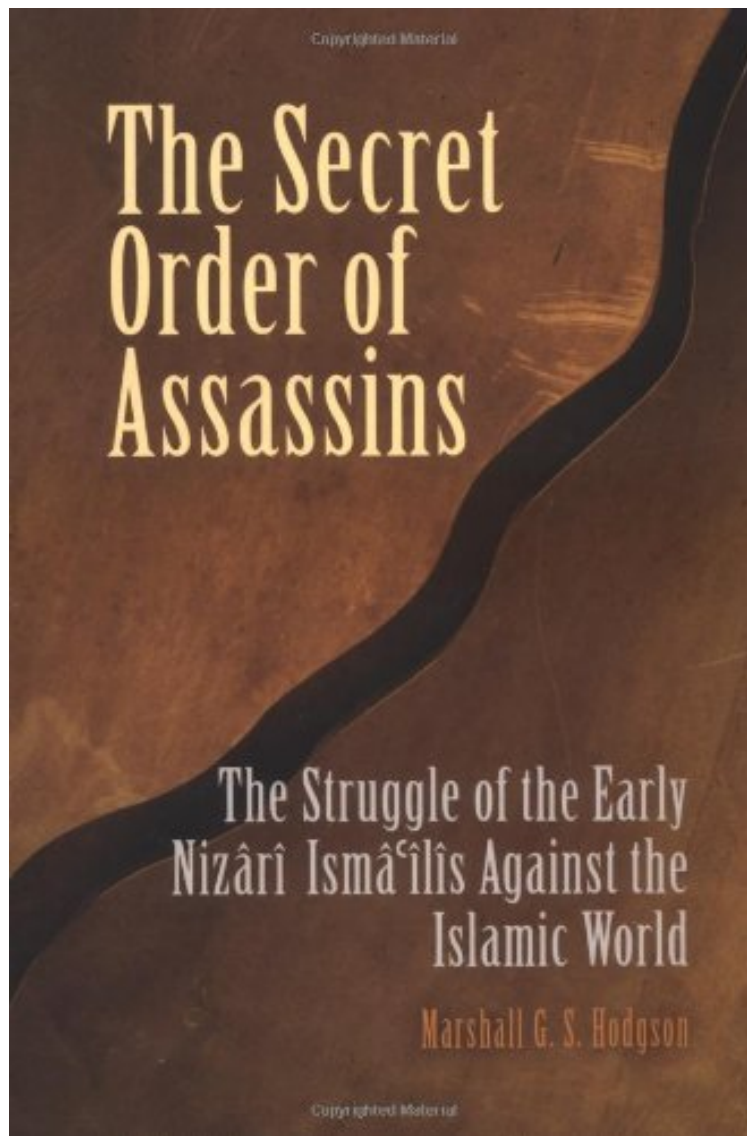


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Marshall G. S. Hodgson

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#811049 in Books Marshall G S Hodgson 2005-03-08Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.02 x .82 x 5.981, 1.26 #File Name: 0812219163368 pagesThe Secret Order of Assassins The Struggle of the Early Nizari Ismai lis Against the Islamic World | File size: 46.Mb

