

joyful! In the lands of the Arabs, Persians, Byzantines and Russians, the words is in the hand of the Turks, and fear of their sword is firmly implanted in all hearts!"⁴² Bernard Lewis has recently cited a significant passage in Ibn Khaldūn's *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, in which the great historian brings up to date the concept of the Turk as noble savage which we detected in the writings of Jāhīz. He reviews the almost universal political domination of the Turks in his day, and notes how when the Muslims' luxury and sloth, their lack of vitality and courage in battle, had brought down upon their heads the invasions of the Tatars or Mongols, God had made Egypt a defensive bastion against the infidels, and raised up there a body of valiant defenders in the shape of the Mamlūks, brought from the strong and numerous tribes of the Turks. Moreover, he goes on, God in his providence has provided that wave after wave, and generation after generation, of fresh Turks should come into the Islamic world to prevent the old habits of lassitude and luxury from re-asserting themselves amongst the Muslims.⁴³ Such a passage as this seems to show that the Arab-Turkish antipathy, characteristic of the last decades or so, cannot be traced back to an ancient ethnic feeling, but is a product of the movement towards the setting-up of nation states which contributed to the disintegration of the Ottoman empire.

⁴² *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, ed. M. Iqbāl (London, 1921), pp. 13 ff., 17 ff., cf. O. Turan, "The ideal of world domination among the mediaeval Turks", *SI* (Paris, 1955), vol. IV, pp. 84-5.

⁴³ *Kitāb al-'Ibar* (Cairo, 1867), vol. V, p. 371, quoted in Lewis, "The Mongols, the Turks and the Muslim polity", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (London, 1968), 5th Series, vol. XVIII, p. 64.

CHANGES IN THE MIDDLE EAST (950-1150)
AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE DOCUMENTS
OF THE CAIRO GENIZA

by

S. D. Goitein

I feel a little bit odd and almost embarrassed to open this series of lectures on a most dramatic epoch of Islamic history with a paper on a society which might be regarded as living outside the main stream of the revolutionary developments forming the subject of this colloquium. The documents of the Cairo Geniza naturally have been found in Egypt; but Egypt was not the main theatre of the crucial happenings between 950 and 1150. True, the country of the Nile was the hub of the great maritime East-West trade developing during these centuries. Consequently, the Geniza has preserved priceless documents and letters which originated all along the trade route between Spain and India. But the crucial developments of lasting impact took place in this period in Īrān, 'Irāq, northern Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, as well as Syria, but not in Egypt.

Moreover, the Geniza papers originated mostly, although not exclusively, within the Jewish community, a minority group, and only in certain layers and sections of this group. The rich and influential Jews lived in Cairo, the seat of the government, and had no opportunity to dispose of their discarded writings in the Geniza chamber found in the synagogue of the Palestinians in Fustāt. In Fustāt itself the upper crust of the Jewish society was largely formed by Karaites and Iraqians, who also had synagogues of their own and deposited their papers in the lumber room of the Palestinian synagogue only in very exceptional cases. On the other hand, since Egypt had once formed a part of the Byzantine empire, the Palestinian synagogue, that means, the one which paid allegiance to the Jewish High Council, or *yeshiva*, of Palestine, which, of course, also had been Byzantine, always retained the communal leadership. It was the main synagogue for the whole area of the Egyptian capital, New Cairo included; there, the courts had their seat, and therefore, the Geniza is

such an inexhaustible source for legal and communal history.¹ Thus, while the communal leadership is very well represented in the Geniza documents, as a rule, it was the middle and lower middle classes, and not the economically and socially highest layer of Jewish society, which have left us their day-to-day writings in the Geniza.

If, after all these qualifications made, I still dare to hope that the Geniza is apt to provide us with much food of thought for the study of our period, I base my confidence on these three considerations:

First, *al-nās 'alā dīn mulūkihim*, "the common people adopt the ways of their rulers", and since they speak not to a public, but for inner consumption, their writings are far more revealing and form, so to say, a living commentary on the period, as seen from within and below. Fortunately, the years 950 through 1150 coincide with what I have called *the classical Geniza*, that is, which provides the richest and most valuable information. To be sure, very copious material is found for another hundred years, a little beyond the middle of the 13th century. But it is perfectly in order for our purpose to make use of this later material also, for it always takes time until changes in the upper layer of a society filter down to the common people. Charles Pellat, in his article "Jāhīz à Baghdād et à Samarra",² relates how the litterateur of Baṣra was impressed when he found that at the caliphal court people were seated on Tabaristān couches, that means, couches covered with Tabaristān brocade. A century later the Geniza shows that any better middle class Jewish bride had to get a Tabaristān or several Tabaristāns as part of her dowry. Another example: al-Balādhurī in his *Ansāb al-Ashraf* provides a rather detailed biography of Ibn al-Muqaffa' in his chapter on the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr. He describes with gusto how Ibn al-Muqaffa' teaches his Arab guests the refined table manners of the Persians, for instance, that it was not enough to wash one's hands with water, but one had to use for the purpose *ushnān*, soda ash, potash, alkali. In the Geniza, the trousseau of almost every bride of better circumstances included a *tawr ushnān*, a receptacle with alkali. Thus we see that something which once was presented by a Persian nobleman to Arab grandees as something very special, worth reporting in a history book, became some time later a simple necessity of life in every middle class home.

