

Ismā'īlī-Fāṭimid Legal Education and Judicial Activities in Egypt

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Abstract

The Shi'i-Ismā'īlīs, who established the Fāṭimid Caliphate after conducting long-term missionary activities across the Muslim world, placed significant emphasis on the regulation, teaching, and implementation of law as a fundamental requirement of their rule. This study aims to explain the Ismā'īlī legal system and the institution of the judiciary within the context of Fāṭimid administrative circles, social structure, and spatial organization. To this end, the approaches of state officials and qāḍīs in their judicial activities, as well as the social impacts of the law, have been examined through various historical accounts. The data collected has made it possible to explain the judicial activities in relation to the conditions of the time.

The study addresses two main topics: the teaching and the application of Ismā'īlī-Fāṭimid law. The establishment of study circles, the books studied, and the works of key authors, along with the influence of Qāḍī Abu Hanifa al-Nu'mān b. Muhammad (363/974) and Abu'l-Faraj Ya'qub b. Killis (380/991) on legal education and the judicial system, are prominent topics related to Ismā'īlī legal instruction. The application of Ismā'īlī law, specifically judicial activities, is another central theme explored in this study. In this context, it is important to highlight the existing literature on the functioning of the judiciary and the position of qāḍīs during the Fāṭimid period. The study also places particular emphasis on identifying narratives regarding the approaches of statesmen and qāḍīs in judicial activities, as well as examining the social impact of law. This study seeks to offer a thorough analysis of the Ismā'īlī-Fāṭimid legal system, grounded in historical sources. In doing so, it places emphasis on examining the approaches of state officials and qāḍīs in their judicial activities, as well as the social impacts of the law, as depicted in historical accounts. During the literature review

conducted, İsmâ'îlî sources were utilized, benefiting from both primary and secondary sources.

The Fâṭimids, who carried out propagation activities for a long time under the da'i system, structured the law and conducted judicial activities in accordance with the principles of İsmâ'îlî faith. One of the key indicators is that the qāḍī al-quḍāt held a rank higher than that of the da'i. The appointments of qāḍīs were conducted with a specific ceremony, and their areas of responsibility were clearly defined. Additionally, it should be noted that, in the judicial activities of the İsmâ'îlî-Fâṭimid period in Egypt, Sunnī qāḍīs were also appointed alongside Shi'i-İsmâ'îlî qāḍīs as a practice that supported the society's alignment with the government. The focal points of influence in judicial activities underwent changes over time. From the establishment of the state, the judicial influence of certain families and circles remained prominent. Over time, as the political influence of the Fâṭimid khalīfahs weakened and administrative functions deteriorated, it became evident that viziers with high authority began intervening in the appointment and responsibilities of qāḍīs in Egypt, thus shaping the judicial system.

Keywords

Islamic History, İsmâ'îlism, Fâṭimid State, Law Education–in Egypt, Judicial Practices, Qāḍī.

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Mısır'da İsmâîlî-Fâtımî Hukuk Öğretimi ve Yargı Faaliyetleri

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Öz

Müslüman coğrafyada uzun süre davet faaliyeti yürüterek Fâtımî Devleti'ni kuran Şî-İsmâîlîler, hakimiyetlerinin bir gerekliliği olarak hukukun düzenlenmesine, öğretilmesine ve uygulanmasına önem vermişlerdir. Bu çalışmada Fâtımî yönetim çevreleri, toplumsal yapı ve mekân örüntüsü içinde İsmâîlî hukuk düzeninin ve kadılık kurumunun açıklanması amaçlanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda, devlet erbabı ve kadıların yargı faaliyetlerindeki yaklaşımlarına, hukukun toplumsal etkilerine ilişkin rivayetler belirlenmiştir. Elde edilen veriler yargı faaliyetlerinin, dönemin şartlarına göre açıklanmasını olanaklı kılmıştır. Fâtımî yargı düzeninde görev alanlar ve uygulama yerleri hakkında ayrıntılı bilgilere ulaşılmıştır.

Çalışmada İsmâîlî-Fâtımî hukukunun öğretimi ve uygulama alanları olmak üzere iki ana konu ele alınmaktadır. Kurulan ders halkları, okunun kitapları ve müellifleri, Kâdî Ebû Hanîfe Nu'mân b. Muhammed (363/974) ve Ebü'l-Ferec Ya'kûb b. Killis'in (380/991) hukuk öğretimi ve yargı düzenindeki etkileri, İsmâîlî hukuk öğretimine ilişkin öne çıkan konu başlıklarıdır. İsmâîlî hukukun uygulama alanı olan yargı faaliyetleri, çalışmada yer alan diğer konu alanıdır. Bu doğrultuda, Fâtımîler döneminde yargının işleyişi ve kadılık hakkında literatürün bulunduğunu belirtmek gerekir. Bu doğrultuda, devlet erbabı ve kadıların yargı faaliyetlerindeki yaklaşımlarına, hukukun toplumsal etkilerine ilişkin rivayetlerin belirlenmesine önem verilmiştir. Çalışma sırasında yapılan literatür araştırmasında, İsmâîlî kaynaklar, birinci ve ikinci derece kaynaklardan yararlanılmıştır. Fâtımîler döneminde idare ve yargıda görevli müelliflerin eserlerinde, İsmâîlî hukukun ilkeleri ve işleyişine ilişkin bilgilere ulaşılmıştır. Kadılık kurumu, bölge tarihleri üzerine hazırlanan telif çalışmaları ve genel tarih kitaplarından Fâtımî yönetim çevrelerinin ve toplumsal olayların hukuk düzeni ile ilişkilerine

dair ayrıntılı rivayetlere ulaşılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler İsmâîlî hukuk faaliyetlerinin, dönemin şartlarına göre açıklanmasını olanaklı hale getirmiştir.

Uzun süre dâî düzeni ile yayılma faaliyeti yürüten Fâtımîlerin, İsmâîlî inancının ilkelere uygun biçimde hukuku düzenledikleri ve yargı faaliyetlerini yürüttükleri çalışmanın öncül sonucudur. Kâdılkudatın dâidduattan yüksek rütbede oluşu bu durumun önemli göstergelerinden biridir. Yargıda görevlendirilen kadıların atamaları belirli bir törenle gerçekleştirilmiş ve görev alanları açıkça belirlenmiştir. Bununla birlikte, Mısır dönemi İsmâîlî-Fâtımî yargı faaliyetlerinde, toplumun yönetim ile uyumunu destekleyici bir uygulama olarak Şîî-İsmâîlî kadıların yanı sıra Sünnî kadıların da görevlendirildiğini belirtmek gerekir. Yargı faaliyetlerindeki etki odakları dönemsel değişiklikler geçirmiştir. Devletin kuruluşundan itibaren uzun süre belirli aile ve çevrelerin yargıda etkinlikleri ön plandadır. Zamanla Fâtımî halifelerinin siyasi etkinliğinin zayıflaması ve idari işleyişin bozulması sonucunda, yüksek yetkileri bulunan vezirlerin Mısır'da kadıların görevlendirilmelerine ve faaliyet alanlarına müdahil oldukları, dolayısıyla yargı düzenine yön verdikleri anlaşılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

İslam Tarihi, İsmâîlîlik, Fâtımî Devleti, Mısır'da Hukuk Eğitimi, Yargı Faaliyetleri, Kadı.

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Introduction

Following the establishment of the Fatimid state in Ifrīqiyya, the Ismā'īlīs endeavored to systematize and enforce their legal framework,¹ grounded in the belief that the imam-mahdī possessed esoteric (bātinī) knowledge of the law.² To align society with Ismā'īlī-Fāṭimid rule, they appointed Sunnī qāḍīs to regions with significant Sunnī populations.³ Furthermore, in the Friday and Eid sermons delivered by the Fatimid caliphs during the founding period of the State, core Ismaili concepts of imamate and caliphate were emphasized. These sermons also addressed legal and transactional matters, reflecting the doctrinal principles of Ismā'ilism in their literal form.⁴

After al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh (341/953–365/965) established his rule in Egypt, significant importance was placed on the systematic training of qāḍīs in order to develop a legal system specific to Fāṭimid Ismā'īlism. The initiatives launched in the Maghrib to establish a judicial system gained considerable momentum during the Egyptian phase of the state and contributed to the gradual institutionalization of Ismā'īlī-Fāṭimid law.⁵

This study is primarily based on Shi'i-Ismā'īlīs and Muslim historical sources. Contemporary research on the subject has also been consulted; however, the scope of the study is shaped mainly by information drawn from primary sources. In this context, the prominent

¹ Abdullah Galadari, "Ijtihad Holds Supremacy in Islamic Law: Muslim Communities and the Evolution of Law", *Religions* 13/4 (2022), 8-9.

