

THE 'AHD OF 'ALĪ IN AL-QĀDĪ AL-NU'MĀN'S *DA'Ā'IM AL-ISLĀM* UNDER MICROSCOPIC SCRUTINY: NEW DISCLOSURES*

Mikroskopik İnceleme Altında al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān'ın *Da'ā'im al-Islām*'ında Ali'nin Ahd'i: Yeni Açıklamalar

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Abstract

In his celebrated book on Ismā'īlī law entitled *Dā'ā'im al-Islām* (The Pillars of Islam), al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān has incorporated the full version of a document called the 'ahd of 'Alī. It is a long document placed around the middle of the last chapter titled *kitāb al-jihād* (the book on *jihād*) in the first volume of the *Da'ā'im* which deals with the primary section of Islamic law, viz., *'ibādāt*, (Acts of Devotion and Religious Observances). The following study aims at reviewing the progress made in its thorough scrutiny by Gerald Salinger, Wadād al-Qāḍī and Heinz Halm. Their investigations have led them to arrive at new disclosures that the proto-type of the 'ahd ascribed to 'Alī, both in the *Da'ā'im* and *Nahj al-balāgha*, originated in Khurāsān.

Keywords: Ismā'īlī, *Dā'ā'im al-Islām*, al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *The Pillars of Islam*.

Öz

İsmaili hukuku üzerine ünlü *Dā'ā'im al-Islām* (İslam'ın Sütunları) adlı kitabında el-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, 'Alī'nin Ahd'i adlı bir belgenin tam versiyonunu dahil etmiştir. Bu, *Da'ā'im*'in ilk cildinde, yani İslam hukukunun birincil bölümünü, yani 'ibadet'i (İbādāt) ele alan kitābū'l-cihād (cihad kitabı) başlıklı son bölümün ortasına yerleştirilmiş uzun bir belgedir. Bu çalışma, Gerald Salinger, Wadād al-Qāḍī ve Heinz Halm'ın kapsamlı incelemesinde kaydedilen ilerlemeyi gözden geçirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmaları onları, hem *Da'ā'im*'de hem de Nehc'ül-Belaga'da Ali'ye atfedilen 'ahd'in ilk tipinin Horasan'dan geldiğine dair yeni açıklamalara ulaşmalarına yol açmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İsmaili, *Dā'ā'im al-Islām*, al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *The Pillars of Islam*.

Introduction

In his celebrated book on Ismā'īlī law entitled *Dā'ā'im al-Islām* (The Pillars of Islam), al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān has incorporated the full version of a document called the 'ahd of 'Alī. It is a long document placed around the middle of the last chapter titled *kitāb al-jihād* (the book on *jihād*) in the first volume of the *Da'ā'im* which deals with the primary section of Islamic law, viz., *'ibādāt*, (Acts of Devotion and Religious Observances). Although it is an important early Muslim political document which expresses Islamic concepts of rulership, it is not easily accessible to ordinary readers even in its English translation since it is not published separately. The following study aims at reviewing the progress made in its thorough scrutiny by Gerald Salinger, Wadād al-Qāḍī and Heinz Halm. Their investigations have led them to arrive at new disclosures that the proto-type of the 'ahd ascribed to 'Alī, both in the *Da'ā'im* and *Nahj al-balāgha*, originated in Khurāsān. Its two versions of transmission, the North African (in the *Da'ā'im*) and the Irāqī (in the *Nahj*) represent revised recensions of the

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proto-type. In fact, the *Da 'ā'im*'s reproduction betrays the power struggle between the Fāṭimid caliph-imam Mahdī and his chief *dā'ī* and the commander Abū 'Abdallāh al-Shī'ī. The investigations of the above scholars were published in different journals in English and German at intermittent intervals of time. The following pages are therefore devoted to gather together all piecemeal information in one concise article so that the interested scholars and ordinary readers will be able to access and evaluate steady progress in Ismā'īlī studies during the last half a century.

1. The 'Ahd of 'Alī in the *Da 'ā'im*

Before we discuss the importance of the 'ahd of 'Alī and its contents it is necessary to step back a little and sketch the history of scholarly progress since the critical edition of the first volume of the *Dā'ā'im al-Islām* (wherein the 'ahd of 'Alī is incorporated) by Asaf A. A. Fyzee in 1951.¹ Two years later in 1953, Gerald Salinger translated "The *Kitāb al-Jihād* from the *Da 'ā'im*," with an introduction and notes as his Ph.D. dissertation and submitted it to Columbia University, in New York. Three years later, in 1956, he published an article entitled "A Muslim Mirror for Princes," with full translation of the 'ahd of 'Alī, except its fifth section entitled: "What is proper for the governor to observe concerning the affairs of his army?" (Salinger, 1956, 24-39)² In the introduction to his above article, Salinger observes that the 'ahd document ascribed to 'Alī is quite long about eighteen pages of Arabic text divided into twelve sections with appropriate headings. He also states that it represents a tenth century expression of a political desiderata of early Islam. He further adds a significant note that a different version of the above 'ahd can also be found in *Nahj al-balāgha*, the well-known compilation of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī,³ and edited by Muḥammad 'Abduh.⁴

1. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da 'ā'im al-Islām*, ed. Asaf A. A. Fyzee (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1951); The *kitāb al-jihād* pp. 339-98; English tr. Asaf A. A. Fyzee, completely revised and annotated by Ismail K. Poonawala, *The Pillars of Islam: 'Ibādāt: Acts of Devotion and Religious Observances* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002). The book of *jihād* pp. 422-94, in its English translation. For the author and his works see Ismail K. Poonawala, "The chronology of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Works," in *The Sound Traditions: Studies in Ismaili Texts and Thought*, ed. Kumail Rajani (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 360-432.

2. The Arabic text of section five reads:

وفيه ذكر ما ينبغي للوالي أن ينظر فيه من أمر جنوده.

