Eunuchs and slaves in the court of the Norman kings of Sicily

Jeremy Johns

Bibliography

(a) General: Primary Sources

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(b) General: Secondary Sources


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(c) Eunuchs in Norman Sicily: Primary sources

Note: The Arabic sources are conveniently collected in Michele Amari (ed.), Biblioteca arabo-sicula: Arabic texts, 1 vol. and 2 apps., Lepizig, 1857–1887 (BAS¹); Italian trans. 2 vols and 1 app., Turin, 1880–1889 (BAS²); revised Arabic texts (although with a few out-dated editions — e.g. Ibn Hawqal — and notable omissions — e.g. Ibn Qalāqīs), 2 vols, Palermo, 1988 (BAS³); revised It. trans., 3 vols, Palermo 1997–1998 (BAS⁴).


——— al-ʿIbar, 7 vols, Būlāq, 1868, vol. 5, p. 204 (BAS², vol. 2, 553; BAS³, p. 608); vol. 6, 191 (BAS², vol. 2, 559; BAS³, p. 614).

Ibn al-Qalaqīs: for texts concerning Richard, see notes and discussion in Johns, Arabic administration (below) pp. 233–234. (Not in BAS.)


(d) Eunuchs in Norman Sicily: Secondary Sources


Terms for eunuchs in Norman Sicily

**al-fatā**, pl. al-fītyān, lit. “youth”, from verb fāṭa / yaftā, “to be youthful”: a common euphemism for “eunuch” (e.g. Umayyad al-Andalus), for young and old alike; in both Umayyad Andalus and Sicily (and elsewhere) used as a title in royal documents, inscriptions etc., e.g. al-fatā Barrūn, “the eunuch Pierron”.

**al-fītyān al-majābīb** (Ibn Jubayr): “totally castrated eunuchs”. Ibn Jubayr’s source (Messina, winter 1184): “one of the eunuchs, called ʿAbd al-Masīḥ, “the Servant of the Messiah”, who is one of their leaders, and one of the most prominent amongst them”.

**al-khaḍīm**, pl. al-khuddām, “domestic servant” (Ibn Jubayr, Ibn al-Athīr, etc.: pace Ayalon, may or may not mean “eunuch”, but often does)

**al-khaṣī, pl. al-khiṣān** (Ibn Qalāqīs): “eunuch”;

**eunuchus**, “eunuch” < Greek εὐνοῦχος, < εὖνόι bed + -οχ- ablaut-stem of ἕχειν to keep; the literal sense is thus a bedchamber guard or attendant (all Greek and most Latin narrative sources)

**devirati homines** (“Hugo Falcandus”), lit. “un-manned men”: < devirātus coined from Latin ēvirātus, “castrated” < ēvirāre < ē “out” + vir “man”.

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**Putifares, “Potiphars”(Peter of Eboli: cf. “Putiphar eunuchus Pharaonis magister militum” (Genesis 38:35); “Putiphar eunuchus Pharaonis, princeps exercitus, vir aegyptius” (G. 39:1)

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**servus effeminatus** (“Hugo Falcandus”), “a [male] slave made woman”: < Latin effēminātus, < effēmināre, < ex “out” + fēmina “woman”.

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