Another encouraging aspect of the Geniza finds is the enormous amount of information to be culled from the very extensive business

¹ For the richness of the Geniza, see S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, vol. I, *Economic Foundations* (Berkeley, etc., 1967), vol. II, *The Community*, 1971.

² *RSO* (1952), p. 55, n. 3. See also Goitein, *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (reimpression, 1968), p. 239.

correspondence included in them. In the extremely interesting *waṣīya* written by 'Alī al-Harawī for al-Malik al-Zāhir, the son of Saladin³ he recommends to the ruler for specific consideration the merchants who are *mawādd al-manāfi' wa-jawāsis al-'ālam*, "the providers of everything useful and the scouts of the world". If we wish to study that turbulent world of the Middle East during the High Middle Ages, we can do no better than entrust ourselves to the guidance of these spies and reconnoiters of that world, the *tujjār*.

Finally, *al-nās bi-azmānihim ashbah minhum bi-aslāfihim*. "People resemble their contemporaries more than their own ancestors." This saying is particularly applicable to the economic activities and social habits of the Geniza people. Even where we do not happen to possess a single Muslim or Christian parallel, we are permitted to assume that certain practices illustrated by Geniza finds were general, if such an assumption recommends itself and nothing else militates against it. For example, in the first volume of *A Mediterranean Society* I characterized the Fatimid economy as being partly a paper economy, because to a large extent payments were made not in cash but by transfer of debts and orders of payment. These procedures are referred to in many letters and documents and are known from literary sources. In addition, however, I pointed out, I had found in the Geniza slips with orders of commodities to stores or payments to banks, preserved mostly in groups of 5, 10, or 20, which showed that payment by orders and not in cash was a normal procedure not only in business, but also for regular household purposes. All these slips were in Hebrew characters and in Arabic language, but there was not the slightest reason to assume that those procedures represented anything specifically Jewish. A few weeks ago, alerted by my student Milton Kenneth Friedman, who was searching for fragments of marriage contracts, I came across at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, a whole bunch of such orders of delivery written in Arabic characters and patterned exactly like those in Hebrew letters, with the only exception that the signature is always preceded by the word *wa-kataba*. (ENA 3971, fs. 13-24, 31, 33, 34) (15 and more slips together in one volume of tiny Talmudic fragments). This find certainly was most welcome. But no sober scholar was in need for such confirmation of the conclusions drawn from the 70 or so slips in Hebrew characters made before.

We are now well aware of both the limitations and the value of the Geniza documents and able to appreciate what they may tell us about the manifold transformations during the centuries we are going to study in this

³ J. Sourdel-Thomine, "Le Testament politique du Shaikh 'Alī al-Harawī", *Arabic and Islamic Studies in honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb*, ed. G. Makdisi (Leiden, 1965), p. 11.

colloquium. It was a Janus-faced period, not of simple, but of double changes, of movements and countermovements. On the one hand, the final dismemberment of the caliphate, on the other, the miraculous self-assertion of the Muslims, the emergence of the idea of the *mamlakat al-Islām*, which by no means should be identified with, or exclusively attributed to the Sunni revival, for it preceded the latter by a century. On the one hand, the thrust of the Christian West: the advance of Byzantium, the Crusades, the Normans in Southern Italy and Sicily, the *reconquista* in Spain, on the other, the expansion of Islam, through the Ghaznavids in India and the Saljūks in Asia Minor; these were no unified movements of either Islam or Christianity, but advances separate in time and place, motivation and effect, but having as common denominator religious fervour, present in varying degrees of strength on different occasions. Then, there is the success of the Shi'a during the 10th century, which has been characterized as the century of the Isma'īliya, and the subsequent Sunnī restoration propped by the advent of the Turks. Finally, the consummation and utmost refinement of Arabism, as exemplified in the new poetry and the creation of the Maqāma, countered by the rise of the neo-Persian language and literature, which formed also the cultural medium for the education of the peoples in the East newly converted to Islam.

We should be aware of the fact that the period singled out by us here, overlaps and coincides in part with that characterized by Adam Mez as *Die Renaissance des Islam*. About the original meaning of the title of that book there can be no doubt. Mez was professor in Basel, and the name is, of course, modelled on the example provided by his famous compatriot Jacob Burckhardt in his book, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien*, which emphasized the revival in Italy of the 15th and 16th centuries of the art, literature, sciences and ideals of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Very little of this can be found in Mez' book, although he alludes to the classical heritage, when he deals with the geographical sciences, sufism, and law. The renaissance which he really has in mind is the revival of the pre-Arabic ancient East, which he underlines about forty times in his book, describing it partly with approval, but mostly with abhorrence. Not without nostalgia he speaks repeatedly about the waning of the Arab stamina and lovingly depicts that last consummation of Arabism in the new poetry and the maqāma to which I have alluded before. An additional trend which pervades his whole book and which has been assumed also for our period is the assertion that the 10th century created ways of life which remained unchanged until modern times.

