



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

The Fatimid Legacy and the Foundation of the Modern Nizari Ismaili Imamate

[Dr Daniel Beben](#)

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The Fatimid era is ubiquitous today in the discourse of the Nizari Ismaili imamate.¹ Yet this was not always the case. As with other societies and religious communities the world over, the arrangement and presentation of history in the Ismaili tradition has evolved in the course of time, with new historiographical agendas and subjects of emphasis emerging or receding in response to changes in the political and social contexts. In this chapter the place of the Fatimids in the cultural memory of the Nizari Ismailis in the post-Mongol era will be explored.² It will be argued that the emphasis placed on the Fatimid era in present-day Nizari discourse is a relatively recent development, rooted in the dynamic changes that occurred in the social and political context of the community in the 18th and 19th centuries. Rather than the Fatimids, the primary locus of Nizari communal memory in the earlier period from the 7th/13th AH to the 12th/18th CE centuries was the Alamut era, and particularly the declaration of the *qiyama* (spiritual resurrection) under Imam Hasan ‘*ala dhikrihi*’-*l-salam* at Alamut in 559 AH / 1164 CE. It was only in the 18th century, when the Nizari imamate emerged from a long period of concealment and entered into a new-found position of political and social prominence, that we see the first signs of a de-emphasis of the *qiyama* and a renewed focus on the Fatimid era and its legacy.

This reorientation of the locus of Nizari communal memory away from the events of the *qiyama* and towards the Fatimid era was facilitated by an even more dramatic shift in historical consciousness that saw a revision in the very notion of historical time. In an article published in 2014, Shahzad Bashir called for greater attention to emic conceptions of time and chronology in Muslim societies and texts.³ This chapter aims to respond to this challenge through presenting a closer examination of conceptions of chronology in Nizari literature and their shift over time. While the notion of time in the Ismaili tradition has received some consideration in scholarship, to date these studies have focused primarily on presentations found in the ‘classical’ period of Ismaili literature from the Fatimid era, with little attention given to the manner in which these conceptions have changed over the course of time or with consideration to the social and political contexts that informed these shifts. We shall explore how the cyclical model of history presented in Ismaili works of the Fatimid era was revised in the light of the declaration of the *qiyama*, and then ultimately discarded entirely in the new Nizari historiographical tradition established in the 19th century. These developments facilitated a major shift in the place of the Fatimid era in the historical imagination of the Nizaris.

The *Qiyama* and Communal Memory in the Nizari Tradition

The events surrounding the declaration of the *qiyama* in 559 AH / 1164 CE and its significance have long been the subject of scholarship and debate, and hence do not merit an extensive elaboration here.⁴ Both contemporary Sunni sources and later Nizari sources concur that in that



year the Nizari lord of Alamut, Hasan, publicly declared his status as the awaited imam. Up to this time, the Nizaris had lived without direct access to their imams, who had remained in hiding following the death of the Fatimid Imam-caliph Mustansir bi'llah in 487 AH / 1094 CE and the schism in the Ismaili community arising from a dispute between the supporters of his sons, Nizar and Must'ali. This schism led to the execution of Nizar a year later and the dominance of the Must'ali faction at the Fatimid court.

Contemporary Sunni sources relate that Hasan initially declared himself to be merely the representative (*khalifa*) of the hidden imam, only later revealing that he was in fact the descendant of the Fatimid imam Nizar b. al-Mustansir bi'llah, whose son and successor al-Hadi had been secretly escorted to Alamut before Nizar's murder, and hence was the awaited imam himself. Thereafter Imam Hasan II became known among the Nizaris with the honorific '*ala dhikrihi 'l-salam*' ('upon whose mention be peace'), a sobriquet by which he is still known among Nizaris today.

For many contemporary Sunni authors, the declaration of the *qiyama* constituted little more than an abolition of the *shari'a*, that is, the legal structure of Islam, and a brazen excuse to indulge in libertinism. For Nizari authors, however, the *qiyama* in Hasan's declaration, beyond an immediate declaration of his personal imamate, amounted more broadly to an unveiling of the true, spiritual essence of the imam and the revelation of the esoteric reality of religion, one with profound consequences that would be felt long after the Mongol conquests and the end of the Alamut era. Moreover, for Nizaris living in the post-*qiyama* era, the declaration constituted not simply a new stage in the linear unfolding of history, but a historical rupture of cosmic significance. From an early period, Ismaili writers had propounded a cyclical model of history in which each cycle (*dawr*) of human history is defined by the presence of a prophet, or 'annunciator' (*natiq*).⁵ The *natiqs* of the first six eras of human history were Adam, Noah (Nuh), Abraham (Ibrahim), Moses (Musa), Jesus ('Isa) and Muhammad, each of whom were in turn accompanied by a successor, or 'silent one' (*samit*), who was entrusted with the esoteric knowledge of his teaching, corresponding to the function of the imam in Ismaili thought. With Muhammad (the *natiq*) and his successor Ali b. Abi Talib (the *samit*) humanity had entered the sixth cycle, the last one before the day of resurrection.

This model was given a revision in Nizari literature following the declaration of the *qiyama* under Imam Hasan '*ala dhikrihi 'l-salam*', which was presented as the initiation of a seventh historical cycle. This new historical model is illustrated in a text that is among the oldest Nizari works known to survive from the period following the Mongol conquests, namely the *Risala-yi sirat al-mustaqim*, tentatively dated to the late 8th AH / 14th CE or early 9th AH / 15th CE century. The author of the anonymous *Risala* writes:

These are the six cycles (*dawrs*) of the six Annunciators (*natiqs*). In truth, after that they were uninterrupted and successive 'descendants, one after the other' (Qur'an 3:34) reaching the time of the noble Hasan '*ala dhikrihi 'l-salam*, the Lord of the Resurrection (*qa'im al-qiyamat*), which is the seventh cycle. From the time of Mawlana Isma'il until the time of Mawlana Mahdi Abd Allah, the imams were concealed ... Mawlana Mahdi manifested in the lands of the Maghrib and the succeeding imams were manifest until the time of Mawlana Mustansir of Egypt. Mawlana Mustansir of Egypt had several children but the imamate was with Mawlana



