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# The Ismaili Tradition in Iran: 13th Century to the Present

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## Summary

The Ismailis are a minority community of Shi'i Muslims that first emerged in the 8th century. Iran has hosted one of the largest Ismaili communities since the earliest years of the movement and from 1095 to 1841 it served as the home of the Nizārī Ismaili imams. In 1256 the Ismaili headquarters at the fortress of Alamūt in northern Iran was captured by the Mongols and the Imam Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh was arrested and executed, opening a perilous new chapter in the history of the Ismailis in Iran. Generations of observers believed that the Ismailis had perished entirely in the course of the Mongol conquests. Beginning in the 19th century, research on the Ismailis began to slowly reveal the myriad ways in which they survived and even flourished in Iran and elsewhere into the post-Mongol era. However, scholarship on the Iranian Ismailis down to the early 20th century remained almost entirely dependent on non-Ismaili sources that were generally quite hostile toward their subject. The discovery of many previously unknown Ismaili texts beginning in the early 20th century offered prospects for a richer and more complete understanding of the tradition's historical development. Yet despite this, the Ismaili tradition in the post-Mongol era continues to receive only a fraction of the scholarly attention given to earlier periods, and a number of sources produced by Ismaili communities in this period remain unexplored, offering valuable opportunities for future research.

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**Keywords:** Ismailis, Iran, Shi'ism, Aga Khan, Mongols, Timurids, Safavids, Nadir Shah, Qajars, Pahlavis

## The Ismailis of Iran After the Mongol Conquests

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The Ismaili movement traces its origin to a schism in the nascent Shi'i Muslim community over the question of succession to the Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 765), with one party championing the imāmate of his second son Ismā'īl, while the line of imams constituting the Ithnā'asharī or "Twelver" Shi'i branch, today the majority Shi'i community in Iran, Iraq, and elsewhere, extended from his younger son Mūsā al-Kāẓim. Like other Shi'i traditions, the Ismailis believe in the principle that religious leadership of the Muslim community inheres in the position of the Imam, who stands in a line of genetic succession stemming from the Prophet Muḥammad through his daughter Fāṭima and his son-in-law 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who is considered by Shi'as as the first Imam. In contrast to the majority Twelver Shi'i community, whose line of Imams is considered to have been in a state of occultation since the death of the

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eleventh Imam in 874, the line of Ismaili Imams continues to be held by a living claimant down to the present time, being held at the time of writing by Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī (Aga Khan IV), the 49th Imam of the Ismaili tradition.

Supporters of the Ismaili movement appeared in northern Africa in the late 9th century, founding the Fatimid dynasty under the Imam Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdullāh al-Mahdī in 909. Later establishing its capital in the city of Cairo, the Fatimid Empire persisted for over two centuries as one of the leading cultural, political, and religious centers of the Islamic world, presenting a formidable challenge to the Sunni ‘Abbasid caliphate. From Cairo the Fatimid imams administered a wide-ranging missionary organization known as the *da‘wa*, or “summons,” which worked to spread Ismaili ideas into many regions outside the Fatimid Empire, particularly in Iran, where it gained many followers during the Fatimid era. In 1094 the Ismaili community experienced a schism over the question of succession to Imam Mustanṣir bi’llāh between supporters of his sons Nizār and Musta‘lī, culminating in the arrest and execution of Nizār in 1095 and the ascension of Musta‘lī to leadership of the Fatimid Empire. According to a tradition preserved among the followers of Nizār, known as the Nizārīs, a son of his was smuggled out of Egypt prior to his execution and given refuge in the Ismaili-controlled fortress of Alamūt in the Daylam region of northern Iran, which thereafter served as the headquarters of the Nizārī imamate.<sup>1</sup>

The Mongol conquest of Alamūt and execution of Imam Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh in 1256 initiated a precarious new phase for the Iranian Nizārīs. One of the chief ministers for the Mongols, ‘Atā’ Malik Juvaynī, who participated in the Mongol campaign against Alamūt and whose historical chronicle serves as the chief source for these events, claimed that the Nizārīs, a group that he considered to be utterly heretical and outside the bounds of Islam, were entirely exterminated in the course of the Mongol conquests. Yet while the Mongol conquests undoubtedly constituted a tremendous calamity for the Nizārīs, it has long been clear that Juvaynī considerably exaggerated his claims of their complete annihilation. The reasons for this exaggeration may be attributed in large measure to an effort on the part of Juvaynī, an observant Muslim in the service of the Mongols, to perceive some sort of silver lining in the vast destruction brought to Muslim lands by the Mongol conquests. In any event, the Nizārīs in fact continued to maintain a presence in the Daylam region for centuries following the Mongol conquests and even recaptured and held the fortress of Alamūt for a period of several years beginning in 1275.<sup>2</sup>

According to Nizārī tradition, a son of Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. c. 1310), was smuggled out of Alamūt prior to the Mongol conquest and given refuge in the city of Tabriz. The addition of the epithet *zardūz* or “tailor” to the name of Shams al-Dīn in some sources may be an indication that this imam had adopted a common occupation, perhaps in an effort to conceal his identity. Later Nizārīs maintained a number of hagiographical traditions ascribing widespread travels to Shams al-Dīn, who is sometimes associated in legendary accounts with the figure of Shams Tabrīzī, the teacher of the renowned Persian poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, as well as with a renowned missionary (*dā‘ī*) by the name of Pīr Shams, who was active in India in this same period.<sup>3</sup> However, rather little is known concretely of the status or activities of the imams during this period. It is clear that the position of the imamate and of the Ismailis in general remained precarious in the centuries immediately following the Mongol conquests, and the few references to Ismailis that appear in the sources from this time almost invariably occur in the context of accounts of their conflicts with Sunni Muslim rulers.

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## The Muḥammad-Shāhī Imamate

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In the early 14th century there occurred a schism within the Nizārī community over the question of succession to Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, with the resulting parties known commonly as the Qāsim-Shāhī and Muḥammad-Shāhī lines.<sup>4</sup> While today the Qāsim-Shāhī line is virtually synonymous with Nizārī Ismailism and is the only line to maintain a living Imam, for several centuries the Muḥammad-Shāhī lineage held a strong position in several regions, particularly in Syria, where the very few remaining supporters of this lineage reside today, and also within Iran and Central Asia. The Muḥammad-Shāhī imams were based in the Daylam region of northern Iran throughout the 14th and 15th centuries. Non-Ismaili sources note an Ismaili imam by the name of Khudāvand Muḥammad, who can be most likely identified as Muḥammad Shāh, as being active in the political and military affairs of Daylam in the late 14th century, even occupying Alamūt for a period of time once again.<sup>5</sup> A later imam of this lineage, Raḍī al-Dīn ‘Alī, traveled from Iran to the Badakhshān region of Central Asia and led the Ismailis of the region in an abortive uprising there against the Timurids in 1509.

