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CAIRO AS THE CENTRE OF THE ISMĀ'ILĪ MOVEMENT

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*Ismā'ilism as the state religion
in the Fāṭimid Empire
and as a missionary movement outside it*

Ismā'ilism was founded in the middle of the third century of the Hijra, i. e. the middle of the ninth century A. D., as an underground revolutionary movement, aiming at the overthrow of the 'Abbāsid caliphate. Missionaries were sent out into the various parts of the Islamic world, with the task of gaining adherents. In order to achieve this aim, the leaders of the local missions played upon the grievances, ambitions and interests of different classes in different places, as the opportunity arose. In Southern 'Irāq they rallied with spectacular success peasants and Bedouins; in Baḥrayn they firmly established themselves and used for their own purposes the rapaciousness of the Bedouins who for generations had habitually robbed the pilgrim caravans. In the Yemen, the Ismā'ili missionaries gained footholds among the mountain tribes, and in similar fashion the leader of the mission, who went from the Yemen to a distant Berber district of the Kutāma on the eastern boundary of the province of Ifriqiya, gained adherents among these Berber mountaineers. In the Jibāl, the first missionaries addressed themselves to the villagers near Rayy; but later they changed their tactics and tried to convert the local rulers, hoping to see Ismā'ilism introduced from above. The same ambitious game was played by the heads of the mission in Khurāsān and Transoxania¹.

The movement achieved its aims to a limited degree only. When the dust settled after the great revolutionary explosions and attempts at taking over various provinces, at the turn of the third and fourth centuries A. H., the Ismā'ilis found themselves in the possession of a firm territorial base in the dominion established by them in North Africa. (The Qarmatians of Baḥrayn also survived, but in the meantime they had quarrelled with the leadership of the movement.) But the hope of taking possession of the main body of the Islamic Empire did not materialize. In most provinces the attempts at seizing power proved unsuccessful, the Ismā'ilis merely retaining their missionary organization. Thus the movement was organized in two concentric circles. First, the territorial domain of the Fāṭimids, where Ismā'ilism was the state religion. This domain was enormously extended by the conquest of Egypt and Syria. Apart from the main dominion, during the second half of the fourth century the Fāṭimids also controlled the distant province of Multān in Sind, which was gained for them by the local missionaries, and from the middle of the fifth century the Yemen, which acknowledged their sovereignty in similar

circumstances? Against this was to be set the loss of North Africa in the middle of the fifth century. Secondly, outside their dominions the Fātimid Imāms commanded the religious loyalty of small groups of Ismā'īli believers, members of the local Ismā'īli missions, who hoped to be the forerunners of the ultimate Fātimid conquest. This feeling is clearly expressed in a passage taken from the treatise of a *dā'i* of the second half of the fourth/tenth century on the organization of the *da'wa*:

Kingship is the guardian of religion; the spread of religion and the success of the *da'wa* strengthen the Empire (*dawla*). The subjects of the Imām reside either within the limits of his empero (*fi ḥadrah*) or in different *djairas* (dioceses of the *da'wa*) where they are his *djund* [army—or shall we say "fifth column"]³

I shall first discuss the position of the Ismā'īli *da'wa* within the Fātimid Empire, and shall then say a few words about its organization outside the Empire.

The Chief Dā'i and the Madjālis al-Ḥikma

In the Fātimid territories the dominant position of Ismā'ilism did not mean that it became the religion of a significant part of the population. Far from it: as is well known, only a small minority joined the state religion. Ismā'ilism enjoyed a privileged position insofar as its legal doctrines were applied by the judiciary and its particular ritual was, at least in the main centres, enforced on public occasions. The Chief Qāḍi, head of the judiciary, was usually an Ismā'īli, and even on the occasions when he was chosen among the members of another *madhhab*, he had to administer justice according to the Ismā'īli *madhhab*. The Chief Qāḍi often acted as head of the Ismā'īli organization and was at the same time Chief Dā'i. If there was a separate Chief Dā'i, he took the second place in the religious hierarchy after the Chief Qāḍi. There is not much evidence about the functions of the Chief Dā'i. He was responsible for the appointment of provincial *dā'is*, and also of *dā'is* working outside the frontiers of the Fātimid Empire, though not many details are available on this point.

The hierarchy of the dignitaries (*ḥudūd*) is often discussed in Ismā'īli literature. The Imām is served by twelve "proofs" (*ḥudūdjas*), of whom four occupy a special position, comparable to that of the four sacred months among the twelve months of the year. These four are sometimes

called "gates" (*bābs*), and the first in rank among them is the "chief gate" (*bāb al-awwal*). The well-developed and by no means uniform doctrine concerning the hierarchy of the *da'wa* demands separate study and as we shall briefly point out below, its relation to historical reality is somewhat problematic. The title of Chief Dā'i, which the head of the *da'wa* bore according to the protocol of the Fātimid Empire, does not seem to occur in the theological literature. One is tempted to assume that the title of "Chief Gate" is the theological counterpart of the official title of Chief Dā'i; but it is better to speak with reserve on this obscure subject of the hierarchy of the *da'wa*.

The main occasion for the Ismā'īlis of Cairo to assert themselves as a community was during the meetings held for the delivery of lectures on Ismā'īli doctrine. It was natural that Ismā'īli theologians gave public lectures, and historians record some lectures notable for incidents, such as deaths due to overcrowding. In 365, 'Alī b. al-Nu'mān's son of the Qāḍi al-Nu'mān, one of the greatest Ismā'īli authorities, dictated, in the presence of an immense multitude, his father's compendium of law "according to the Family of the Prophet", called *al-Iqtisār*; Ibn Killis lectured on a law book composed by himself. According to the early Fātimid historian al-Musabbihī, in Rabi' I of the year 385 the Qāḍi Muḥammad, son of al-Nu'mān, sat on a chair in the palace to lecture on the sciences of the Prophet's Family, according to the custom followed by him and his brother in Egypt and their father in the Maghrib; in the throng eleven men lost their life. This may refer to lectures given on text-books such as the *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, the famous treatise on law according to the Ismā'īli *madhhab*. In 394, 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān (the son of the qāḍi just mentioned), on his appointment as Chief Qāḍi, began to lecture in the Cathedral Mosque (the Azhar) on his grandfather's treatise "The Differences of the Law-Schools concerning Principles". (*Ikhtilāf Uṣūl al-Madhāhib*).⁴

These, however, were lectures on law, and of a more public character than theological lectures meant for the members of the sect. For them there were systematic courses which were then published in the form of treatises, with or without a formal division into "lectures" (*madjālis*). Or else the form of lecture was more prominent. This second type of lecture finally predominated and the *madjālis al-ḥikma*, "lectures on wisdom" (i. e. on Ismā'īli theology) became a recognized literary form.

