

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY



Exterior of a house in Cairo (photo by J. Brinkmann)

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY
MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO

edited by

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FOREWORD

GIL J. STEIN
DIRECTOR, ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

At its best, a museum exhibit shows us beautiful things we've never seen before, and challenges us to understand those objects — and the cultures they represent — in new and different ways. The Oriental Institute's new special exhibit *A Cosmopolitan City: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Old Cairo* fulfills that goal in a very timely way. For most of us, the term "Egyptian Civilization" conjures up images of the ancient civilization of the pharaohs with its pyramids, magnificent temples, and opulent tombs. As true as those images may be, they are only part of the overall panorama of Egyptian history, which did not end with the Islamic conquest, but instead entered a new, different, and spectacular era with the art, architecture, and cultural achievements of medieval Islamic civilization. At the epicenter of Islamic Egypt was Fustat — Old Cairo — the early Islamic city that grew to be the metropolis of Cairo that we know today.

The Oriental Institute has an extremely important collection of artifactual and textual material from Fustat in the seventh–twelfth centuries AD, and it tells a fascinating story. *A Cosmopolitan City* presents this rarely seen material as a way to explore the complex interaction of the Muslim, Coptic Christian, and Jewish communities that together made Fustat a vibrant city that in many ways foreshadowed the rich diversity of modern global urbanism. In Old Cairo, in accordance with Islamic law, Christians and Jews were defined as monotheistic "People of the Book" who were allowed to practice their own religions and exercise a degree of communal self government. These three communities lived in their own neighborhoods, spoke different languages, and worshipped separately — in the famous Coptic "Hanging Church," in the brilliant al-Azhar Mosque, and in the Ben Ezra Synagogue — but they interacted on a daily basis in their economic life and were closely connected in a shared way of life as citizens in the successive Abbasid, Fatimid, and Mamluk states centered around Fustat/Cairo.

The written records — especially the treasure trove of documents from the Cairo Genizah (document repository) of the Ben Ezra Synagogue — show both the strong cultural identities and the complex inter-relationships of the communities that constituted Old Cairo. Most notable among these are the documents in Judaeo-Arabic, a linguistic amalgam that clearly shows the influence of Muslim Arab culture on Jewish life in Cairo and elsewhere in North Africa. The exhibit highlights the extent of these cultural interconnections by showing the objects of everyday life recovered by George Scanlon's excavations in Fustat (1964–1980). Occasionally these artifacts show religious motifs, but mostly, were it not for textual records, we would be unable to determine whether the objects belonged to Muslim, Christian, or Jewish households. As seen in the exhibit, even the decorations on the Torah ark door of the Ben Ezra Synagogue would have been almost identical to the decorations in many Muslim and Christian houses and public buildings. This suggests that these communities shopped in the same places and purchased goods made by the same artisans, and we can be confident that most people in Old Cairo were multi-lingual, whether to deal with the tax collectors, the shopkeepers, or their close neighbors.

I want to thank guest curators Tasha Vorderstrasse and Tanya Treptow, along with Chief Curator Jack Green and Special Exhibits Coordinator Emily Teeter, for the wonderful job they have done in developing this exhibit. I believe that it is especially timely in our current, turbulent world, where it is frighteningly easy to stereotype those of other faiths, and to treat the acts of extreme fundamentalist groups as the normative practices of Islam, Christianity, or Judaism. This exhibit reminds us that a thousand years ago — and even today — different communities of faith lived and worked together in urban centers that were all the richer for tolerating and valuing the diversity of their citizens.

PREFACE

JACK GREEN
CHIEF CURATOR, ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM

Fustat (Old Cairo) was a bustling place in the medieval world. It's easy to take for granted the idea of a city and the complex economic, social, and cultural interactions that can take place in urban environments whatever the time period. Cities, for all their grandeur and public works, can also have historic challenges of sanitation, overcrowding or abandonment, as well as social deprivation. But cities present possibilities for their inhabitants who live, work, and trade there, as well as for people who seek refuge or new opportunities. Medieval Fustat was a place where Muslims, Christians, and Jews co-existed and were able to maintain, for the most part, religious freedom of worship in a setting of peaceful co-existence. It was also a city of seemingly endless possibilities. It was a place where the stories of the Arabian Nights were told and retold, and where people played endless games of chess and backgammon. It was a place where traders shared knowledge as well as exchanged exotic goods. Amazingly, it was also a place where inhabitants could dine on take-away meals and live in high-rise dwellings (up to seven stories) — reminiscent of modern New York or Chicago rather than medieval Egypt! Finally, Old Cairo in the modern era, within the shadows of the Giza pyramids, was a place of new possibilities for scholars and explorers in tracking down a forgotten medieval world. This included the discovery of the now famous repository of Jewish manuscripts in the Ben Ezra Synagogue in the late nineteenth century, known as the Cairo Genizah, and the subsequent twentieth century excavations of the medieval city that have contributed to our understanding of Old Cairo.

This special exhibit and catalog provide a rare opportunity to explore the communities that made up this multilayered, cosmopolitan city. Here, the Oriental Institute is able to present an important collection of archaeological objects and manuscripts to the public for the first time and the wider world. It also provides an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of the Islamic-era collections within the Oriental Institute Museum. To date these collections are not generally known beyond a handful of specialized scholars, as the focus for Oriental Institute research has traditionally been on earlier periods.

There are very many individuals who made this exhibit happen. Our profound gratitude goes to guest co-curators Tasha Vorderstrasse, PhD, Research Associate of the Oriental Institute, and Tanya Treptow, who recently received her PhD from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC) of the University of Chicago. Tasha and Tanya's own acknowledgments can be found in their *Introduction* on the following pages. Donald Whitcomb, Research Associate (Associate Professor) of Islamic archaeology at the Oriental Institute, provided extremely valuable advice and insights along the way — his highly supportive and encouraging role was crucial to this exhibit. In addition to their work in selecting the objects and preparing the exhibit, Tasha and Tanya's major achievement includes their role as co-editors of this catalog. It stands as a major contribution considering its multiple contributors and broad, inclusive scope. The exhibit would not have been possible were it not for the archaeological work of George Scanlon, who, sadly, passed away in July 2014. His excavations on behalf of the American Research Center in Egypt yielded the artifacts that make up the majority of the items in this catalog. In addition, the other major element of the exhibit, the inscriptions and manuscripts, including the "rediscovery" of Genizah manuscripts in our collections, would not have taken place had it not been for the systematic survey of Islamic-era and medieval collections carried out by Dr. Vorderstrasse over the past few years.

We thank the following for their involvement in the preparation of this exhibit. Brenda López Silva helped to create the tablet-based app for the audio-recordings in our exhibit. Jack Green, Tasha Vorderstrasse, Wahied Helmy Girgis, Emily Teeter, and Josh Tulisiak voiced the audio-recordings created by Eric Fey of UChicago Creative. Tasha Vorderstrasse also provided a musical contribution to the audio-recordings as part of the show. In addition to faculty input from Donald Whitcomb, we were grateful to receive assistance from Professors Norman Golb, Brian Muhs, and Fred Donner of the Oriental Institute. We are also grateful to NELC graduate students Rachel Schine for input and advice, and Laura Krenz for sharing images. We also thank Kathleen Scott, Director of Publications of the American Research Center in Egypt, as well as Matjaz Kacicnik and Michael Jones for images and permissions.

In addition to innovative research and editing conducted by Tasha Vorderstrasse and Tanya Treptow, we wish to thank the multiple authors who contributed to the essays and catalog entries in this volume. Two institutions assisted us with loans, which have helped us to considerably enhance this exhibit. We thank Director Julia Marciari-Alexander,

PREFACE

PhD, of the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, and Director Jacob Wisse, PhD, of the Yeshiva University Museum, New York, for their generous loan of the Ben Ezra Synagogue ark door. We thank Dr. Marciari-Alexander and her staff for the loan of two ceramic objects from the collections of the Walters Art Museum for this exhibit, including Associate Registrar for Loans and Exhibitions Barbara Fegley, Assistant Registrar Jennifer Harr, and the staff of the Walters' conservation and technical research laboratory. Special thanks go to Curator of Islamic Art Dr. Amy Landau for all her advice, support, and flexibility in assisting us with this loan and her subsequent contribution to this volume.

The staff of the Oriental Institute has been wonderfully supportive throughout the course of the exhibit preparations. I would like to thank Registrars Helen McDonald and Susan Allison for work on preparation of loans, access to the collections, and object lists; our conservation team, Laura D'Alessandro and Alison Whyte, especially for objects treatment and compositional identification of materials using our portable XRF reader; Museum Archivist John Larson for access to photographic and documentary archives; Anna Ressler, assisted by Bryce Lowry, for her excellent new photographs for this catalog; Kiersten Neumann, Curatorial Assistant, for help with image procurement and social media promotion, assisted by work-study intern Alexis Faust; Erik Lindahl and Josh Tulisak of our Preparation Department, assisted by Matt Federico, designed and built the show. We are also grateful to our colleagues in the Public Education and Outreach Department: Catherine Kenyon, Carol Ng-He, and Moriah Grooms-Garcia for their help in developing creative educational activities and programs related to the exhibit; Emily Hammer, Director of the Center for Ancient Middle Eastern Landscapes (CAMEL) at the Oriental Institute, for assistance with maps.