The most famous imam of the Muḥammad-Shāhī lineage was Shāh Ṭāhir, the son of Raḍī al-Dīn, who had remained in Iran during his father’s expedition to Badakhshān. A renowned poet and scholar in his day, Shāh Ṭāhir came into conflict with the Safavid government on account of his teachings and the strength of his following, and he was forced to flee to India under threat of arrest and execution. He arrived at the city of Ahmednagar, the capital of the Nizām-Shāhī kingdom in the Deccan, and there he began a second career as a propagator for Twelver Shi‘ism, which has been interpreted as reflecting the practice of *taqiyya*.<sup>6</sup> Eventually he succeeded in bringing the ruling dynasty itself over to Twelver Shi‘ism and became a spiritual advisor to the ruler, Burhān Nizām Shāh. Thereafter the Muḥammad-Shāhī lineage remained based in the Deccan and appears to have died out there sometime in the late 18th century. By that time, the majority of the followers of the Muḥammad-Shāhī lineage, with the exception of a group in Syria, had either transferred their allegiance to the Qāsim-Shāhī imams or adopted Twelver Shi‘ism. The bulk of the Syrian Ismaili community officially transferred its allegiance to the Qāsim-Shāhī imam in 1887 after several unsuccessful attempts to track down descendants of the last known Muḥammad-Shāhī imam, and today only a small number of Ismailis in Syria still retain allegiance to the Muḥammad-Shāhī lineage in expectation of its reappearance.<sup>7</sup>

## The Nizārī *Da‘wa* in the Post-Mongol Era

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Starting from the 9th century, the Ismaili movement became well known for its abundant production of scholarly literature, in which Ismaili ideas were expressed through a rich vocabulary conjoining Islamic philosophy, Neoplatonism, and indigenous Iranian cosmology.<sup>8</sup> This literature was produced, by and large, by scholars operating in the service of the *da‘wa*, or “summons,” a hierarchical missionary organization charged with the dual task of educating and administering to the Ismaili community while also spreading the Ismaili tradition to new regions and populations. Yet while the literature and operations of the Ismaili *da‘wa* in the pre-Mongol era has now received a significant amount of attention in scholarship, its evolution and functioning in the post-Mongol era has received much less attention and in many respects remains poorly understood.

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In contrast with their prolific production by Ismaili authors from earlier periods, there is significantly less Ismaili literature that survives from the centuries immediately following the Mongol conquests. Among them are a small handful of texts containing discourses attributed to Ismaili imams, including the aforementioned *Haft nukta* and a text titled *Alfāz-i guharbār*, which can be tentatively attributed to Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad.<sup>9</sup> Aside from these works, one of the few Ismaili authors from this period whose works have survived was the Persian poet Nizārī Quhistānī (1247–1320), a native of the town of Bīrjand in the Quhistān region of eastern Iran, who left behind a collection of poetry and a travel account.<sup>10</sup> Quhistānī’s works are notable for employing terminology echoing that of the Sufi traditions, such as the notion of the *pīr-murīd* (“master-disciple”) relationship, and for his efforts to convey Ismaili concepts through such terminology, reflecting a practice that has remained an established element of Ismaili writings in the Persianate world down to the modern era. This tendency has been interpreted by a number of scholars, beginning with Wladimir Ivanow, as an effort to disguise Ismaili ideas through the employment of *taqiyya*, or “precautionary dissimulation,” under the guise or cloak of Sufism.<sup>11</sup> In the case of Quhistānī in particular, such a motive can be deemed unlikely, as his identity as an Ismaili was clearly recognized by many later anthologists. More broadly, recent scholarship has argued that the labeling of these literary tendencies under the framework of *taqiyya* reflects an essentialist view of both Ismaili and Sufi identity, which does not leave room for the possibility that the adoption of such terminology simply reflected an organic development within the Ismaili tradition itself.<sup>12</sup> While the performance of *taqiyya* undoubtedly was a central element in the lives of many Ismailis at this time, at least in certain social contexts, it is not evident that these literary developments were necessarily a sign of that performance, as in many cases the Ismaili character of the texts from this period remains abundantly clear, despite the shift in lexical usage.

The broader workings of the Nizārī *da’wa* in the centuries following the Mongol conquests remains poorly understood, due in no small part to the absence of source material. Earlier Ismaili writings from the pre-Mongol era outlined an elaborate hierarchy of ranks or stations for the *da’wa*, beginning with the Imam at its apex and descending down to the masses of common believers, with each rank ascribed a station of cosmological significance as well. While this terminology was retained in the literature of the post-Mongol period, with some modifications, it is questionable as to the degree to which this continued to reflect the working reality of the *da’wa*, as the available evidence suggests a much more streamlined organizational structure at work. Regional leaders of the *da’wa*, taking the title of *pīr* or *ḥujjat*, operated with a great deal of autonomy in this period, serving as the personified representation of the Imam’s authority, as the politically precarious position of the imamate restricted the ability of the imams to exercise more direct oversight over their followers. As a consequence, Nizārī communities in this period were often prone to schism or separation, as evidenced by the incessant emphasis in the literature of this period on the necessity of communal unity and of recognizing the rightful leadership of the Imam, coupled with frequent denunciations of the “people of discord” (*ahl-i taḍādd*).<sup>13</sup> In addition, the pressures of *taqiyya* remained constant throughout this period, in many cases resulting in the eventual absorption of Ismaili communities into majority traditions, even as Ismailis also found a number of creative means to avoid such an outcome.<sup>14</sup>

Yet despite these challenges, Nizārī communities in the post-Mongol era also experienced significant growth in some regions, along with a major shift in their geographical distribution. Following the overthrow of the Fatimid Empire by Saladin in 1171, the Ismaili population in

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Egypt and Northern Africa gradually declined, and Ismailis in these regions are no longer mentioned in the sources past the 15th century, leaving Syria as the only place within the western regions to maintain a Nizārī presence today.<sup>15</sup> In northwestern Iran, which served as the headquarters of the Nizārī imamate from the 12th to the 15th century, the Ismaili presence appears to have disappeared by the 17th century.<sup>16</sup> Instead, the center of gravity of Nizārī Ismailism shifted gradually but decisively to the east, as we find evidence of significant expansion of communities in central Iran, where the seat of the imamate relocated in the 15th century, and particularly in the Quhistān region of eastern Iran, in the highlands of present-day Afghanistan and the Badakhshān region of Central Asia, and in India.

