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## Women in the Fatimid Era (358 - 567 AH / 969 - 1171 AD)

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### Keywords

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Charitable architectures

### Abstract

The importance of this issue stems from the prominent role that women played in society during the Fatimid era in Egypt (358 - 567 AH / 969 - 1171 AD). Therefore, this research focuses on the conditions of women who lived in that period, whether they were honorable and lived in the Fatimid palace or of the Egyptian public, including the Muslims, non-Muslims, and maids. Remarkably, the societies of the Islamic Middle Ages consisted of these three categories that differ from one another, in terms of their lives, which makes them an independent sector in society. There is no doubt that the conditions of Muslim women at that time were linked to the conditions of the Fatimid Caliphate in general, in terms of its Shiite doctrine and wealth. In addition, the political circumstances paved the way for some female figures to appear on the scene of events, as some women were so influential that they managed the affairs of government brilliantly. Therefore, it is important to study this topic from its various aspects - social, religious, and political – to provide a comprehensive overview of women's lives and their different conditions in this period. The research examines the social conditions of women, and the conditions of the Fatimid royal women, and sheds light on some of their prominent figures who played an

important role in the palace. These included the wives, sisters, and daughters of the caliphs, as they enjoyed high status with the caliphs. In addition, they were distinguished from Egyptian women by taking titles and designations. Also, the wealth of the Fatimid caliphs provided them with the opportunity to spend a lot in constructing some facilities, especially the religious facilities.

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## 1. Introduction

Islam entered Egypt with the Arab conquest in 20 HJ, 1410 years ago and with its Sharia law regulated the status of Muslim women in general, since Allah restored the status of women through the new religion, stated their autonomy and independent personality and gave them rights that were inaccessible to women until the twentieth century.

In the Islamic era, women assumed high status, played important roles in Egyptian society and practiced many professions. Despite the social restrictions, they received full legal rights from signing sales, purchase and ownership contracts, were not deprived of their right to education and attended scientific and religious councils.<sup>1</sup>

- Women have earned many recognizable titles which demonstrates recognition of their merits. In the Fatimid era, the wives of sultans were called "the Side (al-Geha)" and sometime even "the High/Exalted Side", which title was preceded by the words "Our Lady" (Mawlatna). Many titles were also given to the princesses of the Palace of the Caliphate such as al-Saida (the Dame), al-Sharifa (the Honest), al-Tahira (the Immaculate), al-Jalila (the Venerable) and al-Mahrousa (the Guarded). In the Mamluk era, they got several other titles, and were called the women of the sultans: The Kings' Blessing (Baraka-al-Malik), The Covered With The Veil Of Immunity (Dhat al-Hijab al-Munie), The Descendant Of Kings And Sultans (Salilat al-Muluk wal-Salatin), The Honest And The Chaste (al-Sharifa al-Eafifa), The Bough of Islam (Ghosn al-Islam), The Bough of Pure Tree (Farae al-Shajarat al-Zakiat), The Wise-Minded (al-Sitar al-Rafie), preceded by the title "Khatoon", which means the honorable lady in Persian, and "Khond" which means the dame in Turkish.<sup>2</sup>

- The commoner women were not deprived of that privilege and earned a number of titles such as the Lady Of Children (Set al-'Ial), the Lady Of The Family (Set al-Ahl), the Lady of House (Set al-Beit), the Lady of Ladies (Set al-Setat), the Lady of All (Set al-Kol).

- The Fatimid era witnessed the emergence of many stars. The first woman to be highly regarded was Princess Taghreed (as-Saida Taghreed), wife of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah called "The Mother of Princes". She has an exceptional business mentality and a large commercial activity related to sending maid women and slaves

<sup>1</sup> عبد المنعم سلطان , المجتمع المصرى فى العصر الفاطمى دراسة تاريخية وثائقية , دار المعارف , ط 1985 – ص 45 .

<sup>2</sup> ناريمان عبد الكريم أحمد , المرأة فى العصر الفاطمى , النهضة المصرية لصناعة الكتاب ط 1993 م – ص 48 – 49 .

from Morocco to be sold in Egypt by her agent. Taghreed did not have any political role, but the Caliph was seeking her advice on some of the state's affairs. Many important structures were erected under her auspices, such as the Al-Qarafa Palace, which Al-Maqrizi described as a luxury palace that delighted viewers.<sup>3</sup>

- The women who built these buildings were keen to ensure that they were characterized by architectural decorations and elements, distinctive, affected by the center of the caliphate at that time.

- Charitable architectures linked religion and science and the needs of society, especially for students of science and orphans, the poor and the needy, through the buildings still exist till now.<sup>4</sup>

## Categories of Women in the Fatimid Society

### The Elite Women:

#### The Caliphs' Mothers, Wives, and Daughters:

The progress of society is linked to its appreciation of women and the extent of granting them their full rights as prescribed by Islamic law. It is noted clearly that women in the Fatimid era enjoyed great respect and appreciation, whether they belonged to the ruling class, within the royal courts, or to the commons. The ruling families represented the elite that enjoyed great wealth, power, and influence. Hence, the Fatimid palaces included incalculable numbers of women, and at the head of the palace's women were the caliph's wives and concubines.<sup>5</sup>

#### Women in the Royal Court:

##### Umm Al-Mustansir:

Sayyida Rasad is the mother of Caliph Al-Mustansir Billah and wife of Caliph al-Zāhir li-I'zāz Dīn Allāh. It is said that she was a Sudanese slave girl who was one of the concubines of Caliph Al-Zahir and who was presented to him by Abu Saeed Al-Tastari. She gave birth to Caliph Al-Mustansir. In recognition of Al-Tastari's favor, she entrusted him to supervise her council.<sup>6</sup>

Al-Mustansir's mother interfered in the state affairs and took control of the viziers by dismissal, confiscations and murdering them. As a result, the country exposed

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<sup>5</sup> ناريمان عبد الكريم أحمد , المرأة في العصر الفاطمي , النهضة المصرية لصناعة الكتاب ط 1993 م – ص .  
<sup>6</sup> نهلة أحمد عبد الفتاح الجالودي , رسالة ماجستير دور المرأة في مصر خلال العصر الفاطمي ( 567-362 هـ / 1171-972 م ) , 1431هـ/2010م – ص

to corruption. She also interfered in the affairs of the soldiers and bought many slaves and increased their livelihoods at the expense of the Turks that she hated severely. The policy of Al-Mustansir's mother afflicted the country with disasters and famines, and the caliph Al-Mustansir himself did not find enough food to sustain himself from hunger. A woman managed to send him two loaves of bread daily or some food that suffice surviving once a day. Al-Mustansir's mother fled to the Levant after corruption prevailed and the state's subjugation to the viziers' authority since the tenure of Badr al-Jamali, the Armenian vizier in (466 AH/1073 AD). These viziers were entitled to all powers while the caliph had only nominal authority and was only allowed to appear in processions and celebrations.<sup>7</sup>

### **Mothers of the Caliphs: Al-Mustali's Mother:**

Sources did not provide detailed references to the caliphs' mothers due to their limited role in political affairs of the state. For example, the mother of caliph Al-Mustali played a limited role in the state. There are some correspondences sealed with her signature in some records dated back to al-Mustansir's era. This correspondence showed her participation in administering the state.

