Iranian Studies

Studying Isma'ili Texts in Eleventh-Century Shiraz: al-Mu'ayyad and the "Conversion" of the Buyid *Amir* Abu Kalijar

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like to thank Charles Melville, University of Cambridge, and Paula
Saunders, Rice University, for their comments on an earlier version
of this paper.

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As a key primary source for the history of the eleventh-century Isma'ili majlis, the Fatimid chief missionary al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi's autobiographical Sira offers a prime opportunity to consider the application of centralizing features of the Fatimid state in eleventh-century Buyid Shiraz. Previous studies on the Fatimid majlis have raised questions about an Isma'ili core curriculum as well as the intended audience/s of Fatimid da'wa teachings. This article situates al-Mu'ayyad's memoir in the broader context of the Persian and Arabic historiographical traditions in order to provide new insights into the transmission of Isma'ili doctrines in different social settings outside of Fatimid Cairo. It concludes that Abu Kalijar's study sessions with al-Mu'ayyad suggest that Qadi al-Nu'man's Kitab Da'a'im al-Islam was used as a core text for introducing some of the main principles of Fatimid religio-political rule in addition to Isma'ili doctrines to non-Isma'ili audiences.

The *Sira al-Mu'ayyadiyya*, an eleventh-century autobiographical work, narrates three periods of exile, travel and flight in the life of the Fatimid dynasty's chief Isma'ili missionary, Abu Nasr Hibat Allah al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi (d. 470 AH/1078 CE). The *Sira al-Mu'ayyadiyya* begins with al-Mu'ayyad's descriptions of his preparations in the main mosque in Shiraz on 'Id al-Fitr (429 AH/July 1038 CE).[1] The local judge (*qadi*) Ibn 'Abd Allah al-Fazari's complaint lodged against al-Mu'ayyad to the Buyid *amir* Abu Kalijar places into context al-Mu'ayyad's tense description of the growing tumult in Shiraz over the Fatimid Isma'ili *da'wa*'s presence in the city.[2]

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[1]V. Klemm, *Die Mission des fatimidischen Agenten al-Mu'ayyad fi d-Din in Siraz* (Frankfurt, 1989), 2.
[2]Al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi, *Sira al-Mu'ayyadiyya*, ed. M. K. Husayn (Cairo, 1949), 63–64; Klemm, *Die Mission*, 25, 142–145, 150. B. I. Beshir, *The Fatimid Caliphate 386–487 A.H./996–1094 A.D.* (DPhil thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1970), 151, n. 108, first indicated that in School of Oriental and African Studies MS. No. 25740 Idris 'Imad al-Din, *Risala al-Bayan lima Wajab*, folio 41a, al-Mu'ayyad refers to himself as a "trustee" (*mutawali*) of the *da'wa* in Fars, rather than by the title of any recognizable *da'wa* post. In Idris 'Imad al-Din's other work, the *'Uyun al-Akhbar*, however, there appears to be no discussion of

Situating al-Mu'ayyad's memoir of his experiences and *da'wa* activities in the light of the tenth–eleventh-century genre of Fatimid *sira* literature provides insights into the presentation of Isma'ili doctrines in the different social settings of the Fatimid court and the Fatimid Isma'ili *majlis*. In fact, a key passage from the *Sira al-Mu'ayyadiyya* narrates how the Buyid *amir* Abu Kalijar studied the *Da'a'im al-Islam* with al-Mu'ayyad in a weekly *majlis*. This passage, from one of the only extant sources for the history of the eleventh-century Isma'ili *majlis*, offers a prime opportunity to consider the application of some of the centralizing features of the Fatimid "state" (*dawla*) in eleventh-century Buyid Shiraz.[3] As shall be seen in what follows, Abu Kalijar's study sessions with al-Mu'ayyad strongly suggests that a core Fatimid text, the *Da'a'im al-Islam*, was used as an introductory text for non-Isma'ili audiences.[4]

Previous studies on the Fatimid *majlis* have raised questions about an Isma'ili "core curriculum" and the intended audiences of Fatimid *da'wa* teachings. That Qadi al-Nu'man's *Da'a'im al-Islam* has been considered by a number of scholars to be a legalistic handbook tends to reinforce any sort of interpretation which posits that the medieval Isma'ili *majlis* centered itself on "traditionalist" subjects in addition to prominent *da'wa* teachings. Exactly what remains open to enquiry is the extent to which the Fatimid Isma'ili *majlis* in Cairo took definitive shape and institution form through "monopolising the process of determining orthodoxy" and standardizing *da'wa* teachings.[5] Köhler, for example, has drawn parallels between the Fatimid institution of learning, the "house of wisdom" (*dar al-'ilm*) and the Saljuq-period *madrasa*, especially in the light of the manner in which legal texts and instruction in law formed part of the Fatimid curriculum, in particular, Qadi al-Nu'man's works.[6]

The subject of the Fatimid Isma'ili *majlis*, however, becomes more complex when the institution of the Isma'ili *majlis* is extracted from its familiar Fatimid historical and social contexts centered in Cairo and is examined outside of the center of Fatimid religio-political power and administration. In order to provide a new perspective on the history of the Isma'ili missionary organization in Western Iran, this study is interested in tracing how in the *Sira al-Mu'ayyadiyya*, the weekly *majlis* between al-Mu'ayyad and Abu Kalijar was perceived

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this presented in the course of al-Mu'ayyad's biography. See B. T. Qutbuddin, *Al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi: Founder of a New Tradition of Fatimid Da'wa Poetry* (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1999), 19–53. Qutbuddin's thesis has recently been published as *Al-Mu'ayyad al-Shirazi and Fatimid Da'wa Poetry* (Leiden, 2005). References throughout cite Qutbuddin's PhD dissertation.

[3]*Sira*, 9–12, 54–68. The *Sira al-Mu'ayyadiyya* also recounts the weekly Isma'ili *majlis* held in Shiraz and Ahwaz amongst the Daylamis.

[4]This is bolstered by further evidence, in that al-Mu'ayyad, as a member of the Fatimid *da'wa*, would have most likely followed *da'wa* protocol for the use of certain texts in religious instruction. See *Sira*, 44–46.

[5]G. Makdisi, "Baghdad, Bologna, and Scholasticism," in *Centres of Learning*, ed. J. W. Drijvers and A. A. MacDonald (Leiden, 1995), 155.

[6]B. Köhler, *Die Wissenschaft unter den ägyptischen Fatimiden* (Hildesheim, 1994), 56–64, 76–80.

by contemporaries to represent efforts to establish a Fatimid institution in eleventh-century Shiraz and not simply to provide a formalized setting for Isma'ili religious instruction. As shall be seen in what follows, the Sunni establishment only began to launch its full attack against al-Mu'ayyad when it seemed likely that the Buyid court in eleventh-century Shiraz was to grant official sanction to the institutionalization of Fatimid *da'wa* activities.

