



## REVIEW ARTICLE

Section: *Literature, Linguistics & Criticism***Sicily and its inhabitants' resistance to the Fatimid governors (296-335 AH / 908-946 AD)**Reem Hadi Marhaj Al-Dhahibawi<sup>1</sup>  & Fatemeh Janahmadi<sup>2\*</sup> <sup>1</sup>University of Misan, Iraq<sup>2</sup>University of Tarbiat Modares, Iran\*Correspondence: [ream@uomisan.edu.iq](mailto:ream@uomisan.edu.iq)**ABSTRACT**

Sicily is the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, and is distinguished by its strategic location, as it represents the gateway from the East to the West. Our study aims to identify its geographical and political status, especially in the era of the Fatimid state.

The Fatimids realized the political, strategic and economic importance of Sicily, as their presence in Sicily contributed to maintaining their position in Morocco and Egypt after their entry into it, and extending their control over the Mediterranean Sea. The Fatimid governors contributed to protecting the African coasts from Roman invasions, and it also helped to consolidate their extension in Egypt and the Maghreb countries later, but some Fatimid governors abused its people, because they were military leaders, and did not have political experience in managing state affairs, and as a result, a large number of governors were changed by the Fatimid caliphs due to the revolution of the people of Sicily and their dissatisfaction with their presence.

The Fatimid governors were also able to eliminate the revolutions and seditions that took place in Sicily, which gave them military experience in fighting the Byzantines, which in turn helped them overpower their wars against the Umayyads in Andalusia, and the Abbasids in the Levant.

**KEYWORDS:** Byzantine state, Fatimid governors, population resistance, Sicily

**Research Journal in Advanced Humanities**

Volume 7, Issue 1, 2026

ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

**ARTICLE HISTORY**

Submitted: 15 November 2025

Accepted: 12 December 2025

Published: 21 January 2026

**HOW TO CITE**

Al-Dhahibawi, R. H. M., & Janahmadi, F. (2026). Sicily and its inhabitants' resistance to the Fatimid governors (296-335 AH / 908-946 AD). *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.58256/f2y14062>



Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global, an imprint of Royallite Publishers Limited

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## **Introduction**

Due to its geographical location in the Mediterranean basin, the island of Sicily is of political, economic and commercial importance. It is a small island in the shape of an isosceles triangle. It was called in the past by the name of Atrina Crippa, and it divides the Mediterranean into two basins, eastern and western. Due to its location between the European and African landmasses, the island holds great importance, therefore controlling it meant having control over the Mediterranean basin. Because of this importance, the island of Sicily was a field of conflict and war between the Islamic state and Byzantium. It witnessed several campaigns that ended with its detachment from the Byzantine Empire's rule and its entry under Muslim's. The Muslim rule continued for more than two centuries, and the island witnessed a civilizational renaissance in all economic, cultural and urban fields. The island was ruled by two Arab groups: the Aghlabids, and then the Fatimids, starting in the year 909 for immigration.

## **Importance of Research**

The island of Sicily is worthy of study, research and contemplation, as the island occupies an important geographical location thanks to its presence between the arm of the Italian peninsula extending from central Europe to the south in the heart of the Mediterranean, and between the northern arm of the African continent. Because of this location, the island of Sicily connects the coasts of Europe with the coasts of the Arab Maghreb, and the Muslim Arabs realized its economic importance and role, and because of that conquering it became necessity as well as protecting the Islamic presence from Byzantine threats. This stage constitutes an important history shaped by the Muslims on a European island that they turned into a lush garden, and they were the reason for the flourishing of sciences, arts and literature there, in addition to its political, strategic, and economic importance, and to trace the history of the island of Sicily under Islamic rule, starting with the movement of conquest and expansion, which took a long time until stability was achieved, by shedding light on the Byzantine-Islamic conflict over the island of Sicily, the Byzantines refused to let the island out of their hands, and during the period of Aghlabid rule of the island starting from the year 184 AH/800 AD until the year 296 AH/909 AD. Then the Fatimids appeared in Morocco and took control of the Aghlabid properties, including the island of Sicily. After the Fatimids took control, a governor and a judge were sent to rule the island in the name of the Fatimids. The Fatimid control over the island of Sicily had the greatest impact on maintaining their position, whether in Morocco or in Egypt after their entry into it. It also meant extending their control over the Mediterranean. The presence of the Fatimid governors in Sicily made the coasts of Africa safe from Roman invasions, and it also helped to establish their expansion into Egypt and the Maghreb countries later. In addition, from an economic standpoint, Sicily was a fruitful land with abundant bounties, containing many agricultural yields, as well as mineral wealth of gold, silver, and copper. However, the Fatimid governors faced resistance and revolts from the residents of Sicily.

## **Research Methodology**

In our study, we relied on several approaches, the most important of which is the historical approach to chronicle the Fatimid rule of the island, the descriptive approach in presenting the opinions of historians and writers, and the analytical approach to analyze the relationship between the population and the Fatimid governors and the reasons for the revolt against the governors.