For example, her she signed a correspondence to the Sayyida Hurra Queen Arwa of Yemen (الحمد لله على نعمه) which means (Thanks be to Allah for His blessings), where she explained that the Caliph Al-Mustansir's intends to mandate the regency to his son Al-Mustali. This correspondence proves that the mother of Al-Musta'li had close relationships with the Queen of Yemen, along with her son, the Caliph Al-Musta'li, because Yemen was subject to Egypt in the Fatimid era. In addition, she enjoyed several titles, including (al-Sayyida al-Malika al-Karima or the Honorable Lady and Queen). It can be said that the role of Al-Musta'li's mother was crucial as the pledge of allegiance to Al-Musta'li's to assume the caliphate faced many problems because his eldest brother, Nizar claimed his right to the caliphate. Hence, Al-Musta'li's mother may have intervened to support her son to defend his right to the caliphate, as is the custom of Fatimid women in defending their sons' right to accession.<sup>8</sup>

### **Wives of the Fatimid Caliphs:**

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<sup>7</sup> عبد الرحمن الراجعي , سعيد عبد الفتاح عاشور , مصر في العصور الوسطى من الفتح العربي حتى الغزو العثماني , دار النهضة العربية , القاهرة – ص .  
<sup>8</sup> عبد المنعم سلطان , المجتمع المصري في العصر الفاطمي دراسة تاريخية وثائقية , دار المعارف , ط 1985 – ص .

It is evident that all the Fatimid caliphs revered and appreciated their wives and assigned them many titles of honor. The caliphs provided their women with all means of entertainment and enjoyment, especially since the Fatimid state enjoyed many aspects of social luxury represented by the large number of celebrations and events. Some caliphs used to accompany their harems in outings. The Caliph Al-Mustansir used to accompany his harem and servants to the Jubb Omeira area in their excursions.<sup>9</sup>

### **Al-Sayyida al-Mu'izziyya:**

The first woman who enjoyed a great position with the Caliph was Al-Sayyida al-Mu'izziyya, the mother of Caliph Al-Aziz Billah. She was the consort of Caliph Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah. She was entitled Umm al-Omara' (Mother of Princes). As for her birth name, it was Taghrid, and it was said to be Durzan or Darzara. She was Umm Walad - slave-concubine who had given birth to her master's child - of Arab origin. She was married to Caliph Al-Mu'izz in al-Maghreb before making Egypt the center of the Fatimid Caliphate in 358 AH/968 AD. She was the only wife of Caliph Al-Mu'izz. In addition, she had no administrative or political activity in the state, but Al-Mu'izz used to consult her on some political matters. She was a patroness of Fatimid architecture and some monuments were attributed to her, such as Manazel al-Izz in Cairo.<sup>10</sup>

In 366 AH/ 967 AD, Durzan inaugurated Jami al-Qarafa Mosque, a qasr (palace) and a bath at al-Qarafa that she entrusted their construction to Al-Hussein bin Abdul Aziz Al-Farsi Al-Muhtasib. It was one of the masterpiece antiquities in terms of the perfection of architecture. Durzan died in 385 AH / 995 AD, i.e., a year before the death of her son al-Aziz. Her corpse was carried to the palace where Al-Aziz prayed over her and shrouded her with a ten thousand dinars shroud. The washerwoman took the mattresses that were under the deceased and the clothes that were on her, and their value was 6000 dinars. Her daughter mourned Durzan in her mausoleum for a month. There, she showed favor to the people and fed them with various types of food and sweets. In addition, she distributed two thousand dinars to the poets and mourners who elegized her mother.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> أحمد كامل صالح , مصر الإسلامية منذ الفتح الإسلامي حتى نهاية الدولة الأيوبية , مكتبة الشباب , القاهرة , ط 1980 – ص 145.

<sup>10</sup> ناريمان عبد الكريم أحمد , المرأة في العصر الفاطمي , النهضة المصرية لصناعة الكتاب ط 1993 م – ص 65.

<sup>11</sup> عبد الرحمن الرافي , سعيد عبد الفتاح عاشور , مصر في العصور الوسطى من الفتح العربي حتى الغزو العثماني , دار النهضة العربية , القاهرة – ص 112 .

### **Al-Sayyida al-Aziziyya:**

She is the wife of Caliph Al-Aziz, a Roman Melchite Christian. She was called Al-Aziziyya without reference to her origin or religion. She was a secret wife who gave birth to a daughter, Sitt al-Mulk. The sources agreed that she was the mother of Sitt al-Mulk, but there was controversy on her maternity to al-Hakim. Al-Sayyida Al-Aziziyya had a great influence upon her husband, al-Aziz, as evidenced in his policy towards the Christians, which was characterized by tolerance and involving them in the administration of the state. This made the Melchite sect more powerful than the expense of other sects in Egypt. In addition, Al-Aziz participated in the Melchite's celebrations and religious events. This reflects the caliph's policy towards the Christian sects as a result of that intermarriage.<sup>12</sup>

### **Al-Amiriyya:**

She is the wife of the caliph al-Amir bi-Ahkam Allah, and she is called Juma or Maknun Al-Amiriyya. She had a great influence upon her husband al-Hakim, who gave her a dowry of fourteen thousand dinars. This indicates that she was related to the Caliph al-Amir, because her dowry indicates that she descended from the ruling dynasties or from the Fatimid House. She may have been his cousin and gave birth to a daughter named Sett Al-Qosour. The caliph al-Amir spared no effort in fulfilling her requests. It is said that he gave money to two of his close servants, and when he came to her, she kept him in her room until he gave her the money she requested. Soon, the caliph sent the couriers who brought the money in ten bags, of ten thousand dinars each. She may have wanted this money to spend on the poor and needy.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Bedouin Wife of al-Amir:**

It is said that her name is al-Aliya, a beautiful poet from Upper Egypt. When the Caliph Al-Amir heard of her, he sent to her family and proposed to her. Her family sent her to the Caliph's palace in al-Qahira, where she married to the caliph and became the Fatimid caliph's consort. However, she began to yearn for the desert life, as she was

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<sup>12</sup> نهلة أحمد عبد الفتاح الجالودي , رسالة ماجستير دور المرأة في مصر خلال العصر الفاطمي ( 362-567 هـ / 972-1171 م ), 1431هـ/2010م – ص 150 .