Nizar. Must‘ali falsely claimed the imamate, but it was cut off with his descendant Alid. They martyred Mawlana Nizar and the following imams were concealed until the time of Mawlana Hasan ‘*ala dhikrihi*’l-salam, the Lord of the Great Resurrection. The imam’s manifestation reached the entire world. Since then, the imams have been in concealment until our day. However, this concealment was for the exotericists, not for the esotericists (*ahl-i batin*). Even when there is concealment for the esotericists, it is not for all of them, for it is decreed that the epiphany of the Universal Intellect, who is the proof (*hujja*) of the imam, always has access to the Imam of the Age and Time in the spiritual world.⁶

The enduring relevance of the *qiyama* for the historical memory of the Nizaris is further illustrated in a late 9th AH /15th-century CE source, the *Haft bab* of Abu Isbaq Quhistani. In the third chapter of his work, Quhistani provides a historical and genealogical overview of the imams. This account offers a fairly straightforward historical chronology of the imamate down through the Fatimids and the early Nizari imams, until arriving at the mention of Hasan ‘*ala dhikrihi*’l-salam, of whom he writes:

He [Hasan] was the *Qa’im* of the Resurrection (*qiyamat*). It was in his time that the ties and fetters of *shari‘at* fell from the necks of his slaves. By that time, 180,000 years had passed since the ‘Great Date’ (*tarikh-i a‘zam*). [This was] the date indicated by the Prophet, who said, ‘I will remain in the grave no more than half a day. And what Jesus predicted in the Gospels (*Injil*), Moses in the Torah (*Turat*), Zoroaster in the Book of and (*Kitab-i Zand*), in the *Kitab-i anhiqliyun* of Abu Sa‘id Yumani,⁷ and all other predictions of the prophets all came true with him.⁸

This emphasis on the pivotal nature of the imamate of Hasan II is a defining element of most of the Nizari literature produced down to the 19th century.⁹ Broadly speaking, Nizari authors of this same period displayed little interest in the Fatimid era; it is generally referred to only in passing, and almost invariably only in the context of accounts of the genealogy of the imams.¹⁰ Hence, while the genealogical connection between the Nizari and Fatimid imams continued to be emphasised, the Fatimid era itself quickly lost its relevance as a primary point of historical reference, having been superseded in Nizari communal memory by the *qiyama* and the imamate of Hasan ‘*ala dhikrihi*’l-salam. This lack of emphasis on the Fatimid era was facilitated by a broader sense of a detachment between the Nizari and Fatimid literary legacies; while the question has yet to be explored at any depth in scholarship, it would appear overall that very little of the Fatimid literary heritage was preserved among the Nizari communities in pre-modern times, being reintroduced to the Nizari tradition only in the 20th century via modern scholarship.¹¹ In their writings, Nizari authors of the post-Mongol era reveal little knowledge of the Fatimids beyond the broadest outlines of this era, and in fact display little interest in the period aside from the genealogy of the imams of the era. It is telling that when Nizari authors of the late 19th and early 20th century, such as Fidia‘i Khurasani (discussed in the section: A New Vision of History below), set about writing a history of this period they were forced to rely primarily on non-Ismaili sources.

It should be emphasised, however, that the absence of any attention to the Fatimids in pre-modern Nizari literature did not reflect a lack of interest in history per se, as has sometimes been claimed, but rather is reflective of the overwhelming impact on communal memory of the



qiyama and its legacy, which was seen as having superseded the Fatimid era in the historical vision of the Nizaris. The enduring relevance of the *qiyama* for Nizari historical memory is rooted also in the social and political reality of the Ismailis of the post-Mongol era. For most of the period between the Mongol conquests in the 7th AH /13th CE century and the public re-emergence of the imamate in the 18th century, the Nizari imams generally lived in a state of relative concealment. While the extent of this concealment varied according to the specific time and circumstances, throughout most of this period the Nizaris by and large had little direct contact with their imams. As a result, authority in the community devolved to the local representatives of the imams, known as *pirs* and *khalifas*. Accordingly, this state of affairs produced an environment that was uniquely suited to the appeal of the *qiyama*, which emphasised the spiritual nature of the imam as a reality that transcends his physical form, and hence provided a plausible model of authority for those who lacked direct contact with the imams. Conversely, this context may also explain the lack of attention paid to the Fatimid era, as the model of direct political and social authority employed by the imamate in this period would have certainly appeared alien and anachronistic to later Nizari observers. But, as will be seen, beginning in the 18th century a series of geopolitical transformations occurred that once again placed the Nizari imams in a position of public authority. In time, these transformations would lead to a wholesale reassessment of the historical vision of the Nizari community, which reduced the emphasis on the *qiyama* and once again turned the focus of memory towards the Fatimids.

The 18th-Century Transformation in Ismailism

This section will briefly outline a series of developments, beginning in the 18th century, which led to a drastic shift in the status of the Nizari imamate and its political and social standing in the Islamic world. These developments provide the context for understanding the transformation of communal history and the role of the Fatimids in the Nizari literature of the 19th century. The destruction of Alamut and the murder of the Imam Rukn al-Din Khurshah by the Mongols in 655 AH / 1257 CE initiated 200 years of the utmost level of concealment for the Nizari imamate. The history of the imamate for most of this period remains almost entirely obscure and little is known of it beyond the barest outlines.¹² While the decentralised political climate of late 9th AH / 15th CE century Iran permitted a brief public re-emergence of the imamate in the period known in Ismaili history as the ‘Anjudan revival’, the Safawid conquests of the early 10th AH /16th CE century once again forced the imams into a more guarded position. Despite their Shi‘i disposition, the Safawid rulers were largely hostile to the Nizari imams, seeing in them a challenge to their own claim to be heirs to the authority of the earlier twelve imams of the Ithna‘ashari tradition. At least one of the Nizari imams from this period, Murad Mirza, was executed by the Safawids on the charge of spreading heresy, while others were forced into hiding or exile.¹³

The collapse of the Safawid state in the early 18th century and the subsequent rise to power in Iran of Nadir Shah provided the opportunity for a critical change in the status of the Nizari imamate under Hasan Ali (known also as Sayyid Hasan Beg). This shift in the status of the Nizari imamate had its roots in a close personal relationship that formed between Imam Hasan Ali and Nadir Shah. According to a number of accounts of this relationship, Nadir Shah employed the imam as a commander in his army, in which many Nizaris also served in the ranks.¹⁴ It would appear, moreover, that Nadir Shah made this appointment while entirely aware



of Hasan Ali's status as the Nizari imam. According to some accounts of their relationship, Imam Hasan Ali also accompanied Nadir Shah on his invasion of India, after which he was rewarded with the governorship of the region surrounding his ancestral village of Mahallat. After some time, however, intrigues were fomented at court by enemies of the imam who accused him of heresy, leading Nadir Shah to blind him. However, Nadir Shah later apologised to Imam Hasan Ali and reinstated him to his former position.¹⁵ Despite its hesitant beginnings, the relationship between the Nizari imams and the Afsharid dynasty outlived Nadir Shah and was strengthened significantly under his successors, as will be outlined shortly.

