



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

The Eagle Returns: Evidence of Continued Isma‘ili Activity at Alamut and in the South Caspian Region following the Mongol Conquests

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None of that people should be spared, not even the babe in its cradle.

-Edict of Chingiz Khan and Mangu Qa’an¹

It is generally believed that the fall of the castle of Alamut in A.H. 654 (A.D. 1256) marks the end of the Ismaili influence in Gilan. This is a great mistake.

-Hyacinth L. Rabino²

The catastrophic Mongol incursions into the heart of the Muslim world during the thirteenth century left a path of death and destruction in their wake. Though the assaults succeeded in vanquishing Baghdad, toppling the Muslim caliph himself, it is notable that the famous contemporary historian, ‘Ata-Malik Juwayni, does not describe this as the pinnacle of Mongol conquest. Rather, for this Sunni historian, the zenith and culmination of the Mongol invasion is the obliteration of the tiny rival enclave of the Isma‘ilis, a Shi‘i community centred at the mountain fortress of Alamut. It is to this singular event that Juwayni dedicates the concluding one-third of his *History of the World Conqueror*.³

Ibn al-Athir and later historians record a charming anecdote about this fortress. Apparently, Wahsudan b. Marzuban, one of the Justanid rulers of Daylam, was on a hunting expedition when he saw a soaring eagle alight on a rock. Noticing how strategically ideal the site was, the ruler decided to build a castle there that was henceforth called *Aluh amu [kh]t*, which may mean “the eagle’s teaching,” *ta‘lim al-‘uqab* in Ibn al-Athir’s rendering. The name, later simplified to Alamut, is significant in at least two ways. As noticed by a number of historians, in the traditional *abjad* system of alpha-numeric correspondence, the name is a chronogram for the year 483 AH, corresponding to AD 1090, the very year that Hasan Sabbah, the champion of the Nizari Isma‘ili cause, came into possession of the fortress. From then on, it became the home of the Nizaris, the *ta‘limiyya*, as they came to be known, reflecting their emphasis on the need for

¹ ‘Ala al-Din ‘Ata-Malik Juwayni, *Ta’rikh-i Jahangushay*, ed. Mirza Muhammad Qazwini, 3 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1912-37), 3: 275; trans. John A. Boyle, *The History of the World Conqueror*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), 2: 723.

² Hyacinth Louis Rabino, “Rulers of Gilan,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1920): 293-94. Juwayni himself

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authoritative instruction (*ta'lim*) and reminiscent of this delightful story about the *ta'lim al-'uqab*, the eagle's teaching.⁴

The Mongols sought a complete destruction of Alamut and the extermination of the Isma'ilis. Many of the Persian historians, led by Juwayni, believed that they were successful in this endeavour. Until recently, the complete extermination of the Isma'ilis in the face of the Mongol behemoth was also accepted as fact in Western scholarship. Perhaps the first person to draw attention in orientalist circles to the continued existence of the Isma'ilis as well as to their local traditions and literature was Jean Baptiste L. J. Rousseau (d. 1831), who was the French consul-general in Aleppo from 1809 to 1816 and a long-time resident of the Near East. He came across the Nizaris in Syria and highlighted their sorry plight after their 1809 massacre at the hands of the Nusayris. He was also much surprised, during his participation as a member of an official French mission sent to the court of the Persian monarch Fath 'Ali Shah (d.1834),



histories, geographical tomes and inscriptions clearly point to sustained Isma‘ili presence in the region. This evidence is further supported by the fifteenth-century *Nasa‘ih-i Shah-Rukhi*, a hostile Khurasani source that clearly indicates that Alamut was a centre of the Isma‘ili *da‘wa* to which community funds were sent. The testimony of the *Nasa‘ih* is supported by that of the *da‘wa* literature of the Indian subcontinent, which provides very suggestive evidence that the residence of the Imam Islam Shah was Alamut. From this, it becomes clear that the south Caspian region continued, perhaps sporadically, as an important centre of the Isma‘ili community for over a century after the Mongol ir



somewhat more forgiving, noting that his circumstances “compelled him to speak with civility of the barbarians whom it was his misfortune to serve.”¹⁴



have treated the Isma‘ili Imam with great deference, viewing him with “attention and kindness,” and even bestowing lavish gifts on him.¹⁸