Emily Teeter continued to play her integral and essential role as Special Exhibits Coordinator, to ensure that the exhibit, catalog, and publicity ran smoothly and according to plan. In our Publications Department, we thank the extremely patient and diligent Thomas Urban and Leslie Schramer who provided us with this impressive catalog. We thank anonymous reviewers of the catalog for their valuable input and feedback. We of course, also thank Oriental Institute Director Gil Stein and Executive Director Steve Camp for their sustained and committed support of the exhibit program, and for their close interest and engagement with this show.

Our community focus group assisted with a review of the exhibit in its formative stages. Many thanks to Dianne Hanau-Strain, Matt Matcuk, Beverly Serrell, Nathan Mason, Molly Woulfe, Patty McNamara, and Charles Bethea, who provided useful comments and ideas that we took on board in the formation of this exhibit. We are also grateful for support from the Franke Institute for the Humanities, the Center for Jewish Studies of the University of Chicago, who have all assisted as sponsors or supporters for the public programs and academic lecture series coinciding with our exhibition. I also especially thank Josef Stern of the Chicago Center for Jewish Studies, Orit Bashkin and Hakan Karateke of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and Margaret Mitchell, Dean of the Divinity School for their contributions, enthusiasm, and advice concerning our programs. Thanks also go to Rabbi Yossi Brackman of the Rohr Chabad Center at the University of Chicago.

Finally, we thank the Members of the Oriental Institute and our public visitors who regularly contribute donations which help us to put on our special exhibitions. We thank Maged Refaat Aboulmagd, the Consul General of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Chicago, for his support, as well as other community partners we have sought in the preparation of our exhibit and programs. We hope that this exhibit provides us with new opportunities to bring to life the people of the medieval city of Fustat, and to explore and build new relationships with our visitors and community partners.

INTRODUCTION: RECONSTRUCTING EVERYDAY LIFE AT FUSTAT

TASHA VORDERSTRASSE AND TANYA TREPTOW

Unlike many cities in Egypt which originated during ancient pharaonic or Greco-Roman times, Cairo is a relatively young city. The first permanent urban settlement began in 642 AD when Arab armies set up camp along this centralized location on the Nile River. The settlement quickly became the thriving capital city of Fustat, al-Fustat meaning “tent” in reference to the city’s humble origins. Over the next centuries Egyptians and foreigners flocked to Fustat and shaped new neighborhoods, communities, and traditions. In 969 AD the large northern enclosure of the city was officially designated as al-Qahira (Cairo), “the victorious,” a grand rebranding that would hold to modern times.

In Egypt (as throughout the world), novel developments often build upon the past. Fustat’s people built on existing traditions and social understandings of the medieval Middle East, but also creatively re-interpreted a new urban way of life. Even in its construction, Fustat recycled the monuments of an earlier period. The city was established directly adjacent to the conquered Roman fortress of Babylon (no relation to the city of Babylon in Mesopotamia), which was founded along the Nile by the Emperor Diocletian in 300 AD. As the city of Fustat grew around the fortress, houses and neighborhoods were built into the structure of the fortress itself so that it was soon subsumed by the surrounding city. This creative re-use was applied to many areas of life in Fustat, not just to the city’s architecture. Fustat’s residents put in place new systems of laws and social rules that could accommodate an increasingly diverse community of religions, ethnicities, and languages. This volume and its companion exhibit explore how Fustat’s residents melded these traditions to create an ever-growing, multi-cultural society during the seventh to twelfth centuries.

GOALS FOR THE EXHIBITION CATALOG

This volume brings together leading scholars of medieval Egypt who focus new attention on the archaeological objects of Fustat within wider trends of history, art, and community studies. Jonathan M. Bloom, Michael Wechsler, Tasha Vorderstrasse, and Audrey Dridi provide readers with an introduction to the three main religious communities of Fustat and their languages, highlighting that no group held a monolithic view on belief and faith. Scholars such as Arietta Papaconstantinou and Maya Schatzmiller explore a more formal view of the city through organizations of government administration and industry. By highlighting productive junctures between archaeology and text, contributors also build on the goals of excavations at Fustat fifty years ago by George Scanlon and Władysław Kubiak. Articles by Ayala Lester and Tasha Vorderstrasse continue the analysis of excavation artifacts and help build a comparative database with other archaeological finds of jewelry and childhood in Egypt and the Middle East.

Throughout the catalog, authors also bring well-deserved attention to daily life during the early periods of settlement at Fustat, which often is neglected in favor of studies at the height of Cairo’s medieval expansion. For example, Paulina Lewicka highlights the diverse and shifting food traditions of early Fustat. Several articles also help readers understand how the city of Fustat fits into Egypt’s wider history. Vanessa Davies investigates the re-use and re-interpretation of ancient objects in early Islamic life, while Donald Whitcomb and Tanya Treptow explore continuing developments in the history of Fustat as it became the modern neighborhood of “Old Cairo” and a protected archaeological site.

Our goals in this volume are multi-fold. We hope that a general reader will find the objects and associated analysis to be a useful starting point for learning about the rich history of Cairo. We also aim to add new dimensions to current scholarship on early Islamic Egypt. In this catalog, we explore daily life in early Fustat and Cairo from a specific perspective by highlighting the themes of community, especially religious community. We hope to use this theme of community to open a productive discussion on the historical role of tolerance and discrimination in Islamic societies, especially in light of modern political tensions in the Middle East. The term “community” may be easier to recognize in practice than to pin down in theory. At a high level, a community is a group of people who share something in common, whether universal ideals, expectations in life, or the close, delineated space of collective living. Individuals typically choose whether to identify with a community (a conscious sense of belonging), so social categorizations such as race, ethnicity, or class do not necessarily result in a sense of community (Keller, 2003, p. 8). At Fustat, people chose to identify their association with a religious community, even as governments imposed taxes and laws based on religion as a social category.

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As this volume demonstrates, a wide variety of different peoples and religions came to Fustat during the medieval period. The medieval Middle East's three main religions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — were practiced here, though it is difficult to find artifactual evidence for them. Materials found in archaeological excavations typically highlight everyday behaviors and interactions but rarely provide direct insight into personal beliefs or religious identity. This difficulty has been observed elsewhere in the medieval Middle East (Vorderstrasse 2005a; Insoll 1999) and more broadly in archaeological literature. The everyday objects found in excavations at the Judenplatz in Vienna, Austria, could not be assigned to the Jewish households who lived in the area. As Martha Keil of the Institute for Jewish History in Austria notes, “the Jewish or Christian origin and use of everyday objects cannot be differentiated” (2014, p. 317). The challenge in this exhibition was not only to highlight everyday life in the city but to also bring attention to the ideas, thoughts, and religious beliefs of the people who lived there.

Our choice to place everyday archaeological artifacts at the center of this exhibition contrasts with many museum exhibitions that focus on “high art” in medieval society that was produced for and by elites. While elite art is treated here — for example, the Mamluk royal Qurʾans (Catalog Nos. 9–10) — the focus is very much on relations in the populous quarters of the early city. Within this emphasis on daily life, the exhibition seeks to look at multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, rather than approaching daily life in the city from all angles. In highlighting this important aspect of medieval communities in Egypt, the exhibition takes a narrower focus from previous exhibitions, such as the extensive and wide-reaching *Everyday Life in Byzantium* exhibition organized in Thessaloniki in 2001–2002 (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2002), or the smaller 1989 *Art and the Holy Powers in the Early Christian House* at the Krannert Art Museum in Champaign, Illinois (Dauterman Maguire, Maguire, and Duncan-Flowers 1989). The themes of the exhibit are shared in dialogue with several other contemporary exhibits such as *Pearls of Wisdom: The Arts of Islam* (Gruber and Dimmig 2014) at the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology and the upcoming *One God: Three World Religions* at the Staatliche Museen (Bode Museum), Berlin, and at the British Museum in London.

ORIGINS OF EXHIBITION ARTIFACTS

We were excited to find that the collection of the Oriental Institute Museum provide a one-of-a-kind opportunity to showcase the archaeology of Fustat, along with the writings and documents of Fustat's communities. While it is usually known for its ancient art, the Oriental Institute Museum also has an important collection of Islamic period artifacts and documents from Fustat. Archaeological pieces in the collection come from the pioneering excavations at Fustat by George Scanlon and the American Research Center in Egypt in 1964 and 1965. In recent decades these materials have been “re-discovered” within Oriental Institute archives, along with a number of Islamic-period manuscripts also from the collection originating from the Genizah of the Ben Ezra synagogue in Old Cairo.