## The Anjudān Revival and the Safavid Era

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The southern Caucasus region remained the base of the Qāsim-Shāhī imamate until the mid-15th century, when they took up residence in the town of Anjudān in the present-day Markazī province of central Iran, initiating a historical phase known as the “Anjudān revival” in modern historiography. While there is evidence for an Ismaili presence in the region since at least the late 14th century, the first imam known to have taken up residence there was Mustanṣir bi’llāh II, whose mausoleum in the town is dated to 1480.<sup>17</sup> From this time onwards, until the early 18th century, Anjudān and other nearby towns such as Kahak and Maḥallāt remained the primary residences of the Qāsim-Shāhī imams. While the reasoning behind the decision to relocate the seat of the imamate to Anjudān remains unclear, it is likely connected with the fact that the region was situated at some distance from the twin centers of Sunni power in Iran in this period, namely the Timurid court in Herat and the Aq-Qoyunlu capital in Tabriz, and hence provided a relative degree of safety and autonomy.

In contrast with the preceding two centuries, during which the Nizārīs appear to have carried out relatively little literary production, the period beginning from the late 15th century is marked by a significant increase in writing, as well as a renewed effort to expand and consolidate the *da’wa* in areas beyond Iran, most notably in India and Central Asia. The texts produced in this period include the works of several notable Ismaili poets and discourses attributed to the imams of this period. Among the latter is a book titled *Pandiyāt-i javānmardī*, which contains a series of counsels attributed to Imam Mustanṣir bi’llāh, probably referring to the third imam of this name, also known as Gharīb Mīrzā (d. 1498). Many copies of this work are found in Ismaili collections in Central Asia and in India, where it was translated into a number of Indic languages, testifying to the increasing spread of the *da’wa* in this period.<sup>18</sup> Another important work produced during the imamate of Gharīb Mīrzā was the *Haft bāb* of Abū Ishāq Quhistānī, which was distributed widely and adapted into a text titled *Kalām-i pīr* produced in Central Asia.<sup>19</sup> Somewhat later, an author known as Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (d. after 1553) composed a number of works that provide unique insight into the function of the *da’wa* in this period.<sup>20</sup>

The Safavid conquest of Iran in the early 16th century once again forced the imams into a perilous position. For a time it was believed by scholars that the Safavids, as a Shi’i dynasty, would have naturally been welcoming toward the Ismailis.<sup>21</sup> However, it is clear now that the form of Shi’ism expressed by the Safavids was an exclusionary one, and that the claims of the Nizārī imams to the station of living successors to the imamate of ‘Alī presented an ideological challenge to Safavid prerogatives to rule on behalf of the authority of the hidden Twelfth Imam.<sup>22</sup> One of the Nizārī imams from this period, Murād Mīrzā (d. 1574), was executed on

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the charge of spreading heresy. However, the situation for the Nizārī imams appears to have improved somewhat in the 17th century, as we find an edict dated 1627 from the Safavid ruler Shāh ‘Abbās, addressed to Murād Mīrzā’s successor Khalīlullāh (known also as Dhu’l-Fiqār ‘Alī, d. 1634), referred to in the edict as the mayor of Anjudān, exempting him and the inhabitants of Anjudān from taxes on account of their proximity to the holy city of Qumm and because of his status as a sayyid.<sup>23</sup> Judging from the text of the edict, it would appear that the Imam and his local followers were perceived to be Twelver Shi‘is at this time. Hence, while the Nizārī imams were able to obtain a degree of autonomy during the later Safavid period, their ability to operate openly as Ismailis remained very constricted, and there is no evidence that the imams after Murād Mīrzā openly expressed their claim to the imamate. However, this situation changed significantly after the fall of the Safavids in the 18th century.

## The 18th-Century Transformation in Iranian Ismailism

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Beginning in the early 18th century, a confluence of political and economic developments occurred that led to a drastic shift in the status of the Nizārī imamate, enabling it to newly emerge as a political and social force in Iran after centuries of relative obscurity.<sup>24</sup> The most significant of these was the decline and collapse of the Safavid state and the subsequent rise to power of Nādir Shāh, the founder of the Afshārid dynasty, who undertook a series of sweeping reforms in an effort to consolidate his power. Among these was the introduction of a far-reaching change to the religious policy of the state, in which official patronage of Twelver Shi‘ism was deemphasized in an effort to reduce tensions with his Sunni subjects and neighbors. Given his lack of genealogical credentials and his tense relationship with the Twelver ‘*ulamā*, Nādir Shāh sought new allies in support of his ambitions, among whom were the Ismailis. Nādir Shāh developed a close relationship with Imam Ḥasan ‘Alī (known also as Sayyid Ḥasan Beg) and employed the Imam as a commander in his army, in whose ranks also served a number of Nizārīs.<sup>25</sup> It would appear, moreover, that this appointment was made by Nādir Shāh with full knowledge of Ḥasan ‘Alī’s status as the Nizārī Imam, indicating that at least the elite members of the Ismaili community were no longer compelled to observe *taqiyya* at this time. According to some accounts of this relationship, Imam Ḥasan ‘Alī also accompanied Nādir Shāh in his invasion of India, after which he was rewarded with the governorship of the region surrounding his ancestral village of Maḥallāt. After some time, however, intrigues were made against the Imam by his enemies at court who accused the Imam of heresy, leading Nādir Shāh to blind the Imam. However, Nādir Shāh later pardoned Ḥasan ‘Alī and reinstated him to his former position. Despite its hesitant beginnings, the relationship between the Nizārī imams and the Afshārid dynasty outlived Nādir Shāh and was strengthened significantly under his successors.

Another major development that accompanied the public emergence of the Nizārī imamate under Nādir Shāh was the shift of the seat of the imamate from Anjudān, where it had been based since the 15th century, to the Kirmān region in the southeast of Iran, where the imamate had maintained a following since at least the 17th century. During the imamate of Sayyid Ḥasan ‘Alī’s grandfather, Shāh Nizār ‘Alī (Nizār II), a group of nomadic Khurāsānī tribesmen known as ‘Aṭā’ullāhīs (after the *takhalluṣ* of Shāh Nizār, ‘Aṭā’ullāh), who were followers of the Imam, were resettled in Kirmān, in the region of Sīrjān.<sup>26</sup> The strengthening of the position of the Nizārī imamate in 18th-century Iran and the move to Kirmān reflected another key development in this period, namely the increase in the economic fortunes of the



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Indian Ismaili communities, who had grown increasingly wealthy through engagement in the Indian Ocean trade. As a result of the disorders in Iran following the fall of the Safavids, the Nizārīs in India faced increasing difficulty in traveling to visit and pay tribute to the imams in northern Iran. Many of their caravans were plundered by the Bakhtiyārī tribes and the flow of religious dues to the imamate was stifled. As a result, toward the end of the reign of Nādir Shāh the decision was made by Sayyid Ḥasan ‘Alī to relocate the seat of the imamate to the town of Shahr-i Bābak in Kirmān in order to position himself closer to both the overland routes from India as well as the port at Bandar ‘Abbās, which was also used by many Indian pilgrims in this period. The flow of religious dues from India resumed and increased, and the Imam soon became a major landholder in the Kirmān region. Following the death of Nādir Shāh, Sayyid Ḥasan ‘Alī developed a close relationship with Nādir Shāh’s grandson, Shāhrukh Khān, the governor of Kirmān, and gave one of his daughters in marriage to Shāhrukh Khān’s son.

