



DEYLAMITES

DEYLAMITES, people inhabiting a shifting region in northern Persia and adjacent territories, including the Deylamān uplands.

i. In the Pre-Islamic period.

ii. In the Islamic period.

i. IN THE PRE-ISLAMIC PERIOD

In antiquity the Deylamites (Gk. Dolomítai and variants) were mountain tribes, usually identified by 10th-century Arab geographers with the inhabitants of Deylam, the highlands of Gīlān. A considerably broader distribution extending as far as southern Armenia and the Caucasus can be deduced, however (Minorsky, p. 193).

The earliest mention of the Deylamites occurs in Polybius' universal history, of the late 2nd century B.C.E. (5.44.9), in which, in the description of Media, Greek *Delymaíoi is to be read in place of geographically impossible Elymaíoi (i.e., Susiana), as the tribes named immediate after them (Anariákai, Kadoúsioi, Matíanoi) were all in the north. It is also possible that the "Elymaioi" mentioned by Plutarch (*Pompey* 36.2; 1st century B.C.E.) with the Medes were actually Deylamites. In the later 2nd century C.E. Ptolemy (6.2) listed



*Delymaís as a place in northern Choromithrene, which was located southeast of Ray and west of the Tapuroi (i.e., Ṭabarestān). There, too, the toponym was corrupted to Elymaís (Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, p. 126 n. 1).

In the Pahlavi *Kār-nāmag* (tr., p. 47) it is recorded that in the final years of the crumbling Parthian empire Artabanus V (or IV) mobilized all the troops from Ray, Damāvand, Deylamān, and Patešk̄vārgar, evidence that the region south of the Alborz was inhabited by Deylamites. More precisely in the *Nāma-ye Tansar* (tr., p. 30) it is stated that Deylamān, Gilān, and Rūyān (later part of Ṭabarestān) all belonged to the kingdom of Gošnasp of Ṭabarestān and Parešvār, the latter apparently the Alborz region. Gošnasp made his submission to Ardašīr I (224-70) only after thorough consideration and kept his realm by the guarantee of Ardašīr himself. The dynasty was still ruling there in the time of Pērōz I (459-84; cf. Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 99-100). Kavād I (488-531) appointed his eldest son, Qābūs (Kāōs), king of Ṭabarestān (*Nāma-ye Tansar*, tr., p. 70; Ebn Esfandiār, tr. Browne, pp. 92-94). Toward the end of his reign (while the Roman emperor Justin I [d. 527] was still alive), Kavād dispatched Būya (Gk. Bóēs), “bearing the title *wahriz*” (Gk. *ouarízēs*), against King Gurgēn of Iberia (Procopius, *De Bello Persico* 1.12.10). That Būya had come from Deylam can be deduced from a tradition according to which the *wahriz* (i.e., Ḳorraẓād b. Narsē b. Jāmāsp) who conquered Yemen during the reign of Ḳosrow I (531-79), in about 570, had formerly been governor of Deylam (Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 260; Ḥamza, p. 138). The troops of the *wahriz* also included Deylamites (Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, p. 167). Procopius (*De Bello Gothico* 4.14.5-7, 4.14.9) reported, from a western point of view, on the Dolomītai at the siege of Archeopolis in the disputed territory of Lazica during the reign of Ḳosrow I (about 552): They were independent allies of the Persians, living in inaccessible mountains in the heart of Persia (i.e., Media) and fighting as infantrymen, each armed with sword, shield, and three javelins and accustomed to warfare on mountainous terrain. Some time later, according to Agathias (3.17.6-9, 3.17.18-22), the Dilimnītai, “the largest tribe of those dwelling on this side of the river Tigris in the region of Persis” (i.e., in central Persia, or Media), undertook a fruitless attack against the Hunnic Sabirs, who were in the service of the Romans, and vainly charged the fortress of Phasis in Colchis. Agathias characterized them as very warlike and independent allies of the Persians, skillful warriors in close combat or at a distance, using sword, pike, and sling. In a fragment from Theophanes (preserved in Photius, *Bibliotheca* 64) it is related that in the battles between Persians and Romans during the reign of Justin II (565-78), which broke out in