The above-mentioned issues have received very little attention. Furthermore, the employment of the Fatimid Isma'ili *da'wa*'s "handbooks" for religious instruction in the *majlis* setting alludes to another issue with respect to the Fatimid *da'wa*'s expected audiences. Late tenth-century Cairo was the center of the Fatimid dynasty and missionary organization. Many Fatimid Isma'ili authors drafted a wide range of doctrinal works and treatises with the pedagogical purposes of the Isma'ili *da'wa* in mind. One such work, Qadi al-Nu'man's *Majalis wa al-Musayarat*, documents the process by which the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz put forth his interpretations of doctrine based on the Qur'an. Qadi al-Nu'man's work marks the emergence of an ideal model of the transmission of religious knowledge for the Fatimid Isma'ili *da'wa*. The caliph-*imam* and members of the *da'wa* worked together to provide a range of levels of religious instruction for the "community of believers." Qadi al-Nu'man himself aims to underscore how this ideal model was put into practice when he narrates al-Mu'izz's guidance and direction as a "scholar"-*imam* during the drafting of a number of works for the Fatimid *da'wa*.[7]

It should therefore come as no surprise that many scholarly views have been entertained on the nature of Fatimid *da'wa* teachings, some of which pertain more specifically to their ideological and political implications as well as their subject matter than others. For example, M. Brett, S. Hamdani and W. al-Qadi suggest that the *Da'a'im al-Islam* aimed to solidify the position of the Fatimid caliph as a ruler over a diverse community—a community to which the caliph held different responsibilities, and over which, as *imam*, "submission" was required in practice rather than "conformity" in interpretation.[8] These scholars maintain that the Fatimids' centralization of power coincided with a firmly articulated stance on the parameters of the *imam*'s religio-political authority vis-à-vis the community and the Isma'ili *da'wa* itself. Certainly it can be said that this was one aim of the Isma'ili doctrine of *walaya* addressed in Qadi al-Nu'man's *Da'a'im al-Islam*.[9]

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[7]Qadi al-Nu'man, *Majalis wa al-Musayarat*, ed. H. el-Feki, I. Chabbouh and M. el-Yalaoui (Tunis, 1978), 361, para. 185.

[8]M. Brett, "Realm of the Imam," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 59 (1996): 446; S. Hamdani, *Between Revolution and State* (London, 2006) (References throughout cite Hamdani's PhD dissertation, unless otherwise indicated); W. al-Qadi, "An Early Fatimid Political Document," *Studia Islamica*, 48 (1978): 103.

[9]See in particular, Brett "Realm of the Imam"; I. K. Poonawala, "Al-Qadi al-Nu'man and Isma'ili Jurisprudence," in *Mediaeval Isma'ili History and Thought*, ed. F. Daftary (Cambridge,

There is another facet to the Fatimids' efforts to consolidate *da'wa* activities under al-Mu'izz. In her treatment of the *Da'a'im*, al-Qadi points out that included in the chapter on the '*ahd* of 'Ali is a narrative concerned in part with al-Mahdi's establishment of the Fatimid dynasty, despite the opposition to his rule as the *imam*. Qadi al-Nu'man's explicit correlation of the unification of religious and political authority in the figure of a single person ruling over a unified empire to al-Mahdi's legitimacy "was very relevant to the situation of al-Mu'izz," who also grappled with perhaps what might be best termed "dissident" missionaries (*du'at*).[10] Equally, questions of doctrinal legitimacy informed the composition of the *Da'a'im al-Islam*.[11]

Whereas some scholars view the Fatimid efforts towards the standardization and consolidation of religious teachings as a response to the formation of Fatimid identity, S. Hamdani draws a link between what she calls the "broader," less "specialized" nature of Qadi al-Nu'man's *Da'a'im al-Islam* and the Fatimids' move towards a less exclusive, more exoteric doctrinal stance on the concept of the *imam*. Hamdani's argument suggests that the shift in the presentation of Isma'ili doctrines notable in Qadi al-Nu'man's works reflected the Fatimids' tenth-century increased dynastic expansion and diversification, where the modes of religious instruction thus served the needs of a larger audience and no longer simply the members of the *da'wa*.[12]

Moreover, doctrinal diversification is evident in the *majalis* literature from the late and post-Fatimid periods; a diversification that is reflected in the changing content of *da'wa* lectures to suit the wide range of audiences participating in the lectures.[13] S. M. Stern originally posited that there were two types of lectures

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1996), 127, who states that there is a "legalistic place to *al-walaya*" in the introduction of this doctrine as a "pillar" of practice.

[10] al-Qadi, "An Early Fatimid Political Document," 104. The *Majalis wa al-Musayarat*, 419–420, para. 219, specifically refers to the problem of *ghuluww*.

[11] For the text of the '*ahd* of 'Ali, see *Da'a'im al-Islam*, 411–431; *The Pillars of Islam*, trans. I. K. Poonawala (New Delhi, 2002), 436–456. Al-Qadi, "An Early Fatimid Political Document," 105–107. Qadi al-Nu'man's incorporation into the *Da'a'im* of what al-Qadi explains was already a widely circulated recension of the '*ahd*, used in conjunction with older versions of the sayings of 'Ali from *Nahj al-Balagha*, ensured its continued textual authority, acclaim and transmission. Al-Qadi's research strongly suggests the earlier recension of this chapter of the *Da'a'im al-Islam* circulated in the form of a compendium, though points to an established oral transmission of the work as well.

[12] S. Hamdani, *From Da'wa to Dawlah* (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1995), 86–91, 224–225. Hamdani (86–87) states the following: "Qadi al-Nu'man's *zahiri* formulation of a mandate for the authority of the Fatimid imams, should thus be seen as responding not only to the exigencies and realities of the actual rule of an imam, but also to the issue of his universal legitimacy." F. Dachroui, ed., *Iftitah al-Da'wa* (Tunis, 1975), (Intro.), 22: "In actuality, al-Nu'man contributed largely to the elaboration of Isma'ili law (*fiqh*) in the light of the doctrine of the impeccable Imams and especially in close collaboration with al-Mu'izz himself. One notices in the *Magalis* the zeal and effort that he displays in codifying Isma'ili law and in its 'vulgarization' for the public teaching (*durus al-hikma*) of the doctrine of the Imams."

[13] F. Daftary, *The Isma'ilis*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2007), 167–172, 215 ff.; H. Halm, *The Fatimids and their Traditions of Learning* (London, 1997); H. Halm, "The Isma'ili Oath of Allegiance ('*ahd*) and

in the Fatimid period, the *majalis da'wa* ("teaching sessions") and the *majalis al-hikma* ("sessions of wisdom").[14] He suggested that the chief missionary (*da'i al-du'at*) read out the *majalis* at meetings whereas the *majalis al-hikma* represented "more authoritative expositions of Isma'ili doctrine" and were read out weekly, on both Thursdays and Fridays.[15] Further complicating the question of the codification and redaction of Fatimid lectures into collections of *majalis* is one particular historical fact that Stern discusses, based on his analysis of the extant historical sources for the tenth–eleventh centuries. Distinguishing between these two types of lectures becomes even more difficult because it appears that by the mid-eleventh century, weekly meetings began to be held customarily only on one day each week, Thursday.[16]

Stern's brief comments on a mid-eleventh-century Fatimid collection of lectures, the *Majalis al-Mustansiriyya*, and its method of doctrinal elaboration, warrant attention at this juncture. He notes that each of the lectures in the *Majalis al-Mustansiriyya* begin with a stylized opening and are likewise closed by "final formulae."[17] According to Stern, the main body of each lecture consists of two parts, both of which are focused on the exegesis of the Qur'an and *ta'wil*: by the means of *ta'wil* in reference to specific chapters and verses from the Qur'an or to Islamic religious practices and tenets.[18] The opening and closing formats of each lecture may provide a clearer picture of how Fatimid lectures were standardized and redacted in written form during the mid-eleventh century. At the very least, it suggests that there was indeed a model for writing *majalis* in Fatimid Isma'ili circles.