For the same reasons that Juwayni seriously downplays the desolation of the Sunni Muslim world, he revels in the Mongol victories over the Isma‘ilis. As



destruction of Alamut cannot have been as complete as reported by the Persian writers, or the castle was rebuilt.”²⁵

This event involving the son of Imam Khwarshah forces us to dismiss Juwayni’s assertion that the Mongols had killed the entire family, “to even the babe in its cradle.” A careful examination of the *History of the World Conqueror* further reveals inconsistencies and lapses in Juwayni’s testimony, particularly with regards to a parenthetical remark that Imam Rukn al-Din Khwarshah had but a single son - “he sent out his son, *his only one*, and another brother called Iran-Shah with a delegation of notables, officials and leaders of his people.”²⁶

Prior to this pivotal assertion, Juwayni had mentioned a young son of the Imam Rukn al-Din who was sent together with a number of his chief officials to the service of Hulagu. As the historian tells us, the Mongol leader suspected that he had been tricked and that a decoy of the same age had been sent in place of the real son, despite assurances to the contrary. It seems rather more probable that the misgivings were Juwayni’s, not Hulagu’s. The Mongol conqueror treated the child kindly and allowed him to return on the agreement that one of the imam’s brothers, Shiran Shah, would take his place.²⁷ Rashid al-Din, narrating the same incident, doesn’t share Juwayni’s doubts about the identity of the boy.²⁸ His testimony regarding this event seems more reliable. Juwayni is convinced that even Imam Khwarshah’s ministers and advisers had been duped and were unaware that it was not the real son, which is scarcely a possibility.²⁹ Both Juwayni and Rashid al-Din record that the child was seven or eight years old.³⁰ If indeed this were a decoy, it would have been quite foolhardy to send such a youngster, who would have easily blurted out the truth of his identity under questioning.

Both Juwayni and Rashid al-Din mention that when the castle of Maymundiz was conquered in 654 AH/1256 CE, Rukn al-Din Khwarshah sent another son to Hulagu together with the imam’s brother Iran Shah and various notables and dignitaries.³¹ This son was clearly not the same person as the child sent earlier, as Juwayni is confident of his identity.³² Rashid al-Din provides the important additional detail that the name of this son was Tarkiya.³³ Thus, Imam Khwarshah had at least two sons. This is further supported by Juwayni himself who contradicts his testimony about a single son, by writing about Rukn al-Din Khwarshah’s “sons and daughters, brothers and sisters”³⁴ in one instance, and again about his “brothers, children, domestics and dependents”³⁵ in another.

Whether the son of Imam Khwarshah who reconquered Alamut, named Abu Dawlat or Naw Dawlat in our sources, was this Tarkiya, the child sent with Iran Shah, or some other offspring is not possible to determine without more information. If he was either Tarkiya or the child sent with Iran Shah, he would

²⁵ “Rulers of Gilan,” 293-94. Juwayni himself was suitably impressed by the fortifications of the castle, and describes the immense difficulty of destroying it; see *Ta’rikh-i Jahangushay*, 3: 272-73, tr. 2: 720-21.

²⁶ *Ta’rikh-i Jahangushay*, 3: 267, tr. 2: 717, emphasis added.

²⁷ — — 3: 111, tr. 2: 620.

²⁸ *Jami’ al-Tawarikh*, 2: 694, tr. 2: 484.

²⁹ *Ta’rikh-i Jahangushay*, 3: 264, tr. 2: 715. It is equally inexplicable how he was somehow able positively to identify as false a child whom even the imam’s most intimate associates thought to be his son.

³⁰ This seems in keeping with the fact that Imam Rukn al-Din Khwarshah was also quite young at this time, his youth being mentioned in the *Fathnama* of Alamut. See *ibid.*, 3: 116, 124, tr. 2: 624, 628.