<sup>13</sup> نهلة أحمد عبد الفتاح الجالودي, دور المرأة في العصر الفاطمي , المصدر السابق , ص 95 .

in love with a cousin of hers called Mayah. Hence, the Caliph ordered allocating a great place for her to use as a park and they called it (Hawdaj).<sup>14</sup>

### Daughters of the Caliphs: Sett al-Mulk

There are few references to the Fatimid caliphs' daughters due to the lack of their roles in the administration of the state. However, some had a clear political role in the state such as Sitt al-Mulk, the daughter of the Caliph Al-Aziz Billah and the elder sister of the Caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah. Many historical sources did not mention her birth, but Ibn Dhafer mentioned that she was born in al-Maghreb, before 362 AH/972 AD. She enjoyed a prominent position with her father al-Aziz, who honored and revered her. In addition, he provided her with all means of luxury and wealth. For example, he built her al-Kasr al-Gharbi (the Western Palace) to live there alone. Moreover, she had ca. 4000 maids.<sup>15</sup>

Many historical sources referred to many of the qualities that indicated her sound mind and influential personality, which had a great impact on the successful political and administrative role she played during the succession of her brother, the Caliph Al-Hakim. She was highly instrumental in securing his succession, and continued to interfere in the administration of the state. When her brother, the caliph, turned away from her as a result of his rejection of her interference in the state affairs, she realized that preserving the state entity was so complicated, especially since al-Hakim's policy was highly turbulent, and the two siblings drifted apart. The princess opposed al-Hakim's intolerant politics, and he was jealous of her, suspecting her of having lovers. This prompted many sources to indicate the participation of Sett al-Mulk in murdering al-Hakim. She managed the state affairs until early period of al-Zahir's reign, whom she raised to the throne after assassinating his father, al-Hakim. Sitt al-Mulk moved to establish his control of the state until she died in 414 AH/1023 AD, or as some sources indicated in 415 AH/1024 AD.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> أحمد كامل صالح , مصر الإسلامية منذ الفتح الإسلامي حتى نهاية الدولة الأيوبية , مكتبة الشباب , القاهرة , ط 1980 - ص 147.

<sup>15</sup> أحمد عبد الرازق , تاريخ مصر وأثارها الإسلامية منذ الفتح العربي حتى نهاية العصر الفاطمي , الفكر العربي , القاهرة , ط 1993 م - ص 110 .

<sup>16</sup> نهلة أحمد عبد الفتاح الجالودي , رسالة ماجستير دور المرأة في مصر خلال العصر الفاطمي ( 362-567 هـ / 972-1171 م ) , 1431هـ/2010م - ص 95 .

### **Al-Zahir's Daughter:**

There is a reference to the daughter of Caliph Al-Zahir, who is the sister of Caliph Al-Mustansir. She may have been his half-sister from his Sudanese mother. The sources did not record her name, but she played a political and administrative role in the state. Although there are a few references to her, she played influential role in the state affairs as evidenced by her correspondence and participation in the Fatimid call.

This is through her correspondence with the Queen of Yemen in their records and correspondence. One of these read as follows:

"(فإنه عرض بحضرتنا كتابك والذي أعربت فيه عن موالاتك وإخلاصك وطاعتك وحميد مسعاك فأما تشميرك في إقامة منار الدعوة العلوية المستنصرية"

It means: (Here is presented to us Your Correspondence in which you expressed your loyalty, obedience, and praiseworthy efforts. As for your steadfastness in establishing the minarets of al-Mustansir's Alawite call). There is another correspondence of Al-Mustansir's sister to Al-Malika Al-Hurra that included:

" تجديد تقليد ولدك الدعوة وخرجت الأوامر إلى السلاطين في الأعمال اليمنية بطاعتكما والأقياد لكم".

It means: (Renewing the pledge of allegiance to your son to assume the call and orders came out to the sultans in Yemeni territories to obey you and submit to you". This indicates that she was sometimes in charge of responding on behalf of the caliph. Also, she had a signature sign similar to that of Umm Al-Mustansir, which is " الحمد لله ولى كل " "نعمة", which means "Praise be to God, the Granter of all blessings".

Her correspondence begins with the phrase " من السيدة أخت الإمام عرض بحضرتنا", which means (From the Lady: Sister of the Imam: Here Presented to our Highness...), indicating that the state's foreign correspondence were presented to her. Hence, she may have been responsible for responding to those correspondences, in reference to her familiarity with the state's internal and foreign affairs. This is evidenced in her correspondence with al-Maleka al-Hurra of Yemen which showed that she had several titles. It reads:

" بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم , الحمد لله ولى كل نعمة , ومن السيدة الطاهرة الشريفة الملكة الكريمة ابنة الإمام الظاهر إعزاز دين الله"



It means: (In the Name of God, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful, Praise be to God, the Grantor of all blessings, and from the Pure and Honorable Lady, the Honorable Queen, Daughter of Imam al-Zahir Li-I'zaz Din Allah).<sup>17</sup>

Thus, it can be concluded that Al-Mustansir's sister was so influential on her brother, the caliph, and she played a crucial role in paying the pledge of allegiance to the Caliph Al-Musta'li. It seems that her brother, the caliph, confided to her of his intentions to pay the pledge of allegiance to his son Al-Musta'li. This is confirmed with what Nizar's sister mentioned. She indicated that her father Al-Mustansir summoned her aunt, Bint Al-Zahir, and confided to her with this intention. She said that the caliph confided to her aunt to enthrone Abu Al-Qasim - (a.k.a) Al-Musta'li- after his death. His aunt summoned him and pledged allegiance to him. This indicates the great role played by Al-Mustansir's sister. It confirms how the caliph revered her to the extent of entrusting her with announcing the pledge of allegiance to his son. Perhaps she was so resourceful, insightful and decisive.<sup>18</sup>

#### **Titles of Prominent Royal Women in the Fatimid era:**

The Fatimid state in Egypt glorified the caliphs according to the rules of the Shiite doctrine. They sanctified the imam as infallible, their wives, concubines, mothers, daughters, and sisters as well. Thus, women in the Fatimid era acquired many titles that indicate their status as they represented the top of the social pyramid in the state. There were many titles limited only to women of the elite and not the commons. Here are some of these titles:

**Al-jiha al-'ālīya:** In Arabic (الجهة العالية), (lit. the high side, loosely Her Highness).

It is one of the titles that women acquired in the Fatimid era. This title was specific to the wives and concubines of the caliphs, who enjoyed a prominent position within the Fatimid palaces. They were called "الجهة العالية، الجهات العالية، الجهات المعظمة", which read: "**Al-jiha al-'ālīya**, al-Jihat **al-'ālīya** , al-Jihat al-Mu'azzama", and mean: "(the High Side) or (the High Sides) and (the Sublime Sides) respectively. It seems that these titles were specific to the wives and concubines of the caliph without the other classes in the

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<sup>17</sup> نهلة أحمد عبد الفتاح الجالودي, دور المرأة في العصر الفاطمي, المصدر السابق, ص 101.  
<sup>18</sup> إبراهيم رزق الله أيوب, التاريخ الفاطمي الاجتماعي, الشركة العالمية للكتاب لبنان ط 1997, ص 109.

state, such as the viziers' and senior statesmen's wives as they were entitled only with (الجهة), without the word high or sublime.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Al-Sayyida: In (Arabic السيدة):**