The content of *majalis* works as collections of recorded lectures differs in its presentation and format of Isma'ili doctrine than in more specifically doctrinal works. Like S. Hamdani, Dachroui has also considered the underlying reasons behind the "broader" presentation of doctrine in the setting of the Fatimid Isma'ili *majlis*. Dachroui's remarks buttress Brett's theory that the *Da'a'im al-Islam* functioned as a "handbook" or a "utopian" manual of Isma'ili Fatimid law.[19] The *Da'a'im al-Islam* also served to present the Fatimid's ideals of religio-political rule.[20] The *Da'a'im al-Islam* did not solely serve as a text for legal rulings and juridical decisions. These considerations of Qadi al-Nu'man's

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the 'Sessions of Wisdom' (*majalis al-hikma*) in Fatimid Times," in *Mediaeval Isma'ili History and Thought*, ed. F. Daftary (Cambridge, 1996), 91–115; S. M. Stern, "Cairo as the Centre of the Isma'ili Movement," reprinted in *Studies in Early Isma'ilism* (Leiden/Jerusalem, 1983), 238–239; P. Walker, "Fatimid Institutions of Learning," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 34 (1997): 179–200.

[14]Daftary, *The Isma'ilis*, 214–216.

[15]Stern, "Cairo as the Centre of the Isma'ili Movement," 238–239.

[16]Stern, "Cairo," 241–242.

[17]Stern, "Cairo," 240.

[18]Stern, "Cairo," 240.

[19]Brett, "The Realm of the Imam"; Dachroui, *Iftitah al-Da'wa*, 22, n. 3.

[20]Brett, "The Realm of the Imam"; Dachroui, *Iftitah al-Da'wa*, 22, n. 3.

work do not detract from the important conclusions S. Hamdani, Poonawala and al-Qadi have reached concerning the *Da'a'im al-Islam*'s far-reaching influence on the development of later Isma'ili authors active in the Fatimid Isma'ili *da'wa*. Rather, Dachroui and Hamdani's research allows for reconsidering how the setting of the public lecture necessitates a different format for presenting doctrinal arguments, that is, to suit a didactic purpose. However, this article will return again to some of the assertions concerning the Fatimid Isma'ili *majlis* but from the vantage point of al-Mu'ayyad's *da'wa* activities in eleventh-century Shiraz.

The Isma'ili Da'wa *in Shiraz*

Al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography is a frequently overlooked primary source for the religious and social histories of eleventh-century Western Iran, Syria and Egypt. It serves as an important written record of medieval Isma'ili *da'wa* activities (i.e., conversion narratives, polemical debates, public preaching and religious instruction) as well as Fatimid–Saljuq diplomatic relations. Its significance as a source is due to its author's unique participation and placement in pivotal events that one Western scholar has described as having produced "*une transformation de la civilisation musulmane.*"[21]

In the *Sira*, al-Mu'ayyad records the fierce competition amongst the different Muslim religious communities in Shiraz for both popular support and the Buyid court's sanction. In addition, the *Sira* attests to the eleventh-century "Persian" Isma'ili *da'wa*'s rapprochement with a fundamentally Fatimid doctrinal work, Qadi al-Nu'man's *Da'a'im al-Islam*. The account of al-Mu'ayyad's employment of the *Da'a'im al-Islam* in the context of a study session (*majlis*) with the Buyid *amir* Abu Kalijar is of particular importance for this article's discussion of Isma'ili *sira* and *majalis* literature. The first part of this section will focus on al-Mu'ayyad's work of Isma'ili *sira* literature in order to consider the *Sira* as a "local" account of the Fatimid Isma'ili *da'wa*'s activities and modes of religious instruction in Western Iran. The second part of this section will address the "social strife" (*fitna*) in Buyid Shiraz and Ahwaz that followed al-Mu'ayyad's growing influence on the "converted" Buyid *amir* Abu Kalijar.

Studying the Da'a'im al-Islam

In the *Sira*'s account, prior to the outbreak of *fitna* in Shiraz, al-Mu'ayyad and the Buyid *amir* Abu Kalijar meet in a weekly *majlis* and read together a chapter of Qadi al-Nu'man's *Da'a'im al-Islam*.[22] In ways that are very indicative of the method of presentation in the *majlis*, the text of *Sira* reads as follows:

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[21]See in particular, *Sira*, 4–76; D. S. Richards, ed., *Islamic Civilisation* (Oxford, 1973), vii.
[22]Shah, *The Imam as the Interpreter of the Qur'an* (MA thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1984), 13; *Sira*, 43, on al-Mu'ayyad reading a chapter from the *Da'a'im al-Islam* to Abu Kalijar.

he set up the *majalis*, which were called into session in his presence on Friday nights provided that they commence with the recitation of something from the sections on the hours of the Last Judgement (*qawari'*) in the Qur'an. He praised highly a chapter from the *Kitab al-Da'a'im*, and it was repeated three times in order that he could ask questions about whatever he wanted from it and so that I could answer his questions about it. It concluded with the praise to God (*al-tamhid*) and with the *khutba* to our Master, the *Imam*, may God lengthen his rule, and to the one who succeeds him. Then I withdrew to my house.[23]

The account of the *majlis* between al-Mu'ayyad and the Buyid *amir* Abu Kalijar from the *Sira* is frequently cited in order to indicate al-Mu'ayyad's "conversion" of Abu Kalijar to Isma'ilism.[24] At the same time, the *Sira* also provides concrete textual documentation of the eleventh-century Isma'ili *da'wa*'s application of the *Da'a'im al-Islam* in the context of religious instruction outside of the center of the Fatimid Isma'ili *da'wa* in Cairo.[25] This particular passage from the *Sira* quite clearly indicates the manner in which written texts were incorporated and employed in the *majlis*. A written chapter from Qadi al-Nu'man's *Da'a'im al-Islam* is used in conjunction with the recitation of certain parts of the Qur'an, which, as al-Mu'ayyad points out, Abu Kalijar suggested and requested himself. The *majlis* is then followed by the traditional closures to a lecture: the praise to God (*tamhid*) and closing honorific to the current ruler (*khutba*). As the text indicates, portions of the chapter from the *Da'a'im al-Islam* were read over the course of several lectures in order to facilitate additional questions and commentaries on the written text itself or perhaps other themes as well. Al-Mu'ayyad's narration of Abu Kalijar's active interest in the *Da'a'im al-Islam*

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[23]*Sira*, 43; Hamdani, *The Sira*, 43; Klemm, *Die Mission*, 16, 157–158. Klemm divides the *majalis* held by al-Mu'ayyad with Abu Kalijar into four parts: reading from the Qur'an; a chapter from the *Da'a'im*; the discussion of a "theme" between al-Mu'ayyad and Abu Kalijar; and finally, the *khutba* for "*mawlana al-imam*."