The sources relate few details regarding Imam Sayyid Ḥasan ‘Alī’s successor, Qāsim ‘Alī, whose imamate evidently was quite brief. Much more information is available on the next imam, Sayyid Abu’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī. During Sayyid Abu’l-Ḥasan’s imamate, control of Kirmān passed from the Afshārids to the Zand dynasty established by Karīm Khān Zand. Sayyid Abu’l-Ḥasan quickly developed a strong relationship with Karīm Khān, who eventually appointed him as the governor of Kirmān province. The Imam successfully repelled a major Afghan invasion of Kirmān and patronized a number of major construction projects in the capital. Following the death of Karīm Khān in 1779, Imam Abu’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī continued to receive the support of his successors and governed the province as a virtually autonomous ruler. However, he crucially switched his support to Āghā Muḥammad Khān Qājār during the latter’s conflict with the Zands, and with the support of his ‘Atā’ullāhī followers he repelled an effort by the Zand ruler Luṭf ‘Alī Khān to capture the city of Kirmān in the winter of 1790–1791. This switch of allegiance laid the foundation for a close and beneficial relationship between the Nizārī imamate and the Qājārs for the next half-century.

## The Qājār Era and the Departure of the Imamate from Iran

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Following the Qājār capture of Kirmān, Imam Abu’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī retired to his ancestral home in Kahak, due to the violent upheavals that continued to convulse the region following the Qājār conquest.<sup>27</sup> The Imam passed away a year later, in 1792, and was succeeded by his son Shāh Khalīlullāh, who was appointed by the Qājār ruler Āghā Muḥammad Khān as the mayor of Kahak. In 1815 Shāh Khalīlullāh moved his residence to the city of Yazd, in south-central Iran, in order to once again situate the imamate more conveniently for pilgrims from India. In 1817, two years after the shift of the seat of the imamate to Yazd, Imam Shāh Khalīlullāh and his residence were attacked by an angry mob instigated by a member of the local Shi’i *‘ulamā* named Mullā Ḥusayn Yazdī, who murdered the Imam and a number of his Indian followers. The Qājār ruler of the period, Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh, severely punished Mullā Yazdī for his role in the murder and appointed Shāh Khalīlullāh’s son and successor to the imamate, Ḥasan ‘Alī Shāh, as governor of Qumm and granted him one of his own daughters in marriage, and in addition bestowed on him the honorific title of Aga Khan (Āqā Khān), which has since become a hereditary title for the Nizārī imams.<sup>28</sup>

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In 1834, Ḥasan ‘Alī Shāh was appointed by the Qājār ruler Muḥammad Shāh as governor of Kirmān, the same position that his grandfather had held under the Zands, and charged with restoring the province to Qājār authority after having fallen into disorder during the general upheaval that accompanied his ascension to the throne earlier that year. The Imam governed Kirmān for two years, during which he waged a successful campaign to restore law and order to the province. However, beginning in 1836, a series of incidents brought an abrupt end to the close relationship enjoyed between the Nizārī imams and the Qājārs over the preceding decades, as the Imam was dismissed from his post and subsequently besieged and imprisoned, thus initiating a cycle of events that would culminate in the forced departure of the Nizārī imamate from Iran several years later.

In his memoirs, the Imam attributes these conflicts to an intrigue against him at court stemming from his unwitting involvement in a rivalry over leadership of the Ni‘matullāhī Sufi order, whose members were often persecuted by the Twelver ‘*ulamā* but who nonetheless had enjoyed a close relationship with members of the Qājār royal family since the late 18th century.<sup>29</sup> The Aga Khan had for many years been a close companion to the spiritual leader (*quṭb*) of the Ni‘matullāhiyya, Zayn al-‘Ābidīn Shirvānī (d. 1838), whose chief rival, Ḥājji Mīrzā Āqāsī, had been appointed as prime minister to Muḥammad Shāh in 1835. In September 1840 the tensions between the Aga Khan and the Qājārs broke out into open conflict, and the Imam and his followers engaged in a number of battles with Qājār troops that lasted nearly a year. Finally, following a failed attempt to escape via the port of Bandar ‘Abbās, the Imam and his party in summer 1841 crossed into neighboring Afghanistan, thus bringing an end to the nearly seven-and-a-half-century history of the Nizārī imamate’s residence in Iran.

Following his exile from Iran, Aga Khan I traveled widely throughout Afghanistan and western India over the next several years, visiting with various Ismaili communities along the way, and he developed close relationships with a number of British officials. These relationships established the foundation for a warm association between the Nizārī imams and the British that formed a key plank for its subsequent flourishing in India under Aga Khan I and his successors. The Imam eventually settled in the port city of Bombay in 1848, which thereafter became the new seat of the imamate, and he died and was buried there in 1881.

## The Ismailis of Iran in the Modern Era

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The relocation of the imamate to India spurred a new round of literary production among the Ismailis, to include a number of important historical works.<sup>30</sup> Aga Khan I in 1850 dictated an autobiography, titled *Ibrat-afzā*, while his grandson Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh al-Ḥusaynī (d. 1884) composed a number of works, including a text titled *Khiṭābāt-i ‘āliyya* that is noteworthy, among other things, for its effort at establishing a canonical account of the genealogy of the Nizārī imams. Shihāb al-Dīn’s brother, the Imam Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh (d. 1957), sponsored the work of a prolific Iranian author named Muḥammad Fidā’ī Khurāsānī (d. 1923), who among other things composed a historical work titled *Hidāyat al-mu‘minīn al-ṭālibīn*, copies of which circulated widely among the Ismailis of Iran and Central Asia. While earlier Nizārī texts contained accounts of the genealogy of the imams, Khurāsānī’s work is noteworthy for being the first historical chronicle to be produced among the Nizārīs since the Mongol conquests. In addition, in 1893 a history of the Nizārī imams was composed by Muḥammad Taqī Maḥallātī, a



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sympathetic Twelver Shi‘i author whose ancestors had been in the service of the Nizārī imams. This work, titled *Āthār-i Muḥammadī*, survives in several manuscript copies but remains unpublished.