3. *Nahj al-balāgha* is an anthology of about 239 *Khuṭab* (public addresses or sermons), 79 *kutub wa-rasā'il* (letters) and 480 (or 489) *ḥikam wa-mawā'iz* (wise aphorisms) traditionally ascribed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40-661). Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 406/1016), a celebrated poet and, a writer and scholar in various disciplines, compiled it in 400/1010, six years before his death, from a wide variety of extant sources accessible to him. It is held in high esteem by the Shī'a community and considered a masterpiece in Arabic literature. See the following articles for details: M. Djebli, "Nahj al-Balāgha," *EP*, 7:903-4; idem "Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī," *EP*, 9:340-43. Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, ed. Muḥammad Abu 'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 2nd edn. (Cairo: 'Īsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1965), See the introduction by the editor in 1:3-24.

4. Salinger refers to Muḥammad 'Abduh's edition because the most celebrated commentary of the *Nahj* by Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd was not yet edited; its first edition appeared in 1958. *Kūṭab Nahj al-balāgha wa-hurwa mā jama'ahu al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Raḍī min kalām Sayyidnā Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib karrama Allāhu wajhahu*, with linguistic explanations in the footnotes by al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh (Beirut: al-Maṭba'a al-adabiyya, 1307/1889-1890. In this edition the 'ahd of 'Alī consists of pages 45 to 60, in the second vol. and is titled:

من كتاب له [علي] عليه السلام، كتبه للأئمة النخعي لما ولأه على مصر وأعمالها حين اضطرب محمد بن أبي بكر، وهو أطول عهد وأجمع كتبه للمحاسن. Its 2nd edn. (Beirut: Dār al-Hudā al-waṭaniyya li'l-ṭibā'a wa'l-nashr, n.d.), 4 parts bound in one vol. The publisher has transgressed his limits by making various arbitrary changes in the original first edition. See also the 'ahd of 'Alī in *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 17:30-130; its heading reads:

من كتاب له، عليه السلام، كتبه للأئمة النخعي، رحمه الله، لما ولأه على مصر وأعمالها حين اضطرب أمر أميرها محمد بن أبي بكر. وهو أطول عهد كتبه وأجمع للمحاسن.

English tr. "From ['Alī's] written letter, which he wrote for [Mālik] al-Ashtar al-Nakha'ī, may God have mercy

Salinger further asserts that a comparison of the two versions. i.e., the *Da'ā'im* and the *Nahj*, offers certain sidelights of some political significance, but space does not allow him of their discussion here [i.e., in the abovementioned article]. It was an important suggestion for the future line of research, which we will see below, was taken up by Wadād al-Qāḏī. What is noteworthy for our purpose is his critical remark about the 'ahd which states that considering its contents it is very doubtful that it could have been written by 'Alī whose reign was very short and full of internal bloody conflicts.

Now, let us return to al-Nu'mān. According to him the 'ahd has come down from 'Alī and that the latter traced it back to the Prophet. The text of the preamble reads:

A written document is transmitted on the authority of 'Alī. The man who related this to us said, "I assume [the 'ahd itself] to be in the words of 'Alī;" however, we [Nū'mān] have reproduced it as having come down from ['Alī], and he traced it back to [yet an earlier authority] and said, "The Messenger of God ordered a command document [to be written] wherein, among other things, he said [as follows]".⁵

It is followed by two preliminary sections, not found in the *Nahj*, with emotional exhortation of the addressee. The first paragraph of the first section reads:

O King [of men, but slave [of God]! Recollect your former status, and consider what you have come to. Build your faith on that which last. Take heed for the future by [considering] what has happened in the past. Begin by giving good counsel to your conscience. Consider the matters pertaining to your own self, and understand your duties and your rights. His own actions are the best vindication for a man concerning his due in the presence of God; and his own works are the best vindication for him concerning his due with mankind. Fear God in respect of your personal duties and in matters pertaining to your soul. Be watchful of the burden imposed upon you by God and abase yourself in humility because it is He Who has elevated you [to your high office]. Verily, humility is the essence of servitude, and pride is one of the [spiritual] states (*hāl*) of sovereignty (Al-Qāḏī al-Nu'mān, 1951, 350-351).⁶

The first paragraph of the second section reads:

Consider O you who have been made sovereign [over man] and are yet a slave [of God]! Where, O where, are your forefathers? And where are kings and the sons of kings—enemies of yours—who have been devouring the world since its beginning? You enjoy only their leavings and govern as they governed. Where are the treasures they gathered and the bodies they gratified, and their sons whom they honoured? Do you see anyone so bereft of offspring or so deprived

on him, when the latter was appointed as a governor of Egypt and the surrounding areas when the position of its governor Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr became precarious. It is the longest document written by 'Alī and contains the greatest number excellent pieces of advice."

5. The Arabic text reads:

وعن عليّ (صلع) أنه ذكر عهداً. فقال الذي حدثناه: أحسبه من كلام عليّ (ص) إلا أننا روينا عنه أنه رفعه، فقال: عهد رسول الله (صلع) عهداً كان فيه بعد كلام ذكره، قال صلى الله عليه وعلى آله.

6. *The Pillars of Islam*, pp. 436-37. Arabic title of this section reads:

فيما يجب على الأمير من محاسبة نفسه.

of remembrance? When God favours you with His bounties, recollect what you used to hope for. Let not your passion overpower you by your fortune; and let not your indulgence of your children lead you to garner for them more than what is allotted to them by God and what He has intended them to obtain, lest it lead to your own perdition for the benefit of someone else, and [lest it] cause you to fall from the grace of God for the happiness and sensual delights of one [your superior] who neither stands by you nor shares your sorrow (Al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, 1951, 351-352).⁷

As stated above the full text of the *‘ahd* (with some variations in its wording), except the preamble and the first two sections, is also preserved by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī in his recension of the *Nahj* with the heading “From [‘Alī’s] written letter, which he wrote for [Mālik] al-Ashtar al-Nakha‘ī (may God have mercy on him!), when the latter was appointed as a governor of Egypt and the surrounding areas when the position of Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr [the previous governor of Egypt] became precarious; it is the longest document written by ‘Alī and contains the greatest number of good qualities.”⁸ The *‘ahd*’s recension in the *Nahj* therefore presents striking differences as well close similarities to the text of the *Da‘ā‘im*. It should be noted that the *Da‘ā‘im*’s version does not disclose the occasion of writing, while the *Nahj* clearly states that it was written by ‘Alī when he appointed Mālik al-Ashtar as the governor of Egypt.

