-bar*, "Bravo the commander and the commanded! How can anyone say something like that?" The Ra'īs was a cultured man, and the elegance of his own compositions was well-known among the aforementioned notaries.

All of the ministers of state advised the Sultan to call him to account for the wealth of Amīrdād. Ra'īs Muḏaffar replied, "I and the inhabitants of the castle are the special servants of the Sulṭān. We have been nurtured by his favors and grace and have flourished in the shade of his benevolence." The Sultan sharply rebuked the ministers and bestowed a special robe of honour on the Ra'īs.

Sanjar showed particular deference to the Nizārīs, and adopted a policy of maintaining good relations with them, but sometimes his commanders and the state ministers would depict them in lurid colors. He would listen, advise against haste, and would soon regain his composure, considering the advisability and rectitude for his dominions in leaving them be.<sup>53</sup>

Muḥammad [Tapar], the son of Malikshāh, had willed that his brother Sanjar spare no effort in eradicating the Nizarīs, smashing their heads in with a mace. He himself continuously sent armies to Alamūt to drive them away. Suddenly, however, cholic would break out among his soldiers staked out at the foot of the castle and infighting would erupt in his ranks. In this respite, the Nizārīs would buttress their strength with people under their suzerainty arriving from 'Irāq, Ādharbayjān, Māzandarān, Rustamdār, Tataristān, Tanījān, Gurjiyān and all the provinces of Gīlān, with complete unity, harmony and singleness of purpose.

53 Sanjar's relationship with the Ismailis is a question worth examining, but a detailed exploration is beyond the scope of this paper. It is worth noting, though, that al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh ḥukamā' al-Islām*, p. 140, writes that Shahrastānī "even succeeded in approaching the court of the Seljuq ruler himself, Sanjar, presently becoming 'close to the mighty throne of the Sultan and his confidant.'" Shahrastānī, *Mafātīḥ*, p. 9. See also Badakhshani, "Introduction," pp. 9-13.

At the beginning of Shawwal 498 (June 1105), the Raʿīs passed away. He was 101 years and five months old. His son was Raʿīs Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, a cultivated litterateur who served at Alamūt in the days of his father. After his father's demise, he was appointed as the successor for the protection of Girdkūh.



The information in Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī's narrative provides strong evidence that Khwāja Qāsim Tushtarī's contemporary, the Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad whose status as a leader in the community is alluded to and whose poetry is quoted in *Recognizing God* was none other than the son of the redoubtable Raʿīs Muẓaffar. Raʿīs Muẓaffar was a cultivated author of literary leanings. He had studied under ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAṭṭāsh, whom Ibn al-Athīr described as “an eloquent litterateur and skilled calligrapher,”<sup>54</sup> and was himself described as treating Prince Ismāʿīl, Ḥabashī's offspring, as he would his own son, “raising him and cultivating in him grace, wisdom, and knowledge of literature and the arts.” One would imagine that Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad would have been exposed to the same genteel upbringing. The fact that Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī describe him, like his father, as a cultivated litterateur, makes it very likely that he also composed poetry, and that the verses with the penname Qāsim in *Recognizing God* are his.

Tushtarī invokes him with utmost reverence, referring to him as “*Khwāja*” and as a “true teacher,” *muʿallim-i ṣādiq*, a technical term in Ismailism referring to either the Imam himself, or to members of the spiritual hierarchy (*ḥudūd-i dīn*) authorized by him to guide the believers. The term resonates with the concept of the true guide (*sat gur*) who leads the adepts to divine recognition in the Gināns of the South Asian Ismaili tradition.<sup>55</sup> The intertextual reverberations of both words of the phrase *muʿallim-i ṣādiq* must be borne in mind in understanding how Qāsim Tushtarī addresses this dignitary: “the true (or righteous) teacher (*muʿallim-i ṣādiq*), Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, the pride of those who realize the truth and leader of the people of certainty.” A *muʿallim* is literally one who conveys knowledge, or *ʿilm*. Following on Qurʾānic usage, *ʿilm* in this context is understood to be sacred knowledge, vouchsafed to the chosen family of prophecy, who are referred to in South Asian Ismaili Gināns as “the progeny of knowledge” (*elam āl*).<sup>56</sup> The Twelver Shīʿī scholar, Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1050/1640) was also to give a cosmological significance

54 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, p. 67.