With this, Adam Mez overlooked one factor which was already very much felt in his period, and became paramount in the subsequent century:

the coming of the Turks, who after all ruled that East uninterruptedly down to the 20th century. This oversight by the meticulous historian is due to another, even stranger, omission in his great book. In its 22 chapters he deals with each and every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life, with one exception, the army; the army, which certainly was the first and foremost concern of every Islamic ruler. Mez' book appeared in 1922, and a generation of students reared on Delbrück's *Weltgeschichte* (presenting world history as war history [or: as a history of wars]) was never able to understand how such an omission was possible. Perhaps because Mez was a citizen of Switzerland, which had not witnessed a war for generations. Anyhow, this deficiency explains why Mez was not sufficiently aware of the great impact of the Turks already in the period described in his book.

Since I shall have no opportunity to talk about the Turks in the course of my talk, I shall summarize immediately the few references found about them in the Geniza. The word Turk is comparatively rare and refers normally to Turkish soldiers. It is also found in the female name Turkiya, which appears in documents as from the second half of the 11th century, meaning of course simply a girl with a fair complexion (either that she was such at birth, or, rather, that her mother wished her to be so). The female name Khazariya, which is found already a hundred years earlier, has the same meaning. "Turk" appears also in the connection *al-Turk al-Ghuzz*. It occurs first in an unexpected context indeed. This is a letter sent from Toledo to Almeria, both in Spain, in the twenties or thirties of the 12th century, but at latest in 1139. The writer was Judah ha-Levi, the famous Hebrew poet, who, in private life, was a successful and well-to-do physician and, as such, also a communal leader. He dealt with the case of a Jewish lady who obviously had travelled in a Muslim caravan and was captured by Christian marauders. We remember that Toledo at that time was Christian. The ransom for an adult person was 33½ dinārs, and the letter reports how much of that amount had already been collected, with a view, of course, to get the balance through the efforts of the addressee. Among the contributors were *al-Turk al-Ghuzz*, who had provided 4 dinārs or so, a very substantial percentage of the total sum required. Who are these people? Professor Vernet of Barcelona, whom I asked this question, replied that Ghuzz were used as auxiliary troops in Spain and the Maghrib in the 14th century and there was even a quarter called after them in Fez. But here we are undoubtedly in the first half of the 12th century. Therefore I played with the possibility that *al-Turk al-Ghuzz* might be a nickname, although one would not expect a thing like this in such a context. Then, however, I found Ghuzz Turks as partners in a transaction. Thus, it

stands to reason that those mentioned in Judah ha-Levi's letter were Saljūq merchants, perhaps travelling in the same caravan as that lady, which should not surprise us too much, since nomads often are also great merchants, and the Saljūqs of Anatolia have left more numerous and gorgeous caravanserais than most other Islamic peoples. Claude Cahen, in his *Pre-Ottoman Turkey* (p. 164), mentions that these *hans* make their appearance only under Kilij Arslān II, that is, during the second part of the 12th century, but this means only that it took some time until the Saljūqs became desirous of more comfortable means of lodging than that provided by tent camps.

The other references in the Geniza to the Ghuzz show them from a less peaceful side. In an appeal to the Jewish community of Fuṣṭāṭ from the last third of the 11th century a widow says that her only remaining son was killed by the Ghuzz. An India traveller on his way to 'Aydhāb on the Sudanese coast reports to his son that the Ghuzz while pillaging Minya (in Upper Egypt) had robbed him of everything including his clothes and he was in such despair that he was prepared to take his own life—"had it belonged to him". This letter, which is written in Arabic characters, is from the second half of the 12th century, and the reference is probably to one of Shīrkūh's detachments.

By far the most important Geniza piece dealing with Turks is the long Hebrew poem, consisting of 150 lines, dedicated on Monday, January 23, 1077, to the caliph al-Mustanṣir and his vizier Badr al-Jamālī, on the occasion of the latter's victory over Atsiz, the Turkoman chieftain, before the gates of the Egyptian capital. The author of the poem was the chief judge of the Jewish community of Fuṣṭāṭ, Solomon ben Joseph ha-Kohen, and unlike similar creations, this encomium contains many realistic traits, perhaps unknown from other sources. The piece was edited in full, with facsimile and complete English translation by Julius H. Greenstone.⁴ I do not know whether it has been used by the writers of Fāṭimid or Saljūq history; if not, it should. For me, for instance, it was new that the army of Atsiz consisted of the following contingents: Armenians, Arabs, Latin Christians, Greeks, various peoples, three in number, called by biblical names and therefore not identifiable with certainty, one of them Tōgarma, which later became the regular Hebrew designation for Turks and Turkey, but which at that time, because of the similarity of sounds, might have stood for Turkomans. (There is also a slight chronological question. According to the Muslim sources, the battle was fought in Rajab 469 A.H., which started a week later, on January 26th, but the date in the Hebrew

⁴ *American Journal for Semitic Languages and Literatures*, vol. XXII (1905-6), pp. 144-75.

poem is given in great detail and cannot be mistaken.) I assume the poem was recited or delivered in writing on a Monday, because the caliph held a reception on this day. One might wonder what the caliph did with a poem in a foreign language of which he did not know a word. But it might well be that he did not understand the Arabic poems dedicated to him either.