It is a general title given to women of the elite. It can also be called upon women of the public, despite it was more closely associated with the women of the elite, including the wives and mothers of the caliphs and all the princesses of the Fatimid palace. These included al-Sayyida Sitt al-Mulk, who was called (Sultana), and Sitt al-Kull. Despite the fact that Sitt al-Mulk had no official correspondence, she enjoyed some titles. Also Sayyida Umm Al-Mustansir had several titles, including (al-Sayyida "the Lady") and (al-Malika "the Queen"), and that her son, the caliph Al-Mustansir, used to address her as "Maulatuna al-Walida", an indication of her position in the state with the caliph and the statesmen.<sup>20</sup>

For example, Umm Al-Mustansir had specific titles that were not called upon any other women. These included "الجهة الجليلة": al-Jiha al-Jalila" or "the Venerable Side" and "الستر الرفيع": al-Sitr al-Rafi" or "the Fine Veil". It can also be found that the titles of Fatimid women denote their attribution to their husbands, the caliphs. Hence, some historical sources attributed them to their husbands, the caliphs, without identifying their names and origins, such as "السيدة العزيزية": "al-Sayyida al-Aziziyya", "السيدة المعزية": al-Sayyida al-Mu'izziya" and "علم الأمرية": Alam al-Amiriya". These titles are intended to show pride and make them feel proud of belonging to the Caliph, in indication to the status of the caliphs' women, whether inside the palaces or in their relations with the statesmen and people.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, it can be found that Umm al-Musta'li had also several titles through her official correspondence, including "الملكة": The Queen". This title was probably shared by most of the women who were mothers and wives of the caliphs and who participated in the state administration, even for a short period, or had a distinguished position in the state. Umm al-Musta'li had also other titles such as "الكريمة الرؤوف الرحيمة": The Generous, Compassionate and Merciful).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> عبد المنعم سلطان , المجتمع المصري فى العصر الفاطمى دراسة تاريخية وثائقية , دار المعارف , ط 1985 - ص 195 .  
<sup>20</sup> نهلة أحمد عبد الفتاح الجالودى , رسالة ماجستير دور المرأة فى مصر خلال العصر الفاطمى ( 362-567 هـ / 972-1171 م ) , 1431هـ/2010م - ص 102

<sup>21</sup> عبد المنعم سلطان , المجتمع المصري فى العصر الفاطمى دراسة تاريخية وثائقية , دار المعارف , ط 1985- ص 199 .  
<sup>22</sup> عبد المنعم سلطان , المجتمع المصري فى العصر الفاطمى , المصدر السابق , ص 200.

**Al-Sharifa (In Arabic: الشريفة):**

The title of "al-Sharifa" is a prestigious and a prominent honorific title. It was not called upon all the caliphs' wives or their mothers. Rather, it was called on to the caliph al-Zahir's daughter in her correspondence that denote that perhaps was the only one who acquired this title. It was mentioned in the context of "من السيدة الطاهرة الشريفة", which reads "Men al-Sayyida al-Tahera al-Sharifa al-Malika al-Karima al-Ra'ouf al-Rahima Ibnat al-Imam al-Zahir Li-I'zaz Din Allah", which means (From the Pure and Honorable Lady, the Benevolent Queen, the Compassionate Daughter of Imam Al-Zahir Li-I'zaz Din Allah). Other titles were called upon many Fatimid women.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, the women of viziers and leaders in the state had titles that indicated their husbands' status in the state. Consequently, these women enjoyed such status. These included "جهة المولي أبي الفضل جعفر" (Jihat al-Mawla Abu al-Fadl Ja'far), and "جهة جواهر" (Jihat Jawhar).<sup>24</sup>

**Al-Mahrousa (In Arabic: المحروسة)**

It is a title for women in the Fatimid era, and it was mentioned among the titles of Sayyida Alam al-Amriyya in an inscription dated back to 550 AH/1160 AD. It was inscribed on a wooden Mihrab found in the Sayyida Ruqayya Mosque. It can be concluded that there was a large number of women's titles that were not mentioned in many sources.<sup>25</sup>

**Women's Economic Role in the Fatimid State:**

In the Fatimid era, Egypt became unprecedented seat of governance and a magnificent splendid and civilized caliphate, unlike its former Tulunid and Ikhshidid states. The Fatimids established the city of al-Qahira<sup>(26)</sup> to be a new source of spreading Islam<sup>(27)</sup> that would regain its strength after the weakness and apathy that had befallen the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad.

<sup>23</sup> ناريمان عبد الكريم أحمد , المرأة في العصر الفاطمي , النهضة المصرية لصناعة الكتاب ط 1993 م – ص 49 .  
<sup>24</sup> نهلة أحمد عبد الفتاح الجالودي , رسالة ماجستير دور المرأة في مصر خلال العصر الفاطمي ( 362-567 هـ / 972-1171 م ) , 1431هـ/2010م – ص 127 .

<sup>25</sup> إبراهيم رزق الله أيوب , التاريخ الفاطمي الاجتماعي , الشركة العالمية للكتاب لبنان ط 1997 , ص 109 .  
<sup>26</sup> أندريه ريمون , القاهرة تاريخ حاضرة , ترجمة : لطيف فرج , دار الفكر للدراسات ط 1993 , ص 33-34 .

<sup>27</sup> عبد الفتاح شرف الدين , الأوراق الندية في تاريخ مصر الإسلامية من قبيل الفتح الإسلامي حتى نهاية الدولة الأيوبية , مكتبة الآداب , القاهرة , ط 2003 م , ص 91-92 .  
<sup>27</sup> أيمن السيد فؤاد , التطور العمراني لمدينة القاهرة منذ نشأتها وحتى الآن , الدار المصرية اللبنانية ط 1997 , ص 1 .

From an economic standpoint, it can be found that the Fatimid state lived in velvet and extravagance within the palaces of caliphs, despite Egypt's agricultural economic history that was linked to the Nile River<sup>(28)</sup>. Egypt is an agricultural country and all aspects of life depend on the seasonal nature of the Nile's floods. Therefore, Egypt experienced many famines due to the recess of Nile's flood that resulted in repeated famines<sup>(29)</sup>. This had a detrimental effect on the population including death as a result of the spread of epidemics and migration as well as the lack of labor to cultivate the land<sup>(30)</sup>. It is evident that the Fatimid era witnessed the largest share of these famines.<sup>31</sup>

The wealth of the Fatimid state in Egypt is evident in women's possession of magnificent palaces.

In addition to the elites' women, the Fatimid women in Egypt in general played a major role in public life. Despite the social restrictions imposed on women in general, the elite's women were not subject to these restrictions due to the uniqueness of their social conditions.<sup>32</sup>

This had a profound impact on common's women, whose economic lives mostly depend on agriculture<sup>(33)</sup>. It can be found that famines sometimes do not last long, and the state may play a role in limiting their damage and taking some measures to overcome them. These included announcing the increasing the level of the Nile<sup>(34)</sup> in preparation for agriculture, as measures taken by the caliphs.