55 Virani, “Symphony of Gnosis,” *passim*.

56 Pīr Shams, *Shrī Nakaḷaṅk Shāstr*, vv. 15, 57; Virani, “Symphony of Gnosis,” p. 513.

to the concept of *mu'allim*, referring to the agent intellect, identified with the "sublime pen (*al-qalam al-a'lā*), as "the teacher of intense force (*al-mu'allim al-shadīd al-quwā*)."<sup>57</sup> Elucidating the meaning of the expression "the true" or "the righteous" in the Qur'anic verse *yā ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū'ttqū llāh wa-kūnū ma'a l-ṣādiqīn*, "O you who believe, be mindful of your duty to God and be with the righteous" (9:119), the Ismaili *dā'ī* al-Mu'ayyad fi l-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 470/1078) recalls the Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's words, "We are the righteous (*al-ṣādiqūn*), and are the ones meant by the verse."<sup>58</sup> We are told that the poetry of the *mu'allim-i ṣādiq* Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad Qāsim cited in the text was composed in response to a question from a *rafiq*, an Ismaili companion.

### E The Evolution of the Ismaili Leadership Structure: "We Need Recourse to a True Teacher"

An interesting interpretation regarding the Ismaili leadership structure suggests itself here, which has certain parallels with the leadership structure as it evolved in South Asian contexts. The station of *ra'īs*, derived from the Arabic word for head (*ra's*), refers to the leader or chief of a political, religious, tribal or other group. In territories governed by the Fāṭimids, Būyids and Sajūqs, between the fourth/tenth and sixth/twelfth centuries, the term was used extensively as a title for the head of a village or city, a type of local "mayor." The *ra'īs* could be appointed, or at least approved of, by a central government, and often held responsibilities for religious activities as well. For example, in Saljūq times, the powerful vizier Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092) appointed Abū 'Alī Ḥassān al-Manī'ī as the *ra'īs* and *shaykh al-islām* in Nishapūr in ca. 465/1073, where he was to promote the Ash'arī school of theology and Shāfi'ī school of law.<sup>59</sup> In areas of Ismaili settlement, the ideal appointee would similarly have had both administrative ability, commanding the respect of the populace, as well as the capacity to act as the *mu'allim-i ṣādiq*, the true teacher. This connection is explicitly made in Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāh's *Four Chapters (Chahār faṣl)*, preserved in al-Shahrastānī's (d. 548/1153) abridged Arabic translation. He writes in the fourth chapter:

57 Mullā Sadrā, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 442. In this regard, see Meisami, "A Critical Analysis of Discourses on Knowledge and Absolute Authority", pp. 188f. Hermann Landolt presents several insights on Ismaili influences on Ṣadrā in his "Introduction," in *Paradise of Submission*. See also Landolt, "Being-Towards-Resurrection", passim.

58 Al-Mu'ayyad fi l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyya*, vol. 2, p. 231.

59 A. Havemann, C.E. Bosworth, and S. Soucek, "Ra'īs," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.; "ra'īs," *Encyclopaedia of Islam: Glossary and Index of Terms*, 2nd ed.

There exist two groups of people. The first group says that in order to recognize the Creator, may He be exalted, we need recourse to a true teacher (*mu'allim ṣādiq*). First, such a teacher must be appointed and designated (*ta'īnah wa-tashkhīṣah*), after which we may learn from him. The other group takes knowledge from those who are teachers, as well as those who are not. The preceding preliminaries demonstrate that the Truth (*al-ḥaqq*) is with the first group and that their leader (*ra'īs*) must be the leader of the Purveyors of Truth (*muḥiqqīn*).<sup>60</sup>

An explicit parallel is therefore drawn between the *mu'allim-i ṣādiq* and the *ra'īs*. While the word *ra'īs* used in Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's text has a more general connotation of "leader," the fact that this theoretical construct manifested itself historically is demonstrated by the case of Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad who was both a *ra'īs*, in the sense of that word as a specific civil dignitary, and a *mu'allim-i ṣādiq*.