² Ali Humayun Akhtar, *Philosophers, Sufis, and Caliphs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 79.

³ Sumaiya A. Hamdani, *Between Revolution and State* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 60.

⁴ Münir Ecer, "Fâtımî Hutbelerinin Eğitim Açısından İncelenmesi: Bir İçerik Analizi Çalışması", *Iğdır Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 19 (2022), 13,20.

⁵ Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 177.

works of Ismail Poonawala,⁶ Amin Haji,⁷ Bayard Dodge,⁸ Asaf A. A. Fyzee,⁹ and Paul E. Walker¹⁰ on the sources and principles of Ismā'īlī law and the institution of the qāḍīship during the Fatimid period have been examined. Similarly, in the Turkish context, İrfan İnce's studies¹¹ on the Fatimid judiciary, the institution of qāḍī al-quḍāt (chief qāḍī), and the position of Sunnī law within Islamic law, as well as Münir Ecer's assessments of legal education within the educational framework of the Fatimid era,¹² have been analyzed.

This focused study offers insight into the relationship between the judiciary, the administration, and society during the Fāṭimid period. A central contribution of the research is its critical examination of the qāḍī's role within the judicial system, along with their influence in both administrative and societal spheres. In addition, the analysis of historical sources provides a basis for understanding aspects of urban life during the Fāṭimid period, the composition of the ruling elite, the shaping of legal education and practice, and the spatial dimensions of judicial activity.

1. Teaching of Isma'ili Law

The diversity of schools of fiqh in Islam was an important factor in establishing teaching circles in masjids. In the period when educational activities developed and progressed

⁶ Ismā'īl Poonawala, "Ismā'īlī Jurisprudence", *The Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (New York: Columbia University, ts.).

⁷ Amin Haji, "Institutions of Justice in Fatimid Egypt (358–567/969–1171)", *Islamic Law (RLE Politics of Islam)*, (2013), 198–214.

⁸ Bayard Dodge, "The Fatimid Legal Code", *The Muslim World* 50/1 (1960), 30–38.

⁹ Asaf Ali Asghar Fyzee, "The Fatimid Law of Inheritance", *Studia Islamica* 9 (1958), 61–69; Asaf Ali Asghar Fyzee, *Compendium of Fatimid Law* (Simla, India: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1969); Asaf Ali Asghar Fyzee, "Aspects of Fatimid Law", *Studia Islamica*, (1970), 81–91.

¹⁰ Paul E. Walker, "The Relationship between Chief Qāḍī and Chief Dā'ī under the Fatimids", *Speaking for Islam* (Brill, 2006), 70–94; Paul E. Walker, "Another Family of Fatimid Chief Qāḍīs: The Al-Fāriqīs", *Fatimid History and Ismaili Doctrine*, 1 Cilt (Routledge, 2023).

¹¹ İrfan İnce, "Mısır Fâtımî Devletinde Yargı, Kâdi'l-kudâthk ve Sünni Ulemanın Yeri", *MUTALAA* 3/2 (2024), 84–105; İrfan İnce, "Mısır Fâtımî Devleti'nde 525/1131 Yılında Dört Kadı Ataması, Yeni Bir Değerlendirme", *İslam Tetkikleri Dergisi* 14/2 (2024), 501–528.

¹² Münir Ecer, *Fâtımîler Döneminde Eğitim* (Ankara: Fecr Yayınları, 2023), 196–220, 291–295.

under the name of madrasa, the Fāṭimids, who emerged with the claim of a Shi'i-Ismā'īlī caliphate, established teaching circles in Cairo to teach Ismā'īlī law. In time, the number of these masjids where teaching circles were organised had risen.¹³ al-Azhar was one of the important places where lecture circles were established to teach Ismā'īlī law, and judicial affairs were carried out.¹⁴ On the other hand, the works of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, a prominent figure in the Fāṭimid state due to his judicial activities, formed the foundation for the systematic teaching of Ismā'īlī law, which would later be taught in various mosques and madrasas.

1.1. The Authority of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān: Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, who was appointed to his first official position in the service of the Fatimids in 313/925¹⁵ and carried out the judicial duties according to the guidance and indoctrination of the Fāṭimid khalīfah¹⁶, had a significant influence¹⁷ on the institutionalization of Ismā'īlī law. In addition to his judicial duties, Qāḍī al-Nu'mān was an Ismā'īlī scholar and writer known for his moderate and widely read writings. His works, written in consultation with the imam-khalīfah, played a key role in Ismā'īlī-Fāṭimid legal literature. He wrote several treatises on Ismā'īlī jurisprudence, includ-

¹³ George Maqdisi, who is known for his studies on the history of Muslim education, argues that the form of government in Islam was based on the legal system; in other words, legitimacy was based on law, and therefore, the teaching of law was prioritised in the study circles established in the masjids. George Maqdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 8.

¹⁴ A.A. Ateek, *al-Azhar The Mosque and University* (Londra: Egyptian Education Bureau, 1949), 7.

¹⁵ F. Dachraoui, "al-Nu'mān", *El²*, Critical ed. Bearman (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 8/ 117.

¹⁶ 'Imād al-Dīn Idrīs, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā' al-Fāṭimīyīn bi-al-Maghrib : al-Qism al-khāṣṣ min Kitāb 'Uyūn al-Akhbār*, Critical ed. Muḥammed al-Ya' lāwī. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1985), 39.

¹⁷ Qāḍī al-Nu'mān was one of the earliest Shi'is to contribute to hadīth and jurisprudence and spent most of his life writing works on law, history, tawḥīd, and authenticity. Khalīl b. Aybak Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayat* (Bayrūt: Dar Ihya al-Turath, 2010), 27/ 95; Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, *al-Dawlah al-Fāṭimīyah fī Miṣr* (al-Qāhirah: al-Dar al-Masriyah Al Lubnaniyah, 1992), 268; Heinz Halm, *The Fatimids Traditions of Learning* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 41.

ing the semi-official *Kitāb al-İzāḥ* (of which only a small part survives), in which he systematically compiled the hadiths of the Ahl al-Bayt. He later authored *Da'a'im al-Islām*,¹⁸ considered the official compilation of Fāṭimid state law.¹⁹ This work by Qāḍī Nu'mān is structured in two principal parts. The first outlines the seven core tenets of Fatimid Ismā'īlī belief, with *walāyah* (guardianship) emphasized as the central principle. Encompassing the concepts of *īmān* (faith), *Islam*, and *imāmah* (imamate), *walāyah* is presented as the foundation upon which the other tenets—such as ritual purity (*ṭahārah*), prayer (*ṣalāt*), almsgiving (*zakāt*), fasting, retreat (*i'tikāf*), pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), and *jihād*—are built. According to Fatimid doctrine, the imam-caliph's authority is divinely sanctioned.²⁰

The second part of the work addresses legal and social issues including trade, slavery, inheritance, marriage, divorce, hunting, intoxicants, medicine, clothing, missionary activity (*da'wah*), and legal procedures. Qāḍī Nu'mān supports his discussions with examples from the Prophet and the Ahl al-Bayt, using their practices as authoritative precedents.²¹

In the words of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, he would carefully examine the matters assigned to him and submitted his written responses to the *khalīfah* for approval. After the *khalīfah* reviewed and made corrections, he would commend the *qāḍī* and order the implementation of the decision.²² This hierarchical relationship highlights the *khalīfah*'s central role in the Ismā'īlī legal system.

Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's public presentation of his writings through wisdom lectures was one of the first efforts to introduce and teach Ismā'īlism. The jurisprudential study circles held after Friday prayers under Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's presidency were among the earliest efforts to

¹⁸ Abū Ḥanīfah ibn Muhammad Qāḍī Nu'mān, *Da'a'im al-Islām*, thk. Asaf Ali Asghar Fyzee (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1963).

¹⁹ Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubalā'*, 11/429.

²⁰ Qāḍī Nu'mān, *Da'a'im al-Islām*, 1 /12-13.

