



## The Institute of Ismaili Studies

- Title:** Nur al-Din Muhammad II (542-607 AH / 1148-1210 CE)
- Author:** Farhad Daftary
- Source:** [\*The Encyclopaedia of Islam\*](#) (Second Edition), Volume VII, 1995, pp. 133-134, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs, (E.J. Brill)

---

*Copyright permission has been sought from the aforementioned publisher.*

*The use of materials published on the Institute of Ismaili Studies website indicates an acceptance of the Institute of Ismaili Studies' Conditions of Use. Each copy of the article must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed by each transmission. For all published work, it is best to assume you should ask both the original authors and the publishers for permission to (re)use information and always credit the authors and source of the information.*



## **Nur al-Din Muhammad II (542-607 AH / 1148-1210 CE)**

Farhad Daftary

This is an edited version of an article that was originally published in [\*The Encyclopaedia of Islam\*](#) (Second Edition), Volume VII, 1995, pp. 133-134, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs, (E.J. Brill).

Nur al-Din Muhammad II, Nizari Isma‘ili Imam and the fifth lord of Alamut (561-607 AH / 1166-1210 CE). Born in Shawwal 542 AH / March 1148 CE, he succeeded to the leadership of the Nizari community and state on the death of his father, Hasan II, on 6 Rabi‘ al-Awwal 561 AH / 9 January 1166. He devoted his long and peaceful reign of some forty-four years to managing the affairs of the Nizari *da‘wa* and community, especially in Persia, from the central headquarters of the Isma‘ilis at Alamut. Being a thinker and a prolific writer, he also contributed actively to the Nizari teachings of his time.

Nur al-Din Muhammad II affirmed the Nizari Fatimid genealogy of his father and, therefore, of himself. Henceforth, the lords of Alamut were acknowledged as *imams*, descendants of Nizar b. al-Mustansir, by the Nizari Isma‘ili community. In the doctrinal field, he systematically expounded and elaborated the important doctrine of the Qiyama, announced by his father in 559 AH / 1164 CE, and placed the current Nizari *imam* and his autonomous teaching authority at the very centre of that doctrine (see *Haft bab-i Baba Sayyidna*, ed. W. Ivanow, in *Two early Ismaili treatises*, Bombay 1933, pp. 4-42).

Aside from petty warfare, the history of the Nizari state in Persia was politically uneventful under Imam Nur al-Din Muhammad. However, the Syrian Nizaris were more involved at this time in their own local alliances and conflicts. There are also indications that a widening rift had developed between this Nizari *imam* and Rashid al-Din Sinan (d. 589 AH / 1193 CE), the contemporary leader of the Syrian Nizaris, although a complete break was avoided. Rashid al-Din and other Persian historians also report a detailed story about how the Nizaris of his time persuaded the famous Sunni theologian Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 606 AH / 1209 CE) to refrain from denouncing them in public. Having ruled longer than any other lord of Alamut, Nur al-Din Muhammad II died, possibly of poison, on 10 Rabi‘ al-Awwal 607 AH / 1 September 1210 CE.



## Bibliography

Juwayni, 'Ala' al-Din 'Ata-Malik. *Ta'rikh-i jahan gushay*, ed. M. Qazwini. London, 1912-1937, vol iii, pp. 240-242.

Juwayni, 'Ala' al-Din 'Ata-Malik. *Ta'rikh-i jahan gushay*, Eng. tr. J. A. Boyle, *The History of the World Conqueror*, vol ii, Manchester, 1958. pp. 697-699.

Rashid al-Din Fadl Allah, *Jami' al-tawarikh, qismat-i Isma'iliyan*, ed. M.T. Danishpazhuh and M. Mudarrisi Zanjani, Tehran 1338 Sh./1959, pp. 170-173.

Abu 'l-Qasim 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali Kashani, *Zubdat al-tawarikh, bakhsh-i Fatimiyan wa Nizariyan*, ed. M.T. Danishpazhuh, Tehran 1366 Sh./1987, pp. 208-214.

M.G.S. Hodgson, *The order of Assassins*, The Hague 1955, 160 ff., 180-4, 210-17, 225, 279-324 (containing the English tr. of the anonymous *Haft bab*, the only Persian Nizari work extant from this period).

I.K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Isma'ili literature*, Malibu 1977, pp. 258-259.

F. Daftary, *The Isma'ilis. Their history and doctrines*, Cambridge 1990, pp. 391-6, 400, 403-5, 687.