These findings led to initial discussions for an exhibition that would juxtapose archaeological materials from the excavations with manuscripts and other objects from medieval Egypt. Additionally, many of the artifacts in the exhibit have never previously been published or displayed to the public. As a result, this collaborative volume helps connect the collection to emerging areas of research within the field of Islamic studies and art history.

Objects of everyday life from George Scanlon's excavations at Fustat form the basis of this exhibition. These artifacts reached the Oriental Institute by a somewhat circuitous route as part of the excavation's distribution of artifacts to supporting institutions. The American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), which sponsored the excavations, received a portion of the artifacts as part of a formal arrangement with the Egyptian Department of Antiquities, a common practice to encourage excavation during this period. ARCE then provided smaller shares of the objects to scholarly institutions that helped to fund the excavations. The Oriental Institution's collection of artifacts from the excavations was originally provided to the Princeton Art Museum in New Jersey, which was subsequently given to the Akron Art Museum, and then only later re-assigned to the Oriental Institute's collection. Artifacts at the Oriental Institute consist of material from the 1964 and 1965 seasons of excavation, with the vast majority coming from the 1965 excavations.

The 1965 season objects were distributed to the Akron Art Museum through the auspices of Mrs. Ruth Alderfer Oenslager (1892–1992). She was a good friend of Scanlon who had visited on the excavations and donated money to the project, and she wanted a share of the materials originally bound for Princeton University to go to the Akron Art Museum in Ohio, where she was also a donor. Princeton University's share of the Fustat excavation material was divided by Dr. Patrick Kelleher (director of the Princeton Art Museum), with a selection to go to the Akron Art Museum. It is evident when one looks at objects from the excavation in the Princeton collection that Kelleher tried to choose a representative sample of the different types of objects available, including pottery, metalwork, and other small finds. A certain amount of selection was clearly involved, considering the small amount of imported pottery in the Akron collection, along with

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a lack of glass weights and enameled glass. The Princeton Art Museum also retained the sole ostrakon — a pottery sherd that contains an Arabic inscription. On the other hand, other groups of objects seem to have been sent as a whole to the Akron Art Museum, such as the pharaonic shabtis and the coins.

Materials from the Fustat excavations remained in the Akron Art Museum from 1965 until 1983, when the then director of the museum, Robert Doty, decided that the ceramic material would have a better home elsewhere. He approached the Oriental Institute with the idea that the Fustat pottery and additional artifacts should be transferred to Chicago. Scanlon agreed to the transfer of objects, but noted with some irony that in 1965 he had sent a share of the finds to the Institute in the hope of receiving funding for the project, but that this did not occur. In his letter of 1983 to Doty he states that “I see no reason at the moment to retrieve the objects, so we’ll let them stay where they are ... a contribution would even now be most welcome to help defray expenses of the Final Report.” Some of the objects from the Oriental Institute collection were published, most notably in a book that catalogs all the filter-neck jars from the site (Scanlon 1986). The vast majority, however, have never or only briefly appeared in print and are published in this catalog for the first time.

In addition to the objects from the 1965 excavations, a small number of pottery objects from the 1964 season were donated to the Oriental Institute Museum in 2007. These objects came from the collection of Kenneth Pawula, who was the artist during the 1964 campaign.

The archaeological evidence presented in this exhibition is supplemented by objects on loan from the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, as well as manuscripts and other objects primarily from the Oriental Institute Museum’s Bernhard Moritz collection. Moritz, a German Arabist who from 1896 to 1911 was the director of the Khedival Library in Cairo (now the Egyptian National Library and Archives), sold a private collection to the Oriental Institute beginning in 1929 (see Bosch, Carswell, and Petherbridge 1981, p. x). The Moritz collection consists of papyri, manuscripts, and coins primarily but not exclusively from Egypt. It is clear that during his tenure at the Khedival Library Moritz not only collected papyri for that institution but also for himself. The Oriental Institute collection could theoretically also contain papyri that he collected after he left the library in 1911 and returned to Germany, although little is known of his collecting habits in that period (*ibid.*, pp. ix–x). Materials in this exhibition from the Bernhard Moritz collection are supplemented by textual objects from other private collections and the Egypt Exploration Fund.

SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

The curators of this exhibition would like to thank all the authors who have contributed to this catalog and everyone involved in helping the catalog, particularly Dr. Donald Whitcomb of the Oriental Institute, for his continued inspiration and guidance. It is no exaggeration to say that this exhibition would have never occurred without Don’s support and assistance throughout the entire process

In addition to the catalog authors, we would also like to thank Jack Green, chief curator, and Emily Teeter, special exhibitions coordinator, both of the Oriental Institute Museum, for all their assistance and encouragement throughout this process. We are immensely grateful to Tom Urban and Leslie Schramer of the Oriental Institute’s Publications Department, who helped ensure the high quality of this publication despite an extremely tight schedule. A special thanks goes to Susan Allison, assistant registrar, who has been instrumental in the formation of the exhibition from the beginning. We would also like to thank Alison Whyte, conservator at the Oriental Institute, who examined and conserved and conducted X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analysis on many of the objects in this catalog. Others who assisted in this exhibition at the University of Chicago whom we would like to thank are Helen McDonald, registrar at the Oriental Institute Museum, Brian Muhs, Associate Professor of Egyptology, Karen Wilson, research associate at the Oriental Institute, Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer, Hannah Chazin, Laura Krenz, and Aleksandra Hallmann. Outside of the University of Chicago, we would like to thank Jere Bacharach, Michael Padgett, curator of ancient art at the Princeton University Art Museum, Alan Stahl, curator of numismatics at Princeton University, Terry Wilfong of the University of Michigan, Kathleen Scott, publication director, ARCE, Wahied Helmy, and Judy Brinkmann.

Finally, we would like to dedicate this volume to George Scanlon. Scanlon knew about this exhibition and planned to participate, but his death in July 2014 meant that was not possible. We are, however, happy that he knew that this exhibition was in the planning. We see this as a celebration of his work and an invaluable contribution to our understanding of Fustat.

CONTRIBUTORS

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS*

- JB** **Jonathan M. Bloom** shares both the Norma Jean Calderwood Professorship of Islamic and Asian Art at Boston College and the Hamad bin Khalifa Endowed Chair of Islamic Art at Virginia Commonwealth University with his wife and colleague Sheila Blair. He is the author or co-author of a dozen books and hundreds of articles on many aspects of Islamic art, ranging from general surveys to specialized studies. His particular interest is the arts of the Mediterranean region in the medieval Islamic period, as in his 2009 book, *Arts of the City Victorious: Islamic Art and Architecture in Fatimid North Africa and Egypt*. He is currently working on a book on the Islamic architecture of North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula.
- HC** **Hannah Chazin** is a zooarchaeologist and a doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago. Her research focuses on the organization of pastoral practices and political authority in the Late Bronze Age South Caucasus.
- VD** **Vanessa Davies** is currently a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow and Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She has excavated an Islamic-era house at Tell Jawa in Jordan and worked as an epigrapher for the Epigraphic Survey of the Oriental Institute. She is currently revising her dissertation, which discusses the Egyptian concept of *hetep*, for publication as a monograph.
- Audrey Dridi** has been a doctoral student in Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University since 2012, under the supervision of Sylvie Denoix (Centre national de la recherche scientifique) and Françoise Micheau (Paris 1). She is a member of the Institut de Recherche sur Byzance, l'islam et la Méditerranée au Moyen Âge (IRBIMMA). Her area of specialization is Late Antiquity and early Islam in Egypt and the history of the Christians of Egypt before the Fatimids.
- ASL** **Amy S. Landau** is associate curator of Islamic and South Asian art at the Walters Art Museum. She received her doctorate from the Department of Islamic Art and Archaeology at the University of Oxford in 2007. Landau's published research explores shifts in the visual culture of early modern Iran, with particular emphasis on interaction between Safavid Persia and Europe and the Armenian merchant community of New Julfa.
- AHL** **Ayala H. Lester** has worked at the Islamic Museum in Jerusalem as assistant curator and established the Islamic Study Collection at the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University. Since 1990 she has worked at the Israel Antiquities Authority as the curator of Islamic archaeology, concentrating on Islamic glass, metalwork, and jewelry. One of her research interests is the subject of material culture and its historical linkage as reflected in the Genizah documents from the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Fustat. Her doctoral thesis dealt with the identification of Fatimid metalware based upon the hoard from Caesarea excavated in 1995.
- Paulina B. Lewicka** is associate professor of Arabic and Islamic studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw. Her research is focused on the history and social history of the medieval Near East, particularly of the Mamluk period. She has recently been working on topics related to social history of medicine and inter-faith relations. Her publications include *Šāfi' Ibn 'Alī's Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn: Introduction, Edition, and Commentary* (Dialog, 2000) and *Food and Foodways of Medieval Cairenes: Aspects of Life in an Islamic Metropolis of the Eastern Mediterranean* (Brill, 2011).
- BM** **Brian Muhs** is an associate professor of Egyptology at the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. He received his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania in 1996 and was a lecturer at the Papyrological Institute at Leiden University from 1997 to 2011. He primarily studies documentary texts and archives from Greco-Roman Egypt in their social, legal, and economic contexts.