Nadir Shah's cultivation of a relationship with the Nizari imamate was reflective of the broader political and religious agenda he pursued in the course of his short-lived effort to rebuild and expand the Safawid empire. Lacking the genealogical or religious claims to legitimacy afforded to the Safawids, Nadir Shah instead made use of a series of alternative bases of legitimation in order to establish his rule in Iran.¹⁶ Given his efforts to combat the influence of the Ithna'ashari Shi'i *ulama* and to displace them from the privileged position they held under the Safawids, it is likely that Nadir Shah would have seen a useful ally in the Nizari imamate.¹⁷ Nadir Shah also replaced Twelver Shi'ism with Sunnism as the official religion of his realm, while according Twelver Shi'ism the status of a *madhhab*. In this context he sought to have the Ja'fari *madhhab* recognised as the fifth school of Islamic jurisprudence, alongside the four Sunni schools. This particular endeavour entailed an effort not only to reduce the barriers between Shi'i and Sunni interpretations of Islam, but also, and equally, to efface distinctions in Shi'ism under the common umbrella of a single Ja'fari *madhhab*, hence creating a space for Ismaili participation in the project.¹⁸ While this effort met with considerable resistance from both the Shi'i and Sunni *ulama*, leading to its ultimate failure, it nonetheless provides a context for understanding Nadir Shah's motivations in seeking the support of religious constituencies outside the structure of the Twelver *ulama*.

Nadir Shah's cultivation of the Nizaris came on the heels of another significant development concerning the religious and social context of the imamate. From the beginning of the Nizari era to the end of the 9th AH / 15th CE century the imams had operated in a largely Sunni environment. In the wake of the Mongol conquests this environment became increasingly marked by the presence of the Sufi traditions that flourished in this period, and the imams elaborated their claims to religious authority accordingly within this context.¹⁹ The Safawid conquest ushered in a dramatically revised religious environment in Iran. Consequently, for the first time in history, the Ismaili imamate found itself situated within a majority-Shi'i environment. As noted above, initially this development did not prove favourable to the imams, who suffered greatly under the repressive ideological regime of the Safawids. The position of the Nizaris was alleviated somewhat beginning in the late 10th AH / 16th CE century during the reign of Shah Abbas and there is evidence suggesting that the imams actually adopted Ithna'ashari Shi'ism as a form of *taqiyya* during his reign.²⁰ Following the collapse of the Safawid state it would appear that the Nizari imams were no longer under pressure to practise *taqiyya*. As the sources of this period illustrate, the Ismaili identity of the imams was clearly known to observers during the reign of Nadir Shah and after, indicating a cessation of *taqiyya* practices.²¹ From this point forward the imams asserted new claims to legitimacy on the basis of appeals to a pan-Shi'i heritage. It was this context that saw an increasing emphasis on the imams' descent from Ja'far al-Sadiq and on the legacy of the Fatimids as the first Shi'i polity in history.



One of the major developments that accompanied the public emergence of the Nizari imamate under Nadir Shah was the shift of the seat of the imamate from the Qumm region, where it had been based since at least the 9th AH / 15th CE century, to the province of Kirman in south-eastern Iran. The main sources chronicling this development are the writings of Ahmad Ali Khan Vaziri (d. 1295 AH / 1878 CE) among whose works are the *Tarikh-i Kirman*, a history of Kirman from pre-Islamic times to the early Qajar period, completed in 1293 AH / 1876 CE, and a historical geography of the Kirman region titled *Jughrafiya-yi Kirman*. While Kirman had not historically been an important centre of Ismaili activity, the imamate had maintained a following there since at least the late 11th AH / 17th CE century. During the imamate of Sayyid Hasan Beg's grandfather, Shah Nizar (d. 1134 AH / 1722 CE), a group of nomadic Khurasani tribesmen known as the Ata Allahis (after the *takhallus* of Shah Nizar, Ata Allah), who were followers of the imam, were resettled in the province of Kirman, in the region of Sirjan. One interesting characteristic of this group was that they are explicitly identified in the sources as not having been Ismaili, but nonetheless as followers of the imam drawn to his charismatic authority as a sayyid and a descendant of Ja'far al-Sadiq. According to Vaziri,

this group maintained complete faith and sincerity in the sayyids of the line of Isma'il, son of Hadrat-i Imam, to speak correctly, Ja'far Sadiq ... from that time forward the Khurasani and Ata Allahi communities have been believers and followers of this *silsila*, but like the Haydarabadis, they are neither Sevener Shi'as nor Ismailis.²²

The Khurasani and Ata Allahi communities continued to be steadfast supporters of the imams down to the time of Hasan Ali Shah (Aga Khan I), who made use of the tribesmen as a military force in the course of his campaign, on the orders of the Qajar ruler Muhammad Shah, to pacify the province of Kirman and expunge it of the invading Afghans and Baluchis.²³ The presence of the Ata Allahis offers one of the earliest signs of the gradual growth and extension of the political and social authority of the Nizari imams in the 18th century, which saw the development of new constituencies for the imamate outside the context of narrowly defined Ismaili communities. This development should also be understood in the context of a broader phenomenon witnessed in the Indo-Iranian border regions in this period, as well as in many other areas of the Islamic world, in which, in the absence of any firm state authority, sayyids and other individuals of revered or sacred status, come to occupy positions as political intermediaries and as mediators in conflicts.²⁴ This role was illustrated most vividly during the imamate of Hasan Ali Shah, who was charged with mediating between the Qajar government and various tribal groups in the border regions of Sistan and Baluchistan. Critically, the authority assigned to the imams among these groups was given not on the basis of their position as Ismaili imams, but rather on their charismatic status as sayyids.

