

Female Power and Religious Change in the Medieval Near East engages with two levels of scholarly discussion that are all too often dealt with separately in modern scholarship: the Islamization of the Near East and the place of women in pre-modern Near Eastern societies. It outlines how these two lines of inquiry can and should be read in an integrative manner. Major historical themes such as conversion to Islam, Islamization, religious violence, and the regulation of Muslim/non-Muslim ties are addressed and reframed by attending to the relatively hidden, yet highly meaningful, role that women played throughout this period.

This book is about the history of Islam from the perspective of female social agents. It argues that, irrespective of their religious affiliation, women possessed crucial means for affecting or hindering religious changes, not only in the form of religious conversion, but also in the adoption of practices and the delineation of communal boundaries. Its focus on the role and significance of female power in moments of religious change within family households offers a historical angle that has hitherto been relatively absent from modern scholarship. Rather than locating signs of female autonomy or authority in the political, intellectual, religious, or economic spheres, *Female Power and Religious Change in the Medieval Near East* is concerned with the capacity of women to affect religious communal affiliations thanks to their kinship ties.

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