Some of the standard works of the Qāḍī al-Nu'mān were originally meant to be read in lecture courses given by him. Indeed, he himself explains that these courses were graded according to the seniority of the audience. The first course was given to beginners, and dealt with the religious law according to the system of the Ismā'īlīs; the *Pillars of Islam* (*Da'a'im al-Islām*), which became the classic handbook of Ismā'īlī law, was composed for this course. After expounding the outward rules of religion, the *ẓāhir*, he gave a course introducing his audience to the inner meaning, the *bā'in*. This course, however, was of an elementary nature, containing only "allusions and indications, this being the easiest and most comprehensible grade of the *bā'in*." The book written for this purpose was called *Hudūd al-Ma'rifa*, "Grades of Knowledge". Its contents are described by the author as follows: "We based this book on the grades of explaining, for those who deny this, the proofs for the need of allegorical interpretation and for the existence of an inner meaning for religion; and of how one must gradually ascend on its steps. We have set out, for the use of intelligent men, allusions and indications for the inner meaning and the allegorical interpretation". This book does not seem to be preserved among the Bohras of India, but copies of it are said to be in the possession of the Nizāri Ismā'īlīs of Syria.

For the advanced initiates, al-Nu'mān gave a course on the "roots" of the *bā'in*. The book composed for this purpose was called *Asās al-Ta'wil*, "The Foundation of Allegorical Interpretation", and contains the interpretation of the subject matter of the *Da'a'im al-Islām*: "just as the *Da'a'im* is the root of the *ẓāhir*, the *Asās al-Ta'wil* is the root of the *bā'in*. Only the first volume of the book is extant, and it mainly consists of the *ta'wil* of the stories of the prophets. It is possible that the lectures were interrupted and the book remained unfinished.⁵

Curiously enough, another book by al-Nu'mān, his *Ta'wil al-Da'a'im* ("Allegorical Explanation of the *Da'a'im*") was also delivered as a course of lecture for more advanced audiences, who had finished the course on the *Da'a'im* and an intermediary "allusive" course lasting for two years.⁶ The explanation is obviously that lectures on the *Da'a'im* accompanied by a middle course were given repeatedly and in one case they were followed by the *Ta'wil al-Da'a'im* in another, and the *Asās al-Ta'wil* as advanced course. It is remarkable that the *Ta'wil al-Da'a'im* is divided into *madjālis*; this clearly indicates its origin as a lecture course.

By the end of the fourth/tenth century there existed collections of *madjālis*; and there were regular assemblies on Thursdays and Fridays for the reading of the *madjālis al-hikma*; presumably these were miscellaneous lectures, like the extant *madjālis*, the earliest of which date from the middle of the fifth/eleventh century. It is impossible to say with certainty when the reading of the new type of *madjālis* was introduced, and whether this supplanted the other type of lectures, or as is perhaps more natural, both types existed side by side.

The *madjālis* were composed by (or for) the Chief *Dā'i*, and read out at the meetings. Though the earliest extant lectures date from the middle of the eleventh century, there is ample evidence for their existence before that. Ḥamza, the founder of the Druze religion, refers in his writings, which date from 408-11 A. H., to the *madjālis al-hikma* as authoritative expositions of Ismā'īlī doctrine. In two slightly later Druze treatises (nos. 72 and 76 of the Druze canon) there are more specific references to the *madjālis* of the Chief Qāḍī 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad b. al Nu'mān, the quotations being from the 10th, 38th, 117th, 125th and 129th *madjālis*. (Later Ismā'īlī writings also refer to *madjālis* from the period of al-'Azīz.) In No. 42 a fragment of the 244th *madjālis* by the Chief Qāḍī Mālik b. Sa'id is quoted.⁷ The brief quotations in the Druze writings do not allow us to form an idea about the form of these lectures. That by the reign of al-Ḥākim the lecture of the *madjālis* had become a fixed institution we learn from al-Musabbiḥī the great Fātimid chronicler who wrote at the beginning of the eleventh century, who reports an order of al-Ḥākim from the month of Shawwāl of 400 A. H. suppressing the *madjālis al-hikma* which were read to the adepts on Thursdays and Fridays. (They were re-established in Rabi' I 401).⁸

A collection of lectures, preserved among the Ismā'īlīs of India, is known as *al-Madjālis al-Mustansiriyya*, "lectures delivered during the reign and in the name of al-Mustansir". The author of the lectures has not hitherto been correctly identified, the opinions expressed on the subject by scholars being proved wrong by the discovery of the real author. The collection is ascribed to "the *dā'i*, the signpost of Islam and the confidant of the Imam" (*lī'dā'i 'alam al-islām thiqt al-imām*). It is easy to recognize in this phrase one of those honorific titles customary in the Fātimid period, and a search in the biographies of the Chief Qāḍīs of al-Mustansir shows that the one to

hear this title was Abu'l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Ḥakīm b. Waḥb b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Malidī. He was appointed Chief Qādi on 7 Dhu'l-Qa'da 450 and remained in office till 11 Rajab 452. Since the lectures were delivered weekly from the month of Muḥarram onwards until the third week of Ramaḍān, the year of their delivery must be 451.⁹ The lectures begin with a highly stylized opening. The main part is always divided into two sections, the first discusses the *ta'wīl* of the main rites of Islam, with the numbers 12 and 7 as leitmotifs, the second contains interpretations of the *fātiḥa* and Sūra 2. The lecture is closed by final formulae. From the reign of al-Mustansir we have also the enormous collection of *madjālis* (numbering over 700) by al-Mu'ayyad, *dā'i* in Shirāz and later Chief *Dā'i* in Cairo. An analysis of their contents is being undertaken in Oxford, so that soon we will be able to characterize this collection, the most important of all collections of *madjālis*. There are some other minor collections of *madjālis* from the Fātimid period.