In certain ways, the role of the *ra'īs* correlates with that of the *mukhī* in South Asian situations. The word *mukhī*, like *ra'īs*, comes from a word meaning head or chief (*mukhya*), and pre-independence towns and villages in Gujarat, Sindh, Panjab and many other regions traditionally had headmen who were known as *mukhīs*.<sup>61</sup> Like a *ra'īs*, a *mukhī* was frequently appointed from a prominent local family, and it was not unusual for multiple generations of a family to serve in this capacity.<sup>62</sup>

In the communities amongst whom the Ismailis lived, leadership structures such as that of the *ra'īs* and the *mukhī* served civil and administrative as well as religious functions. These well-established leadership structures were likely incorporated organically by the Ismailis, particularly in those villages, towns and fortresses where they formed the majority of the population and which were headed by an Ismaili. These structures were likely then adopted in places where the Ismailis were a minority, though with religious and administrative functions solely within the community itself. In pre-modern times, when appointments to the role of *mukhī* were generally lifelong, the position was one of particular gravity and bearers of the title were tasked, as it were, with "saving souls."<sup>63</sup> Such appointments would have been made by senior members of the Ismaili Invitation, the *da'wa*. For example, Kāshānī depicts Sayyidnā Ḥasan-i

60 Shahrastānī, *al-Mūlal wa-l-niḥal*, p. 233. Cf. Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects and Divisions*, p. 169; Hodgson, *Order of Assassins*, p. 326.

61 See, for example, Chaturvedi, *Peasant Pasts*, pp. 39-41, 280.

62 See, for a modern example, Carstairs, *The Twice-Born*, pp. 128, 331.

63 Pīr Indra Imāmshāh, "Tame suno munīvaro ved vīchār (Mukhīnī kīrīā)," vol. 5, no. 98, passim.

Şabbāh appointing qualified people to the position of *raʿīs*.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, tradition holds that Pīr Şadr al-Dīn (fl. 8th/14th c.) appointed *mukhīs* in Sindh, Panjab and Kashmir.<sup>65</sup> Over time, the position of *raʿīs* ceased in general usage, as well as within the Ismaili community. By contrast, though the office of *mukhī* in Western Indian civil practice is gradually giving way to other structures of governance, the office continues to the present day in the Ismaili community, spreading even beyond South Asia.

#### F Dating Khwāja Qāsim Tushtarī's *Recognizing God*: "Of Four (چهار) and Forty (چهل)"

On the surface, the narrative provided by Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī provides a perfectly clear timeline for us to estimate Raʿīs Sharaf al-Dīn's period of activity, and thus pinpoint dates for the composition of Khwāja Qāsim Tushtarī's *Recognizing God*. Digging a bit deeper, however, reveals many complications. There is ambiguity in the sources about when Raʿīs Muẓaffar passed away and was succeeded by Raʿīs Sharaf al-Dīn.<sup>66</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī confidently inform us, being very specific, that the aged Raʿīs relinquished his life at the beginning of Shawwal 498/June 1105 at the age of 101 years and five months. However, earlier we were told that when the Raʿīs became master of the castle of Girdkūh, as per Rashīd al-Dīn, or when the lords of the castle had been killed (presumably fighting by the side of their master, Amīrdād Ḥabashī when he joined Barkiyāruq's cause against Sanjar in 493/1100), the Raʿīs gave it to the Nizārīs, remaining there for forty years. This would suggest that he died in approximately 533/1139, not 498/1105. It would be quite easy to conceive a scribal error in Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī's source, in which the word four (چهار) appeared as forty (چهل), as the two words look extremely similar in Persian.<sup>67</sup> Assuming that the Raʿīs inhabited the castle soon after Amīrdād passed away, at which time he donated the castle to Alamūt, and Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ appointed him to be his representative there, the time period of four

64 Kāshānī, *Zubdat*, p. 155.

65 Sayyid Imāmshāh, *Janatpurī*, vv 84ff. Cf. Dāmānī, *Pīrono Itihās*, p. 52; Rematulā (Rahimtoola), *Khojā Kom no Itihās*, p. 121. The names of the *mukhīs* are identified as Mukhī Trikamadās (Sindh), Mukhī Shāmādās Lāhorī (Panjab), and Mukhī Tulasīdās (Kashmīr).

66 Hodgson's observations on the discrepancy of dates and various aspects of the narrative may be found in *Order of Assassins*, pp. 100f. n5.

