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### **Salah al-Din and Syrian Assassins**

Since ancient times in the East lots of religio-philosophical and mystical sects have been established, but most of them collapsed and disappeared during the centuries. The Islamic era was not an exception. Despite the fact that orthodox Islam was fighting with all “heretics” in every way, many religio-philosophical orders were established in the Islamic world and they suggested their own interpretations of Islam to society.

The best example is the Ismaili branch of Shia Islam. Ismailis are known also as Assassins. Unfortunately we have very little information about their activity and in most cases this information is based on myths and legends. The large majority of Ismaili sources have been destroyed during the centuries. Modern scholars have to collect the information from Sunni historians or Christian travelers, whose works in most cases are prejudiced. Sunni historians of the Middle Ages proclaimed Ismailis as heretics and Christians described them as sorcerers. The name of the Ismaili imam or as Europeans called him “The Old Man of the Mountains”, intimidated Muslim as well as Christian monarchs and princes. Ismaili activities and their hidden way of life gave birth to various legends in the minds of Muslims and Christian.

We find the first mention of the term “Assassin” in western sources dated from the 12<sup>th</sup> c A. D. Benjamin of Tudela, the Spanish Rabbi of 12<sup>th</sup> century, was one of the earliest Europeans to have written about the Ismailis. He visited Syria in 562/1167, and described the Syrian Ismailis by the term of Hashishin. Other forms of the modern word Assassins are given in chronicles of other western travelers and historians<sup>1</sup>. They are: Accini, Arsasini, Assassi, Assassini, Assessini, Assessini, Assissini, Heysessini.

Since 18<sup>th</sup> century, the name Assassin has received a good deal of attention from scholars, who threw a flood of theories to explain its origin and significance<sup>2</sup>. Recently the most popular point of view is that the word Assassin was Hashishiyya, i.e., the users of hashish<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> I. Machivala, *Origin of the Word “assassins”* <http://www.123articleonline.com/article32061.html> (28 October, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> А. С. Де Саси, *Сообщение о династии ассасинов и этимологии их именованя*, Приложение, Легенды об ассасинах мифы об иσμαилитах. Дафтари Ф. «Ладомир» Москва 2009, pp. 133-137.

<sup>3</sup> F. Daftari, *Mukhtasir tāriḫ al-ismā‘ilīyn*, Dimashq 1999, p. 33.

The earliest reported application of the term Hashishiyya to the Ismailis occurs in the anti-Ismaili polemical epistle issued in 517/1123 by the then Fatimid regime in Cairo on behalf of the caliph al-Amir (d. 524/1130)<sup>4</sup>. The term Hashishiyya came to be used also by Seljuqid and other Sunni authors such as Imad al-Din Muhammad al-Katib Ispahani (d. 597/1201)<sup>5</sup>.

We decided to study the ancient meanings of root “*h-sh-sh*” or “*h-s-s*” to understand the real meaning of the term Hashishin.

We find the first appearance of this term in ancient Babylon. One of the epithets of god Enki was *Hasisu* (wise)<sup>6</sup>. In the Phoenician pantheon we find god *Kotaru-wa-hasisu* (wise and handsome)<sup>7</sup>. In our opinion this god entered Judaism as Demon Azazel. In Islam we do not find *Hasisu* or *Azazel*, but in the Arabic language there is a “*h-sh-sh*” root. Its main meaning is dry. In other words, something which was good, but during its growth became dry and useless<sup>8</sup>.

In our opinion the term Hashishin has nothing to do with any drug. We think that Sunni and other anti-Ismaili authors tried to find the special term which could provoke only negative feelings among the population. We can find some similarities when we compare the meaning of “*h-sh-sh*” and Ismaili history. Like a tree that dried and became useless, Ismailis chose the wrong way and became servants of evil. We can also see some parallels with Babylonian god Enki-Hasisu who was kind and friendly to humanity, but with the passing of time became Demon-Azazel<sup>9</sup>.

So we think that the term Hahishin stems from the Arabic root “*hashsha*”, but it has only an ideological and psychological meaning.

To understand more clearly the sectarians’ activities, we have to make a short review of their history.

As a result of several important factors, Shiism spread in the eastern part of the Omayyad Caliphate and the number of the movement’s adherents increased very quickly. Shiites opposed

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<sup>4</sup> G. Narimanishvili, *Asasinebi – miti da realoba*, Tbilisi 2012 (*Assassins – Myth and Reality*. Tbilisi 2012), p. 159.