We are now ready for our survey of the transformations in the Middle East during the High Middle Ages in the light of the Geniza documents according to the pattern of movements and countermovements which we have outlined at the beginning. Our survey is best opened by externalia, such as population movements and topographical changes. Besides direct references and implicit indications about which more will be said later, we possess one very important source for population movements, especially for the period prior to the year 1000, namely family names. Naturally, greatest circumspection is recommended for the use of this indicator. When a man is called Ḥijāzī or Hindī it does not necessarily mean that he or one of his ancestors had been a native of those countries, but rather that he or his father had often travelled there. The name Āmidī or Tustarī, both of which are common in the Geniza, does not always indicate that the family concerned came from Āmid or Diyārbakir (today in eastern Turkey), or from Tustar in south-west Persia, but most probably meant that it specialized in the fabrication or sale of Āmidī or Tustarī textiles. Only where we find a large group of family names referring to one region concentrated in another are we permitted to assume serious dislocations of the populace. And here we find indeed that Egypt and North Africa were flooded by people from Asia, especially from Īrān and 'Irāq, and not only from larger cities, such as Samarqand, Nishāpūr, Tūs, Hamadhān and Nihāwand, but also from many smaller places, such as Arrajān, Barzanj, Dāmghān, Kāzirūn, Shīnīz, Sinān, Sīrjān, Tawwaz, and others, to mention only Īrān. Many Persian family and personal names, such as Bābād, Babshād, Bakhtaway, Khodādād, Khoshnām, Kujik, Rozbih, Shāhīn, Shahryār, Yazdād, were common in the Geniza around the year 1000, but disappear almost entirely later. Names like Baghdādī, Dimashqī, Ḥalabī, Muqaddasī (more common in Hebrew Yerushalmī) are legion, but here I have the same doubts as those uttered with regard to Ḥijāzī and Hindī, for one Gaon, or head of an 'Irāqī *yeshiva*, writes in a *responsum* that many a native of Fuṣṭāṭ is called Baghdādī, because he had travelled to the city on the Tigris and stayed there for some time. Anyhow, the Geniza clearly indicates that Africa was during the early period of Islam a colonial area populated from the East. It was not only the rulers, as we have known for a long time, such as the Rustamides, the Spanish Umayyads, the Idrīsids, the Aghlabids, the Ṭūlūnids, the Fāṭimids and the Ikhshīdids,

who all had come to North Africa and Spain from Īrān and 'Irāq and other Asian countries, but an important part of the urban bourgeoisie as well. For this we have also literary sources, such as the well-known notice that after the foundation of Qayrawān the governor of Egypt was asked to send there a thousand Coptic or Jewish families, in order to put the economy of that city on its feet. Thus the testimony of the Cairo Geniza is certainly in accordance with what could be assumed to be a general trend of Islamic history.

For Tunisia proper an additional influx can be observed in the period before 1000, concerning which I am not sure whether it is not specifically Jewish, namely from southern Italy, which then was under Byzantine rule. Southern Italy, Sicily and Tunisia were the entrepôts of the Mediterranean trade during the 10th century, and, certainly not unconnected with this, southern Italy then also was a great centre of Jewish learning, so great indeed that a French Jewish scholar of the 12th century, Rabbenu Tam, applied to that region the words of Isaiah 11:3 saying: "Out of Bari shall go forth the Torah and the word of God from Otranto." The Jews had reason to leave southern Italy because of the persecutions by the Byzantine rulers. But I wonder whether the very important Christian population of Tunisia, which we are able to observe there during the 10th and 11th centuries did not come there largely from the same region. We should remember that southern Italy was exposed to raids by Muslims during most of the Aghlabid and Fāṭimid periods. Many of the Christian merchants might have found it more practicable to settle under Muslim rule in Qayrawān and al-Mahdiyya than to be in constant danger in those small south-Italian port-cities of being annihilated economically, or even to be massacred or sold as slaves. Anyhow for Jewish Qayrawān this influx from southern Italy was of greatest importance. In Italy, which was Byzantine territory, the Palestinian tradition prevailed. Tunisia, which was basically a colonial area settled from the East, paid allegiance to the *yeshivas* of 'Irāq, or, as we should say in a more Hebraic vein, Babylonia. This amalgam of Palestinian and Babylonian traditions produced the great centre of Jewish learning in Qayrawān, which had a sound economic foundation in the flourishing trade of that city and a congenial spiritual atmosphere in the very distinguished Muslim scholarship active there at the same time. Rabbenu Hananel and Rabbenu Nissim of Qayrawān are among the greatest Talmudic scholars whom no one, who makes even a fleeting acquaintance with rabbinical studies, can afford to neglect. Both are referred to in Geniza letters and documents, but to a far smaller degree than one would expect in view of their importance, which was fully recognized during their lifetime. (In a letter recently edited by me

tajdīd al-dīn, the revival of Jewish religion, is attributed to R. Nissim.) The reason for this deficiency was clearly that these scholars were connected with their colleagues in North Africa, Spain, Italy and France more than with those in the East.