[24]Qutbuddin, *Al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi*, 28–29.

[25]According to Qadi al-Nu'man's own account in his *Majalis wa al-Musayarat*, the *Da'a'im al-Islam* was written under the scholarly direction of the caliph al-Mu'izz at the time of the foundation of the Fatimid dynasty in Cairo. Both the Fatimid and the later "Egyptian" sources attest to the fact that Qadi al-Nu'man read the *Da'a'im al-Islam* in the setting of the tenth-century Fatimid *da'wa*'s *majlis*. S. M. Stern points to the "evolution" of Qadi al-Nu'man's works: "It is remarkable that the *Ta'wil al-Da'a'im* is divided into *majalis*; this clearly indicates its origin as a lecture course." Also see Stern, "Cairo as the Centre," 238. H. Halm has indicated (*Empire of the Mahdi*, Leiden, 1996, 376, citing *Majalis wa al-Musayarat*, 283, para. 283) that Qadi al-Nu'man's *Majalis* refers to the drafting of the *Ta'wil al-Da'a'im al-Islam*, in addition to the audience of individuals who have taken an oath of loyalty in order to attend the sessions discussing this work. See *Majalis wa al-Musayarat*, 142, para. 83; 212, para. 106; 269, para. 134; 301, para. 156; 305, para. 158, refers specifically to Qadi al-Nu'man's reading of the *Kitab Da'a'im al-Islam* in the *majlis*. Qadi al-Nu'man's reading of the *majlis* "lectures" is also referred to in Maqrizi's *Khitat*. See *Khitat*, Bulaq Edition, (Beirut, 1971), Volume I, 390–391, 388–400; Volume II, 341–342.

makes it apparent that the lectures held on a weekly basis were in a *majlis* setting akin to a study session rather than one of a "literary salon."[26]

It would be difficult to find a more appropriate passage from a historical work which details al-Mu'ayyad's method of holding a *majlis* as well as his use of Fatimid texts in the course of instruction. Another example of al-Mu'ayyad's employment of the *Da'a'im al-Islam* in a public setting exists, however, in the course of his first polemical debate at the Buyid court of Abu Kalijar. Al-Mu'ayyad refers to the *Da'a'im al-Islam* in his debate (*munazara*) on the *ta'wil* of the Qur'an.[27] According to the *Sira*, al-Mu'ayyad's skillful disputation in defense of the Isma'ili concept of the allegorical interpretation of the Qur'an had a highly favorable outcome. Abu Kalijar is convinced by the arguments al-Mu'ayyad upheld during the debate and then wishes to study with al-Mu'ayyad.[28] Though scholarly debates were often a standard feature of the court *majlis*, as also seen in a number of other examples from al-Mu'ayyad's *Sira*, it points to the fact that more frequently than not the lectures on Isma'ili doctrine held by al-Mu'ayyad in Shiraz were study sessions (either formal or informal) or sermons.[29]

Al-Mu'ayyad's autobiographical accounts of his troubles and triumphs at the Buyid court are distinctive because the *Sira* is the only extant source that contains any degree of historical information on the Fatimid Isma'ili *majlis* in eleventh-century Western Iran. Moreover, the *Sira* permits a number of observations on

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[26]"Madjlis," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1960–2005), 1031–1033; F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schriftum* (Leiden, 1967), vol. II, 83–85, primarily on works of *majalis* and *amali*. There are some prime examples of the caliph's *majlis* in al-Jahiz's *Kitab al-Taji*, ed. A. Z. Pasha (Cairo, 1914). French trans., Ch. Pellat, *Le Livre de la couronne* (Paris, 1954). Other examples are given in D. Brookshaw, "Palace, Pavilions and Pleasure-gardens: the Context and Setting of the Medieval *Majlis*," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 6, no. 2 (2003): 99–223; M. R. Cohen and S. Somekh, "Interreligious Majalis in Early Fatimid Egypt," in *The Majlis*, ed. H. Lazarus-Yafeh and M. Cohen (Wiesbaden, 1999), 128–136; S. Stroumsa, "Ibn al-Rawandi's *su' adab al-mujadala*: the Role of Bad Manners in Medieval Disputations," in *The Majlis* ed. Lazarus-Yafeh and Cohen, 66–67. During the reign of the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz, the vizier Ibn Killis also hosted his own private *majlis* study sessions. The *majalis* at the Fatimid court in the presence of al-Mu'izz discussed in this article are supported by an important Genizah document. S. Stroumsa, with regard to the extant Ibn al-Rawandi material, examines the *majlis* as a forum for debate. For an additional discussion of the *majlis*, albeit neither from the Isma'ili nor Fatimid contexts, see N. Pourjavadi, "Majalis-i Ahmad-i Ghazzali ba hudur-i Yusuf-i Sufi," *Ma'arif* 55 (1381): 3–20, which presents detailed information on the *majalis* Ahmad-i Ghazzali (d. 1161 CE) delivered in Baghdad and which are partially preserved in Ibn al-Jawzi's work on sermons, the *Kitab al-Qussas wa al-Mudhakirin*.

[27]*Sira*, 16–25. In the text of the debate, al-Mu'ayyad is referred to as Hibat Allah b. Musa. See *Sira*, 16.

[28]*Sira*, 43–44.

[29]With regard to al-Mu'ayyad's accounts of his debates held at the Buyid court of Abu Kalijar, Wasserstein states (110): "Unlike the great majority of such texts, the memoirs of this Isma'ili missionary appear in large part to offer a reflection of historical truth." D. J. Wasserstein, "The 'Majlis of al-Rida': A Religious Debate in the Court of the Caliph Al-Ma'mun as Represented in a Shi'i Hagiographical Work about the Eighth Imam 'Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida," in *The Majlis*, ed. Lazarus-Yafeh and Cohen, 108–118; 109–110 (on al-Mu'ayyad in particular).

the employment of the *Da'a'im al-Islam* as a Fatimid Isma'ili text in the context of religious instruction, given the fact that Abu Kalijar's introduction to Isma'ili doctrine, as far as it can be ascertained, is through the guided study of a chapter from this work. As the *Da'a'im al-Islam* focuses primarily on the basic duties of Islam and "pillars" of practice, it is my opinion that in the particular example of Abu Kalijar's *majlis* with al-Mu'ayyad, the chapter from the *Da'a'im al-Islam* constitutes the very sort of introduction to Isma'ili doctrine suitable for non-Isma'ilis or potential "converts" as suggested by Hamdani. But at the end of this study, we shall return to the question of Abu Kalijar's "conversion" and religious instruction in Isma'ili doctrine once again.