## **Research Problem**

Since it took control of the island of Sicily, the Fatimid state was interested in sending its governors and judges to impose its control over it, and to support its position in spreading its Ismaili doctrine among the inhabitants of the island and their dependent territories. Therefore, we must determine the reasons and motives for the Fatimids to seize and control this island by asking questions in order to answer Through study:

1. What are the motives of Arab Muslims to conquer the island of Sicily?
2. What is the position of the inhabitants of Sicily towards the Fatimid governors?
3. How were the Fatimid governors able to eliminate the revolutions and rebellions that arose against them in the peninsula's regions?

## Search Structure

The research was entitled: “The Island of Sicily and the resistance of its inhabitants to the Fatimid rulers (296-335 AH/908-946 AD). The research included four axes. The first axis is about the island of Sicily, the second axis deals with the conditions of the island of Sicily, and the third axis deals with the inhabitants of the island of Sicily after The Islamic conquest, and the fourth axis talks about the governorship of Sicily during the Fatimid era.

## Previous Studies

Before starting any research, we must review previous studies, which serve as a guide for us in our research.

1. A study by researcher Alia Ahmed Abdel Hamid Shaaban entitled “Ahmed bin Qarhab’s Revolt against the Fatimid Caliphate in Sicily (300-304 AH/913-917 AD).” The research aims to study the causes of Ahmed bin Qarhab’s revolt against the Fatimids, its most important events, and the factors that led to its elimination. On her.
2. A study by researcher Aisha Nazi entitled “The Islamic Island of Sicily and its Civilizational Role in the Islamic West.” The aim of the research is to study the historical stages of Islamic Sicily between its emergence, strength and collapse, its most important scientific contributions, its commercial and economic role and the fate of the Islamic minority after its fall.

## Sicily Island

Sicily is one of the cities of the island to which the entire island is attributed (Al-Himyari, 1984, p. 363). The island of Sicily is one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean, and is located between northern Italy and the Islamic Maghreb, as it faces the city of Tripoli to the west, and takes the shape of an equilateral triangle (Ibn Hawqal, 1996, p. 113), and is surrounded by three seas: the Ionian Sea to the east, the Tyrrhenian Sea to the north and the sicilian sea or the African to the south and west. The island of Sicily is divided into three regions: the province of Mazar, the province of Notus and the province of Dimanche (Ahmed, 1980, p. 8). Its strategic location, which is considered the link between North Africa on one hand, and Italy on the other hand, makes it one of the most important islands in The Mediterranean Sea, due to the importance of its commercial and cultural location, which facilitated communication between the peoples and countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The island is also known to be wealthy with animal, agricultural and mineral resources.

## Conditions of the Island of Sicily Before the Fatimid Governors

The strategic location of Sicily on the sea made it coveted by the powers since previous eras, during its political history, starting with the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Goths and Byzantines, then followed by the Muslims and other political forces that controlled this island (Saad, 2007, p. 5), and before the arrival of the Muslims to the island, Sicily was under the control of Ghout. The Byzantine Emperor Justinian wanted to restore the possessions of the ancient Roman Empire (Ismail (2003, p. 58). The Byzantines subjected all the cities of the island to their control, and the island became part of the Byzantine Empire, and the Mediterranean Sea became a Roman lake again (Nasim δ Youssef, 1984, pp. 78-79).

The beginning of the successive Muslim attacks on the island of Sicily were due to the growth of the Islamic navy in the Rum Sea first, and the ongoing conflict between the two countries second, in addition to the victory achieved by the Muslims in the Battle of Dhat al-Sawari over the Byzantines in the year (31 AH/651 AD) during the caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan (may God be pleased with him) ( Al-Tabari, 1967, p. 288). During that era, Islamic sovereignty was declared on the coasts of the Mediterranean, but historical sources told us that the first campaign on the island of Sicily was in the year (32 AH/652 AD) led by Muawiyah bin Hudayj during the era of the Rashidun Caliph Othman bin Affan, as he was sent by Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan during his emirate over the Levant (Al-Baladhuri, 1978, p. 329).

The Umayyad Caliphate (41-132 AH / 662-750 AD) also witnessed campaigns towards the island of Sicily. During the caliphate of Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan (41-60 AH / 661-680 AD), Qais bin Abdullah Al-Fazari sent a military campaign in the year (46 AH / 666 AD). Heading towards the island of Sicily, it consisted of more than two hundred ships. That expedition returned with great spoils and slaves (Al-Baladhuri, 1978, pp. 329-330), Uqba bin Nafi al-Fihri and Musa bin Nusayr also had campaigns on the island of Sicily (Lewis,

undated, p. 96), Ibn Abi Dinar also indicated to us that Musa bin Nusayr crossed the sea to Tunisia, built a shipbuilding house, and invaded Sicily (D.T., pp. 35-36). Likewise, in the year (86 AH/705 AD), Musa bin Nusayr sent two expeditions to Sicily, returning with great spoils. (Al-Asfari, 1985, p. 292; Al-Talbi, 1985, p. 422). After these two campaigns, the sources didn't mention further campaigns against Sicily, and it seems that the reason for the cessation of these campaigns is due to the preoccupation of the African governors with the conquest of Andalusia.

