

Chapter 1 : Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam - Delia Cortese, Simonetta Calderini - Google B

This first full-length study of women and the Fatimids is a groundbreaking work investigating an unexplored area in the field of Islamic and medieval studies.

The Fatimids in Egypt Contributed by Prof. It destroyed any semblance of central authority in the Muslim world, provoked the reaction of the Turks as defenders of orthodox Sunni Islam, impelled the Omayyads in Spain to declare their own Caliphate, launched the powerful Murabitun revolution in western Africa, denied the Muslims their last chance to conquer Europe and was the decisive ideological provocation that was answered by the eloquence of Al Ghazzali d. The cleavage opened by the Fatimid schism gave the Crusaders an opportunity to capture Jerusalem Finally, when the Fatimids left the center stage of history, they did so with a vengeance, contributing to the rise of the assassins. The assassinations, chief among which was that of Nizam ul Mulk d. However, a minority refused to accept this verdict, declared Imam Ismail to be the 7th Imam and recognized the Imamate only through his lineage. From the Fatimids are derived the Agha Khanis and the Bohras, two powerful groups of Muslims who have played an important part in the politics of East Africa and in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. Our focus in this chapter is on the Fatimids. The confluence of several historical developments helped the Fatimid movement. In the 9th century, the consolidation of vast territories in Asia, Africa and Europe led to an enormous increase in trade. Great cities sprang up and older towns grew larger. The movement of the rural population to the cities, in search of protection from marauding tribesmen, assisted the urbanization process. Conversion to Islam was taking place at a rapid pace both in Asia and North Africa and the new Muslims found refuge in the cities from the pressure of their kinsmen who had not yet converted. Brisk trade stimulated the demand for manufactured goods such as brass work, gold jewelry, silk brocade, fine carpets and iron and steel products. Guilds arose in the urban centers, organized around specific trades and skills. The Fatimid movement zeroed in on these guilds to propagate their ideas. The Abbasid Caliphate also lost much of its political and military power after Caliph Mutawakkil was killed by his Turkish guards in The emergence of the Turks was a new element in the body politic of Islam. Initially hired by the Caliphs as bodyguards to balance the established power of Arabs and Persians, the Turks displaced both the Arabs and the Persians and rose to control the destiny of the Caliphate itself. Sensing the political impotence of Baghdad, local chieftains in the far-flung provinces of the empire asserted their independence and established local dynasties. After the year , an Arab general Al Aghlab and his descendants exercised autonomous control over Algeria and Tunisia. In the east, Tahir, a general who had helped Caliph Mamun in the civil war between the two brothers, Amin and Mamun, was granted autonomy over Khorasan. After the year , the Tahirids dropped any pretense of allegiance to Baghdad and ruled as independent rulers. In , Buyeh, a Persian, established a powerful dynasty at the borders of Persia and Iraq. In the year they captured Baghdad itself and forced the Caliph to surrender effective power to the Alavis. But they stopped short of eliminating the Abbasids, partly because there was no single person who was acceptable as Imam to all Muslims and partly out of concern for the reaction of the Turks who were emerging as a powerful new military element. Nonetheless, the Buyids came as close as the Ithna Asharis ever did in establishing their political control over the world of Islam. Perhaps the most persuasive reason for the success of the Fatimid movement was the internal corruption in the ruling circles. After Harun al Rashid, Baghdad became a dazzling city of splendor. Long gone was the spartan simplicity of the first Caliphs. In a bygone era, Caliph Omar ibn al Khattab r had traveled from Madina to Jerusalem to accept its surrender, sharing a single camel for the journey with a servant. Ali ibn Abu Talib r would fast for days on a ration of dried dates. By contrast, the Caliphs of the 9th century moved in golden chariots with an entourage of thousands. Lavish sums were spent on pomp and ceremony. Surrounded by eunuchs and dancing girls, the court of Baghdad was no different from the Byzantine court in Constantinople or the Persian courts it had displaced. The Islamic Empire was now held together by political expediency and brute force rather than by fidelity to a higher transcendental idea, as was the case in early Islam. In North Africa there was continued tension between rural Berbers and the Arab city dwellers. In Persia, the Turks had displaced the Persians from the centers of power but were looked down