Since the era of Caliph Al-Mu'izz (362 AH/972 AD), the Fatimids showed a special interest in the Nile, and they monitor the increase by the Miqyas (Nilometer), as Caliph Al-Mu'izz forbade announcing the Nile flood, and informing him and Jawhar only with it, until its level reaches sixteen cubits, and then announces it to the people<sup>(35)</sup>. Doing so, the Caliph Al-Mu'izz may have aimed to reduce the people's anxiety,

<sup>28</sup> عبد اللطيف البغدادي , ( ت 557 هـ / 1161 م ) كتاب الأفادة والأعتبار في الأمور المشاهد والحوادث والمعانية بالأرض مصر , قصة المجاعة الكبرى بمصر عام 600 هـ , تحقيق : أحمد غسان سبانو , دار قتيبة , ط 1983 م , ص 15 – 18 .

<sup>29</sup> أحمد السيد الصاوي , مجاعات مصر الفاطمية وأسباب ونتائج , دار التضامن , لبنان بيروت , ط 1988 م , ص 14 - 21 .

<sup>30</sup> راشد البراوي , حالة مصر الاقتصادية في عهد الفاطميين , مكتبة النهضة المصرية , القاهرة , ط 1948 م , ص 82 .

<sup>31</sup> نهلة أحمد عبد الفتاح الجالودي , رسالة ماجستير دور المرأة في مصر خلال العصر الفاطمي ( 362-567 هـ / 972-1171 م ) ,

1431هـ/2010م – ص 100

<sup>32</sup> المصدر السابق , ص 150

<sup>33</sup> أحمد السيد الصاوي , مجاعات مصر الفاطمية وأسباب ونتائج , دار التضامن , لبنان بيروت , ط 1988 م , ص 32 .

<sup>34</sup> ناصر , خسرو العلوي ( ت 418 هـ / 1188 م ) , سفر نامه , رحلة ناصر خسرو إلى لبنان وفلسطين ومصر والجزيرة العربية في

القرن الخامس الهجري , ترجمة يحيى الخشاب , دار الكتاب الجديد , ط 1983 م , ص 42 .

<sup>35</sup> المقرئزي , تقي الدين أحمد بن علي ( ت 845 هـ / 1441 م ) اتعاظ الحنفا بأخبار الأئمة الفاطميين الخلفاء , تحقيق : جمال الدين

النشال 3 أجزاء , لجنة إحياء التراث الإسلامي , القاهرة , ط 1967 م , ج 1 , ص 138 .

otherwise celebrations were held on the Nile by opening the gulf. The caliphs participated in these celebrations since the advent of al-Mu'izz to Egypt, as he rode on the first year of his tenure to open the gulf in a great procession that included senior statesmen and notables<sup>(36)</sup>. Later, the caliphs followed his footsteps<sup>(37)</sup>. It is noted that measuring the Nile during the Fatimid era was entrusted to a group of Christians<sup>(38)</sup>.

### **Manifestations of Women's Wealth in the Fatimid Era:**

#### **First: The Elite Women's Wealth:**

The Fatimid state in Egypt was characterized by many manifestations of wealth and luxury. The caliphs spared no efforts in pleasing surrounded and their wives with means of luxury and extravagance that were rarely found in any Islamic era in Egypt. This luxury is evident in many aspects of their lives and the palaces built for them and their families<sup>(39)</sup> as well as to some statesmen from viziers and senior leaders.

Many sources referred to the wealth of Fatimid royal women as they possessed great wealth in the form of antiques, ornaments and precious jewels since their advent to Egypt. For example, al-Sayyida Sitt Misr, the daughter of Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah, which is described by Ibn **Al-Zubair** the author of "Al-Zakha'ir wal Tuhaf" as generous, noble of sublime morals and deeds. When she died, she left great wealth, including eight thousand maids, and an annual fifty thousand dinars as the yield for her feud. There were also thirty Chinese earthen jars full of powdered musk. In addition, she left precious jewels, including a piece of ruby that weighted ten mithqals - a unit of mass equal to 4.25 grams.

The luxurious life of royal women and daughters of the caliphs within the Fatimid palaces is evident in the wealth of Al-Mu'izz's daughters: Abda and Rashidah, who owned a lot of money and antiques that the Caliph Al-Mustansir inherited after their death.

<sup>36</sup> المقریزی , اتعاظ الحلفاء , المصدر السابق , ج 1 , ص 139 .

<sup>37</sup> المقریزی , اتعاظ الحلفاء , ج 1 , ص 214 ,  
أبی بکر بن عبد الله بن أبیک الدواداری , ( ت 736 هـ / 1335 م ) الدرر المضية فی أخبار الدولة الفاطمية , تحقيق : صلاح الدين المنجد , القاهرة , ط 1961 م , ج 6 , ص 175 .

<sup>38</sup> عبد المنعم سلطان , المجتمع المصری فی العصر الفاطمی دراسة تاريخية وثائقية , دار المعارف , ط 1985 , ص 183 .  
<sup>39</sup> رمضان عبد العظيم , موسوعة تاريخ مصر عبر العصور , كتبها : سيدة كاشف جمال الدين سرور , سعيد عبد الفتاح عاشور , دار النهضة المصرية للكتب , ط 1993 م , ص 326 .  
أندريه ريمون , القاهرة تاريخ حضارة , ترجمة : لطيف فرج , دار الفكر للدراسات ط 1993 م , القاهرة , ص 52 .

Al-Maqrizi mentioned the large amounts of money and antiques that were in the Fatimid palaces when they fell in Egypt. These varied between dinars and dirhams, gold, jewellery, copper, clothing, furniture, cloth and weapons, as well as unimaginable and incalculable items<sup>40</sup>. There may be an exaggeration in these wealth because the Fatimid state in Egypt at its downfall suffered from famines that may have declined its economy, which would consequently affect the elite's wealth.

When Caliph Al-'Adid died in 567 AH/ 1171 AD, there was magnificent wealth and precious items in the palaces. The inventory of treasures revealed a hundred boxes of luxurious coverings, including scarves and studs, precious necklaces, luxurious relics, precious jewels, and other items<sup>41</sup>.

### **The Architecture of the Fatimid Royal Women:**

In the Fatimid era, the lights of Islamic civilization reflected upon Egypt, as the caliphs took the precedence in establishing mosques, palaces, parks, and orchards. Also, women competed in establishing many mosques and ribats, which reflected the manifestations of the Fatimids' wealth in many aspects of their private life. It can be seen that their palaces were adorned with many decorative styles, which was adopted from Bilad al-Maghreb<sup>42</sup>, including Kasr al-Shouq as it was known to the commons. There were many other palaces such as Kasr al-Zumurrud (the Emerald Palace), Kasr al-Nasim (Palace of the Breeze), Kasr al-Hareem (Harem Palace)-Kasr al-, and al<sup>43</sup> Sharqi (the Eastern Palace), where Qa'et al-Zahab (the Gold Hall) is located. It was the king's seat for governance<sup>44</sup>. There were also many manazir (belvederes) in which they reside, and the mosques<sup>45</sup>, that they and their viziers and entourage used to reside until the end of their state by Saladin Al-Ayyubi, who expelled the people of their palaces<sup>46</sup>. Likewise, the Fatimid woman enjoyed their financial rights and awareness. They worked to spread the Shiite doctrine by participating in establishing many religious

<sup>40</sup> المقریزی ، المواعظ والاعتبار بذكر الخطط والآثار المعروف بالخطط المقریزية ، قدم لها وعلق عليها زهير حميدان ، 4 أجزاء ، منشورات دار الثقافة دمشق . ط 1978م ، ج 2 ، ص 396 .