The campaigns were launched towards Sicily after they were interrupted during the era of the Abbasid Caliphate (132-656 AH / 749-1258 AD), where the first campaign to the island of Sicily was in the year (135 AH / 752 AD) led by Abd al-Rahman bin Habib (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 456), and after that the campaign, Sicily did not witness any campaign against it for a long time. This may be due to the fact that all the campaigns during the Rashidun era and the Umayyad era were nothing but a threat to the Byzantines and to break their power, in addition to the importance of the location of the island of Sicily and its threat to the Muslim ports on the coasts of the Mediterranean, especially Africa. What we also note is that these campaigns despite achieving victories in the island of Sicily, they did not settle there and did not place military garrisons in its cities.

The countries of Africa and Morocco witnessed revolts between the Berber tribes. The Abbasid Caliph Harun appointed Ibrahim bin Al-Aghlab (184-196 AH / 799-811 AD) as governor of Africa in the year (184 AH / 800 AD), due to the strength and courage he demonstrated in eliminating the rebellions that occurred in Africa. Ibrahim bin Al-Aghlab pledged to declare obedience and loyalty to the Abbasid Caliph Harun in exchange for bequeathing an African state to his sons after him on one hand, on the other hand, the aid imposed on Ifriqiya was not to be sent to Egypt, which is estimated at about one hundred thousand dinars, and send the tax was to the Abbasid Caliph annually, which is estimated at about forty thousand dinars, in addition to the independence of the state of Ifriqiya in managing its internal affairs from the Abbasid Caliphate (Ibn Khaldun, 2000, p. 250), the reign of Ibrahim ibn al-Aghlab did not witness any campaign on the island of Sicily. However, he was able to conclude a truce with Sicily that lasted ten years (Al-Douri, 1980, p. 32). During the rule of Abu al-Abbas al-Aghlabi (196-201 AH/811-816 AD), when he took the governorship after his father Ibrahim al-Aghlabi, and he was of good appearance and ugly conduct (Ibn al-Abar, 1963, p. 168), Abu al-Abbas was able to conclude a new truce during which Muslim prisoners were exchanged with The Byzantines (Al-Douri, 1980, p. 32), The truce continued during the reign of the third Aghlabid prince Ziyada Allah I (201-223 AH / 816-837 AD), but these treaties were frequently violated, which forced the Aghlabids to rethink their relationship with Sicily, in addition to the presence of revolutions and strife within Sicily that encouraged the Aghlabids to conquer Sicily. This was helped by the Muslims' control over the island of Quraytsh, which increased the importance of the conquest of Sicily to protect important sites for Muslims in the Mediterranean. Also, Vimy, the commander of the Byzantine naval fleet, took advantage of the situation in Sicily and gained independence away from the Byzantine Empire. However, he failed and gave what was under his control to the Aghlabids in exchange for making him ruler of Sicily. Ziad, I decided to convene a Shura Council in which the faces of the people of Kairouan were gathered, including scholars and jurists. And he consulted with the people of opinion regarding the peace treaty concluded with Sicily, and informed them of Vimy's request for consideration, which was the military intervention of the Aghlabids in the island. The opinions of the council were divided into two groups. A disagreement arose between them. The first party found that it was inappropriate to break the peace treaty with the Byzantines, while the second party saw that the Byzantines still held Muslim prisoners in Sicily, and that the Byzantines had previously violated the treaty, so they encouraged military intervention, Ziad I agreed with them, and sent an expedition to the island of Sicily. Led by Judge Asad bin Al-Furat, who set off from Kairouan in a large military campaign consisting of ten-thousand-foot soldiers and seven hundred knights with their horses in more than a hundred large and small ships. It left the port of Sousse on the Mediterranean Sea amidst a large crowd of people from the country, who came out to bid farewell to the fighting campaign. The Islamic fleet moved on Saturday. 15 Rabi' al-Awwal of the year (212 AH/827 AD), heading to the south of the island of Sicily. Indeed, the Muslim fleets reached the city of Mazar on the western end of the island after three days of sailing. That is, on Tuesday, Asad ibn al-Furat headed with his army to the east of the Jazira, and there he found a Roman force led by the rebel Vimy (Al-Nuwayri, undated, pp. 355-356), who requested Ibn al-Aghlab's help to restore his rule over the Jazira, and Vimy offered to Asad ibn al-Furat participating with him in the fight against the people of Sicily, But the commander Asad bin Al-Furat refused to participate with Vimy and his army and said to him:

“We have retired, so there is no need for you to help us” (Al-Dabbagh, undated, p. 24). He also said to him and his army: “Put on your heads badges by which you will be recognized, lest any of us imagine that you are those who agree to us, and something bad will befall you” (Al-Dabbagh, undated, p. 24), and to this Al-Nuwairi pointed out: “He expelled Femi and those with him”. He did not seek their help” (Al-Dabbagh, undated, pp. 355-356).