The departure of the Nizārī imamate from the territory of Iran in 1841 led to a profound crisis of leadership for the Ismailis of the region, as many of the local Ismaili leaders left with the Aga Khan.<sup>31</sup> Subsequently, the Ismailis of Iran entered into a period of crisis, due both to the absence of communal leadership and to the fact that the official protection they had previously enjoyed under the Qājārs (stemming from the close relationship between the imams and the court) was now removed. While the Qājārs never officially endorsed any persecution of the Ismailis, they nonetheless were now much less vigorous in prosecuting such acts than they had been in the decades of the close relationship with the imamate. As a result, Ismailis across Iran faced renewed attacks from members of the Twelver ‘*ulamā* in the second half of the 19th century, eventually causing even more Ismailis to choose either to move to India or to assimilate to Twelver Shi‘ism. Furthermore, the increasingly strained relations between the Qājārs and the British caused difficulties for Iranian Ismailis seeking to travel to India for an audience with the Imam.

Accordingly, the Ismailis of Iran suffered a widespread crisis of leadership and identity in the second half of the 19th century. At the time of the Imam’s departure, the Nizārī communities of Iran, often confined to relatively remote regions and separated from each other by great distances, operated on a largely autonomous basis under the control of hereditary local authorities known as *hujjats*.<sup>32</sup> Following the establishment of the new seat of imamate in Bombay, Aga Khan I appointed an individual by the name of Mīrzā Ḥasan, of the village of Sidih in southern Khurāsān province, as his chief representative (*kalāntar*) in Iran and granted him responsibility for collecting dues from all the Nizārīs of Iran for a period of forty years. Ḥasan traced his genealogy back to a legendary *dā‘ī* of the Quhistān region, Ḥusayn Qā’ini, reportedly a contemporary of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, and through a renowned Ismaili poet of the 17th century, Mīrzā Ḥusayn b. Ya‘qūb Shāh. On Mīrzā Ḥasan’s death in 1887 he was succeeded in the position of *kalāntar* by his son, Murād Mirza, although this succession evidently occurred without the authorization of the Imam of this time, Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh (Aga Khan III). Murād Mīrzā was accused of retaining the dues for himself and displaying other signs of rebellion against the Imam’s authority. He openly broke with Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh in 1906, when he joined in a lawsuit against the Imam and claimed another individual named Šamad Shāh, a great-grandson of Aga Khan I, as the rightful Imam (although Šamad Shāh himself rejected the claim and remained loyal to Aga Khan III). Following this, Murād Mīrzā and his followers broke away from the main body of the Nizārīs and formed a separate community known commonly as the Murād Mīrzā’īs. Although most of this community later shifted toward Twelver Shi‘ism after the death of Šamad Shāh in the early 1940s, a small number reportedly remain in Iran today.

The Iranian Ismailis down to the early 20th century remained largely indistinct from their Twelver Shi‘i neighbors in terms of religious practices. While there reportedly existed a number of distinct practices and traditions that were observed by some Nizārī communities, these were generally confined to certain localities and, aside from the practice of the payment of religious dues to the imams, there do not appear to have been any practices that were universally observed by the Nizārīs of Iran that were distinct from the broader Shi‘i community. Imam Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh (Aga Khan III) undertook a series of reforms that

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were broadly centered on the twin goals of establishing a more unified and consolidated religious identity among the various Ismaili communities of Iran and elsewhere, while encouraging his followers to articulate that identity through the observation of practices that are distinguished from other Muslim communities. Concurrently, Aga Khan III also undertook a series of organizational reforms among the Nizārīs of various areas, including Iran, with the goal of asserting the authority of the imamate and replacing entrenched local hierarchies with bureaucratic structures that were more accountable both to the imamate and to the communities they served. To these ends, in 1903 Aga Khan III appointed Fidā'ī Khurāsānī to the newly created position of *mu'allim*, charging him with encouraging the Ismailis of Iran to begin distinguishing themselves further from their Ithna'ashari neighbors through their religious practices and to assert more openly their identity as Ismailis. Among the reforms instituted by Khurāsānī was the institution of a daily prayer in a mixture of Persian and Arabic commonly known as the *Haft tasbīh*, which remained widely observed among the Ismailis of Iran until the introduction of the current Arabic *du'a* under Aga Khan IV in 1964. On his death in 1923 Fidā'ī Khurāsānī was succeeded in his position as *mu'allim* by Sayyid Sulaymān Badakhshānī.

The break in relations between the Nizārī imamate and the Qājār court that occurred under Aga Khan I was rectified in large measure under Aga Khan III, who had a cordial meeting with the Qājār ruler Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh in Paris in 1900.<sup>33</sup> The ascension of Riḍā Shāh to power and his establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925 marked a new chapter for the Ismailis of Iran. The Pahlavis pursued an aggressive campaign of modernization and the expansion of education and literacy in Iran, and Aga Khan III encouraged his Iranian followers to engage wholeheartedly in these efforts. In the early 1930s there began a widespread campaign to establish schools in Ismaili villages across the country, along with other efforts toward the economic development of the community. Whereas due to their historical experience of persecution the Ismailis of Iran had previously been confined to rural regions in peripheral areas of the country, as a result of these modernization initiatives there emerged by the mid-20th century a significant middle class among the Ismailis based in the major urban areas. In 1951 Aga Khan III made a high-profile visit to Iran to attend the royal wedding, the first visit by a Nizārī imam to the country in over a century. This close relationship between the Pahlavi dynasty and the Nizārī imams continued under Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī (Aga Khan IV), who competed on the Iranian ski team at the 1964 Winter Olympics and who continued the previous Imam's organizational reforms of the community.

The revolution in Iran of 1978–1979 once again forced the Ismailis into a more guarded position, as the close relationship between the Aga Khan and the deposed Pahlavis, along with the Ismailis' adherence to an alternative articulation of Shi'ism than that officially promoted by the state, constituted potential liabilities for the community with the new regime. While the Ismailis have not suffered the levels of persecution inflicted upon other minority religious communities by the Iranian government, such as the Bahā'īs, nonetheless their public presence in Iran has become significantly reduced in recent decades. The exact size of the Nizārī population in the Islamic Republic of Iran as of 2020 is unknown; estimates generally range from 30,000 to 50,000, with some reaching as high as 100,000. Recent decades have also seen a sizable migration of Ismailis to the West, chiefly to Canada and the United States, with smaller diaspora communities based in the United Kingdom, France, and elsewhere.

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## Discussion of the Literature

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In contrast with earlier periods of Ismaili history, the era following the Mongol conquests continues to receive significantly less attention in scholarship. The Ismailis had been known to the West since the time of the Crusades via an assortment of sensationalist and polemical accounts that coalesced into the so-called “Assassins” legends.<sup>34</sup> But it was only in the early 19th century that the Ismailis came to the attention of European travelers and colonial officials in the Near East as a living community.<sup>35</sup> The remainder of the 19th century saw only a handful of studies produced on the history of the Ismailis, focusing chiefly on their earlier history and working almost entirely on the basis of European and Sunni Muslim sources that were generally hostile toward their subject, as Ismaili sources were almost entirely unknown to Western scholarship at that time. One of the prime representatives of this body of scholarship was the work of the Austrian scholar Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, whose study broadly concludes with the Mongol conquest of Alamūt but which offers some important remarks on the survival of Ismaili communities in Iran after the Mongol conquests.<sup>36</sup> In particular, von Hammer-Purgstall had access to an important source, the *Naṣā’ih-i Shāhrukhī* of Jalāl-i Qā’inī, which provides some critical insight into the Ismaili communities of the Quhistān region down to the early 15th century. This work exists in a unique manuscript in the Imperial Library in Vienna and its account of the Ismailis remained unstudied for nearly 200 years after von Hammer’s work, until it was again taken up by Delia Cortese and Shafique Virani.