²¹ Qāḍī Nu'mān, *Da'a'im al-Islām*,

²² Abū Ḥanīfah ibn Muhammad Qāḍī Nu'mān, *Kitāb al-Majālis wa-al-Musāyarāt*, thk. Ḥabīb al-Faqī, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Muntazar, 1996), 357.

teach the developing legal order.²³ This practice continued with Qāḍī 'Alī b. Nu'mān and at al-Azhar, where qāḍīs formed circles that became the center of Ismā'īlī law development in Egypt.²⁴ After Qāḍī 'Alī (374/985)²⁵ his brother Qāḍī Muhammad carried on Ismā'īlī legal activities and led the majālis al-ḥikma. These assemblies, where the sciences of Ahl al-Bayt were taught, were held in the palace and al-Azhar on specific days, continuing the tradition established by his father and brother.²⁶

1.2. The Jurisprudential Contributions of Ya'qūb b. Killis to Fāṭimid-Ismā'īlī Law:

The contribution of Ya'qub ibn Killis, an influential vizier during the caliphate of al-'Azīz Billāh, to the development of the Ismā'īlī legal order²⁷ highlights the dynamic relationship between political leadership, legal authority, and religious ideology in the Fāṭimid state.²⁸ In addition to the foundational role played by Qāḍī al-Nu'mān and his family in shaping Ismā'īlī jurisprudence, Ibn Killis's constructive initiatives established al-Azhar as the foremost institution for higher education in Ismā'īlī law. (377/988)²⁹

Ibn Killis's jurisprudential work, *Risālat al-Wazīriyya*, composed with the support of a select group of Ismā'īlī qāḍīs, draws upon the pronouncements of al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh and al-'Azīz Billāh. Ibn Killis publicly recited this work at a gathering attended by both notables

²³ Dachraoui, "al-Nu'mān", 8/117; Furkan Erbaş, "Fâtımîler'in Ebû Hanîfe'si: Kâdî Nu'mân b. Muhammed (ö. 363/974)", *e-Makalat Mezhep Araştırmaları Dergisi* 17/2 (2024), 791.

²⁴ Muṣṭafā. Bayram, *Tārīkh al-Azhar*, 1903, 23-24.

²⁵ Egyptian historian Ibn Zūlāq mentions 'Alī b. Nu'mān was the last of the sixty-one qāḍī who took office in Egypt from the conquest until 372. The first in the line was Qays b. Abī'l-As. While qāḍīs could hold office for twenty-five years, some held office for three days. al-Ḥasan b. Ibrāhīm Ibn Zūlāq, *Faḍā'il Miṣr wa-Akhbārūhā wa-Khawāṣṣuhā*, (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 2000), 26-27.

²⁶ Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* (Lebanon, 2004), 38/103; Ateek, *al-Azhar The Mosque*, 7; Yaacov Lev, *State and Society in Fatimid Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 137.

²⁷ 'Alī b. Munjib Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *al-Qānūn fī Dīwān al-Rasā'il: wa, al-Ishārah ilā man Nāla al-Wizārah*, Critical ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid (al-Qāhirah: al-Dār al-Miṣrīyah al-Lubnānīyah, 1990), 49; Bayard Dodge, *al-Azhar: A Millennium of Muslim Learning* (Washington: The Middle East Institute, 1974), 10-11.

²⁸ Halm, *The Fatimids*, 43; Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, 177.

²⁹ Halm, *The Fatimids*, 43; Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, 177; Aydın Çelik, *Fâtımîler Devleti Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2018), 227.

and the general public during Ramaḍān 369/980. It is also recorded that qāḍī issued fatwās based on this book in the Mosque of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ.³⁰ Contemporary scholars argue that Ibn Killis authored this work as a handbook for Ismā‘īlī qāḍīs, and positioned it as an alternative to Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān’s *Da‘ā’im al-Islām*. *Risālat al-Wazīriyya*, which has not survived to the present day and whose content remains unknown, has also been evaluated as an attempt at reconciliation between Sunni and Ismā‘īlī law in the contemporary period. It has been stated that the *Risālat al-Wazīriyya*, an important achievement for someone who converted from Judaism, was not accepted by the Fāṭimid qāḍīs. The Khalīfah al-‘Azīz withdrew it from circulation so that Qāḍī Nu‘mān’s *Da‘ā’im al-Islām* became the undisputed handbook of the Ismā‘īlī judicial order.³¹

2. The Ismā‘īlī -Fāṭimid Judiciary and the Qāḍī al-Qudāt in Egypt

During the Fāṭimid period in Egypt, the official legal system was structured according to the Ismā‘īlī sect. However, Fustāṭ.³² was home to members of several other sects, including the Mālikī, Hanbalī, Mu‘tazilī, and Karrāmiyya. Upon his arrival in Egypt, the Fāṭimid commander Jawhar al-Sikillī’s (381/992) first judicial act was to retain Abū Ṭāhir Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Zuhlī (d. 366/977)³³ as qāḍī, a position he had held for many years during the Abbasid caliphate in Fustāṭ. In addition, he assigned a Maghribī shāhid—Fatimid allies from North Africa who arrived in Egypt following the Fatimid conquest—alongside every Egyptian shāhid in the judiciary.³⁴ These appointments (348/959), which were made without clashing with Sunnī circles, were an important step that facilitated the implementation of the Ismā‘īlī

³⁰ Şafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi*, 27/89.

³¹ Halm, *The Fatimids*, 43; Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs*, 177, 215.

³² Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqaṣīm fi Ma‘rifat al-Aqālīm* (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat Madbūlī, 1991), 202.

³³ Abū Ṭāhir al-Zuhlī, who was appointed as Qāḍī during the reign of Kāfur (347/960), maintained his judicial competence until 366/977. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Kindī, *Kitāb al-Quḍāh Qlladhīn walū Qaḍā’ Mīṣr*, Critical ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār, 2005, 33; ‘Alī b. Ḍāhir Ibn Ḍāhir, *Akhbār al-Duwal al-Munqaṭī‘ah* (al-Qāhirah: Maṭbū‘āt al-Ma‘had al-‘Ilmī al-Faransī lil-Āthār al-Sharqīyah, ts.), 28; İnce, “Mısır Fâtımî Devletinde Yargı”, 93.

³⁴ İdris, *Uyūn al-Akhbār*, 687.

legal order in Egypt. Jawhar al-Siqillī's recourse to Ismā'īlī law in cases of inheritance and divorce, while maintaining the position of Abū Ṭāhir al-Zuhlī, were the first applications of the new judicial order.³⁵

The early judicial appointments under Jawhar al-Siqillī marked a foundational phase in the establishment of the Ismā'īlī legal order in Egypt. In order to understand the practical implementation and socio-political significance of this system, it is necessary to examine the office of the qāḍī al-quḍāt—one of the most prestigious positions within the Fāṭimid administration—along with its associated ceremonial and legal prerogatives. The qāḍī al-quḍāt held one of the highest positions in the Fāṭimid government, ranked among the 'amaim (turbaned) and 'arbāb al-'aqlām. He rode a gray mule from the khalīfah's stable, a color exclusive to him, and used silver-embroidered saddles and a gold-embroidered hil'at. The qāḍī al-quḍāt required the khalīfah's permission to testify or attend funerals. He appeared before the khalīfah at the palace on Mondays and Thursdays, and at the Amr b. al-Ās Mosque on Saturdays and Tuesdays. However, it should be stated that the days of the qāḍī al-quḍāt's presence in the mosque changed in different periods. He would have seated on a silk cushion with a dais for his diviths (inkstand and pen case), positioning the shuhūd according to their seniority. Hājibs would be present in his presence, at the maqṣūrah door, and opposite him.³⁶ Four individuals were responsible for signatures (tevki'), two in his presence and two opposite him. When the khalīfah received the pledge of allegiance, he read his sijil from the pulpit.³⁷ In addition to the symbols of appointment and jurisdiction, the qāḍī al-quḍāt's remuneration

³⁵ Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubalā'*, 11/429; Sayyid, *al-Dawlah al-Fāṭimīyah fī Miṣr*, 268; Fatiha Bozbaş, *Mısır'da Fıkıh Tarihi* (İstanbul: Kitap Arası, 2019), 243.

³⁶ 'Abd al-Salām b. al-Ḥasan Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, *Nuzhat al-Muqlatayn fī Akhbār al-Dawlatayn*, Critical ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid (Shtūtghārt: Yuṭlabu min Dār al-Nashr Frānts Shtāyna, 1992), 107; Aḥmad 'Alī Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā fī ṣinā'at al-Inshā*, Critical ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-Dīn. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1987), 3/557-558.

