The Fatimid and Kalbite Governors in Sicily:
909-1044
[Islamic Sicily II]*

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This is the second part of my investigation on the Muslim governors (or rulers) in Sicily.

I transliterate Arabic letters based on the following rule with vowels added:

bâ'=b, tâ'=t, thâ'=th, jîm=j, ha'=h, khâ’=kh, dâl=d, dhâl=dh, râ’=r, zây=z, sin=s, shîn=sh, sâd=s, dâd=d, tâ’=t, za’=z, ‘ayn=‘, ghâyin=gh, fâ’=f, qâf=q, kaf=k, lâm=l, mîm=m, nûn=n, hâ’=h, wâw=w, yâ’=y, hamza=[‘]

* If there is a problem in determining vowels I show only consonants with dashes in [ ].

Ex.: [sh/m/sh].

* I usually do not transliterate hamza. If necessary I use “’” to indicate hamza.

* I show the assimilation of the definite article “’l (‘al)” before the sun letters (ḥurūf shamsiyya), and transliterate “‘al” into “a#” according to subsequent letters. I ignore other assimilations.

Ex.: Abû al-Qâsim, not Abû-l-Qâsim.

The abbreviation system is as follows:

AH = anno hezirae (the year of the Hegira).

* This is the latter part of my study on Islamic Sicily, which originates from an appendix (Appendix 3: Islamic Sicily) to my Ph.D. dissertation entitled Medieval Kingdom of Mystery: The Norman Kingdom of Sicily and Its Administration (Yale University, New Haven, Conn. 1990). The former part of Islamic Sicily is scheduled to appear in Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies, VII (1992), with the title of “The Aghlabid Governors in Sicily: 827-909 [Islamic Sicily I].” I should like to thank Dr. Jonathan Rotondo-MacCord of Xavier University of Louisiana for his help.
II. THE FATIMID GOVERNORS (wālīs): 909-948

Aghlabid rule of Sicily came to an end in 909 when the Aghlabid dynasty in Tunisia was replaced by the Fāṭimid dynasty (909-1171), and thus the history of Islamic Sicily entered the second phase. As soon as the news arrived in Sicily that Abū `Abd Allah, a leader of the Shiʿites and one of the founders of the Fāṭimid dynasty, had occupied Tunisia, the Muslims in Sicily imprisoned Abū ʿAbd al-Láqi, last Aghlabid wālī (903-909), and re-elected the former wālī Abū Muḥammad (903-903) to be first Fāṭimid wālī (909-910) on 4 April 909. Fāṭimid rule in Sicily.

Abū b. Muḥammad was, however, deposed and replaced with Al-Ḥasan (910-12) by the first Fāṭimid caliph Ḫubayd Allāh al-Mahdī (909-934) in 910. This new wālī, Al-Ḥasan, appointed Ishaq b. Abī al-Mināḥāl to be qāḍī of Sicily, who proclaimed Al-Mahdī’s name in

1 He had been deposed by the Aghlabid amīr in 903. Nuwayrī in BAS testo arabo, p. 434, sana 255 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 124, Anno 255); “Cronica di Cambridge,” in BAS testo arabo, p. 168, sana 6417 (BAS versione italiana, pp. 280-1).
the Friday sermon at Palermo. Fāṭimid rule (909-947) of Sicily was then established religiously as well as politically. During this period most of the wālis were appointed by the caliphs and maintained close ties with the Fāṭimid court in Tunisia, but enjoyed political independence.

1. `Afi b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Fawāris (909-910)

When the news arrived in Sicily that Ābū `Abd Allāh, a leader of the Shi‘ites and founder of the Fāṭimid dynasty, had occupied Tunisia, the Muslims in Sicily imprisoned the wāli Aḥmad b. Ābū al-Ḥusayn and chose anew `Āli b. Muḥammad (= I, No. 31) to be wāli on the tenth day of the month of Rajab of AH 296 (4 April 909) [Nuwayri]. He was confirmed by Ābū `Abd Allāh in the same year, but deposed by the first Fāṭimid caliph (khālīfa) Al-Mahdī ‘Ubayd-Allāh (909-934) in AH 297 (20 Sep 909-8 Sep 910) [Nuwayrī]. He is described as Ībn Abī al-Fawāris in “Cronica di Cambrige” Nuwayrī in BAS testo arabo, pp. 434-5, sana 296, 297 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 125, Anno 296, 297); “Cronica di Cambridge” in BAS testo arabo, p. 168, sana 6417 (BAS versione italiana, I, p. 280-1, Anno 6417). No mention in Ibn `Adharī, Ibn Khaldūn, Ābū al-Fidā’ and Ibn al-Āthīr.


