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MADDE YAYIMLANDIKTAN
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"Al-Raqqa, Namely Kalne" – Testimonies from the Cairo Geniza

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Abstract: The article concerns the medieval history of the strategic city al-Raqqa, situated at the junction of the Balikh and Euphrates Rivers. After an overview of the city's middle Islamic history, gathered from Islamic textual sources and archaeological finds, it focuses on the city's history during the fifth/eleventh century, which is also its most obscure period, on which the textual sources are silent and archaeological finds are scanty. Eleventh century al-Raqqa is revealed through several documents from the Cairo Geniza, which tell the story of the al-Lādhiqī family, whose members occupied leadership positions in the local Jewish community and around. Through the saga of the al-Lādhiqīs, some light is shed on the dimorphic rule exercised by the Bedouin tribe of Banū Numayr on the city and on the local Jewish community and the ways it integrated in the city and in the wider network of Jewish communities.

Keywords: al-Raqqa, Cairo Geniza, Fatimids, Banū Numayr, Manī' ibn Shabīb, the al-Lādhiqī family.

The present article constitutes an attempt to corroborate the information that can be extracted from the Cairo Geniza documents with the available general information about the city of al-Raqqa so as to provide a foundation for broader future research. It commences with a short overview of the city's Middle Islamic history gathered from Islamic textual sources and from archaeological finds. Its center is the reconstruction of the saga of a local Jewish family through several Geniza documents, shedding some light on the position of the Jewish community of Al-Raqqa within the Levant and its links with the local Muslim authorities. Through the lens of the Geniza documents we may gain a glimpse into the ways the fifth/eleventh century Bedouin leaders conducted their dimorphic rule on the fringe of the Fāṭimid Empire.

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