Before we proceed further it is appropriate to summarize the contents of the *‘ahd* document of ‘Alī as presented by al-Nu‘mān. It comprises of twelve sections, each introduced by an appropriate heading, and could also be divided into three broad categories: i) an introductory emotional exhortation to the addressee, the ruler, to look carefully at his present status and compare it with his previous humble standing (sections 1-2 as listed below); ii) the main body of the *‘ahd*, giving advice to the ruler (sections 3-11); iii) the concluding part, with the heading “Manners and virtuous conduct which the governor should adopt” (section 12).

The twelve sections are as follows:

1. How the commander (*amīr*) should reckon with his conscience;
2. Advice to the commander of an army to take example from his predecessors;
3. On the justice to be observed by the *umarā‘* in respect of their subjects and of themselves;
4. Knowledge of the different classes of people;
5. What is proper for the governor to observe concerning the affairs of his army?
6. What is necessary for the governor to observe concerning the administration of justice among the people?
7. What the governor should consider in matters concerning his administrative officers (*‘ummāl*)?

7. *The Pillars of Islam*, pp. 437-38. Arabic title of this section reads:

وفيه في موعظة أمير المؤمنين بمن كان قبله في مثل حاله.

8. See n. 5 above.

8. How the governor should look after the affairs of the taxpayers (*ahl al-kharāj*)?
9. What is incumbent on the governor to observe with regard to his secretaries?
10. The duties of the governor regarding the classes of merchants and artisans;
11. What is proper for the governor to do as regards the poor and the needy?
12. Manners and virtuous conduct which the governor should adopt (Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, 1951, 350-368).⁹

Twenty-two years later Wadād al-Qāḍī followed the clues indicated by Salinger and pursued very close comparison between the two versions of 'Alī's *'ahd*: one recorded by al-Nu'mān in the *Da'ā'im*, and the other documented by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī in his *Nahj*. Let me summarize the important points in her findings as follows:

a. The *'ahd* of 'Alī, a political testament of 'Alī, is inserted towards the middle of the chapter on *jihād*, which has absolutely no relation with the topic. Hence, she will examine it thoroughly, and relocate it within the correct context of its composition in the critical years the Fāṭimid spent in North Africa before they established themselves in Egypt (Al-Qāḍī, 1978, 72).

b. Next, her search for the author of the *'ahd* after the scrutiny of its text leads her to state that the authorship of the *'ahd* in the *Da'ā'im* is not at all certain. On the other hand, in the *Nahj* (which represents another recension of the *'ahd*) it is attributed to 'Alī when he appointed Mālik b. al-Ḥārith al-Ashtar al-Nakha'ī as the governor of Egypt.¹⁰

c. Following her discussion of the latter issue she discovers that there were two main textual lines of the *'ahd*'s transmission which differ widely: the first is a Maghribī one which appears in the *Da'ā'im* (almost fifty years before the *Nahj*); and the second, an Irāqī one, which emerges in the *Nahj*. This leads her to disclose that the two versions of the transmitted text of the *'ahd*, particularly the *Da'ā'im*'s text, bears a very strong affinity to the testament of Tāhir b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 207/822), Abbasid governor of Khurāsān, to his son 'Abd Allāh written around 206/821. Hence, she considers that the latter was the original proto-type of the *Da'ā'im* [as well as of the *Nahj*]¹¹

d. Now, she turns to the question: Who is the original author of the *'ahd* from whom al-Nu'mān took that document? She presumes that the clue to that answer lies in the emotional preamble to the *'ahd*, which includes some biographical information about the addressee. She summarizes that factual evidence as follows:

He was a man of humble origin, who was raised into the position of ruler by the grace of God; when he was still in that modest position, he used to hope that God would be charitable to him, and he used to blame the 'kings' of the district in which he resided because they were 'extravagant in their expenditure, harsh in their rule, haughty towards their subjects, etc.'

9. *The Pillars of Islam*, pp. 436-56.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-79.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-94; He is Tāhir I b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muṣ'ab b. Ruzayq al-Khūzā'ī from 205/820 to 207/822. C. E. Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties: A chronological and genealogical manual* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 168-69.

Since the addressee had his hopes fulfilled, he has changed and adopted the position of those very kings he used to admonish. Therefore, he is harshly counseled not to be extravagant and cannot ignore his duties to God and to his subjects.¹²

e. At this stage of her investigation she tries to relocate the *'ahd* [what she claimed earlier] within the context of the power struggle between the first Fāṭimid caliph-imām al-Mahdī and his chief *dā'ī* and commander Abū 'Abdallāh al-Shī'ī, particularly the crisis created by the assassination of the *dā'ī*. Hence, she presumes that the addressee of the document was the *dā'ī* Abū 'Abdallāh al-Shī'ī. She further ventures to suggest that the *'ahd* document was written by al-Qāḍī Aflah b. Hārūn al-Malūsī, the first *qāḍī al-quḍāt* (chief judge) of the Fāṭimid state appointed by al-Mahdī, after the assassination of the *dā'ī* [and his elder brother Abu'l-'Abbās] to justify al-Mahdī's action towards Abū 'Abdallāh al-Shī'ī, and to appeal to the common people for support and to indicate clearly that he intends to be the sole ruler of the state.¹³

f. Additionally, she states that the *'ahd* represents the first political constitution of the Fāṭimid state after its final establishment as a *Dawla* (State). It is for this very reason that al-Nu'mān had to record it, perhaps under the influence of al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh, in his *Da'ā'im*, the book which contained the final statement of the Ismā'īlīs/Fāṭimids on matters pertaining to law. With the *'ahd*'s incorporation in the *Da'ā'im*, it came to represent not only the paramount *divine constitution* of the Fāṭimid State but also the civil constitution of the state."¹⁴