<sup>5</sup> I. Machivala, op. cit.; F. Daftari, op.cit., 32

<sup>6</sup> Г. Вильхельм, *Древний народ Хурриты*, Москва 1992, p. 95; Е. Доброва, *Популярная история мифологии*, Москва 2003, p. 82.

<sup>7</sup> Ю. Циркин, *Мифы Финикии и Угарита*, Москва 2003, p. 53.

<sup>8</sup> E.W. Lane, *An Arabic - English Lexicon*, In eight parts. part 2 .Beirut 1968, pp. 573-574; al-Fayrūzābādī, *Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*, Beirut 2003, p. 546; X. Баранов, *Арабско – Русский словарь*, Москва 1962, pp. 218-219.

<sup>9</sup> G. Narimanishvili 2012, op. cit., 44; G. Narimanishvili, *Termin asasinis etimologiisatvis*, “Axlo aghmosavleti da saqartvelo V”, Tbilisi 2008, pp. 128 – 133. (*Etymology of the Term Assassin*, “Near East and Georgia”, # 5, Tbilisi 2008. pp. 128 - 133), p. 132.

the Omayyad caliphs from the very beginning and declared them as usurpers. Soon, after the Kerbela tragedy, the united Shiite movement divided, and three independent Shiite branches were established. One group of Shiites recognized descendants of Husain as rightful heirs of Ali, the second one - Hassan's descendants and the third one adhered Hassan's and Husain's half-brother Muhammad ibn Ali al-Hanafyyah, who was not a descendant of Muhammad at all<sup>10</sup>.

The most important branch of the above-mentioned three was the one, whose followers supported Husain's descendants. Soon the important schism was about to happen. The main reason of dissidence was the decision of Imam Ja'far when he declared his elder son Ismail as the next Imam, but after the latter's death in 762/145 changed his choice to Musa al-Qazem, Isma'il's younger brother. Some Shiites considered this decision as unjust and established a new, Ismaili movement is Shia Islam<sup>11</sup>.

Unfortunately we have very poor information about Ismail and his son Muhammad. But we know that by the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> century, the Ismailis had organized a religio-political movement designated as al-da'wa (the mission). At the end of the 9<sup>th</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> century Ismaili centers had been established in Bahrain, Yemen, Northern Africa, Iraq and Iran. In the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> century the Ismaili Imam moved from Syria to North Africa where he founded Fatimid Caliphate<sup>12</sup>.

It is important to mention that in the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> / 5<sup>th</sup> century a great schism in the Ismaili movement occurred. According to caliph al-Mustansir's will his successor was Nizar, his elder son, but after the old caliph's death, vizier al-Afdal enthroned al-Mustansir's younger son al-Musta'li, and ordered the killing of Nizar. As a result of the vizier's actions a huge number of Ismailis turned away from the Fatimids and established their own independent movement – Nizarya<sup>13</sup>.

As a result of this schism Nizari Ismailis lost a strong ally, but became completely independent. They also changed their general policy and methods of struggle.

There was an Ismaili cell in almost every town, and each cell had its own armed forces. There scarcely existed any single target for military conquest by a regularly organized army, a

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<sup>10</sup> De Lacy o'Leary, *A Short History of Fatimid Khalifate*, London 1923, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> F. Daftary, *Ismaili Literature: a Bibliography of Sources and Studies*, New York, London 2004, p. 7

<sup>12</sup> H. Halm, *al-Fāṭimiyyūn wa taqāliduhum fi al-ta'lim*, dār al-mada lil-thaqāfa wa al-nashr 1999, pp. 24-25; F. Daftari, op. cit., pp. 128 – 129.

<sup>13</sup> P. E. Walker, P. Walker, *Succession to Rule in the Shiite Caliphate*, "Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt", Vol. 32, 1995, p. 255.

conquest which would have resulted in the submission of an obedient realm as had happened in Egypt. If the Ismailis were to win, it was reasonable to expect that, at least at first, that it would be locality by locality, fort by fort<sup>14</sup>.

Also it is very important to notice the use of a crucial auxiliary technique for achieving military and political aims by assassination. In a place where local authority was relatively personal, so that an official furnished with basically the same means of power as another official did not automatically succeed him, the elimination of a key individual could disrupt any social undertaking<sup>15</sup>. So, a viewpoint that it was better to kill one great man who caused trouble than to slaughter many ordinary men on a battlefield was very acceptable for the Ismailis of Iran.