Asad conquered many castles during his journey, such as: Oak Castle, the Bear and the Peacocks, until he reached the battlefield on the plain of Balata, named after the ruler of Sicily, and then Balata arrived with an army numbering one hundred and fifty thousand fighters (Al-Maliki, 1994, p. 188), that is, ten times the army. Muslim, and Asad bin Al-Furat addressed the people, saying: “These are the non-Arabs of the coast. These are your slaves. Do not fear them” (Al-Maliki (1994, p. 188). He rushed to fight and clashed with the powerful Sicilian army, and the Muslims rushed behind him, and a fierce battle took place and Balata and his army were defeated (Al-Maliki, 1994, p. 188), on the seventeenth day of Rabi’ al-Awwal in the year (212 AH/827 AD) (Al-Duri, 1980, p. 50). The site of the battle is called Marj Balata (Al-Nuwayri, undated, p. 356). The victory of the Muslims in this battle contributed to raising his morale. And the fall of many fortresses at their hands. Ibn al-Atheer indicated this by saying: “And the Muslims seized several fortresses from the island” (Ibn al-Atheer, Al-Kamil, 335). On the other hand, the Muslims obtained many spoils (Ibn Adhari, undated, p. 102). After news of the victory reached the Aghlabid prince Ziyada Allah, he wrote about it to the Abbasid Caliph Al-Ma’mun, promising him the great conquest (Al-Maliki, 1994, p. 188), Asad ibn al-Furat headed to the city of Syracuse, and on his way there he met with representatives of the people of Syracuse, and they offered him the payment of tribute in exchange for an appeasement. The leader, Asad ibn al-Furat, agreed. This was a trick on their part while Syracuse was preparing to fortify their strongholds and fortresses. The commander ibn al-Furat realized this a few days after so he attacked them and sent companies to collect the spoils (Al-Nuwairi, undated, p. 357). However, the ruler of Belarum marched against the Muslims to break the siege of Syracuse, so the Muslims dug trenches around them, and dug many holes to deceive the enemies, so many of them fell into the pit, and were killed. Thus, the Muslims tightened the siege on Syracuse (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 335), and the latter requested A new truce to conclude, but the Muslims refused, and during their siege an epidemic struck the Muslims, and many of them perished, including the leader Asad ibn al-Furat in the year (213/828 AD). After a siege that lasted ten months, the city of Syracuse was on the verge of surrender (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, pp. 335-336). The Islamic conquests were completed after the death of the leader Asad ibn al-Furat in the peninsula against the Byzantine strongholds of the Romans, so the city of Belarum was conquered after a siege that lasted a full year (Nasrallah (2003, p. 9), and by conquering it, the Muslims were able to conquer several cities, and other cities joined in peace without fighting, such as Quria, The Muslims continued their conquests on the island of Sicily until the year 289 AH/902 AD. Sicily was conquered after many years and many wars from the year (212-289 AH / 826-902 AD) at the hands of the Aghlabids, which made the key to having the central and western Mediterranean basin in their hands (Abbas, 1975, p. 35).

Thus, the Muslims were able to end the Byzantine presence on the island, so it became an Arab island belonging to the Aghlabid state, and Byzantine sovereignty over the Mediterranean Sea ended. The Muslim Arabs took Sicily as an important base from which they set out to conquer the islands and straits near it, which in turn paved the way for their sovereignty over the Mediterranean Sea and it became an Arab lake (Ahmed, 2009, 196).

### **Inhabitants of the Island of Sicily**

Sicily was inhabited since ancient times by the Sicilian people who were in the Balkans, and they settled in Italy and inhabited the island that derived its name from them (Al-Madani, 2009, p. 29), and after that the Sikati from Spain, and then Etruscans from Italy (Effendi, undated, p. 67) moved to it. The elements of the population on the island of Sicily varied, and its society mixed with different races, including Arabs, Berbers, The Romans, Greeks, Lombards and others (Fawzi, 2007, p. 37), and after the Islamic conquest, Sicilian society consisted of several elements:

- 1- The Arabs were mostly from the army of conquest and from Africa, in addition to Arab migrations to it as a result of high prices and hunger (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 124), or sectarian differences (Al-Zahrani, 1996, p. 103). The Arabs were from various Arab tribes and settled in cities. Mazer, Notus, and Dimansh

(Abbas, 1975, p. 40).

