

CHAPTER ONE

JOSEPH B. DAVID LEBDI AND HIS FAMILY

A. *Lawsuit of Jekuthiel al-Hakim vs. Joseph Lebdi*

I, 1-2 *Session of the Rabbinical Court of Fustat*

Fustat, November 9, 1097

I, 1. ULC Add. 3418

I, 2. ULC Add. 3421

Two separate sheets, the format usual in record books. Stains and holes. ULC 3421 is the direct continuation of 3418. The two sheets might have been connected and bound together with others related to the same lawsuit. But no holes through which threads might have been fed are visible. ULC 3421v also contains the beginning of I, 4. The document was written by Hillel b. Eli al-Baghdadi, an experienced court clerk. For information about him and the other signatories, see nn. 32 and 34.

This court record is a model of the proceedings at a session of the Jewish court of Fustat. The exact identification of time, place, and the parties concerned is followed by:

- A. *The claims of the plaintiff* (I, 1, line 6-I, 2, line 8). He enumerates the textiles (I, 1, lines 6-12), silver vessels (lines 13-18), types and weight of copper (lines 18-20), corals (lines 20-21), medical and culinary plants (line 20-verso, line 1) and cash delivered to the defendant (verso, lines 1-3), as well as the instructions given to him for actions to be taken in Aden and India (lines 5-9).
- B. *Explanations by the defendant* about his transactions in Dahlak on the southwestern coast of the Red Sea, in Aden, and India (verso, line 9-I, 2, line 1).
- C. *Questions* addressed by the Court to the defendant and the plaintiff and their answers (I, 2, line 1-verso, line 2).
- D. *Declaration* of the defendant that having delivered to the plaintiff cash and goods of the total value of 200 dinars and forgone claims to certain items due to arrive from Aden, the case, as far as he was concerned, was settled (lines 3-7).

The record is concise and quite vivid, because it was customary for the presiding judge to summarize the statements of the parties, which were then written down by the clerk during the proceedings. Occasionally the parties corrected their statements (or perhaps the summary of the judge); cf. the deletions and corrections in 1*v*, line 14, and I, 2, line 13.

No written contract made before a notary was produced in court and certainly none had existed; cf. page 32. No doubt, a *tadhkira*, or memorandum, like those in II, 33–34 {see the introduction there; II, 43, II, 44, II, 50} or VII, 50, and frequently found in the Geniza, was handed over to Joseph Lebdi and copied in the account book of Jekuthiel, as is proved by the detailed and precise claims submitted by the latter in court. The *tadhkira* specified forwarded goods, their quantities, the persons carrying them {and the recipients}.

The arguments heard in this session are echoed in subsequent meetings of the court and in the two letters sent by Joseph Lebdi to Ḥasan b. Bundār of Aden (I, 13 and 14), where they find additional clarification.

Translation

Re: Abū Ya'qūb, the Doctor, vs. M. Joseph of Tripoli.

[I, 1] (1) *This happened on Monday, Kislev 2, (2) 1409 of the era with which we are accustomed (E.D.), (3) in Fustat of Egypt, which is situated on the Nile River.*

(4) Mr. Jekuthiel, son of Mr. Moses, *the Doctor*—(5) *may he rest in Eden!*—sued Mr. Joseph, *known as The Son of the Lebdis* {alt. tr.: Ibn al-Lebdiyya}, for sixty-two pieces¹ (6) of clothing, as follows: eight *fūṭas*² of brownish pink {lit., 'partridge [eye]'} color, (linen) with silk;³ a red silk *fūṭa*, (7) and another, green one, both manufactured in Miṣr (Old Cairo),

¹ {As with English 'piece,' one (whole) item or unit is designated *qiṭ'a*. This use is common in our papers, e.g., II, 20*v*, lines 8–9, II, 26*v*, lines 11–12, a 'piece' of rose water. Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣir*, 140, refers to *qiṭ'at al-nīl*, a 'piece' of indigo. This same usage appears in the thirteenth century documents from the Red Sea Port of Quṣayr for units of wheat, rice and flax; see Guo, *Commerce*, 30–31. Cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:371.

² For this garment, see pages 175–80.

³ The phrase 'with silk' is to be understood as meaning 'linen with silk' {read: '(silk) with silk' (?)}, cf. II, 44*v*, lines 23–24 'two *fūṭas*, either silk with silk, or silk with linen,' ordered in Fustat-Cairo.

made by Burayk;⁴ a Dabīqī (linen)⁵ *mulā'a* wrap⁶ (8) with silk borders and gold threads,⁷ a Sūsī, Rūsī⁸ *fūṭa*; and a chest (9) with textiles made in Miṣr (Fustat), numbering forty pieces of (10) white, 'raw' {alt. tr.: 'not fulled'} kerchiefs {alt. tr.: *iḥrāms*};⁹ five dotted grayish-blue {lit., 'chick-pea patterned, lead-colored'} *fūṭas* and a complete, separately packed (11) goat's hair *fūṭa*; two matching brocade¹⁰ women's half-mantles¹¹ (12) of high quality with badges {alt. tr.: markings}; a piece of *muthallath* ('triple-thread' fabric);¹² a 'fulled' half-*thawb* (robe);¹³ a loincloth for fastening the textiles.

⁴ The name Burayk was not common among Jews, but was found in Qayrawān (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:258, bottom), Alexandria ({below, II, 34, side, e, line 1, side f, line 10} TS 28.19 {see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:210}) and Fustat (ULC Add 3336, margin, a letter addressed to Ezekiel b. Nethanel Dimyāfī). It is attested in the Geniza also as the name of a Melchite Christian (TS 8.224, sale of a house by his daughter). It was rare among the ancient Arabs (Ibn al-Kalbī, 2:229). Here it is the name of a well-known manufacturer of textiles in Fustat, whose religion is not indicated.

⁵ {On the common Egyptian Dabīqī linen, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:165–66, 401, n. 113, and references there; cf. al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 419 and references there.