³¹ — — 3: 133, tr. 2: 634.

³² — — 3: 267, tr. 2: 717, *Jami’ al-Tawarikh*, 2: 685, tr. 2: 485.

³³ *Jami’ al-Tawarikh*, 2: 685, tr. 2: 485.

³⁴ *Ta’rikh-i Jahangushay*, 3: 276, tr. 2: 723.

³⁵ — — 3: 134, tr. 2: 635.



have been in his late twenties when he led his people



Iraq and Gilan, were under the control of independent governors, each of whom considered himself to be an independent king. The work further goes on to state that the people of many of these areas were Isma'ilis.⁴⁷ It seems that during this period of respite,



Allah Mustawfi, himself a native of Qazwin, had remarked that though the city was encompassed by Isma‘ilis, its population remained largely Sunni of the Shafi‘i school, “extremely bigoted in matters of religion.”⁵² However, the inhabitants of nearby Taliqan, just to the east of Qazwin, while declaring themselves Sunnis, were known to incline to Isma‘ilism.⁵³ In 781 AH/1378 CE, Sayyid ‘Ali Kiya’s commander of Ashkawar and Rudbar, Khwaja Ahmad, drove these refugees out of Qazwin. The Kushayji family then fled to Sultaniyya to join some of their co-religionists who had been ordered there by Tamerlane.⁵⁴ Just over a decade later, Tamerlane’s troops were also to massacre the Isma‘ilis in Mazandaran,⁵⁵ and shortly afterwards those of Anjudan as well.⁵⁶

‘Ali Kiya sought to enlist the support of Khudawand Muhammad’s forces in his efforts to dominate the region. He therefore sent an emissary bearing a message proclaiming, as Mar‘ashi informs us, that “the Almighty God’s gate of repentance and penitence was open” and that the way to it was for the imam “to forsake the corrupt beliefs” of his forbears and ancestors.⁵⁷ The message is further supposed to have proclaimed:

Your folk have ruled over Daylamistan for a number of years, but due to abounding iniquity, the evil of impiety, and wicked beliefs, you have witnessed what you have witnessed [apparently a reference to the downturn of Isma‘ili political fortunes]. If you turn away from the path reviled by

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Kiya.⁶¹ Realising he had been deceived, Khudawand Muhammad stole away by night to Alamut, where he formed an alliance with the defeated Kiya Malik. In turn, Kiya Malik promised that Alamut would be entrusted to the imam if he helped him to regain Ashkavar. As Mar'ashi narrates, upon seeing Khudawand Muhammad, the Isma'ilis of Alamut and Lamasar immediately rallied about him, joined the forces of Kiya Malik, and converged on Ashkavar. The combined forces inflicted heavy losses on the Gilani army of Sayyid Mahdi, whose dead and wounded totalled close to two thousand, while many others were taken prisoner by the Isma'ilis.⁶² Sayyid Mahdi Kiya was himself taken captive and sent to the court of the Jalayirid ruler of Azarbayjan, 'Iraq and Kurdistan, Sultan Uways (r. 757-76 AH/1356-74 CE), whose dynasty had been one of the successors of the Mongol Ilkhanids in Persia.⁶³ An accompanying letter written by Kiya Malik stated that a group of *rafidis* had made common cause with Sayyid Mahdi Kiya to subjugate Daylamistan and 'Iraq, and hence he was being sent to the court.⁶⁴

Mahdi-Kiya remained incarcerated for a period of a year and six months, during which time, oddly enough, his brother made no attempt to have him released. It was only with the intercession of Taj al-Din Amuli, one of the Hasanid Zaydi *sayyids* of Timjan, and the proffering of numerous gifts that he was freed.⁶⁵ When appealing to Sultan Uways, Taj al-Din explained that Kiya Malik was in cahoots with the Isma'ilis of Alamut (*malahida-i Alamut*). Apparently the sultan required no further explanation. Even away in Tabriz, he seems to have been well aware of the continued existence of the Isma'ilis in Daylam and their survival of the Mongol depredations.