Al-Ḥasan was appointed wāli by the caliph Al-Mahdī, and arrived in Sicily on the tenth day of the month of Dhd al-ḥijja of AH 297 (20 Aug 910) [Ibn al-Āthīr]. He was deposed by the caliph in AH 299 [Nuwayrī]. According to Ibn `Adharī, however, he was expelled from Sicily with `Āli in AH 300. Nuwayrī in BAS testo arabo, p. 435, sana 297 (BAS versione italiana, II, pp. 125, 126, Anno 297); Ibn `Adharī in BAS testo arabo, p. 364, sana 300 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 23, Anno 300); Ibn Khaldūn in BAS testo arabo, faṣl 8, p. 476 (BAS versione italiana, II, §8, p. 189); Ābū al-Fidā’ in BAS testo arabo, p. 406, sana 296 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 88, Anno 296); Ibn al-Āthīr in BAS testo arabo, pp. 250-1, sana 296 (BAS versione italiana, I, p. 408, Anno 296). No mention in “Cronica di Cambridge.”

3. `Afi b. `Umar al-Balawi (912-913)

`Āli was appointed by the caliph Al-Mahdī, and arrived in Sicily on the tenth day of the month of Dhd al-ḥijja of AH 299 (15 Aug 912) [Nuwayrī], or on the last day of the same month (17 Aug 912) [Ibn al-Āthīr]. But the Muslims in Sicily were not satisfied with him because he was old and weak, and abandoned him in AH 300 (18 Aug 912-6 Aug 913) [Nuwayrī]. According to Ibn `Adharī, however, `Āli was a brother of Al-Ḥasan and son of Aḥmad b Abī Khinzir. Nuwayrī in BAS testo arabo, p. 435, sana 297 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 126, Anno 297); Ibn `Adharī in BAS

4. ʿĀḥmad b. Ziyāda Allāh b. Qurḥub (913–†916)

ʿĀḥmad was elected wālī by the Muslims of Sicily on 17 January of AM 6421 (27 Jan 913) (“Cronica di Cambridge”), and confirmed by the ʿAbbasid caliph al-Muqtadir (908-932) in AH 300 (18 Aug 912-6 Aug 913). He was deposed by the Muslims in Sicily on 14 July of AM 6424 (14 Jul 916) (“Cronica di Cambridge”), sent back to Africa in the month of Muḥarram of AH 304 (July 916), and was killed in the same year (5 Jul 916-23 Jun 917) [Nuwayrī, Ibn ʿAdhārī]. Nuwayrī in BAS testo arabo, pp. 435-6, sana 297, 304 (BAS versione italiana, II, pp. 126-7, Anno 297, 304); Ibn ʿAdhārī in BAS testo arabo, pp. 364, 366, sana 300, 304 (BAS versione italiana, II, pp. 23, 25-26, Anno 300, 304); Ibn Khaldūn in BAS testo arabo, faṣl 8, pp. 476-7 (BAS versione italiana, II, §8, pp. 189, 190); Ibn al-Athīr in BAS testo arabo, p. 251, sana 300 (BAS versione italiana, I, pp. 409-10, Anno 300); “Cronica di Cambridge” in BAS testo arabo, pp. 168-9, sana 6421, 6424 (BAS versione italiana, I, pp. 281-2, Anno 6421, 6424). No mention in Abū al-Fīdāʾ.

5. ʿAbū Saʿīd Mūsā b. ʿĀḥmad, aḏ-Ṭayf (916-917)


6. ʿĀlim b. Asad b. Ṭaḥīd (917-937 [†940])


Abū al-‘Abbās was appointed wāli by the Fatimid caliph Al-Qa‘īm (934-946) in AH 325 (19 Nov 936-7 Nov 937). He entered Palermo on 23 October of AM 6446 (23 Oct 937) [“Cronica di Cambridge”], and left for Africa on 11 September of AM 6450 (11 Sep 941) [“Cronica di Cambridge”], in the month of Dhū al-hijja of AH 329 (27 Aug-25 Sep 941) [Nuwayrī, Ibn al-Athīr].

