

LETTER TO EDITOR

Changes in the Scientific Strategy from the Fatimids to Salah al-Din Ayyubi

Dear Editor,

A very valuable article has been written entitled “Medical Developments during the Reign of Salah al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī and the Famous Physicians of the Period” which provides valuable information about Salah al-Dīn’s medical services. This article refers to the establishment of different hospitals and the advent of physicians who lived during this period and the content of medical education. (Basuguy, 2019, pp. 3-18)

Salah al-Dīn Ayubi (1137, Tikrit; 1193, Damascus) was a Kurd general who was trained in the Zengid government (1127-1259 AD) and reached high ranks in that era. He went to Egypt with the support of the Zengid and was appointed as the vizir of the Fatimid Caliphate (909-1171). After the Fatimids were weakened, he succeeded them and by eliminating the last ruler of the Zengid, he established the Ayyubid dynasty (1171–1260 AD) in the western parts of the Islamic lands. Of course, the reign of this Kurdish dynasty did not last long and in the end, it was divided into different branches and was eventually taken over by the Qan people, who according to the *Orkhon* inscriptions, had Mongolian roots. With the tact and intelligence of Salah al-Dīn, the authority of the Islamic lands was preserved in the western regions for many years, and Jerusalem came under his rule. In this article, we point out the

Kamran Mahlooji¹

1- M.S., Department of History of Medicine School of Persian Medicine, Tehran University of Medical Science, Tehran, Iran

Correspondence:

Kamran Mahlooji
M.S., Department of History of Medicine School of Persian Medicine, Tehran University of Medical Science, Tehran, Iran

k-mahlooji@farabi.tums.ac.i

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issues existing in the article in question that need to be corrected for future studies.

Whereas the primary hypothesis of the writer, as stated in the introduction, is in doubt, the whole article is written based on this hypothesis. Historical studies show that during the rule of the Fatimids, Muslims tried to keep a more tolerant attitude not only toward the Christians and Jews in their country but also toward other non-Islamic nations. This led to a glorious era of science, resulting in the emergence of the University of AL Zahra and other scientific centers. Some scholars consider the Fatimid era as an Islamic renaissance. (Barani and Mahdinejad, 2014, pp. 37-57) During this time, numerous scientists were raised; they wrote books in different fields. (Badkoube Hazaveh and Abdolmaleki, 2017, pp. 5-26) The emergence of radical groups ended this era, leading to the Crusader wars. It is not clear why the author of the article considered the reign of Salah al-Din as a time of Islamic revival.

As mentioned above, not only the Islamic renaissance happened before the Ayyubids, but also some scientists, like Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi who were known as the scientists of Ayyubid era, were executed by the order of Salah al-Din. (Parniani and Najafzadeh, 2015, pp. 86-107) Then, it is not clear why the author of the article considered this period of suppressing and killing the elites and practicing violence toward the Christians as that of Islamic revival.

After the collapse of the era of tolerance toward the non-Muslims, an era of warlords emerged which was against the scientific policy of Fatimids, and although it gained some success in practical and religious jurisprudence aspects, it does not seem to follow a proper scientific approach. Some hold that Salah al-Din had a hostile attitude toward the Fatimid schools. (Roohi and Seyedi Noghany, 2017, pp. 21-37.) So, this is why Salah al-Din's era cannot be considered as a renaissance. If they were few scientists, it was because of the Fatimids. On the other hand, the establishment of hospitals is considered as the medical development of that period. It is noteworthy that this development does not happen overnight. Hence, this cannot happen during the reign of one caliph. Furthermore, replacing the Fatimid palaces and cultural centers with new religious schools and hospitals cannot be considered as the sign of scientific strategy and development of medical education in this era. At the end of the article, the author tries to introduce some of the scientists and physicians of Ayyubid time, while the book of *Ateba misr ebr alosur al Islamiee* names the scientists of Fatimid era in 35 pages. (Betatoni, 1939, pp. 52-86) A comparison between the number of scientists and physicians of these two eras can be a solid reason for showing the development of medical knowledge in Egypt during the reign of Salah al-Din.

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