I wish to discuss some aspects of the delivery of the *madjālis*. First of all, I summarize the instructive details contained in al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography. When in 441 al-Yāzūrī was appointed Chief Qādi and Chief *Dā'i*, al-Mu'ayyad was rather shocked; it was all right that al-Yāzūrī, who started his career as a Qādi, should be promoted to the top of that profession, but since he had nothing to do with the *da'wa*, it was wrong for him to take over the Chief *Dā'i*ship too. But al-Mu'ayyad had to make the best of a bad business, and being an old hand in the missionary work, acted as ghostwriter for the lectures delivered by al-Yāzūrī "in the assemblies". Though the word used here for "assemblies" is *andiyya*, by a passage which follows two pages later it is clearly shown that the *madjālis al-ḥikma* are meant. After making the modest remark that the only fault with these lectures was that at the beginning al-Yāzūrī wished to assert himself by making some additions of his own, al-Mu'ayyad states that this state of affairs continued for over a year. Even after the deposition of the vizier al-Djardjarā'i, al-Yāzūrī did not cease from the reading of the *madjālis* on their days, according to the rule". But when he was appointed vizier (Muḥarram or Dhu'l-Qa'da 442), his new office prevented him from appearing "in the assemblies for the reading of the *madjālis al-da'wa*". Al-Mu'ayyad hoped to be appointed as his successor in that job, but al-Yāzūrī appointed instead Qāsim b. al-Nu'mān, who ascended the *minbar* and read to the audience.¹⁰

We have seen that according to al-Musabbiḥi in the time of al-Ḥakīm the *madjālis* took place on Thursdays and Fridays. Other sources speak of Thursday as the day for the *madjālis*. A poem by al-Mu'ayyad (no. 01 in the *Diwān*) begins with the praise of Thursday—obviously for its being the day of the reading of the *madjālis*.

Welcome to you, Thursday morning! May the One God, our Protector, increase your excellence! You are a solon festival for the believers, on your religion assembles them together. We collect the fruits of the Garden of Eden, whenever the Thursday comes and passes; from gardens, the channels of which are running with water, and in the lodges of which the Houris make their appearance. In these gardens the souls drink to their fill water more wholesome and sweeter than the purest water. This is the rank bestowed upon us by the (Inān), the Lord of the Epoch, God's trusted servant.

A chronicle, describing some court intrigues which took place in the year 440, says that "the Chief Qādi (al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad, great grandson of al-Nu'mān) used to present himself in the audience-chamber of the vizier on Thursdays, in the palace, after performing the service of the *madjālis*".¹¹ An author of the Yemenite period had to answer the question: "Why have the Imams ordered that the *madjālis* should be read on Thursdays, and not on some other day? Why have they not ordered that this should be done in Fridays? What is the deeper reason for this?"¹² It appears therefore that an earlier practice of holding meetings on Thursdays and Fridays was followed by one in which the meetings were on Thursdays only.

Al-Musabbiḥi gives some details about the *madjālis*. According to him, the *dā'i* gave many lectures in the Palace, lecturing separately to the adepts, the members of the court, the common people and strangers. To women, he lectured in the Djāmi' al-Azhar: a separate lecture was given to the women of the court. The *dā'i* prepared the lecture in his house; after being presented to the caliph, a neat copy of the lecture was prepared. The contributions of the Ismā'ilis (*madjwa*) were collected during these lectures, which were called *madjālis al-ḥikma*. Finally al-Musabbiḥi gave the account about the suspension of the *madjālis* by al-Ḥakīm in 400 A. H.¹³

In the letter of appointment of a Chief *Dā'i* (of the eleventh century and preserved as a specimen by al-Qalqashandī) he is instructed to "read the *madjālis al-ḥikma*, which are issued from the Caliph, to the believers, male and female, and the adepts, male and female in the Caliphial palace and the Friday mosque in Cairo". This seems to

ally well with al-Musabbihī's account, assuming that the reference is to lectures for men in the Palace and for women in the Azhar, Cairo's main Friday mosque.¹⁴

Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, an author of the early Ayyūbid period, describes the preparation of the text of the *madjālis* differently, reflecting no doubt the practice of the late Fātimid period. Ismā'īli theologians, housed in the Dar al-'Ilm, met on Mondays and Thursdays and agreed on the text of "a booklet called *madjālis al-ḥikma*". A clean copy was brought to the Chief Dā'ī, who, after checking it, presented it on these days to the Caliph. If possible, the Caliph read it; at any rate he put his signature on it. The Chief Dā'ī then read the lectures in the Palace in two different places—for men, sitting on the chair of the *da'wa* in the Great Hall, for women, in his own audience-chamber. After the lecture the believers came up to kiss the hand of the Chief Dā'ī, who stroked their heads with the booklet, so that the signature of the Caliph touched their heads.¹⁵

I wish to present here an extraordinary document preserved in the Geniza of the Fustāṭ synagogue¹⁶: the original letter of a *da'ī* addressed to a Chief Qāḍī written in order to congratulate the addressee on the occasion of a new grace bestowed by the Caliph on him—presumably his appointment to the office of Chief Qāḍī. Were he not prevented by some impediment, he would have presented his

compliments in person, since he owes a great deal to the noble family of the addressee for the favours he has received from the addressee's grandfather and father, former Chief Qāḍis. Unfortunately the name of the Caliph, which would have allowed the identification of the addressee, has faded away completely, so that it is illegible even under ultraviolet light. The length of the blank space makes me surmise that it was al-Ẓāhir li-I'zāz Dīn Allāh; if so, the Chief Qāḍī in question was Qāsim b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān, appointed in 418 A. H. His predecessor, Abū'l-'Abbās b. Abī'l-'Awwām, was a Ḥanbalite, so it would fit that he had a deputy to act as *da'ī*. Be that as it may, the writer reports on some innovation made by him in the routine of his office. There used to be held two assemblies. One presumably on Thursday; something (the context is difficult to grasp)—was done (presumably read) in the presence of the "believers" (i. e. Ismā'īlis) by a person other than the writer, and the *Kitāb al-Da'ā'im* seems to be mentioned. Another meeting took place on Fridays also in the Djāmi'. The writer has now introduced the custom of having a third session on every Friday after the service, to be held in turn in the three cathedral mosques (i. e. probably the mosque of 'Amr in Fustāṭ, the Azhar, and al-Ḥākīm's mosque). If he received any *madjālis*, he would himself read them out, according to custom.