572, the Deylamites (Gk. *tò Dilmainòn éthnos*) joined forces with the Persians and the Sabirs. When power passed from Ohrmazd IV (579-90), to whom the Deylamites had submitted, to Ƙosrow II in 590 a certain Zoarab, leader of the Deylamites, rose up against the latter and joined the party of [Bahrām VI Čōbīn](#) (590-91; Theophylact Simocatta, 4.4.17, 4.3.1). When Bahrām Čōbīn's rising failed the Deylamites joined the rebellion of Beṣṭām (see [BESTĀMÚ O BENDOY](#)), a maternal uncle of Ƙosrow II (probably 592-95; cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, p. 486). After the fall of Beṣṭām the *šahr-wahriz* (i.e., governor of Deylam) fought against the remnants of his army, consisting of Deylamites and Armenians, in alliance with Smbat Bagratuni, *marzbān* (margrave) of Gorgān (Sebeos, tr., pp. 43-46). Incidentally it was reported (Balāḍorī, *Fotūhá*, p. 282) that Ƙosrow II had a personal guard of 4,000 Deylamites. When the Arabs conquered Persia the Deylamites remained virtually unsubdued, ruled by their own dynasty until the 9th century (cf. Minorsky, p. 190; Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, p. 127; see ii, below).

Christianity entered Deylam fairly early; in 554 there was a diocese of Āmol and Gīlān (Chabot, pp. 109, 366). The religion obviously survived for a long time in these iunaccessible regions: The Nestorian patriarch Timothy I (780-823) elevated both Gīlān and Deylam to the status of metropolis (Thomas of Marga, I, pp. 252-53; II, pp. 467-68), though evidence from a letter of the patriarch suggests this separate status was limited to the years 795-98 (cf. Braun). These arrangements were, in fact, not stable; in about 893 Elias, metropolitan of Damascus, mentioned only Media (=Ray) as a metropolis, and the lists compiled by Ebn al-Ṭayyeb (d. 1043) and 'Abdīšō', metropolitan of Nisibis (d. 1318), are silent about them (Sachau, pp. 21 ff.). The metropolis of Deylam does, however, reappear in the lists given by the early 14th-century historians of the Nestorian patriarchs, 'Amr b. Maṭṭā and slightly earlier Salibhā b. Yūḥannā (*Maris Amri et Slibae*, pp. 126, 132). It seems that remnants of Christianity must have survived up to that time.

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(WOLFGANG FELIX)

ii. IN THE ISLAMIC PERIOD

In the early Islamic centuries the Deylamites lived in the [Alborz](#) mountains and along the shore of the [Caspian](#) north of Qazvīn, between Gīlān in the west and Ṭabarestān (Māzandarān) in the east. Whatever their actual origins, at that time they and their Gilite neighbors were commonly considered closely related and frequently mentioned together. It was claimed that the two peoples were descended from two brothers, Deylam and Gīl, of the Arab tribe Banū Ḍabba; this legend of the Arab origins of the Deylamites seems to have been known already at the time of the early expansion of Islam (see Ṭabarī, I, pp. 1992, 2352; III, p. 2367). Deylamites were certainly known among Arabs from the time of the Persian conquest of Yemen in about 570, and during the early days of Islam the Deylamites Fīrūz and Gošnasp (Jošnas) played a leading



role among the Persian *Abnā'*, backing the new religion in Yemen. Fīrūz Deylamī's family emigrated to Palestine and Syria, where several of his descendants became well-known Muslim traditionists. Deylamites may also have participated in raids in northern Arabia. Abū Dolaf b. Mohalhel (sec. 25; Yāqūt, *Boldān*, s.v. Deylamestān) mentioned a place called Deylamestān, located 7 farsangs from Šahrazūr, where in pre-Islamic times Deylamites used to camp while they carried out their raids into the lowlands of Mesopotamia.