⁶ The *mulā'a* was worn as an outer garment, when going outside, and served as a night cover (both usages appear together in the dowry list in I, 36, fol. 47, lines 30, 49). See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4, esp. 116, 166, 452, n. 33; Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 230 (index).

⁷ Arabic *muḡaṣṣaba*. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:214, 426, n. 465. (According to al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 290, fine linen gauze.)

⁸ Made in Sūsa, Tunisia. {See Diem, *Dictionary*, 108–109, and sources cited there. For Rūsī see the Appendix ('*Fūṭa*').} This item was so precious that Joseph Lebdi obtained 30 dinars for it in Dahlak, one half of the worth of all the textiles delivered to him by Jekuthiel and sold in that port. See I, 5, line 13.

⁹ {The *iḥrām* is mentioned in I, 5, line 8. Also VI, 16, lines 20–22: "17 white *iḥrāms* manufactured in Alexandria." Maimonides, in his commentary to Shabbat 20, 5, defines *sādīn* as: "a small wrap (*ridā*), which we call *iḥrām*" (see Shailat, Shabbat, 172). Besides the garment worn by a pilgrim, this is defined by Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:279, as a cover for the bath or a cover for the head and shoulders or only for the shoulders. Note the forty pieces of cloth mentioned in I, 4, lines 7–8. Below, 'kerchief' usually translates *mandīl*, for which see page 185, n. 8.

¹⁰ Arabic *mudabbaj* (also in I, 22, line 24; I, 36, fol. 47, line 20), i.e., *dibāj* work. For *dibāj* (I, 36, fol. 47, lines 36, 38–40, 49), see Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 201–202, 245 (index); Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:20 (s.v. brocade); Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 12, 22, 46; Gil, "Silk," 32 (according to whom it is the most frequently used word for silk cloth in the Geniza) does not mention brocade.) 'Matching' translates *miṭā'yya*, derived from *miṭw*, pl. *miṭā*, peer, similar.

¹¹ Arabic *Nisfayn ardiya* is the dual of *niṣf ridā*, half-mantle, a piece of female clothing fairly common in the Geniza {cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:397, n. 31}.

¹² 'Three-thread,' twill, a heavy fabric, used for garments, covers of mattresses, and caps worn beneath more sumptuous head covers, common in the Geniza, but seemingly not found in this sense in the dictionaries. Discussed in Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 4:114, 379, n. 44 {where this document is cited. Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 57: "literally 'triangle cloth', perhaps a fabric with three different types of thread"; Gil, "Silk," 33, defines it a 'triple-layered.' According to Lebdi's statement in I, 5, lines 15–16, this piece of *muthallath* was used for wrapping the textiles.

(13) Silver vessels: a 'burned,' inlaid¹⁴ sprinkler, weighing 70 dirhems; (14) a gilded inlaid flask, weighing 2 1/4; a censer with a handle {lit., 'a handle of a censer'}, niello- (15) ornated,¹⁵ 'burned,' inlaid, weighing 82 dirhems; a water jug with its lid, (16) niello-ornated and gilded, weighing 78 1/2, a wash basin, niello-ornated (17) and gilded, 52 1/4, a niello-ornated gilded bowl, weighing (18) 55 dirhems.

Copper:¹⁶ hammered yellow copper (brass), and also cast copper, (19) both in a bundle {alt. tr.: bag} weighing 110 Egyptian pounds.¹⁷

Corals: (20) two sales-units less one tenth.¹⁸

¹³ For 'not fulled' (line 10) and 'fulled' material, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:177-78; and below 426, n. 69. Cf. Gil, "Flax," 82-83 (some of his linguistic notes merit reconsideration, in my opinion). 'Half-robe,' Arabic *nisf thawb*. This item is rare; cf. I, 5, line 15. The *thawb* meant both the standard robe that covered the whole body and a piece of cloth of the size needed to make it or one of twenty *fiṭas* or was used as a general term for garment. See page 179, n. 30; 304, n. 8; IV, 1, lines 2-4; and the discussions in Goitein, *ibid.*, 1:229, 2:131, 4:180; Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 12, 78-79.

¹⁴ 'Burned' = *muhraq*; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:223, '*muhraq*, burnished with gold'; 392, n. 42, "burnt silver" *muhraqa* (not listed in the Index but in Diem, *Dictionary*, 40). For the confusing use of *muharraḡ* (so vocalized), see al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 430 (and references there), according to whom, when used for silver, it means 'blackened or inlaid with niello' (see the following note) or possibly 'etched,' while *muharraḡ bil-dhabab*: 'silver etched then inlaid with gold.' As noted *ib.*, 395, the word is spelled *mukharrāḡ* (i.e., with a diacritical over the letter *h*), 'perforated,' in one source. The spelling in Hebrew characters, in the Geniza texts, irrefutably demonstrates the correct reading of the letter (*h* rather than *kh*). 'Inlaid' = *mughraq*, which according to al-Qaddūmī, *ib.*: 'silver overlaid with gold, profusely ornate.'

¹⁵ Arabic *yad midkhana mujrah sawad*. For the *midkhana*, 'censer,' see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:137-38. For 'niello-ornated,' see Goitein, *ib.*, 212-13, 425, nn. 452-55, where the year 1117 for the earliest dated Geniza document, in which this is found, is to be corrected to 1097, as indicated by its use here in I, 1. Goitein, *ib.*, 4:425, n. 454, comments that since *mujrah*, 'niello,' is spelled in Hebrew characters *mgry*, the letter *g* could represent Arabic *j* or *gh*, and that the correct reading is ascertained by the appearance of the word in two Arabic sources. To these the many citations in al-Qaddūmī, *ib.*, 431 can be added; there the term does not appear with 'black' and it is explained as 'inlaid' (see here the preceding note). Since here the same item is described *mujrah sawad* and in the continuation, *muhraqa*, it is obvious that both terms cannot mean niello; see preceding note. For the niello technique in medieval sources, especially in Jewish literature, see Narkiss, "Niello" (thanks to Nurit Reich for this reference). According to him the technique probably was introduced in Europe from the East in the Middle Ages and was known to Spanish Jewry in the 13th century. For the niello technique in Yemen, see Qāfīh, "*Lāz*."