Soon after his brother was released, 'Ali Kiya set out to displace Kiya Malik from Ashkavar once again. Kiya Malik was bested in the ensuing struggle and fled to Alamut, where Khudawand Muhammad wanted nothing to do with him. He thus took refuge with Tamerlane. Meanwhile, the army of 'Ali Kiya, which had pursued Kiya Malik right up to Alamut, decided to besiege the fort. Khudawand Muhammad refused to capitulate. However, dwindling resources forced him to surrender the castle. He was granted safe conduct and also made his way to the camp of the Turkic conqueror.⁶⁶

'Ali Kiya wrote a letter to Tamerlane about the collusion of Kiya Malik and the Isma'ili imam, prevailing upon him to take the appropriate measures. Upon receipt of this letter, the ruler sent Kiya Malik to Sawa, while Khudawand Muhammad was sent to confinement in Sultaniyya. Mar'ashi writes that the imam's descendants continued to reside there until his own days, that is to say, until the late fifteenth century.⁶⁷

'Ai Kiya's death in 791 AH/1389 CE allowed Kiya Malik Hazaraspi to return to Daylaman from Sawa. There he received help from the locals to regain Alamut and Lamasar from the Amir Kiya'i *sayyids*.⁶⁸ He was, however, murdered by his own grandson, Kiya Jalal al-Din, who then succeeded him and who, we are informed, was hated by the Daylamites. Amidst this confusion, Khudawand Muhammad reappeared in the area, and the Isma'ilis of the region, who apparently resided at Alamut, gave the fortress to him.

⁶¹ — — 58

⁶² — — 59

⁶³ On this dynasty, see J. M. Smith, Jr., "Djalayir, Djalayirid", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2: 401

⁶⁴ *Ta'rih-i Gilan wa Daylamistan*, 59.

⁶⁵ — — 60-61

⁶⁶ — — 63-64

⁶⁷ — — 65. Maryam Mu'izzi, while also forwarding this interpretation, correctly comments that the meaning of the phrase *wa awlad-i an jama'at aknun niz inja and* [this reads *anja and* in Sutuda's edition] is equivocal. See her "Isma'iliyyan-i Iran", 229 n. 28.

⁶⁸ *Ta'rih-i Gilan wa Daylamistan*, 89, 121



After Alamut's capitulation to the Mongols, while the community had continued its activities in the area for an extended period, and tenuously and sporadically tried to reassert its control over the fort,⁷⁴ repeated reversals of fortune eventually led to its disappearance from the area. Command over all the fortresses formerly under Isma'ili suzerainty eventually passed into the hands of the Amir Kiya'i *sayyids* who used them as prisons until the Safawid conquest.⁷⁵

An interesting question arises here about the identity of Khudawand Muhammad, who played such a central role in rallying the Isma'ilis of the area. As mentioned above, Mar'ashi records that people in Daylaman, Rudbar, Padiz, Kushayjan, and some of the regions of Ashkawar owed their allegiance to this figure, a descendant of the imam 'Ala' al-Din "Mulhid". This lineage, Mar'ashi's description, and the title "Khudawand" all indicate that he was considered the imam by his followers. The confusion arises because of the existence of evidence, first brought to light in a seminal article by Ivanow published in 1938, indicating the possibility that the Nizari Isma'ilis split into two sects in the fourteenth century, the followers of Qasim Shah and the followers of Muhammad Shah.⁷⁶ Further evidence from Muhammad Shahi sources was later provided by the Syrian scholar 'Arif Tamir in his "*Furu' al-shajarat al-Isma'iliyya*"⁷⁷ and *al-Imama fi al-Islam*.⁷⁸