Fitna *in Shiraz and Ahwaz*

From the vantage point of the medieval Islamic Persianate world, Sufi *sira* and biographical literature offer a similar perspective onto life at the courts of local dynastic rulers and governors as tenth–eleventh-century Fatimid works of *sira* literature provide for the history of medieval Cairo and Egypt. Perhaps surprisingly, al-Mu'ayyad's accounts of the emergence of *fitna* in eleventh-century Shiraz and Ahwaz share distinctive features in common with the long tradition of Sufi works of religious autobiography and biography, especially such works as the tenth-century *Bad 'Sha'n Abi 'Abd Allah Muhammad al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi* of Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d. ca. 295–300 AH/905–910 CE), the *Sirat-i Ibn Khafif* (d. ca. 932 CE) of Abu al-Hasan al-Daylami (fl. fourth AH/tenth CE), and the *Kitab-i Firdaws al-Murshidiyya* of Mahmud 'Uthman al-Daylami (d. 747 AH/ 1346 CE).[30] Amongst the most striking features shared in common are the accounts of a ruler's "conversion," public debates in defense of doctrinal positions, and dream-vision narratives.

The disputation motif often appears as an important narrative feature within Sufi *sira* and hagiographical literature.[31] In the *Bad' Sha'n*, Tirmidhi recounts

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[30]Busse, interestingly enough, does not discuss any of the Buyid period Sufi autobiographical and biographical works of the Kazeruni tradition as possible primary sources for the social history of medieval Western Iran in his *Chalif und Grosskönig*. See in particular, H. Busse, "al-Daylami, Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali b. Mohammad," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. VII, 338–339; F. Sobieroj, *Ibn Hafif as-Sirazi und Seine Schrift zur Novizenerziehung (Kitab al-iqtisad)* (Beirut, 1998), 13–33, 238.

[31]B. Radtke, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism* (Richmond, 1996), 9–10. Radtke has indicated that Hakim al-Tirmidhi's *Bad' Sha'n* is one of the earliest surviving autobiographical works written in Arabic. In fact, al-Tirmidhi's work was not discovered until after Rosenthal had completed his seminal study on Islamic historiography. With regard to the autobiographical works of al-Tirmidhi, al-Mu'ayyad, and other authors, Robinson claims that the genre of autobiography was taken up by "non-traditionalist rationalists and iconoclasts (philosophers, mystics and Isma'ili Shi'ites." In his opinion, prior to the thirteenth century, autobiographical works were not indicative of the mainstream, traditionalist oriented method of historical narration. See in particular, C. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge, 2003), 95–96. Robinson, however, does not address Ibn Banna's eleventh-century autobiographical diary in this particular presentation of

being accused publicly of heresy. He narrates the events that led to the theological debates he participated in as being to defend his doctrinal position. Tirmidhi's autobiography selectively emphasizes his perseverance in spiritual matters despite adversity from the local political authorities and the opposing theologians at court.[32] While such narratives of public disputation are a common motif in Sufi *sira* literature and religious biography, they also provide evidence of the competition amongst different religious communities in medieval urban centers (and their surrounding environs) in Iran and Central Asia.[33]

Al-Mu'ayyad's "heresy episodes" from the *Sira* are similar in tone to Tirmidhi's. However, unlike the material from Tirmidhi's autobiography, they are richly corroborated by two extant, anonymous, medieval Persian local histories. The anonymous twelfth-century *Farsnama* refers directly to al-Mu'ayyad's growing influence at the Buyid court, on the *amir* Abu Kalijar, and his popularity amongst the Daylami community in Shiraz.[34] In the case of the Saljuq-period *Mujmal al-Tawarikh*, the account of Abu Kalijar's reign details the social repercussions of the influence of certain suspect religious doctrines on Abu Kalijar, which led to the outbreak of *fitna* in Shiraz. There is, however, a "multi-sectarian" aspect to the emergence of *fitna* in Shiraz during the time of al-Mu'ayyad's increasingly prominent *da'wa* activities, which included al-Mu'ayyad's growing influence on Abu Kalijar and Abu Kalijar's "conversion" to Isma'ilism.

Another prominent individual of Isma'ili affiliation, one of whom numbered among Abu Kalijar's closest companions at the Buyid court, also figures in al-Mu'ayyad's accounts of the public accusations against him.[35] In the *Sira*, it becomes apparent that one of Abu Kalijar's closest and most influential associates (a *nadim*) was someone whom al-Mu'ayyad claims had "embraced the Fatimid *madhhab* not for God" and "not through sincere belief."[36] Al-Mu'ayyad

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medieval autobiographical works. Likewise, he does not take a clear stance on Makdisi's theories about the development of a historiographical tradition from the diaries of traditionalist, *hadith*-focused scholars and historians. See Robinson (*Islamic Historiography*, 182). In many respects, Ibn Banna's diary is a parallel text to al-Mu'ayyad's *Sira*, especially given the fact that Ibn Banna, as a contemporary of al-Mu'ayyad, narrates many events from the vantage point of Baghdad and pays particular attention to outbreaks of *fitna* in different neighborhoods of mid-eleventh-century Baghdad. See G. Makdidi, "Autograph Diary of an Eleventh-Century Historian of Baghdad-I," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 18 (1956): 9–31, 239–260.

[32]Radtke, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism*, 2, 20–23. A debate is held at the court in order that Tirmidhi might defend his public preaching on the doctrine of love, from which he emerges victorious.

[33]D. Aigle, "Un Foundateur d'ordre en milieu rural," in *Saints orientaux* (Paris, 1995), which includes a number of examples concerning disputes between the Zoroastrian community of Kazerun and Sufi leaders; Radtke, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism*, 2.

[34]J. Meisami, *Persian Historiography* (Edinburgh, 1999), 185–188, explains that the *Farsnama* is replete with accounts of *fitna* in both the pre-Islamic and Islamic contexts as they concern the history of the Iranian province of Fars.

[35]See Klemm's most recent monograph, for a summary of the "other" Isma'ili's intrigues against al-Mu'ayyad. V. Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission* (London, 2003), 36–39.

[36]*Sira*, 44, 46; Qutbuddin, *Al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi*, 29.

disparagingly refers to this individual as the "renegade" (*al-mariq*). The presence of this other Isma'ili at the Buyid court turns out to be at the source of many of the problems that then follow for al-Mu'ayyad, including his increasingly unstable position in Shiraz itself. Using his influence at the Buyid court, the "renegade" Isma'ili was successful in his intrigues against al-Mu'ayyad as well as in his efforts to discredit the Fatimid Isma'ili *da'wa*. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad was ordered to suspend the public lectures on Isma'ili doctrine he held in Shiraz.[37] In the *Sira*, al-Mu'ayyad notes that the "renegade" brought his plans to fruition through meeting with the Sunni *qadi al-qudat* of Fars, 'Abd Allah al-Fazari. The "renegade" was then able to convince Abu Kalijar that al-Mu'ayyad had the power to mobilize his Daylami supporters against Abu Kalijar, to the extent that he could be overthrown.[38] In part, a group of individuals of different religious persuasions at the Buyid court coalesced to work steadily against al-Mu'ayyad as a Fatimid Isma'ili *da'i*, in order to discredit him, to break his hold on Abu Kalijar, and to exile him from Shiraz.[39]

Ultimately, al-Mu'ayyad's problems in Shiraz were due to the Sunni establishment's public accusations, spearheaded by the Sunni judge 'Abd Allah al-Fazari.[40] Whether or not the *amir*'s conversion to Isma'ilism in fact took place, it is reasonable to propose that there were initially a number of multi-sectarian reactions at the Buyid court to al-Mu'ayyad's growing influence on Abu Kalijar.