³⁷ Ibn al-Ṭuwayr recorded that when Ḥāfiz Lidīnillāh became khalīfah, the qāḍī al-quḍāt, who read his sijil (official record) in the palace iwān, announced the new khalīfah's imamate. Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, *Nuzhat al-Muqlatayn*, 27.

reflected his authority within the legal framework and his role in broader political and ceremonial affairs, further emphasizing the intertwined nature of law and governance in that society. According to the information recorded by Ibn al-Tuwayr, the salary of the qāḍī al-quḍāt and dāi al-du'āt was the fourth degree,³⁸ one hundred dinars.³⁹

In Fāṭimid court ceremonies, the qāḍī al-quḍāt followed a specific protocol when addressing the khalīfah. Unlike other statesmen, he greeted the khalīfah by raising his right hand and reciting a formal phrase, while still adhering to the custom of kissing the khalīfah's hand. Additionally, the qāḍī al-quḍāt accompanied the khalīfah during his entrance and exit from al-Azhar, maintaining his position within the ceremonial hierarchy.⁴⁰

2.1 The Impact of the al-Nu'mān Family on Judicial Activities: Qāḍī al-Nu'mān was responsible for the judiciary during the establishment of the state and ruled according to the orders and instructions of the Fāṭimid khalīfah.⁴¹ Following the transfer of the seat of government to Cairo, he retained his position as qāḍī al-quḍāt, overseeing the judiciary. The Fāṭimid khalīfah entrusted him with legal matters from the regions he ruled.

The early Ismā'īlî-Fāṭimid judicial system was shaped by the activities of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān and the qāḍīs selected from his family.⁴² There are different statements in the sources

³⁸ For detailed information, see Ibn al-Tuwayr, *Nuzhat al-Muqlatayn*, 84.

³⁹ When al-Jawhar al-Siqillî entered Syria, the value of the dinar, the gold coin he had issued in the name of al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh, was 15.5 dirhams. In other words, gold was 15.5 silver coins. The weight of each ten dirhams is six misqāl. Misqāl is usually explained as a grain of barley. Accordingly, one misqāl is equivalent to seventy-two barley grains. (4.25 grams) Aḥmad b. 'Alī Maqrīzī, *Rasā'il al-Maqrīzī* (al-Qāhirah: Dāru'l-Hadith, 1998), 169; S.D. Goitein, "The Exchange Rate of Gold and Silver Money in Fatimid and Ayyubid Times: A Preliminary Study of The Relevant Geniza Material", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 8/1 (1965), 26; Adam Abdullah, "The Islamic Monetary Standard: The Dinar and Dirham", *International Journal of Islamic Economies and Finance Studies* 1 (2020), 14.

⁴⁰ He would raise his right hand, point his index finger towards the sky, and recite, "as-Salāmu 'alaykum yā amīr al-mu'minīn wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuhu." Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, 4/71; Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 1/ 402-403.

⁴¹ 'Imād al-Dīn Idrīs, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā' al-Fāṭimīyīn bi-al-Maghrib : al-Qism al-khāṣṣ min Kitāb 'Uyūn al-Akḥbār*, Critical ed. Muḥammed al-Ya' lāwī. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1985), 39.

⁴² Qāḍī Nu'mān, *al-Majālis wa-al-Musāyarāt*, 307.

regarding the appointment of the first qāḍī al-quḍāt from the Nu'mān family, who was influential in the judiciary for a long time. Considering the fact that he regulated Ismā'īlī law, made suggestions, and kept historical records of the khalīfah-imams, Qāḍī al-Nu'mān can be considered as the first qāḍī al-quḍāt of Cairo. On the other hand, under Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, 'Abdullah b. Muhammad b. Abī Sawbān was assigned to take care of the legal affairs of the Maḡribis.

After Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, his sons 'Alī (d. 374/985), Muḥammad (d. 389/999), and Ḥasan, as well as his grandsons Ḥusayn b. 'Alī (389–394/999–1004)⁴³ and 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad (394–398/1004–1008),⁴⁴ played a significant role in the Fāṭimid legal order for more than sixty years.⁴⁵ The title 'qāḍī al-quḍāt' first appeared in the appointment register of Qāḍī Ḥusayn b. 'Alī.⁴⁶

Shortly before his death, Qāḍī al-Nu'mān appointed his son, 'Alī b. al-Nu'mān, as an assistant to Qāḍī Abū Ṭāhir at the Mosque of 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ. After the death of al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh, Qāḍī 'Alī, who was responsible for the Dār al-Darb and al-Jāmi'⁴⁷, assumed the role of qāḍī al-quḍāt (qāḍī al-ajall)⁴⁸ upon Abū Ṭāhir's illness, owing to the appointment sijil issued

⁴³ Kutubī Muḥammad b. Shākir, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt* (Beirut: Dāru Sadir, 1973), 1/ 292-294.

⁴⁴ Kindī, *Kitāb al-Quḍāh*, 175-176; The daughter of Qāḍī 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jawhar al-Sikhli was married to the brother of Husayn b. al-Jawhar, who was appointed to replace the vizier al-Barjawān (389/999). He was appointed Qāḍī after his uncle's son Husayn b. Ali. The Fatimid khalīfah had them both killed because Husayn b. Jawhar fled from Hākim Biemrillāh and sought refuge with Qāḍī 'Abd al-'Aziz. (391,401/1009,1011) Musabbihī, *Akhbār Miṣr fī Sanatayn (414-415 H.)*, Critical ed. Wilyam J. Milward (al-Qāhirah: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyah al-'Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1980), 213; Aḥmad b. al-Rashīd B. al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-Dhakhā'ir wa-al-Tuḥaf*, Critical ed. Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allah (al-Kuwayt: Dā'irat al-Maṭbū'āt wa-al-Nashr, 1959), 233; Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi*, 37/329; Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 71.

⁴⁵ Muḥammad ibn Salāmah Quḍā'i, *Tārīkh al-Quḍā'i: Kitāb 'Uyūn al-Ma'ārif wa-Funūn Akhbār al-Khalā'if*, critical ed. Cemil Abdullah Muhammed el-Misrī (Makkah: Jāmi'at Umm al-Qurā, 1995), 568; Ibn Ṣāhir, *Akhbār al-Duwal*, 28; Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 199; Idrīs, *'Uyūn al-Akhbār*, 729.

⁴⁶ Aḥmad b. 'Alī Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa-al-I'tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār*, Critical ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid (Bayrūt: Dār Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 1854), 2/341; Aḥmad b. 'Alī Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, Critical ed. al-Ya'lāwī Muḥammad (Bayrūt: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1991), 7/352-353.

⁴⁷ The place mentioned as al-Jāmi' in the sources is estimated to be the Mosque of Amr b. 'As. Ibn al-Hajar referred to it as the Egyptian Mosque. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 281.

⁴⁸ Idrīs, *'Uyūn al-Akhbār*, 729.

in his name and his close relationship with ‘Azîz Billāh (Şafar 366/September 976). Upon his appointment, he went to al-Azhar Mosque with a large entourage, wearing his hil’at and armed with his sword, where the sijil was read publicly. He was instructed to prostrate whenever the name of al-Mu‘izz li-Dîn Allāh or any member of his family was mentioned. Afterward, he proceeded to the Mosque of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, where the orator ‘Abd al-Samī‘ was waiting for him. He performed the Friday prayer, and his brother Muḥammad read the *sijil* of appointment. ‘Alī b. al-Nu‘mān then assumed judicial authority in Egypt, with the power to deliver the khutbah, lead prayers, and regulate the value of gold, silver, and commodities.⁴⁹ With ‘Alī b. al-Nu‘mān, it became customary to publicly read the sijil of qāḍī appointments in major mosques like al-Azhar, the Mosque of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, and the Mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn,⁵⁰ reinforcing the legitimacy of the judicial system.

The storage of documents, seals, and similar items under the responsibility of the qāḍī al-quḍāt, in a red-colored chest symbolizing its official status and its public display, served as an important tool in attributing official authority and significance to the activities of the qāḍī al-quḍāt. In this context, it is recorded that Ali b. al-Nu‘mān went to the Mosque of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ with a red trunk in his hand three days after the reading of the appointment register. Accordingly, he went to the mosque in a crowd of judicial members, qāḍī, merchants and dignitaries and sat in the judicial seat. Surah al-Asr was recited at this time.⁵¹ In addition to his judicial authority, Ali b. al-Nu‘mān was assigned other responsibilities as detailed in the appointment register. In this capacity, he oversaw inheritance matters, advised on valuables such as gold and silver, weights and measures, supervised the calibration of the dinar, oversaw prisoners,⁵² presided over al-Maẓālīm,⁵³ supervised the market (hisba), and advised on

⁴⁹ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf‘ al-Iṣr*, 282; Dachraoui, “al-Nu‘mān”, 8/117.

⁵⁰ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī Maqrīzī, *Itti‘āz al-Hunafā bi-Akhbār al-a‘immah al-Khulafā* (al-Qāhirah, 1996), 2/108-109.