In my view despite her excellent comparison of the two versions of the *'ahd* and analysis of the *Da'ā'im*'s text with valuable remarks, she was unable to see the wood for the trees. She incorrectly presumes that the addressee of the document was the *dā'ī* Abū 'Abdallāh al-Shī'ī and that it was probably written by the Mahdī's judge (under the latter's instruction) after the assassination of the *dā'ī*. In his brief article "Zwei fatimidische Quellen aus der Zeit des Kalifen al-Mahdī" published in 1988, Heinz Halm rejected al-Qāḍī's suggestion that al-Mahdī was the author or sender of the document, and the *dā'ī* was the addressee of the Mirror for Princes. He states that this relationship should be reversed. He correctly argues that it is in the nature of the genre that the mirror is held before *the prince*; a prince is being addressed here too, and it is not at all necessary to preach humility and asceticism to the *dā'ī*. I fully concur with the views of Heinz Halm. However, before discussing the rift that had occurred between the two adversaries shortly after al-Mahdī had assumed power as described by Heinz Halm in his latest book, I would digress a little to include Yaacov Lev's pertinent remarks about al-Qāḍī's article in his book *State and Society in Fatimid Egypt* (Yaacov, 1991).

First, Lev applauds al-Qāḍī's efforts for thoroughly analyzing the text of the *'ahd*, dealing with the political organization of the state, and affirms that it is an important contribution to the discussion of the Ismā'īlī character of the Fāṭimid state. He further compliments her for concluding her research that although the document belongs to "Mirror of Prince" genre, it betrays Fāṭimid political thinking and contains

12. Al-Qāḍī, "An Early Fāṭimid Political Document," pp. 95-100.

13. Ibid., pp. 105-7.

14. Ibid., p. 104.

original ideas. The political order envisaged there is highly centralized and consists of three entities: God, the ruler and the rest of the people. The ruler is advised to be attentive to his subjects and treat them humanely. Al-Qāḍī sees in this attitude a highly original approach and speculates on the historical context in which the document originated and its possible authorship.¹⁵

However, he adds that her claims regarding the originality of the ideas contained in the 'ahd are not warranted because it deals with a common theme in "Mirror of Prince" literature and Islamic political writings, namely; justice vis-à-vis oppression. The ruler should conduct himself in a just manner and look after his subjects like a shepherd looking after a flock. The centrality of the ruler in the political system set forth in the 'ahd is a reflection of the pivotal place of the *imām* in Shī'ī-Ismā'īlī Islam.¹⁶

Returning to Heinz Halm, let me add that he is a leading scholar in the field of pre-Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī movement and the early period of Fāṭimid history in North Africa and Egypt. His publications are numerous and original that contributed substantially in the progress of Ismā'īlī studies and shedding new light on some opaque areas, such as the early Ismā'īlī Cosmology and other articles. His latest book *Das Reich des Mahdī, Der Aufstieg der Fatimiden* (The Empire of the Mahdī: The Rise of the Fatimids) elaborates on the question of the rift that had occurred very early between the two antagonists soon after the *dā'ī* had rescued al-Mahdī from prison in Sijilmāsa.¹⁷ In the third chapter devoted to discuss the events after the Mahdī's arrival in Raqqāda, Halm has devoted a section of about ten pages with the heading "The Conspiracy of the *Dā'īs*" that discusses the widening disagreements between the caliph-imām and his chief *dā'ī* and commander Abū 'Abdallāh al-Shī'ī.¹⁸ In this section he has gathered the scattered information from the Ismā'īlī and non-Ismā'īlī sources, mainly from the three works: i), al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's *Iftitāh al-da'wa* (composed in 346/957);¹⁹ ii), Ibn al-'Idhārī's *al-Bayān al-mughrib fī akhbār mulūk al-Andalus wa'l-Maghrib* (compiled around 712/1312)²⁰ and iii), al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār's (d. 415/1025) *Tathbūt dalā'il*

15. Ibid., p. 2.

16. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

17. Heinz Halm, *Das Reich des Mahdī, Der Aufstieg der Fatimiden* (München: C.H. Beck, 1991); English tr. by Michael Bonner, *The Empire of the Mahdī: The Rise of the Fatimids* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1996). All references below are to the latter English tr.

18. It should be noted that in the *Iftitāh al-da'wa* there is a section with the heading: "Events relating to the hypocrites against al-Mahdī and the outcome of their affair," which provides detailed information. See al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Les Commencements du Califat Fāṭimide au Maghreb*, edition critique et analyse du *Kitāb Iftitāh al-da'wa*, par Farhat Dachraoui (Tunis: STD, 1975), pp. 306-19 (paras 278-288). All the references in the notes below are to this edition. It is to be noted that the latter book was first edited by Wadād al-Qāḍī with an incorrect title, *Risālat iftitāh al-da'wa (Risāla fī zuhūr al-da'wa al-'Ubaydiyya al-Fāṭimiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-thaqāfa, 1970). Leaving aside the distorted title, it suffers from a total lack of diacritical marks for many tribal or clannish names, such as Malūsa. In her abovementioned article she always uses Mallūsa, with a *shadda* on the letter *lām*, which is incorrect. In my opinion Dachraoui's edition is superior. See also the following note.

19. The fourth Fāṭimid caliph-imām al-Mu'izz had commissioned al-Nu'mān to collect the material for this official history of the beginning of the *da'wa* (the Ismā'īlī mission) and the establishment of the Fāṭimid state. For details see Ismail K. Poonawala, "Chronology of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Works," in *The Sound Traditions: Studies in Ismaili Texts and Thought*, ed. Kumail Rajani (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 402-5. It is the earliest extant source written from the Fāṭimid perspective. Al-Nu'mān's narration of the events seem to be quite accurate except that the whole blame is put on Abu'l-'Abbās for his corruptive influence on his younger brother Abū 'Abdallāh and other conspirators. Of course, al-Mahdī is not to be blamed since he is the imām-caliph and should be obeyed in his orders.

20. J. Bosch-Vila, "Ibn 'Idhārī," in *EF*, 3:805-6. The importance of his work lies in the fact that many of the earlier sources used by him are no longer extant.

al-nubuwwa, with long sections on the Qarāmiṭa and the Fāṭimids.²¹ Here Halm gives much more detailed and nuanced account of the conspiracy of the *dā'īs*. The point is that the tension between the Maḥdī and Abū 'Abdallāh continued for some time until it came to the surface and actual confrontation just before the latter's assassination.