Marshall G. S. Hodgson : The Secret Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizari Ismai'lis Against the Islamic World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Secret Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizari Ismai'lis Against the Islamic World:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Mr Hodgson's book is a good work about the Nizaris. By Rodrigo Abdo. Mr Hodgson's book is a good work about the Nizaris. However, it is based on his researches for his phd and because of that his approach to the theme is in my opinion too "academic" making the reading a little tiring for people who are not used to this kind of writing style. (there is no illustrations also and it definitely doesn't make the reader's task easier...) I don't recommend this book for people who want to just read a good history book for leisure but I recommend this for an academic research about the Nizaris and their time.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Good Foundational Text for the Assassins. By Metatron Marshall G. Hodgson's *The Secret Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizari Ismailis Against the Islamic World* investigates the origins of Nizari Ismailis and how they became a formidable threat to Sunni and Shia sects of Islam. As most histories centered on the Muslim world tend to do, the account commences at the formation and rise of Islam on the Arabian Peninsula, and the schism that occurred with the murder of Ali, the fourth Caliphate, in 661 C.E. From this schism emerged the division of Islam into two sects: Sunni and Shia. This partitioning of Islam led to further fissures in the religion, giving rise to various sub-sects. Hodgson notes that there is no clear picture of the rise of Ismailism, but, after 900 C.E., a clear structure and organization became evident. The sect erected a power structure known as the Ismaili Dynasty of Egypt also known as the Fimidi Caliphate. Within this empire, the doctrinal foundations of the sect are further elaborated and solidified; however, another schism occurred over the succession of the Imam. The setting aside of Nizari, in his rightful ascendancy to the position of Imam, led Hasan-i Sabbah to set out on his own with his followers to establish their sect: Nizari Ismailis. Under Hasan-i Sabbah, the sect underwent a reformation of the original Ismaili doctrines and practices. Hodgson pieces together the history of the sects exodus from Fimidi Egypt, indicating that Hasan-i Sabbah initiated a military campaign simultaneously with their alienation away from their former home. The military operations were aimed at both Fimidi Egypt and the Saljuq Turks, who occupied Sunni lands. They seized Alamut in 1090 C.E., an inaccessible, rough terrain location, which provided short routes between the important city of Qazvin and the Caspian Sea. The barrage of assaults unleashed by the Nizari Ismailis horrified and baffled the Saljuq Turks, as they were devastated by the sect of Hasan-i Sabbah. Hodgson presents a picture that shows the complexity of Islamic world and how factional disputes among the Saljuq Turks benefited the Assassins. Also, Hodgson discusses and examines the employed method of struggle used by the Nizaris, assassination. He reexamines Islamic history when such precedents for the use of assassinations were set. Just as the Kharijites had done, they sought to overturn all who did not agree with their view of puritanical Islam. They labeled all their enemies as backsliders. This was deliberate imitation of that archetype deployed by Muhammad's own military stratagem to take Mecca, posits Hodgson. Not only was assassination employed, but the use of blockades and the disruption of supply routes. However, from various other sources I've read, this seems to be a polemical view towards the sect. Understanding the religious teachings of the sect over time evinces a different motive behind their use of assassination. They aimed at protecting their hierarchical structure of knowledge, which they desired to preserve for future generations. This structure is what scared the Sunni establishment. Hodgson asserts that such tactics were not used for the sake of carving out a vast expanse of territory, but rather for the purpose of evincing to their enemies that they rule by a formidable power. Assassinations demonstrated to all that the absolute power of fear was the method for Ismaili governance. These methods allowed them to gain outposts away from Alamut, where they captured fortresses in Syria and Ifahan just to name a few. Later, Syria would become an important outpost for one of the most heroic and well-known names of the sect, Rashid ad-Din Sinan. The history contained in this book tries to evince not only chronology of events, but also the guiding philosophy behind the sect. Hodgson sets the account of the Nizari Ismailis in the light of their philosophical underpinnings. This seemed to be a painful chore, as the scholarship and pertinent documents addressing Ismailism had not been fully developed. As this book was written in the 1950s, many of the sources relied upon by scholars were those of medieval Sunni sources or Crusader accounts. Ismaili sources were rare and seldom available for scholars. The Sunni accounts resort to polemical attacks on the Assassins, which may have been justified. It must be remembered that most of the Middle East at that time, was ruled by Sunni Muslims, who sought to extinguish all other sects of Islam. Hodgson makes ample use of these statements from the sources, but, just because they are Sunni sources, does not mean they should be discounted. Hodgson works with the sources that are available to him, rendering scholarly work with an interesting perspective of the Nizari Ismailis. The picture provided by Hodgson is a foundational starting point for any who are interested in the Assassins. Hodgson is not only known for this book, but also for the standard volume of texts that provide the best account of Islamic history as a whole, *The Venture of Islam*.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The best work on this subject. By auto585415. The definitive work on the topic of the now-infamous Nizari Assassins and the small independent state they tried to create back in the 1100s and 1200s. Despite the fact that the original work dates back to 1955, it remains the best and most informative book on their history, customs, and beliefs. No other book packs quite the information that this one does on this topic. There are many other books on this topic that try to do it, but just don't come close, as they often get too sensational, political, or biased, or they just don't go into much detail. As a disclaimer, this book is not for those looking for an easy, action-packed retelling of the Nizari efforts. It is excellent for those doing scholarly research on them or for dedicated enthusiasts who want hard info and facts to the best of an author's ability with what sources were and are available on this secretive group.

The sect known as "the Assassins," a corruption of an Arabic word that means hashish smoker, is familiar to the West as a mystical cult of killers led by the "Man in the Mountain" encountered by the Crusaders. But it was not defeat at the hands of Christians that ended more than a century of Assassin rule; it was the massive and brutal invasion of Mongols from the East who conquered Assassin strong points and mountain fortifications one by one, crushing nearly all traces of this once fearsome sect. For nearly two centuries the Ftimids, Shi'ite Muslims who believed Mohammed's daughter Ftimah was his successor, attempted to control the Islamic world from their seat in Cairo. Following the death of the Ftimid caliphate al Mustansir in 1094, members of a faction in Persia that supported a deposed claimant to the caliphate, Nizr, believed they now represented Ftimid interests. These Nizr Ism'ls ended up separating themselves from mainstream Islam and creating their own state in parts of present-day Syria, Iraq, and Iran. In order to establish and maintain regional control, the Nizr Ism'ls used political murders and spies to subjugate or influence rival caliphates and the dominant Saljqs. Marshall Hodgson's first major book, *The Secret Order of the Assassins* remains the most complete history of the Assassins. Beginning the story with the separation of Sunnis and Shi'ites and the rise of Ism'ism, an offshoot of Shi'ism, Hodgson traces the long and complex history of power struggles within Islam that led ultimately to the separation of the Nizr Ism'ls and their direct challenge to Muslim leadership. Hodgson goes on to explain the principles of the movement, provides an examination of their sacred texts, and follows the history of the group from the pinnacle of power in the mid-eleventh century to its legacy in the form of small pockets of followers in parts of contemporary Syria and India. Long out of print and appearing for the first time in paperback, this book is an illuminating study in the history of Islam.

"The essential work on the Assassins." *Times Literary Supplement* About the Author Marshall G. S. Hodgson (1921-68) taught history at the University of Chicago. A major scholar of Islamic civilization, he was the author of numerous books and articles, including *The Venture of Islam*.