Nizari Ismailis started their religious and political activities in Syria in the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> / 6<sup>th</sup> century, where they found suitable circumstances to spread the Ismaili doctrine among the broad masses of population. The Muslim world was weakened and divided into several independent states, which were involved in a permanent conflict between each other. Along with the Muslim states, there were also Crusader states pursuing their own independent policy.

From the end of the 9<sup>th</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> c. Ismaili doctrine was very popular among the Syrian population, because the center of the early Ismailis used to be in Central Syria – the small village of Salamia. From the end of the 10<sup>th</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> century Syria had been a part of the Fatimid Caliphate and Ismaili doctrine started to be propagated freely. But by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> century Sunni Seljukids had conquered a great part of Syria and the Fatimids lost their control over this region<sup>16</sup>. So, the Shiite population of Syrian lands, that was persecuted by both, Turks and Crusaders saw the deliverance in the Nizari Ismaili branch.

According to sources the first Ismaili emissary from Alamut to Syria was al-Hakim al-Munajjim<sup>17</sup>. Syrian Nizari Ismailis used the Iranian method of struggle, which was based on conquering the citadels in a particular region with a Shiite population. The attempts of Ismailis in fulfilling their purposes could be divided into three main campaigns. The first one was led from

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<sup>14</sup> G. Narimanishvili, *Iranshi ismailitta sakhelmtsifos chamikalibebis tsinapirobebi (iranis ismailitta brdzolos metodebi)*, “Akhlo aghmosavleti da saqartvelo VI”, Tbilisi 2009, pp. 79 – 87. (*Backgrounds of the Establishment of Ismaili State in Iran (Methods of struggle of Ismailis in Iran)*, “Near East and Georgia” #6. Tbilisi 2009. pp. 79 - 87), p. 82.

<sup>15</sup> G. Sanikidze, *Ismailianta sakhelmtsifos sheqmna iranshi XI – XII saukuneebis mijnaze*, Sadisertatsio nashromi tsardgenili istoriul metsnierebata kandidatis sametsniro khariskhis mosapoveblad. Tbilisi 1990. (*Establishment of Ismaili state in Iran on the verge of the 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> cc. A.D.* Ph.D thesis. Tbilisi 1990), p. 78.

<sup>16</sup> R. Irwin, *Islam and the Crusades, 1096 – 1699*, The Oxford History of the Crusades, edited by Jonathan Riley-Smith. Oxford University Press 1999, p. 216.

<sup>17</sup> Ibn al-Qalānisi, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, taḥqīq Suhayl Zakkār, Dimashq 1983, p. 230.

Aleppo and aimed at conquering the citadels in the Jabal al-Summaq region. It ended without any results in 1113/507. The second one started from Damascus. This time the Ismailis tried to establish their center in Banyas and Wadi al-Tayyim, but it ended with massacres of Ismailis in Damascus in 1129/523. The third campaign lasted from 1132/527 – 1151/545. It aimed at conquering citadels in the Jabal Bahra region. We do not know from where this campaign was led, but the Ismailis reached their goal and established their political center in one of the Syrian regions.

Exactly at this time Rashid al-Din Sinan had been appointed as the leader of Syrian Ismailis. There is no exact information about his place of date or birth. According to recently found sources he died in 1193/588 at the age of 58 or 60, so he was born in 1135/530 or in 1133/528. Unfortunately we have very poor information about Sinan's birthplace and parents. According to the famous Arabian geographer - Yaqut al-Hamawi - Sinan was born in the small village of Aqr as-Sudan between Wasit and Basra. The majority of its population were Shi'a Muslims. Some anti-Ismaili sources tell us that his parents were Twelver Shiites<sup>18</sup>.

A more or less detailed Sinan's biography can be found in Kemal al-Din's work, where the Aleppian historian describes some interesting moments of Sinan's life. Kemal al-Din tells us that Sinan was interested in the Ismaili doctrine from his childhood and according to Sinan's own words, which are preserved in Kema al-Din's work, after a conflict with his brothers he left his family and moved to Alamut. In Alamut Sinan studied the Ismaili doctrine and after the death of Kiya Muhammad in 1162/557 his successor Hasan II sent Sinan to Syria as a Ismaili resident. Sinan describes his journey from Alamut to Syria:

He ordered me to go to Syria. I set forth as I had set forth from Basra, and only rarely did I approach any town. He had given me orders and letters. I entered Mosul and halted at the mosque of the carpenters and stayed the night there, and then I went on, not entering any town, until I reached Raqqa. I had a letter to one of our companions there. I delivered it to him, and he gave me provisions and hired me a mount as far as Aleppo. There I met another companion and delivered him another letter, and he too hired me a mount and sent me on to Kahf. My orders were to stay in this fortress, and I stayed there until Shayh Abil Muhammad, the head of the Mission, died in the mountain<sup>19</sup>.