The period of the discord and conflict was a short one, barely lasting one year; beginning with the Maḥdī's entry into Raqqāda where he was proclaimed as the Maḥdī on Friday 21 Rabī' II 297/7 January 910 until day of the *dā'īs* assassination on Monday 15 Jumādā II 298/ 18 Februar 911. Halm begins his discussion with the expectations which the *dā'ī* and his army of Kutāma warriors had from al-Maḥdī, such as his supernatural powers and to perform miracles. What they had seen from the very beginning that al-Maḥdī tried to divert those expectations which he himself could not fulfill toward his son, whom he had given the name of the Prophet (i.e., Abū'l-Qāsim Muḥammad), and thereby also the name of the real Maḥdī. Already in Sijilmāsa, several of the Friends of God (*Awliyā' Allāh*) are said to have shown irritation over the Maḥdī's appearance and demeanor. Quoting from the Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār Halm states:

[When al-Maḥdī intended to depart from Sijilmāsa (where he had spent five years) to Qayrawān ... the North Africans and the companions of Abū 'Abdallāh entered the (the residence of al-Maḥdī) to take his men out],²² they found [around Maḥdī] silk and brocade clothing, gold and silver vessels, Greek eunuchs, and indications of the use of alcohol. In their Berber simplicity, they disapproved of all this, and they asked the *dā'ī* Abū 'Abdallāh about it. For he had spent many years among the Kutāma while recruiting among them for the Maḥdī, the Guarantor (*hujja*) of God, claiming to be his man. But Abū 'Abdallāh lived an ascetic life, clothed himself in coarse garments, and took his sustenance from wood, and he prophesied the same sort of thing to them concerning the Maḥdī. [Because of that they disapproved (what they saw) and asked the *dā'ī*. And Abū 'Abdallāh said: "These are the traces of his companions and followers, and he had many followers."]²³

Halm adds that even the *dā'ī* himself, who had greeted the Maḥdī in Sijilmāsa with all the signs of deep religious emotion, showed signs of becoming increasingly disturbed by the Maḥdī's entirely this-worldly search for pomp and pleasure, which before long rubbed off onto the Friends of God. He openly reproached him for the corrupting effect which his conduct was having on the good old customs of the Kutāma. Then Halm cites a paragraph from al-Nu'mān's *Ifṭitāh al-da'wa* which states:

O our lord! The Kutāma are a people whom I set aright, organized and instructed in a particular way. Having done this, I was able to achieve with them what I

21. Al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbūt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, ed. 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān (Beirut: Dār al-'Arabiyya, 1966); S. M. Stern, "'Abd al-Djabbār b. Aḥmad," *EP*. 1:59-60. He composed this book in 385/005, that is about four decades later than al-Nu'mān's *Ifṭitāh*. He was a noted Mu'tazilī theologian and *qāḍī l-quḍāt* of Rayy. Although he composed his work in Rayy, he was well informed about the Fāṭimids in North Africa and the Qarāmiṭa in the east as he maintained close relations with anti-Fāṭimid Qarmaṭī circles of this community in Rayy. Since his reports originated from the latter circle he does not cite the sources.

22. I have added what is enclosed within the square brackets to give context to what follows from al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Tathbūt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, 2:598.

23. Halm, *The Empire of the Maḥdī*, p. 161; al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Tathbūt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, 2:598.

aspired to do with them, and attained what I had aimed to do with them. But that which you have done with them, by giving them money and appointing them over provinces, and commanding them to wear [fine] clothing and ornaments, is spoiling them, because it turns them away from that to which they are accustomed. Leave them as they were before, so that I might, in your place, assume the task of commanding them and prohibiting them, directing them as they are accustomed to being directed by me, of treating them in the manner in which I did up until now, and of carrying on your wars and conducting the affairs in your place, with them and with others. Then you might stay in peace in your palace, without being disturbed by any of them or by anyone else. If you do so, it will create much more respect for you, reinforce your authority, and bring about complete success and order which you wish.

When al-Mahdī heard this from him, he knew for certain what was on his mind and where it came from. He gave a courteous reply about the matter, without showing him that he knew of his situation, and caused him to despair of what his self had enticed him to do.²⁴

Halm states that we do not know precisely when the first confrontation with the Mahdī took place, but there were several leading *dā'īs* included in the plot against the Mahdī. Besides Abū 'Abdallāh al-Shī'ī and his brother Abu'l-'Abbās, they were: the "supreme shaykh" (*shaykh al-mashāyikh*) of the Kutāma, Hārūn b. Yūnus of the tribe of the Masāla, who had been one of the first to join the *da'wa*; then Abū 'Abdallāh's closest confidant, the young Abū Zākī Tammām of the tribe of the Ijjāna, who was also one of the very first Friends of God; and who had taken Abū 'Abdallāh's place during his journey to Sijilmāsa, and whose house served as a meeting place for the conspirators; finally, the tried and trusted military commander Ghazwiyya b. Yūsuf, of the tribe of the Malūsa.²⁵

Halm states that there are two versions of the decisive scene before the throne of al-Mahdī, the official version of Fāṭimid historiography (which is al-Nu'mān's *Iftitāh al-da'wa*), and an anti-Fāṭimid version (which is al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār's in his *Tath-bīt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*). According to the former:

He [Abu'l-'Abbās] deluded Hārūn b. Yūnus al-Azāyī, who was called "chief of the elders" (*shaykh al-mashāyikh*), so that he confronted al-Mahdī with speech which (Abu'l-'Abbās) embellished for him, and through which he sought to corrupt him. He told al-Mahdī to his face, "We have doubts about you, so bring forth a miraculous sign if you are the Mahdī as you have asserted."²⁶

24. *Iftitāh al-da'wa*, para, 279. Instead of English tr. (from German) by Bonner in *The Empire of the Mahdi*, p. 161, I have preferred English tr. by Hamid Haji directly from Arabic, see his book *Founding the Fatimid State*, pp. 214-15. It should be stated that in his *Iftitāh al-Nu'mān* has also given more details under the heading: "Events relating to the hypocrites against al-Mahdī and the outcome of their affairs." *Iftitāh* being an official Fāṭimid version, it records Abū 'Abdallāh's initial advice to the Mahdī, then Hārūn b. Yūnus's confrontation with the Mahdī. According to the *Iftitāh*'s account Abu'l-'Abbās was the villain who instigated his younger brother Abū 'Abdallāh and others against the Mahdī. After their assassination al-Mahdī asked forgiveness for the *dā'ī* in the Hereafter because of his previous pious deeds and good intention, but God's curse for Abu'l-'Abbās. *Iftitāh*, para 288.