The decision under Imam Sayyid Hasan Beg to move the seat of the imamate from the village of Kahak, near Qumm, to Kirman was made primarily out of concern for the imamate's relationship with its followers in India. According to Vaziri, who introduced the imam as 'from the lineage of Nizar who was, at several degrees removed, among the ancestors of Isma'il b. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq' owing to the disorder in Iran following the fall of the Safawids the Nizaris in India faced increasing difficulty in travelling to visit and pay tribute to the imams in northern Iran.²⁵ Many of their caravans were plundered by the Bakhtiyari tribesmen and the flow of tithes to the imamate was blocked. Thus towards the end of the reign of Nadir Shah the decision was



made by Imam Sayyid Hasan Beg to move the seat of the imamate to the town of Shahr-i Babak in Kirman in order to position himself closer both to the overland routes from India and to the port of Bandar Abbas, which was also used by many Indian Ismailis, or Khojas, coming to Iran in this period. The flow of tithes from his followers in India resumed and increased, and the imam soon became a major landholder in Kirman, maintaining a winter home in the capital city of Guvashir (now the city of Kirman) and spending his summers in Shahr-i Babak. Vaziri further relates that, following the death of Nadir Shah, Imam Sayyid Hasan Beg developed a close relationship with Nadir Shah's grandson, Shahrukh Khan, the governor of Kirman, and that the imam gave one of his daughters in marriage to Shahrukh Khan's son, Lutf Ali Khan.

The sources relate few details regarding Imam Sayyid Hasan Beg's successor, Qasim Ali, whose imamate evidently was quite brief. Much more information is available on the next imam, Sayyid Abu'l-Hasan Ali.²⁶ During Sayyid Abu'l-Hasan's imamate, control of Kirman passed from the Afsharids to the Zands. The imam also enjoyed a close relationship with the Zand governor of the region, Mirza Husayn Khan, who reaffirmed his position in the area and eventually appointed him to the positions of *beglerbegi*, or governor, of the province of Kirman.²⁷ The imam successfully repelled a major Afghan invasion of Kirman in this period, which brought him many accolades from the Zands. In addition, he patronised the construction of a public square adjacent to the Friday mosque as well as several other prominent buildings in the city of Kirman, displaying a predilection for the patronage of public architecture that had defined the rule of the Fatimids and which remains a priority for the modern Nizari imamate. Following the death of the Zand ruler Karim Khan in 1193 AH / 1779 CE, Imam Abu'l-Hasan Ali continued to receive the support of his successors and governed the province as a virtually autonomous ruler. However, he crucially switched his support to Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar during the latter's conflict with the Zands and repelled an effort by the Zand ruler Lutf Ali Khan to capture the city of Kirman in the winter of 1790–1791 CE.²⁸ This switch in allegiance proved to be remarkably prescient, as it laid the foundations for a very close and profitable relationship between the Nizari imamate and the Qajar establishment for the next half century.

The Fatimid Legacy under Aga Khan I

Imam Abu'l-Hasan Ali died in 1206 AH / 1792 CE and was succeeded by his son Shah Khalil Allah.²⁹ The new imam decided to transfer the seat of imamate to its former location in Kahak in the region of Qumm, on account of the violent upheavals that continued to take place across Kirman following the imposition of Qajar authority there,³⁰ and the Qajar ruler Agha Muhammad Khan obligingly appointed Shah Khalil Allah as mayor of the town and granted his family new holdings there. It was here in Kahak that Hasan Ali Shah, the future Aga Khan, was born in 1804. In 1815 Shah Khalil Allah moved his headquarters to the city of Yazd in central Iran which lay along the trade routes to and from India, a move made once again in order to situate the seat of the imamate more conveniently for the Indian Ismailis who brought with them a significant amount of revenue each year. In 1817, two years after the shift of the imamate to Yazd, Imam Shah Khalil Allah and his residence were attacked by an angry mob instigated by some members of the local Shi'i clergy, who murdered the imam and several of his followers. This incident clearly illustrates the fact that the Nizari imamate's position in Iranian Society continued to be contested in this period. Yet, at the same time, the incident also reveals the remarkable degree of affinity between the imamate and the political elite of Iran that had developed over the previous century. The Qajar monarch of the period, Fateh Ali Shah, had the cleric responsible for inciting



the murder severely punished. In further compensation, Fath Ali Shah appointed Shah Khalil Allah's son and successor to the imamate, Hasan Ali Shah, governor of Qumm and bestowed on him the honorific title of Aga Khan which has become a hereditary title for the Nizari imams.

Little more is known about this period of Aga Khan I's life until the death of Fath Ali Shah in 1834 and the accession of his grandson Muhammad Shah to the Qajar throne. The Aga Khan endeared himself to the new ruler and soon afterwards was appointed governor of Kirman, the same position that his grandfather had held under the Zands. The Aga Khan's appointment as governor of Kirman came with considerable responsibility, as the province had evidently fallen into disorder and was plagued by a series of tribal uprisings. The Aga Khan agreed to accept this appointment without any stipend. By his own account, he carried out this task with great success, and succeeded in restoring the province to the Qajars.³¹ Very quickly, however, the relationship between the Aga Khan and the Qajar government took a decisive turn for the worse, and less than two years after his appointment as governor of Kirman the Aga Khan was dismissed from his position and recalled to Tehran. This dismissal led to a chain of events culminating in the permanent departure of the imamate from Persia, severing the long established relationship between the Nizari imamate and the rulers of Iran.³²

Following his arrival in India, the Aga Khan quickly cultivated a reputation as a patron of various pan-Shi'i constituencies, sponsoring the *ta'ziya* commemorations in the city of Jamnagar in Muharram 1845 during a period of residence there and then again two years later in Calcutta. Following the permanent re-establishment of the seat of the imamate in Bombay in 1848, the Aga Khan composed a memoir of his career under the Qajars, entitled *Ibrat-afza*.³³ In this work the Aga Khan declared his continued loyalty to the Qajar dynasty and defended his record of service to the court. At the same time, the text reveals an effort to establish new political relationships, most notably among the British.³⁴ Most importantly, the work reveals a renewed effort on the part of the Aga Khan to draw upon the imamate's Fatimid legacy as a means of broadening the basis of his claim to religious authority. In one telling passage in the text the Aga Khan poignantly reminds the reader of his own illustrious lineage and claims to religious legitimacy:

Since it was and is known to God and his shadow, His Highness the King, that in my mind there was and is no thought of the rule of Kirman, much less that of Iran and Turan, I simply obeyed the royal order and carried out the imperial wishes and decrees. All know that due to the blessings of God and the grace of my ancestors and pure forefathers, I consider rulership with utter contempt in the breadth and extent of my dervishhood ...