(Text continued on page 445)

وكتب عده عند انصال الخبر اليها علمنا سائر الأولياء بما جده الله تعالى عنده من جميل .
 رأى مولانا الإمام [؟ الظاهر لإعزاز دين الله ؟ أمير] المؤمنين صلوات الله عليه وعلى آياته الطاهرين
 وأبنائه الأكرمين فجددنا الشكر لله سبحانه على ما منحنا فيه وسائر محبيه وضرعنا إليه
 في أن يهتبه بتمامه ويجعله بداية لا تنتهي وغاية لا تقضى وأن يجرى عليه ما وهبه له من

وكتبه في شهر ربيع الثاني سنة ١٠٠٠ هـ
 في داره في مدينة حلب
 وكتبه في شهر ربيع الثاني سنة ١٠٠٠ هـ
 في داره في مدينة حلب
 وكتبه في شهر ربيع الثاني سنة ١٠٠٠ هـ
 في داره في مدينة حلب
 وكتبه في شهر ربيع الثاني سنة ١٠٠٠ هـ
 في داره في مدينة حلب

جميل رأى الحضرة الطاهرة مهد الله أعلامها ، وأدام أياها ، وأن يسمع الدعاء ،
 ويحبب النداء . وبالله لولا ما اعترضني من [المرض ؟] الذي لا يمكن معه من الحركة لما فاتني
 حظي عن [رؤيته ؟] وكنت [حضرت بنفسى مكان] كتابي هذا [وأذيت] حق النعمة لما يلزمني لهذه
 العترة الجليلة ولما كان [شمليتي من جميل رأى قبضة القضاة الجليلين القاضي أجد والوالد نصر الله
 وجهيها وسط
 الناشر من الجميل
 من أجزءه

على هذا
 الصنع الجليل والفضل العميم والله تعالى يجري



قد جرى على يد غيري بحضور المؤمنين
 كتاب الدعائم [ك يوم الجمعة في الجامع أيضا لقراءة هذا الكتاب وكان هذا على هذا
 النمط وأحدثت أنا رسما في كل يوم الجمعة مجلسا ثالثا بعد صلوة الجمعة في الثلثة
 الجوامع بالنوبة وإن من الله تعالى بشيء من المجالس كنت أنا أتولا قراشتها بنفسي
 على ما جرى به الرسم وأنهيت إلى حضرته الجليلة ذلك [إن شاء الله وكتاب حضرته] [
 به مضمتنا أوامر ونواهي وما] [من خدمة إن شاء الله الحمد لله [وحده] وصلواته على سيدنا
 محمد رسوله وآله وسلم تسليما
 حسبتنا الله ونعم الوكيل

قد جرى على يد غيري بحضور المؤمنين
 كتاب الدعائم [ك يوم الجمعة في الجامع أيضا لقراءة هذا الكتاب وكان هذا على هذا
 النمط وأحدثت أنا رسما في كل يوم الجمعة مجلسا ثالثا بعد صلوة الجمعة في الثلثة
 الجوامع بالنوبة وإن من الله تعالى بشيء من المجالس كنت أنا أتولا قراشتها بنفسي
 على ما جرى به الرسم وأنهيت إلى حضرته الجليلة ذلك [إن شاء الله وكتاب حضرته] [
 به مضمتنا أوامر ونواهي وما] [من خدمة إن شاء الله الحمد لله [وحده] وصلواته على سيدنا
 محمد رسوله وآله وسلم تسليما
 حسبتنا الله ونعم الوكيل

... [may God prolong his days], and crush his enemies, when the news reached us, we informed all the friends [members of the Ismā'īlī movement] of the now sign of favour¹⁸ shown to God—through God's grace — by our lord the Imam [al-Zāhir li-'Izzat Dīn Allāh] Commander of the Faithful, God's blessings upon him, his pure ancestors and noble sons. We renewed our thanks to God, for the gift bestowed upon us and all your loving friends through you, and brought Him to let you enjoy this gift and make it, a beginning without end and a goal never ceasing; to let you further partake of the favour of the Pure Presence [of the Imām] (may God firmly establish its standards and prolong its life) which He has given to you; and to listen to their prayer and respond to this invocation. By God, were it not for this illness which prevents me from moving about, I would not have deprived myself of seeing you in person, but would have appeared myself instead of this letter, and would have rendered what is due to this eminent family through the favours which I have experienced from the two eminent Chief Qādīs, the Qādi your grandfather and your father, may God illumine their faces their kindness, which spreads for this noble action and all-embracing kindness. God (may He be exalted) continues been done by someone else in the presence of the believers the *Kitāb al-Da'ū'im* on Friday also in the Cathedral Mosque for the reading of this book. This was done in this fashion. I have introduced a new arrangement, namely to hold every Friday a third assembly after the Friday prayer, in the three cathedral mosques in turn. If God will favour us with the issue of some *madjālis*, I shall undertake to read them in person, according to custom. I have reported this . . . to the eminent presence, if God wills. The letter of your presence . . . containing your orders and what service [I can do] for you; if God wills.

Praise be to God alone, and His blessings and greetings be upon our lord Muḥammad, His Prophet, and his family. God is sufficient for us; how excellent a Keeper is He!

The *dā'īs* of the provincial capitals of the Fāṭimid Empire

Within the Fatimid Empire the provincial capitals had their *dā'īs*, who were under the authority of the Chief Qādi in Cairo. Ibn Ṭuwayr writes: The Chief Dā'i "has lieutenants in every country like the lieutenants of the Judicature *nuwwāb al-ḥukm*"—i. e. he has subordinate *dā'īs* in the provincial capitals as the Chief Qādi has subordinate Qādīs¹⁹. This refers to the late Fāṭimid period; for an earlier period we have a sentence in the eleventh century letter of appointment

in which the Chief Dā'i is instructed to appoint lieutenants for the affairs of the *dā'wa*; they presumably include provincial *dā'īs*. Information about the tenth century is provided by an instructive passage, which I have published on a former occasion, and in which 'Abd al-Djabbār, Mu'tazilite Chief Qādi of Rayy and a fierce enemy of the Ismā'īlīs, gives a list of some of their *dā'īs* during the reign of al-'Azīz (the book in which the passage occurs dates from 385/995)²⁰:

I have told you about their former leaders. At the present time there are among them men like Abū Djabala Ibrāhīm b. Ghassān, Djābir al-Manūffī, Abū'l-Fawāris al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Mimādhi, Abū'l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Kumayt, Abū Muḥammad al-Ṭabari, Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Ḥalabi, Abū Tamīm, Abū'l-Qāsin al-Bukhārī, Abū'l-Wafā' al-Daylamī, Ibn Abī'l-Dīb, Khuzayma b. Abī Kuzayma, and Abū 'Abd Allāh b. al-Nu'mān. Their residences are Cairo, al-Ramla, Tyre, Acre, 'Asqalān, Damascus, Baghdad and Djabal al-Summāq.