25. All those names appear in the *Iftitāh*, para 282 and 283.

26. *Iftitāh*, para 282; tr. by Hamid Haji, p. 216; Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, p. 165.

Al-Mahdī found what he said impertinent. He let him know of the viciousness of his speech on the basis of the Book of God, may his mention be exalted, which rebukes people who asked their prophets to produce miraculous signs. It would be too long to relate what he said to him on this matter. There are indeed proofs concerning al-Mahdī for this scoundrel and for those whom he incited, such that if they considered carefully, they would be satisfied with them. Because God, the Mighty, the Glorious, says in His book to those like him who asked His Prophet, may God bless him and grant salvation: *And they say, 'Why does he not bring us a sign from his Lord?' Has not a clear proof of what is in the former scriptures come to them?*²⁷ And He, exalted be His praise, replies: *"It is not sufficient for them that We have sent down to you the Scripture to be recited to them."*²⁸

He instituted His revelation as the miracle of His Prophet, and its esoteric interpretation as the miracle of the imams from his posterity, and He instructed in His Book and through the tongue of His Prophet, bestowing guidance on this matter whose significance is beyond the scope of this book, and which is not our intention to investigate.²⁹

Halm continues and states that the other version from al-Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār is much sharper. Although it may have been condensed for the sake of achieving a heightened dramatic effect, it probably gives a correct account of the conspirators’ mood. Here too for the first time we find the Kutāma chieftains inclined to put the *dā ī* Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Shī‘ī in the imposter’s place and consider him as the true Mahdī. However, Abū ‘Abdallāh will have nothing to do with this. What follows is that report: (it is to be noted that here al-Mahdī is referred to by his original name ‘Sa‘īd.’)

The supreme shaykh Abū Mūsā Hārūn, the shaykh of the Shī‘ites, told Sa‘īd to his face: “Woe to you! You are the one who leads astray, and not to the one who is rightly guided! You practice whoremongering and sodomy, you drink wine, you lie and play false, and you shed blood! What are you after all, and whose son are you? [And turning toward the Kutāma:] But the *dā ī* Abū ‘Abdallāh [al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā’ al-Kūfī] has told you that he is the Mahdī.”

Then they had Abū ‘Abdallāh brought there, and they called out: “This one here is the Mahdī!” Abū ‘Abdallāh, however, refused and denied this. Then Sa‘īd said to Abū ‘Abdallāh: “Did you not yourself say to the men of the army in Sijilmāsa that I am the Mahdī, for whom you had recruited?” Then Abū ‘Abdallāh turned to Abū Mūsā [Hārūn] and the others, and said: “You people, I have erred, as any man may err at some time. I am a Shī‘ite from Kufa. At first we believed in the imamate of [the seventh Imam] Mūsā b. Ja‘far and his descendants. But when [the eleventh Imam] al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī died [childless], Ibn Ḥawshab abandoned this belief, and so did we. Then someone came to us, recruiting for the imamate of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far. I myself met the

27. *The Qur‘ān*, tr. into English by Alan Jones (London: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2007), p. 297 (Qur‘ān 20:133)

28. *Ibid.*, p. 367 (Qur‘ān 29:51)

29. *Ifitāh*, para 282; tr. by Hamid Haji, p. 216; Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdī*, p. 165.

Imam of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl in Kufa; I took my leave of him, and went to Ibn Ḥawshab in the Yemen. The Imam in Kufa had two boys, and as I took my leave of him, he said to me: 'Abū 'Abd allāh these two are your Imams; if one of them calls you, then answer!'

"Thereupon I went to the Yemen, from there to Mecca, and then to you in the Maghrib. Then the news reached us that the Imam had died leaving a son. I received a series of letters with special signs which had been agreed upon between the Imam and myself. In this way it came about that I took this man here for the Mahdī! But he is not the Mahdī, but rather a rascal, a liar and evildoer, an enemy of God and his Prophet, an enemy of the Mahdī!"

Then Sa'īd accused Abū 'Abdallāh of being a liar and a traitor, and he reminded him of what he had taught the Kutāma, and they insulted each other. Then Abu'l-'Abbās, brother of Abū 'Abdallāh, who was more venerable than the latter, and more knowledgeable about Sa'īd and the *da'wa* called out to Sa'īd that he is a great liar and an enemy of the Messenger of God and his family and both of them vilified each other. Then Abū Zākī, who was an eminent Shī'ite and a confidant of Sa'īd stood up and continued to shout: "Be on you guard against this lying Easterner, for he has no religion."³⁰

After this stormy audience, al-Mahdī had the spokesman, the supreme shaykh Hārūn, done away with in secret.³¹ The other conspirators now pressed for action that al-Mahdī should be eliminated by assassination. The *dā'ī* Abū 'Abdallāh wavered indecisively, but his brother Abu'l-'Abbās said to someone who blamed him concerning that, "By God, we shall not allow anyone else to live in a building which we built with our hands, for which we toiled and where we our lives were spent, while we remain behind its doors. Rather, we shall stay in its high points or make him join its lowest [places]."³²

Someone, else told Abū Zākī similar things. And he replied, "No, by God, I will not spend days in which the son of the herdsman, meaning Ghazwiyya b. Yūsuf, precedes me and rises above me."³³

Someone else said to one of them on this matter, and (that person) replied, "We shall not leave him, meaning al-Mahdī, until he shares with us these palaces where he resides, and the gardens which are around them liberally, and we shall command and rule as we used to do. We are not satisfied to take from under his hand like slaves do. Rather, what we have taken by our swords will remain with us and under our hands just as it was, and we have merit in that which we give him from it."³⁴

30. Al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbūt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, 2:389-91. It appears to me that the text in its last part is corrupted and the following Arabic sentence comes before the speeches of Abu'l-'Abbās and Abū Zākī:

وأعمل [سعيد] الحيلة، وقتل أبا العباس و شيخ المشايخ.