8. **Ibn al-Kūfī (941-946?) and Abū al-Qāsim b. ‘Aṭṭāf (941-948)**


**III. THE KALBITE RULERS (wālīs, amirs): 948-1044**

On 25 April 947 the people in Palermo rose against the Fatimid wāli Ibn ‘Aṭṭāf. In order to handle this situation, the third Fatimid caliph Al-Mansūr (946-953) appointed Al-Ḥasan (948-953) as wāli and sent him to Sicily. This was the beginning of the Kalbite dynasty, which ruled the island for over ninety years (948-1044), and marks the third phase of the Islamic history of Sicily. In 953 Al-Ḥasan was called back to Mahdia by the new caliph Al-Mu‘izz (953-975) to attend the Fatimid court, and his son Alḥmad was appointed wāli of Sicily. Alḥmad’s governorship continued for more than sixteen years until he was also recalled to Africa in 969. The government of Sicily was entrusted to Al-Ḥasan’s freedman Ya‘īsh. But soon disorder prevailed in Sicily, and Caliph Al-Mu‘izz sent Abū al-

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Qāsim ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan, brother of Aḥmad, to the island as the latter’s deputy. Aḥmad died a few months later and Abū al-Qāsim was confirmed as wali of Sicily in 970. Thus, the Kalbite wali of Sicily became hereditary and the Kalbite dynasty was established.4

The Kalbite dynasty was interrupted by the intervention of the Zirid amir Al-Muʿizz in Africa, who sent his son ʿAbd Allāh with his army to Sicily in 1036. The Kalbite wali Aḥmad al-Akhl (1019–1036) was killed during the war against the Zīrids, and the Zirid prince ʿAbd Allāh was elected wali in the same year. In 1040, however, Al-Ḥasan aṣ-Ṣimsām, brother of Aḥmad al-Akhīl, defeated ʿAbd-Allāh, who fled to Africa, and became wali (1040-44). Thus the Kalbite dynasty was revived, but its authority no longer extended over the whole island.

<table>
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<th>Table 1</th>
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<td><strong>Struggles among powerful local rulers in Sicily</strong></td>
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<td>(ca.1040 ca.1060)</td>
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| Aṣ-Ṣimsām (1040-44) |
| ‘Abd Allāh b. Mankūd (Mazara, Trapani, Sciacca, Marsala, etc.) |
| | Ibn al-Ḥaawwās (Castrogiovanni, Girgenti, Castronuovo, etc.) |
| deposition | (1044) |
| | Ibn Maklātī (Catania) |
| | Ibn ath-Thumna (Syracuse) |
| | defeat & death <--------- |
| | | Normans (1052)= |

Local governors and leaders of the army gained more power and independence. Among them four powerful local rulers emerged: the qa'id ‘Abd Allāh b. Mankūd (or Mankūt), the independent ruler of Trapani, Marsala, Mazara, Sciacca and the western plains; the qa'id ‘Alī b. Ni'ma, better known as Ibn al-Ḥaawwās, the powerful master of Castrogiovanni, Girgenti, Castronuovo, and their neighborhoods; the qa'id Ibn Maklātī, the ruler of Catania; and the qa?id Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. ath-Thumna, better known as Ibn ath-Thumna, the master of Syracuse.

In 1044 the wali Aṣ-Ṣimsām was deposed and the Kalbite dynasty came to an end. The government of Palermo was put in the hands of its nobles. Now, Ibn al-Ḥaawwās became the most powerful local ruler. But the balance of power among local rulers was changed by Ibn ath-Thumna, who first attacked and killed Ibn Maklātī, the ruler of Catania, and then defeated ‘Abd Allāh b. Mankūd and took all his territory in the western part of Sicily.

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Thus, Ibn ath-Thumna became the most powerful ruler in Sicily. His name was proclaimed in the Friday sermon in Palermo, and he was called al-Qādir billāh. However, a domestic conflict between Ibn ath-Thumna and his wife Maymūna, Ibn al-Ḥawwās’ sister, led to a conflict between himself and Ibn al-Ḥawwās. Ibn ath-Thumna, defeated by Ibn al-Ḥawwās, asked for help from the Normans, offering the island in return. This enabled the Norman conquest of Sicily.5