Before the 10th century was out, the countermovement started. The once colonial area became prosperous and selfsufficient and was looking for markets of expansion. Besides, the caliphal government had moved to Egypt, and the court and the army always constituted the best customers. To be sure, the court of the Zīrids of Qayrawān remained one of the most sumptuous and luxurious for many decades after the exodus of the Fāṭimids from the West. Thus, the countermovement from the West to the East was effected in two waves, much different from each other. The first one, starting during the 10th century, was one of expansion; the second one, discernible already before the middle of the 11th, was a flight. During the first period, the merchant families of Qayrawān—I counted about thirty of them in the Geniza—tried to get a foothold in the East, that is, one or several members of the family settled in Egypt or in one of the cities of the Syro-Palestinian coast, while other sections of the family remained back in Tunisia. (One of the early settlers in Egypt was the Ibn 'Awkal family, whose business correspondence, consisting of about 45 pieces written between 998 and 1038, has been edited by me recently.) In the course of the 11th century, and even before the devastating incursion of the Hilāl and Sulaym bedouins, the economic situation of Tunisia deteriorated constantly because it became sidetracked by the direct trade between Spain, Italy and France on the one hand, and Egypt and the Syro-Palestinian coast on the other. Many merchants of Qayrawān strove to move eastwards, and what had been a council of wisdom before the pillage of Qayrawān in 1057, became a dire necessity thereafter. (See p. 32)

In the second half of the same century, a flight of people to Egypt from the opposite direction, Palestine, Syria, northern Mesopotamia and Iraq, discernible in the Geniza, might have to do with the Saljūq invasion. This was a terrible visitation especially as long as no stable government was established. The moving descriptions in the encomium on Mustanṣir of January 1077, which refer mainly to the horrors endured by the population of Palestine, are a living testimony to the causes of that flight. We know about it mostly from the lists of foreigners assisted or maintained by the Jewish community of Fustāṭ.

To be sure, unhappy Palestine never had peace during the Geniza period. Immediately after the Fāṭimid conquest of Egypt there were the great wars with the Carmatians, which were fought out on the soil of Palestine, then, in the 1020's there occurred the disturbances caused by the

bedouin hordes of Ibn Daghfal who took both Ramla and Jerusalem and perpetrated there atrocities, the like of which, we read in the Geniza in more than one source, had never been seen or heard of in Islam before. After the Turkomans and the Saljūqs came the Crusades, about which the Geniza has preserved many important documents; but even those translated by me into English have passed unnoticed in histories of the Crusades published subsequently.⁵ The upshot of all this was that Egypt, and in particular the Rīf, its smaller towns and villages, were flooded with people coming from Palestine, and, during the later part of the 11th century also from parts of Asia further east.

At the beginning of the 13th century, a rather strange population movement, the influx of French Jews to Egypt and Palestine is very much to be felt in the contemporary Geniza papers. The so-called emigration of 250 French rabbis to the Holy Land had long been known from literature and often been discussed, especially as some eminent French Jewish scholars moved to Palestine at that time. But seen from the relevant Geniza texts, which have not yet been collected appropriately, the movement was by no means an organized undertaking and the whole matter needs a new scrutiny in the light of the Geniza papers. For Middle Eastern history the matter is of interest only inasmuch as it shows that the Ayyūbid empire of an al-Malik al-ʿĀdil and al-Malik al-Kāmil must have appeared to Europeans secure and orderly enough to make emigration there attractive.

Shifts in population and in economic life are visible in the topography of cities. The Muslim geographers and antiquarians have paid much attention to such changes, but their material mostly comes from times somewhat later than the period we are concerned with here. Let me complement their detailed and interesting information about Fuṣṭāṭ with some new and significant items from the Geniza.

A Hebrew document from summer 959, that is, exactly ten years before the Fāṭimid conquest, makes mention of the Market of the Greeks, *shūq ha-yewānīm*, which is a rendering of *sūq al-rūm*, in the Fortress of the Candles, *qaṣr al-Shamʿ*, the old Byzantine nucleus of the Muslim city. This market, it seems, is not mentioned by the Muslim geographers and does not appear in later Geniza documents. Its disappearance from the Geniza can be explained only by its actual closing down, for it was situated on the *zuqāq Mīkāʿīl* (the Lane of Michael, then a Christian, not a Jewish, name) and the *zuqāq al-masākīn*, the Lane of the Poor, which both occur frequently in later documents. Thus it stands to reason that the market was abolished in early Fāṭimid times. Instead, we find two other localities bearing out-

⁵ For the benefit of future students of the Crusades I should like to remark that in *Speculum* Vol. XXXIX (1964), pp. 744-5, I have shortly surveyed these sources.

landish names and dedicated to export to Christian countries. One is the *dār Mānak*, occurring in scores of accounts as from the end of the 10th century and found also in literary sources. All merchandise leaving Fuṣṭāṭ for abroad went through *dār Mānak* and paid a toll there. The most feasible derivation of this strange term is *monach*, monk. The dignitaries of the church, including the patriarch of Alexandria, much like the Muslim Qāḍīs and the Jewish *dayyānīm*, used to be active in economic life. Thus, there is nothing strange in the assumption that a *dār wakāla* or warehouse and bourse, which later was used as a toll station, originally was founded by a man, popularly called the monk (just as *al-Rāhib* was the nick-name of that notorious finance minister, Abū Najāḥ, who was put to death in 1129).