⁵¹ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf‘ al-Iṣr*, 283.

⁵² Halm, *The Fatimids*, 42; Eymen Fuād Seyyid, “Fâtımîler”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1995), 12/234.

⁵³ ‘Abd al-Ḥayy b. Aḥmad Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār man dhahab*, Critical ed. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-

donations to masjids. These duties highlight the broad scope of his role in both legal and societal matters.⁵⁴

This appointment, which signified the extension of the Fāṭimid legal order beyond Fustāṭ-Cairo and reinforced the qāḍī's authority in the capital, led to the designation of Qāḍī 'Alī's brother, Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān, as the qāḍī of the Mediterranean settlements of Faramā, Tinnīs, and Damietta, as well as the al-nā'ib. Despite holding this regional appointment, Qāḍī Muḥammad continued to fulfill his duties in the capital by appointing deputies to oversee judicial matters in the settlements under his jurisdiction.⁵⁵ When Qāḍī 'Alī embarked on an expedition, he entrusted his judicial responsibilities to Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān as his nā'ib. Another nā'ib of 'Alī b. al-Nu'mān was the Shāfi'ī qāḍī Ḥasan b. Khalīl, who adjudicated cases in accordance with Fāṭimid law. However, both deputies were explicitly required to rule in accordance with Ismā'īlī legal principles.⁵⁶ This structure suggests that the responsibilities of the qāḍī al-quḍāt may have extended beyond purely judicial duties, potentially encompassing broader roles in religious and societal governance, as reflected in the delegation of authority to deputies who were expected to rule in accordance with Ismā'īlī legal principles.

The intervention of viziers in judicial matters during the Fāṭimid period highlights the complex dynamics between political power and the judiciary. Despite his high authority in the judiciary, Qāḍī 'Alī b. al-Nu'mān, who was close to the Fāṭimid khalīfah, was present at his table, accompanied him on horseback, and accompanied him on expeditions, could face

Arna'ūṭ (Dimashq: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1986), 4/426.

⁵⁴ Ibn Khaldūn states that from the reign of al-Hākim Biamrillāh onwards, al-Mazālīm and da'wah were frequently entrusted to the qāḍī al-quḍāt. Kindī, *Kitāb al-Quḍāh*, 176; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, 4/71.

⁵⁵ When Qāḍī 'Alī, who accompanied Azīz Billāh during the struggle against the Qarmatians, left his brother Qāḍī Muḥammad in his place by proxy, it caused an uproar that he was dismissed by the Fatimid khalīfah. (368/979) Upon this incident, Sāhib al-Shurta Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim was appointed, and support was received from Qāḍī Muḥammad B. Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 283.

⁵⁶ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 282; Lev, *State and Society*, 133.

the opposition of Ibn Killis. It is known that he consulted the vizier in judicial affairs or abolished some judicial practices that the vizier opposed. It is recorded that the vizier, who could sit in the *iwān* and watch the court proceedings,⁵⁷ ignored Qāḍī 'Alī and did not enforce the verdict, did not make changes in the *shuhūd*, did not allow the appointment of *nāib* without consulting him, and in response to this approach, he abolished Qāḍī 'Alī's sessions in the mosque. During the period of Ibn Killis's arrest, Qāḍī 'Alī maintained his authority. On the other hand, it is understood that Ibn Killis was influential in the appointment of *Ismā'īlī qāḍīs*. To illustrate, he summoned Qāḍī Abū 'Alī Aḥmad b. al-Qāsim from Tunisia and appointed him as the head of the judicial and supervisory body of al-Mazālim.⁵⁸ Similarly, he summoned Qāḍī Muḥammad b. Ḥasan from Tripoli in the Maghrib and granted him jurisdiction over Damietta, Tinnīs, Faramā, and several other cities, replacing Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān. The tension between Qāḍī 'Alī b. al-Nu'mān and the vizier underscores the broader issue within the Fāṭimid legal framework, where the balance between judicial independence and political interference was often unstable.

Alī ibn al-Nu'mān, whose authority expanded after Abū Ṭāhir assumed⁵⁹ judicial duties, died in Rajab 374/985. His judicial responsibilities were transferred to his brother, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān,⁶⁰ following the reading of the appointment decree prepared by the secretary of the *dār al-inshā*, Abū Maṣṣūr b. Sūrīn al-Naṣrānī in the Mosque of 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ.⁶¹ According to the register, he oversaw the judiciary in Cairo and its environs,

⁵⁷ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 472.

⁵⁸ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 70; Celal Yeniçeri, "Mezālim", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2004), 29/517.

⁵⁹ Muḥammad Ḥamdī al-Manāwī, *al-Wizārah wa-al-Wuzarā' fī al-ʿAṣr al-Fāṭimī* (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1970), 4.

⁶⁰ Kindī, *Kitāb al-Quḍāh*, 175; Qāḍī Nu'mān, *al-Majālis wa-al-Musāyarāt*, 546; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 28/103; Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz al-Hunafā*, 2/5.

⁶¹ Ibn Khaldūn states that al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh, had mentioned that Qāḍī Muḥammad would be appointed to judgement while he was still in Maghrib. Similarly, al-Maqrīzī, quoting al-Atekī, one of the historians of the Fāṭimid period, relates that upon al-Mu'izz Lidīnillāh's order, Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, together with his son Muḥammad, made a silver astrolabe and presented it to the khalīfah, while al-Mu'mān announced his son Muḥammad as the qāḍī of Egypt. Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 9/71.

Alexandria, Haramayn, Damascus and Egypt, leading the congregation in prayer, and overseeing gold, silver, weights and measures. Ali b. al-Nu'mān's correspondence with the khalīfahs was delivered to him, and the marriage contract and all other documents were approved by Qāḍī Muhammad. He was present at al-Azhar to issue judgments in the presence of his shuhūd, after which he proceeded to perform the Friday prayers at the Mosque of 'Amr b. al-'As. Due to his illness, he appointed his brother's son Husayn b. 'Ali to judge between people in the Amr b. al-'As Mosque. In 377/988, Qāḍī Muhammad's son, 'Abd al-'Azīz, was appointed qāḍī of Alexandria and later became qāḍī of Damascus within the same year. That same year, Qāḍī Muhammad nominated him as his successor in the judiciary, by the order of Fāṭimid khalīfah.⁶² The appointment of Qāḍī Muhammad's son, 'Abd al-'Azīz, as qāḍī of Alexandria and subsequently Damascus highlights the enduring political and judicial influence of the Numan family. This decision not only underscores the family's long-standing backing from the ruling elite but also illustrates how dynastic authority was reinforced through pivotal judicial roles, contributing to both political stability and the preservation of ideological coherence within the Fāṭimid state.

The close relationship between the Fāṭimid ruling circles and the judiciary, along with the actions and decisions of the qāḍīs, was another significant factor in shaping the judicial system. In light of this, the fact that Qāḍī Muhammad warned the shuhūd, reminding them that he had replaced thirty shuhūd because they came to the judicial council after him, indicates that he took measures to ensure the orderly functioning of the judiciary. This suggests that he was strict in his judgments on both religious and social issues. For example, he ordered the beheading of a man who had abandoned his religion and imprisoned a woman who had filed a debt lawsuit against her husband and was pleased to see him imprisoned. It is also known that Qāḍī Muhammad disqualified those among the qāḍīs who made many mistakes from issuing fatwas and replaced al-Hāfiz 'Abd al-Ghāfi b. Saīd, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Ali b. 'Abd al-

⁶² Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, 7/189.

Rahmān b. Yūnus, and Abū al-'Abbās Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Abī al-'Awwām al-Hanafi, who was to become the qāḍī of Egypt. Accordingly, it is understood that he aimed to ensure the influence of Ismā'īlī qāḍīs in the judiciary.⁶³ These actions not only reflect his commitment to upholding the integrity of the judiciary but also underscore his strategic efforts to maintain the ideological alignment of the judicial system with Ismā'īlī principles, reinforcing both the political and religious authority of the Fātimids.