* Initials identify contributors in the Catalog.

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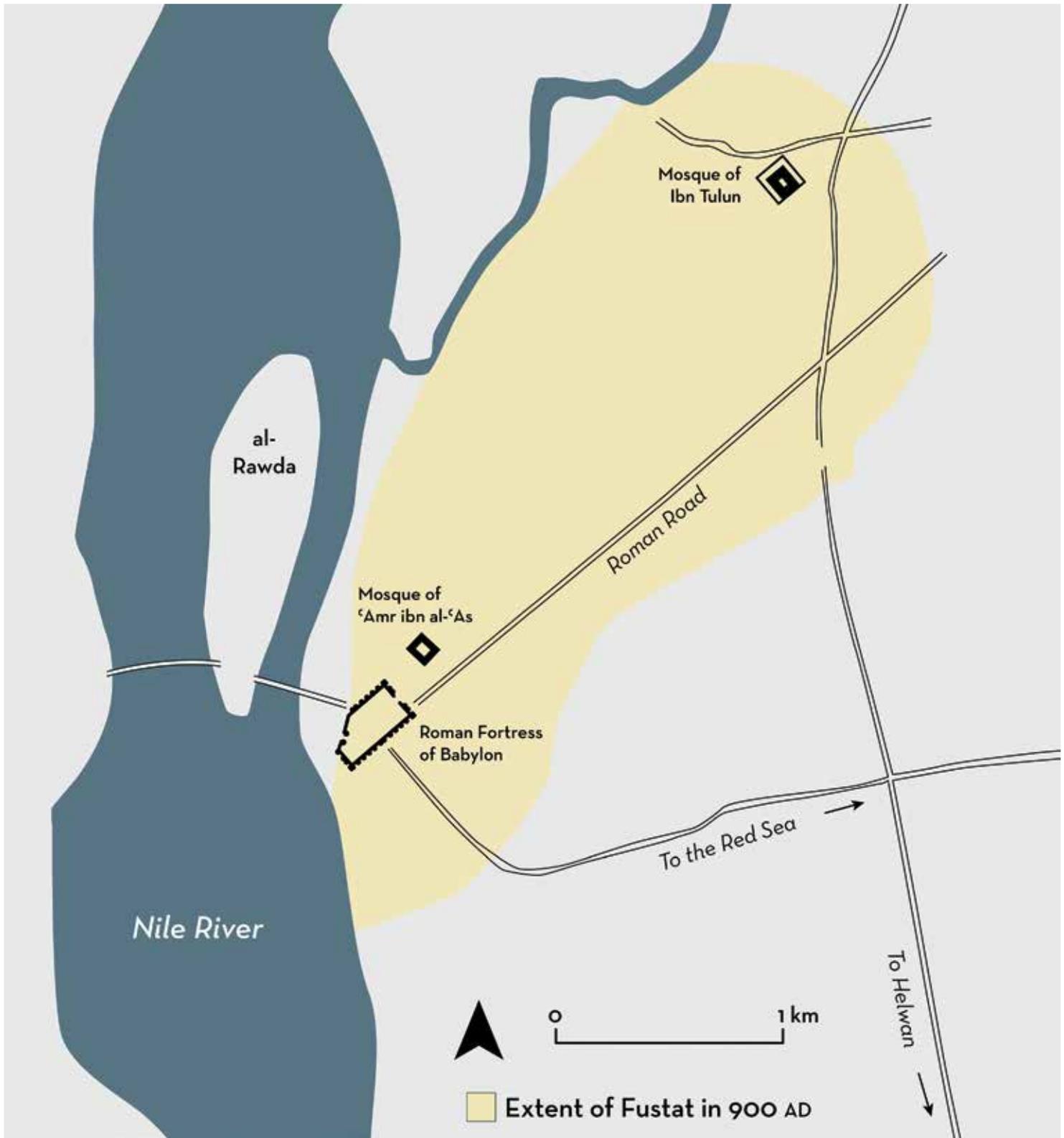
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KEY DATES IN THE HISTORY OF FUSTAT

30 BC–619 AD	Roman/Byzantine rule of Egypt	969–1171	Egypt is ruled by the Fatimid Caliphate from northwest Africa; conquest followed by large influx of immigrants from the Maghreb countries, including a large number of Jews
300 AD	Byzantine Emperor Diocletian builds the fortress of Babylon around Trajan's harbor and canal along the Nile; Diocletian was a great persecutor of Christians	969	Al-Qahira (Cairo) founded by Fatimids directly northeast of Fustat
ca. 360	Christianity becomes the dominant religion in Egypt less than 50 years after the death of Diocletian in 311; conversion of old temples and construction of new churches and monasteries	1072	Edict of vizir Badr al-Gamali allows the citizens of Cairo to plunder building materials from Fustat; this follows several decades of decline in southern Fustat following low Nile levels, plague, famine, and earthquakes
541	Justinian plague	1168	Fustat is burned to prevent it from falling to the Crusaders
619–629	Persian Sasanian rule in Egypt	1171–1250	Egypt ruled by the Ayyubid Dynasty ; construction of Saladin's citadel on a spur of the Muqattam hills; majority of the Cairo Genizah letters from the Ben Ezra Synagogue at Fustat date to this period
632	Death of Prophet Muhammad, believed by Muslims to be the last prophet sent by God to mankind; during his life Muhammad unified Arabia under a single state	1250–1517	Rule of the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt; over time, Fustat is absorbed as a neighborhood of Cairo and loses prominence
632–661	Expansion of the Rashidun Caliphate across the Middle East and Africa	1517–1867	Conquest of Egypt by the Ottoman Empire leads to the growth of Bulaq as the main port of north Cairo, and decline of the southern port of Old Cairo
641/42	ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAs conquers Egypt and becomes governor of Egypt for the Rashidun Caliphate ; seven-month siege and capture of the fortress of Babylon	1867–1914	Autonomous rule by the Khedivate of Egypt (tributary state of the Ottoman Empire)
642	Founding of Fustat, which replaces Alexandria as Egypt's administrative and economic capital; Muslim and Christian soldiers of the Arab army settle the first neighborhoods of Fustat	1871	The Khedivate modernizes Cairo with broad avenues and European-style buildings
661–750	Egypt is ruled as a governorate of the Umayyad Caliphate	1896	Solomon Schechter, a rabbi and scholar, is the first to recognize the historic importance of the Genizah texts from Ben Ezra Synagogue
700s	Christians settle in neighborhoods in northern areas of Fustat; Jews migrate to Fustat from the previous capital of Alexandria	1912–1924	Aly Bahgat conducts the first archaeological excavations at Fustat for the Museum of Arab Art in Cairo
709–714	Qurra ibn Sharik is governor of Egypt	1932	The Oriental Institute purchases a number of Cairo Genizah documents from Erik von Scherling
750–868	Abbasid conquest of Egypt; Egypt is ruled as a governorate of the Abbasid Caliphate in Iraq	1964–1980	George Scanlon leads excavations at Fustat with the support of the American Research Center in Egypt to help save the site from being bulldozed for modern development; many of the artifacts on display here were discovered in these excavations
Late 700s	Paper technology spreads from Central Asia to the Near East		
868–905	Egypt is ruled under the Tulunid Dynasty (vassals of the Abbasids); under the Tulunids, new urban districts expand to the north of Fustat		
905–935	Egypt is again under the direct rule of the Abbasid Caliphate		
935–969	Ikhshidid Dynasty takes control of Egypt (vassals of the Abbasids)		