<sup>41</sup> المقریزی ، المواعظ والاعتبار ، المصدر السابق ، ج 2 ، ص 395 .

<sup>42</sup> حسن عبد الوهاب ، تاريخ المساجد الأثرية ، الهيئة المصرية للكتاب ، ط 2 ، 1994 م ص 17 .

<sup>43</sup> المقریزی ، المواعظ والاعتبار بذكر الخطط والآثار المعروف بالخطط المقریزية ، قدم لها وعلق عليها زهير حميدان ، 4 أجزاء ، منشورات دار الثقافة دمشق . ط 1978م ، ج 2 ، ص 65 .

<sup>44</sup> رمضان عبد العظيم ، موسوعة تاريخ مصر عبر العصور ، كتبها : سيده كاشف جمال الدين رور ، سعيد عبد الفتاح عاشور ، دار النهضة المصرية للكتاب ، ط 1993 ، ص 326 .

<sup>45</sup> إبراهيم رزق الله أيوب ، التاريخ الفاطمي الاجتماعي ، الشركة العالمية للكتاب لبنان ط 1997 م ، ص 109 .

<sup>46</sup> المقریزی ، المواعظ والاعتبار بذكر الخطط والآثار المعروف بالخطط المقریزية ، قدم لها وعلق عليها زهير حميدان ، 4 أجزاء ، منشورات دار الثقافة دمشق . ط 1978م ، ج 2 ، ص 66 .

facilities, including mosques, ribats, and scientific libraries in the palaces and parks for entertainment and enjoyment.

### Manazel al-'Izz

It was established by Sayyida Taghrid, the wife of Caliph Al-Mu'izz and the mother of Caliph Al-Aziz Billah, who died in 385 AH / 995 AD, i.e., a year before the death of her son al-Aziz. It was the best sight in Egypt, and it overlooked the Nile, and the caliphs managed to enjoy their time there. They inherited it successively after Caliph Al-Mu'izz, as it was prepared for their picnics<sup>47</sup>. Later, after the end of the Fatimid state, Saladin turned it into a madrasa for Shafi'i jurists<sup>48</sup>, as a measure to obliterate the features of the Shiite doctrine in Egypt. In addition, Saladin adopted the construction of Sunni madrasas, which marked the intellectual revolution against the Shiite doctrine<sup>49</sup>. Moreover, he dedicated many palaces and facilities for serving the Sunni doctrine and state. Also, he confiscated the Fatimid properties, even those of viziers and princes<sup>50</sup>, perhaps because he needed money to achieve the stability of his state, and to erase the traces of the Fatimids and their doctrine<sup>51</sup>. Finally, he took several steps that led to the fall of the Fatimid state in Egypt and erased the last traces of the Shiite doctrine.

### Jami' al-Qarafa:

It was built by Sayyida Taghrid, wife of Caliph Al-Mu'izz and mother of Caliph Al-Aziz, in 366 AH/976 AD<sup>52</sup>. The Jami al-Qarafa Mosque or Qarafa Mosque or Jami' al-Awliya<sup>53</sup> was the second major mosque built by the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt after al-Azhar Mosque and in its form<sup>54</sup>. It consists of a mosque, a palace, and a bath. It was established under the supervision of al-Hussein al-Farisi al-Muhtasib. This indicates that there are other duties for al-Muhtasib, which the sources did not mention and may not be very common, which is supervising the construction. The mosque included also

<sup>47</sup>المقريزي , المواعظ والاعتبار ,المصدر السابق , ج 2 , ص 376 .

<sup>48</sup> عبد المجيد أبو الفتوح بدوى , التاريخ السياسى والفكرى للمذهب السنى فى المشرق من القرن الخامس الهجرى حتى سقوط بغداد , دار الوفاء للطباعة والنشر , المنصورة , ط 1988 م , ص 230 .

<sup>49</sup>عبد المجيد أبو الفتوح بدوى , التاريخ السياسى والفكرى ,المصدر السابق , ص 230 .

<sup>50</sup> محمد أمين , الأوقاف والحياة الاجتماعية فى مصر ( 648 – 923 هـ / 1250 – 1517 م ) دراسة تاريخية وثائقية , دار النهضة العربية , ط 1980 م , ص 67 .

<sup>51</sup> محمد أمين , الأوقاف ,المصدر السابق , ص 67 – 68 .

<sup>52</sup> ابن المأمون , جمال الدين أبو على موسى بن مأمون البطائحي ( ت 588 هـ / 1192 ) نصوص من أخبار مصر , حققها وقدم لها : أيمن فؤاد السيد المعهد العلمى الفرنسى للأثار الشرقية , القاهرة , ص 63 .

<sup>53</sup> حسن عبد الوهاب , تاريخ المساجد الأثرية , الهيئة المصرية للكتاب , ط 2 , 1994 م , ص 12 .

<sup>54</sup> ابن المأمون , جمال الدين أبو على موسى بن مأمون البطائحي ( ت 588 هـ / 1192 ) نصوص من أخبار مصر , حققها وقدم لها : أيمن فؤاد السيد المعهد العلمى الفرنسى للأثار الشرقية , القاهرة , ص 63 .

a park, and a cistern to its west<sup>55</sup>. The entrance to its gate had large steps and it was armored in the middle. The compartment consisted of several gates (ca.14 gates).

In front of each gate, there was an arch resting on two marble columns decorated with all kinds of colored paintings. It was one of the best monuments in terms of its structure perfection and accuracy of establishing its pillars<sup>56</sup>. It included also a large view overlooking a basement with a trough for animals. Jami al-Qarafa Mosque performed its role like all other mosques in Egypt. Marquees and all relevant items were sent to it in various feasts and events to hold celebrations there. These events were attended by Quran reciters and preachers of mosques<sup>57</sup> and honorable Mashhads<sup>58</sup>. Five quintals of sweets<sup>59</sup> and a thousand pounds of sugar<sup>60</sup> were distributed to the poor annually in the events and celebrations held at al-Azhar mosque and al-Masjid al-'Ateeq (Amr ibn al-As Mosque) in Fustat.

Masjid Al-Qarafa was destroyed during a fire of Fustat in 564 AH / 1168 AD<sup>61</sup>, as the case with many urban structures. The caliph Al-Amir Bi-Ahkam Allah<sup>62</sup> ordered its reconstruction in 420 AH / 1029 AD.

