



AḤMAD B. 'ABDALLĀH

AḤMAD B. 'ABDALLĀH B. MAYMŪN AL-QADDĀḤ (3rd/9th century), son of the supposed founder of Isma'ili doctrine (see 'Abdallāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ) and grandfather of the first Fatimid caliph, Maḥdī. Anti-Isma'ili writers assert his descent from the alleged heretic "Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ," but this claim is as unhistorical as the official Fatimid account that he was a grandson of Moḥammad b. Esmā'īl b. Ja'far al-Šādeq. Aḥmad's place in Fatimid genealogy is indicated by a letter of Maḥdī to the Isma'ilis of Yemen (H. F. Hamdani, *On the Genealogy of Fatimid Caliphs*, Cairo, 1958, Arabic text, p. 11, bottom) and by the account of Aḳū Moḥsen (cited in Ebn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-dorar*, ed. Š. al-Monaḳḳed, VI, Cairo, 1961, pp. 17ff.; Maqrīzī, *Ette'āz al-ḥonafā'*, ed. J. Šayyāl, I, Cairo, 1387/1967, pp. 22ff.; cf. *Fehrest* [Tehran¹], p. 238).

Little is known of Aḥmad's life. He succeeded his father as second head (*hojja*) of the Isma'ili mission (*da'wa*) and, like him, lived as a merchant in Salamīya in Syria. In 261/874-75 (according to Ebn al-Nadīm) or 264/877-78 (Aḳū Moḥsen) he sent the missionary (*dā'ī*) Ḥosayn Ahwāzī to the district (*sawād*) of Kūfa. The latter converted Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ and founded the "Qarmatian" sect of Iraq (Ebn al-Dawādārī, op. cit., VI, pp. 19, 46). The dispatch of the *dā'īs* Ebn Ḥawšab Maṣšūr al-Yaman and 'Alī b. al-Faẓl to Yemen in 267/881 may have occurred already in his lifetime (Qāzī No'mān, *Eftetāḥ al-da'wa*, ed. W. al-Qāzī, Beirut, 1970, pp. 39, 44). Aḳū Moḥsen claimed that Aḥmad also directed Abū 'Abdallāh Šī'ī to the Maḡreb in 279/892-93 and so laid the foundation for later Fatimid power there (Ebn al-Dawādārī, op. cit., VI, p. 20).

Fatimid tradition reports secret journeys of Aḥmad to Kūfa and Daylam or to



'Askar Mokram in Kūzestān, his father's home (Edrīs, *'Oyūn al-aḵbār*, ed. M. Ġāleb, IV, Beirut, 1973, p. 394). It also makes him the author of the *Rasā'el eḵwān al-ṣafā'* (ibid., IV, pp. 367ff.), although these texts evidently were first received by the Isma'īlis in the 5th/11th century. Aḥmad died at an unknown date in Salamīya; his son Moḥammad Abu'l-Šala'la', uncle of the later caliph Mahdī, succeeded him as director of the *da'wa*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Given in the text.