Aside from von Hammer-Purgstall’s work, there was little progress in scholarship in the field until the early 20th century, when the first efforts at the collection of Persian Ismaili manuscripts were initiated. These efforts first occurred not in Iran itself, but rather in the upper-Oxus region of Russian-controlled Central Asia, where scholars including Ivan Zarubin, Aleksandr Semenov, and Wladimir Ivanow collected a number of Persian Ismaili manuscripts in the decade preceding World War I. Ivanow in particular, following his exile from Russia after the 1917 revolution, went on to publish a large number of Ismaili texts, including a few key sources from the post-Mongol era.<sup>37</sup> In addition, Ivanow also published a number of valuable ethnographic accounts of Ismaili communities within Iran.<sup>38</sup> Further, in the early 20th century, the British vice-consul in Rasht, Hyacinth Louis Rabino (d. 1950), published a series of studies on the history of the Daylam region based on local sources and was the first to draw attention to the information in these accounts on the survival of Ismaili communities in this region after the Mongol conquest of Alamūt.<sup>39</sup>

Until the final decade of the 20th century, accounts of the post-Mongol era of the Ismailis in scholarship continued to be found primarily in the form of conclusions or postscripts to studies focused on their earlier history, as we see, for example, in the renowned study of Marshall Hodgson on the Nizārī state in Iran.<sup>40</sup> A comprehensive account of the Ismailis in post-Mongol Iran appeared only with Farhad Daftary’s *The Ismā’īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, the first edition of which appeared in 1990 (with a revised edition published in 2007). To date, Daftary’s work remains the only study to address the post-Mongol era of Iranian Nizārī history in its entirety, although a number of specialized studies addressing more specific time periods and topics have appeared since then. The studies by Nadia Eboo Jamal and Shafique Virani, as well as the unpublished dissertation by Delia Cortese, cover the period immediately following the Mongol conquests, down to the late 15th century.<sup>41</sup> The Safavid era until recently had remained almost completely ignored in Ismaili studies, aside

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from the brief coverage found in Daftary's work, although it has recently received comprehensive treatment in a Ph.D. dissertation completed by Jamil Kassam at the University of Chicago.<sup>42</sup> The period from the end of the Safavid era down to the departure of the imamate from Iran in 1841 has been the subject of a handful of studies, including several by the present author.<sup>43</sup> The modern era of the Iranian Ismailis still awaits a comprehensive treatment. Several valuable ethnographic studies of contemporary Ismaili communities in Iran remain unpublished; these include the Ph.D. dissertation completed by Rafique Keshavjee at Harvard in 1981, the M.A. thesis of Maryam Mu'izzī completed at Firdawsī University in Mashhad in 1993 (in Persian), and the Ph.D. thesis by Maryam Rezaee at the University of York in 2008.<sup>44</sup> The current situation surrounding the Ismailis in Iran is likely to hinder the completion and publication of further research on this topic for the foreseeable future. There exist several bibliographies of scholarship in Ismaili Studies, the earliest published by Nagib Tajdin in 1985.<sup>45</sup> This has now been superseded by Farhad Daftary's *Ismaili Literature*, published in 2004.<sup>46</sup> A list of additions and corrections to Daftary's bibliography was published in 2013 by Niwazali Jiwa.<sup>47</sup>

## Primary Sources

References to the Iranian Ismailis for the period from the 13th to the 19th century in non-Ismaili sources are generally quite sparse. While nearly all the universal historical chronicles produced in the Persianate world in this period contained a comprehensive history of the Ismailis, these accounts were generally based on earlier works, chiefly the writings of Juvaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn, and hence invariably conclude with the Mongol conquest of Alamūt.<sup>48</sup> By contrast, references to the Ismailis in the sources for the period after 1256 are fragmentary and episodic, often appearing only in instances in which the Ismailis come into conflict with one of the ruling powers of this period.<sup>49</sup> While Ismaili sources for much of this period were also, until recently, imagined to have been relatively sparse, there nonetheless exists a substantial body of manuscript material preserved in private Ismaili collections in the Persianate world, much of which has only recently come to light and remains yet to be properly investigated.

For a number of reasons, the literature produced by the Ismaili communities of Iran in the post-Mongol era has been known to scholarship, until recently, almost entirely from manuscripts preserved in private collections among Ismailis in the Badakhshān region of Central Asia, and not in Iran itself.<sup>50</sup> There are a number of reasons for this development, chief among them being the close ties formed between the Central Asia Ismailis and Russian scholars beginning in the early 20th century, which continued into the Soviet era, and which allowed a large amount of literature that was previously subject to intensive secrecy practices to come to light. A small number of Ismaili manuscripts collected from Central Asia in the early 20th century by Ivan Zarubin, Wladimir Ivanow, and Aleksandr Semenov are currently held at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg.<sup>51</sup> A much larger collection is held at the Rudaki Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, having been collected during a series of five summer expeditions led between 1959 and 1963 by Andrei Bertel's and Mamadvafo Bakoev.<sup>52</sup>

While in many respects they developed as autonomous traditions, the Central Asian and Iranian Ismailis also shared many historical ties, as well as a common literary language, with the *da'wa* in Central Asia being repeatedly reinforced over the centuries with migrant scholars from Iran. Among the manuscripts collected from Central Asia there are a number of texts of Iranian provenance from the post-Mongol era, including copies of prominent works such as the *Haft bāb* of Abū Ishāq Quhistānī and the *Pandiyāt-i javānmardī*, as well as a much larger selection of anonymous treatises on various doctrinal and theological subjects whose date and provenance are uncertain. Judging from the language of these latter texts, it is clear that the majority of them date to later periods and likely circulated among Ismaili communities across the Persianate world.

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The largest collection of Ismaili manuscript materials is housed at the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) in London. The Persian Ismaili manuscripts at the IIS are divided between two collections. The first is a collection of manuscripts previously assembled by Wladimir Ivanow and his associates for the Ismaili Society, the Bombay-based forerunner to the IIS, consisting of many of the materials that he utilized for his text editions. A much larger collection is currently in the process of development, consisting of materials identified and digitized from private collections in Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Iran. While the IIS maintains a partial hand-list of its Persian manuscripts that is available to visiting researchers, a complete catalog of the collection was still in preparation as of 2020.