¹⁶ Arabic *nahās* (also verso, line 15, deleted). For the meaning of this term, see page 555, n. 11.

¹⁷ 'Pound' translates *raṭl*. For exact values of the Egyptian *raṭl*, see Ashtor, "Weights," 472-74.

¹⁸ Corals, *marjān*, "were sold wholesale (by the thousands) in 'selling units,' *bay'a*" (Goitein, "Portrait," 457, n. 33). According to al-Dimashqī, corals were put on the market in quantities of 10.5 Egyptian *raṭls* (pounds) (Dietrich, "*Marjān*"). This is a common

Scammony:¹⁹ the blue one, (weighing) 20 dirhems.

(21) Storax: the dry, red one, a load weighing 380 *manns*.²⁰

Lichen (22) 400 *manns*, exactly;

Dodder of thyme from Crete: 10 *manns*.

[Verso] (1) A barrel of fluid storax, weighing 50 *manns* exactly. He received it from 'Arūs,²¹ but it is mine.

A purse (2) with 20 fresh dinars²² of excellent mint. (He continued):

I paid also the expenses (3) for the customs in {alt. tr.: I paid also the toll²³ of (3) the customs of} Fustat and the boat's freight for everything to {add:

export item from the Mediterranean to Yemen, India and East Asia (Dietrich, *ib.*; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:47) It is mentioned as such frequently in the documents in this collection; see the Index. Goitein comments (below, 346, n. 64) that corals served both as ornaments (an example in the dowry of the daughter of an India trader, III, 54v, line 2) and for protection of a young child from the evil eye and (188, n. 10) 'for religious (or, as we would say, magical) purposes'. They also served multiple medicinal purposes (Dietrich, *ib.*). Throughout his corpus, Gil, *Ishmael*, defines *marjān* (vocalized *mirjān*) 'small pearls' (see *ib.*, 4:934). Though this definition appears in some dictionaries, it is unlikely that it was intended in our documents, since pearls were bountiful in the Indian Ocean and in India (cf. Ruska, "*Durr*"; Watt, *Commercial Products*, 557-58; Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, 173-76) and would hardly be imported there from the West. Pearls (*lu'lu'*) were an import item to Egypt from Aden; cf. II, 75; III, 42a, list a, line 1 (there perhaps pearls from India). See further Shy, "Terms," 221-22, 240, who cites additional sources for *marjān*, 'corals,' and rejects Gil's translation (for his response, see Gil, "Merchants," 307, n. 156).

¹⁹ Arabic *mahmūda*, an indigenous Palestinian and Mediterranean plant, still imported today to Egypt from Syria and Greece. The juice extracted from it is used as a strong diuretic drug. The name *mahmūda* (= high quality), which perhaps originated from its strong action, is still used in Egypt and Morocco. For the medicinal faculties of scammony see further Maimonides-Meyerhof, no. 281 and also Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 141-42, who mentions that the name *mahmūda* is used also in Iraq; also see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:584, n. 43; *id.* *Letters*, 55, n. 11.

²⁰ Storax, "*may'a*, an aromatic resin obtained from trees in Asia Minor, used in perfume and medicine, a common commodity exported via Alexandria, Cairo, and Aden to India, as proved by the Geniza letters" (Goitein, "Portrait," 457, n. 32; cf. *id.*, *Letters*, 243, n. 15). For its medicinal faculties, see Maimonides, *Lexicography*, ed. Muntner, no. 228; Dols, *Islamic Medicine*, 164; Isaacs, *Medical Manuscripts*, 132; Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 140. The *mann* consists "of two pounds slightly lighter than the pound of Fustat" (Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:360). For exact values of the *mann*, see Ashtor, "Weights," 474-75.

²¹ This is Abu 'l-Afrāh 'Arūs b. Joseph al-Arjawānī al-Mahdawī. On him see Goitein, "Portrait," 450 ff. and VI, 5-15; VII, 67, 70. Storax and corals were exported together to India by 'Arūs in VI, 11, line 9 (Goitein, *ib.*, 457 and n. 33, where he refers to I, 1-2).

²² 'Fresh' renders *ṭari*. Elsewhere, Goitein explains this word both in the sense of fresh, full weight dinars, unimpaired by wear, and the Sicilian quarter dinar (*rubā'i*), the *tari*. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:115 (Index, the reference there to 264 is a misprint for 265) and especially 1:237. According to Grassi, "*Ṭari*," it refers only to the *rubā'i*, but the word may have been used originally for a fresh 'uncirculated *rubā'i*.' Also see Gil, *Ishmael*, 1:567-68.

²³ Arabic *muwunh*, *ma'ūna*, often spelled *mwnh*, *mu'na*, *mūna*. The plural is spelled *mwn*, *muwn*, i.e., *mu'an*, *muwwan*. Dictionary definitions include 'provisions', 'encumbrance.'

the port of}²⁴ Qūṣ. (4) I sent everything with him to sell and buy for me whatever God would grant [lit., 'facilitate'].

(5) I told him: "If God grants you [lit., 'facilitates your'] safe arrival in Aden, send (6) for me one half of this shipment by the agency of Ḥasan b. Bundār to Manībār {or: Munaybār},²⁵ (7) the pepper country, to buy for me pepper, and the other half should be (8) with you until you come to Nahrwāra, where you will buy lac for me with it, and bring everything back (9) with you."