This narrative is also confirmed in other sources and according to Ismaili sources Sinan stayed in Kahf for seven years.

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<sup>18</sup> A. M. Nasseh, *Syrian Ismailism: The Ever Living Line of the Imamate, AD 1100-1260*, Published by Routledge, 1997, p. 24.

<sup>19</sup> B. Lewis, *Kamāl al-dīn's biography of Rāšid al-dīn Sinān*, "Arabica", T. 13, Fasc. 3, 1966, p. 231.

During his leadership the Syrian Ismailis reached the peak of their strength and almost full independence. It must be mentioned that Sinan was the first Ismaili leader in Syria, who abandoned Alamut's rule and started to pursue an independent policy. The first aim of Sinan was the consolidation of all his power. First of all Sinan reconstructed the citadels of al-Rusafa and al-Khawab and conquered al-Ula'ika citadel<sup>20</sup>. Kemal al-Din tells us that the leader of Alamut was so scared of Sinan that he sent several fidawis to assassinate him, but they failed in their mission<sup>21</sup>.

Sinan changed the doctrine of Syrian Ismailis. As a result of these changes the leaders of Alamut or Nizari imams were not mentioned. On the other hand Sinan is mentioned as the only leader and bearer of divine reincarnation. This aspect is noted in Syrian sources as well as by the famous Arabian traveller Ibn Jubair, who visited Syria in 1184/580:

The Satan with human face has been sent to them known by name Sinan, who used lies and fake dreams to control their minds and bewitched them by his rubbish. They accepted him as an idol and started to obey him not sparing their souls. They did obey him and execute his orders: if he orders one to throw himself from a rock, he does it fast to indulge his master. Allah will guide who wants on right way and will put on the wrong way who He wants<sup>22</sup>.

Kemal al-Din tells us that the population of Jabal Summaq declared Sinan to be their God :

Abandoned themselves to all kinds of debauchery iniquity. Calling themselves 'the Pure', men and women mixed in drinking sessions, no man abstained from his sister or daughter and the women wore men's clothes. One of them stated that Sinan was his god<sup>23</sup>.

In time of his leadership Syrian Ismailis undertook several important actions: two unsuccessful attacks on Salah al-Din, arson in Aleppo and the assassination of Conrad of Montferrat.

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<sup>20</sup> F. Daftary, *The Isma'ilis. Their History and Doctrines*, Second edition. Published by Cambridge University Press. 2007, p. 368.

<sup>21</sup> B. Lewis 1966, op. cit., p. 231.

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla al-kātib al-adīb al-bāri' al-labīb abī al-Husain Muḥammad bin 'Aḥmad bin Jubayr al-Kananī al-Andalusī al-Balnisi*, Leiden 1907, p. 255.

<sup>23</sup> B. Lewis, *The Ismailites and the Assassins*, A History of the Crusades. General Editor: Kenneth M. Setton. Volume I. First Hundred Years. Edited by Marshall W. Baldwin. The University of Wisconsin Press. Madison, Milwaukee and London 1969, p. 122.

Now we have to mention the main subject of our article: the relations between Syrian Assassins and sultan Salah al-Din. The great sultan of Egypt and conqueror of Jerusalem, whose three main enemies were: Franks, Assassins and Zengis<sup>24</sup>. The sultan's first goal was to unite Muslim Middle East under the Abbasid Caliph's rule. The rise of Salah al-Din made him a main enemy of the Assassins, and inevitably inclined them to look in a more friendly manner on the Zengids, the sultan's chief opponents. After the conquest of Damascus in October 1174/Rabi al-Thani 570 Salah al-Din became able to achieve his goal<sup>25</sup>. In letters written to the caliph of Baghdad in 1181/1182, Salah al-Din accuses the rulers of Mosul of being in league with heretical Assassins.