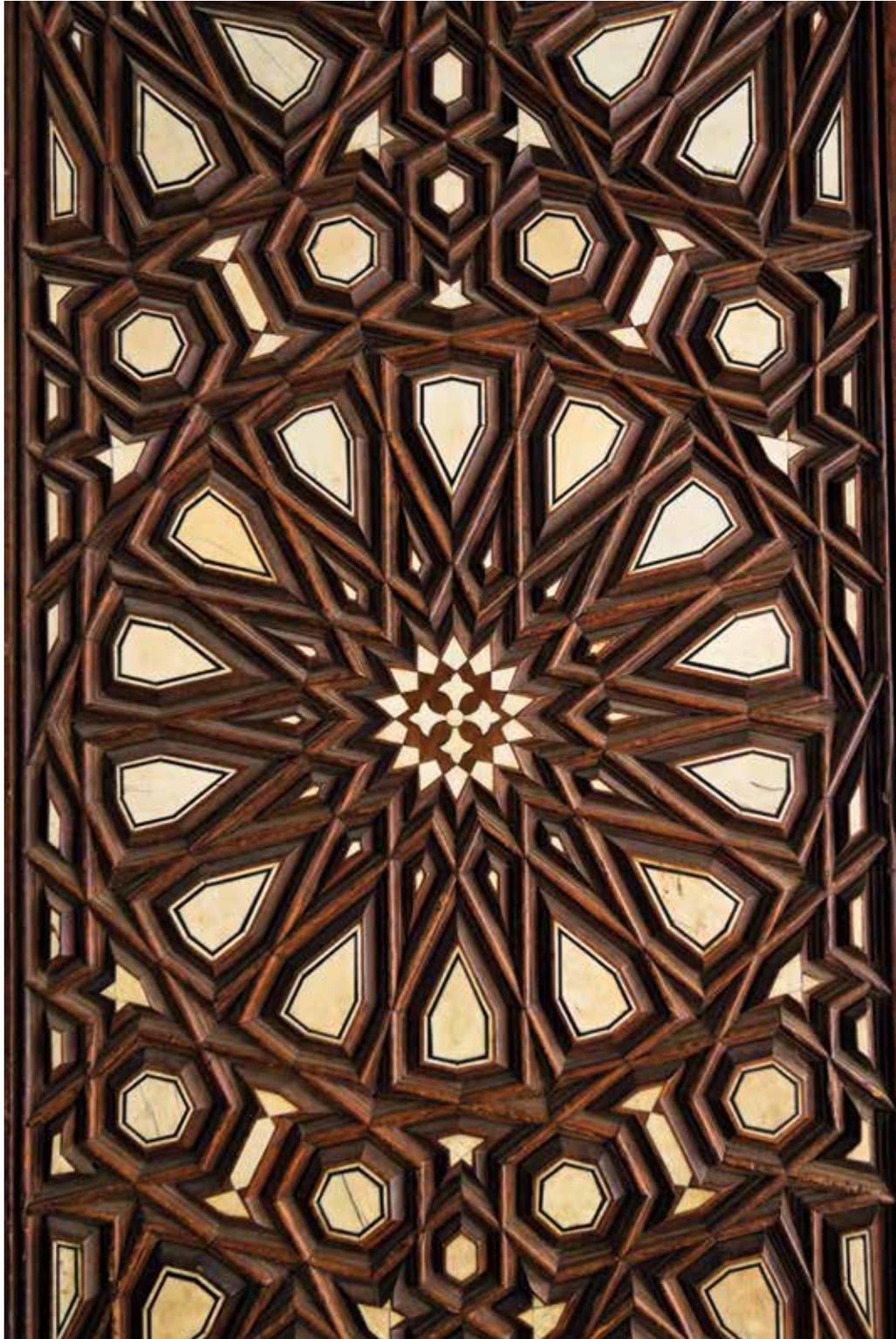
Maps of principal sites mentioned in the text



The region of Fustat (additional maps on pp. 34-35, 93-97)

I

RELIGION AND COMMUNITY



1. THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY OF FUSTAT

JONATHAN M. BLOOM

Camr bin al-ʿAs (died ca. 663), a Companion of the Prophet Muhammad and commander of the Muslim army that conquered Egypt, established an encampment for his troops near the Roman fortress of Babylon (Qasr al-Shamʿ; fig. 1.1) in 641. The fortress was located on the east side of the Nile at the southern edge of the Delta where the narrow river valley expanded and an island (linked to the

banks by a boat bridge) allowed relatively easy crossing of the river. Furthermore, an ancient canal at this location had linked the Nile (and consequently the Mediterranean) with the Red Sea. The Muslim settlement quickly grew into a city known in Arabic as *al-Fuṣṭāṭ* (from the Greek *fossaton*, or “camp”), *Fuṣṭāṭ-Miṣr* (from the Arabic *miṣr/amṣār*, meaning “settlement”), and sometimes simply *Miṣr* (colloquially *Maṣr*), which



FIGURE 1.1. Standing remains of the fortress of Babylon as they appeared in the early twentieth century (Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford, negative no. EA.CA.2396)

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO



FIGURE 1.2. City walls of Fustat as they appeared in the early twentieth century (Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford, negative no. EA.CA.4392)

also came to be the common Arabic designation for the land of Egypt (fig. 1.2).

The settlement grew quickly in early Islamic times, and in the tenth century, the Fatimid dynasty (969–1171) founded another settlement a few kilometers to its northeast. Known as *al-Qāhira* (“the victorious”), the Fatimid district became more famous than its predecessor and lent the entire urban agglomeration its name, eventually becoming “Cairo” in European languages. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, whole districts of Fustat were either abandoned (following famines and epidemics) or destroyed (to prevent them from being taken by Crusaders), but some areas were subsequently rebuilt and enclosed within a defensive wall encompassing both Cairo and Fustat and linked to the citadel on the Muqattam hills to the east. Today, the district now corresponding to the

original settlement of Fustat is commonly known as *Maṣr al-‘Atīqa*, or Old Cairo, and the remains of the Roman fortress still contain several important churches and synagogues dating back to the medieval period that testify to the religious diversity of the urban settlement over the centuries.

FUSTAT AS A POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL CENTER

In pre-Islamic times, the pre-eminent city of Egypt had been Alexandria, located on the Mediterranean coast at the west side of the Nile Delta, but the foundation of Fustat shifted the political, economic, and cultural center of the country up the Nile and away from the coast. The Muslim governors of Fustat were

1. THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY OF FUSTAT

initially charged with ruling all the lands Muslims conquered to the west, including present-day Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, although soon independent government centers were established across North Africa. Fustat prospered from the extraordinary agricultural wealth produced in the Delta and the Nile valley, and it soon became a major center of trade after the ancient canal to the Red Sea was renewed, stimulating the development of the city's riparian harbors and port facilities so Egyptian grain could be shipped easily to Arabia. Goods from across North and West Africa passed through its markets, and by the year 1000 merchants from Amalfi had established a trading post there, soon to be followed by merchants from other Italian cities. Nasir-i Khusraw, a Persian visitor to Fustat in the eleventh century, reports seeing apartment houses of up to fourteen stories and crowded markets where an extraordinary variety of goods were sold.

The Arab Muslim troops had initially settled in tribal-ethnic groups clustered in quarters around small mosques they used for daily worship, and these neighborhoods were themselves clustered around the large congregational (or "Friday") mosque, about 250 meters north of the Roman fortress. Founded by al-'As in 642, the mosque of 'Amr has, however, been

repeatedly reconstructed and expanded over the centuries so that nothing of its original aspect remains (fig. 1.3). Parts of the ninth-century mosque survived into the twentieth century, but virtually everything one sees today is modern construction. The mosque of 'Amr retained its prestige as the center of Muslim life and scholarship even after later rulers built other congregational mosques throughout metropolitan Cairo. For example, when the Shi'i Fatimids conquered Egypt in 969, they made sure that the mu'ezzins of this mosque, who called out the *adhān*, or call to prayer, five times a day, included the special formulas the Fatimids preferred. Eventually, however, al-Azhar, the mosque the Fatimids built in their district of the city, came to surpass the mosque of 'Amr as the center of scholarship and to this day it remains the premier religious institution in the Sunni world.

Fustat soon became the largest city in Africa, attracting not only merchants and craftsmen, but also scholars and religious leaders from east and west. For example, the great religious scholar Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (died 820), after studying in Arabia and Iraq, settled in Fustat and lectured until his death at the mosque of 'Amr; there he composed several of his major works, and his wide following eventually made the Shafi'i interpretation