### Al-Dar al-Qutbiyya

It is a house built for Sayyida Sitt al-Mulk, daughter of the caliph al-Aziz and sister of the caliph al-Hakim, who enjoyed a high position with her father al-Aziz, who provided her with many means of luxury and wealth. He allocated a special residence for her in al-Kasr al-Gharbi al-Saghir<sup>63</sup> (the small Western Palace), that was known as

<sup>55</sup> المقریزی ، المواعظ والاعتبار بذكر الخطط والآثار المعروف بالخطط المقریزية ، قدم لها وعلق عليها زهير حميدان ، 4 أجزاء ، منشورات دار الثقافة دمشق . ط 1978م ، ج 2 ، ص 210 ، 211 .

<sup>56</sup> المقریزی ، المواعظ والاعتبار ، المصدر السابق ، ج 2 ، ص 379 .

<sup>57</sup> ابن المأمون ، جمال الدين أبو على موسى بن مأمون البطائحي ( ت 588 هـ / 1192 ) نصوص من أخبار مصر ، حققها وقدم لها : أيمن فؤاد السيد المعهد العلمي الفرنسي للآثار الشرقية ، القاهرة ، ص 35 .

<sup>58</sup> The honorable Mashhads are structures that were built to some of Ahl al-Bayt (People of the Prophetic House), such as Mashhad al-Sayyida Sakina, Mashhad al-Sayyida Atika, and Mashhad al-Sayyida Ruqayya. In addition, during the Fatimid era, the caliph al-Hakim ordered establishing many Mashhads. For more about see:

- ابن المأمون ، جمال الدين أبو على موسى بن مأمون البطائحي ( ت 588 هـ / 1192 ) نصوص من أخبار مصر ، حققها وقدم لها : أيمن فؤاد السيد المعهد العلمي الفرنسي للآثار الشرقية ، القاهرة ، ص 35 ، 60 ، 62 ، 63 ، 69 .

المقریزی ، اتعاط الحنفا ، ج 3 ، ص 81 .

<sup>59</sup> قنطار ، القنطار الواحد يساوي 100 رطل ، هنتس ، المكابيل ، ص 40 .

<sup>60</sup> ابن المأمون ، جمال الدين أبو على موسى بن مأمون البطائحي ( ت 588 هـ / 1192 ) نصوص من أخبار مصر ، حققها وقدم لها : أيمن فؤاد السيد المعهد العلمي الفرنسي للآثار الشرقية ، القاهرة ، ص 60 .

<sup>61</sup> المقریزی ، المواعظ والاعتبار بذكر الخطط والآثار المعروف بالخطط المقریزية ، قدم لها وعلق عليها زهير حميدان ، 4 أجزاء ، منشورات دار الثقافة دمشق . ط 1978م ، ج 2 ، ص 326 .

<sup>62</sup> المقریزی ، المواعظ والاعتبار ، ج 2 ، ص 379 .

<sup>63</sup> أندريه ريمون ، القاهرة تاريخ حاضرة ، ترجمة : لطيف فرج ، دار الفكر للدراسات ط 1993 ، ص 52 .



al-Dar al-Qutbiyya. It is located opposite to al-Kasr al-Sharqi (the Eastern Palace) in<sup>64</sup> vicinity of Qa'et al-Zahab (the Gold Hall). In addition, he assigned a special group<sup>65</sup> for her service known as "Al-Qasriya"<sup>66</sup>. This palace included several places, including the western field, the Qutbiyya Stable<sup>67</sup>, which may have been named after the house.

### Masjid al-Sayyida Ruqayya

It was built by orders of Sayyida Alam Al-Amiriyya, the wife of the Caliph Al-Amir bi-Ahkam Allah, to whom several mosques are attributed. This mosque was built in 527 AH/1132 AD. It housed a wooden coffin adorned with the following inscription:

"هذا مسجد السيدة رقية ابنة أمير المؤمنين علي ابن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه<sup>68</sup>"

It reads: "Haza Masjid al-Sayyida Ruqayya Ibnat Amir al-Mu'minin Ali Ibn Abu Talib Radiya Allah 'Anhu", and means: "This is the Mosque of Sayyida Ruqayya, daughter of the Commander of the Faithful Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may God be pleased with him." Alam Al-Amriyya also ordered the construction of Naranj Mosque in 522 AH / 1128 AD.

Hence, it can be concluded that many endowments were allocated to spend on these facilities from their returns<sup>69</sup>, knowing that such endowments had a special significance in the state. However, the scarcity of information does not mean that there were no endowments for women in the Fatimid era.

The royal Fatimid women owned large fiefs. For example, Sitt al-Mulk owned "Ebra" or estates<sup>70</sup> in 389 AH / 989 AD with an annual tax amounting to one hundred

<sup>64</sup> ابن المأمون , جمال الدين أبو علي موسى بن مأمون البطانحي ( ت 588 هـ / 1192 ) نصوص من أخبار مصر, حققها وقدم لها : أيمن فؤاد السيد المعهد العلمي الفرنسي للآثار الشرقية , القاهرة, ص 20 .

<sup>65</sup> Qa'at al-Zahab (Hall of Gold): It is also known as Kasr al-Zahab (Palace of Gold). It is one of the halls of al-Kasr al-Kabir, one of the buildings of the Caliph Al-Aziz. It was entered through Bab al-Zahab (Golden Gate) and Bab al-Bahr, which is located in vicinity of Madrassa al-Kamiliyya. Ramadan and the two Eids pavilions were extended there. It also housed the King Bed of Ibn al-Ma'mun.

- ابن المأمون , جمال الدين أبو علي موسى بن مأمون البطانحي ( ت 588 هـ / 1192 ) نصوص من أخبار مصر, حققها وقدم لها : أيمن فؤاد السيد المعهد العلمي الفرنسي للآثار الشرقية , القاهرة, ص 99 .

<sup>66</sup> المقریزی , المواعظ والاعتبار بذكر الخطط والآثار المعروف بالخطط المقريزية , قدم لها وعلق عليها زهير حميدان , 4 أجزاء , منشورات دار الثقافة دمشق . ط 1978م , ج 2 , ص 298 .

<sup>67</sup> المقریزی , المواعظ والاعتبار , المصدر السابق , ج 2 , ص 298 .

<sup>68</sup> المقریزی , المواعظ والاعتبار بذكر الخطط والآثار المعروف بالخطط المقريزية , قدم لها وعلق عليها زهير حميدان , 4 أجزاء , منشورات دار الثقافة دمشق . ط 1978م , ج 2 , ص 652 .

<sup>69</sup> ابن طوير , أبو محمد المرتضى عبد السلام بن الحسين القيسراني ( ت 617 هـ / 1220 م ) , نزهة المقلتين في أخبار الدولتين , تحقيق : أيمن فؤاد السيد , دار النشر فرانتس شتايز شتوتغارت , ص 100 – 101 .

Endowments were the task of the chief judge who was responsible for the mosques, mausoleums, and quarters. See the same source.