Qāḍī Muhammad, whose influence in the judiciary increased over time, conducted judicial affairs with the help of his son 'Abd al-'Azīz during the progression of his illness. He referred to himself only as 'seyyidina' and used the title of 'qāḍī al-quḍāt' in his correspondence. It is known that Barjawān (390/1000), the vizier of the reign of al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh, visited Qāḍī Muhammad at his house every Thursday. On the other hand, the officials accompanied him every day when he went to Barjawān's house or to the palace, while Husayn b. Jawhar and Qāḍī Muḥammad would meet with him in the palace.⁶⁴

al-Maqrīzī mentions the rivalry between Qāḍī Husayn b. 'Alī and Qāḍī 'Abd al-'Azīz b. al-Nu'mān, who succeeded Qāḍī Muhammad as head of the judiciary. This rivalry, which caused a major split in the Fātimid judiciary, reflects the influence of judicial power on state governance. The judicial shuhūd played a role that reflected the competition among the qāḍīs. When al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh appointed Qāḍī 'Abd al-'Azīz to handle al-Maẓālīm (390/1000)⁶⁵, some of the shuhūd left and chose to align with Qāḍī Husayn b. 'Alī. This led to a split, with those hostile to one of the qāḍīs supporting the other. While 'Abd al-'Azīz was

⁶³ Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, 7/189.

⁶⁴ Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, 7/189-190. Barjawān, the influential statesman of the reign of Ḥākim Biamrillāh, played a role in important changes in the military order as well as his influence in the judiciary. During the period when he was vizier, the ethnic elements known as mevālī in the army diversified and the dominant position of the Qutāmas was shaken. Ibn al-Sayrafī, *al-Ishāra*, 27; Ibn Zāfir, *Ahbāru al-Duwal*, 60; Ibn Khaldūn, *Dīwān al-Mubtada*, 4/75; Muhammad Suheil Taqqūsh, *Tarīhu Fāṭimīdiyyīn fī al-Shimālī Ifriqiya wa Mīsr wa Bilādī-Sham*, Dāru al-Nafāis, Beirut, 2007, 261.

⁶⁵ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kenz al-Durar*, 6/267.

at al-Jāmi'⁶⁶, he was accompanied by his shuhūd, while none of the shuhūd of Qāḍī Husayn b. 'Alī were present.

The tension between the two qāḍīs escalated when Qāḍī Husayn was struck on the forehead with an iron rod by a Maghribī man while praying the afternoon prayer in the mosque, injuring him in three places. After this incident, which resulted in the congregation killing the man (391/1001), Qāḍī Husayn went to the palace and was rewarded with a *hil'at*. The rumors that arose among the people due to this split in the judiciary reached al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh. In response, the Fāṭimid khalīfah, in a letter of confidence addressed to Qāḍī Husayn from his own hand, confirmed his authority in the judiciary and gave permission him to use the title of 'qāḍī al-quḍāt' in his correspondence. When Qāḍī Husayn came to the Amr b. al-ʿĀs Mosque, the guards would line up behind him, shielding him, but would not pray until he had finished. When he sat down, they would stand to his right and left. He was the first qāḍī to sit in this order in the mosque. He made it obligatory for the shuhūd to be present when he was at home and in the mosque. Qāḍī Husayn was criticized for allowing a Shi'i group, which appeared untrustworthy, to testify in his court. This group began cursing the companions, testifying against their opponents and those who spoke against them, and bringing them before Qāḍī Husayn's court. Qāḍī Husayn was the first judge to be killed and then burned by al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh, who implemented inconsistent religious policies (395/1005).⁶⁷

In the Fāṭimids, it became a tradition with Ali b. al-Nu'mān that judicial affairs and courts were held in grand mosques on certain days. On Mondays and Thursdays, the qāḍī al-quḍāt was in the Amr b. al-ʿĀs Mosque in Fustat, on Tuesdays in the mosque of al-Azhar, the

⁶⁶ al-Maqrīzī did not explicitly mention the name of al-Jāmi' here. However, it is probable that the mosque, which is understood to be close to the palace, is al-Azhar. Maqrīzī, *Muqaffa al-Kabīr*, 3/351.

⁶⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, *Dīwān al-Mubtada*, 4/71-4. For the text of Ḥākim Biemrillāh's letter addressed to Qāḍī Husayn b. 'Alī, see al-Maqrīzī, *Muqaffa al-Kabīr*, 3/351-2.

mosque of the reign, and on Saturdays in the section known as *sagīfah*⁶⁸ in the Fāṭimid palace, where the court gentry would gather. Among the records and documents, he kept in his own residence, the documents and manuals necessary for the trials were carried to the court sessions in a red trunk. During the reign of al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh, the records of the judges were transferred to the Bayt al-Mal adjacent to the Amr b. al-ʿĀs Mosque.⁶⁹ On Saturdays and Tuesdays, he was typically present at the Amr b. al-ʿĀs Mosque in Egypt. When Qāḍī Ahmad b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Abī ʿUqayl (533/1139) was appointed to the judiciary (531/1136), it is reported that he raised his seat and cushion, sitting on a silk cushion known as *ṭarrāhāt al-thāmin*. This practice continued after him. The shuhūd (witnesses), who were assigned to witness the course of the trial and the qāḍī's verdict, were present in the court on his right and left according to the date of their application.⁷⁰

2.2 Various Practices in the Ismāʿīlî-Fāṭimid Judicial System: After the long rule of the Nu'mān family in the judiciary, Mālik b. Saīd al-Fārūqī, a well-known qāḍī of the reign of al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (398/1008) was appointed qāḍī al-quḍāt.⁷¹ His appointment decree was publicly read at the Mosque of ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀs, after which he donned the ceremonial *hilʿat*. Known to be a courtier and close to al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh, the qāḍī al-quḍāt was influential in state affairs. In his early years, the judicial council was established in the house of the qāḍī al-quḍāt Mālik b. Saīd.⁷²

In the Fāṭimid legal order, Sunnī qāḍīs, as well as Ismāʿīlī qāḍīs, were able to take part

⁶⁸ He used to leave his house near the estuary in Cairo, cross the estuary on the Nile and go to the palace. Shuhūd would accompany him to his house in Hamra. al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 1/405.

⁶⁹ al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāzu al-Hunafā*, 2/108-9; Halm, *Fāṭimids*, 42.

⁷⁰ Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, *Nuzhat al-Muqlatayn*, 107; Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāz al-Hunafā*, 2/163; I Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. al-Furāt, *Tārīkh B. al-Furāt*, Critical ed. Ḥasan Muḥammad al-Shammā (Baṣrah: Maṭbaʿat Ḥaddād, 1967), 1/138; Aḥmad Muḥammad ʿAwf, *al-Azhar fī al-ʿAm, Abriḥ Sanat 970 m- Abriḥ Sanat 1970* (al-Qāhira: al-Azhar, Majmaʿ al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyah, 1970), 71-72; Marius Canard, “Le Cérémonial Fātimite et le Cérémonial Byzantin: essai de Comparaison”, *Byzantion* 21/1 (1951), 382.

⁷¹ Musabbihī, *Akhbār*, 21-22; Abū Bakr b. ʿAbd Allāh B. al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jāmiʿ al-Ghurur* (al-Qāhira: Qism al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyah, al-Maʿhad al-Almānī lil-Āthār, 1961), 6/289.

⁷² Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Rafʿ al-Iṣr*, 316; Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāz al-Hunafā*, 2/108-109.

in the judiciary with extensive powers. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. 'Abdullah b. al-'Awwam al-Sa'dī (418/1028), who was among the shuhūd under Qāḍī Muhammad b. al-Nu'mān (389/999) and then took part in the practice of farāiz and nazar under Qāḍī Husayn b. 'Ali b. al-Nu'mān, was a Hanafī.⁷³ Ibn Abi al-Awwam was appointed considering his knowledge of the local situation in Egypt. (405/1014)⁷⁴ According to Ibn al-Awwam's appointment *sijil*, the judiciary in Cairo, Egypt and the provinces was attached to Ibn al-Awwam. Accordingly, he was responsible for the supervision of the foundations of mosques and masjids, the provisions of the military, the representation of the judiciary, the Dār al-Darb, measuring and weighing, and inheritance. The golden armor, bridle, halter and saddle, which were allocated as the sign of qāḍī al-quḍāt, were carried in a box. During his tenure, the judicial council was relocated from the residence of Mālik b. Sa'īd to the Bayt al-Māl within the Mosque of 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ. The diwans were established in the mosque during this period.⁷⁵

It is clear that Ibn Abi Awwām was able to take the initiative in the judiciary. While present at the Mosque of 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ in 409/1019, he dismissed four hundred out of one thousand five hundred shāhid in a single day. As the dismissals continued, complaints were brought before al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh; however, the Fāṭimid khalīfah ultimately deemed his actions justified.⁷⁶ The appointment of Sunni qāḍīs like Ibn al-Awwam served as an example of the multifaceted nature of the legal system under the Fāṭimids, while also functioning as a tool to maintain balance in the government's relationship with the public. Moreover, Ibn al-Awwām's initiative in the judiciary can be interpreted as a demonstration of his authority within the legal system. His dismissals should be regarded as a centralization effort aimed at

⁷³ Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, 7/368; Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 73.