67 It is entirely possible that Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī derived this particular detail from the narrative in Juwaynī, *Jahāngushāy*, vol. 3, p. 208; Juwaynī, *World-Conqueror*, vol. 2, p. 679.



years matches fairly closely with the given date of death as 498/1105. This also accords better with the statement in *Kāshānī* (which is not present in *Rashīd al-Dīn*) that “*Sayyidnā*,” i.e., Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, was the one who appointed Sharaf al-Dīn as Raʿīs Muẓaffar’s successor. As Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ died in 518/1124, this would not have been possible had Raʿīs Muẓaffar died in 533/1139 rather than 498/1105.

There are, however, other discrepancies that argue for the later date. We are told of an aged Raʿīs Muẓaffar hosting Sulṭān Sanjar upon his return from Persian ʿIrāq. *Kāshānī* provides an additional detail not given by *Rashīd al-Dīn*, in telling us that the purpose of the Sulṭān’s travel was a sortie against his recalcitrant nephew Masʿūd (r. as local sulṭān 529-47/1134-52), the son of his brother Muḥammad Tapar. This is almost certainly a reference to Sulṭān Sanjar’s defeat of Masʿūd at Dīnawar in 526/1132.<sup>68</sup> It is simply not possible for Sulṭān Sanjar to have engaged in combat with Masʿūd before 498/1105 as his nephew was born in 502/1109.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, if the Raʿīs really died in 498/1105 the activities attributed to him in the court of Sulṭān Barkiyāruq, who came to the throne in 485/1092, would have occurred when he was 88 years old, which seems rather implausible, though not impossible. The evidence in *Kāshānī* and *Rashīd al-Dīn* tilts toward the later date of death as being more likely. As will be seen below, preference for this later date is also supported by the evidence of *Recognizing God*, assuming that our identification of the Sharaf al-Dīn Qāsim, who was alive at the time of writing, with Raʿīs Sharaf al-Dīn is correct.

If we are to accept the testimony about Raʿīs Muẓaffar’s age at the time of his death, while rejecting the explicit year of 498/1105 recorded in our sources, opting instead for the year 533/1139 implied by his residence in Girdkūh for forty years, this fits in well with the other dates recorded in the narrative. Raʿīs Muẓaffar’s “feeling duty-bound to Amīrdād’s father” Āltūntāq, and being like a father to both Amīrdād Ḥabashī and later his son Prince Ismāʿīl, suggests that he would have been a contemporary of Āltūntāq, and a generation older than Amīrdād, who passed away in battle (and, therefore, as a man of fighting age) in 493/1100. Assuming a death date of 533/1139, and estimating 25 years per generation, he would have been about 61 when Amīrdād was killed in his mid-thirties, both of which seem possible. He would also have

68 C.E. Bosworth, “Sandjar,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.

69 Note that at the very end of the chapter on Masʿūd in Nīshāpūrī’s *Saljūq-nāmāh*, it is stated that “his reign was eighteen years and the length of his life was forty-five years.” *Rashīd al-Dīn and Nīshāpūrī, The History of the Seljuq Turks*, p. 119. Given that he died in 547/1152, that would place his birth in 502/1108, which may have been after the death of Raʿīs Muẓaffar.

been 94 years old at the time of his meeting with Sulṭān Sanjar, which tallies well with his being frail, aged, and having to be carried into the sulṭān's presence on a palanquin. The explicit date recorded for his death, 498/1105 is, in fact, the year that Sulṭān Barkiyāruq died, and one wonders if perhaps either the original author or an early scribe confused this date with that of Ra'īs Muẓaffar's passing.

If our assumption that Ra'īs Muẓaffar passed away in 533/1139 at the age of 101 is correct, and we again calculate approximately 25 years per generation, we can further speculate that Sharaf al-Dīn might have been born around 457/1065, and so was already fairly advanced in years when his father passed away. The fact that Sharaf al-Dīn had already been appointed as *mu'allim-i ṣādiq* and was writing poetry before the composition of *Recognizing God* suggests he must have reached the age of majority by that time, and was likely at least 20 years old. While we cannot state categorically whether this was before or after his appointment to the position of *ra'īs* of Girdkūh, the fact that Khwāja Qāsim Tushtarī, while referring to him with a number of other titles does not refer to him as *ra'īs* suggests it would have been before 533/1139. Given the foregoing, it would be possible to cautiously narrow down the period of Khwāja Qāsim's activity, and the time when *Recognizing God* was written, to between 477/1084 and 533/1139. However, as we know from the foregoing discussion, Sanā'ī's *Orchard of Reality* had already been written before *Recognizing God*, in 525/1131, allowing us to narrow our range even further, to between 525/1131 and 533/1139. While the identity of Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad is not certain, if he was the aforementioned Kiyā Fakhr-Āwar, we know he died in 511/1118, which also accords well with these calculations. Given the ambiguity in our sources about the exact dates of the activities of Ra'īs Muẓaffar and Ra'īs Sharaf al-Dīn, and the likely, though admittedly contingent identification of the Sharaf al-Dīn of the text with the *ra'īs* of Girdkūh, this dating is of course provisional. Nevertheless, the single verse of Qāsim Tushtarī's poetry preserved in the *Mines of Mysteries*, as well as its context, may support this dating:

*bi-sh(i)nākhtam ba-mard imām-i zamānah-rā*  
*ān bī-naẓīr nām-i Khudā'ī yagānah-rā*<sup>70</sup>

By man I recognized the Imam of the Time  
 Who is the incomparable name of the one God

70 Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (attrib.), *Shinākht-i imām*—1960, 20. The metre is --˘ / -˘ -˘ / ˘ --˘ / -˘ -, the well known *baḥr-i mudārī'*. See Thiesen, *A Manual of Classical Persian Prosody*, pp. 153-155.

As the *Mines of Mysteries* continues, “And that man is the Proof (*ḥujjat*), the Proof also being the incomparable name of the Imam, as the Imam’s real name (*ism-i ḥaqīqī*) is the person through whom he is recognized, not these ephemeral names (*asmā-yi majāzī*).”<sup>71</sup> As it will be recalled, in Ismailism the Imam is regarded as the supreme name of God, that is, the person through whom God is recognized, and the members of the spiritual hierarchy appointed by the Imam are the names through whom the Imam is recognized.<sup>72</sup> Given Tushtarī’s suggestion that he recognized the Imam through a certain individual, and the statement in the *Mines of Mysteries* that this individual was the Imam’s Proof (*ḥujjat*), the verse and its context suggest it may have been written in a period of concealment (*dawr-i satr*), when the Imam was not openly available, certainly before the time of the Imam Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi l-salām (d. 561/1166). In all likelihood the Proof (*ḥujjat*) to whom Khwāja Qāsim Tushtarī attributed his success in recognizing the Imam of the Time was none other than the redoubtable Ḥasan-i Šabbāh, who passed away approximately a decade before the date of composition we have estimated for Tushtarī’s *Recognizing God*.

The oldest known manuscript of *Recognizing God*, described below and dated 1101/1689, attributes a couplet of poetry in §7 to Ḥakīm Nizārī (d. ca. 720/1320), an Ismaili poet from Quhistān who was active after the fall of Alamūt.<sup>73</sup> Based on this allusion, when I first drew attention to the existence of this work in *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, a Search for Salvation*, I posited a later period of authorship, cautioning, however, that the second manuscript in my possession simply read *ḥakīm*, and that the couplet was not to be found in the published first volume of Nizārī’s poetry then available to me.<sup>74</sup> Since that time, I have been able to positively identify the verse as belonging to the oeuvre of Ḥakīm Sanā’ī, not that of Ḥakīm Nizārī, which demonstrates a scribal error in the oldest manuscript. The reference to Nizārī can thus no longer serve to establish a *terminus post quem* for the date of composition.

71 Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (attrib.), *Shinākht-i imām—1947*; Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (attrib.), *Shinākht-i imām—1960*.

“*Wa ān mard ḥujjat ast wa ism-i bī-naẓīr-i imām ham ḥujjat ast, zūrā kih ism-i ḥaqīqī-yi imām, kih az ū imām-rā mī-tawān shinākht ūst, nah in asmā-yi majāzī*”.

72 See, e.g., al-Nu‘mān, *Ta’wīl al-da‘ā’im*, vol. 1, p. 85; Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Dīwān-i ash‘ār*, ed. Taqawī and Mīnūwī, p. 34; Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Dīwān-i ash‘ār*, ed. Mīnūwī and Muḥaqqiq, p. 139.

73 Jamal, *Surviving the Mongols*; Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, q.v. Nizārī Quhistānī, Ismā‘īlī poet.

74 Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, pp. 87f.