The aforementioned Mr. Joseph was asked about this and replied:

I received from him (10) a bundle of textiles and arrived with it at Dahlak. In Dahlak (11) I noticed that textiles sold well there; so I sold the best pieces.²⁶ The proceeds of this (12) were 60 good first-class *mithqāls*, [[and there remained with me]] together with what had remained (13) of it and was sold in Aden.

As for the silver vessels, I received them from him (14) and delivered them to Ḥasan b. Bundār, the agent, as he had ordered me [[for buying]]. (15) The lichen [[and the copper]] was also handed over by me to Ḥasan b. Bundār, who sold it (16) and added its proceeds to the 60 dinars, for which I had sold the textiles and which I had delivered (17) to him. He owes also the proceeds of the storax, of which I had sold in Dahlak a quantity worth (18) 40 dinars in local currency equivalent to ten good *mithqāls*.²⁷

The word appears often in reference to expenses connected with merchandise. Examples in I, 2, line 4 (*ba'd al-mu'na wal-wājib*, "after the *mu'na* and the dues), I, 6, line 7 ("customs, 'tithes,' and *mu'an*"), I, 6, line 11 ("for which I was not required to pay *ma'ūna*"), I, 33, line 9, II, 1, line 11, II, 16, line 37 ("tithe, *mu'na* and [cost of] the porter"), II, 32, lines 10, 34, 35, II, 61, line 43 ("the customs and the *mu'an* and the like"), III, 12, line 19, III, 18, account A, line 9, III, 42, list 3, line 3, IV, 57, line 10, V, 8, margin line 3 ("Please, my lord, give to the porter of the lac, PN, whatever *mu'na* the bag requires, which the man says"), VII, 1, line 10, verso, line 7, VII, 35, margin, line 1, VII, 45, lines 9–10 ("I spent a great deal on customs and *mu'an*"). On page 372, n. 10, Goitein explained: "customs and other dues . . . plus freight" In 637, n. 5: cost of transport on land. Following Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:195, 448, n. 14 (cf. Diem, *Dictionary*, 200), it seems more specifically to denote in these cases a toll. While in the text here, I translated *ma'ūnat maks*, literally 'the toll of the customs,' the more idiomatic 'customs toll' is preferable. The phrase *mu'nat al-ṭariq* in I, 13 [fol. 67], line 19 and I, 30, line 18, apparently means 'transport expenses.'

²⁴ Arabic *sāhīl*; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:636b.

²⁵ I.e., the Malabar Coast. For the vocalization Munaybār, see Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 450.

²⁶ See page 199, n. 6.

²⁷ The exchange rate between the Maliki dinar of Yemen and the internationally accepted Egyptian dinar varied in the Geniza papers from 1:2.2 to 1:4. The official exchange rate was 1:4.5 (see Löfgren, "Glossary," 34 [Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣir*, 89, line 4]). According to a communication of George C. Miles, the American Numismatic Society possesses a Maliki dinar weighing 2.33 grams. This would correspond approxi-

(19) These I handed over to Ḥasan b. Bundār, together with the dodder of thyme, the scammony (20) and the cover²⁸ of the textiles. I took the remainder of the dry storax and the corals (21) to Nahrwāra. As far as the barrel of fluid storax is concerned, (22) I received it from 'Arūs, but settled the account for its price with Mr. Jekuthiel [I, 2] (1) prior to my departure, and he has no claim to it.

We asked Joseph about the proceeds from the remainder (2) of the dry storax and the corals, which, as he said, had gone (3) with him to Nahrwāra. He answered:

(4) The storax, after the deduction of costs for transport {alt. tr.: after the toll} and the dues, brought (5) 120 (local) dirhems. As to the corals, I bartered them (6) for beads.²⁹ A part of these were lost at sea. The remainder (7) is in a bag of *sharāb* (fine linen), which is here. The proceeds from the storax were added (8) by me to the shipment entrusted to me, and I bought for it the {alt. tr.: whatever} goods he wished to have, (9) which I delivered to him in accordance with the accounts made with him.³⁰

Then he was asked (10) with regard to the advance given to him by Ḥasan b. Bundār on account of the pepper. He replied: (11)

The aforementioned Ḥasan lent me, on account of 50 *bahārs* pepper, (12) five dinars for each *bahār*,³¹ of which there were for [[Sheikh]] Mr. Jekuthiel (13) 15 *bahārs*, of which [[three were *bahārs* of {alt. tr.: for} iron {alt. tr.: silk}]] one fourth were for iron {alt. tr.: silk}.³²

mately to the rate 1:2.2, provided it was not excessively debased. {The *mithqāl* is the full weight (according to Miles, "*Dinār*," 297b, 4.25 grams) Egyptian dinar; see Friedman, "Dispute," 140, n. 4, and the literature noted there. The exchange rate between it and the Maliki dinar varies in our documents. As here (in Dahlak!) it is 1:4 also in II, 1, margin, lines 7–9; II, 21, lines 3–4 (see note there); II, 23, lines 35–36, 1:3.5 (see note there); in the following it is between 1:2.3 and 1:2.5; II, 16v, lines 15–16; II, 20, lines 31–32; the note to III, 21, line 3; III, 28a, lines 17–18; IV, 1, line 23.

²⁸ Arabic *liffā*, which is equivalent to *lifāfa* (mentioned in I, 5, line 20, I, 14, line 42). Cf. IV, 78, line 14 *al-liffā al-ḥarīr*. See now, Blau, *Dictionary*, 635.

²⁹ 'I bartered' translates *'aradtu bihi*; see III, 12, line 31 and 617, n. 23. Different kinds of beads were common commodities. See the Indexes to Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:17; Goitein, *Letters*, 346; Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:933. These *kharaz* may have been made of glass; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:361a. Rich findings of glass beads from the medieval Islamic world have been identified, and they may have been imported from India; see Meyer, *Glass*, 94–95, 128, 136.

³⁰ Following Goitein's Hebrew translation, render lines 8–9: "...and I bought for it goods. Whatever he wants from the various types of goods, I shall deliver to him, in accordance with his account."