While a discussion of the split is beyond the scope of this study, it should be mentioned that scholars have cautiously identified Khudawand Muhammad with Muhammad Shah b. Mu'min Shah (d. 807 AH/1404 CE) of the Muhammad Shahi line, on the basis that there was no contemporary imam of the Qasim Shahi line with the name Muhammad.⁷⁹ However, new evidence in a work entitled *Haft Nukta*, associated with the Qasim Shahi Imam Islam Shah, may suggest a different identification.⁸⁰ While the Muhammad Shahi line is never explicitly mentioned in this work, there is an allusion to rivalry in the family. This source specifies that the author's rival had influence in four areas, Badakhshan, the fort of Zafar, Egypt and Narjawan. Daylam is not mentioned at all, and we may therefore assume that it remained loyal to the imams of the Qasim Shahi line. This would significantly reduce the possibility of the earlier identification of Khudawand Muhammad. Given that the first of the Qasim Shahi imams named Islam Shah was also known as Ahmad,⁸¹ and that the names Ahmad and Muhammad are often interchangeable (as in the case

⁷⁴ Cf. W. Madelung, "Isma'illiya," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 4: 198

⁷⁵ Zahir al-Din Mar'ashi, *Ta'rikh-i Gilan wa Daylamistan*, ed. Hyacinth Louis Rab-5.8(0-5(t)0-5(t)0.4(h Loo(t)he J/TT6R-5.3 cahh Lou



of the Prophet himself), it is possible to suggest cautiously that Khudawand Muhammad may be identifiable with Imam Islam Shah b. Qasim Shah. In view of the fact that the Nizari tradition of the Indian Subcontinent, which is discussed below, identifies the residence of Imam Islam Shah as Alamut, this is conceivable. As far as we can tell with the limited information available to us, there is no parallel tradition among the Muhammad Shahis of Syria identifying a place of residence for the imam Muhammad Shah b. Mu'min Shah. In the absence of further information, though, the question of Khudawand Muhammad's identity must remain open.

The material outlined above clearly indicates that the Isma'ilis continued their activities in the south Caspian region, perhaps sporadically, through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This hypothesis finds further support in sources from both Khurasan and India.

Testimony of the Nasa'ih-i Shah-Rukhi

Our most important source for the Isma'ilis of Quhistan after the Mongol invasions is the *Nasa'ih al-Muluk* or *Nasa'ih-i Shahrukhi* by a fourteenth/fifteenth-century author and inveterate enemy of the Isma'ilis by the name of Jalali Qa'ini, a resident of Harat. The work is contained in a hitherto unpublished manuscript in Vienna, and its contents regarding the Isma'ilis are only accessible to us through the writings of Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall and Delia Cortese, both of whom were able to consult the original.⁸²

It appears that the last of the great Ilkhanids, Abu Sa'id Bahadur Khan (d. 735 AH/1335 CE), was concerned that much of the province remained dedicated to the tenets of Isma'ilism. This is certainly a possibility. Just decades earlier, recalling the ubiquity of the Isma'ilis in the area, Juzjani opprobriously dubbed Quhistan, *Mulhidistan*, "the land of the (Isma'ili) heretics."⁸³ Indeed, in his verses, the Isma'ili poet Nizari Quhistani rails against those who would call him a *mulhid*:

⁸² Jalali's *Nasa'ih al-Muluk* is item 163 in the Imperial Library of Vienna. My repeated attempts to secure a copy of this manuscript from the Imperial Library have been unsuccessful. A summary of the contents of the whole work is given in Gustav Flügel, *Die Arabischen, Persischen und Türkischen Handschriften der Kaiserlich-königlichen Hofbibliothek zu Wien* (Vienna, 1867), 3: 289-91. See also *Codices Arabicos, Persicos, Turcicos, Bibliothecae Caesareo-Regio-Palatinae Vindobonensis*, ed. Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (Vindobonae, 1820), n. 163 *Nasa'ih-i*



If I am a heretic, then where is this “Muslim?” Who is he?!⁸⁴

And again:

Why do you say “heretic” to one who has established his faith with a hundred proofs from the Qur’an and the Hadith?