In order to understand the multi-sectarian response to the presence of al-Mu'ayyad's *da'wa* activities, it is important to turn to the pivotal role the *qadi* Ibn 'Abd Allah al-Fazari plays in the *Farsnama*'s rather polemical account of al-Mu'ayyad's influence on Abu Kalijar.[41] The role of the Fazari family as judges at the Buyid court, from the reign of 'Adud al-Dawla onward, is attested to in numerous Persian historical sources and Sufi biographical works. The *Kitab Firdaws al-Murshidiyya* discusses the role of the *qadi* al-Fazari, Ibn 'Abd Allah's father, at the court of Fakhr al-Mulk in Shiraz.[42] According to the *Shiraznama*,

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[37]*Sira*, 57–68.

[38]*Sira*, 60-64.

[39]*Sira*, 44, 46; Qutbuddin, *Al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi*, 29.

[40]*Sira*, 63.

[41]See *Sira*, 3–79, 44–49; Klemm, *Die Mission*, 183–184; Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 185–188. It is important to note here that in the thirteenth-century Persian history, the *Nizam al-Tawarikh* of al-Baydawi (c. 674 AH/1275 CE), there is no mention of Isma'ili influence on Abu Kalijar. See, however, the accounts on Abu Kalijar and the Buyid dynasty. *Nizam al-Tawarikh*, ed. H. S. Qadri (Hyderabad, 1930), 63–68.

[42]*Farsnama*, 118; *Kitab-i Firdaws al-Murshidiyya*, ed. F. Meier (Leipzig, 1943), 117–119; Sobieroj, *Ibn Hafif as-Sirazi*, 199. The *Kitab-i Firdaws al-Murshidiyya* contains a great deal of relevant information on the strength and continuity of certain religious communities in tenth–eleventh-century Shiraz and its surrounding environs—the Sufis, the traditional Qur'anic storytellers, and jurists. One sub-chapter from this work, entitled "The Account of the Beginning of the *Majlis* of the Shaykh Murshid (may God bless his inner-most secret)," records several accounts of sermons being delivered at the congregational mosque of the old town (*dar masjid-i jami'-i shahr-i kuhna*) and the almost visceral tensions which subsequently developed between the sufi shaykh and the traditional deliverers of the Friday sermons (*wa'z*) in Kazerun, the traditional storytellers. See *Kitab-i Firdaws*, 134–135.

al-Fazari taught in a Sufi meeting place (*khanaqa*) of Ibn-i Khafif's Sufi followers.[43] The fourteenth-century Sufi manual on pilgrimage sites, the *Shadd al-Izar*, also discusses the *madrasa* al-Fazari founded.[44] An examination of the *Sira* in conjunction with the Persian local histories also points to the prominence of the Sunni religious establishment in Shiraz and its surrounding environs under Buyid rule. The importance of the *Farsnama*, however, lies in the fact that as a local history, it attests to al-Mu'ayyad's Isma'ili *da'wa* activities amongst the Daylamis, his initial success in converting Abu Kalijar to Isma'ilism, and his troubles with the Sunni *qadi* 'Abd Allah al-Fazari.[45] In this Persian local history, al-Fazari convinces Abu Kalijar that al-Mu'ayyad's popularity amongst the Daylami community poses a substantial threat to the stability of his rule in Shiraz. The *Farsnama* likewise narrates in a parallel manner to the *Sira*, al-Mu'ayyad's decision to go to Cairo after being sent into exile, due to the *qadi* Ibn 'Abd Allah al-Fazari's ultimate success in convincing Abu Kalijar to cease supporting al-Mu'ayyad *da'wa* activities.[46]

Are there, however, any other indications of Abu Kalijar's potential Isma'ili affiliation? One passage from the *Sira* states how it was the custom of Abu Kalijar to be present at the congregational mosque (*al-masjid al-jami'*) in Shiraz every Friday during the month of Ramadan. Abu Kalijar's mosque attendance during the month of Ramadan could be a significant detail, given the fact that this was a custom of the Fatimid caliphs, such as al-Hakim and al-Zahir.[47] In addition, albeit from an even more hostile Sunni perspective, the *Mujmal al-Tawarikh* corroborates the *Farsnama* on the matter of Abu Kalijar's periodic, non-Sunni religious affiliation. One passage from the *Mujmal al-Tawarikh* states that Abu Kalijar's changing religious beliefs directly resulted in the outbreak of *fitna* during his reign, suggesting that in the eyes of his contemporaries, Abu Kalijar had fallen under the influence of "bad" doctrines.[48]

Al-Mu'ayyad and the Daylamis

Given that two of the public accusations lodged against al-Mu'ayyad concerned his influence over the Daylamis in Shiraz, it is important to consider further al-Mu'ayyad's relationship with the Daylami communities in Shiraz and Ahwaz.

[43]Ibn Zarkub-i Shirazi, *Shiraznama*, ed. I. W. Jawadi (Tehran, 1351), 53, 151. In addition, see Sobieroj, *Ibn Hafif as-Sirazi*, 18, on the *Shiraznama*'s use of Sufi works.

[44]*Shadd al-Izar*, ed. M. Qazwini and A. Iqbal (Tehran, 1328/1950), 358–365, 396–397.

[45]See *Sira*, 66, 69; *Farsnama*, ed. G. LeStrange and R. A. Nicholson (London, 1921), 117–119; Klemm, *Die Mission*, 37–38; Sobieroj, *Ibn Hafif as-Sirazi*, 181–182.

[46]*Farsnama*, 117–119; *Sira*, 63: the *qadi* denounces al-Mu'ayyad.

[47]*Sira*, 63. See P. Sanders, *Ritual and Politics in Fatimid Cairo* (Albany, NY, 1994), 26, 60–61, 64–67. On the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim leading the Friday prayer at different mosques throughout Cairo during the month of Ramadan, see al-Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, ed. M. Hilmi (Cairo, 1971–1973), vol. II, 97–99. I would like to thank Professor P. Sanders for pointing out this detail to me.

[48]*Mujmal al-Tawarikh* (2000), 311.