Whatever the original language of the Deylamites may have been, in the Islamic period they spoke a northwestern Iranian dialect very similar to the language of the Gilites. Apart from other characteristics of northwestern Iranian, the guttural pronunciation of *h* as *k*, noted as Gilite by Maqdesī (Moqaddasī, p. 368; e.g., both *Ḳošam* and *Hawsam*, *Ḳašūya* and *Hašūya*), and an *ī* sound added between consonants and *ā* (*Lāhījān*=*Līāhījān*, *Došmanzār*=*Došmanziār*, *Amīrkā*=*Amīrkīā*, presumably pronounced *Lyāhījān*, *Došmanzyār*, and *Amīrkyā* respectively) were probably characteristic of Deylamite, as well as of Gilite. The question whether or not the report by Eṣṭakrī (p. 205) about a tribe in the Deylamite highlands that spoke a language different from Deylamite and Gilite and a similar report by Abū Eshāq Šābī about a tribe in the region of Rašt (Madelung, 1987, pp. 14-15) attest the survival of a non-Iranian language among them must be left open.

In the first Islamic centuries. During the early centuries of Islam the Deylamites successfully resisted frequent Arab efforts to conquer their land. Some Deylamite mercenaries seem, however, to have joined the Arabs even before the battle of Qādesīya (16/637) and afterward accepted Islam (Ṭabarī, I, pp. 2340-41). Sayf b. 'Omar reported a battle at Vājrūd in the year 18/639 in which the Arabs under No'aym b. Moqarren defeated the Deylamites and killed their leader Mūtā (Ṭabarī, I, pp. 2650-53). Qazvīn surrendered to Barā' b. 'Āzeb, governor of Ray, in 24/645 and continued to function as a fortified border town against the Deylamites, as it had in the Sasanian period. Its garrison converted to Islam, and a group settled in Kūfa, where it was known as the Ḥamrā' of Deylam, presumably because its members were largely of Deylamite extraction. In Hadiths ascribed to the Prophet Moḥammad Qazvīn was praised as a border fortress, its martyrs equal in merit to the martyrs of the battle of Badr (Ebn al-Faqīh, p. 283). The Deylamites were commonly described, together with the Turks, as the most barbarous and odious enemies of the Muslims (Ṭabarī, II, pp. 285, 320, 722, 748, 1391), against whom religious war (*jehād*) was most meritorious.



In the historical sources numerous Muslim raids on Deylamān are mentioned summarily, but little detailed information is offered. Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, the Omayyad governor in Iraq (73-95/694-714), seems to have been particularly eager to subdue the stubborn enemy and is reported to have had a detailed map of their country prepared for himself. Eventually he sent his son Moḥammad to invade the land. The campaign ended in failure, however, and instead Moḥammad built a mosque in Qazvīn (Ebn al-Faqīh, p. 283). The Dabuyid *esphabads* of Ṭabarestān (see [DABUYIDS](#)) continued to claim suzerainty over the Deylamites and Gilites until the Muslim conquest of Ṭabarestān in 144/761. They maintained the border fortifications along the Čālūs river to guard against Deylamite incursions. Both Deylamites and Gilites, however, repeatedly aided the *esphabads* against Muslim invaders of Ṭabarestān, especially during the campaign of Yazīd b. Mohallab in 98/716-17, during which Yazīd sent his *mawlā* Ḥayyān Nabaṭī, of Deylamite origin and leader of the non-Arab client troops in Khorasan, as envoy to deceive the *esphabad*, in order to extricate himself from a dangerous situation (Balāḍorī, *Fotūh*, p. 339; Ebn Esfandiār, I, p. 163; Ṭabarī, II, pp. 1291, 1329).

In 144/761 ‘Omar b. ‘Alā’ conquered the territory as far as Rūyān, which was not considered part of Ṭabarestān and had in earlier times been Deylamite. The border town and district from which the Muslims raided Deylamān was Mozn, where a group of Deylamites seeking Muslim protection (*mosta’mena*) were settled (Ebn al-Faqīh, pp. 304-07). In 201/816-17 ‘Abd-Āllāh b. Ḳordāḍbeh conquered the Deylamite regions of Lārez and Šerrez for Islam (Ṭabarī, III, pp. 1014-15). This conquest does not, however, seem to have been permanent.