It is known to all that material and spiritual kingship has belonged to my ancestors and forefathers since eternity, and is in perpetuity, and will be so. But despite the fact that my great forefathers were the firm handle of religion and the strong cord of God, 'in which there is no split', [as is written] in the Clear Book, [or] 'there is no splitting the twain and no cutting the twain' in the famous tradition of my ancestor, the Master of the Messengers, peace be upon him and upon his family, I am not attached in the slightest detail to this world and what is in it. Yes, efforts have been exerted as far as possible in spreading the faith and religious law of the final prophet in imitation of the pure ancestors. Likewise, is it evident that in Egypt several generations of my ancestors held the positions of kingship and the caliphate, and they carried out the joining of the Ja'fari Shi'i community to the law



of the Ithna‘ashari, which today is attributed to Shah Isma‘il Safawi. I am a descendant of that family.³⁵

The Aga Khan’s statement here may be interpreted on many levels. First, it may be understood within the context of the immediate background to his dispute with the Qajar throne and in relation to Qajar claims to symbolic succession (if not dynastic succession) to the Safawid throne.³⁶ The Qajar claim to Safawid inheritance not only was advanced through historiographical production, but was also manifested in visual and material culture, through what Priscilla Soucek terms the ‘neo-Safavid’ style displayed in the coinage and medals of the era.³⁷ Given the importance of the Safawids for the history of Shi‘i Islam in Iran, a claim to this heritage was vital for establishing the religious legitimacy of the dynasty. In the words of Hamid Algar:

The Qajar dynasty was tribal in its origins; whereas the Safavids claimed descent from the Imams, the Qajars could point only to the Mongols for the origin of their line. They raised no religious claims, even if they inherited, consciously or unconsciously, many of the assumptions concerning regal power implicit in the Safavid monarchy. Under the Safavids, a close alliance of the state and the religious body had existed, with the former as the dominant partner; under the Qajars, there would never be more than an uneasy and fitful coalition.³⁸

The Aga Khan’s statement in *Ibrat-afza*, therefore, may be seen as a forthright retort to Qajar claims. Notably, the Aga Khan presents the Fatimid legacy not merely within the context of Ismaili history, but as part of Ja‘fari and ‘pan-Shi‘i’ heritage. While not denying Qajar claims to the Safawid legacy, the Aga Khan instead lays claim to an even older legacy and precedent for religious authority in Shi‘i history, hence dispensing with the need for his reliance on the Qajar court for the legitimation of his authority.

Beyond this, the Aga Khan’s statement here is indicative of the broader and more nuanced manner in which the Fatimid legacy has been adduced by the Nizari Imams. As this example illustrates, the Fatimid legacy has not been evoked as a basis for claims to direct political or territorial authority; rather, the Aga Khan in his statement explicitly denies any pretences to territorial rule, evoking in its place a claim to religious and charismatic authority. This statement has been echoed repeatedly by his successors. For example, the current Ismaili imam, Shah Karim al-Husayni, Aga Khan IV, in a speech to the Canadian parliament in 2014 stated:

Although there was a time when the Ismaili Imams were also caliphs, that is to say the heads of state – for example in Egypt during the Fatimid period – my function today is apotitical; every Ismaili is primarily a citizen of his or her country of birth or adoption. However, the scope of the Ismaili Imamate is considerably greater than that distant time, since today it operates in many parts of the world.³⁹

Rather than claims to territorial rule, the Fatimid legacy has been evoked by the modern Nizari imamate as a precedent for a broader claim to social and religious leadership within the Muslim *umma* extending beyond the boundaries of the Ismaili community.⁴⁰ Over the past century and a half, the Fatimids have been repeatedly evoked by the imams as precedents for their patronage of educational and cultural institutions, and have been cited particularly vigorously by the present imam in the context of his work as a patron of architectural projects. In the discourse of the modern Nizari imamate, the Fatimids are recalled not for the glory of their military victories or



for the extent of their territorial sovereignty, but rather as a dynasty that oversaw remarkable advancements in areas such as education, cultural and artistic production, and public works. In particular, the role of religious tolerance and pluralism under the Fatimids has been repeatedly emphasised and cited as a model for present-day forms of governing and as a precedent for the imamate's engagement with a wide range of political and religious constituencies.⁴¹ The connection between the modern imamate and the Fatimids was solidified by the decision of the previous imam, Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III, to be buried in Aswan along the banks of the Nile, his ancestral Fatimid land. More recently, the present imam has supervised a 20-year project (completed in 2005) to create the Azhar Park and renovate its surrounding structures in Cairo, which has become a potent symbol of the modern Nizari imamate's claim to the Fatimid legacy.⁴²

A New Vision of History

In the second half of the 19th century a new genre of historical writing was developed by the Nizari community under the patronage of Aga Khan I and his successors. To date, this body of historiography has been almost exclusively used as a repository of historical information on the imams with little attention being given to their historiographical concerns or their context. Yet this new body of historical works displays a number of remarkable departures from previous literary and historiographical practices in the Ismaili tradition. Most conspicuously, these new texts completely disregard the cyclical model of history found in older Nizari writings, emphasising in its place a continual and linear genealogical chain of imamate stretching from the present imam back to the Prophet Muhammad. Furthermore, this body of work is devoid of any reference to the events of the *qiyama*, once again marking a radical departure from previous Nizari literature.