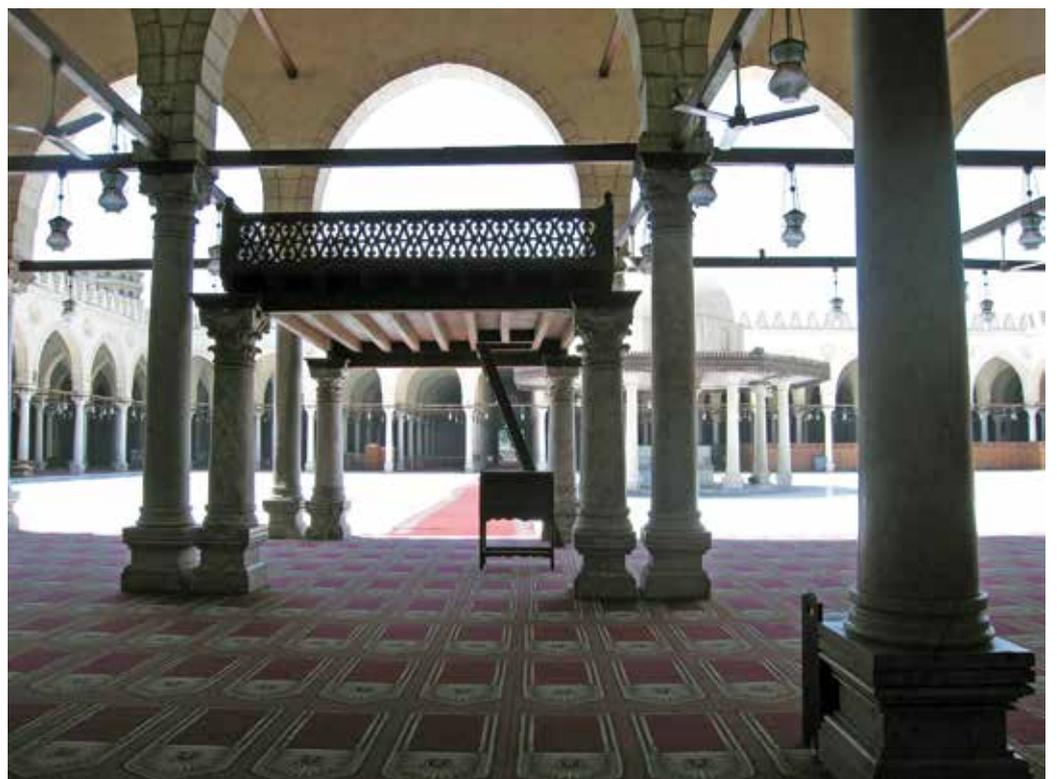


FIGURE 1.3. Interior of the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'As (photo by L. Krenz)

of Islamic law (*madhhab* in Arabic) the predominant one followed in Egypt. His tomb, in the desert cemetery to the east of Fustat, is venerated to this day, although the present structure dates from the thirteenth century.

THE PRACTICE OF ISLAM AT FUSTAT

All Muslims, whether Sunni or Shi'i, are expected to follow the five pillars of Islam, namely, to (1) declare that "There is no god but God (known as Allah in Arabic) and that Muhammad is His messenger"; (2) worship God five times a day (at dawn, midday, mid-afternoon, evening, and nightfall) by following a prescribed series of ritual motions and reciting specific formulas; (3) fast during the days of the holy month of Ramadan, during which the Qur'an was revealed; (4) give alms (*zakāt*), if one has sufficient resources; and finally, (5) make the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca, the central shrine of Islam in Arabia, assuming one is

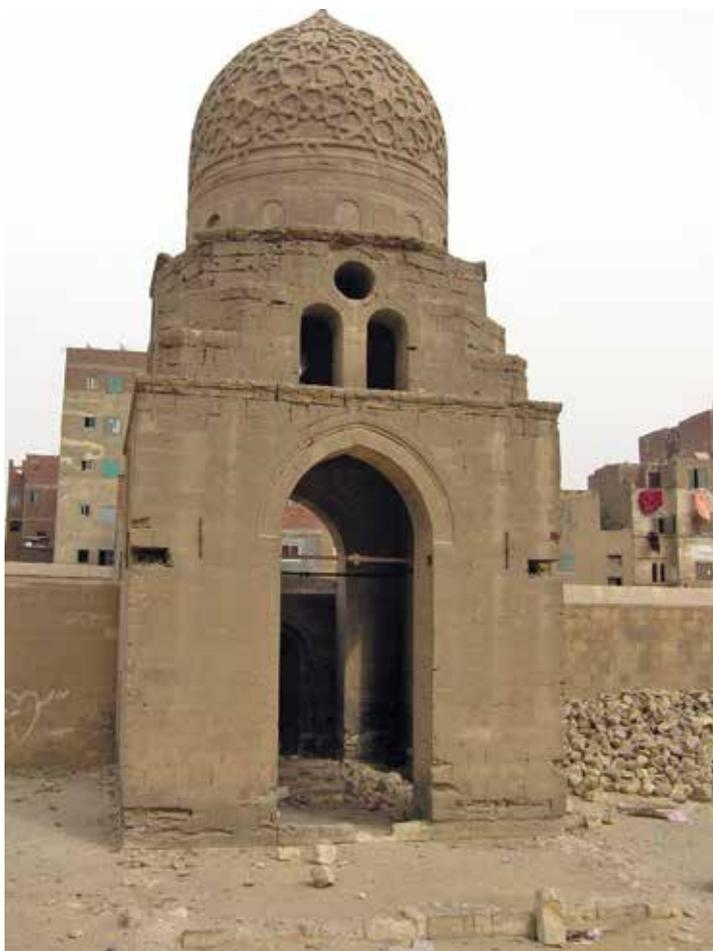


FIGURE 1.4. Tomb in the City of the Dead (photo by J. Brinkmann)

physically and financially able. In addition, men are expected to attend communal worship in the mosque at Friday noon, when they hear a sermon pronounced by or in the name of the current ruler. In Fustat, women, who did not normally attend the mosque, seem to have turned their religious lives toward the cemeteries that spread out from the city into the desert on the east. Although the Prophet Muhammad did not approve of building tombs or even of erecting tombstones for the deceased, claiming that all men were equal in death, an enormous Muslim cemetery known as al-Qarafa developed outside Fustat. It was marked — at least from the ninth century — by domed mausolea (fig. 1.4) over the graves of important individuals, as well as by simple head- and footstones. The abundance of women's names on these stones, of which several thousand survive from the early centuries of Islam, suggest that cemeteries were particularly important foci for the religious lives of women.

All Muslims believe that the Qur'an ("recitation") is the literal word of God as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad early in the seventh century AD (fig. 1.5). The oral nature of the revelation meant that it was particularly important to hear, recite, and memorize God's word. Children learned to read by repeatedly reciting verses of the Qur'an that had been written out on wooden tablets (see Catalog No. 31), and some individuals managed to commit the entire Qur'an — approximately the same length as the New Testament — to memory. Although not everyone in the society could "read" in the modern sense of the word, it seems that many if not most people could recognize writing, particularly when it consisted of familiar quotations from the Qur'an. Despite the importance of orality for learning and transmitting the Qur'an, manuscripts of the text were important tools for maintaining the integrity of God's message over the centuries.

Egyptians had been writing for over three millennia before the coming of Islam, and the Nile valley was the birthplace and home of papyrus manufacture, which, along with parchment were the principal flexible supports for writing in the Mediterranean lands of antiquity. Papyrus, made from a reed that grows along the Nile, was best suited to making scrolls, for repeated bending and folding tended to weaken the material (see Catalog Nos. 23–24). Parchment, which is made from animal skin, was more expensive but

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FIGURE 1.5. Folio from a Mamluk Qur'an given as *waqf* by Sultan Barsbay (r. 1422–1438), 1435/6 AD. Ink on paper, 30 x 21 cm. OIM A12030A (D. 027328)

better suited for the codex format of a book (which has folded leaves bound together on one side) that Christians adopted for copying their scriptures in the centuries after Christ. In the first centuries of Islam, the Muslims of Fustat are known to have used papyrus for their everyday correspondence and parchment for copying the Qur'an. It is said that the caliph 'Uthman (r. 644–656) ordered an authoritative edition of the Qur'an, of which one of the parchment copies was sent for reference and safekeeping in the mosque of 'Amr in Fustat.

In the late eighth century, when Muslims conquered Central Asia, they first encountered paper, a flexible writing support invented in China before the time of Christ but that had been made in Central Asia for centuries. Made from plant-derived cellulose fibers that are beaten in the presence of water,

collected on a screen, and dried, paper could be made virtually anywhere from easily available materials. The manufacture and use of paper spread quickly across the Islamic lands, from Central Asia to Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, where it began to replace papyrus. Excavations in parts of Fustat have produced paper fragments datable to the ninth century, including the Oriental Institute's fragment of the opening page of a copy of the earliest known manuscript of the *Thousand and One Nights* (Catalog No. 33). It is thought that this book was copied in Syria in around 800, then taken to Egypt, where it was read so often that it eventually fell into disrepair and its pages used for scrap paper by a certain Ahmad ibn Mahfuz, who copied legal formulas in its margins in October 879. While some Egyptians still used papyrus for writing in the early tenth century, the geographer Ibn Hawqal, who visited in 969, makes no mention of it as a writing material, and the geographer al-Muqaddasi, writing in 985/86, mentions paper as an Egyptian product. In the eleventh century, a Persian visitor mentions that the grocers wrapped one's purchases in paper, suggesting that it was relatively common (and cheap). By the early thirteenth century another traveler explicitly declared that the manufacture of papyrus was quite forgotten.

