



'ALĀ'-AL-DĪN MOḤAMMAD

'ALĀ'-AL-DĪN MOḤAMMAD B. JALĀL-AL-DĪN ḤASAN, chief of the Isma'ilis of Alamūt (d. 653/1255). When 'Alā'-al-dīn succeeded his father in Ramaẓān, 618/November, 1221, at the age of nine, at first Jalāl-al-dīn's vizier remained as effective ruler of Alamūt, continuing the policy of accommodation with the 'Abbasid caliphate and with Sunni Islam. There was however some reaction against this policy; the observance of the *šarī'a* was no longer enforced, and even, according to some historians, actively discouraged in the Isma'ili possessions. Persian historians attribute this change to the new imam, whom they accuse of general incompetence. Be this as it may, there were still capable leaders to direct the affairs of the Isma'ili realm and sect, and 'Alā'-al-dīn's reign was a period of both intellectual and political activity. The great library of Alamūt attracted many scholars and scientists, among them K̄vāja Naṣīr-al-dīn Ṭūsī. During 'Alā'-al-dīn's early years, the breakup of the Khwarazmian empire and the resulting interregnum gave the Isma'ilis the opportunity to extend their power. An agreement patched up with the K̄vārazmšāh proved ineffective, and bickering between them continued for many years, enlivened from time to time by warfare, assassination, and negotiation. Meanwhile the Isma'ilis maintained friendly relations with the Khwarazmians' two main adversaries in west and east—the caliph and the Mongols. Nearer home, the Isma'ilis came into conflict with the rulers of Gīlān, and acquired some territory at their expense. In contrast, their relations with their old enemies in Qazvīn were on the whole peaceful, and 'Alā'-al-dīn even became the disciple of a shaikh in Qazvīn to whom he is said to have sent a yearly grant of 500 dinars. During 'Alā'-al-dīn's last years the Mongol advance in the east brought



the Isma'ilis nearer to the final confrontation with their most dangerous enemy. This period, however, also saw a major Isma'ili success—the implanting of the Nezārī “New Preaching” in India, which ultimately became the main center of the sect. Jovaynī and other Persian Sunni historians paint a dark picture of 'Alā'-al-dīn, whom they depict as a drunken degenerate, subject to fits of melancholia and madness. During his last years he came into conflict with his eldest son, Rokn-al-dīn K̄voršāh, whom he had nominated as his heir to the Imamate, and then tried unsuccessfully to set aside in favor of another son. 'Alā'-al-dīn was murdered, allegedly by one of his followers, on 29 Šawwāl 653/1 December 1255 and was succeeded by his son Rokn-al-dīn.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Jovaynī, pp. 249-67; tr. Boyle, pp. 703-17.

Rašid-al-dīn, *Jāme' al-tawārīk: qesmat-e Esmā'īlyān*, ed. M. T. Dānešpažūh and M. Modarresi Zanjānī, Tehran, 1338 Š./1959, pp. 178-84.

Kāšānī, *Tārīk-e Esmā'īliya*, ed. M. T. Dānešpažūh, Tabrīz, 1343 Š./1964, pp. 201-06.

MoḤammad Nasavī, *Tārīk-e Jalāl-al-dīn (Histoire du Sultan Djelal ed-Din Mankobirti)*, ed. O. Houdas, Paris, 1891, Arabic text pp. 132-34, 214-15, French tr. pp. 220-23, 358-59; Persian tr. ed. M. Mīnovī, *Sīrat-e Jalāl-al-dīn*, Tehran, 1965, pp. 163-66, 232-33.

Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt* I, pp. 182-83; tr. Raverty, II, pp. 1197-98.

M. G. S. Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins*, The Hague, 1955.

B. Lewis, *The Assassins*, London, 1967.