Only a few of the *dā'īs* are otherwise known. Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān is the son of the famous Qādi al-Nu'mān; after serving as assistant and lieutenant of his brother 'Alī, Chief Qādi of Egypt, he succeeded him in 374/984 and died in 389/999. His residence was, naturally, in Cairo. It is known that Abū'l-Fawāris al-Mimādhi was an author and functioned for some time as *dā'i* in Rayy; at the time 'Abd al-Djabbār wrote his book, he may have retired to the Fāṭimid dominions, but his residence cannot be identified. Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Ḥalabi may be identical with the Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ḥalabi al-Qādi, who transmitted *al-Risāla al-Masīhiyya* from al-Mu'izz to Abū'l-Fawāris al-Mimādhi; again, his residence is unknown. I have no further information about the other *dā'īs*. The main point which we learn for our purpose is that such provincial centres as Damascus, Tyre, al-Ramla and 'Asqalān had their *dā'īs* within a quarter of a century of the Fāṭimid conquest of Syria. Incidentally, the mention of the Djabal al-Summāq—the mountainous region south-west of Aleppo, north of Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān—is of great interest for another reason. This is the only district in a list of cities; the existence of a "rural" *dā'i* there suggests that—under unknown circumstances—Ismā'īlism spread there to the villages. Indeed, in the eleventh century the Djabal Summāq reappears as an important Ismā'īlī centre; at the beginning of the century the first Druze missionaries were active there, and at its end some of the early authorities of the Nizāri schism come from places in the area.²¹

Texts from the twelfth century confirm that the provincial capitals of the Empire had resident *dā'is*. The letters of appointment for two provincial governors, those of al-Faramā and of 'Asqalān have been preserved; the former cannot be dated, while the other must belong to the first half of the twelfth century. In both the governor is exhorted to uphold the authority of the local representative of the Chief Qāḍī, as well as the "administrator of the *da'wa*", i. e. the local *dā'i*. In the letter of appointment of the governor of al-Faramā wa'l-Djifār the *dā'i* is described as "the one in charge of the right-guided propaganda (*mutawallī'l-da'watī'l-hādiya*), which is the lamp of our time and through the loud proclamation of which (read *dhikrihā* for *dhikrihi*) the pillars of belief are strengthened" whereas the governor of 'Asqalān is ordered to facilitate the task of "the one in charge of the right-guided propaganda", namely "to give explanations to the believers and guide the adepts (*al-mustadji-būn*) and the pious"²². It is, of course, entirely by chance that just these documents referring to these two towns have been quoted as stylistic specimens. Just as there were *dā'is* in al-Faramā and 'Asqalān, there must have been *dā'is* in all the provincial capitals, alongside the local Qāḍī, and as the local Qāḍī was the representative (*nā'ib*) of the Chief Qāḍī in Cairo, the local *dā'i* was the representative of the Chief *Dā'i*; and this is precisely what Ibn al-Ṭuwayr says.

Ismā'ili missions outside the Fātimid Empire

Ismā'ili missionary activity outside the Fātimid state was the direct continuation of the missionary activity in the third century A. H. which resulted in the establishment of the state. It is to be assumed that the early missionaries were sent by the founders of the movement and that their successors kept in communication with their headquarters; but there is obviously little evidence on this subject. After the establishment of the Fātimid state, the Fātimid court, first in Ifriqiya and then in Egypt, was the centre of Ismā'ili propaganda in the non-Fātimid provinces. The exact organization of this propaganda remains somewhat obscure. According to the Ismā'ili doctrinal books, the *da'wa* of the Imāms was strictly organized not only in the Fātimid period but during the whole history of mankind from Adam onwards. This is not the place to go into

details and discuss the different accounts which appear in different authors. Much of it is mere theory, and even those features about which there is unanimity in all accounts may give rise to doubts. It is held by all authors that the world is divided into twelve "islands" (*djazā'ir*), each of which is governed by a high ranking missionary, called *hudjdja* or *lāhiq*. In spite of the innumerable reference to the *djazā'ir*, I find no enumeration of them before the twelfth century, and then a fairly fantastic one²³. Was the *da'wa* in the Fātimid period really divided into twelve regular provinces? It is perhaps even possible to discover in the following passage by a mid-tenth century author a hint to the utopian character of the system:

When the Imām's rule is accomplished (*istakmalat auruk*), he has in each of the twelve islands of the earth a *hudjdja*. In each island there is a hidden *dā'i*, who can be compared to the hours of the night, and a licensee (*ma'dhūn*) working in the open, who breaks in for the *dā'i* the followers of the outward sense of religion and leads to the *dā'i* those whom he gains for the cause. The licensees can be compared to the hours of the day.²⁴

Perhaps it is not too fanciful to understand this passage in the sense that the full complement of twelve *djazā'ir* will only be set up when the Imām's rule will be universal.

We know the names of some *dā'is* who presided over large provinces which presumably counted as "islands": such as Ḥamid al-Dīn al-Kūrānī, *hudjdja* of the two 'Irāqs, or Nāsir-i Khuraw, *hudjdja* of Khurāsān. A missionary of the name of Šāliḥ b. 'Alī is called in the Druze writings "*dā'i* of the *djazira* of Ray"²⁵-i. e. of Persian 'Irāq; he may have been a successor of Ḥamid al-Dīn. The Yemen is counted as a *djazira*. But if my surmise about the utopian character of the system is correct, it would be futile in principle to expect to find out the identity of the heads of the twelve "islands" at a given epoch. About the subordinate personnel of *dā'is* under the jurisdiction of the head of the *djazira* the doctrinal books give multifarious information, some of which seems too contrived to have corresponded to the actual facts.

More important for our purpose is the question about the relations of the external provinces of the mission with the headquarters of the Imām. The evidence is rather patchy, but the main lines are visible. It is clear that there was fairly regular correspondence between the provinces and the Imām's capital. The Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's memoirs of court life in Ifriqiya (*al-Madjiḥis wa'l-Musāyarāt*) refer occasionally to the arrival

of envoys sent by *dā'is* in distant provinces²⁶; and we have extracts from an important letter sent by al-Mu'izz to the *dā'i* of Sind, in response to a letter received from him. The envoys also brought contributions (*a'māl*) or *qurbān* collected from the initiates. After the conquest of Egypt, such delegations came to Cairo. 'Abd al-Djabbār, whose list of *dā'is* under al-'Aziz was reproduced above, has the following to say about these delegations²⁷: "At the court of the fifth (Fātimid) Imām, i. e. al-'Aziz there are many visitors from Khwārizm and Multān and other countries, carrying money and presents". From the eleventh century we have the collection of letters sent by al-Mustansir to the successive Šulayhid rulers of the Yemen, which is the most important witness for the relations between the Ismā'ili headquarters and a province of the mission²⁸. Several of these letters refer to envoys going to and fro between Cairo and the Yemen.