Al-Ḥasan was appointed wāli by the caliph Al-Manṣūr, and arrived in Sicily from Africa in AH 336 (23 Jul 947-10 Jul 948) [Nuwayrī, Abū al-Fidā’] and in AM 6456 (1 Sep 947-31 Aug 948) [“Cronica di Cambridge”]. He was recalled to Mahdia in AH 342 (18 May 953-6 May 954) after having spent two years and some months in Sicily [Abū al-Fidā’], or in AH 341 (29 May 952-17 May 953) [Ibn al-Athīr]. According to “Cronica di Cambridge,” Al-Ḥasan went back to Africa in AM 6469 (1 Sep 960-31 Aug 961), but returned to Palermo in AM 6473 (1 Sep 964-31 Aug 965), and died there in November of the same year (964) [“Cronica di Cambridge”] or in the month of Dhu al-Qa‘da of AH 353 (9 Nov-8 Dec 964) [Abū al-Fidā’]. Nuwayrī in BAS testo arabo, p. 435, sana 325 (BAS versione italiana, II, pp. 129-130, Anno 325); Ibn Khalḍūn in BAS testo arabo, faṣl 2, p. 463, faṣl 8, pp. 479-80 (BAS versione italiana, II, §2, p. 168; §8, pp. 193-4); Abū al-Fidā’ in BAS testo arabo, pp. 407-9, sana 336 (BAS versione italiana, II, pp. 89, 91, Anno 336); Ibn al-Athīr in BAS testo arabo, pp. 256-7, 262, sana 336, 340 (BAS versione italiana, I, pp. 415-6, 423, Anno 336, 340); “Cronica di Cambridge” in BAS testo arabo, pp. 173-6, sana 6456, 6469, 6473 (BAS versione italiana, I, pp. 289, 292-3, Anno 6456, 6469, 6473). No mention in Ibn ‘Adhārī.

2. Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan (954-969)

Aḥmad, son of Al-Ḥasan, was appointed wāli by the caliph Al-Manṣūr in AH 343 (7 May 954-26 Apr 955), but recalled to Africa at the end of AH 358 (23 Nov 968-13 Nov 969) after having governed Sicily for six years and nine months [Abū al-Fidā’]. According to “Cronica di Cambridge,” Aḥmad returned to Africa in August of AM 6471 (Aug 963). Nuwayrī in BAS testo arabo, p. 435, sana 325, 358 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 129-130, 135, Anno 325, 358); Ibn Khalḍūn in BAS testo arabo, faṣl 2, p. 464, faṣl 8, p. 481 (BAS versione italiana, II, §2, p. 169, §8, p. 196); Abū al-Fidā’ in BAS testo arabo, pp. 407-9, sana 336 (BAS versione italiana, II, pp. 89-91, Anno

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3. Ya’ish (969-970)

Ya’ish, a freedman of Al-Ḥasan, was entrusted with Sicily by Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan in AH 358 (23 Nov 968-13 Nov 969) [Nuwayrī, Abū al-Fīḍā’] or in AH 359 (14 Nov 969-3 Nov 970) [Ibn al-Athīr], but soon recalled to Africa. Nuwayrī in BAS testo arabo, p. 442, sana 358 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 135, Anno 358); Ibn Khaldūn in BAS testo arabo, faṣl 8, p. 482 (BAS versione italiana, II, §8, p. 197); Abū al-Fīḍā’ in BAS testo arabo, p. 409, sana 336 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 91, Anno 336); Ibn al-Athīr in BAS testo arabo, p. 266, sana 359 (BAS versione italiana, I, p. 429, Anno 359). No mention in Ibn ‘Adhārī and “Cronica di Cambridge.”

4. Abū al-Qāsim ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan (970-982)

Abū al-Qāsim, son of Al-Ḥasan and brother of Aḥmad, arrived in Sicily as deputy of Aḥmad on the 15th day of the month of Sha‘bān of AH 359 (23 Jun 970) [Nuwayrī, Abū al-Fīḍā’]. In the same year, Aḥmad having died, Abū al-Qāsim received a diploma from the caliph Al-Mu‘izz and his promotion to amīr was confirmed. He died in the month of Muḥarram of AH 372 (26 Jun-25 Jul 982) [Nuwayrī, Abū al-Fīḍā’]. Nuwayrī in BAS testo arabo, p. 442, sana 359 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 136, Anno 359); Ibn ‘Adhārī in BAS testo arabo, p. 369, sana 372 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 30, Anno 372); Ibn Khaldūn in BAS testo arabo, faṣl 8, p. 482 (BAS versione italiana, II, §8, p. 197); Abū al-Fīḍā’ in BAS testo arabo, pp. 409-10, sana 336 (BAS versione italiana, II, pp. 91, 92, Anno 336); Ibn al-Athīr in BAS testo arabo, pp. 267, 269-70, sana 359, 371 (BAS versione italiana, I, p. 429, 434, Anno 359, 371).