⁷⁴ Musabbihī, *Akhhār*, 201-203; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 6/289; Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār*, Critical ed. Kāmil Salmān al-Jubūrī (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiya, 2010), 24/114-115.

⁷⁵ Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, 24/114-115; Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz al-Hunafā*, 2/108-109; Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, 7/369; Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 73-74.

⁷⁶ Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, 7/369-370; Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 75.

addressing inefficiencies in the judiciary.

Ibn Abī al-ʿAwwām, acting on the orders of al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh, had four judges with him. This may reflect an effort to centralize the legal system and prevent unrest that could arise from sectarian differences. The qāḍī al-quḍāt would accompany the khalīfah while he wandered on Friday, held sessions with the courtiers, amirs, and shuhūd on Saturday, ruled at the Mosque of 'Amr b. 'As on Sunday and Thursday, and at al-Azhar on Tuesday. On Wednesday, he spent his time in rest and worship in his house he had bought in al-Qarafa. He would have whomever he wanted from the shuhūd, and his close circle stay with him. On Thursdays, he convened the judicial council at the Mosque of 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, where he presided over cases until noon. After the prayer, he remained occupied with judicial affairs.⁷⁷ During the ceremonies held in al-Jāmi' (the mosque of 'Amr b. al- 'As) in Ramaḍān, it was his responsibility to ascend the pulpit, to fix his shade (mizalla), and to say takbir behind the khalīfah.⁷⁸

The Ismāʿīlī legal order, which was practiced extensively in Egypt until the reign of Khalīfah al-Mustansir, lost its superior position over time due to the weakening of the khalīfah's authority following internal turmoil. During this period, the deposition of viziers and qāḍī increased. After the last qāḍī of the Nu'mān family (418/1028), al-Qāsim b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (441/1049-50),⁷⁹ Abū Muhammad Ḥasan b. ʿAli b. ʿAbd al-ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Yāzūrī assumed both the roles of qāḍī al-quḍāt and vizier. (442/1050) For this reason, he would be present at the Mosque of 'Amr b. ʿĀs on Saturdays and Tuesdays for ruling and judicial affairs,

⁷⁷ Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, 24/114-115; ʿAbd al-Qādir b. Muḥammad Qurashī, *al-Jawāhir al-muḍīyah fī Tabaqāt al-Hanaḫīyah*, Critical ed. Muḥyī al-Dal-Ḥanaḫīn, ts., 1/107; Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāz al-Hunafā*, 2/108-109.

⁷⁸ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Rafʿ al-Iṣr*, 73; Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, 7/270.

⁷⁹ Qāsim b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, who took office forty-three days after Ibn Abī Awwām's death, was known by such epithets as qāḍī al-quḍāt, dāʾi'd-duʿāt, thiḡah al-dawla, amīn al-a'imma, sharaf al-ahkām, jalāl al-Islam. He stayed in office for one year, two months and twenty-three days, then he was dismissed. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Kindī, *Wulāt Miṣr*, Critical ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār (Bayrūt: Dār Bayrūt : Dār Ṣādir, 1959), 177; Maqrīzī, *Rasāʾil*, 9.

and would go to Cairo⁸⁰ after the afternoon prayer.⁸¹ Similarly, during the state's disintegration, the offices of vizier and qāḍī al-quḍāt were often consolidated, as in the case of al-Yāzūrī.⁸²

Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Ḥakīm b. Saīd al-Fārūqī was appointed qāḍī al-quḍāt after al-Yāzūrī and held the office four times at various intervals (450-454/1059-1063).⁸³ After his dismissal from his duty,⁸⁴ Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Ḥakīm b. Wuḥayb b. 'Abdurrahmān was appointed qāḍī al-quḍāt eight times at various intervals and became the nā'ib of al-Badr al-Jamālī, who held both judicial and dawah authority. (450-464/1058-1072) During his time in the judiciary, he was in charge of al-Mazālim and undertook the prayer and sermon. (453/1061) It is recorded that he went to the palace before noon on Sundays, and from noon to afternoon he was in the Mosque of al-Azhar, hearing cases among the people. (455/1063)⁸⁵ Following Qāḍī 'Abd al-Ḥakīm, 'Abd al-Karīm al-Fārūqī was appointed in his place.⁸⁶ Following the weakening of the khalifah's authority, the need to maintain more direct control over legal and administrative matters, expedite the decision-making process, and prevent the activities of factions that could cause instability became more pronounced, which led to the merging of the offices of

⁸⁰ Hibat Allāh ibn Mūsā al-Shīrāzī Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn, *Sīrat al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn Dā'ī al-Du'āh*, Critical ed. Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn. (al-Qāhirah : Dār al-Kātib al-Miṣrī, 1949), 86; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *al-Qānūn*, 41; Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz al-Hunafā*, 2/210; Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, 7/216.

⁸¹ Hasan b. 'Abdullah al-Yāzūrī, a Hanafī sectarian, served as a qāḍī in Remle before coming to Egypt. Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, 24/246.

⁸² Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 1/356.

⁸³ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 6/375; Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz al-Hunafā*, 2/251; Maqrīzī, *Rasā'il*, 57.

⁸⁴ Abd al-Ḥakīm b. Saīd al-Fārūqī, whose appointment register was read in Cairo and Egypt when he was appointed as Qāḍī al-Qudāt, customarily wore a hil'at. He was appointed four times for short periods of time. However, he was appointed for the second time in 453/1061, a post that expired the same year. Qāḍī Ahmad b. Abdilhakīm, who was appointed as qāḍī al-kudāt twice more in 454/1062, in addition to his viziership and the position of dā'ī, was nicknamed as fahru'l-wuzarā, qāḍī al-kudāt, vizier al-ajal, dā'ī-du'āt, ilm al-dīn, Thiqaḥ al-Muslimīn, khalīlu amiri'l-'ilmīn. Qāḍī Ahmad retired from his duties in 455/1063 and died in Damascus in 556/1064. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 58.

⁸⁵ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 209-210.

⁸⁶ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 95.

vizier and qāḍī al-quḍāt, especially during the decline of the Fāṭimids. Moreover, the appointment of a Sunnī vizier like al-Yāzūrī, who held both the office of vizier and chief qāḍī, served as a decisive response to judicial challenges. However, over time, the concentration of judicial and administrative power in one hand led to the intertwining of judicial functions with the religious and political mission of the state.

In 470/1077, al-Badr al-Jamālī was appointed vizier and entrusted with both the institutions of qāḍā' and da'wa, with the qāḍī al-quḍāt and dā'ī al-du'āt serving as his two deputies. It is possible that during this period, the caliph's decisive power in the appointment of judges weakened, and Fatimid-Isma'ili law lost its priority in matters that distinguished it from other sects.⁸⁷ After al-Badr al-Jamālī assumed the title of “sāhib al-saif”, the term qāḍī al-quḍāt was no longer used.⁸⁸ One of the first changes in judicial practices was the order to treat inheritance according to the sect to which the deceased belonged. Abū 'Alī Ahmad b. Afdal al-Qutayfāt appointed four qāḍī al-quḍāt from the Shāfi'ī, Mālikī, Imāmī, and Ismā'īlī-Fāṭimī legal schools, granting each the authority to administer inheritance matters according to their respective sects. (525/1131)⁸⁹ This practice, which takes social diversity into account, means that each denomination is formally recognized as having the right to practice its own laws. This change eventually led to the diminishing dominance of traditional Fāṭimid-Isma'ili law in judicial matters and the adoption of a multi-confessional approach. During the reign of the Armenian vizier Bahrām (529-1135/531-1137)⁹⁰, the duty of the pulpit was assigned to the qāḍī, but this guardianship was not mentioned in the judiciary.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Lev, *State and Society*, 197.

⁸⁸ Seyyid, “Fâtımîler”, 12/233.

⁸⁹ Accordingly, the Ismā'īlī Qāḍī Abū al-Fāḍl Hibatullah b. Husayn b. al-Azraq, the Imamiyya Qāḍī Hibatullah b. 'Abdullah b. Kāmil, the Mālikī Qāḍī Muhammad b. “Abd al-Mawla, and the Shāfi'ī Qāḍī Muhammad b.” Abd al-Mawla. Abd al-Mawla and Shafi'i Qāḍī Abū al-Fath Sultan b. Ibrahim; Ibn Rashā was appointed. (525/1131) Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Ishr*, 162; Maqrīzī, *Rasā'il*, 114.

⁹⁰ Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, *Nuzhat al-Muqlatayn*, 43; Maqrīzī, *Rasā'il*, 123.