There are two expressions that may give moment for pause regarding our dating of the text. In §§15-16, Qāsim Tushtarī refers to the “Blessed and Hallowed Epistles” (*Fuṣūl-i mubārak wa muqaddas*) of the Imam as being a source for his epistle and in §7 the benediction “hallowing and prostration upon his mention” (*li-dhikrih sujūd wa-taṣbīḥ*) is used after reference to the Imam. While comparatively richer source materials for the period after the Imam Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrih l-salām (d. 561/1166) show that both of these had become common idioms by that time, our lack of sources for the earlier period at Alamūt does not allow us to gauge when they became current among Persian-speaking Ismailis. I am not aware of the use of these expressions in this sense in the works of Ḥakīm Nāṣir-i Khusraw, our most important source for Persian Ismailism during the united Fāṭimid caliphate. That said, Nāṣir-i Khusraw lived in a different region than Qāsim Tushtarī, and all his writings date to over half a century before our estimate for the date of composition of *Recognizing God*. Already, in the writings of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and al-Shahrastānī, we see the evolution of a new Ismaili technical argot, and so it would not be unusual if the expressions were adopted at that time. If so, the usage suggests that written epistles from the Imams descended from Imam Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh were being received by the members of the *da‘wa* at this time and were already being referred to as the “Blessed and Hallowed Epistles” (*Fuṣūl-i mubārak wa muqaddas*). In their *Paradise of Submission* (*Rawḍa-yi taslīm*), Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd (fl. 7th/13th c.) and Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) describe the Invitation (*da‘wa*) of Sayyidnā Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ as the first sounding of the trumpet of the Resurrection (*naḥk-i šūr*), suggesting the dawn of a new era.<sup>75</sup> While not enough literature from this early period has survived to speak definitively, the writings of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, Shahrastānī, and Khwāja Qāsim Tushtarī certainly suggest that the technical vocabulary that we see in the writings of the later authors of Alamūt had already started taking root in this early period.

A discrepancy exists in our manuscripts about our author’s *niṣba*, i.e., the portion of names that indicates such things as hometown, tribal affiliation, or ancestry. Some refer to him as Turshizī, while others refer to him as Tushtarī. We know that the Ismailis had a number of castles in the Turshiz district, most notably the fortresses of Barda Rūd, Mikal, Mujāhidābād, and Ātishgāh.<sup>76</sup> Meanwhile, Tustar (also known as Shushtar and Shustar, among other variants) was, along with Ahwāz, one of the two main towns of

75 Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, *Paradise of Submission*, chapter 26. See also Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Āghāz ū anjām*.

76 Qazwīnī, *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, ed. p. 143, trans. p. 142.

Khūzistān. Ḥasan-i Šabbāh himself had preached Ismailism in this region.<sup>77</sup> At this time, the *dā'ī* Abū Ḥamza was also in possession of two fortresses in nearby Arrajān.<sup>78</sup> It is therefore conceivable that Khwāja Qāsim may have been from either of the two places, and so for the sake of expediency we simply refer to him as Qāsim Tushtarī, the name by which he first became known in Western scholarship, rather than as Qāsim Turshīzī.

Certain passages in *Recognizing God* bear striking similarities to Shahrastānī's contemporary *Book of Confessions and Creeds* (*Kitāb al-Milal wa-l-niḥāl*). The Prophetic traditions in *Recognizing God* can equally be found in Shahrastānī's book. Similarly, the following explanation in Shahrastānī's introduction of the first doubt that arose in the world, along with his elaboration of Satan's refusal to submit to Adam and of the "general and particular command" immediately after, find direct parallels in Tushtarī's *Recognizing God*:

The first doubt that arose in the world was the doubt of Iblis: may the curse of God be on him! Its source was his assumption of independence in opposition to a clear instruction; his preference for his own inclination over a command; his pride in the matter out of which he was created, that is, fire, in contrast to the matter out of which Adam was created, that is, dust.<sup>79</sup>

This and Tushtarī's elaboration in §14 regarding the necessity for the faithful to tame their pride and fallible notions in order to follow the commands of the true teacher (*mu'allim-i šādiq*) may presage similar pronouncements in later Alamūt period texts.

It is said that there is no danger in faith in the Unseen, because *yu'minūna bi-l-ghayb*, "they believe in the Unseen" (2:3). Thus, the solution for the seekers on the path of truth is to set aside their own egos, conceptions and views, and to forsake vain opinions and analogies (*ra'y wa qiyās*), which are the methods of the accursed devil, and to submit their entire will, in worldly and religious affairs, to the true teacher who is truly and certainly an intermediary between God and His creatures, so that Satan will not capture them, nor even be capable of doing so. They should

77 Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, p. 313. The authoritative *Dihkhudā* dictionary gives *تشتار*, which it vocalizes as Tashtar, as a variant of the more familiar Tustar.