A second bourse bearing a Greek name was the flax market, the *qālūs(s)*, obviously Greek *kalos*, which appears also as a proper name in the Geniza. Thus, this place, too, originally might have been instituted by a non-Muslim. (The Muslim antiquarians tell all kinds of fanciful stories about it.) When a letter inquires about *as ʿār al-qālūs*, it means the prices of the various types of flax.⁶ During the 11th century, flax was the staple export of Egypt to the Muslim West and to Europe.

As frequent the *dār Mānak* and the *qālūs* were in the accounts and the letters of the 11th century, in the 12th century they disappear completely. The *qālūs* is still mentioned occasionally as a landmark in topographical descriptions, but never in business papers. In addition to European naval superiority becoming paramount in this century other factors might have accounted for this decline. Tunisia, the greatest customer for Egyptian flax during the 10th and 11th centuries was now in a shambles and its renowned linen industry of Sūsīs and other famous fabrics had much shrunk. And I wonder whether an expanding European production of flax had not ousted the Egyptian varieties from the markets of Sicily and southern Italy. I do not know whether it is possible to verify such an assumption from European sources or even from a chemical examination of the textiles still extant in our museums and other places.

Almost the opposite development is to be observed for another topographical landmark, the *Murabbaʿa*, the Square, as the *Murabbaʿat al-ʿAḥḥārīn*, Square of the Perfumers, in Fuṣṭāṭ used to be called shortly. The reports of the Muslim geographers and antiquarians about this place are rather confused and the same impression is to be gathered from the description in Paul Casanova's *Essai de restitution de la ville d'al-Foustat*. The cause of this confusion is easily to be discovered. As is only natural, this commercial centre Fuṣṭāṭ underwent structural changes, while the

⁶ For 21 varieties of Egyptian flax, differing very much in price, see *Mediterranean Society*, vol. I, pp. 455-7; a further two have since been noted.

descriptions try to unify information derived from chronologically different sources. At the beginning of the 11th century, when the trade in oriental spices and perfumes started to gain momentum, we read in the Geniza about the *Murabba'a qadīma*, the old *Murabba'a*, alongside the *Murabba'a*, just about the same time the Persian traveller Nāṣir-i-Khosraw found a small and a large *Murabba'a* in Nishāpūr.⁷ The heyday of the *Murabba'a* of Fustāṭ was the late 11th, the 12th and the early 13th centuries. I believe it is an understatement to say that one third of the Geniza letters with a more detailed address (that means more than the mere indication of the city) were directed to the *Murabba'a*. A Jewish 'aṭṭār, or ṣaydalānī, apothecary or *safūfī* (procurer of medical powders) or *sharābī* (which should be translated "seller of medical and culinary potions", not "wineseller", this was called *nabbādih*), in short, a Jewish drugstore, was found on every street corner in Fustāṭ, even in a purely or predominantly Muslim neighbourhood, and sometimes even two in one street at the same time, but these, as we learn from their accounts, were retailers. The big 'aṭṭārīn, the wholesalers, those who were also engaged in the international trade of spices, perfumes and medical herbs, had their seat on the *Murabba'a*. If the synagogue was one centre of the Geniza world, the *Murabba'a* was the other. Still, I believe I am able to prove from the Geniza that the Jewish share in this great international trade was only a small percentage of the whole volume.

In conclusion I wish to summarize the great socio-economic, communal, and spiritual transformations undergone by the Geniza people during the period considered in this colloquium, transformations which might be indicative also, at least in part, for the surrounding Muslim and Christian societies.

Again, movement and countermovement, efflorescence and decline of the middle class, partly connected with the changing patterns of world trade and of government. During the 11th century, the naval superiority of Europe was in the ascendancy, but still far from complete. The Geniza shows us a vigorous and cultivated middle class, carrying on a flourishing mediterranean trade travelling on ships bearing Arabic names. I have collected the names, routes and other details of about 150 such ships—all from the 11th century. From the 12th century, I have only *markab al-sultān* and *markab al-qā'id*. There were certainly others. But as from 1120 approximately, only a few business letters of importance relating to the Mediterranean trade have been identified thus far. Instead, the India papers, which had been only a trickle during the 11th century, become

⁷ *Sefer Nameh*, ed. C. Schefer (Paris, 1881), p. 280.

now a flood. Every one invests now in the commerce with Yemen, East Africa and India and even farther afield. This can only mean that for middle class undertaking the Mediterranean had become closed. By the beginning of the 13th century the India trade, too, fizzles out. Whether this was due to the ever more growing power of the Kārim merchants, as is likely, I would not wish to discuss here. The little capital left to the middle class was now invested in local ventures. Everyone had a share in a *maṭbakh sukkar*. Reading Ibn Duqmāq or Maqrīzī, one immediately realizes that in Ayyūbid and Mamlūk times these sugar factories simply dominated the landscape of Fustāṭ, and also that the Jewish share in this industry was tangible. In the Mamlūk period, as is well known, this branch of economic activity was also taken out of the hands of the independent middle class; it became a state monopoly.