- 2- The Christians: the Christians were considered to be the original inhabitants who came from different regions and settled on the island. They were from the Saqān, Saqīl, and Germans (Fawzi, 2007 AD, p. 39). After the Islamic conquest, many of them became Muslims, and some of them kept their religion in exchange for paying the jizya (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 471). Under Islamic rule, Christians enjoyed freedom, equality and lenities on the island of Sicily (Le Bon, n.d., p. 309).
- 3- Jews: There were Jews in the city of Sicily before the Islamic conquest, but they were few, their number increased after the Islamic conquest (Abbas, 1975, p. 38). This was due to the policy of Muslims on the island of tolerance with other religions, and the Jews settled in the city of Balram (Ibn Hawqal, 1996, p. 116), they practiced many crafts, including trade, in addition to their scientific activity (Amari, 2002, p. 679)
- 4- Berbers: Berbers from the tribes of Sanhaja, Zenata, Hawara, Nafzawa and others resided in the Mazer region of the island (Amari, 2002, p. 54). These tribes were in constant conflict with the Arabs of the Peninsula (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 195).
- 5- Persians: The land of the island of Sicily also witnessed the Persian element, as they entered it during the Arab-Islamic conquest, and settled in some of the cities of Sicily (Ibn al-Abar, 1963, p. 107; Al-Zahrani, 1996, p. 107).
- 6- Slaves: Slaves spread widely on the island of Sicily due to captivity, and purchase (Bashari, 2011, p. 255). After the Islamic conquest, slaves became a large class and Muslims allowed them to work in many crafts (Abbas, 1975, p. 39).

Thus, the island of Sicily became affiliated with the Aghlabid state, and its governors were appointed by them. The Arab element became the ruler of this island, while the other elements in society enjoyed their religious freedom under the rule of the Muslims there (Abdul Wahid et al., 2004, p. 283).

### **Governors of Sicily in the Fatimid Era**

In the last period of the Aghlabids' rule, the Maghreb witnessed a significant deterioration due to the oppression and injustice the residents of Kairouan suffered at the hands of Ibrahim II Al-Aghlabi (261-289 AH / 875-902 AD). He was afflicted with a nervous disease, which led to him having doubts and suspicions about his relatives, so he began to kill them. As well as killing large numbers of his supporters in the year (280 AH / 895 AD), which reached seven hundred men of the Belzmen, not only his supporters, but also his brothers, daughters, and servants, and his son was beheaded by his hands (Muhammad, 1990, p. 348). His grandson Ziyad Allah III followed suit by killing his father and uncles to gain power (Ibn Abi Dinar, undated, p. 50).

At the same time, the Fatimids were able to reach Morocco through Abdullah al-Shi'i (Ibn Abi Dinar, undated, p. 50), and he settled in the Zab region of the Maghreb. He played a military role and succeeded in eliminating the attempts of the Aghlabids to repel against the Fatimid. At the site of Al-Arbes near the city of Kef, Ziyada Allah III was defeated by Abdullah al-Shi'i (Al-Tha'alabi, 1987, p. 319), so Ziyada left the city of Raqqada in the year (296 AH / 908 AD) and from there to Tripoli. He resided there and then left for Egypt with his family and entourage (Salem, 1981, pp. 319-320).

Abdullah al-Shi'i sent his army commander and settled in his palace. Thus, the Fatimids inherited the Aghlabids' possessions and cancelled their authority in Morocco (Al-Bakri, undated, p. 27; Salem, 1981, pp. 319-320). The Fatimids were interested in maritime activity, so being defensive and only repelling attacks wasn't sufficient for them, they favored offensive position and gaining new locations, because they aimed to form a strong state with army and naval bases so that they could take control and protect their country from any danger, regardless of its source. Naturally, this policy made them interested in the naval fleet, so they established ports and shipbuilding houses of various sizes (Al-Madani, n.d., pp. 72-73). By doing that, the Fatimid Caliph Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi realized the importance of the island of Sicily to achieve his goals in establishing a strong state in the Mediterranean, and make it a base for his large fleet. (Al-Bakri, undated, p. 29) With the arrival of the Fatimids to Morocco, Sicily and North Africa became areas of rivalry between the Abbasid state and the Fatimid state. We cannot fail to mention that Sicily was absolutely subordinate to the Aghlabid state, and since Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi (Al-Bakri, undated, p. 27; Salem, 1981, pp. 319-320) took over the reins of