Only a small number of Ismaili sources from the post-Mongol era have been published and the further publication of sources from this era remains a major desideratum of the field. Several texts from this period were published by Ivanow, including the *Pandiyāt-i javānmardī* of Imam Mustanṣir bi'llāh and the *Haft bāb* of Abū Ishāq Quhistānī from the 15th century; the collected works of the 16th-century *dā'ī* Khayrkhwāh Harātī and an anonymous work titled *Faṣl dar bayān-i shinākht-i imām* ("Treatise on the Recognition of the Imam") that has also been tentatively attributed to Harātī; an abbreviated edition of the *Dīvān* of the 17th-century poet Khākī Khurāsānī; and the *Risāla dar ḥaqīqat-i dīn* of the 19th-century author Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh al-Ḥusaynī.<sup>53</sup> The latter's *Khiṭābāt-i 'āliyya* has also been published by Hūshang Ujāqī.<sup>54</sup> In addition, Ivanow published an edition of an important source of Central Asian provenance, the *Kalām-i pīr*, which was based substantially upon the *Haft bāb* of Abū Ishāq Quhistānī.<sup>55</sup> While Ivanow's publications have served as an invaluable resource for the field, many new manuscripts of these works have come to light more recently, in many cases being older and of better quality than those available to Ivanow. Furthermore, Ivanow's judgments on the authorship, date, and significance of these sources has in a number of cases now been called into question.<sup>56</sup> Accordingly, the entire corpus of Ismaili sources edited and published by Ivanow needs to be revisited on the basis of newly discovered manuscripts.

Aside from Ivanow's publications, only a few other Ismaili sources from the post-Mongol era have been published. The Russian scholar Aleksandr Semenov published an edition of the *Hidāyat al-mu'minīn al-ṭālibīn* of Muḥammad Fidā'ī Khurāsānī.<sup>57</sup> An anonymous late 14th or early 15th-century treatise titled *Risāla-i širāṭ al-mustaqīm* ("Treatise on the Right Path") has been published by Shafique Virani, who is at work in preparing editions of several other texts from this period.<sup>58</sup> The mid-19th-century autobiography of Imam Ḥasan 'Alī Shāh (Aga Khan I) has been published in an edition and translation by the present author and Daryoush Mohammad Poor.<sup>59</sup> The dissertation of Jamil Kassam includes a number of previously unpublished extracts and translations of Ismaili texts from the period from the 16th to the 19th century.<sup>60</sup> Many key sources for this period remain unpublished. Chief among them is the aforementioned *Āthār-i Muḥammadī*, which contains a wealth of critical information on the Iranian Ismailis, particularly for the period following the departure of the imamate from Iran.

Ismaili sources from outside Iran also contain important insights into the Iranian Ismailis in the post-Mongol era. A number of unpublished Ismaili sources from Central Asia are valuable in this regard; among them is a text titled *Silk-i guhar-rīz* (authored c. 1835 in Badakhshān), which contains several accounts of travels by the author's ancestors to visit the imams in Iran. Indian Ismaili sources, and particularly the corpus of devotional hymns known as the *Gināns*, also contain some details on the status of the imams in Iran in the post-Mongol era.<sup>61</sup> The Syrian Ismaili sources also contain some important information on the imams from this period, particularly those of the Muḥammad-Shāhī lineage, although these remain insufficiently explored.<sup>62</sup>

Several bibliographies of Ismaili primary sources have been published, including an earlier work by Wladimir Ivanow (now highly dated and lacking references to manuscripts), a far more comprehensive survey by Ismail Poonawala (which includes references to manuscripts in published catalogs as of 1977), and the 2004 publication by Farhad Daftary, which includes only published sources and no references to manuscripts.<sup>63</sup> A revised edition of Poonawala's bibliography is in preparation.

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## Notes

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1. While a number of Ismaili communities stemming from Musta‘lī remain in existence today, the Ismailis of Iran since the time of the schism have been followers of the Nizārī branch; hence, in this article I use the terms Ismaili and Nizārī interchangeably when discussing the Ismailis of Iran. Out of concern for brevity in the first part of the article I have provided references only to secondary sources, wherein references to the relevant primary sources may be found. I have given references to the published Ismaili sources mentioned in this article in the section on “Primary Sources.”
2. On the continuation of the Nizārī presence in Daylam after the Mongol conquests, see Shafique N. Virani, “The Eagle Returns: Evidence of Continued Ismā‘īlī Activity at Alamūt and in the South Caspian Region following the Mongol Conquests,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 123, no. 2 (2003): 351–370; and Shafique N. Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, a Search for Salvation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 29–46.
3. For a review of the evidence concerning the links between Imam Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad and Shams Tabrīzī, see Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, 49–55. On the Imam’s association with Pīr Shams, see further Zawahir Moir, “The Life and Legends of Pir Shams as Reflected in the Ismaili Ginans: A Critical Review,” in *Constructions hagiographiques dans le monde Indien: entre mythe et histoire*, ed. Françoise Mallison (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 2001), 365–384.
4. There are a number of different versions of this schism and of the familial relationship between the participants that are reported in the sources. For details, see Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, 77–83. See also Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (2nd ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 413–416, 451–456; Wladimir Ivanow, “A Forgotten Branch of the Ismailis,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 30, no. 1 (1938): 57–79; and ‘Ārif Tāmīr, “Furū‘ al-shajara al-Ismā‘īliyya al-Imāmiyya,” *al-Mashriq* 61 (1957): 581–612.
5. Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, 35–39. Virani suggests that this Khudāvand Muḥammad may in fact have been a reference to Islām Shāh ibn Qāsim Shāh, who is given the name Aḥmad (of which Muḥammad may be a hypothetical variant) in some sources. As evidence for this, Virani points to an Ismaili source titled *Haft nukta*, tentatively datable to the late 14th or early 15th century, containing a series of discourses attributed to Islām Shāh in which reference is made to a group of rivals (presumably the Muḥammad-Shāhī imams) as being active in several regions, among which Daylam is not mentioned. While Virani takes this as evidence to suggest that the Muḥammad-Shāhī lineage did not have a presence in Daylam, since then a number of additional manuscripts of this text have come to light, some bearing the name of Khudāvand Muḥammad Shāh as the author. Hence, it would appear there were both Qāsim-Shāhī and Muḥammad-Shāhī redactions of the work in circulation, raising the possibility that the text may have originally been produced within the Muḥammad-Shāhī lineage and later “corrected” by a Qāsim-Shāhī author. On these manuscripts of the *Haft nukta*, see Daniel Beben, “The Legendary Biographies of Nāṣir-i Khusraw: Memory and Textualization in Early Modern Persian Ismā‘īlism” (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 2015), 238–240. In addition, newly discovered evidence from a mid-15th-century genealogical source further attests to the residence of the Muḥammad-Shāhī imams in Daylam in this period; see Kazuo Morimoto, “A Mid-Fifteenth-Century Attestation of the Muhammad Shahi Isma‘ilis: Between Khudawand Muhammad and Shah Tahir Dakani,” *Orient* 53 (2018): 95–107.
6. Farhad Daftary, “Shāh Ṭāhir and the Nizārī Ismaili Disguises,” in *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought: Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt*, ed. Todd Lawson (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 395–406. A more recent study has argued that Shāh Ṭāhir was in fact a *dā‘ī* for the Qāsim-Shāhī imams, a claim that is advanced in Qāsim-Shāhī sources from the 19th century; see Jamil Anwarali Kassam, “Persistent Light: The Nizari Ismailis from the Advent to the Apogee of Safavid Rule” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2018), 108–175.