It was most likely after the Muslim conquest of Ṭabarestān that the dynasty of Deylamite kings known as Jostanids rose to power. They are first mentioned in the sources around 176/792, when the ‘Alid rebel Yaḥyā b. ‘Abd-Allāh found refuge with one of them, perhaps the presumed founder of the dynasty, Jostān. In 189/805 the caliph Hārūn-al-Rašīd (170-93/786-809) received the visit of Marzobān b. Jostān in Ray. The history of the dynasty can be traced until the first half of the 11th century, but the extent of its authority outside its own tribe is uncertain. The Jostanid seat of power was in Rūḍbār, a side valley of the Šāhrūd basin (not the Rūḍbār of the Safīdrūd near Manjīl), where one dynast is reported to have built the fortress of [Alamūt](#) in 346/860-01.

Little is known about the religion of the Deylamites in this period. There may have been a few Christians and Zoroastrians among them, but the bulk were pagans. According to Bīrūnī (*Āṭār al-bāqīa*, p. 224), the Deylamites and Gilites



lived by the rule laid down by the mythical Afrīdūn, according to which men were the absolute masters in their families. The Zaydī imam Nāṣer le'l-Ḥaqq broke up this order, evidently when he imposed the laws of Islam on his converts (see below). Bīrūnī added caustically that this change rather led to a return of the devils and demons (*marada*) to dominate their houses, suggesting that the Zaydī converts of Nāṣer remained pagan at heart. Zaydī Islam began to spread from Rūyān into Deylamān during the lifetime of the Zaydī imam Qāsem b. Ebrāhīm Rassī (d. 246/860). When the 'Alid Ḥasan b. Zayd established Zaydī rule in Ṭabarestān in 250/864, Zaydī Deylamites became his most effective, if not always reliable, warrior supporters. The Zaydī doctrine spreading among the Deylamites at that stage was that of Qāsem, whose followers were later known as the Qāsemīya. After the overthrow of Ḥasan b. Zayd's brother Moḥammad in Ṭabarestān in 287/900 the 'Alid Ḥasan b. 'Alī Otrūš Nāṣer le'l-Ḥaqq became active in summoning the population to Islam in the village of Kaylākejān (Gīlākjān) among the more western Deylamites and in Hawsam (modern Rūdsar) among the Gilites. All Deylamites and Gilites east of the Safīdrūd were converted. His doctrine differed from that of Qāsem, and its adherents became known as the Nāṣerīya.

The Deylamite expansion. As Nāṣer le'l-Ḥaqq gradually widened his support among the Deylamites and Gilites, he compelled an oath of allegiance from the Jostanid king Jostān b. Vahsūdān. In 301/914 his followers inflicted a crushing defeat on a Samanid army on the river Būrrūd west of Čālūs, and he was able to restore the Zaydī 'Alid reign in Ṭabarestān with solid backing from the Deylamites and Gilites, who now, under their tribal leaders, erupted en masse from confinement in their homeland. After Nāṣer's death in 304/917 Nāṣerī Deylamites and Gilites for centuries made pilgrimage to his tomb in Āmol and remained deeply attached to his descendants, preferring them as candidates for the Zaydī imamate.

Nāṣer's successor, Ḥasan b. Qāsem Dā'ī, quickly came into conflict with the Deylamites, partly because of their loyalty to the house of Nāṣer and partly because he sided with the civil population of Ṭabarestān against the often unruly and overbearing Deylamite warriors. In 309/921, after an abortive attempt to conquer Khorasan and a conspiracy of Deylamite and Gilite leaders to kill Dā'ī, the latter murdered seven of them in Gorgān, provoking widespread disaffection. Many rebels joined the Samanids, and one of them, the Gilite Mardāvīj b. Zīār, eventually killed Dā'ī in battle, in 316/928, in revenge for his uncle, king of the Gilites.



