



SARGODAŠTE-E SAYYEDNĀ

SARGODAŠTE-E SAYYEDNĀ (The life-story of our master), title of an anonymous Persian work containing the biography of Ḥasan-e Šabbāḥ (d. 518/1124), the founder of the Nezāri Ismaʿili state of Persia (see [ISMAʿILISM iii. ISMAʿILI HISTORY](#)) centered at the mountain fortress of Alamut. This biography (*sargodašt*), the first part of which might have been autobiographical, has not survived, but it was seen and paraphrased extensively by three Persian historians of the *Il-khanid* period, notably ʿAṭā-Malek Jovayni (d. 681/1283; see [JOVAYNI FAMILY](#)), Rašid-al-Din Fażl-Allāh (d. 718/1318; see [JĀMEʿ AL-TAWĀRIK](#)), and Abuʿl-Qāsem Kāšāni (d. ca. 738/1337), who had access to the *Sargodašt* and other Nezāri sources of the Alamut period, which are no longer extant. These historians produced accounts of the Ismaʿilis, and all three authorities name the *Sargodašt* as their main source for the life and career of Ḥasan-e Šabbāḥ, referred to as Sayyednā (our master) by the contemporary Nezāris (Jovayni, III, pp. 186-87; tr., II, p. 666; Rašid-al-Din, ed. Dānešpažuh and Modarresi, pp. 97, 134; ed. Rowšan, pp. 98, 131; Kāšāni, pp. 133, 168).

There are two short manuscripts (Pers. 162, and 177), each entitled *Sargodašt-e Sayyednā*, among the uncataloged Persian Ismaʿili manuscripts of [The Institute of Ismaili Studies](#) in London. These manuscripts, transcribed in India during the early years of the twentieth century, are late compilations based on unknown sources. They contain an admixture of highly anachronistic details, such as Ḥasan-e Šabbāḥ's meeting with the poet Nāšer-e Ḳosrow (d. some time between 465-71/1072-78; see [ISMAʿILISM xiii. ISMAʿILI LITERATURE IN](#)



PERSIAN AND ARABIC) in Cairo, as well as some of the events narrated by Jovayni and Rašid-al-Din in their fragmentary quotations from the original *Sargodašt-e Sayyednā* (see Ivanow, p. 157).

The *Sargodašt-e Sayyednā* marked the initiation of a Nezāri Isma‘ili historiographical tradition covering the career of Ḥasan-e Šabbāḥ and the reigns of his seven successors as the lords of Alamut (Daftary, 1992, pp. 91-97). However, the *Sargodašt* and all other Persian Nezāri chronicles compiled subsequently, and kept at the famous library of Alamut and other fortresses, perished in the course of the Mongol destruction of the Persian Nezāri fortresses in 654/1256 or soon afterwards during the Il-khanid period. Thus, the accounts of Jovayni, Rašid-al-Din, and Kāšāni, though hostile towards the Isma‘ilis to various degrees, represent our chief primary sources on Ḥasan-e Šabbāḥ and the history of the Nezāri Isma‘ili state, community, and *da‘wa* (see *DAI*) in Persia during the Alamut period (483-654/1090-1256).

‘Aṭā-Malek Jovayni was the earliest of three Persian historians who had direct access to the *Sargodašt* and other Nezāri chronicles kept at Alamut. Jovayni, who was in the service of the Mongols when they converged on Alamut, relates how, with Hülegü’s permission, he examined the library at Alamut and selected rare and precious books (*mašāḥef wa nafāyes-e kotob*) from its collections of manuscripts, including the *Sargodašt-e sayyednā*, before the library was consigned to the flames (Jovayni, III, pp. 186-87, tr. Boyle, II, p. 666). Jovayni composed his account of the Isma‘ilis soon after the fall of Alamut in 654/1256, adding it to the end of his *Tāriḳ-e jahāngošā*. Rašid-al-Din Faḏl-Allāh was the second Persian historian who had independent access to the *Sargodašt* and other Nezāri chronicles as well as to Jovayni’s work. Rašid-al-Din quotes more extensively than Jovayni from the *Sargodašt* and is also less hostile towards the Isma‘ilis than his predecessor. Kāšāni, who was associated with the compilation of Rašid-al-Din’s *Jāme‘ al-tawāriḳ*, included a section on the Isma‘ilis in his own general history, *Zobdat al-tawāriḳ*. Kāšāni’s history of Ḥasan-e Šabbāḥ and the Persian Nezāris is very similar to Rašid-al-Din’s account and is closely related to it. Kāšāni, however, mentions details from the *Sargodašt* and other Nezāri sources, which are missing in both Rašid-al-Din and Jovayni (Daftary, 2007, pp. 303-7).

The fragmentary evidence extracted by our three Persian historians from the *Sargodašt*, indeed, constitutes our main source of information on Ḥasan-e Šabbāḥ, the revolutionary-preacher who founded an Isma‘ili Shi‘ite state within the Sunni Saljuq empire, as well as the independent Nezāri branch of



the Isma'ili *da'wa* (see Jovayni, III, pp. 186-216; tr. Boyle, II, pp. 666-83; Rašid-al-Din, ed. Dānešpažuh and Modarresi, pp. 97-134; ed. Rowšan, pp. 98-131; Kāšāni, pp. 133-68). Later Persian historians, such as Ḥāfez-e Abru (d. 833/1430), based their account of Ḥasan-e Šabbāḥ and his successors at Alamut mainly on Jovayni and Rašid-al-Din.

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