One might have hoped to cull details about the organization of the *da'wa* from treatises devoted to the subject, such as a chapter in the Qādi al-Nu'mān's book on the etiquette to be observed towards the Imām, and a special book on the subject by his younger contemporary, the *dā'i* Ahmad al-Naysābūrī²⁹; but they offer rather vague generalities, though a few grains of information may be extracted from al-Naysābūrī's long discourses.

A *dā'i* can only be made by permission (*idhn*); p. 25.

The Imām, having sent his *dā'i* to a certain community, does not interfere with his work, and only gives general direction and guidance to his people; pp. 4 and 19-20.

If God asks the Imām to account for the welfare of the community, the Imām refers Him to the *dā'i* in charge, who takes upon himself the whole responsibility for this; p. 4.

If the *dā'i* feels himself unfit to carry out his obligations, he must inform the Imām at once and resign from office, so that another man, fit to fill the post, may be appointed instead of him; p. 27.

If the *da'i* is unable to deal himself with a member of the *da'wa* who misbehaves, he must at once report the matter to the Imām; p. 31.

He must not bother the Imām by asking for sanction of every trivial item of finance; p. 32.

The picture suggested by these excerpts is one which could be expected. The *dā'is* are appointed by the Imām and there is a certain amount of correspondence with the Imām's court, but a

fair degree of independence is left to the local heads of the *da'wa* to deal with current affairs. This is confirmed by various passages in the correspondence of al-Mustansir with the heads of the movement in the Yemen. To be sure, the Yemen was a special case, insofar as the head of the movement there was also a territorial ruler, and insofar as he was also given control over the mission in Oman and India. In one of the rare extant letters from the Yemen to the Imām, Ahmad b. 'Ali al-Šulayhi, after giving an account of the death of his father and the following events, reports that the envoys of the *dā'i* of India have brought him a letter asking that permission be given to them to pass from verbal propaganda to the use of force; a most interesting piece of evidence, showing that there were preparations for a rising on the western coast of India, presumably in Gujarat, ruled by the Hindu Chalukya dynasty, and establish there a Fātimid enclave, as had been done in Sind a century before. In his letter dated Rabī' II 461 (no. 60) the Imām replies to the question of the *dā'i* Yūsuf b. Ḥusayn (we have here the name of the *dā'i*, anonymous in the letter from the Yemen) and leaves it, to him to judge whether the plan is feasible. Nothing seems to have come of it.³⁰ In the same year of 461 al-Mustansir writes to al-Šulayhi that his question concerning Shahriyār b. Ḥasan was referred "to the most excellent sheikh, the Chief Dā'i al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Din, Safeguard of the Believers, Chosen One of the Commander of the Faithful and his Friend, Abū Naṣr Hibat Allāh b. Mūsā", who will take the necessary action (no. 61). Shahriyār b. Ḥasan was a *dā'i* active in Fārs and Kirmān³¹; though we have no inkling of the nature of the business involved, the passage is important because it confirms that the Chief Dā'i, as is to be expected, dealt with the affairs of the mission outside the Fātimid Empire. In 468 Yūsuf b. Ḥusayn, the *dā'i* in India, died; al-Šulayhi was commissioned to choose a successor, who would then receive a letter of appointment from the Imām. Yūsuf's son, Ahmad, was suggested by the Šulayhid; al-Mustansir agreed and sent the letter of appointment, adding that the country in question (i. e. the management of its mission) was in the charge of the Šulayhid, who was also ordered to make some arrangements for Oman, which had at that time no mission. (Nos. 41 and 58.)

No. 54 (from the next year, 469) also deals with Oman: the Šulayhid is charged with the government of the City of Oman (i. e. presumably

Şulhâr) and exhorted to establish the *da'wa* in the city²². In 476 the office of chief of mission was vacant, owing to the death of its incumbents, both "in India and its province," and letters were addressed to the Commander of the Faithful asking him to fill the posts²³. Also, the Şulayhid wrote suggesting the appointment of Marzubân b. Ishâq in India and Ibrâhîm b. Ismâ'il in Oman. The caliph was agreeable and ordered that letters of appointment be issued in the name of the vizier, Badr al-Djamâli. (No. 63) No. 50, dating from 481, deals again with the affairs of India and Oman. Marzubân died, and of his two sons Aĥmad was recommended as the more suitable successor. Ismâ'il b. Ibrâhîm turned to commerce and neglected the affairs of the *da'wa*; a certain Ĥamza was recommended to succeed him. The Caliph had ordered the vizier Badr to issue the letters of appointment, which are enclosed with the letter to the addressee, the Şulayhid queen-regent, whom "the Commander of the Faithful has charged with supervising those countries and provinces, looking after their *dâ'is*, and ensuring the good order of the *da'wa* in them". We note in the last two letters that Badr al-Djamâli, who had in hand the administration of the Empire in general, is also the supreme authority in the affairs of the *da'wa*. Not for nothing does he count among his titles those of "Protector of the Qâdis of the Muslims and Guide of the Dâ'is of the Believers" – titles which figure regularly in the style of subsequent viziers till the end of the Fâtimid dynasty. In general, these letters

give us some glimpses into the relations of the court in Cairo with outlying missions. They leave the impression that the Cairo authorities were on the whole rubber-stamping the decisions of the Şulayhida. It must not, however, be forgotten that the greater of the business was no doubt transacted orally with the envoys exchanged by the court of the Imâm and that of the Yemen, and the letters had a largely ceremonial function. On the whole they confirm the scanty evidence derived from other sources about the overall control of the Imâm's court over the missions and the fair amount of independence enjoyed by the missions in current affairs.

The far-flung mission, a unique feature of Ismâ'ilism, was the clearest expression of the ambition of the Fâtimids to be much more than the rulers of the territories which formed their empire. After al-Mustansîr's death at the end of the eleventh century, the Fâtimids lost, owing to the Nizârî schism, the greater part of the external *da'wa*, which rallied to the Nizârî leadership in Alamût. Apart from a few adherents in Syria, the Fâtimids only retained the Yemenite *da'wa*. A quarter of a century later, even this *da'wa* was split by the chism between the followers of 'Abd al-Madjid, proclaimed as Imâm under the name of al-Ĥâfîz, and those who upheld the rights of al-Ṭayyib, the infant son of al-Âmir²⁴. This loss of support from the mission outside Egypt diminished the significance of the last Fâtimid Caliphs and crippled the Ismâ'ilî movement.