government, the Fatimids appointed governors subordinate to them on the island of Sicily, which they ruled for two and a half century or more. After the victory achieved by the Fatimids in Africa, they enforced their control on the city of Raqqada. Many supporters of Aghlabid rule fled to the island of Sicily, and some of them sided with the governor, Ali bin Ahmed bin Abi Al-Fawaris (296-297 AH / 908-909 AD), as he had previously been governor of the Aghlabid state in Sicily, and he was deposed by them, so Abi Al-Fawaris took charge of the Persians supporting the Fatimid state, defeated the supporters of the Aghlabids, then The last Aghlabid governor in Sicily, Governor Ahmed bin Abi Al-Hussein, was arrested (Ahmed, 1980, p. 30). They wrote to Abdullah al-Mahdi asking him to approve of what they had done, and he responded to that and granted them their safety (Al-Nuwairi, undated, p. 199). However, he saw that the time was not appropriate to impose the Ismaili doctrine on the island of Sicily, as it was imposed on Africa, and based on that The Sicilians acknowledged the authority of the Fatimids without opposition (Takoush, 2007, p. 8), and he did not continue his term, as he was dismissed in the year (297 AH/910 AD). And Al-Hasan bin Ahmed, known as Ibn Abi Khanzir was appointed in his place (297-298 AH / 909-910 AD) (Ahmed, 1980, p. 25). He came to the island of Sicily, and arrived in the province of Mazar in the year (297 AH / 909 AD), and he was considered to be loyal to the Fatimid state. He belonged to the Katama tribe, which was a major tribe in Morocco that inhabits the plains and mountains between Constantine and Bejaia. It also has some posts in the Aures Mountains. It is one of the most powerful and long-standing tribes in the kingdom, with troops and stations spread throughout the Middle Maghreb. This tribe played a major role during the era of the Fatimid state, and this tribe was also known for its loyalty to the Fatimid state (Ibn Khaldun, undated, p. 301; Al-Jilali, Abd al-Rahman, 1965, p. 365), Ibn Abi Khanzir also led a military campaign in the Dimansh region, and entrusted the rule of Jarjant to his brother. In the year (298 AH/913 AD) the residents of Sicily revolted against his rule. They arrested and deposed him and his followers (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 236). It seems that the governor, Hussein bin Abi Khanzir, misruled Sicily, and Ibn Khaldun mentioned to us that the reason for his deposition was the tribal fanaticism of his Berbers (Ibn Khaldun, 2000, p. 207). ), Beside his campaigns of raids on Damnish in order to plunder and burn lands, and his brother's abuse towards the residents of the Jarjant region (William, 1986, p. 19), All of this led to the resentment of the people of the Peninsula, so they took and imprisoned him, and forced the Caliph al-Mahdi to invite him to his deposition (Al-Nuwayri, undated, p. 200; Ibn Khaldun, 2000, p. 264), so the people of Sicily went out against him and sent a letter to the Fatimid Caliph Muhammad al-Mahdi apologizing to him for deposing him, so the Caliph responded to them and agreed to remove the governor Ibn Abi Khanzir. Then issued an amnesty to those who opposed Fatimid rule, and appointed Ali bin Omar al-Balawi (299 AH-300 AH/912-913 AD) as the new governor to Sicily (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 236). He was a kind-hearted and gentle governor, so they revolted against him and deposed him.

In the city of Belarum, an Arab opposition arose against the rule of the Fatimids, and at the same time another opposition arose against the Fatimids by the Berbers in the city of Jarjant, the Arabs and Berbers agreed to appoint Ahmed bin Ziyada Allah bin Qarhab (300 AH - 304 AH / 913-917 AD) (Ibn Al-Atheer, 1987, p. 23) as governor of the island of Sicily. Ahmed bin Qarhab came from a wealthy Arab family in the city of Balram, which was in contact with the Aghlabids, Ahmed sent a message to the Abbasid Caliph Al-Muqtadir Billah to grant him legitimacy to his state, and he also sent messages the Abbasid Caliph on the island of Sicily. Ibn Qarhab wanted to change the capital, so he sent his son to Tabarmaine to conquer it as a fortress for him, but he failed in that. The reason is that Tabarmaine is an area inhabited by a Christian majority, and it abstained and resisted many campaigns that were sent its way (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 23). So he sought the help of the Sicilian soldiers, and conquered Qaluriyya, and sent another army to conquer the rest of the cities of Al-Jazbara (Ibn Al-Atheer, 1987, p. 23), and Ahmad bin Qarhab would not have thought about rebelling against the Fatimid Caliph Al-Mahdi, as he sent him a letter saying: "The people of Sicily are rioting a lot against their princes, and they're not obeying them, and they're plundering their wealth, and this shall not be stopped except by an army that vanquishes them and removes leadership from their leaders". (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 23), We infer from this advice to the Fatimid Caliph, and we haven't found the real reason for Ahmed bin Qarhab's revolt against the Fatimid Caliph, but he burned the fleet of the Caliph al-Mahdi in the port of Lamta, killed its commander, and captured about six hundred men of his companions. The news reached the Fatimid Caliph Abdullah al-Mahdi, so he sent an army to support his fleet in Lamta, but Ibn Qarhab was able to arrest them and seize what they had (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 23), Ibn Qarhab's ambition did not stop there, he sent a fleet to Africa