upon by both the Arabs and the Persians as pushy intruders. Corruption was rampant and it was time for a revolutionary movement like that of the Fatimids who promised a new era led by the Fatimid imams. Then, in the second half of the 9th century, it burst out from horizon to horizon like a hundred volcanoes spewing forth at once. The architect of this movement was Abdullah bin Maimun. The lineage of hidden imams from Ismail till the latter part of the 9th century is not clear, but in , one Hamdan Karamat, set up his operations near Baghdad. In , the Karamathians, as the followers of Karamat are called, captured Yemen under the leadership of Abu Abdallah. In , he moved on Damascus and massacred its inhabitants. Basra was plundered in . The Karamathians were ruthless. They attacked caravans of Hajj pilgrims on the caravan routes from Basra to Madina and massacred thousands of men, women and children. There the black stone remained for 22 years until it was returned to Mecca in upon orders of the Fatimid Caliph al Mansur. Baghdad moved swiftly to retake Damascus but in the meantime the Karamathian movement had spread to North Africa. The Arabs called the territories that today comprise Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia Maghrib al Aqsa the farthest western frontier. More often, this area is simply referred to as the Maghrib. Maghrib al Aqsa was the hinge around which the fate of Muslim Spain and southwestern Europe revolved. The region was an historic caldron of discontent and sporadic rebellion against external authority. In part, this was a reflection of the free spirit of the mountain Berbers and the desert Sinhajas. The Arab experience was no different from that of the Romans who had clung to fortified positions along the Mediterranean shores but were unsuccessful in subduing the Atlas mountain interior. There was also tension between the Arab city dwellers and the Berbers who lived in the hinterland. The classical Islamic civilization was primarily urban. People congregated in towns and cities for safety as well as for economic opportunity. Resentment against the perceived haughtiness of the city dwelling Arabs surfaced time and again as rebellion against established authority. The Berbers welcomed new ideas that challenged the status quo as a vehicle for expressing their resentment and anger. For instance, in the year , a Persian Kharijite, Rustum, moved to the Maghrib and established his base there. He successfully challenged the local Aghlabid emirs who represented Abbasid authority. Support from the Berbers and the Sinhaja enabled Rustum to established a Kharijite dynasty in southern Algeria centered on Sijilmasa. This seemingly democratic position was welcome to Berber ears. The Kharijites survived in isolated pockets long after the Rustamid kingdom disappeared. Ibn Batuta reported the existence of Kharijite communities in north central Africa as late as . The American traveler John Skolle has recently provided an account of the remnants of this community. South of the Atlas belt, the powerful Sinhaja tended their sheep and roamed freely, much as their ancestors had for centuries and acted as power brokers between the Berbers and the Arabs. There developed in the Maghrib a triangular relationship between the Berbers, the Arabs and the Sinhajas, much as there was a triangular relationship between the Arabs, the Persians and the Turks in Persia and Central Asia. Occasionally, there was a fourth element in this relationship, namely the Sudanese from sub-Saharan Africa, who were recruited by the Ikhshidids and later by the Fatimids, in their armed forces as a counterbalance to the power of the Berbers. Conditions were ripe in North Africa for a revolutionary movement like that of the Fatimids. The Aghlabid rulers had become more interested in women and wine than in the affairs of state. Law and order had deteriorated to such an extent that people longed for deliverance by a Mahdi. By the sheer magnetism of his character and the force of his arguments, he converted the powerful Kitama tribe to Fatimid doctrines. In , taking advantage of the incompetence of Aghlabid Ziadatulla, Abu Abdallah moved on Salmania, driving out the Aghlabids. It was now time to invite the Fatimid Imam Ubaidullah who was living in Syria. After a harrowing travail, with Abbasid agents hot on his trail, Ubaidullah reached the Maghrib. He was arrested in Sijilmasa but Abu Abdallah moved with a powerful force on the town, freed his mentor and proclaimed Ubaidullah to be the long awaited Mahdi and the hidden Imam and the first Fatimid Caliph. Ubaidullah al Mahdi, the first Fatimid Caliph, was an able general, a capable administrator, a shrewd but ruthless politician and was tolerant of the Sunnis who made up the vast majority of his subjects. He established a new capital, Mahdiya, near modern Tunis. His first act was to assassinate Abu Abdallah and eliminate any possibility of a challenge from that quarter. The fate of Abu Abdallah was similar to that of Abu Muslim d. After consolidating his hold on Algeria and Tunisia, he moved west into Morocco displacing the floundering Idrisid dynasty . But his eyes were on the prosperous provinces of Spain to the northwest and