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Notes

- 1 Cf. my articles "Ismâ'ilîs and Qurmatians", in *L'Elaboration de l'Islam, Travaux du Centre d'études supérieures spécialisé d'histoire des religions de Strasbourg*, 1961, pp. 20ff., and "The Early Ismâ'ilî Missionaries in North-west Persia and in Khurâsan and Transoxania", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1960, pp. 56ff.
- 2 Cf. my article "Ismâ'ilî Propaganda and Fâtimid Rule in Sind", *Islamic Culture*, 1940, pp. 208ff., and for the Yemen H. F. AL-HAMDANI, *al-Şulayhiyyân*, Cairo (1956).
- 3 AĤMAD AL-NAYBABURI, *al-Mudjaza al-Kâfiya fi Adâb al-Da'wa wa'l-Ĥudûd*, quoted in ĤATIM b. Ibrâhîm's *Tuhfat al-Qulûb*, and in ĤASAN b. Nûĥ's anthology, *al-Azhâr*. Extracts translated in W. IVANOW'S article "The Organization of the Fâtimid Propaganda", *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1930, pp. 18ff.

- 4 AL-MAQRIẒI, *Ĥiĥaṭ*, ii, 341 ('ALI and İBN KILLÎS; the book *al-Iqtisâr* was edited by M. W. MIZZA, *Damascus* 1954); i, 391 = ii, 341 (Muhâmmad); İBN ĤADAR, *Raf' al-Jar'an Quḍât Mişr*, Cairo 1954-61, p. 300 ('abd al-'Azîz).
- 5 The preceding exposition is based on *Asûs al-Ta'wil*, ed. 'ARIF TAMIR, pp. 23ff. It is the editor who says in the footnote to p. 26 that the Ismâ'ilîs of Syria have copies of the *Ĥudûd al-Ma'arif*.
- 6 See *Ta'wil al-Da'â'im*, ed. M. H. AL-'AZAMI, 23ff. recur here. p. 48-9. Some of the ideas and phrases used in *Asûs al-Ta'wil* pp. 23 ff recur here.
- 7 See SILVESTRE DE SACY, *Erpoit de la religion des Druzes*, vol. 1, pp. cccv-ccxiii, cccxviii, cccxix, 105, 108-9, 112-3; vol. 11, pp. 99-100, 156, 465, 500, 506-18 passim, 529, 571, 572, 583, 678 (Mâlik b. Sa'îd), 679, 684. *Mudjâzi* of al-'Azîz (i. e. belonging to his reign) are quoted in ĤATIM b.

- 8 Al-Maqrizī, *Khitāf*, i, 391, = ii, 342.
- 9 This *Madjālis* was published by MUḤAMMAD KĀMIL ḤUSAYN, Cairo no date. There is one difficulty about the attribution. According to a notice by IBN MUḤASSAB (preserved in the extracts published by H. MASSÉ, p. 10, and in al-Maqrizī's *Itti'āz al-Ḥunafā'*, Istanbul MS., s. a. 450), on the dismissal of al-Yāzūrī in A. H. 450, al-Mu'ayyad was appointed Chief Dā'i. This may be correct—but if so, he must have been deposed soon, since there is no explaining away the conclusion that in 451 it was al-Malidjī who read the *madjālis*. Indeed, we see that the office of Chief Dā'i jointly with the vizierate and Chief Qādīshif in 453 was held by 'ADD AL-KARĪM B. 'ADD AL-ḤĀKIM B. SA'ĪD, and in 354 by his brother AHMAD B. 'ADD AL-ḤĀKIM (IBN AL-ṢAYRAFI, *al-Jahāra*, pp. 48, 49), and we hear that the vizier IBN AL-MUḌABBIR (who held this office in 453 and 454) had al-Mu'ayyad banished to Syria (ibid., p. 48). There is no doubt that subsequently he held the office of Chief Dā'i; he is mentioned as such in a letter of al-Mustanṣir to the Yemen dated 461 (see below). The dating of his numerous *madjālis* which must have been spread over many years has not yet been investigated.
- 10 *Sirat al-Mu'ayyad fī'l-Din*, pp. 89–90, 91.
- 11 Al-Maqrizī, *Itti'āz al-Ḥunafā'*, Istanbul MS.
- 12 Question 2 in Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir's *Ḥudā'iq al-Ālḥāb*; I have not seen a MS. of the book but the questions are listed in al-Madjdū's *Fahrasat al-Kutub wa'l-Nasā'ih*, ed. Munzawi, p. 246 ff.
- 13 Al-Maqrizī, *Khitāf*, i, 391.
- 14 Al-Qalqalshandī, s. 434 ff., quoting 'Alī b. Khalaf's *Mawādd al-Bayān*, which belongs to the eleventh century (cf. S. M. STEIN, *Fāṭimid Decrees*, pp. 104–5). The sentence about the *madjālis* is on p. 437, 11. 2–4. On p. 438, 1. 12, there is a reference to the secretary of the *da'wa* who keeps lists of those paying contributions; further details about the secretary in the last four lines of the page.
- 15 Ibn al-Tuwayr's account is reproduced in al-Maqrizī's *Khitāf*, i, 391, and Ibn al-Furāt's *Chronicle*, vol. IV (ed. Ḥasan al-Shamīnā', Baṣra 1967) p. 139. Both passages are corrupt, but the correct text can be recovered by collating them.
- 16 I have found three fragments, two in the Tylor-Schechter Collection of the Cambridge University Library, Arabic Box 42 (fols. 134 and 156), and another in Arabic Box 40 (fol. 151). The beginning is missing, then there are two fragments which belong together, then there is a gap, and then finally we have the end of the letter. The width of the sheet is 27 cm.; of the length 42. 134 (a) preserves 11 cm. on the left side, 8 cm on the right; 40. 151 (b) 16.5 cm. on the left side, 16.5 cm on the right; and 42. 156 (c) 16.5 cm. The document was used as scrap in order to write on its back in Hebrew a list of the prophetic lessons for the Book of Deuteronomy, divided in pericopes according to the triennial cycle used in the Palestinian rite. The list confirms that there is no gap between A. H. 42. 134 and 40. 151, and that the gap between the latter and 42. 156 is fairly short.