<sup>70</sup> 'Ebra: It is an Arabic term that means the amount of tax or money imposed upon to each piece of land and the returns obtained from each village in terms of produce, and crops.

thousand dinars. These estates included lands in Upper Egypt with returns that amounted to 680450 dinars, lands in Abu Tij area with returns 60750 dinars, and in Sahrascht<sup>71</sup> with returns 10.000 dinars, in Damanhour<sup>72</sup> with returns five thousand dinars, and the rest with returns that amounted to thirty-one thousand dinars, as well as five hundred and fifty dinars from houses and orchards<sup>73</sup>. All these indicate the huge wealth of the Fatimid women of the palace of from the elite and upper class.

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- ابن المأمون , جمال الدين أبو علي موسى بن مأمون البطانحي ( ت 588 هـ / 1192 ) نصوص من أخبار مصر , حققها وقدم لها : أيمن فؤاد السيد المعهد العلمي الفرنسي للآثار الشرقية , القاهرة , حاشية , ص 10 .

<sup>71</sup> There are two regions bearing the name of Sahrascht: namely Sahrascht al-Kubra abd Sahrascht al-Sughra. The first is located in the center of Mit Ghamr on the eastern shore of the Sahel Canal, ca. 4kms of the south-east of Minyat al-Ezz. The second is located in the center of Minyat Samanoud, ca. 1000 perch, in the south-east of Bishla area, in the north-east.

- المقرئزي , تقى الدين أحمد بن علي ( ت 845 هـ / 1441 م ) اتعاط الحنفا بأخبار الأئمة الفاطميين الخلفاء , تحقيق : جمال الدين الشيال 3 أجزاء , لجنة إحياء التراث الإسلامي , القاهرة , ط 1967 م , ج 2 , ص 33 .

<sup>72</sup> Damanhour: a city in Lower Egypt, that is away a day from Alexandria (currently 70 km) on the way to Egypt.

- باقوت , شهاب الدين أبي عبد الله الحموي الرومي البغدادي ( ت 626 هـ / 1228 م ) معجم البلدان , تحقيق : فريد عبد العزيز الجندي , 3 أجزاء , دار الكتب العلمية , بيروت , ج 2 , ص 536 .

<sup>73</sup> المقرئزي , تقى الدين أحمد بن علي ( ت 845 هـ / 1441 م ) اتعاط الحنفا بأخبار الأئمة الفاطميين الخلفاء , تحقيق : جمال الدين الشيال 3 أجزاء , لجنة إحياء التراث الإسلامي , القاهرة , ط 1967 م , ج 2 , ص 33 .

## Conclusion

Although medieval Islamic society was considered primarily a male society, women in Fatimid Egypt were able to assert their existence as much as circumstances allowed them to do so. They participated in public life and tried to defend their rights and freedom. They were not submissive to the conditions that prevailed in these eras.

At that time, women were highly concerned with everything, especially their clothes and jewelry. They were also keen to acquire everything luxurious and precious in their homes, in accordance with the spirit of the era in which they lived, an era of extravagance and luxury that extended to all aspects of life.

In addition, women were influenced by the religious spirit of the era, as the Egyptian women were keen on worshiping and adhering to religious values, considering that the doctrine of the Fatimid Caliphate had an important impact on women's conditions.

Also, women had an effective role in state policy. This role was sometimes fluctuating due to the turbulent surrounding conditions. In general, all Fatimid women aimed to preserve the entity of the Fatimid Caliphate at home and abroad.

Therefore, this research dealt with the role of women in Egypt during the Fatimid era (358 - 567 AH / 969 - 1171 AD) from a social perspective. It is a very important topic due to the effective role that women played, especially in the crucial periods that the Fatimid Caliphate underwent. The categories of women in Fatimid society included the royal women of the caliphs' mothers, wives, and daughters. It highlighted their economic conditions and their economic role in building magnificent archaeological structures. Moreover, the research addressed the economic conditions of public women how they were affected by the bad economic conditions in the country.

In conclusion, the study has provided a richly informative analysis of the status and influence of women in this period. Their contribution is explored within the context of the Fatimid history, and then within the courts in their roles as mothers, courtesans, wives and daughters, and as workers and servants.

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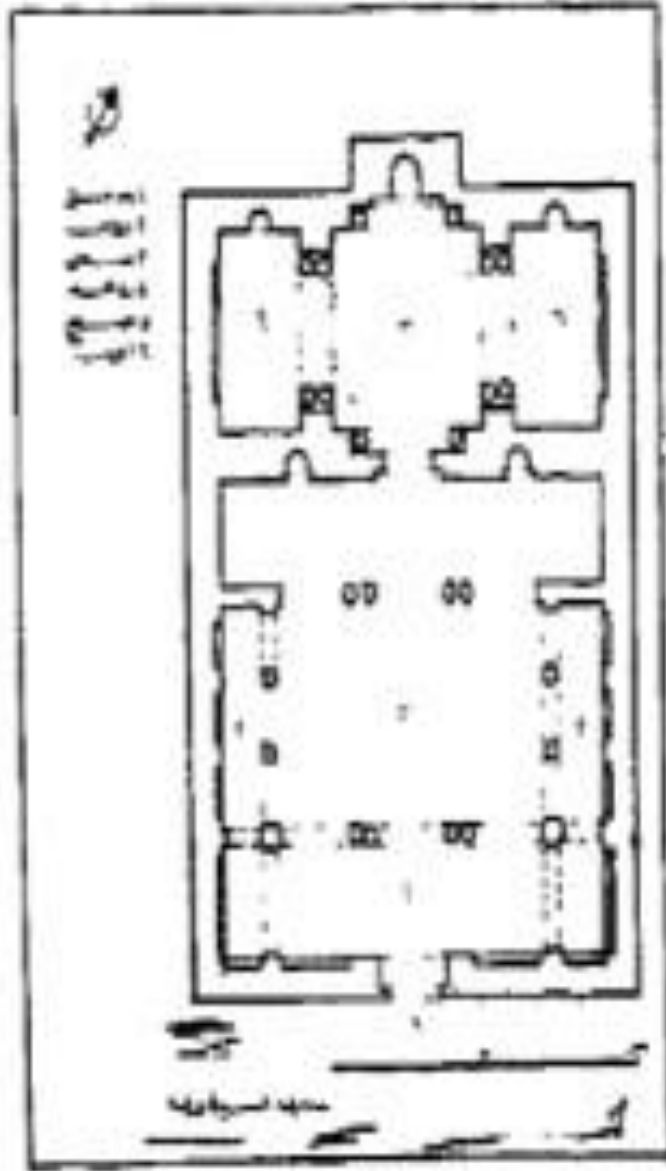


Figure 1. Masjid al-Sayyida Ruqayya

دليل الآثار الإسلامية بمدينة القاهرة

الأصدار الأول 2000



Plate 1. The Dome of Masjid al-Sayyida Ruqayya



Plate 2. Mahrab of Masjid al-Sayyida Ruqayya