



EBN ḤAWŠAB, ABU'L-QĀSEM ḤASAN

EBN ḤAWŠAB, ABU'L-QĀSEM ḤASAN b. Faraj (or Farah) b. Ḥawšab b. Zādān Najjār Kūfī, known also as Manšūr al-Yaman (d. 302/914), Isma'ili *dā'ī* and founder of the Isma'ili community in northern Yemen. He came from the neighborhood of the Narses canal (Nahr Nars) in the countryside (*sawād*) of Kūfa south of present-day Ḥella in Iraq, where he was occupied as a linen weaver and manufacturer of *narsī* cloth. According to other sources, he was a carpenter or a joiner. His father was a Twelver Shi'ite. According to his own account, in his *Sīra*, Ebn Ḥawšab doubted that the Hidden Imam would return and was thus easily converted to Isma'ilism. The hidden Imam himself was supposed to have appeared to him while he was meditating on the banks of the Euphrates and summoned him. According to Ja'far Ḥājeb (Yamānī, p. 115), it was the *dā'ī* Fīrūz who completed his initiation, which must have taken place between 260/874 (the date of the *ḡayba*, or occultation, of the Hidden Imam) and 267/880.

After his education in Isma'ili teachings, Ebn Ḥawšab departed for Mecca with the pilgrim caravan from Qādesiyya; he was accompanied by a young Yemenite named 'Alī b. Faẓl, who had been won over to the *da'wa* in Karbalā'. From Mecca the two continued to Yemen, where Ebn Ḥawšab, disguised as a cotton merchant, first settled in Aden, while his companion went to the mountains as a hermit and *dā'ī*. Not until 270/883-84 "did the *da'wa* move forward," when Ebn Ḥawšab established himself in the territory of the clan of the Banū Mūsā



in Wādī Lā'a west of the Jabal Maswar massif; he captured several cities in the Jabal Maswar, including Bayt Fāyes, which became the *dār al-hejra*, or main center, of the cell of the *da'wa*, which was expanding militarily. The Ya'furid amirs of Ṣan'ā' were not in a position to stem the growing power of the *dā'ī*. In Ebn Ḥawšab's lifetime the Isma'ilis several times took Šebām and the mountain of Kawkabān; Ṣan'ā' itself was captured no fewer than five times.

In 279/893 Ebn Ḥawšab sent the Kufan Abū 'Abd-Allāh "Šī'i," who had been staying with him in Yemen for a year, as *dā'ī* to Mecca. There he met pilgrims from the Berber Kotāma, whom he attached to himself. That was the beginning of the Isma'ili *da'wa* in North Africa, which led in 297/909 to the foundation of the Fatimid caliphate. Ebn Ḥawšab dispatched *dā'īs* also to other lands; he sent Hayṭam, a relative, to Sind, from where the *da'wa* was extended to other regions of the Indian subcontinent. He also sent a certain Abū Zakarīyā Ṭamāmī (or Ḥamāmī) to Bahrain, where there was an important Persian community. At the time, the Isma'ilis of Bahrain developed close relations with the Isma'ili communities in southern Iraq, Kūzestān, and Fārs.

At the time of the schism in the Isma'ili community in 286/899 Ebn Ḥawšab had acknowledged as imam 'Abd-Allāh ('Obayd-Allāh) Fāṭemī, the future Fatimid caliph al-Mahdī, to whom he remained faithful to the end of his life. That choice ultimately brought him into conflict with his former companion Ebn Faḏl, who had been living as *dā'ī* and commander in the southern Yemeni city of Moḏayḵera since 292/904; he had, however, renounced the Fatimids. Ebn Faḏl led a force against Ebn Ḥawšab and besieged him for eight months in his *dār al-hejra* in the Jabal Maswar, but withdrew again after receiving some hostages. In the last year of his life Ebn Ḥawšab was occupied with his campaigns in northern Yemen. He died on 11 Jomādā I 302/2 December 914 ('Abbāsī, p. 402). His three sons were forced out of the leadership of the *da'wa* by the *dā'ī* Šāwerī. One of them, Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr Yaman, later lived at the Fatimid court in Maṣṣūrīya near Qayrawān in Efrīqīya. He seems to have brought his father's writings with him to the court. Ebn Ḥawšab is significant as the author of several treatises on secret Isma'ili teachings (e.g., *Ketāb al-rošd wa'l-hedāya*, *Ketāb al-'ālem wa'l-golām*). The main source on his life is his own *Sīra*, which was written either by himself or by his son; numerous fragments from it were cited by later authors (No'mān, Edrīs, Ebn Mālek Yamānī).



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ‘Alī b. Moḥammad ‘Alawī, *Sīrat al-hādī ela’l-Ḥaqq*, ed. S. Zakkār, Beirut, 1981.
- C. van Arendonk, *Les débuts de l’imamat zaidite au Yémen*, tr. J. Ryckmans, Leiden, 1960, pp. 119-26. 237-49.
- F. Daftari, *The Ismā‘īlīs. Their History and Doctrine*, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 92, 118-19, 131, 134, 179, 208.
- ‘Emād-al-Dīn Edrīs, *‘Oyūn al-aḳbār wa fonūn al-āṭār*, ed. M. Ġāleb, Beirut, 1975, IV, pp. 396-403; V, pp. 31-44.
- H. Halm, “Die *Sīrat Ibn Ḥaušab*. Die ismailitische *da‘wa* im Jemen und die Fatimiden,” *Die Welt des Orients* 12, 1981, pp. 107-35.
- Idem, *Das Reich des Mahdi. Der Aufstieg der Fatimiden (875-973)*, Munich, 1991.
- Ḥ. Hamadānī, *al-Ṣolayḥeyyūn*, Cairo, 1955, pp. 27-48.
- M. Jalālī Moqaddam, “Ebn-e Ḥawšab” in *DMBE* III, pp. 377-80.
- Abū ‘Abd-Allāh Bahā’-al-Dīn Yūsof Janadī, *Aḳbār al-Qarāmeṭa be’l Yaman...*, in H. C. Kay ed. and tr., *Yaman, Its Early Medieval History...*, London, 1892; text, pp. 139-52; tr. pp. 191-212.
- W. Madelung, “Manšūr al-Yaman” in *EI* ², pp. 438-39.
- I. K. Poonwala, *of Ismā‘īlī Literature*, Malibu, 1977, pp. 34, 74.
- M. S. Moḥammad Yamanī, “Sīra Ja‘far Ḥājeḅ,” *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Egypt University* 4, pt. 2, 1936, pp. 107-33; tr. in W. Ivanow, *Ismaili Tradition Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids*, London, 1942, pp. 184-223.
- Moḥammad b. Mālek Ḥammādī Yamānī, *Kašf asrār al-Bāṭenīya wa aḳbār al-Qarāmeṭa*, ed. M.-Z. Kawṭarī, Cairo, 1955.
- Qāzī No‘mān, *Resālat eḳtetāḥ al-da‘wa*, ed. W. Qāzī, Beirut, 1970, pp. 32-62; ed. F. Dašrāwī, Tunis, 1975, pp. 2-34.