5. Jābir b. Abī al-Qāsim (982-983)


Jaʿfar, a Kalbite, was appointed amīr by the caliph Al-‘Azīz and arrived in Sicily in AH 373 (15 Jun 983-3 Jun 984). [He died in AH 375 (24 May 985-12 May 986, Nuwayrī, Abū al-Fīḍā’), Ibn Khaldūn]. Nuwayrī in BAS testo arabo, p. 442, sana 359 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 136, Anno 359); Ibn Khaldūn in BAS testo arabo, faṣl 8, p. 482 (BAS versione italiana, II, §8, pp. 198, 199); Abū al-Fīḍā’ in BAS testo arabo,


8. Abū al-Futūḥ Yūsuf b. ‘Abd Allāh, Thiqat ad-Dawla (989–998)

Abū al-Futuḥ, son of ‘Abd Allāh, became wāli’ immediately after his father’s death (Ramadān of AH 379 [3 Dec 989-1 Jan 990]), and was confirmed by the caliph Al-‘Azīz. He fell seriously ill and was succeeded by his son Ja’far in AH 388 (3 Jan-22 Dec 998) [Nuwayrī]. Nuwayrī in BAS testo arabo, p. 442, sana 379 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 137, Anno 379); Ibn ‘Adhāri in BAS testo arabo, p. 369, sana 379 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 31, Anno 379); Ibn Khaldūn in BAS testo arabo, faṣl 8, p. 483 (BAS versione italiana, II, §8, p. 199); Abū al-Fidā’ in BAS testo arabo, pp. 410, 413, sana 336, 484 (BAS versione italiana, II, pp. 93, 96, Anno 336, 484); Ibn al-Athīr in BAS testo arabo, p. 273, sana 484 (BAS versione italiana, I, p. 442, Anno 484).


Ja’far, son of Abū al-Futuḥ, succeeded his father as wāli’ when the latter became seriously ill in AH 388 (3 Jan-22 Dec 998). But the Muslims in Palermo rose against him and chose Aḥmad al-Akhal, brother of Ja’far, as wāli’ in place of him on the sixth day of the month of Al-Muḥarram of AH 410 (14 May 1019) [Nuwayrī]. Nuwayrī in BAS testo arabo, pp. 442, 444, sana 379, 410 (BAS versione italiana, II, pp. 137, 139, Anno 379, 410); Ibn Khaldūn in BAS testo arabo, faṣl 8, p. 484, (BAS versione italiana, II, §8, p. 199); Abū al-Fidā’ in BAS testo arabo, pp. 411, 413, sana 336, 484 (BAS versione italiana, II, pp. 94, 97, Anno 386, 484); Ibn al-Athīr in BAS testo arabo, p. 274, sana 484 (BAS versione italiana, I, pp. 442-3, Anno 484). No mention in Ibn ‘Adhāri.

10. Aḥmad al-Akḥal b. Abī al-Futūḥ, Tāyīd ad-Dawla (1019–1036)

Aḥmad, son of Abū al-Futuḥ and brother of Ja’far, was chosen wāli’ on the sixth day of the month of Al-Muḥarram of AH 410 (14 May 1019), confirmed later by the Fāṭimid caliph Al-Ḥākim. He died in AH 427 (5 Nov 1035-24 Oct 1036) [Nuwayrī, Abū al-Fidā’]. Nuwayrī in BAS testo arabo, p. 444, sana 410, 410 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 139, 141, Anno 410, 410); Ibn Khaldūn in BAS testo arabo, faṣl 8, p. 484 (BAS versione italiana, II, §8, p. 200); Abū al-Fidā’ in BAS testo arabo, pp. 411, 413, sana 336, 484 (BAS versione italiana, II, pp. 94, 97, Anno 336, 484); Ibn al-Athīr in BAS testo arabo, p. 274, sana 484 (BAS versione italiana, I, pp. 443-4, Anno 484). No mention in Ibn ‘Adhāri.
11. ‘Abd Allâh b. al-Mu‘izz b. Bâdis (1036-1040?)


12. Al-Ḥasan aṣ-Simşâm ad-Dawla (1040?-1044)

Al-Ḥasan aṣ-Simşâm, son of Abû al-Futûh and brother of Ja‘far and Aḥmad, was chosen wâli` by the Muslims of Sicily, but was expelled. Nuwayrî in BAS testo arabo, p. 445, sana 410 (BAS versione italiana, II, p. 141-142, Anno 410); Ibn Khaldûn in BAS testo arabo, faṣl 8, p. 484 (BAS versione italiana, II, §8, p. 200); Abû al-Fidâ’ in BAS testo arabo, pp. 411, 414, sana 336, 484 (BAS versione italiana, II, pp. 94, 98, Anno 336, 484); Ibn al-Athîr in BAS testo arabo, p. 275, sana 484 (BAS versione italiana, I, p. 445, Anno 484). No mention in Ibn ‘Adhârî.