There is some hope that this missing part may still be found among the Geniza papers; the beginning might have been discarded before using the document as scrap, since the list is complete at the beginning. Above it can be seen the remains of some Arabic characters which may have belonged to the address of the letter, written as usual on the verso.

- 17 The alternative would be to supply the name of al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh, and to take the Chief Qādī of the letter as one of the two grandsons of al-Nu'mān (al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī or 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Muḥammad) who filled the office in the reign of al-Ḥākim.
- 18 The phrase *djamil al-ra'y*, "goodwill", "favour", is part of the aulic language, and it, or the variant *al-ra'y al-djamil*, occurs in the letters of al-Mustanṣir, p. 81, 1. 8; p. 97, 1. 11; p. 126, 1. 9; p. 132, 1. 11; p. 118, last line; p. 120, 1. 10; p. 179, 1. 9; also *ḥasan* (or *ḥusan*) *al-ra'y*, p. 120, 1. 8; p. 161, 1. 14; p. 181, 1. 8.
- 19 For Ibn Tuwayr see above note 15, for the letter of appointment note 14; the passage in the letter about the lieutenants is on p. 438, 11. 13 ff.
- 20 I have published the passage from 'Abd al-Djabbūr's book on the proofs for the prophecy of Muḥammad in my article "New Information about the Authors of the 'Epistles of the Sincere Brethren'", *Islamic Studies*, 1964, p. 423, note 14. (Correct a misprint: the passage ends with *bi-Djabal al-Summāq*; the following words constitute the second, parallel, passage but have been erroneously joined to the preceding by the printer.) Khuzayma b. Abi Khuzayma is a conjecture for "Khurayma b. Abi Khurayma". For references about the identifiable *dā'is* see my article.
- 21 For writings addressed by the founders of the Druze religion to the inhabitants of the Djabal Summaq see de Sacy, *Exposé*, i, p. cccclxxxi (no. 40), p. cviii (no. 100). The Nizārī writer Ḥātim b. Muḥammad b. Zahra came from Sarraïn, and so did Abū'l-Faṭḥ al-Sarīnī, a leader of the Aleppine Nizārīs. A later Nizārī writer, al-Dādikhī, came from Dādikh, in the same region.
- 22 The documents are quoted by al-Qalqalshandī, XI, 81 ff. and 83 ff. The one concerning 'Asqalān reflects the period of the Crusades, and belongs therefore to the first half of the twelfth century, before the capture of the town by the Crusaders in 548/1153. The references to the *dā'is* are on pp. 82 and 85. Al-Qalqalshandī erroneously classified these documents as Ayyūbid; I have briefly pointed out in *Documents from Islamic Chaucerics* (ed. S. M. STEIN, Oxford 1965, p. 34, note 97) that they are of the Fāṭimid period. The reference to the *dā'i* alone is sufficient proof, and there are others; H. A. HIXIN, *Beiträge zur ayyūbidischen Diplomatie*, Freiburg 1908, p. 22, is wrong in contesting my conclusion.
- 23 IVANOW, *The Rise of the Fāṭimids*, p. 20 note 1, quotes a list given by the hand of the Yemenite Ismā'īlī author from the end of the twelfth century: the Arabs, Rūks, Berbers, Negroes, Abyssinians, Khuzars, Chinese, Daylam, Rūm, India, Sūd, Saqībiya. It can be shown that this very list existed

- some time before, since it is quoted in Abū Muhammad's refutation of Ismā'īlism, written in the middle of the twelfth century (see H. RIZZEN, *Der Islam*, 1929, p. 47). The passage in question is found in the MS. 'Aḥīf Effendi 1373, fol. 92r.
- 24 Al-Naysābūrī's *al-Mudjāza*, see above, note 3.
- 25 See DE SACY, *Exposé*, vol. i, p. ccccxxviii (no. 76).
- 26 Examples can be seen in the extracts given in my article referred to in note 2, and in another article published in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1956, pp. 10ff. (see Appendix ii); in Appendix i of the article I have collected the fragments of the letter to Ḥālam b. Shaykhān, dā'ī of Sind.
- 27 For the book see above, note 20. The passage occurs on fol. 180r of the Istanbul MS.
- 28 *Al-Sīdjillāt al-Mustaḥsiriyya*, first described by H. F. AL-HANDĀNĪ in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, 1933-5, pp. 307ff., and published by 'Abd al-Mun'im Mādjid, Cairo 1954.
- 29 Al-Nu'mān's book is *al-Himma fī Adāb Atibā' al-'Imma*, ed. Muhammad Kāmil Ḥusayn. For al-Naysābūrī cf. above, note 3; the page references are to Ivanow's article. I have made stylistic changes in his text. I have not seen the Arabic original, and since Ivanow's versions from Arabic are unreliable, caution is necessary. (The chapter from the *Himma* translated in the same article is full of mistakes.)
- 30 The letter from the Yemen was published from another collection by al-Ḥamdānī, *al-Ṣulayḥiyyūn*, pp. 220 and 318. These documents partially lift the veil about the beginnings of Ismā'īlism in Western India. Late legendary accounts mention various missionaries under al-Mustansir, while the name of Yūsuf b. Ḥusayn is unknown to them; cf. S. C. MISRA, *Muslim Communities in Gujrat*, London 1904, p. 9, and references. (Whether the name Mawlāy Ahmad in the late legends is due to a reminiscence of Ahmad, son of Yūsuf b. Ḥusayn, is more than doubtful.)
- 31 For Shahrīyār b. Ḥasan see Ivanow, *Ismā'īli Literature*, p. 48.
- 32 The phrase *al-da'wa al-ḥādīya* in these texts can mean "the Ismā'īli mission, da'wa", but also the proclamation of the name of the Fāṭimid caliph in the *khutba*. The ambiguity appears in this letter rather absurdly: on p. 178, l. 4, *igāmat al-d. al-h. al-Mustaḥsiriyya* obviously means the proclamation of the name of the Caliph, whereas a few lines below (l. 14) *igāmat al-da'wa* quite clearly means the establishment of an Ismā'īli mission.
- 33 On p. 205, l. 11, read *al-mutawalliyayni lahū kūnā*, "who had administered it", with the common addition of *kūn* after a noun or participle to express the past.
- 34 S. M. STERN, *The Succession to the Fāṭimid Imām al-ʿAmir, the Claims of the Later Fāṭimids to the Imāmate, and the Rise of Ṭayyibī Ismā'īlism*, Oriens, 1951, pp. 103 ff.