As the Zaydī ‘Alid reign in Ṭabarestān collapsed, various Deylamite and Gilite leaders, with their personal followers, sought their fortunes either as mercenaries or by trying to establish independent principalities wherever conditions were propitious. At first the Deylamites Mākān b. Kākī and Asfār b. Šīrūya were the chief rivals. The latter began by serving the Samanids, then established himself as ruler over Ray, Qazvīn, Zanjān, Abhar, Qom, and Karaj. In 319/931 he was seized and killed by his former follower Mardāvīj, founder of the Ziyarid dynasty. Mardāvīj quickly captured Hamadān, Dīnavar, and Isfahan from the caliph’s governors and wrested Ṭabarestān and Gorgān from Mākān. Threatened by the revolt of his vassal ‘Alī b. Būya, founder of the Buyid dynasty (see [BUYIDS](#)), in Karaj, he moved south in 322/932, seized Kūzestān, and extracted recognition of his suzerainty from ‘Alī, who was in control of Shiraz and Fārs. Mardāvīj made plans for the conquest of Iraq, hoping to overthrow the ‘Abbasid caliphate and to restore Persian kingship, crowning himself with a crown shaped like that of Kōsrow Anūšīrvān (531-79). He was murdered by his Turkish troops in Isfahan, however. His plans reflected the strong attachment to Persian royal traditions among the Deylamites and Gilites in that period. Asfār had also intended for a time to crown himself Persian king and had set up a golden throne for himself in Ray. It fell to the Buyids, however, to realize some of these ambitions.

As a result of the murder of Mardāvīj all the southern territories were lost to his brother and successor, Vošmgīr. Ziyarid rule was thenceforth based in Gorgān and usually included Ṭabarestān. It lasted until the last quarter of the 11th century but was under Saljuq suzerainty after 433/1041.

The most successful actors in the Deylamite expansion were the Buyids. The ancestor of the house, Abū Šojā‘ Būya, was a fisherman from Līāhej, the later region of Lāhijān, who, together with his five sons, joined the army of Nāšer le’l-Ḥaqq. Three of his sons rose to royal power. ‘Alī ‘Emād-al-Dawla established his reign in Fārs in 322/934. With his backing, Ḥasan Rokn-al-Dawla first seized Isfahan in 323/935 and later, from 335/946, ruled Ray, while Aḥmad Mo‘ezz-al-Dawla, after invading Kermān in 324/936, seized southern Iraq and entered Baghdad, the seat of the ‘Abbasid caliphate, in 334/945. The long-term presence of three Buyid principalities led to a massive migration of Deylamites to each of them, where they were provided with military fiefs, especially around Shiraz in Fārs, in Mesopotamia south of Baghdad, and in the region of Ray. ‘Alī ‘Emād-al-Dawla retained the supreme leadership among the Buyid amirs. In 325/937 he ascended a throne in Shiraz and adopted the title



šāhanšāh, partly as a claim to legitimacy independent of the caliphate, partly as an appeal to Persian national sentiments among the population in Fārs and among the Deylamites and Gilites, and partly as an assertion of supremacy over his brothers, who ruled in their own domains. While thus adopting the traditional title of Persian royalty, the Buyids also promoted the ideology of a reign of the Deylamites (*dawlat al-Deylam*) to replace the Arab reign of the ‘Abbasids and Qorayš. This ideology was reflected already in Ḥamza Eṣfahānī’s *Ta’rīkò*, written in 350/961, and was fully developed by ‘Emad-al-Dawla’s nephew and successor, ‘Azod-al-Dawla, the greatest of the Buyid rulers. ‘Azod-al-Dawla forced the ‘Abbasid caliph to recognize Buyid sovereignty unequivocally and to renounce all rights to interfere in intra-Buyid relations. He compelled Abū Eshāq Šābī to write *Ketāb al-tājī fī akbār al-dawla al-deylamīya* (now largely lost), glorifying the Deylamites and their reign. In it Abū Eshāq set forth, apparently for the first time, the Buyid claim to descent from the Sasanian king Bahrām Gūr (Bīrūnī, *Āṭār al-bāqīa*, p. 38). The weakness and continuous internal rivalries of the later Buyid rulers, however, gave the ‘Abbasid caliphs the opportunity to reassert their traditional role as sovereign arbitrators. A major weakness of Buyid rule was the fact that the Deylamites remained footsoldiers, so that from the beginning the Buyids were forced to employ Turkish horsemen in large numbers to balance their armies. Fighting between the two ethnic elements became endemic under the later Buyids. The Turkish element also quickly intruded into the ruling house. ‘Azod-al-Dawla himself was half Turkish, the son of a Turkish concubine, and some of the later Buyids had more Turkish than Deylamite blood. By 453/1062 Buyid rule had been overthrown by the Saljuq Turks.