It seems that Halm did realize it but did not alert the readers and continued with his citations from the *Ifitāh*, thereby causing some confusion as if he is continuing with the version of the Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār.

31. Al-Qādī al-Nu'mān, *Ifitāh*, para 282.

32. Ibid., para 287; English tr. by Hamid Haji, *Founding the Fatimid State*, 221.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

The *dā'ī* and the Kutāma chieftains repeatedly expressed their feeling of having been set aside; they bitterly recalled how al-Mahdī had taken the funds hoarded in Ikkjān for himself; the use of functionaries from the old regime made for especially bad blood.³⁵

Al-Nu'mān's report is quite detailed; he states: "The conspirators learnt what the Commander of the Faithful had said. They refrained from going to see him and feared for their lives. Ibn al-Qadīm had taken hold of them,³⁶ making wicked suggestions to them. He corrupted them and won them over by offering Ziyādat Allāh's wealth which was under his charge. He feared that the commander of the Faithful would confiscate it from him. Al-Mahdī had already appointed him director of the courier (*dīwān al-barīd*), and was charitable to him, while he paid him back by causing discord and plotting against him. (Al-Mahdī) was aware of the situation. One day while (Ibn al-Qadīm) was before him, al-Mahdī remarked that the conspirators were staying away from him. (Ibn al-Qadīm) said, "O my lord, if you wish, I can bring them before you." (Al-Mahdī) asked, "Are you able to do so?" He replied, "Yes, right away." He left and returned with them. Hence al-Mahdī knew that he was indeed with them and was one of their companions. They declared their innocence of what was being alleged about them and defended themselves from what had reached him concerning them. (Al-Mahdī) responded to them politely on this matter and dispatched some of their leaders to various provinces to disperse them; among them he dispatched Abū Zākī to Tripoli, whose governor was his paternal uncle Abū Yūsuf. When (Abū Zākī) arrived there, (al-Mahdī) wrote to (the governor) to execute him. Accordingly, Abū Yūsuf, his paternal uncle killed him in captivity and sent his head to al-Mahdī. Several conspirators were also executed in the provinces and in Raqqāda in various ways. Ibn al-Qadīm fled and went into hiding but was caught after a search and was executed.³⁷

In short, apparently the conspirators could not make up their minds to strike. Perhaps the fault for this lay in Abū 'Abdallāh's hesitation, or else they were not united among themselves regarding the identity of the future ruler. In this way al-Mahdī, who through a traitor—Ghazwiyya al-Malūsī—was receiving information on all the conspirator's moves, could prepare for a counterstroke. He removed several Kutāma chieftains from Raqqāda by conferring military commands upon them, and had them eliminated one by one by loyal followers. Notice of Abū Zākī's execution was immediately brought via messenger pigeon to Raqqāda, so that on that very same day – 18 February 911 – al-Mahdī was able to strike there as well.

35. *Ibid.*, para 280.

36. Abu'l-Qāsim 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad, well known as Ibn al-Qadīm, was a dignitary under the reign of Ziyādat Allāh. He administered the amīr's wealth and misappropriated his funds. He returned to Ifrīqiya and obtained pardon from al-Mahdī, who entrusted to him the directorship of land tax. See Hamid Haji, *Founding the Fatimid State*, p. 188, n. 333; *Ifitāḥ*, para 286.

37. *Ibid.*, para 286; English tr. by Hamid Haji, *Founding the Fatimid State*, 221. Those who are interested in details and other sources should consult the footnotes in the Arabic text as well as in the English tr. "Assassination of the chief *dā'ī*, his brother and other chieftains," as stated by Halm, is collaborated with other Sunnī sources. Among the most recent Arabic sources is Farḥāt Dashrāwī, *al-Khilāfa al-Fāṭimīyya bi'l-Maghrib: al-tārīkh al-siyāsī wa'l-mu'assasāt*, Arabic tr. by Ḥammādī al-Sāhilī (Beirut: Dār al-gharb al-Islāmī, 1994), pp. 185-91; originally it was published in French, Farhat Dachraoui, *Le Caliphate Fatimide au Maghreb (296-365 A.H./909-975 A.D.)*; *Histoire politique et Institutions* tr. by Muḥammad Suhayl Ṭaqqūsh, *Tārīkh al-Fāṭimīyyīn fī Shamālī Ifrīqiya wa-Miṣr wa-bilād al-Shām* (Beirut: Dār al-naf'is, 2001), pp. 82-85.

Toward midday Abū 'Abdallāh and his brother Abu'l-'Abbās went, as usual, to dine with al-Mahdī in his palace. Behind the patio-palace the traitor Ghazwiyya lurked in ambush with several Kutāma warriors, and when the two *dā'īs* approached, they were attacked at the edge of the artificial lake. Abū 'Abdallāh called out to Ghazwiyya: "Don't do it, my son!" But he replied, "I kill you at the command of him who you yourself commanded [us] to obey!" Abū 'Abdallāh was struck down with several blows of the lance; his brother fell with nineteen wounds. The corpses lay where they were until after the midday prayer; then they were buried in the garden. Al-Mahdī bade farewell to the man who had brought him to the caliphal throne, with the words: "May God have mercy on you, Abū 'Abdallāh and reward you in the next world for your earlier efforts! But may he not have mercy on you, Abu'l-'Abbās, for you have brought him away from the right way, and led him into corruption!"³⁸ and he cited verses from the Qur'ān: *Whoever is blind to remembrance of the Merciful, We assign to him a tsatan who is his comrade. They will indeed turn them aside from the way, though they reckon that they are being guided aright.*³⁹