The earliest example of this new historiographic approach may be seen in the *Khitabat-i 'aliya*, a collection of discourses by Pir Shihab al-Din Shah Husayni (d. 1302/1884), a grandson of Aga Khan I and elder brother of Aga Khan III, composed sometime before the former's death in 1298 AH / 1881 CE.⁴³ While not formally a historical work, the *Khitabat-i 'aliya* is nonetheless noteworthy for including a historical and genealogical overview of the Nizari imams, which standardised the official genealogy of the imams accepted by the Nizari community down to the present day.⁴⁴ This same arrangement is found in a later work, the *Hidayat al-mu'minin al-talibin* of Fida'i Khurasani (d. 1342 AH / 1923), which was composed around the turn of the 20th century under the patronage of Aga Khan III.⁴⁵ This text is noteworthy for being the first work in the Nizari tradition to be explicitly designated as a work of history (*tarikh*).⁴⁶ In the introduction to his work, Fida'i Khurasani laments the absence of histories of the imams and outlines how he was compelled to rely upon non-Ismaili historical works, such as the late medieval histories *Rawdat al Safa'* and the *Habib al-siyar*, in composing his work, particularly for the Fatimid era.⁴⁷ Most importantly for our purposes, both the *Khitabat-i 'aliya* and the *Hidayat al-mu'minin al-talibin* entirely dispense with the cyclical arrangement of history found in the older Nizari tradition, replacing it instead with a linear chronological overview of the imams, with a substantial emphasis on the Fatimid period. In addition, both works likewise omit any mention of the *qiyama* in their accounts of Imam Hasan 'ala dhikrihi 'l-salam.⁴⁸

Consequently, the events of the *qiyama*, which had had such a predominant influence on the historical imagination of earlier generations of Nizaris, by the first decades of the 20th



century had largely receded from communal memory, having been replaced by a renewed focus on the legacy of the Fatimids. The shift of focus away from the *qiyama* in the historical record was also accompanied by a shift in the very conception of historical time itself, marked by the transition from a cyclical to a linear presentation of history. The re-conceptualisation of communal history found in these works, along with the renewed focus placed on the Fatimid era, emerged as a response to the dramatically new context encountered by the Nizari imamate in the modern era, illustrating a pattern of resilience and adaptability that has defined the Ismaili community throughout its long history. While the notion of the spiritual and transcendental reality of the imam inherent in the concept of *qiyama* remains an essential element in the conceptualisation of the imamate among the Nizari Ismailis today, the view of the *qiyama* itself as a historically significant event has now been almost entirely displaced in favour of a narrative emphasising historical continuity with the Fatimid past.

¹ As an illustration of this point, the collection of the present Nizari Ismaili imam's speeches and interviews archived at <http://www.nanowisdoms.org> (accessed 25 January 2017) presents over 60 separate occasions in which the term 'Fatimid' or 'Fatimids' was referenced. In contrast, the name Alamut appeared on only one occasion, in which it was mentioned by the interviewer, while no references were found to the term '*qiyama*' or its variants.

² On the notion of 'cultural memory', see Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, tr. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, 2006).

³ Shahzad Bashir, 'On Islamic Time: Rethinking Chronology in the Historiography of Muslim Societies', *History and Theory*, 53 (2014), pp. 519- 544.

⁴ Among studies on the *qiyama*, see Jorunn J. Buckley, 'The Nizârî Isma'îlites' Abolishment of the Shari'a during the "Great Resurrection" of 1164 A.D. / 559 A.H', *Studia Islamica*, 60 (1984), pp. 137- 165; Delia Cortese, 'Eschatology and Power in Mediaeval Persian Ismailism' (PhD thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1993), pp. 129-1 90; Cortese, 'The Isma'ili Resurrection of Alamut: A Bid for Spiritual Awakening or a Statement of Political Authority?', in S.E. Porter et al., ed., *Resurrection (Journal for the Study of the New Testament) Supplement 186* (1999), pp. 249- 262; Farhad Daftary, *The Isma'ilis: Their History and Doctrines* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2007), pp. 358-367; Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins; The Struggle of the Early Nizari Isma'ilis Against the Islamic World* (The Hague, 1955), pp. 148- 184; M. Hodgson, 'The Isma'ili State', in John A. Boyle, ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 457-463; Christian Jambet, 'La grande résurrection d'Alamut d'après quelques textes Ismaéliens', in *Apocalypse et sens de l'histoire*, being *Cahiers de l'Université Saint Jean de Jerusalem*, no. 9 (Paris, 1983), pp. 113-131; C. Jambet, *La grande résurrection d'Alamut: Les forms de la liberté dans le shi'isme ismaélien* (Lagrasse, 1990); Liudmila V. Stroeva, 'Den' voskreseniia iz mertvykh i ego sotsial'naia sushchost', *Kratkie soobshcheniia Instituta Vostokovedeniia*, AN SSSR (Moscow) 38 (1960), pp. 19- 25; L. Stroeva, *Gosldarstvo ismailitov v Irane v XI-XIII vv.* (Moscow, 1978), pp. 171-198. The declaration of the *qiyama* became the focal point of the earliest studies on the Ismailis by Western scholars dating back to the early 19th century; for example, see Joseph von Hammer Purgstall, *The History of the Assassins*, tr. O.c. Woods (London, 1835), pp. 105- 138. See also the critique of this work by Farhad Daftary, 'The "Order of the Assassins": J. von Hammer and the Orientalist Misrepresentations of the Nizari Ismailis', *Iranian Studies*, 39 (2006), pp. 71-82.

⁵ For an overview of this system and its symbolism, see Henry Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, tr. R. Manheim and J.W. Morris (London, 1983); Farhad Daftary, 'Cyclical Time and Sacred History in Medieval Ismaili Thought' in K. D'Hulster and J. Van Steenberg, ed., *Continuity and Change in the Realms of Islam: Studies in Honour of Professor Urbain Vermeulen* (Leuven, 2008), pp. 151-158.

⁶ Shafique N. Virani, 'The Right Path: A Post-Mongol Persian Ismaili Treatise', *Iranian Studies*, 43 (2010), p. 211 (English trans.), pp. 219-220 (Persian text).



⁷ Probably a garbled reference to the Gospel of St John.

⁸ Abu Isbaq Quhistani, *Haft bab*, ed. and tr. Wladimir Ivanow (Bombay, 1959), p. 23 (English trans.), pp. 23-24 (Persian text). I have amended Ivanow's translation here. This account is also reproduced in the third chapter of the *Kalam-i pir*, a later text that was partially adapted from the *Haft bab*; see *Kalam-i pir: A Treatise on Ismaili Doctrine*, also (wrongly) called *Haft-Babi Shah Sayyid Nasir*, ed. and tr. Wladimir Ivanow (Bombay, 1935), p. 44 (English trans.), p. 51 (Persian text).