The Deylamite expansion also reached northwest to Azarbaijan and beyond. There it was led by the Sallarid, Mosaferid, or Langarid (not Kangarid) dynasty, founded by Sal(l)ār b. Asvār, whose name was islamized and arabicized as Moḥammad b. Mosāfer. He was a son-in-law of Jostān b. Vahsūdān, and the Sallarid dynasty always remained closely connected with the Jostanid house through marriage ties and in rivalry for power over the Deylamites. Probably in the later 9th century Moḥammad b. Mosāfer took possession of the mountain stronghold of Šamīrān and from there gained control over Ṭārom (Ṭarm), the region extending along the middle course of the Safīdrūd before its confluence with the Šāhrūd. After Jostān b. Vahsūdān was murdered by his brother ‘Alī, who then entered ‘Abbasid service and was eventually appointed governor of Ray, Ebn Mosāfer avenged his death by killing ‘Alī in 307/919. He also killed ‘Alī’s brother Ḳosrow Fīrūz, who had



seized power in Rūdbār of Alamūt, but could not prevent the succession of the latter's son Mahdī Sīāhčašm, in Alamūt. While the Mosaferids gradually succeeded in gaining control of a large portion of the highlands of Deylamān, the Jostanids seem to have held on to Alamūt most of the time. Because of his extreme tyranny, in 330/942 Ebn Mosāfer was seized by his sons Vahsūdān and Marzobān, with the connivance of their mother, and imprisoned. Vahsūdān remained to rule Ṭārom, and in the same year Marzobān invaded Azarbaijan and expelled the Kurd Deysam, whose Deylamite troops mostly went over to their countrymen. Sallarid reign in Azarbaijan lasted until 373/973 and at times extended to parts of Armenia and the Muslim principalities in Trans-caucasia. In Ṭārom the dynasty continued to survive for some decades after accepting Saljuq overlordship in 434/1043-44.

Beside establishing their own principalities Deylamites came to serve as mercenaries in various established states. In the east the Samanids welcomed Deylamite adventurers as allies. In Egypt the Fatimid caliph al-ʿAzīz (365-86/975-96) was particularly fond of the Deylamite and Turkish elements in his army. The first such group arrived there in 368/978-79, led by the Turk Alptegin Šarābī, who had deserted from the army of the Buyid Moʿezz-al-Dawla. The Deylamites were settled by al-ʿAzīz in a special quarter of Cairo, west of the mosque of al-Azhar (Maqrīzī, I, pp. 74, 263, II, pp. 8, 10).

In that period Deylamān was a battleground of indigenous and foreign powers, each seeking to dominate. After the fall of the Zaydī state in Ṭabarestān, various Zaydī ʿAlids succeeded in establishing petty jurisdictions in towns in the Caspian coastal regions of Deylamān and eastern Gilān. Most important was Hawsam in Gilān, on the border of Deylamān, where Nāṣer le'l-Ḥaqq had been active and where the center of Nāṣerīya scholarship was located. In the highlands the Jostanids and Mosaferids were rivals for domination. The Jostanids tended to favor the Zaydīs and at times encouraged ʿAlid claimants to the imamate. The Mosaferids came under Ismaʿīli influence. Both Ziyarids and Buyids tried to exert influence in their former homelands by backing or opposing Zaydī ʿAlid pretenders.