The Assassins' first attempt to murder Salah al-Din took place in December 1174 or January 1175/ Jumada al-Thanyya 570, when the Sultan's army besieged Aleppo. According to Kemal al-Din, the regent of the young Zengid ruler of Aleppo and the real master of the city, Gumushtakin, had sent his ambassadors to Sinan and in return for the assassination of Salah al-Din he promised him lands and money<sup>26</sup>. On a cold winter day Ismaili fidawis entered the Sultan's camp, but were recognized by amir al-Qubays, who challenged them and was killed, but the assassins' mission failed and Salah al-Din remained safe and unwounded<sup>27</sup>. The following year Sinan decided to make another attempt to kill the Sultan, so in May 1176/ Zu al-Qa'da 571, during the siege of Azaz stronghold, assassins, wearing soldiers' uniforms, attacked Salah al-Din. Thanks to his armour, the Sultan was wounded very slightly and the attackers were killed by his guards<sup>28</sup>. According to some sources this second attack was also ordered by Gumushtekin. In all cases, the Sultan adopted elaborate precautions, sleeping in a specially constructed wooden tower and allowing no one whom he did not know personally to approach him<sup>29</sup>.

The presumable motives of Sinan's actions against Salah al-Din we can find in Sibn ibn al-Jawzis chronicles. According to this source, ten thousand warriors of one of the anti-Shiite movements, al-Nubuwyya attacked Ismaili centres in al-Bab and Buzaa, where they massacred more than thirteen thousand Ismailis and took lots of prisoners and booty. Sultan Salah al-Din

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<sup>24</sup> B. Lewis, *Saladin and Assassins*, "Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies", University of London, Vol. 15, No. 2 1953, p. 239.

<sup>25</sup> M. Chamberlain, *The Crusader Era and the Ayyubid Dynasty*, The Cambridge History of Egypt. Vol. I. Islamic Egypt, 640 – 1517. Edited by Carl F. Petry. Cambridge University press, 2006, p. 218.

<sup>26</sup> Kamāl al-Dīn, *zubda al-ḥalab min tārikh Ḥalab*, waḍa'a ḥawāshiyya Khalīl al-Manṣūr, dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, Beirut, 1996, p. 366.

<sup>27</sup> B. Lewis 1953, op. cit., p. 239.

<sup>28</sup> Kamāl al-Dīn, op. cit., p. 371.

<sup>29</sup> B. Lewis 1969, op. cit., p. 123.

used this as justification to send his army against Ismailis to Sarmin, Maarat Mirsin and Jabal Sumaq, where the Sultan's army also massacred lots of people. Unfortunately Sibt does not mention exactly in which month this attack took place, but supposedly the Sultan arranged it during the siege of Aleppo. So, those circumstances can explain a special enmity towards Salah al-Din. Even though this attack did not happen, still the Sultan was the most dangerous enemy of the Assassins, because he had great power in Syria and was trying to unite all Muslims under Sunni rule.

In August 1176/571 for revenge the Sultan entered Ismaili territories and besieged Masyaf citadel, but did not achieve his goal<sup>30</sup>. There are several different versions of the reasons of this failure. Imad al-Din, like the majority of Arab historians, tells us that the Sultan retreated, at his uncle's, ruler of Hama Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. Taqqash's request, whom the Assassins asked to mediate between them and the Sultan. Ibn Abi Tayy claims that the main reason of Salah al-Din's retreat was an attack of the Franks in Bekaa valley. According to Kemal al-Din the Sultan was scared of the Assassins' policy and asked his uncle to mediate between them, just to leave Ismaili territories safely. And finally we find the Ismaili version of Salah al-Din's action, where we read that the Sultan was frightened of Sinan's divine power and with mediation of his uncle got permission to leave Ismaili territories in peace. In all cases, Salah al-Din and Sinan supposedly made some kind of deal, because on the one hand Sultan never returned to Ismaili territories and on the other, Assassins never attacked him again<sup>31</sup>.

Exactly in this period one interesting fact happened. It is described by William of Tyre. According to the historian in 1173/569 Sinan sent an embassy to the king of Jerusalem Amalric I and asked him to mediate between the Ismailis and the Knights Templar in purpose to free them from the Templars' tribute and in return of the king's support the Syrian Ismailis would adopt Christianity<sup>32</sup>.

In 1192 April 28/ 588 Rabi' al-Sani Syrian Assassins carried out one of their most famous assassinations; the victim was the King of Jerusalem marquis Conrad de Montferrat. Sources say that Ismaili fidawis disguised themselves as Christian monks and lived in Tyre for six months. During this time they gained Conrad's confidence and when they got a chance, they attacked and

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<sup>30</sup> S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. II, the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Cambridge University Press 1995, p. 410.