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7. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 456.
  8. For an overview, see Farhad Daftary, “Ismaili *Daʿwa* Under the Fatimids,” in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, Vol. 5, ed. Urbain Vermeulen and K. D’Hulster (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 73–90.
  9. On this text, see Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, 57.
  10. On Nizārī Quhistānī, see Chengiz Baiburdi, *Zhizn’ i tvorchestvo Nizārī: persidskogo poëta XIII–XIV vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966); and Nadia Eboo Jamal, *Surviving the Mongols: Nizārī Quhistānī and the Continuity of Ismaili Tradition in Persia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002).
  11. For example, see Wladimir Ivanow, “An Ismaili Interpretation of the Gulshani Raz,” *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 8 (1932): 69–78; Farhad Daftary, “Ismāʿīlī-Sufi Relations in Early Post-Alamūt and Safavid Persia,” in *The Heritage of Sufism*. Vol. 3, *Late Classical Persianate Sufism (1501–1750)*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 275–289.
  12. See Daniel Beben, “Reimagining *Taqiyya*: The ‘Narrative of the Four Pillars’ and Strategies of Secrecy among the Ismāʿīlīs of Central Asia,” *History of Religions* 59, no. 2 (2019): 83–107; Jamal, *Surviving the Mongols*, 103–105; and Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, 142–148. In addition, Virani has demonstrated that this literary synthesis between Sufism and Ismailism in fact can be traced back to the pre-Mongol era; see his “Persian Poetry, Sufism and Ismailism: The Testimony of Khwājah Qāsim Tushtarī’s *Recognizing God*,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* series 3, 29, no. 1 (2019): 17–49.
  13. Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, 95–97.
  14. Beben, “Reimagining *Taqiyya*,” 83–107; and Shafique N. Virani, “*Taqiyya* and Identity in a South Asian Community,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 70, no. 1 (2011): 99–139.
  15. Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, 97–98.
  16. Virani, “The Eagle Returns,” 361.
  17. Wladimir Ivanow, “Tombs of Some Persian Ismaili Imams,” *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* new series, 14 (1938): 53–54.
  18. On the Indic translations of this text, see Michel Boivin, “A Persian Treatise for the Ismāʿīlī *Khujas* of India: Presentation of the *Pandiyāt-i Jawānmardī*,” in *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture: Indian and French Studies*, ed. Muzaffar Alam, Françoise Nalini Delvoye, and Marc Gaborieau (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 117–128.
  19. On the relationship between the *Haft bāb* and the *Kalām-i pīr*, see Daniel Beben, “The *Kalām-i pīr* and Its Place in the Central Asian Ismāʿīli Tradition,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 31, no. 1 (2020): 70–102.
  20. On Harātī, see further Shafique N. Virani, “Kharykh<sup>V</sup>āh-i Harātī,” in *Encyclopædia of Islam, Third Edition*, ed. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas and Everett Rowson, Vol. 2020-5, (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 80–83. Ivanow also attributed the aforementioned *Kalām-i pīr* to Harātī, although this has been called into question; see Beben, “The *Kalām-i pīr*,” 77–80; and Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, 26.
  21. See, for example, Wladimir Ivanow, *Brief Survey of the Evolution of Ismailism* (Leiden: Brill, 1952), 18–19.
  22. On the Nizārī imamate in the Safavid era, see Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order and Societal Change in Shiʿite Iran From the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), 112–116; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 435–439; and Kassam, “Persistent Light.”
  23. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 437–438.
  24. On these developments, see further Daniel Beben, “The Fatimid Legacy and the Foundation of the Modern Nizārī Imamate,” in *The Fatimid Caliphate: Diversity of Traditions*, ed. Farhad Daftary and Shainool Jiwa (London: I.B. Tauris and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2017), 192–216.

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25. On Nādir Shāh's relationship with the imams, see further my discussion in Beben, "The Fatimid Legacy," 198–202; Daniel Beben, "Introduction," to Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Ḥusaynī, *The First Aga Khan: Memoirs of the 46th Ismaili Imam*, ed. and trans. Daniel Beben and Daryoush Mohammad Poor (London: I.B. Tauris and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2018), 21–24.
26. Several of these communities reportedly still resided in the Kirmān region as late as the 1960s; see Peter Willey, *Eagle's Nest: Ismaili Castles in Iran and Syria* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 205–206.
27. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, 462–463.
28. Imam Ḥasan 'Alī Shāh published an autobiography, titled *Ibrat-afzā*, which contains detailed information on his life and career. See the section on "Primary Sources" for further information. On his imamate, see also Hamid Algar, "The Revolt of Āghā Khān Maḥallātī and the Transference of the Ismā'īlī Imāmate to India," *Studia Islamica* 29 (1969): 55–81; and Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, 463–476.
29. On the relationship between the Ni'matullāhī Sufi order and the Ismailis, see Beben, "Introduction," 31–38; and Nasrollah Pourjavady and Peter Lamborn Wilson, "Ismā'īlīs and Ni'matullāhīs," *Studia Islamica* 41 (1975): 113–135.
30. On this development, see further Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the Western Indian Ocean, 1840–1915* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 155–178.
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49. A discussion of some of the historiographical issues surrounding the study of Ismaili history in this period can be found in Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, 19–28.

50. For a further discussion of Ismaili manuscript collections in Central Asia, see the entry on "The Ismaili in Central Asia <<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.316>>" in OREAH.

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59. Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Ḥusaynī, *ʿIbrat-afzā*, ed. and trans. Daniel Beben and Daryoush Mohammad Poor as *The First Aga Khan: Memoirs of the 46th Ismaili Imam* (London: I.B. Tauris and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2018).

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61. The data from the Gināns has been explored at length in Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*.

62. The data from Syrian sources have been outlined primarily in the work of ʿĀrif Tāmīr. See in particular his “Furūʿ al-shajara.” For a list of his other relevant publications, see Daftary, *Ismaili Literature*, 404–407. Unfortunately, Tāmīr often omits critical information on the sources themselves and the manuscript materials utilized by him in many cases remain inaccessible.

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