⁹ One noteworthy exception to this paradigm is a 16th-century text from Central Asia produced within the community of the rival and now defunct Muhammad-Shah; lineage of Nizari; imams, titled the *Irshad al-talibin fi dhikr a'immat al-Isma'iliyya*. In this work, the bulk of which consists of a genealogy of the Nizari imams, the mention of Hasan 'ala dhikrihi'l-salam passes without further comment or reference to the *qiyama*. In this regard, the organisation of the work resembles much more closely the presentation found in the later Nizari historiography of the 19th and 20th centuries, discussed further in the section entitled 'A New Vision of History: Too little is known of this rival line of Nizari imams to enable account for this omission, but it may be related to the particular genealogical claims and legitimising paradigm it sought to uphold. I have consulted MSS 1959/24 (dated 1144/1732-1733) and 1963/12 (dated 1327/1909-1910) in the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan (the former copy is not included in the catalogue description of the manuscript). MS 1963/12 contains a lacuna in this section, omitting the name of Imam Hasan II and his immediate successor, while the sobriquet 'ala dhikrihi'l-salam is erroneously assigned here to a later imam, 'Ala' al-Din Muhammad.

¹⁰ It should be emphasised here that the study of Nizari history in the post-Mongol era remains in its infancy, and many of the essential manuscript collections for this period in Iran, India and, in particular, Central Asia still remain largely unexplored. Hence, it is not inconceivable that new textual discoveries in the future may provide additional nuance to this argument. For studies reviewing the Nizari literature of the post-Mongol era, see Daniel Beben, 'The Legendary Biographies of Nasir-i Khusraw: Memory and Textualization in Early Modern Persian Isma'ilism' (PhD thesis, Indiana University, 2015); Shafiqe N. Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, a Search for Salvation* (Oxford, 2007).

¹¹ The primary exception here is the work of Nasir-i Khusraw, who appears to be the only Fatimid-era author whose writings were preserved in the Nizari communities. For a further discussion of this issue, see Beben, 'The Legendary Biographies of Nasir-i Khusraw', pp. 114-119.

¹² For an overview of this era, see Daftary, *The Isma'ilis*, pp. 403-422; Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*.

¹³ On Safavid persecution of the Nizari imams, see Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago, 1984), pp. 112-116; Farhad Daftary, 'Shah Tahir and the Nizari Ismaili Disguises', in T. Lawson, ed., *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought: Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt* (London, 2005), pp. 395-406; Daftary, *The Isma'ilis*, pp. 435-436.

¹⁴ For a further discussion of the relationship between Imam Hasan Ali and Nadir Shah and its sources see Beben, 'The Legendary Biographies of Nasir-i Khusraw', pp. 257-264.

¹⁵ Mubammad Taqi b. Ali Rida Mahallati, *Athar-i Mubammadi*, MS 919, Institute of Ismaili Studies, pp. 15-16.

¹⁶ On this see Ernest Tucker, *Nadir Shah's Quest for Legitimacy in post-Safavid Iran* (Gainesville, FL, 2006).

¹⁷ On Nadir Shah's religious policies, see Hamid Algar, 'Religious Forces in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Iran', in P. Avery, G.R.G. Hambly and C. Melville, ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 7: *From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 706-710; H. Algar, 'Shi'ism and Iran in the Eighteenth Century', in T. Naff and R. Owens, ed., *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Carbondale, IL, 1977), pp. 288-302; Ernest Tucker, 'Nadir Shah and the Ja'fari *Madhhab* Reconsidered', *Iranian Studies*, 27 (1994), pp. 163-179.

¹⁸ This notion of Ismailism as an element of the Ja'fari madhhab has more recently been evoked by Aga Khan IV who gave his support on behalf of the Nizaris to the Amman Declaration of 2004, which established the Ja'fari madhhab as one of eight recognised schools of Islamic law. In his message of



support for the declaration, the Aga Khan declared that: 'Our historic adherence is to the Jafari Madhhab and other Madhahib of close affinity, and it continues, under the leadership of the hereditary Ismaili Imam of the time: See <http://ammanmessage.com/letter-from-h-h-the-aga-khan/> (accessed 25 January 2017).

¹⁹ On the Nizari relationship with the Sufi orders in the post-Mongol era, see Farhad Daftary, 'Ismaili-Sufi Relations in Post-Alamut Persia', in F. Daftary, *Ismailis in Medieval Muslim Societies* (London, 2005), pp. 183-203.

²⁰ Daftary, 'Shah Tahir and the Nizari Ismaili Disguises', pp. 395- 406.

²¹ For example, see Mubammad Kazim Marvi, *'Alamara-yi Nadiri*, ed. Mubammad Amin Riyabi (Tehran, 1364 Sh. /1985), vol. 3, p. 1182.

²² Ahmad Ali Khan Vaziri, *Jughrafiya -yi Kirman*, ed. Muhammad Ibrahim Bastani Parizi (Tehran, 1340 Sh. /1961), p. 265. The reference to the Haydarabadis in this account most probably refers to the town of Haydarabad in the province of Sindh in present-day Pakistan, where the Nizari imams likewise have had a strong community of followers since the early modern era.

²³ Aga Khan Mahallati, Hasan Ali Shah, *Tarikh-i 'ibrat-afza*, ed. Husayn Kuhi Kirmani (Tehran, 1325 Sh. 1946), p. 10.

²⁴ Nile Green, 'Blessed Men and Tribal Politics: Notes on Political Culture in the Indo-Afghan World', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 49 (2006), pp. 344-360. For the classic study of this phenomenon in the context of highland Morocco, see Ernest Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (London, 1969). This claim to broader social and religious authority on the basis of sayyid status echoes practices from the Fatimid era as well; see Shainool Jiwa, 'Kinship, Camaraderie and Contestation: Fatimid Relations with the Ashraf in the Fourth/Tenth Century', *Al-Masaq*, 28 (2016), pp. 242-264.

²⁵ Ahmad Ali Khan Vaziri, *Tarikh-i Kirman*, ed. Mubammad Ibrahim Bastani Parizi (Tehran, 1340 Sh./1961), pp. 332-333.

²⁶ On this imam, see also Sayyid Ali Āl-i Davud, Abu al-Hasan Khan Beglerbegi Mahallati, *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, vol. 2, pp. 29-32; Heribert Busse, Abu'l-Hasan Khan Mahallati, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 1, p. 310; Daftary, *The Isma'ilis*, pp. 459- 462.

²⁷ Vaziri, *Tarikh-i Kirman*, pp. 334- 341. On Zand rule in Kirman see John R. Perry, *Karim Khan Zand: A History of Iran, 1747-1779* (Chicago, 1979), pp. 134- 136; James M. Gustafson, 'Kerman viii: Afsharid and Zand Period', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (online).