Egypt to the east. Ubaidullah died in the year without realizing his dream of conquering Spain or subduing Egypt. His son Abul Kasim was a fanatic and tried to force his brand of Islam on everyone. He is best remembered for building a powerful navy and his raids on France, Italy and Egypt. To pay for these adventures, taxation had to be increased. The Berbers rebelled against this excessive taxation. Centered on Sijilmasa, which was a Kharijite stronghold, the rebellion gathered momentum and received support from the Spanish Umayyads. Abul Kasim was cornered in Mahdiya where he died in . His son Mansur, with the help of the Sinhajas, put down the rebellion in . To teach the Spanish Umayyads and the Moroccans a lesson, he stormed the Maghrib all the way to the Atlantic, devastating much of what lay in his path. All of North Africa except Mauritania was conquered. According to Ibn Khaldun, the Maghrib never fully recovered from the devastation caused by the Fatimid-Sinhaja invasions. The power of the cities in North Africa was destroyed. The social political vacuum created by this devastation was in part responsible for the germination of the Murabitun revolution, which was soon to engulf all of West Africa and Spain. It was under Muiz d. Muiz first turned his attention to the west.

Chapter 2 : Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam by Delia Cortese

Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam. Book Description: This first full-length study of women and the Fatimids is a groundbreaking work investigating an.

These men bragged about the country of the Kutama in western Ifriqiya today part of Algeria , and the hostility of the Kutama towards, and their complete independence from, the Aghlabid rulers. The Berber peasants, oppressed for decades under the corrupt Aghlabid rule, would prove themselves to be a perfect basis for sedition. After gaining his freedom, Abdullah al-Mahdi Billah became the leader of the growing state and assumed the position of imam and caliph. The newly built city of Al-Mansuriya , [a] or Mansuriyya Template: Cairo was intended as a royal enclosure for the Fatimid caliph and his army, though the actual administrative and economic capital of Egypt was in cities such as Fustat until After Egypt, the Fatimids continued to conquer the surrounding areas until they ruled from Tunisia to Syria , as well as Sicily. Their trade and diplomatic ties extended all the way to China and its Song Dynasty , which eventually determined the economic course of Egypt during the High Middle Ages. The Fatimid focus on long-distance trade was accompanied by a lack of interest in agriculture and a neglect of the Nile irrigation system. The caliph had been residing in nearby Raqqada but chose a new and more strategic location to establish his dynasty. The city of al-Mahdiyya is located on a narrow peninsula along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, east of Kairouan and just south of the Gulf of Hammamet in modern-day Tunisia. With its peninsular topography and the construction of a wall 8. The city remained downtrodden and more or less uninhabited for centuries afterward. Cairo can thus be considered the capital of Fatimid cultural production. Fatimid dynasty, found in Fustat, Egypt. Brooklyn Museum Unlike western European governments in the era, advancement in Fatimid state offices was more meritocratic than based on heredity. Members of other branches of Islam, like the Sunnis , were just as likely to be appointed to government posts as Shiites. A type of ceramic, lustreware , was prevalent during the Fatimid period. Glassware and metalworking was also popular. The madrasa is one of the relics of the Fatimid dynasty era of Egypt, descended from Fatimah , daughter of Muhammad. Fatimah was called Az-Zahra the brilliant , and the madrasa was named in her honour. It was probably on Saturday in Jamadi al-Awwal in the year A. Its building was completed on the 9th of Ramadan in the year A. Fatimid Caliphs always encouraged scholars and jurists to have their study-circles and gatherings in this mosque, and thus it was turned into a university that has the claim to be considered as the oldest still-functioning University. Fatimid Caliphs gave prominent positions to scholars in their courts, encouraged students, and established libraries in their palaces, so that scholars might expand their knowledge and reap benefits from the work of their predecessors. Fatimids reserved separate pulpits for different Islamic sects, where the scholars expressed their ideas in whatever manner they liked. Fatimids gave patronage to scholars and invited them from every place, spending money on them even when their beliefs conflicted with those of the Fatimids. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed.

Chapter 3 : Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam - PDF Free Download

This first full-length study of women and the Fatimids is a groundbreaking work investigating an unexplored area in the field of Islamic and medieval calendrierdelascience.com authors have unearthed a wealth of references to women, thus re-inscribing their role in the.