When you understand he who attains the perfect *ma‘rifa* [gnosis], then by knowing him, you will confess your own ignorance.⁸⁵

In concert with Shah ‘Ali Sijistani, the lieutenant of Quhistan, the Ilkhanid ruler sent a mission to the area to effect a mass conversion to Sunni Islam in 718 AH/1324 CE. At the head of the mission was the author’s grandfather, a certain Shaykh Imad al-Din Bukhari, a distinguished jurist who had fled Bukhara for Quhistan when that city was destroyed. ‘Imad al-Din was accompanied by his two sons, Husam al-Din and Najm al-Din Muhammad, as well as four other learned men. The details of this expedition were related to our author by his father, Najm al-Din, whose presence on the mission makes this testimony very valuable. The efforts of the group were directed primarily at Qa’in, said to be the chief seat of the Isma‘ilis. Apparently the group’s efforts bore fruit. When Tamerlane’s son and successor, Sultan Shah-Rukh (r. 807-50 AH/1405-47 CE), sent Jalali to the province to snuff out Isma‘ilism there many decades later, he found that Sunnism had made inroads already. The *‘ulama* were said to be zealous Sunnis who were accused of



express intention of recording histor



Where you have established your physical residence! ⁹⁷

Most remarkably, Alamut or Daylam are mentioned in no less than twelve of the compositions attributed to Shihab al-Din's son and successor, Pir Sadr al-Din.⁹⁸ Under the able leadership of this fourteenth-century luminary, perhaps the most prolific of



While this concentration of references to the residence of the imam at Alamut or Daylam in the works attributed to Pir Sadr al-Din, to the exclusion of works attributed to later authors, is in itself compelling evidence to argue for the authenticity of the traditi



I scaled towering mountains and negotiated treacherous passes
Now I await the Light of the True Guide

How base are lofty trees without leaves
How the human soul wanders lost without gnosis of the Guide.¹⁰⁵

The reference to scaling the difficult mountain passes of Daylam is redolent of the arduous journey that would have confronted believers making the trek to see the imam from far-off places. That it was Imam Islam Shah whom Pir Sadr al-Din met is expressed elsewhere:

We received the lord Islam Shah
Who bestowed on us the mysteries of faith
We recognised him in his indescribable form
And he fulfilled all our desires.¹⁰⁶

Yet another composition mentions the author's departure from Alamut:

Brothers, Pir Sadr al-Din, the true guide, departed from the fort of Alamut
The capital of the land of Daylam.¹⁰⁷

Extremely noteworthy is an exultant Sindhi composition that suggests that proselytisation was once again set afoot from Alamut:

The Imam's herald travels throughout the world
Blessings be upon the Imam, the Pir and the community
For the Imam has appeared in the fortress of Alamut

Brother, we are perpetually blissful
By God, he has arrived, the community enjoys its fortune
Hail the advent of the Lord 'Ali in the West!

Recognise the Supreme Man, Lord of Light
Friends, know the Pir to be he
Who has led you to the recognition of the Lord of Twelve Splendours¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ The word *shah*, translated here as imam, is one of the most commonly occurring terms in the *Ginans* 539PismTf term



Serve none other than that very Lord, my brother
Friend, never doubt in this
Hail the advent of the Lord
As glorious as the risen sun!¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

Upon examination of the evidence, it becomes immediately apparent that even after the Mongol onslaught, Isma'ili activity continued in the south Caspian region.

Juwayni's omission of any reference to the destruction of Baghdad and the murder of the Sunni caliph, and his making the subjugation of the Isma'ilis of Alamut the climax of his narrative of the Mongol conquests had definite political motives. The historian wished to celebrate the great service his pagan patron had rendered to the Islamic world by destroying this "community of infidels." He could scarcely dwell on the depredations visited upon the rest of the Muslim world by the Mongols, and certainly not the destruction of the Sunni caliphate. He thus had to overstate the iniquities and the political significance of this minority group, emphasising how the Seljuqs and others had failed to subdue them. He also had to exaggerate the extent of their defeat and stress their absolute and complete extermination. Anything less than a total annihilation would have been seen as failure on the part of his patron. As all future Persian historians drew on Juwayni's testimony for their narratives of the Isma'ili community, they accepted his conclusions.