²⁸ On these events, see also Rida Quli Khan Hidayat, *Rawdat al-Safa-yi Nasiri* (Tehran, 1339 Sh. /1960), vol. 9, pp. 250-252.

²⁹ On the imamate of Shah Khalil Allah, see Daftary, *The Isma'ilis*, pp. 462-464.

³⁰ On Kirman in the early Qajar era, see James M. Gustafson, 'Kerman ix: Qajar Period', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (online).

³¹ Aga Khan Mahallati, *Tarikh-i 'ibrat-afza*, pp. 9-10.

³² On these events, see Hamid Algar, 'The Revolt of Agha Khan Mahallati and the Transference of the Isma'ili Imamate to India; *Studia Islamica*, 29 (1969), pp. 55- 81; Daftary, *The Isma'ilis*, pp. 464-473.

³³ *'Ibrat-afza* was originally published by the Aga Khan's lithograph press in Bombay in 1278/1862. An edition of the text, with numerous typographical errors, was published by Husayn Kuhi Kirmani (Tehran, 1325 Sh. /1946). Another version of the text, evidently based on the Kuhi Kirmani edition but with several critical alterations (on which see below note 35) was published by Muhsin Sa'i in his *Aqa Khan Maballati va firqa-yi Isma'iliyya* (Tehran, 1329 Sh./1950). A new edition and English translation of the text is currently in preparation by the present author. On 'Ibrat-afza and its connection with the broader religious project pursued by the Aga Khan in this period, see also Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the Western Indian Ocean, 1840-1915* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 155-160.

³⁴ Aga Khan Mahallati, *Tarikh-i 'ibrat-afza*, p. 56.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 20- 21. This passage has been curiously altered in Sa'I's edition of the text (p. 35), which reads here: 'Likewise, is it evident that in Egypt several generations of my ancestors held the positions of kingship and the caliphate, and they revived the Shi'i faith, which up to that time had fallen into despondency', omitting the reference to the Safawids (perhaps out of concern for the sensibilities of his Iranian Ithna'ashari readers).



³⁶ On this claim, see Abbas Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896* (Berkeley, 1997), p. 2.

³⁷ Priscilla Soucek, 'Coinage of the Qajars: A System in Continual Transition', *Iranian Studies*, 34 (2001), pp. 51 - 87; P. Soucek, 'The Visual Language of Qajar Medals: in D. Behrens-Abouseif and S. Vernoit, ed., *Islamic Art in the 19th Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 308- 310. On Qajar appropriation of the Safawid legacy, see also Sussan Babaie, 'In the Eye of the Storm: Visualizing the Qajar Axis of Kingship', *Artibus Asiae*, 66 (2006), pp. 35-54.

³⁸ Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785- 1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley, 1969), p. 41.

³⁹ *Même s'il fut une époque où les Imams ismaïlis étaient aussi Califes, c'est-à-dire chefs d'Etats – par exemple en Egypte à l'époque Fatimide - ma fonction est aujourd'hui apolitique; tout ismaïli étant avant tout un citoyen ou une citoyenne de son pays de naissance ou d'adoption. Le champ d'action de l'Imamat ismaïli est pourtant considérablement plus important qu'à cette époque lointaine, puisqu'il déploie aujourd'hui ses activités dans de nombreuses régions du monde.* See: <http://www.akdn.org/speech/highness-aga-khan/address-both-houses-parliament-canadahouse-commons-chamber> (accessed 25 August 2016).

⁴⁰ On this point, see further the recent study by Daryoush Mohammad Poor, *Authority without Territory: The Aga Khan Development Network and the Ismaili Imamate* (New York, 2014).

⁴¹ On the role of religious pluralism in Fatimid governance see Shainool Jiwa, 'Inclusive Governance: A Fatimid Illustration', in A.B. Sajoo, ed., *A Companion to the Muslim World* (London, 2009), pp. 157-176.

⁴² On this project, see <http://www.akdn.org/publication/aga-khantrust-culture-al-azhar-park-cairo-and-revitalisation-darb-alahmar> (accessed 25 January 2017). Similar efforts to lay claim to the Fatimid heritage in Egypt have also been pursued in modern times by the Bohra Ismaili community, on which see Paula Sanders, *Creating Medieval Cairo: Empire, Religion and Architectural Preservation in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (Cairo, 2008), pp. 115-142.

⁴³ The text was published as Shihab al-Din Shah Husayni, *Khitabat-i 'aliya*, ed. Hushang Ojaqi (Bombay, 1963). On this work, see also Farhad Daftary, *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliography of Sources and Studies* (London, 2004), p. 152.

⁴⁴ Shihab al-Din Shah, *Khitabat-i 'aliya*, pp. 37–45.

⁴⁵ On the work and its author, see Farhad Daftary, 'Fida'i Khorasani', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 9, p. 470; Daftary, *Ismaili Literature*, p. 112. Several later copies of this work are preserved among the Nizaris in Central Asia. According to Daftary, these copies, which formed the basis for Semenov's edition, demonstrate numerous corruptions from the original text of Fida'i Khurasani's work preserved in Iran, which remains unpublished. On this see Daftary, 'Kitabi na-chandan muhimm dar tarikh-i Isma'iliyya', *Nashr-i Danish*, 4 (1984), pp. 32-37. I have compared Semenov's edition with one manuscript of the text made available to me in Dushanbe, MS 1960/17, dated 1343 / 1924-1925. The Iranian manuscripts of Fida'i Khurasani's original work were not available to me.

⁴⁶ While an earlier historiographical tradition was maintained under the Fatimids, these sources were almost entirely lost in subsequent centuries and were evidently not available to medieval Nizari authors. Several chronicles and biographies were composed by individuals in the early Nizari community of the Alamut period, but none of these are known to have survived, although some of them were consulted by the non-Ismaili historians of the Mongol era, such as Juwayni and Rashid al-Din; on this, see F. Daftary, 'Persian Historiography of the Early Nizari Isma'ilis', *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, 30 (1992), pp. 91- 97.

⁴⁷ Muhammad b. Zayn al-'Abidin Fida'i Khurasani, *Hidayat al-mu'minin al-talibin*, ed. A.A. Semenov (Moscow, 1959), p. 4.

⁴⁸ Shihab al-Din Shah Husayni, *Khitabat-i 'aliya*, p. 39; Fida'i Khurasani, *Hidayat al-mu'minin al-talibin*, pp. 110- 111.



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