No evidence for medieval paper mills survives in Fustat, however, apart from the piles of linen rags uncovered during excavations, which must have been collected — along with old paper — for recycling. It is most likely that the paper mills were located along the Nile in Fustat, where a supply of both fresh water and water power was readily available, rather than in Cairo, which was farther from both. We know that the Fatimid caliphs had tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of books on all subjects in their palace library in Cairo. Known as the "House of Knowledge," this library and reading room served as a meeting place for scholars of all types. The extraordinary numbers of books was made possible because they were written on paper, which was cheap and abundant, and because they were normally copied by dictation, so several copies could be made at one time. In contrast, contemporary European libraries, which had only manuscripts copied on expensive parchment, had far fewer books than those in the Muslim lands. In the year 1012/13, the caliph al-Hakim commanded that 1,298 manuscripts of the Qur'an in both bound volumes and loose sheets kept in boxes be taken from

the Fatimid palace to the mosque of ‘Amr in Fustat. Among them were some written entirely in gold. Such manuscripts were not meant for actual *reading*, as we understand the term today, but functioned as aide-mémoires to refresh the memories of people who already knew the Qur’an or much of it by heart. Incredibly, only one manuscript from the enormous Fatimid libraries is known to survive, because many books were destroyed in the troubled times that followed the fall of the dynasty in 1171.

THE QUR’ANIC TRADITION

The Mamluk period (1260–1517) was the heyday for the production of books in Cairo, and a great many manuscripts survive from this period, including the two manuscripts of the Qur’an in the exhibition (Catalog Nos. 9 and 10). Following the Mongol invasion of the eastern and central Islamic lands in the thirteenth century and their conquest of Baghdad in 1258, Egypt in general and Cairo in particular became the center of Arab-Islamic culture, as Arab scholars and artisans fled from Iraq to the relatively safe haven of Egypt under the Mamluk sultans. The Mamluks were soldiers of Turkish and Circassian slave (Arab. *mamlūk*) origin who rose through the ranks to rule over Egypt and Syria for several hundred years. In cities such as Cairo, Damascus, Jerusalem, and Aleppo, Mamluk princes and sultans established many religious foundations, such as mosques, schools, hospices, hospitals, and public water dispensaries that were attached to their mausolea and designed to serve the urban population and perpetuate their memories. Manuscripts of the Qur’an along with other items such as lamps and carpets were typically endowed



FIGURE 1.6. Folio from a Mamluk Qur’an given as *waqf* by Sultan Faraj ibn Barquq, 1399–1412 AD. Ink on paper, 18.5 x 12.5 cm. OIM A12066 (D. 027330)

to these *waqf* institutions (fig. 1.6), along with properties whose rents paid for their maintenance. The endowment deeds often specified that professional readers should read the Qur’an aloud for the edification of visitors and those passing by, and the two manuscripts in the exhibition are typical examples of such endowed books.

2. THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE GENIZAH DOCUMENTS: A GLIMPSE OF JEWISH LIFE IN MEDIEVAL CAIRO

MICHAEL G. WECHSLER AND TASHA VORDERSTRASSE

The Jewish population at Fustat was not a monolithic community, but a diverse one. There was an important Jewish community already in Alexandria at the time of the Islamic conquest, though after the founding of Fustat a new Jewish community soon emerged at this new economic and political center. The evidence from the Fatimid period indicates that Egypt had large numbers of immigrants, with Jews coming to Fustat from throughout the Islamic world (Babylonia being particularly important in this regard, including both Jews who had come directly from that region as well as those who came to Egypt from Babylonia via North Africa), as well as Byzantium and Europe. There were also those who moved from other communities in Egypt to Fustat.

EVIDENCE FROM FUSTAT'S JEWISH COMMUNITY: AN OVERVIEW

The material at the Oriental Institute comes from the Ben Ezra Synagogue (*kanīsat al-shāmiyyīn*, “the synagogue of the Syro-Palestinians,” as it was known in the medieval period), which was used by members of the Rabbanite community who practiced the Palestinian rite.¹ This *genizah* (literally “storehouse,” “burial place”) housed documents of all sorts — not simply those containing God’s name, which were not supposed to be destroyed — and comprised a huge number of texts (fig. 2.1), estimated at about 250,000 manuscript leaves. This deposit of documents, produced primarily in the tenth through thirteenth centuries,



FIGURE 2.1. Solomon Schechter examining manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah at Cambridge (reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library)

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO

is commonly known as the Cairo Genizah. It should be considered distinct from the Karaite Genizah, which derives from the Dar Simha Synagogue in Cairo (Rustow 2008, pp. xix–xxi, no. 4; p. 28, no. 34; p. 247, no. 22).

While the Cairo Genizah is the most famous of these repositories, the custom of preserving documents in this manner is not only practiced in Judaism. *Genizot* (plural of *genizah*) are also attested in Islamic contexts, including documents from the Great Mosques of Damascus, Kairouan, and Sana'a (Sadan 1986, pp. 40–42; Deroche 2009, p. 7), and a trove of documents from the mosque of 'Amr al-'As in Fustat has received less attention than the other Islamic examples. They were first recorded in the early nineteenth century in a room on the north side of the mosque, although it appears that fragments from this deposit had already been sold in the seventeenth century. This collection of documents includes important Umayyad Qur'ans (codex Parisino-petropolitanus, codex London, and the Umayyad codex of Fustat) that now form an important part of our understanding of the development of the Qur'an, as well as fragments of ninth-century Qur'ans (Deroche 2009, pp. 7–19, 21–22; Deroche 2014, pp. 17, 38–39, 76). Additionally, the Umayyad fragment MS Mingana Islamic Arabic 1572 also comes from the 'Amr Mosque document trove. The Mingana pieces were sold to the Selly Oak Colleges Library in Birmingham, England, by Erik von Scherling (Fedeli 2011, pp. 48–50), who also sold the Genizah manuscripts to the Oriental Institute Museum (see *Acquisition History*, in the *Catalog*).

The number of texts from the famous Cairo Genizah of the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Fustat that found their way to the Oriental Institute is small. Seven fragments can be identified from the Cairo Genizah at the Oriental Institute Museum, and all of them are published in the catalog (Catalog Nos. 2–8). This chapter discusses these fragments, their relevance to the Genizah in general, and how they relate to other Jewish objects from Fustat, including the Ben Ezra Synagogue Torah shrine door that appears in this exhibition (Catalog No. 1). While the Oriental Institute collection of Genizah documents is small, it is nonetheless an important reflection of the vibrant Jewish community that once inhabited Fustat (fig. 2.2). This exhibition marks the first time that the Oriental Institute Genizah documents have been studied. Indeed, their context was largely unknown

until a recent rediscovery of their provenance within Oriental Institute object storage.

The huge number of texts found at the Ben Ezra Synagogue includes many different types of documents, including magical texts, letters concerning daily life and trade in Fustat and beyond, as well as dowry lists, sales documents, and texts on innumerable other topics. These documents have changed the way that historians view the history of Jews in the medieval world, as well as trade and many other topics (Rustow 2008, p. xxi), and form the basis of S. D. Goitein's monumental study of the medieval Jewish community, *A Mediterranean Society*, published between 1967 and 1993. Many documents in



FIGURE 2.2. Interior of the Ben Ezra Synagogue. Old Cairo, Egypt. Photo by Eliot Elisofon, 1959 (Eliot Elisofon Field photographs, 1942–1972. EEPA EENG 06377. Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution)

2. THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE GENIZAH DOCUMENTS: A REFLECTION OF A COMMUNITY

the different Genizah collections scattered around the world remain to be discovered, and of those that are known, many are still unpublished. The publication of the Oriental Institute Genizah documents here reduces that number by a fraction.

Thanks to the Genizah documents, we know a great deal about the Jewish communities in Fustat. The city's diverse Jewish population was generally divided into two main communities: Rabbanites (who were in turn divided into Palestinians and Babylonians) and Karaites. These two groups did intermarry and seem to have lived together without incident (Bareket 1999, pp. 5–30; Rustow 2008, pp. 10–12). The Karaites lived mostly in the al-Mamsusa quarter, which was located on the eastern side of the Qasr al-Sham^c, which was part of the Jewish quarter where both groups lived (Olszowy-Schlanger 1998, p. 60). The Genizah also provides valuable information about the names of streets, bazaars, and squares that are named after different trades, suggesting that individuals who engaged in similar occupations tended to cluster near each other, although this was not necessarily the case. Examples of some of the streets attested in the Genizah are the Street of the Alchemists, the Street of the Cobblers, and the Street of the Leather-Bottle Makers (Goitein 1967b, pp. 83–84, 111, 193, 231; Kubiak 1987).

It is not only the citizens of Fustat that the Genizah informs us about, but also those who lived outside the city who either visited or corresponded with its inhabitants. One individual who has been particularly well studied is Maimonides (Moses ben Maimon), one of the most famous medieval Jewish scholars. The Genizah has revealed fragments in his own hand dating to around 1160, as well as draft copies of various works written by him (Reif 2013, pp. 169–74) (fig. 2.3).