In this connection something must be said about the employment of Christians and Jews as government servants and agents, which was very much pronounced in Fāṭimid and—not less!—Ayyūbid times, but vehemently opposed in the Mamlūk period. This change was attributed on the one hand to the rising tide of bigotry and fanaticism and on the other, to the replacement of the ancient type of government servant, the secular *kātib*, by the religious scholar, the *faqīh*. This might be correct. But I wonder whether there was not involved another, socio-economic factor, one connected with the evanescence of the middle class. Government service was not enviable; remember al-Jāhīz' *Risāla fī dhamm al-kuttāb* and his praise of the merchants. As long as the Muslim middle class found lucrative occupation in trade, it willingly abandoned government service to the minorities. When, in the course of the 12th and the 13th centuries free enterprise became more and more limited in scope, the sons of the Muslim merchants had to look for positions in the government and it became necessary to oust the Christians and Jews.

Another phenomenon, the enormous growth of the charitable foundations, the *Waqf*, seems also to be connected with the mounting restriction of mobility and economic possibilities described before. Appendix A of vol. II of *A Mediterranean Society* contains descriptions of 184 documents related to the *Waqf* or *Qōdesh*, or *Hegdēsh* of the Jewish community, mainly in Fustāṭ. Around the middle of the 10th century, it was next to nothing, only three or four properties; around the middle of the 11th, about ten. By the end of the 12th over fifty. And by then, the community had not increased, rather decreased. We have less exact information about the development of the Muslim *waqf*. But there is no doubt, that, in Egypt, at least, it became a most prominent feature of socio-economic life only by

the end of the 12th century. This strange system, by which the dead provide for the living, is typical for a society which is becoming static and ceases to be competitive and enterprising.

The greatest donators naturally were the rulers. And here I must state the strange fact that neither Muslim sources, as far as I know, nor the Geniza make mention of any hospital founded by the Fāṭimids during the 200 years they ruled over Egypt. In fact, during the whole Fāṭimid period the Geniza knows only one hospital, *the (bi)māristān* in Fustāṭ, presumably the one founded by Aḥmad ibn Ṭulūn or Kāfūr. On the other hand, following the great Mesopotamian tradition, we have the fine institutions of Nūr al-Dīn in Damascus and elsewhere and of Saladin in the capital of Egypt, repeatedly referred to in the Geniza. In general it seems that the Ayyūbids paid more attention to the affairs of their subjects, including non-Muslims than the Fāṭimids. They interfered more in the internal life of the Jewish community perhaps because the very character of that community had changed, as we shall presently see. Wherever we are able to check, we recognize that the interference of the Ayyūbid, like the Fāṭimid, government was set into motion not by its own initiative, but by acts of the *dhimmi*s. That even great Ayyūbid rulers like al-Malik al-ʿĀdil and al-Malik al-Kāmil did not care very much for the proper functioning of the non-Muslim communities can best be concluded from the fact that the see of the Coptic patriarch remained unoccupied during their reigns for full 19 years (1216–35). Thus, for the conduct of their communal life, Christians and Jews were left to their own devices and therefore their communal life can be taken as the safest indicator of the inner development of their society.

To sum up, as far as the Jews are concerned, our period was the dissolution of the last remnants of classical antiquity with its corporate organization of public life. As the Geniza shows, until the middle of the 11th century the ancient corporate organization was still intact both on the ecumenical and the local level. The Jewish community at large was led by the *yeshivas*, or High Councils, of Baghdād and Jerusalem, which possessed a rather strict inner organization. (A *yeshiva* is essentially not an educational institution, but a mixture of High Court, Academy and Parliament, the like of which is found also, with variations, elsewhere. The word, it seems, is a translation of Greek *synhedrion*, or perhaps, the other way round, Greek *synhedrion* is a translation of *yeshiva*). On the local level, the communities were administered predominantly by the laity with vivid participation of the *plenum* of the congregation assembled in the synagogue. By the early 13th century the ecumenical institutions had disappeared in substance, if not in name, and the local communities were more or less

administered by the *dayyān* who acted like a *qādī*. However, the local community retained something of its corporate character.

Culturally, we witness complete Arabization and Iraqization. Most of the documents of the 10th century and many of the early 11th are in Hebrew. By the end of the 11th century (with a few exceptions of formularies in Aramaic) all legal documents are in Arabic. The *script* used in the earlier documents was the quadrangular, that is, variations of the Hebrew you see today in print. As from the middle of the 11th century, the cursive script, developed in the *yeshiva* of Baghdad, became paramount everywhere. The *law*, which in the older documents shows a refreshing variety of Palestinian customs, becomes during the 11th century entirely streamlined in accordance with the rules laid down in the *yeshivas* of Babylonia. This should not be connected with the victories of the Saljūks and Sunnite orthodoxy, nor be compared with the dying out of the Muslim Syro-Palestinian law school of al-ʿAwzāʿī, but be attributed to the population movements mentioned before. By 1100 most of the Jews of Fustāṭ and Alexandria were Maghribīs, whose ancestors had migrated to the Maghrib from ʿIrāq.