³¹ A *bahār* (also spelled *buhār*) is "usually 300 pounds in our papers" (Goitein, *Letters*, 64, n. 13).

³² Iron, a common import item from southern India, is not mentioned elsewhere in the papers dealing with Jekuthiel's order. In the handwriting of the scribe Hillel b. Eli the

Then Joseph was asked (14) how much the storax sold in Dahlak weighed. He replied:

(15) I sold them two *manns* for one dinar, the total proceeds amounting to 80 *manns*, (16) worth 40 dinars (of the currency) mentioned above. When I arrived (17) here, he argued with me concerning the goods entrusted to me and there was much wrangling (18) between us. As a sign of good will I delivered to him in exchange for that merchandise a load (19) of lac worth 100 dinars and lent {lit., 'advanced'} him another 100 dinars on account of the pepper to be sent {lit., 'his assets held'} (20) by Ibn Bundār.

Asked about this, Mr. Jekuthiel (21) replied: "As to his statement about the 200 dinars, I did indeed receive [Verso] (1) from him these 200 dinars in the way (2) he described, but they are due me." On this Mr. Joseph remarked:

(3) As to those 100 dinars, which I advanced him on account of his assets (4) in Aden; if the shipment arrives safely and will be worth more than 100, the balance belongs to him, (5) and if it is less, he is permitted, as from now, to keep the remainder (of the 100 dinars advanced).

In addition, Mr. Joseph (6) said *during the session*: "I gave him these 200 dinars expressly (7) as a final settlement of all (our accounts)."

The proceedings have been written down and signed to serve as a confirmation of rights and a proof.

/// Hillel b. R. Eli *may his memory be blessed!*³³ ///

Abraham b. R. Shema'ya, *Fellow (of the Yeshiva)*—*may his soul dwell in bliss and his children inherit the land!*³⁴—*descendant of Shema'ya, the Head of the Yeshiva—may he rest in Eden!*

Solomon ha-Kohen, son of R. Joseph, *'Father' (of the Yeshiva), the memory of the righteous is blessed!*³⁵

Hebrew letters 'd' and 'r' are often indistinguishable, and instead of *ḥadid*, 'iron,' *ḥarir*, 'silk,' can be read here.}

³³ The scribe who wrote the record. His name is put between two lines each of which represents a stylized final *m* with a long flourish in both Arabic and Hebrew script (for *khatam*, 'he signed, sealed'). For Hillel b. Eli, a native of Baghdad, dated documents of whose hand have been preserved from the years 1066 through 1108, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:231, and passim. Hillel wrote also I, 4–15 and 16–18b of this dossier.

³⁴ {Ps. 25:13, its first section translated as understood by some commentators as a blessing for the dead.}

³⁵ Abraham b. Shem'aya (dated documents signed by him: 1092–1132) and Solomon ha-Kohen b. Joseph (dated documents: 1077–98) were both descendants of Gaons, that is, Heads of the Jewish High Council (Yeshiva) of Jerusalem and served as professional judges on the rabbinical court of Fustat. See about them Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:512, secs. 11 and 12. Abraham b. Shem'aya signed also I, 4–5, 6–7, 8, 11, 12, 18, and Solomon ha-Kohen I, 4, 12, 16.

*Appendix to I, 1–2: Fūṭa**

The *fūṭa*, a garment frequently mentioned in the Geniza, was sent from Egypt to Aden and from there to India. It was an untailed long piece of cloth, worn either around the loins and legs similar to the sari,¹ or covering the shoulders. Two *fūṭas*, one for the upper, and one for the lower part of the body, formed the customary apparel of the Indians, as reported by an early Arab traveler.² Further east, in Malaya, as noted by the same observer, rich and poor left the upper part of the body uncovered, while wrapping a *fūṭa* (known there as *sarong*) around the waist, similar to a skirt.³

When *fūṭas* were ordered, sent, or carried in pairs, they were probably intended to form a complete outfit, although this should not be assumed for all cases.⁴ Only the goat's hair *fūṭa*, which obviously served to protect the entire body from the cold, {almost} always appears in the singular.⁵

At first glance it appears strange that pieces of cloth, which were the national costume of India, should be imported to that country.⁶

* {This is the only specimen I found that Goitein wrote for inclusion in his intended Introduction to the India Book. It is primarily relevant here.

¹ The use of sari, here and Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:131, 448; 4:155, 403, does not appear to conform with its accepted definition.}

² Sauvaget, *Relation*, 9, sec. 16, 45, n. 3. {The report seems to deal here not with the Indian dress, but with that of the inhabitants of Ṣanf, identified as "Champa situated between Cambodia and the delta of the Song Coi in Viet Nam" (Lamant, "Ṣanf"). The reference to the Indian dress is in the note. An English translation of the passage is found in Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 27; cf. *ibid.*, 54: "The dress of each of the inhabitants consists of two *fūṭas*, one is worn and the other is used as a covering."}

³ Sauvaget, *Relation*, 8, sec. 15, 44, n. 3. {The text describes the dress of the inhabitants of Kalāh (for the attempts to locate this toponym, see Streck, "Kalah"; Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 106 ff.), while the reference to the *sarong*, etc., is in the note. An English translation of the passage is found in Tibbetts, *ibid.*, 26; cf. 52–53: "The dress of the inhabitants is a single *fūṭa*; and is the same for men and women."}

⁴ For instance, II, 44, lines 23–24, verso, lines 29–30 (seven such orders {four orders totaling twelve *fūṭas*}); II, 16v, line 9; II, 23, lines 49–50; II, 26, lines 4–5 (all sent from Aden to India); VI, 16, line 23 (found in the Red Sea port of Sawākin among the belongings of a dead merchant); P. Heid. 917, C, line 7 (bought in Fustat; the document is translated in Goitein, "Bankers Accounts," 53).