<sup>31</sup> B. Lewis 1969, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>32</sup> Wiliam, *tārīkh al-ḥurūb al-ṣalībiyya, al-a 'māl al-munjiẓa fimā warā' al-baḥr*, al-juz' al-awwal, naqalahu 'ila al-'arabiyya wa qaddama al-duktūr Suhayl Zakkār, dār al-fikra 1990, p. 967; S. Runciman, op. cit., p. 397.



killed him. Baha al-Din the contemporary historian to these events, on the base of Salah al-Din's ambassador's report, tells us that during interrogation the fidawis confessed, that they were executing Richard the Lionheart's order<sup>33</sup>. It was well known that Richard wanted to eliminate Conrad and the fact that Lionheart's protégé Henry of Champaign soon married Conrad's widow and took the throne of Jerusalem, spread a lot of rumours among the population<sup>34</sup>. On the other hand, Ibn al-Athir, who never concealed his antipathy towards Salah al-Din, tells us that Richard was innocent in this case and the real mastermind of Conrad's assassination was Salah al-Din himself. According to him, the Sultan planned to assassinate both Conrad de Montferrat and Richard the Lionheart, but an attack on the king of England was impossible and he decided to kill only Conrad<sup>35</sup>. According to Ismaili sources the assassination of Conrad was Sinan's plan, but was executed with Salah al-Din's permission and support. It must be mentioned, that supposedly, this source aimed to show Sinan as a supporter of Salah al-Din in his war against infidels. The Ismaili author adds that in response to this action the Sultan granted Ismailis lots of privileges and allowed them to establish Ismaili centres in Aleppo, Hama, Homs and other Syrian cities. Supposedly this is the overstated list of the privileges, which Salah al-Din granted to Ismailis after the Masyaf agreement. Imad al-Din says that the assassination of Conrad was not beneficial for Salah al-Din, because the marquis used to be an enemy of the Sultan's foe - Richard the Lionheart and at the same time started negotiations with Cairo. Richard also took these circumstances into consideration and tried to start negotiations with the Sultan, but the assassination of Conrad gave him a chance to start war openly. It must be mentioned, that famous French scientist, Joseph Francois Muchaud, on the basis of Walter of Hemingford's chronicles, attached to his work Sinan's letter to Christian kings, where the Old Man of the Mountains announces Richard's innocence in Conrad's assassination<sup>36</sup>. Modern scholars do not believe in the authenticity of this letter and think that it was written in later times, just to acquit Richard of this assassination<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Баха ад-Дин, *Саладин победитель крестоносцев*. Пер. с араб. – СПб.: «Издательство «ДИЛЯ», 2009, р. 338.

<sup>34</sup> B. Lewis 1969, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>35</sup> Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil fi al-Tārīkh*, taḥqīq Abi al-Fiḍa' 'Abd Allah al-Qaḍi, dar al-kutub al-'imiyya, Beirut 1987, p. 213.

<sup>36</sup> J. F. Michaud, *History of the Crusades*, Vol III. Translated from the French by W. Robson. London 1852, pp. 434-435.

<sup>37</sup> Ф. Дафтари, *Легенды об ассасинах мифы об исмаилитах*, Москва 2009, р. 73.

It must be mentioned, that according to sources half of all assassinations, which were executed by Syrian Assassins between 1103/496 and 1273/671 were ordered by other parties<sup>38</sup>.

The assassination of Conrad was Sinan's last order. After the death of Sinan in 1193/588 Syrian Ismailis returned under Alamut's rule. As a result of Mongol conquests and the fall of Alamut, Syrian Ismailis tried to find a strong friend, who would support them in their struggle against Mongols. So, they contacted Mamluk sultan Baybars and sent him precious presents. First Baybars supported the Ismailis, but later changed his policy and conquered all Ismaili centers and strongholds. So, in 1273/621, after the fall of the last Ismaili stronghold in Syria – al-Ula'ika, Syrian Ismailis lost all political power in the Middle East region.

From that time, Ismailis, who turned into a small and powerless sect, were scattered across different regions of the Middle East and lived in isolation. Also many Ismailis, looking for a safe life, moved to India. In India, where, to date, we find the biggest Ismaili community, started the modern Ismaili history. Activities of modern Ismaili Imams Aga Khan II and Aga Khan III resulted in creating a strong basis for recent Ismaili studies. Contemporary Ismaili Imam Aga Khan IV, who is living in France, continues the work of his predecessors and succeeded in popularization of Ismaili studies and Ismailism in general.

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<sup>38</sup> B. Lewis 1969, op. cit., 126.