By this time, the Abbasid caliphate, ruling from Baghdad , had lost effective control over what was becoming a decentralized Islamic empire. Elsewhere, too, real power was in the hands of Sultans which is derived from the word for delegate. Under the Fatimids, Egypt flourished and developed an extensive trade network in both the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean , which eventually determined the economic course of Egypt during the High Middle Ages. The dynasty was founded in C. By adopting the title Caliph, he also laid claim to leadership of Sunni Muslims. The Fatimids and the Abbasids became bitter rivals. The latter claimed that the Fatimids claims to leadership was invalid because they traced themselves to Muhammad through a female. The Abbasids traced themselves to an uncle of the prophet. The Ismailis followed Ismail. The Zaydis had split after the death of the 4th Imam. The Buyids were Zaydis. The Fatimids entered Egypt in C. They continued to extend their control over the surrounding areas until they ruled a span of territory from Tunisia to Syria and their influence even crossed over into Sicily and southern Italy. For a while, they came close to realizing their goal of replacing the Abbasids as recognized leaders of the Muslim world. Unlike other governments in the area, Fatimid advancement in state offices was based more on merit than on heredity. In fact, the Fatimids ruled over a majority Sunni population in Cairo. Tolerance was extended further to non-Muslims such as Christians and Jews , who occupied high levels in government based on expertise. An exception to this general attitude of tolerance includes one significant aberration, the eccentric Fatimid, the 6th Caliph, known as the "Mad Caliph" Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah , the 16th Imam in the Ismaili succession. Others, among them the Druze , believe that Hakim was actually an emanation of the divine. He is well known for desecrating the Holy Sepulcher, an act that was cited to justify the Crusades. After about C. They came close, though, to achieving their goal. In an Iraqi general based in Mosul declared allegiance to the Fatimids. He was defeated by the Seljuks in In , a general, Badr-al-Jamali, assumed effective power in Cairo in an effort to restore centralized authority. From this period, the Caliph-Imams became less directly involved in governance, delegating responsibility to their viziers. Syria, Algeria, and Tunisia were lost between and Sicily was lost to the Normans in , Palestine was lost to the Crusaders in Most Ismailis there have been several sub-schisms continue to revere an Imam who stands in succession to the Fatimid Caliph-Imams.

Chapter 4 : Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam - Edinburgh Scholarship

This first full-length study of women and the Fatimids is a groundbreaking work investigating an unexplored area in the field of Islamic and medieval studies. The authors have unearthed a wealth of references to women, thus re-inscribing their role in the history of one of the most fascinating.

In the end, it is not putative links with radical actors that makes these apocalyptists truly radical and frightening. Rather, it is the fact that their writing channels sentiments widespread throughout the region. This is a sign of the times well worth noting by academics and politicians alike. Edinburgh University Press, The gender bias of authors and their social and religious perceptions of women are another problem for the critical historian. Cortese and Calderini are fully aware of the methodological hurdles and traps in writing a political, social, religious, and intellectual history of women under the Fatimids, and they do not hesitate to remind the reader repeatedly of these source limitations. The authors cover practically the entire historical and literary and to a lesser extent religious published output pertaining to the Fatimids to unearth scattered anecdotes and bits of information that shed some light on Fatimid women. Both creativity and imagination went into producing the representative narrative of the role of Fatimid women in specific areas such as architectural patronage, political involvement, and religious activities. This could be problematic when the limited available accounts cover incidents or personalities that are geographically or temporally distant. As a result, in a few instances the narrative turns into a sequence of anecdotes or dry primary material especially in the women and genealogy chapter. I would argue that this is more an isolated case than a general one. The absence of women from the historical narrative is not a sign of their reduced activity. After all, most of the minor female figures mentioned in the sources made it there because of their participation in an incident involving key male figures. The absence of major religious figures conducting sermons in the palace in the final days of the Fatimids does not necessitate that women stopped attending and contributing to religious life. It merely means that medieval historians were not interested in a male missionary of this period who addressed women in his sermons. Though mainly focusing on the Fatimid state and its subsidiaries the Zirids in North Africa and the Sulayhids in Yemen , Cortese and Calderini at times extend their geographical and temporal compass to include the Alamut state in Persia, but not the Tayyibi dawa in Yemen and India! The study is enriched with lively details and numerous comparisons to the role of women under the contemporary Abbasid and Byzantine states, making it an enjoyable read. The authors continuously provide necessary historical and religious background, making their book accessible to readers unfamiliar with Fatimid history and doctrines. In addition, two appendices containing a family tree of the Fatimid imam-caliphs and their. Of minor concern are few unnoticed typos, such as "Jahwar" for "Jawhar" p. However, this should not detract from the valuable contributions to Fatimid studies and gender history that this book offers. Gender and Public Piety in Shu Lebanon. Princeton University Press, First, are modernity and spirituality compatible? And second, are pious Muslim women modern?

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Chapter 8 : Fatimids Caliphate - New World Encyclopedia

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