⁵ No. I, 1, line 10; II, 23, lines 49–50; III, 3, line 16; {III, 21b, line 19} VI, 16, line 15. {Goat's hair renders *sha'ri*, lit., 'hairy.' In I, 1, line 11, this item is described as *mufṭada tāmma*, 'separate (Goitein translates there: separately packed) and complete.' These *fūṭas* in II, 23 and III, 3, are listed as one item, but it is not specified that they were separate units. No. VI, 16, line 15, is an error, however, as forty-three of these *fūṭas* are listed there, as part of an merchant's inventory, which, of course, does not disprove that they were usually worn as a single piece of clothing.}

⁶ The very word *fūṭa*, as was known to the Arabs, is Indian. *Tāj al-Arus*, 19:549, quotes Ibn Durayd (837–933), who describes it as derived from "*pōta* in the language of Sind." (Since Arabic script has no *ō*, Ibn Durayd says: a *u* not fully articulated.)

However, as the small quantities listed indicate, those *fūtas* were destined for the Westerners living or sojourning in India, who adapted themselves to the clothing habits of their environment, but wished to be distinguished from it by the special types of *fūtas* they wore.⁷

The locally manufactured *fūtas* of India were generally made of cotton.⁸ Those imported, as far as indicated, were of silk, even those for children,⁹ or a weave of silk and linen,¹⁰ or of high quality linen.¹¹ Linen *fūtas* were sent from Aden to a business friend in India to be given as presents for his children.¹² Goat's hair *fūtas* have been noted;¹³ but (sheep's) wool is never mentioned.

Fūtas 'of six' and 'seven' (namely cubits in length) occur in the Geniza. These are the same measurements as those given by Abbé Dubois at the beginning of the nineteenth century, namely the first for the cloth wound around the shoulders and the second for that girded around the waist. But since two orders from Aden list these measurements in pairs, the lengths of the upper and lower *fūtas* were perhaps not always different.¹⁴

The *fūtas* exported to India were made in Miṣr (Fustat), where one manufacturer seems to have enjoyed particular fame; in Sūsa, Tunisia, the most prominent center of the Mediterranean textile industry in Geniza times; in Spain, the country of choice silk; and perhaps in Sicily, also renowned for its silk products.¹⁵

⁷ E.g., sixteen *fūtas* of different makes and limited cost and one of exceptionally high value, sent from Fustat to Aden and India: I, 1, lines 6–11. Thirty-one *fūtas* sold in Aden for 15 dinars and 19 *qirāṭs*, IV, 1, line 9. See n. 17, below.

⁸ Spies, *Ibn Faḍlallah*, 27. Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5:93 bottom (*qutn*). See n. 32, below.

⁹ No. VI, 28, line 8: acknowledgment in Aden of receipt of a silk *fūta* from Egypt, II, 44, lines 23–25: two orders for small silk *fūtas* for children.

¹⁰ No. I, 1, line 6, II, 44v, lines 23–24.

¹¹ No. II, 44v, line 30.

¹² No. III, 1v, lines 16–17.

¹³ See page 178.

¹⁴ 'Of six,' *sudāsī*: II, 44v, line 29 (here two of this length are ordered); TS 16.339, line 15 [ed. Ben-Sasson, *Sicily*, no. 101; Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:142–151, no. 348] (one, sent from al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia, to Egypt). 'Of seven,' *subā'ī*: II, 44v, line 23 (also two) [see also line 11]. In Löfgren, *Aden*, 1:60, *subā'ī* does not refer to a *fūta*. Dubois, *Mœurs*, 1:455, quoted by Sauvaget, *Relation*, 45, n. 3. [For *subā'ī*; see further Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:401, n. 119. Below, 427, n. 70: it may denote a cloth with seven stripes. According to Smith, *Studies*, 10, 132, 'loincloth.']

¹⁵ Miṣr *fūtas*, e.g., I, 1, line 7; II, 23, lines 48–49; II, 26, lines 4–5; [II, 30, line 10;] VI, 16, line 23. see the note to I, 1, line 6. Sūsa: see n. 24, below. Spain: II, 16v, line 9; II, 44, lines 24–25 [III, 21b, lines 9, 18]; Sicily: see n. 29, below.

As from the middle of the eleventh century, that is, at a time when the Geniza does not yet have material about the India trade, *fūtas* sent from Tunisia and Sicily to Alexandria and from there to Cairo are repeatedly mentioned in both business and private correspondence. When a Sicilian husband, who divorced his Egyptian wife gets back from her "the *fūta* with which I clothed her," and when in Fustat in 1139/40, at a distribution of clothing to the poor, fifteen out of a total of fifty-seven persons receive *fūtas*, it is evident that this was a piece of apparel, as it was in India, and not a mere kerchief or towel, as in later Arabic usage.¹⁶

The prices of *fūtas* in the Mediterranean area around 1050 and those in the Arabian-Indian region of the first half of the twelfth century also indicate that the term refers to objects of the same type. An example for the first is a sale of two shipments, each containing forty-five *fūtas*, one sold for 25²³/₂₄ dinars and the second for 24¹/₆ dinars, slightly above half a dinar per piece, as was noted for Aden in note 7, above.¹⁷ This seems to have been the standard price for regular *fūtas*, which was modified by the natural fluctuations of the market. "Seven red *fūtas*" cost 146¹/₂ dirhems in Qayrawān, Tunisia, in July 1048, almost exactly 21 dirhems per piece, or about two thirds of a dinar according to the exchange rates then prevailing.¹⁸ A similar price was charged for shipments from Aden to India around 1140.¹⁹ But when an Alexandrian merchant, on his way to the East, bought a *fūta*, perhaps a secondhand one, in the Red Sea port of 'Aydḥāb, he paid only one third of a dinar.²⁰ Contrariwise, when an Adenese merchant made an order for the very best linen *fūtas* available in Cairo, he added "one *mithqāl* per piece," and a young Egyptian dealer in precious textiles obtained prices of 1¹/₆ to 1³/₄ Egyptian dinars

¹⁶ TS 8 J 5, f. 16 (dated 1095). The story of the divorce is told in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:177. The distribution to the poor: *ibid.*, II, 448, sec. 33. An example of large quantities of *fūtas* sent from Tunisia to Egypt: seventy-eight to one customer and fifty-two to another, TS 8 J 19 f. 24, lines 4–5 [ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:212–15, no. 667] (ca. 1060). Among his assets in Fustat Joseph Lebdi lists one hundred *fūtas*, I, 22, line 26.