to eliminate the Fatimids and end their rule. He attacked the Sfax fleet and destroyed it, then headed to Tripoli, but Abdullah al-Mahdi was ready to confront him, and he defeated the Sicilian fleet. (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 70). (Ibn Khaldun, 2000, p. 207), and as a result to these developments, the residents of Jarjant revolted against Ibn Qarhab. They wrote to the Fatimid Caliph Abdullah al-Mahdi declaring obedience and loyalty to him. The reason for that rebellion against Ibn Qarhab was his decision to send a military campaign in the year (303 AH/916 AD) to the Italian mainland, but his ships were destroyed by a storm, which forced him to conclude a truce with the Byzantines, according to which Eustathius, the Byzantine commander and governor in Calabria, agreed to pay him tribute in exchange for stopping his attacks (1858, 2, P153 Michele). This truce with the Byzantines was the cause of a dispute between the Arabs and the Berbers in Sicily, as the Berber factions accused Ahmed bin Qarhab of colluding with the Byzantines, that's when rebellion against him began, and the Jarjant despised his authority (Ibn Adhari, undated, p. 174), and they sent letters to devote themselves to the Mahdi. The residents of other cities followed them, and the entire population of Sicily revolted against Ibn Qarhab, and he was arrested and sent to the Fatimid Caliph Abdullah al-Mahdi, who reprimanded for his actions. Ibn Qarhab's response came "The people of Sicily were the ones who appointed him while he was unwilling, and the ones to depose him while he was unwilling." The Caliph al-Mahdi ordered the execution of him, his son and his judge (Amari, 2002, p. 679). Then the Fatimid Caliph Abu Sa'id Musa bin Ahmad, called al-Dhaif, took over Sicily, (304 AH-313 AH). /917-924 AD), and was able to have the island Sicily submit to him with the help of the Berber tribes, but the people of Sicily weren't supportive of the Fatimids rather, they wanted to get rid of Ibn Qarahab's politics, and they sought to administer the country themselves, and that the Fatimid Caliph would have nothing but name only, so they sent to the latter asking him for a governor and a judge and that they would not need army forces (Ibn Adhari, undated, p. 368), and we infer from that that they wanted to control the governor however they wanted, so the Fatimid Caliph was able to discipline them, he prepared an army of Katamite Berbers and sent them in a fleet, but the region of Balram resisted, so the Fatimid army sieged it and killed a number of its people, so the people of Sicily asked for safety. They also handed over those who incited sedition to the Fatimid commander, and the Fatimid Caliph ordered his commander to grant them pardon (Ibn Adhari, undated, p. 365). After security was restored for the Fatimids on the island of Sicily, Abu Said returned to Africa, leaving Salem bin Abi Rashid (313-322 AH / 924-934 AD) as governor with the Kutami army alongside him.

The Fatimid fleet continued its military campaigns against the Romans, and Caliph Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi continued his attacks on them for many years, from Mahdia or Sicily, where Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi sent a naval expedition from the city of Mahdia under the leadership of Saber al-Fatta in the year (315 AH/929 AD), consisting of forty-four boats that roamed the sea until they reached Sicily, where they launched raids on the coasts of the Romans and their cities, killing many, taking spoils then returning to their bases safe and sound (Ibn Adhari, undated, p. 192), then Commander Saber al-Fatta set out the following year from the island of Sicily as well. He conquered several Roman sites and seized control of what was in them, and forced other sites to reconcile with them with money, brocade, and clothes. He returned with his army to Sicily (Ibn Adhari, undated, p. 192), and in the year (317 AH/931 AD), the young leader Saber collided with the Romans with seven boats, and while he was in four boats at sea, he defeated his opponents, conquered and captured many captives, and returned to the city of Mahdia (Hassan, 1947, p. 202). The governors of Sicily had a major role in sending military campaigns from Sicily due to the capabilities of its naval fleet. The best example of this is the campaign led by Yaqoub bin Ishaq in the final days of Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi's life, which conquered Genoa. and Sardinian (Metz, 1377 AH, p. 426). The governor, Salem bin Rashid, became harsh with the people of the island of Sicily, and some cities, such as Jarjant and the province of Belarum, revolted. The governor sent Salem to the Fatimid Caliph, Al-Qa'im Bi-Amr Allah (322-334 AH/933-945 AD), informing him that the people of Sicily had disobeyed him. So, the Caliph sent to him the Fatimid army, led by Khalil bin Ishaq, who started to demolish the walls of Balram, and built a city and its fortress, which he called "Al-Khalisa." The people of Jarjant fortified their city and prepared for war, the commander Khalil marched to them in the year (326 AH / 936 AD) and sieged them for eight months. When winter came, he departed to the city of Al-Khalisa, and all the castles and the people of Mazar had revolted (Abbas, 1975 AD, p. 43), and the King of Constantin sent them aids as boats loaded with men and food, to support the people of Sicily. As a result of this development, Commander Khalil sought help from the existing Fatimid Caliph, who he sent him A large army, and headed to the island of Sicily,

