



Consorts of the Caliphs: Women and the Court of Baghdad (Library of Arabic Literature)

Ibn al-Sai

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Consorts of the Caliphs is a seventh/thirteenth-century compilation of anecdotes about thirty-eight women who were, as the title suggests, consorts to those in power, most of them concubines of the early Abbasid caliphs and wives of latter-day caliphs and sultans. This slim but illuminating volume is one of the few surviving texts by Ibn al-Saʿī (d. 674 H/1276 AD). Ibn al-Saʿī was a prolific Baghdadi scholar who chronicled the academic and political elites of his city, and whose career straddled the final years of the Abbasid dynasty and the period following the cataclysmic Mongol invasion of 656 H/1258 AD.

Informed by the author's own sources, his insider knowledge, and well-known literary materials, these singular biographical sketches, though delivered episodically, bring the belletristic culture of the Baghdad court to life, particularly in the personal narratives and poetry of culture heroines otherwise lost to history.

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