In the field of material civilization, Iraqian, or let us say, Eastern influence was exercised directly, continuously and in different fields and stages. The architectural nomenclature is flooded with Persian terms, some of which pose quite a problem inasmuch as they designate things which had been undoubtedly known in Egypt prior to the rise of Islam. Two, extremely frequent examples: the ventilation chimney or wind-catcher which draws the cool north-wind into the inner part of a house was in use already in Pharaonic times, but is called in the Geniza invariably by its Persian designation *bādhahanj*. In the descriptions of houses we often find details about the *bādhahanj*, and it may be that the experts will find differences between the ancient Egyptian contraption and that reflected in the Geniza. A different case is the *rawshan*, which is not a simple window, but a closed balcony, or protruding part of an upper floor with a window often forming objects of lawsuits. For the Persian *rawshan* often Hebrew *gezoztra* is used, which is Greek *exostra*, rendered also in the Arabic form *ʿaskar*, spelled exactly like the Arabic word for "army". (Naturally, I have not found the word in any Arabic dictionary in this sense, but the contexts leave no doubt about its meaning.)

The Persian architectural terms are to be found throughout the Geniza and must have come to Egypt at a very early time. The matter was different with regard to the Eastern words for household utensils and clothing. Here we are able to observe when new terms, probably designating new things, are coming in. The Persian word for cup, *qifk* (in the Geniza *qifq*, pl. *qifāq*, also not found in any Arabic dictionary) does not appear before

1150. And the most common piece of female clothing in the lists of trousseaus after 1200 is *qajīja*. Sometimes a bride gets four or five *qajījas* and they form the main part of her wardrobe.

Finally, mention must be made of natural catastrophes which, during the Middle Ages, were of such great impact on human history. Remember the Black Death. By chance, the two great watersheds of Geniza history, to which we have so often referred in this paper, around 1075 and around 1200, coincided with periods of great famines and plagues. There were a number of such catastrophes between 950 and 1150, and the Geniza proves that the Jewish community of Fustāṭ knew how to take care of its indigent members in such distress. After 1075 a new chapter of history sets in for the people represented in the Geniza, but it was one of brilliant recovery. The great famine and plague of 1201–2 was different. Fustāṭ was destroyed not by Shāwar's setting fire to it in 1168, as had been believed, but by the Great Plague. At that time, the population, at least its Jewish section, about which we have rather detailed statistical data, was reduced to a small fraction of its former size, and its power of resistance and resilience had gone.

Note to page 25.

The Ibn 'Awkal family is representative not only for the move from North Africa to Egypt, but also for the preceding migration from Persia to the West. A manuscript preserved in the University Library Cambridge, TS Arabic Box 42, fol. 176, contains a letter, partly in Arabic and partly in Judaeo-Persian sent to Jacob Ibn 'Awkal and his son Joseph (around 990), which shows that the family despite its Tunisian nickname was of Iranian origin.

Dr. Norman Stillman, assistant professor of Islamic studies at New York University, studied the Ibn 'Awkal archive in his Ph.D. thesis, "East-West relations in the Islamic Mediterranean in the early eleventh century," University of Pennsylvania, 1970.

ADMINISTRATION IN BÜYID QAZWĪN

by

R. Mottahedeh

The collapse of 'Abbāsīd government during the early 4th century A.H. forced many local Islamic communities to work out ways of dealing with the near anarchy which accompanied this collapse. This essay will describe the adjustment of the people of Qazwīn to new conditions, compare their history with the history of other communities in the Jibāl, and discuss the possible relevance of such local history to the subject of this conference—can we consider the fourth and fifth centuries a turning point in Islamic history?

Qazwīn offers an unusually favourable subject for such a study. The unedited biographical dictionary *Kitāb al-Tadwīn fī Dhikr Ahl al-'Ilm bi-Qazwīn* by al-Rāfi'ī¹ gives approximately three thousand biographies of Qazwīnīs for the period from the Islamic conquest to the end of the 6th century A.H.—a surprisingly large number of entries for a relatively small town. The author mentions—along with the relators of *ḥadīth* who are his principal interest—several local officials, especially local *ru'asā'* or headmen. When the biographies of these officials are set in the context of the administrative history of the Būyid kingdom of Rayy, they show that relations between the local and the central government were more complex than the chronicles written in Baghdād or Rayy imply.

From the middle of the 3rd century, when 'Alid rulers established governments in the Caspian provinces of Īrān, Qazwīn was in the path of the march and countermarch of caliphal, Daylamite and eastern Iranian armies. In less than a century the Qazwīnīs were ruled in turn by the 'Alids of Ṭabaristān, the Ṭāhirids, the Ṣaffārids, the Sāmānids and finally

¹ Abū'l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Rāfi'ī; Istanbul Ms., Koğuşlar 1007, 311 folios. This manuscript was written in 676, about a half a century after the death of the author. Al-Rāfi'ī's information on the 3rd and 4th centuries is largely based on the lost *Irshād* of al-Khalil b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥāfiẓ. Al-Rāfi'ī includes many scholars from villages near Qazwīn, and since this essay deals with the people in and near the town who considered themselves and were considered by others to be Qazwīnīs, I have frequently used the word "community" instead of town to make clear that I am not referring to a narrowly defined administrative unit. I hope to give a fuller description of this manuscript in a forthcoming book on Būyid administration in the Jibāl.