⁹¹ al-Manāwī, *al-Wizārah*, 163.

It is recorded that during the reign of Abū 'Abdullah b. Muyassar al-Qaysarānī, who served as a qāḍī al-quḍāt during the reign of Āmir Biahkāmillah (522/1128), the number of shuhūd increased from thirty to one hundred and twenty. Known for his steadfastness and patience in executing his duties, Ibn Muyassar is credited with establishing justice in both Egypt and Cairo. His meeting with the Fāṭimid khalīfah to release a group of people who were imprisoned, the khalīfah's preparation of a declaration for the merchants and reading it in the pulpit, and the minting of a large dinar that would remain in circulation for a long time upon his suggestion are recorded as a result of his active role in the judiciary and his closeness to the khalīfah. Some of his duties as qāḍī al-quḍāt include measuring the water of the Nile by proxy, dealing with al-Mazālim, preparing the sacrifice for the Khalīfah al-Āmir bi-Ahkām Allah's son's aqīqa, carrying the baby during the ceremony, and reading the pledge of al-Hāfiz Lidīnillāh's oath of allegiance. The actions and reforms recorded during Ibn Muyassar's term as qāḍī reveal his influence in both public and ceremonial matters, as well as his close relationship with the khalīfah.⁹²

The relationship between the qāḍī al-quḍāt and the dā'ī al-du'āt in the Fāṭimid administrative hierarchy highlights the distinction between judicial and religious authority. While both held significant roles, the qāḍī al-quḍāt took precedence in terms of authority and protocol, especially in legal and administrative matters. In the execution of the tax system, the qāḍī al-quḍāt had priority of authority over the dā'ī al-du'āt.⁹³ The dā'ī al-du'āt followed the qāḍī al-quḍāt in dress and grooming.⁹⁴ The qāḍīs could appoint nāibs, and their appointees

⁹² Qāḍī al-Āmin Thiqah al-Dawla Thanā al-Mālik Sharaf al-Ahkām, Umda Amīr al-Muminīn were the titles of the Qāḍī al-quḍāt Abu Abdullah B. Abi al-Faraj Muhammad b. Hibatullah b. Müyesser al-Qayserānī. He came from Keysāriyya with his father when he was a young boy in the days of Bedr al-Jamālī. His father undertook the duty of khutba in the Mosque of Amr b. Ās. He was from Arbāb al-Yasār. When Abū al-Hajjāj Yusuf b. Ayyūb al-Maghribī died, al-'Amr appointed Abū 'Abdullah as the qāḍī al-quḍāt of Egypt and other regions. He was replaced by Ibn Abī Uqayl. (531/1137) Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, 7/215; Maqrīzī, *Rasā'il*, 107.

⁹³ Sayyid, *al-Dawlah al-Fāṭimīyah fī Miṣr*, 276-277.

⁹⁴ Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, 3/558.

were called qāḍīs.⁹⁵ The duties of the qāḍī al-quḍāt and the dā'ī al-duāt, who preceded the penman and the clergy in rank, were sometimes combined. It is known that during the period when the khalīfah's authority weakened, the army commander, who had a say in administration and judiciary, also assumed the duty of qāḍī al-quḍāt. During the period when Amīr al-Juyūsh al-Badr al-Jamālī assumed the powers of judiciary and Ismā'īlī invitation, the qāḍī al-quḍāt and dā'ī al-duāt remained as his two deputies. (470/1077)⁹⁶ His dominance of judicial authority caused the qāḍī to remain representative.

The removal of the Ismā'īlī qāḍīs' authority in the judiciary marked the end of judicial proceedings at al-Azhar, the first Ismā'īlī center established in Egypt (566/1170). The gradual changes led to the rapid loss of Ismā'īlism's presence in Egypt.⁹⁷ The weakening of the Ismā'īlī legal system became particularly evident after the vizier Abū 'Alī al-Qutayfāt. Meanwhile, in Alexandria, where the influence of Ismā'īlism was less than in the interior, the Sunnī tradition, which gradually gained strength in the field of judiciary and education, undermined the superior position of Ismā'īlī law in the last period of the state.⁹⁸ This shift was primarily due to Alexandria's strategic role as Egypt's gateway to the Mediterranean, its significance as a major trade hub, and its close ties with the Muslim populations of North Africa and al-Andalus.

Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī's rise to the rank of vizier resulted in the dismissal of Shi'ī qāḍīs from office. Sadr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mālīk b. Dirbās al-Mārānī al-Hadabānī al-Shāfi'i was appointed as qāḍī al-quḍāt, and Shāfi'i qāḍī nāibs were appointed⁹⁹ in the provinces. (566/1171)¹⁰⁰ The

⁹⁵ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Raf' al-Iṣr*, 100.

⁹⁶ Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, *Nuzhat al-Muqlatayn*, 107; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, 4/81; Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 402-403; 'Awf, *al-Azhar fī al-f Am, Abriḥ Sanat 970 m- Abriḥ Sanat 1970*, 71-72.

⁹⁷ Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz al-Hunafā*, 2/319-320.

⁹⁸ Lev, *State and Society*, 139-140.

⁹⁹ al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 28/24; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 6/47.

¹⁰⁰ The Mālīkī Benū Hadīd from Ṭulayṭula (479/1086-7) were influential in the judiciary in Alexandria at the beginning of the sixth century and played a role in the establishment of Sunnī madrasas such as Abū Bakr al-Ṭurṭushī the vizier Ridwān b. Walāhshī, and Ādil b. Sellār. Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2/342-343; 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr,

dismissal of Ismā'īlī qāḍīs and the rise of Sunnī madrasas under Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī signaled the decline of Ismā'īlī legal authority in Egypt. After this appointment, the recitation of the Friday sermon in al-Azhar and the activities of the Ismā'īlī sect were terminated. On the other hand, leaving Qāḍī al-Fāḍīl (596/1200) in the presidency of the Diwan al-Inshā' was an important factor for the Ayyubids to establish legal legitimacy and dominance in official correspondence. As a result, the Ismā'īlī law, which was effective for a while after Nūr al-Dīn Zangī's arrival from Damascus, gradually weakened in the sixth century and was completely abolished with the rule of Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī.¹⁰¹

Conclusion

The Ismā'īlī, having established their state through organized invitation activities, significantly accelerated their administrative and legal developments during the Egyptian period. The judicial system was undoubtedly one of the key institutions that ensured the state's continuity. The Shi'ī-Ismā'īlī state lacked an established tradition or heritage, and the regions and societies under Fāṭimid rule had diverse pre-existing legal practices. Scholarly circles were already present in the Maghrib and especially in Egypt.

The evolution of the Fāṭimid judiciary reflects the interplay between political authority, sectarian identity, and legal practice in a context where no established Ismā'īlī legal heritage existed. In the early period, the state prioritized legal education—especially at al-Azhar—due to the limited number of Ismā'īlī legal sources and the small pool of qualified qāḍīs, many of whom had backgrounds as dā'īs. The judicial system was institutionalized through practices such as ceremonial appointments and the integration of qāḍīs into both legal and religious functions. These measures helped establish the legitimacy of the Ismā'īlī

al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyah, 1987), 9/362; Ṭāhā Walī, *al-Masājīd fī al-Islām* (Bayrūt, Lubnān: Dār al-ʿIlm lil-Malāyīn, 1988), 85; Fatih Kaya, *Geçmişten Günümüze Bir Eğitim Kurumu Olarak Ezher* (Ankara: İlahiyat, 2023), 19.

¹⁰¹ Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2/278; Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz al-Hunafā*, 2/319-320; Bayram, *Tārīkh al-Azhar*, 24; Sayyid, *al-Dawlah al-Fāṭimīyah fī Miṣr*, 238.

legal order while reinforcing the authority of the caliphate.

The central role played by Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān and his family marked a period of coherence and strengthening. However, in the later period, political instability, the increasing influence of viziers, and internal rivalries among qāḍīs gradually weakened the uniformity of the judicial structure. The inclusion of Sunnī qāḍīs—initially exceptional—became more common as the Fāṭimid state adapted to the religious diversity of its territories. This shift, especially during the state's decline, indicated a broader transformation in the legal landscape.

With the rise of Sunnī jurisprudence, the foundation of madrasas, and the political realignment under Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī, Ismāʿīlī legal authority receded to the periphery. What began as an ambitious effort to shape a distinct legal identity eventually gave way to a pluralist and Sunnī-dominated order. Still, the Fāṭimid experience offers a valuable case for understanding how legal institutions serve not only as instruments of governance but also as key arenas where ideology, identity, and political legitimacy are constructed and contested.

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