Ismaʿīli Shiʿism spread among the initially Zaydī Deylamites from an early date, partly because of disenchantment with the conduct and quarrels among some of the ʿAlid leaders after the death of Nāṣer le'l-Ḥaqq. The Ismaʿīli *dāʿī* Abū Ḥātem Rāzī (d. 322/934) in particular gained many converts, among them Asfār, Mardāvīj, and the Jostanid Sīāhčašm, though their allegiance to the Ismaʿīli movement may have been superficial. Among the Sallarids both sons



of Moḥammad b. Mosāfer, Vahsūdān and Marzobān, as well as their vizier, Jaʿfar b. ʿAlī (formerly in the service of Yūsuf b. Abī'l-Sāj and [Daysam](#)), are known to have been active Ismaʿilis. Ebn Ḥawqal (p. 349) noted the presence of numerous Ismaʿilis in Azarbaijan under Marzobān in 344/955.

The Ismaʿilism of all these early converts was of the Qarmaṭī branch, recognizing Moḥammad b. Esmāʿil as the expected *mahdī* and rejecting the Fatimid imamate. Later Fatimid Ismaʿilism also spread among the Deylamites. The prominent Ismaʿili *dāʿī* Moʿayyad fi'l-Dīn Šīrāzī, whose father had been *dāʿī* in Fārs, succeeded in converting the Buyid ruler of Fārs [Abū Kālījār](#) and numerous Deylamites in his army before 438/1046. While still a *dāʿī* for the Fatimid caliph al-Mostaṣfer (427-87/1036-94) Ḥasan b. Šabbāḥ became active among the mountain Deylamites. In 483/1090 he seized the fortress of Alamūt from a Zaydī ʿAlid and made it his residence. After the death of al-Mostaṣfer Alamūt became the center of the Nezārī Ismaʿili movement and later the residence of the Nezārī imams. Other mountain fortresses in Deylamān, like Maymūndez, Lamasar, and Šamīrān, were seized and fortified later. While the Deylamite highlands came solidly under Nezārī Ismaʿili control Zaydī activity persisted, on a reduced scale, in the Deylamite and Gilite littoral, including Lāhījān.

The fall of Alamūt in 654/1256 and the destruction of the Nezārī castles by the Mongols did not put an end to Nezārī activity in the mountains of Deylamān. Alamūt was repeatedly recaptured and restored by them. In the second half of the 14th century Ḳodāvand Moḥammad, imam of the Moḥammadšāhī line, found wide support among the Ismaʿilis in Deylamān and eventually established himself in Alamūt. In the coastal regions Zaydī ʿAlids, both of the Qāsemīya and Nāṣerīya schools, remained active in competition with petty local lords. Few details are known about their history until the rise of the Amīr (Kār) Kīāʿī dynasty. Sayyed ʿAlī Kīā b. Amīr Kīā Malāṭī became lord of eastern Gilān in 769/1367-68, with the help of the Imami Shiʿite Marʿašī *sayyeds* (claiming descent from the Prophet Moḥammad) ruling Māzandarān, and gained formal recognition as imam by the Zaydī scholars of Lāhījān and Rānekūh. Ḳodāvand Moḥammad was expelled from Alamūt by ʿAlī Kīā. Although he was able to return once more after the latter's death, ʿAlī Kīā's son Rāzī Kīā (798-829/1395-1426) took definitive control over the highlands. The later rulers of the Amīr Kīāʿī dynasty were nominally Zaydī but reigned in Lāhījān on the basis of dynastic succession without claiming the imamate.

After the rise of the Safavids the Amīr Kīāʿī sultan Aḥmad Khan embraced



Imami Shi'ism in 933/1526-27, and the Zaydī community disintegrated over the course of the century. Nezārī Shi'ites were last mentioned in the highlands in the 16th century. As the former Deylamite territories were fully integrated into a Persian state for the first time in history, the inhabitants were mostly converted to Twelver Shi'ism, to which in former centuries a few Deylamites had been attracted. Administratively the former Deylamite territories became part of the province of Gīlān, and the population is considered Gilite. Only a small district south of Lāhījān is still called Deylamān.

(For cited works not found in this bibliography and abbreviations found here, see "Short References.") Abū Dolaf b. Mohalhel, *Resāla*, ed. V. Minorsky as *Abu Dulaf's Travels in Iran*, Cairo, 1954.

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