¹⁷ ULC Or 1080 J 79, line 25 [ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:618–23, no. 486] (ca. 1050, when Nahray just started business in Egypt). The same in Nahray's later years, P. Heid. 917 (see n. 4, above): 1¹/₆ for two *fūtas*.

¹⁸ TS 20.96v, line 25. Exchange rate: Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:377–78, secs. 31–35. This tallies with Goitein, *Letters*, 241, where ten red *fūtas* imported from the Maghreb cost 7–7¹/₂ dinars in Fustat around 1090.

¹⁹ No. II, 23, lines 49–50; II, 26, lines 4–5. In both cases, two Egyptian *fūtas* cost four Maliki dinars. Assuming an average exchange rate of the Egyptian against the Maliki dinar as 1:3 [see page 172, n. 27], we arrive at an approximate price of two thirds of an Egyptian dinar.

²⁰ No. VI, 39, line 12.

for his *fūtas* in Aden.²¹ A goat's hair *fūta* sent to India cost 3¼ Maliki dinars, about one Egyptian dinar.²²

A particular difficulty is presented by the 'Russian *fūta* made in Sūsa,' which was sold in the Red Sea port Dahlak for 30 dinars.²³ If we disregard female dresses, which were sometimes studded with pearls and jewels, such a price for a single piece of clothing is practically absent from the Geniza.²⁴ Two fourteenth century Muslim antiquarians quote the chief judge of India, Sirāj al-Dīn 'Umar al-Shiblī as saying: "No one is permitted to wear the linen garments imported into this kingdom from the Russians and Alexandria²⁵ except one who has been clothed with them by the Sultan."²⁶ This statement might demonstrate the exceptional value of 'Russian' linen in India, at least during the fourteenth century. Already in the twelfth century *nūsī* seems to have been regularly imported to India from Aden, for Abu Makhrama (1465–1540) the historian {rather: Ibn al-Mujāwir, the twelfth century historian} of that town, notes—(seemingly) referring to the Zuray'ids who ruled Yemen during most of that century: "The *nūsī* is sold measured by an iron rod four cubits long."²⁷ Joseph Lebdi's sale of a *nūsī* in 1095 or so is not the earliest occurrence of the term *nūsī*, however. Ḥayyīm b. 'Ammar of Palermo (dated documents 1051–66) sends, with a business friend, eight costly textiles among them two 'silk' *fūtas*, one *waṣaṭiyya* (a 'waist' *fūta*) and one *nūsiyya*.²⁸ If 'silk' means that these *fūtas* were made entirely

²¹ No. II, 44v, line 30, VI, 11, lines 7–8. {The price of 1½ dinars matches the data in a responsum written by Mevōrākh b. Saadya, concerning a trader who shipped 100 silk *fūtas* from Alexandria to his partner in Tyre, Lebanon, where they apparently were sold for a sum of 149 dinars (ENA 3725, f. 9).}

²² II, 23, lines 49–50. {Cf. III, 21b, lines 8–9, 3¼ Maliki dinars.}

²³ No. I, 5, line 12, *nūsiyya sūsiyya*, cf. I, 1, line 8: *sūsiyya nūsiyya*. These 30 dinars represented one half of the total proceeds from sixty-two textiles entrusted to Joseph Lebdi on his trip to India.

²⁴ The price of 60 dinars offered for a *hulla*, or festive costume, sent from Egypt to Tunisia (Goitein, *Letters*, 76, top) is an exception proving the rule. The three senior Tustari brothers who had chosen it were the leading merchants of Fustat. The son of one of them, Abū Sa'd, became 'vizier' of the mother of the baby caliph al-Mustansir. {For the *hulla*, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:154; Stillman, *Dress*, 12, 33, 59; and the introduction to II, 8.}

²⁵ I take this as meaning: from the Russians *via* Alexandria, for 'and from A.' would have to be Arabic *wa-min*.

²⁶ Spies, *Ibn Faḍlallah*, 27, lines 12–13; (53, German). Al-Qalqashandī, *Subh*, 5:93, bottom.

²⁷ Löfgren, *Aden*, 1:65, line 14 {Ibn al-Mujāwir, *al-Mustabsir*, 145}.

²⁸ TS NS 323, f. 1. For Ḥayyīm b. 'Ammār see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:374, sec. 22,

of that material, it seems doubtful whether *nūsiyya* refers to Russia. It might rather mean 'with silk borders,' or the like. I prefer to leave this question open.²⁹

We hear little in the Geniza about export of *fūtas* from India. But the occasional way in which they are mentioned among other textiles sent from India to Aden might indicate that in fact such shipments were quite common, at least on the route to Aden.³⁰ Indian garments are conspicuously absent from the trousseau lists of Egyptian brides. One, who had five such pieces, among them two *fūtas*, can be considered an exception. She possessed also many Yemenite items, for instance, a silk *fūta* from Zabīd. Her father seems to have been an India trader.³¹ A silk *fūta* sent from Aden to Cairo together with a small quantity of aromatic wood in 1219 was probably a present; and the same is expressly stated concerning an Indian *fūta* given to a brother.³²

One of the {bride's} two *fūtas* just mentioned was white, which, as well as green, was found by me only once each.³³ Red was popular, both in the Indian and the Mediterranean regions.³⁴ It is noteworthy, however, that subdued colors, such as grayish-blue ('lead-colored'), dark gray ('pepper-colored'), and grayish-brown ('partridge color') were also

and 455, n. 56 {and Gil, *Ishmael*, 1:583}. Since the writing of that volume ENA 2805, f. 14, dated 12 April 1051, has been identified {ed. Gil, ib., 2:730–34, no. 248}. In both *waṣaṭiyya* and *nūsiyya* *ṣ* stands for *s*, as often in Maghrebi papers, especially in words containing sounds like *ṣ* and *nū*.