However, we know that after their initial subjugation in 654 AH/1256 CE the Isma'ilis attempted several times to recapture the fortress of Alamut, and were often successful. Within five years of the fall of Girdkuh, the son of the imam Rukn al-Din Khwarshah had already managed to rally the Isma'ilis of the area and retake their chief fortress. However, the blows they had sustained at the hands of the Mongols had seriously undermined their strength, and it was soon lost once again. The Mongols, though, did not maintain a strong presence in the area, and it is likely that the Isma'ilis resided there unmolested until Uljaytu Khan entered Gilan with his army in 706 AH/1307 CE. However, once again, this attack was short-lived.

After the departure of these forces, Daylam and the surrounding areas likely reverted to their semi-independent status. Certainly, after the death of the last great Mongol Ilkhan, Abu Sa'id, in 735 AH/1335 CE, there was no strong central rule or government in the region. This gave the remaining Isma'ilis a respite from the ravages of the previous decades. At this time, the great mountainous districts between Persian 'Iraq and Gilan were controlled by independent governors. We are informed by contemporary accounts that much of the region remained dedicated to Ismailism in this period. By 770 AH/1368-69 CE, the whole of the Daylaman seems once again to have come under the Ismaili rule of a certain Kiya Sayf al-Din Kushayji. However, he did not openly proclaim his identity until provoked by a Zaydi rival, Sayyid 'Ali Kiya.

Sayyid 'Ali Kiya extended his control over the region, ousting this Isma'ili leader. Nevertheless, the population in Daylaman, Rudbar, Padiz, Kushayjan and Ashkawar remained Isma'ili and was dedicated to an imam by the name of Khudawand Muhammad. This Khudawand Muhammad was intricately involved

karod, mentioned above, which refers to the twelve crore (120,000,000) disciples who are initiated into the mysteries of the *Satpanth* in the last age of the world.

¹⁰⁹ "Jugame phire shahaji muneri", in *102 Ginanaji: Chopadi*, 4: no. 3, vv. 1-4.



with the political struggles of the area and managed to reoccupy Alamut for a spell. At this time a certain Taj al-Din Amuli was able to discuss the Isma‘ilis of Alamut (*malahida-i Alamut*) with the Jalayirid ruler, Sultan Uways (r. 757-76 AH/1356-74 CE) without having to explain who they were. Clearly the continued presence of the Isma‘ilis in their ancestral centre was known even at the court of Tabriz. That Alamut, or at least the region of Daylam, remained an important centre of the Isma‘ili community in this period is testified to by Khurasani and Indian sources. These make it clear that after Hulagu conquered the region, the Isma‘ilis returned and religious dues continued to be delivered to this area. There is even testimony, albeit from sources whose history of transmission has yet to be fully studied, that the imam Islam Shah lived at the fort of Alamut itself.

Though the Isma‘ilis continued to inhabit Alamut and the south Caspian for much of this period, their former political power had been broken. No longer were their activities the stuff of fantastic legends woven by Christians passing through the region as they had been at the time of the Crusades, nor was their history of particular interest to Muslim chroniclers. Henceforth, at least politically, the Isma‘ilis were of minor, regional significance. Soon enough, in 819 AH/1416 CE, they were subject to yet another massacre in which “the waters of the White River (*Safidrud*) turned red with the blood of those killed.”¹¹⁰ Among those done away with were many Isma‘ili leaders, including some descendants of the Isma‘ili imam Khudawand ‘Ala’ al-Din Muhammad. It must have been around this time, about one and a half centuries after Alamut first capitulated to the Mongols, that the Isma‘ilis gave up all hopes of regaining the fortress as their centre. While Isma‘ili activity continued in this region, the imams appear to have moved away to safer, more politically quiescent surroundings, ushering in an era that has been dubbed the “Anjudan Period” of Isma‘ili history.

¹¹⁰ *Ta’rikh-i Gilan wa Daylamistan*, 129.