78 Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārs nāmāh*, pp. 84, 121, 148, 162. For additional references, see Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, pp. 321, 620 n649.

79 Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects and Divisions*, p. 12.

attend to the commands (*farmān*) of the true teacher at every moment, refraining from eating even a morsel of bread or sipping a gulp of water of their own accord without the command (*amr*) of their true teacher, recognizing that if they were to do so, it would be illicit (*ḥarām*). They must not allow their arrogance and egotism to interfere with their faith and confidence in the true teacher.

The analogy of even the consumption of food and drink being forbidden if done against the will of the true teacher is repeated in a different context by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī in his *Desideratum of the Faithful* (*Maṭlūb al-mu'minīn*). After expounding on the seven pillars of faith, the first and foremost of which is bearing witness to the faith (*shahādat*), which means recognizing God through the Imam of the time, and emphasizing the centrality of obedience to the Imam, Ṭūsī explains that it is far more difficult to practice the spiritual pillars of the faith than to follow their physical counterparts, he writes:

To become people of spiritual reality, it is incumbent to fulfill the symbolic elucidation (*ta'wīl*) of the seven pillars of the religious law (*sharī'at*) expounded here. You must know with certainty that the commandments, prohibitions and requirements of the religious law are incomparably easier to fulfill than the requirements of spiritual reality (*takālīf-i ḥaqīqī*). All acts of worship required by the religious law can be fulfilled by the folk of the religious law within two hours of a day and night. As for the remainder of the twenty-four-hour period, they can busy themselves with whatever worldly matters and affairs they deem important, and are worshipful people according to the dictates of the religious law, destined for salvation. The commandments and prohibitions of spiritual reality (*ḥaqīqat*) are more exacting, for if the folk of spiritual reality neglect prayer, fasting and worship and become heedless for even the twinkling of an eye, for that moment, all they do and see will not be for the sake of God. Rather, if they sip a gulp of water or eat a morsel with the intention of quenching thirst or hunger [rather than serving God through obedience to the Imam], that sip or morsel is illicit (*ḥarām*) for them, according to the dictates of spiritual reality, and they would not be among the people of spiritual reality or folk of inner meaning.<sup>80</sup>

80 Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Maṭlūb al-mu'minīn*, ed. p. 28, trans. p. 42.

## G Conclusion

Recent scholarship has gradually increased our knowledge of Ismailism at Alamūt from the time of the Imam Ḥasan ‘alā dhikirihi l-salām (d. 561/1166) onward, particularly with the publication of editions, translations and studies covering such authors and works as the *The Protocols and Invitation of the Faithful to the August Presence* (*al-Dustūr wa-da‘wat al-mu‘minīn li-l-ḥuḍūr*) attributed to Shams al-Dīn b. Aḥmad (or Muḥammad) b. Ya‘qūb al-Ṭayyibī,<sup>81</sup> *Paradise of Submission* (*Rawḍa-yi taslīm*) by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) along with several other works of Ṭūsī,<sup>82</sup> *Poems of the Resurrection* (*Dīwān-i qā’imiyyāt*) by Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd and other Ismaili poets,<sup>83</sup> and the *Poem Rhyming in Tā’* (*Tā’iyya*) of ‘Āmir ibn ‘Āmir al-Baṣrī (d. after 700/1300).<sup>84</sup> Aside from some significant progress in our understanding of al-Shahraṣṭānī’s oeuvre, however, the earlier period has received less attention, and suffers from a dearth of sources. In this context, the discovery of Khwāja Qāsim Tushtārī’s *Recognizing God* is a particularly significant witness to the beginnings of the Nizārī branch of Ismailism.

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81 Al-Ṭayyibī (attrib.), *al-Dustūr wa-da‘wat al-mu‘minīn li-l-ḥuḍūr*. I have prepared a new critical edition and translation of this text, forthcoming.

82 Ṭūsī and Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, *Rawḍa-yi taslīm (Taṣawwurat)*.

83 Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, *Dīwān-i qā’imiyyāt*.

84 ‘Āmir b. ‘Āmir al-Baṣrī, *Tā’iyya*.

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