When the above-mentioned accounts from the *Sira* and the local histories are considered together as a whole, they also reflect a shift in the growing prominence of the Fatimid Isma'ili *da'wa* and al-Mu'ayyad in eleventh-century Buyid Shiraz. In the *Sira*, prior to the outbreak of *fitna* in Shiraz, when al-Mu'ayyad delivers a sermon on 'Id, most of the audience in attendance is from the Daylamis and the Buyid *amir* is only slightly aware of his existence.[49] In the *Farsnama*, despite its Sunni bias, it is noted about al-Mu'ayyad that, "amongst the Daylam, it was accepted that he was like a prophet (*payghambari*)."[50] Based on the following passage itself as well as the previous quote from the *Sira*, it is reasonable to assume that in Shiraz and Ahwaz, the Daylamis constituted the main body of the Isma'ili community as well as al-Mu'ayyad's main supporters at the Buyid court. When the Isma'ili community in Shiraz first falls under the Sunni establishment's scrutiny, al-Mu'ayyad advises his supporters through the following sermon:

> I devoted myself to them with the sermon (*wa'z*) and the admonition (*al-indhar*) and I said: "You are well aware of the form of the time in terms of hardship and of the enemies dissimulating and increasing in number, even though they are the ones busily engaged in vilifying the beauty of our works and attributing terrible things to us, whereas we are the ones who excel in carrying out the burden of devotional duties and established obligations and the practices sanctioned by law and custom. So it is necessary that you rein in yourselves, better your deeds and piously fear God the pious fear He is due. Be mindful that what clings to one amongst you in shame or finds easy expression sets free slander upon [all of] you. Patience and peace upon you, as verily God is with the patient."[51]

In between his troubles at the Buyid court and his attempts to improve his relations with Abu Kalijar, al-Mu'ayyad traveled to Ahwaz. After a stay in Fasa, al-Mu'ayyad reclaimed a *masjid* he himself owned in the city of Ahwaz, ca. 432–33 AH/1041–42 CE. Al-Mu'ayyad states the following: "I had owned a *masjid* fallen into disrepair that the Sufis (*al-sufiyya*) retired to … and they busied themselves with its building until they made it into a sight wondrous to the eyes."[52] In the *masjid*, al-Mu'ayyad inscribed on the *mihrab* the names of the Prophet, 'Ali, Hasan and Husayn, Ja'far b. Muhammad, Isma'il b. Ja'far and Muhammad b. Isma'il. Also included in the inscription were the names of the Fatimid caliphs, up to al-Mustansir. In addition to having the Shi'i call to prayer (*adhan*) recited there, al-Mu'ayyad wanted to hold the Friday prayers in this *masjid* and to give the sermon (*khutba*) in the name of al-Mustansir.[53]

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[49]*Sira*, 3–5; Buyid critique of the Fatimid *da'wa*, p. 4.
[50]*Farsnama*, 119.
[51]*Sira*, 5.
[52]*Sira*, 55; Busse, *Chalif und Grosskönig*, 125–127; Qutbuddin, *Al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi*, 42.
[53]*Sira*, 54–57; Hamdani, *The Sira*, 37; Klemm, *Die Mission*, 20–22; Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi*, 42.

At this juncture of the *Sira*, al-Mu'ayyad states that he had informed the Daylamis from this city, who were supporters of Fatimid *da'wa* activities, if not also Isma'ili in persuasion, that he was interested in establishing these two manifestly Fatimid testimonies at the *masjid*.[54] After his intention became public knowledge, general tumult ensued in Ahwaz, placing al-Mu'ayyad once again in tenuous relationships vis-à-vis the Sunni scholarly community and the Buyid and 'Abbasid political authorities. In what follows in the text of the *Sira*, the *qadi* Ibn Mushtari writes to the caliph in Baghdad and notifies him of the problems emerging from al-Mu'ayyad's *da'wa* activities in Ahwaz.[55] This section of the *Sira* also provides a narrative function with regard to explaining the widening circle of intrigues against al-Mu'ayyad (i.e., the involvement of the 'Abbasid authority from Baghdad, Ibn al-Muslima), which ultimately led to al-Mu'ayyad's second debate at the Buyid court and his final exile from Shiraz. It also provides evidence that amongst the Daylamis in Ahwaz, a weekly *majlis* was held on Tuesdays.[56]

According to the *Sira*, al-Mu'ayyad's debate with the Zaydi Shi'i scholar at the Buyid court was arranged at the suggestion of the "renegade" Isma'ili, who was primarily concerned with discrediting al-Mu'ayyad.[57] Although al-Mu'ayyad's collection of lectures, the *Majalis al-Mu'ayyadiyya*, presents certain aspects of the doctrines of the "Shortcomers" (*Muqassirun*), or those who deny the importance of the doctrine of *walaya* in the absence (the "occultation" or *ghayba* in the Zaydi and Ithna 'Ashari Shi'i traditions) of the *imam*, the debate at the Buyid court in Shiraz between al-Mu'ayyad and the Zaydi scholar may provide some historical insight into the possible sources of al-Mu'ayyad's later *da'wa* teachings on *walaya* and the figure of the *imam*.[58] In addition, there are other passages in the *Sira* where al-Mu'ayyad makes reference to the beliefs of the Shi'i inhabitants of towns in Western Iran, such as Pasa or Fasa), which may likewise reflect some

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[54]*Sira*, 55 ff..

[55]*Sira*, 55, n. 2. Kamil-Husayn points out that the *qadi* of Khuzistan and Fars, Abu al-Hasan 'Abd al-Wahab b. Mansur b. al-Mushtari (d.ca. 436–37 AH/1044 CE) is mentioned in Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-Ta'rikh*, vol. IX, 36. I have not, however, been able to locate this reference. Klemm, *Die Mission*, 40, n. 2, indicates that there are two other biographical references to Ibn Mushtari as a judge, in Ibn Kathir's *al-Bidaya* and al-Baghdadi's *Ta'rikh*. See in particular, L. Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj*, trans. H. Mason (Princeton, 1982), Volume I, 140 ff., for his discussion of public preaching in tenth-century Ahwaz in addition to how both scribes and judges in Ahwaz maintained strong ties with 'Abbasid Basra and Baghdad throughout the third AH/ninth CE.

[56]*Sira*, 55–61.

[57]*Sira*, 57. Al-Mu'ayyad describes how the Zaydi Shi'i scholar was someone who associated with the Sufis, the traditional storytellers, and the *hadith* scholars (*ashab al-hadith*). See Hamdani, *The Sira*, 38. On Zaydi Shi'ism in tenth- to eleventh-century Buyid Iran, see Busse, *Chalif und Grosskönig*, 286 ff; "The Minor Dynasties of Northern Iran," in, *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge, 1974), vol. IV, 206–225; W. Madelung, "Zu einigen Werken des Imams Abu Talib an-Natiq bi l-Haqq," *Der Islam*, 63 (1986): 5–10.

[58]*Sira*, 57–60.

of al-Mu'ayyad's views on Shi'i communities in Western Iran.[59] One such passage from the *Sira*, as Halm has noted, presents al-Mu'ayyad's account of the destruction of a Shi'i shrine for pilgrimage in Pasa around 1038 CE, which suggests further research into these issues may yield more information about the history of different Shi'i communities in Western Iran at the time of al-Mu'ayyad.[60]

Following al-Mu'ayyad's second debate at the Buyid court, however, is one of the most intriguing passages in the *Sira*. Al-Mu'ayyad narrates another individual's dream vision concerning the unjustness of his persecution at the hands of the 'Abbasid authority, Ibn al-Muslima. There are also a number of historical details in this account, for example, the description of the people of Shiraz gathering and attending public sermons delivered on festival days. In the dream of this unnamed individual from the Buyid court, 'Ali delivers a sermon defending al-Mu'ayyad to the people of Shiraz.