besieging the commander Khalil al-Qala', until the year (327 AH/939 AD) passed. He also restricted the city of Jarjant and imposed a siege on it until the year (329 AH/941 AD) (Ibn Adhari, undated, p. 368). Many of its people fled to the Roman lands, but the rest sought safety. He assured them but when they came down from the castle where they were holed up, he betrayed them and sent them to Medina (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 55). Thus, all the castles submitted to the Fatimids, then Khalil bin Ishaq returned to Africa. After a war that lasted four years, in which Ibn al-Kufi left Muhammad bin al-Ash'ath was left to rule Sicily without holding the title. (Governor) of Balram, by order of Khalil bin Ishaq in the year (330 AH/942 AD) alongside Attaf al-Azdi, the two ruled the island, but in the year (334 AH/946 AD) Ibn al-Kufi Muhammad bin al-Ash'ath died. As for Attaf al-Azdi, he became independent in ruling Sicily after the death of Ibn al-Kufi Muhammad bin al-Ash'ath in the year ( 334 AH / 946 AD) to the year (336 AH / 947 AD) (Ibn Adhari, undated, p. 368), he wrote to the Fatimid Caliph Al-Mansur informing him of the prejudices of the people of Sicily, And that their affairs lead up to corruption in the shape of the phenomenon of local chiefs with ambitions, led by the Al-Tabari family, Muhammad bin Abdoun, and Muhammad bin Janna, the leaders of resistance and riots in the Belarum region. and thus, the island of Sicily entered a period of strife and internal disputes, and the Byzantines took advantage and occupied the eastern end of the island for several years (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 108) The Fatimids were also busy eliminating rebellions in Africa, including the rebellion of Abu Yazid Al kharijy, known as the owner of the donkey. It almost overthrew the Fatimid state in Africa, as one city after another fell at the hands of Abu Yazid. Some loyal elements to the Fatimids also tried to take refuge in the island of Sicily and disagreed with some of the Berbers. In Sicily, the Fatimids, and many cities on the island of Sicily refused to pay taxes and tribute to them (Ahmed, 1980, p. 34), This continued until the Fatimid Caliph Al-Mansur Billah was able to eliminate Abu Yazid Al-Kharji in Africa, he appointed Al-Hasan bin Ali Al-Kalbi (336 AH / 947 AD) to rule the island of Sicily. This family was one of the most loyal supportives of Al Abidene. They helped the Fatimid Caliphate eliminating rebellions, including Abu Yazid's revolt. In appreciation of Al-Hasan's services, the Caliph rewarded Al-Mansur with the governorship of Sicily. Al-Hasan did not have an army with him when he arrived in Sicily where the Al-Tabari family was leading the resistance, but he was cleverly able to spoil their plans. He found in Belarum a group who resented the excessive volatility and wanted peace, so they joined the new governor, and the owners of the dawban sided with him (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 158; Ahmed, 1980, p. 44). He was able to eliminate the strife, and with his accession a new phase began in the history of the island of Sicily, and the family continued. The Kalbiyyah ruled the island for a period of ninety-five years. The island witnessed progress in urban life, sciences and literature, and the Kalbins were devoted to protecting Sicily against any attack and considered themselves internally independent. (Ibn al-Atheer, 1987, p. 156; Abbas, 1975, p. 44).

## Conclusion

### Among the Most Important Results We Reached Are;

- 1- The importance of Sicily to the Fatimids, when they realized its political, strategic, and economic importance, and their residence in Sicily had the greatest impact in maintaining their position, whether in Morocco or in Egypt after their entry into it, and it also meant extending their control over the Mediterranean, so the presence of the Fatimid governors in Sicily made the coasts of Africa safe from Roman invasions, It also helped to consolidate their expansion into Egypt and the Maghreb later on, in addition to the fact that Sicily, from an economic standpoint, was a fruitful land with many bounties, containing many agricultural yields, as well as mineral wealth of gold, silver, copper, and others.
- 2- Some of the Fatimid governors who ruled Sicily had abused its people and had no knowledge of the state's administrative matters and state policy, because they were military leaders, so their severity and strictness came from dealing with the people, as they were unable to separate the battlefield from managing state affairs.
- 3- We find the response of many of the Fatimid caliphs to the people of Sicily when they revolted against the governor, and demanded his change, apologizing to the Fatimid caliph, and justifying their behavior to him by saying that this governor was not compatible with the independence and security they aspired to.
- 4- The people of Sicily did not reject Shiite rule, nor the Ismaili doctrine. During their rule, only some minor rebellions occurred from some families living on the island of Sicily, or Ibn Qarahab, who were trying

to destabilize security and stability on the island, and which did not pose a major threat to the Fatimid state, which is that It rose against a certain governor because of the governor's bad policy.

- 5- Despite the short duration of their rule - that is, the rule of the governors before the arrival of the Kalbi Fatimid princes in Sicily - the Fatimid governors were able to eliminate the revolts and strife that took place in Sicily, but despite this, the people of Sicily did not enjoy complete security because of those rebellions or because of mismanagement by one of these governors or because of Riot and rebellion were an inherent characteristic of the people of Sicily.
- 6- The Fatimids gained experience in fighting the Byzantines after they came face to face with the Byzantines in Sicily, and this gave them experience in fighting and knowledge of military and naval matters, which helped them excel in their wars against the Umayyads in Andalusia, and the Abbasids in the Levant.

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