²⁹ The term *nūsī* might stand for *ru'ūsī*, 'of heads,' the *fūta*, with which people could also protect their heads. In this case, one would hardly expect the plural, and since *nūsī* in India of the fourteenth century undoubtedly meant 'Russian,' it is likely that it had that meaning also in the eleventh. {For sources on Rūsī cloth, see also Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 131; Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 192, where the suggestion that *rūs* may be derived from *sūs* can be discarded in light of the documents reviewed above that cite *sūsī* and *rūsī* together.}

³⁰ No. II, 10, line 3. {From II, 10, lines 5–6, we see that large quantities of *fūtas* were counted in *kawrajas* (units of twenties) and *dasts* (dozens), while each individual *fūta*, was called a *ṭhawb*, for which see above, 170, n. 13.}

³¹ TS K 25, f. 42, lines 2–4. This manuscript forms one document together with TS Ar. 4, f. 4. Besides Indian textiles that bride also possessed an Indian bucket, *saḥl*, worth 1½ dinars, ib. line 8.

³² One silk *fūta* as present: VII, 52, line 14. One Indian *fūta* given to a brother: VII, 34, lines 7–8 (thirteenth century).

³³ Green: I, 1, line 7 (made of silk, sent from Cairo to India).

³⁴ Red: I, 1, 6 (silken, sent from Cairo to India); IV, 16, line 23 (two red *fūtas* made in Egypt, being sent to India); TS 20.69v, line 25 (seven; in Qayrawān, Tunisia); TS 8 J 25, f. 19, line 14 {ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:399–402, no. 415} (three, in Alexandria).

avored.³⁵ Checkered ('chess board') and dotted ('chickpeas') patterns enhanced the variety of clothing, which, travelling from East to West and West to East, symbolized the interaction of two different worlds.³⁶

³⁵ No. I, 1, line 10: *raṣāṣī* (five pieces); VI, 16, line 18: *filfilī*; I, 1, line 6: *ḥajalī* (eight pieces); VI, 16, line 16, all sent to India. Rudolf Mach drew my attention to French *oeil de perdrix*, 'partridge eye,' which designates the reddish-brown, or pink color of a certain wine; see Goldman, *Great Wines*, 61 (said also of the color of a corn on one's toe). In this case, however, the Arabic would probably be *'ayn al-ḥajala*. Such composite attributes are common, e.g., *fūṭa fath al-ward*, a *fūṭa* (ornamented with) budding roses, TS 8 J 26, f. 5, line 15, sent, it seems, from Alexandria to Fustat. {Also note VI, 35, lines 25–26: a camphor-colored (*kaḥḥūrī*) 'fulled' *fūṭa*, with cut edges, of exquisite Sūsa manufacture.}

³⁶ TS NS J 414, lines 4–5 (frag. of trousseau): *fūṭa shatranjī bi-ḥarīr bi-ḥawashī zurq*, a chessboard *fūṭa*, (linen) with silk and blue borders. {Cf. II, 43, line 10: two exquisite checkered (*muqaffās*), 'fulled' Sūsi *fūṭas*. For checkered patterns in clothing, see Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 59–60.} No. I, 1, line 10; II, 23, line 48 {II, 30, line 10}: *himmīsī*; sent to India. {For the *fūṭa*, see also Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 130, n. 63; Nainar, *Arab Geographers*, 96; and especially Stillman, "Female Attire," 214–16. For pictures of a man wearing a waist-cloth (*fūṭa*) and of weaving *fūṭas* in Yemen, see Baldry, *Textiles in Yemen*, plates 8–11.}

I, 3 *Second Session of the Rabbinical Court of Fustat*

Fustat, February 22, 1098

ULC Add. 3420, f. 1

This is the first leaf of what was originally a bifolium that ULC Add. 3420 comprises. The second leaf, ULC Add. 3420, f. 2v (!) contains the text of I, 8, and recto (!), I, 15.

This session dealt with a side issue, indirectly connected with Joseph Lebdi's voyage to India. Jekuthiel, alias Abū Ya'qūb the Doctor, had sold indigo to Joseph twice, once for 40, and once for 100 dinars. The payment of the first sum had to be made by a settlement with the *dār wakāla* (lit., 'agency house,' warehouse serving as bourse) of the Qadi Abu 'l-Ṭāhir,¹ to whom Jekuthiel owed a certain sum; the second had been paid by Joseph in cash. First Joseph claimed that his payment of 100 dinars included also the other sum due, but immediately admitted that he had been mistaken. He would settle the account as follows:

Redeeming a promissory note given by Jekuthiel to another merchant (verso, line 6)	33 ³ / ₂₄ dinars
Owed to Joseph by Jekuthiel for occasional payments made for him (line 10)	4
Balance in cash (line 11)	2 ¹⁹ / ₂₄
Total	40 dinars.

In the interim settlement reached with regard to Joseph's Indian venture (see I, 11), this item is also included.

Translation

Re: The Doctor vs. Abū Ya'qūb Joseph,² the {Prominent} Merchant,
concerning the 40 dinars.³
(1–5) Date, place, and parties.

¹ Known from contemporary Geniza documents, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:446, n. 5.

² Written in small letters, not by the recorder of this session, but by Hillel b. Eli, the chief clerk, who wrote I, 1. He must have added this docket when he assembled the entire dossier of the case.

³ Added later with a fine pen in even smaller script, clearly to indicate that the assertions made in this session were not an intrinsic part of the proceedings concerning