Finally, let me add that in her book *Between Revolution and State: The Path to Fatimid Statehood*, Sumaiya Hamdani opines totally out of context and without any tangible evidence that the 'ahd document would certainly be meaningful if interpreted in favor of Jawhar [al-Ṣiqillī], the famous commander of Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh who after consolidation of the Fāṭimid rule in North Africa conquered Egypt and founded the city of Cairo.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, she misses various relevant observations made by previous scholars, particularly that the *Dā'ā'im* was composed around the year 349/960,⁴¹ while the 'ahd document existed independently for half a century earlier. Certainly, the 'ahd of 'Alī was not composed by al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān when he compiled the *Da'ā'im* to be interpreted – like the *Ismā'īl ta'wīl* – in favor of al-Qā'id Jawhar. Certainly, it was incorporated by al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān under the influence of his master al-Mu'izz for some ulterior purpose and placed out of context. Her interpretation is simply outlandish.

Conclusion

The power struggle between the Mahdī and the chief *dā'ī* Abū 'Abdallāh al-Shī'ī as described above is well documented both in the *Ismā'īlī* and non-*Ismā'īlī* sources. In my modest view this case of power struggle was not a simple bickering between the two powerful antagonists but was a fundamental clash between the two commanding institutions for political power and control of the central authority: the *da'wa* organization – established long before the Mahdī's birth – on one hand and the newly installed Mahdī (at the head of a newly created state) on the other hand. In reality it was the *da'wa* organization, headed by the chief *dā'ī* and his hard work for sixteen years among the Kutāma tribe that had paved the way to establish the Fāṭimid state. The *da'wa* had declared the advent of the awaited Mahdī – a messianic figure

38. See also Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Iftitāh*, para 286.

39. *The Qur'ān*, p. 451; (Qur'an 43:36-37).

40. Sumaiya Hamdani, *Between Revolution and State: The Path to Fatimid Statehood* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2006), pp. 125-30.

41. Ismail Poonawala, *The Sound Traditions: Studies in Ismaili Texts and Thought*, ed. Kumail Rajani (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 411-12.

who would usher a new era and will “fill the earth with justice, equity and righteousness.” Very soon his luxurious life style and demeanor rubbed the wrong way not only on the chief *dā'ī* but also the Kutāma chieftains. Since they had certain expectations from the Mahdī they were totally disappointed with him and openly expressed their displeasure and doubts as to whether he was the real Mahdī as promised by the chief *dā'ī* or an imposter. The disgruntled group that included the chief *dā'ī* and his prominent supporters gathered together and debated the issue and how to get rid of the imposter. But due to the chief *dā'ī*'s hesitation to act decisively, or that his supporters were not united on their plan for action, the Mahdī was able buy time and plot in a Machiavellian way to eliminate his leading opponents one by one.

Thus, the entire *da'wa* organization was decimated and the Mahdī became the sole autocratic ruler. In some aspects what happened to Abū Abdallāh resembles as to what happened to Abū Salama and Abū Muslim Khurāsānī at the hands of the 'Abbasid rulers al-Saffāh and al-Manşūr. But here the case is somewhat different. With the assassination of the chief *dā'ī*, his elder brother Abu'l-'Abbās and the entire cadre of the upper hierarchy of the *da'wa*, the ideals and the promises of the *da'wa* were never fulfilled. Since those very leaders perished one cannot speculate what measures they might have taken even to fulfil partial expectations after the advent of the Mahdī. We know that the hopes of a utopia is one thing, but its realization is all together quite different. Let me state what Douglas Crow has observed in his article on Islamic Messianism that a successful messianic movement passes through three progressive phases: i) initially, an intensive propaganda as an underground movement for a form of Islamic revival aimed at winning support among the discontented and deprived segments of the society; ii) with increasing adherents and the formation of a military organization it undertakes the propaganda of its claims and military ventures; and finally, iii) the emergence of a territorial state whose theocratic association (or one might call “messianic expectations”) gradually fade away or become obsolete.⁴²

My point is that the ensuing Fāṭimid dynasty and its rulers behaved very much like any other dynastic sovereigns. Of course, the old *da'wa* organization was reinstated but it was totally subservient to the imām-caliph and it was used as a religious tool in the hands of the royal power. It never encouraged free debate among the *du'āt*, hence the vitality was sapped. The revolutionary ideology was replaced by more and more emphasize on *ta'wīl* (hermeneutics) as an instrument to reveal the *bāṭin* (the inner, true meaning of the Qur'ān and the *sharī'a*) to obtain one's salvation.

Finally, in hindsight let me add a few words about the Mahdī's character as revealed by his earlier actions. He was born around 259 or 260/873 e 874 in Salamiyya, Syria, and his real name was Sa'īd b. al-Ḥusayn. In 286/899 he succeeded his uncle Abu'l-Shalaghlagh who died childless as the next Ismā'īlī imām during the period of *satr* (concealment). It was in the same year that he openly asserted that he is the (promised) Mahdī which caused a schism in the Ismā'īlī movement whereby the Irāqī group with its chief *dā'ī* Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ seceded and became known as the Qarāmiṭa. Once again when he was in Egypt after his flight from Salamiyya, he changed

42. See Douglas S. Crow, “Islamic Messianism,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 9:477-81.

the original plan to proceed to the Yemen. Rather, he decided to head for North Africa to the disappointment his companions. Without going into the details, the chief *dā'ī* Fayrūz was so much disturbed that he decamped and set off for the Yemen on his own. Fayrūz's son-in-law, another important *dā'ī*, wanted to accompany the Mahdī but he was asked to remain in Egypt.⁴³ Al-Mahdī's behavior in Raqqāda soon after his inauguration ceremony was therefore not a surprise but was quite predictable.

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43. I don't want to touch as to what happened in the Yemen as all the efforts of the *da'wa* was ruined. For details see Ḥusayn F. al-Hamdānī, *al-Ṣulayḥiyyūn wa'l-ḥaraka al-Fāṭimiyya fi'l-Yaman* (Cairo: Maktabat Miṣr, 1955.)