> a person from the retinue—there was no association between him and I, and no acquaintance except rarely—saw in his dream, just as the sleeping person sees, the people of Shiraz heading towards their place of prayer in accordance to the custom of festivals, and he asked about the reason for their hurry when it wasn't a festival day. The speaker said: "The *Amir al-mu'minin* 'Ali b. Abi Talib (peace be upon him) is in the place of prayer (*al-musalla*), delivering a sermon to the people." The man said: "So I rushed in the crowd of people hurrying, for then he, peace be upon him, is on the dune of sand, and he is delivering the sermon known by the one seeing the vision (*al-ru'ya*)," according to what he said. Then when he ['Ali] finished, he spread out his hands and lifted the two of them to the sky, and the people raised their hands as he had raised his two hands, and he said: "Oh God, destroy (*ahlik*) the one who harmed so-and-so"—meaning me by it—except that he confused the wording in his narrative with his, peace be upon him, the expression "destroy" (*ahlik*) precisely in the same way, or the word was similar to the meaning of "destroy" (*al-halak*). The man said: "Then I awoke and I was terrified by this fearful vision," and I said to myself, "Then the people really are wrong in intending to harm this person, and that certain person—meaning the one he named specifically—who is from the king's associates and from among the intimates of the king, is sincere" ... The man made his way to the audience of the king and narrated to him the dream vision, and the king became filled with anger over it.[61]

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[59]*Sira*, 12; Hamdani, *The Sira*, 30–31. Hamdani also notes that *qasida* No. 23 from al-Mu'ayyad's collection of poetry, the *Diwan*, discusses how Isma'ilis were massacred and the tombs of the Shi'i *imam* Musa al-Kazim and Ja'far b. Khaddad were destroyed on the order of Ibn Muslima. See Hamdani, *The Sira*, 125.

[60]H. Halm, *Die Kalifen von Kairo* (Munich, 2003), 352–353.

[61]*Sira*, 66–67, referred to by Qutbuddin, *al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi*, 43, n. 63; Klemm, *Die Mission*, 27.

In a state of irritation, and convinced that al-Mu'ayyad might have been the one who invented the dream vision in order to vindicate himself, Abu Kalijar places al-Mu'ayyad under house arrest. Seven months later, al-Mu'ayyad's exile followed at the official request of the 'Abbasid authority in Baghdad, Ibn al-Muslima, and the Buyid *amir* Abu Kalijar. His exile in 437 AH/1046 CE marked the end of his public Fatimid *da'wa* activities in Shiraz.[62]

The "Conversion" of Abu Kalijar

Abu Kalijar's study sessions with al-Mu'ayyad and the evidence from the *Sira al-Mu'ayyadiyya* concerning the Daylami support of al-Mu'ayyad's public *da'wa* activities and sermons give us a good idea of the degree of the Fatimid Isma'ili *da'wa*'s presence in eleventh-century Shiraz and Ahwaz. In fact, the growing support for Fatimid Isma'ili *da'wa* under the direction of al-Mu'ayyad reached such heights that it attracted the hostile attention of the Sunni establishment in Shiraz and Ahwaz as well as the 'Abbasid authorities in distant Baghdad.

Currently, there are two scholarly discussions linked to the medieval Fatimid Isma'ili *majlis* as a form of religious instruction that help to clarify the matter of Abu Kalijar's interest in Isma'ili doctrine. Although the Fatimid *majlis* drew upon specific subjects from the medieval Islamic sciences for the purposes of religious instruction, there is no doubt that Qadi al-Nu'man's *Da'a'im al-Islam* served as a core text for the tenth–eleventh-century Fatimid *da'wa*, especially for introducing the religio-political principles of Fatimid rule in public sessions. In brief, both scholarly discussions of the Fatimid *majlis* address the function, what might be termed the topical content of the Isma'ili *majlis*, and the question of the audience in attendance at the *majlis*. One theory proposes that the Fatimid *majlis* served as formal lectures and study sessions, only open to members of the Isma'ili *da'wa*. Another theory suggests that the *majlis* noticeably exemplified exclusive or inclusive approaches to Isma'ili *da'wa* teachings, in the sense that the lectures were addressed to more than one audience. The lectures therefore reflected a varied presentation of different aspects of Isma'ili doctrine, so that non-Isma'ilis or potential "converts" could then attend.

Was it then merely coincidental that Abu Kalijar chose to study the *Da'a'im al-Islam* with al-Mu'ayyad? Did it entail a change of religious affiliation on the part of Abu Kalijar? According to the eleventh-century members of the Fatimid Isma'ili *da'wa*, the *Da'a'im al-Islam* most likely also served as a foundational text on Isma'ili religio-political doctrines, forming the basis for their explanation and elaboration of the key tenets of Isma'ilism to non-Isma'ilis in public sessions. The above-mentioned points would imply that studying the *Da'a'im* in a *majlis* would not require the "conversion" of Abu Kalijar to Isma'ilism. Another account from the *Sira*, the public debate on the *ta'wil* of the Qur'an at the Buyid

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[62]Hamdani, *The Sira*, 40–45; Klemm, *Die Mission*, 26–27; Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj*, 57, n. 24.

court, draws further attention to the fact that members of the Fatimid *da'wa* employed the text of the *Da'a'im* in non-*da'wa*, public settings.[63]

In view of the larger historical significance of Abu Kalijar's initial support of al-Mu'ayyad, Klemm has suggested that in the years 430–433 AH/1038–42 CE (the very years in which al-Mu'ayyad maintained a certain degree of prominence at the Buyid court), Abu Kalijar sought to establish his independence from Baghdad. During this time, he also took on the Persianate title of *shahanshah* ("King of Kings").[64] According to the *Sira*, al-Mu'ayyad viewed Abu Kalijar's interest in studying the *Da'a'im* as an excellent and ideal opportunity to then suggest to the Buyid *amir* the possibility of forging political alliances with the Fatimid dynasty.[65] It is also likely that Abu Kalijar's close associates at the Buyid court and the Sunni establishment in Shiraz would have viewed his study of the *Da'a'im* as the acceptance of a Fatimid testimony. However, as al-Mu'ayyad explains, Abu Kalijar's interest in further pursuing the practice of Isma'ili doctrine or following al-Mu'ayyad's religious guidance quickly faded.[66] In sum, Abu Kalijar became increasingly suspicious of al-Mu'ayyad the Fatimid missionary, as different individuals clamoring for power and influence at court began to intrigue against al-Mu'ayyad and to discredit the idea of an alliance with the Fatimid dynasty. In the end, "the pressure of the Sunni lobby pushed the government to curb the ambitious mediator" and al-Mu'ayyad was sent into exile from Shiraz.[67]

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[63]*Sira*, 16–43; Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission*, 27–29.

[64]Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission*, 48–49. The *Sira* refers to Abu Kalijar by the title of *shahanshah*. See *Sira*, 62.

[65]*Sira*, 43–44. There is another account in the *Sira* that lends more credence to the theory that Abu Kalijar might have been seriously considering an alliance with the Fatimids. A year after al-Mu'ayyad leaves Shiraz, Abu Kalijar writes a letter to al-Mu'ayyad, suggesting that he draft a treaty for an alliance between the Buyids and the Fatimids, in order to stave off the threat of the impending Saljuq invasions. See *Sira*, 76–78.

[66]*Sira*, 44–54.

[67]Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission*, 48.