Additionally, the Genizah provides information about individuals who are not otherwise known from texts, such as women, often giving very interesting insights into their lives, including the music to which they might have listened. The best-documented woman in the Genizah, Karima bint Ammar al-Wuhsha al-Dallala (“the broker”), for instance, was a successful eleventh-century businesswoman and moneylender who had a colorful personal life. A divorced Jewish woman, she ignored her daughter in her will, but left over 300 dinars to her illegitimate son Abu Sa’d, as well as making provisions for his education. She



FIGURE 2.3. Autograph letter of Maimonides. 12th century. Ink on paper, Judaeo-Arabic, 14.3 x 10.7 cm. Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, Taylor-Schechter Cairo Genizah Collection AS 149.89 (reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library)

never married Abu Sa’d’s father, perhaps concerned that he would try to take her wealth, and she specifically excluded him from her will, although she did cancel the debt he owed her. Additionally, when summoned to court, she appeared in person, rather than staying secluded, which was unusual for a woman. It is perhaps not surprising that she was expelled from the congregation of her synagogue (Goitein 1967a; Goitein 1978a, pp. 346–52; Burns 1996, pp. 127–28; see Chapter 6).

In a letter of the early tenth century or earlier (British Library Or. 1080 J.1; de Lange 1996, pp. 11–15), a woman named Archondou writes from Alexandria to her son Fudhail, who lives in Fustat. Archondou comments that, since the day she heard Fudhail had hurt his eyes, she has “wept night and day without ceasing.” She admonishes him that she has heard that he bought a mattress and that he should sell it and keep the money. She then goes on to state that people are talking about him and cursing him and his wife,

and that she is being harassed by a man from whom Fudhail borrowed money that he has presumably not repaid. Further, she has bought him almonds but has found no one reliable with whom to send them to him. At the end of the letter Archondou comes to the point, which is that she wants to move to Fustat, presumably to live with her son. She began the journey but got only as far as Buhaira (modern Beheira region, where there is now a highway between Cairo and Alexandria) before being forced to turn back because there was such a strong wind blowing that no one was prepared to sail a boat to Fustat. In addition, her eyes hurt and she must pay money every week for the doctor and therefore cannot afford moving from her current place of residence. She pleads with her son to come quickly to fetch her so that she does not die. One can only imagine what Fudhail may have felt upon reading such a letter.

GENIZAH TEXTS IN THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

It is this level of information that has facilitated the use of the Cairo Genizah to describe almost every aspect of social life of the Jewish community in Cairo. But despite the attention that these many fascinating types of documents have received, they are not the only documents that can be found in the Cairo Genizah. In contrast to the lively accounts of the personal lives of the residents of Fustat or information about already known individuals such as Maimonides, the Genizah documents in the Oriental Institute collection tell us less about the social lives of the population at Fustat and far more about their religious lives. The Oriental Institute manuscripts consist of biblical manuscripts and one writing exercise (Catalog Nos. 2–8). The Hebrew Bible — and in particular the Pentateuch (Torah) — naturally played a central role in the communal life of the Jewish community in medieval Cairo. This is evident, first and foremost, from the thousands of biblical fragments (one estimate is 15 percent) contained in the circa 250,000 written items comprising the Cairo Genizah. Biblical passages also feature on the Ben Ezra Synagogue Torah shrine door (see Catalog No. 1), once more demonstrating the primacy of the Bible in Jewish religious life.

In the established Sabbath liturgy of the synagogue, the entire text of the Pentateuch was broken into sectional readings (*parashiyyot*; sing. *parashah*)

that would be read over the course of either a year, according to the Babylonian tradition, or three years, according to the tradition of communities from or with close ties to the Land of Israel (that is, the “Palestinian” tradition). The Jewish community in Cairo had synagogues that followed both traditions, although most followed the Babylonian tradition, the dominant tradition of most Jewish communities today.

The biblical fragments in the Oriental Institute collection, however, were in all likelihood not employed for liturgical use in the synagogue, since they are from codices (that is, books, as evident from the writing on both sides), rather than from scrolls (which had writing on only one side), and Jewish law (*halakhah*) expressly requires liturgical-public reading of the Bible to be done from a scroll, not a codex. The fragments were therefore most likely employed for scholarly study, as medieval Cairo was also a thriving center of Jewish scholarship. Among the Jewish residents of Old Cairo was in fact a thriving community of Karaites — a sect within medieval Judaism characterized by their rejection of the binding authority of rabbinic tradition and who prided themselves on their careful study of Scripture — one of their self-assumed designations being “the Masters of Scripture” (*ba‘alei ha-miqra’*).

Catalog No. 4 is a remnant from this community: a fragment from a codex containing the Judaeo-Arabic translation and commentary on the book of Joshua by Yefet ben ‘Eli (fl. late tenth century), the Karaite exegete par excellence and the first-known Jewish writer to compose a commentary (with full Judaeo-Arabic translation) on the entire Hebrew Bible. Yefet’s translation — as borne out by the present fragment — follows the Hebrew text in a characteristically literal manner, and his accompanying commentary on the biblical text (though not attested in the present fragment) is characterized by close attention to the grammatical-contextual and historical elements of the biblical text — very much in the vein of modern systematic exegesis of the Bible.

Part of the educational curriculum of medieval Jewish community also included learning how to write, as reflected in Catalog No. 5, comprising a writing exercise in which the same line is repeated. In particular, the writer of the exercise appears to have been honing his penmanship for letter writing, as suggested by the content of his exercise: “... everything arriving safely into your care, send back and

2. THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE GENIZAH DOCUMENTS: A REFLECTION OF A COMMUNITY

inform us ... that of which we are informing you took place yesterday, (and) the account of it we have sent to you candidly(?) ...”

CONCLUSION

While there are not very many manuscripts in the Genizah collection at the Oriental Institute, they are nonetheless typical of the extant texts associated with the Jewish community of medieval Fustat. They represent the intellectual activities of the community, rather than the merchants' letters, trousseau lists, or other Cairo Genizah texts that have attracted so much attention. Indeed, all the documents are related to intellectual activities specifically pursued in Fustat. The manuscripts include biblical fragments from codices that could have been used within different sectors of the Jewish community, as well as a fragment of a manuscript from the work of a prominent Karaite scholar, Yefet ben 'Eli. The writing exercise points to the desire of those in the community to improve their penmanship. All of these are aspects of

the intellectual life of the Fustat Jewish community. It is unclear from whom von Scherling purchased these papyri in Cairo, and the number of papyri is small, but they nonetheless add to our understanding of the Jewish community.

NOTE

¹ The Palestinian rite was distinct in many ways from the Babylonian rite, even though the practitioners of both were Rabbanites. The main differences between the two are based upon rituals and points of law. Rabbanite Judaism constitutes the mainstream form of Judaism, as opposed to Karaite Judaism, and is based on the belief that Moses received not only the Torah but also an oral explanation from God, the “Oral Torah” (the divine authority of which is rejected by the Karaites).

3. CHRISTIANS OF FUSTAT IN THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES OF ISLAM: THE MAKING OF A NEW SOCIETY

AUDREY DRIDI

The first church which has been built in Fustat-Misr [...] is the one located behind the bridge, [founded] in the days of Maslama b. Mukhallad [r. 667–682], [which made the members of] the *jund* become indignant and say to him, “Do you allow them to build churches?”, and they protested vigorously against him. Then Maslama said: “it [the church] is not situated in your city but outside of it, in their lands.” Therefore, they were resigned. (Ibn ‘Abd al-Hakam 1922, p. 132)

This story reported by the medieval historian Ibn ‘Abd al-Hakam (died 871) is not anecdotal, but exemplary of the situation of the Christians of Fustat in the first decades of Muslim domination. More than twenty-five years after the foundation of the new capital in 641, Muslims and Christians still lived apart from one another, inside and outside Fustat. In other words, at least up to this period, Fustat was, strictly speaking, a Muslim city reserved for the Arab soldiers who constituted the *jund* (a military division) of Egypt.¹ However, this separation was not religious in its essence. Rather, it differentiated conquerors and conquered, Arabs and Egyptians. Indeed, as al-Hakam describes in his book (Ibn ‘Abd al-Hakam 1922, p. 129), Christian soldiers from other regions of the Muslim world who belonged to the army of ‘Amr ibn al-‘As, the Muslim conqueror of Egypt, settled in a specific area of Fustat.

It is nevertheless a fact that, as this anecdote shows, a native Christian population numerous enough to need a church was living in the city. These Christians are among the first in Egypt to have had — in a likely situation of numerical minority — interreligious and intercultural contacts with Muslims. The majority of these Christians must have lived in the pre-Islamic city of Babylon — widely mentioned in papyri from before and after the Islamic conquest — located in the immediate vicinity of the new capital. In the pre-Islamic period, churches and monasteries

were situated on the west bank of the Nile between Memphis and Giza, and not inside the fortress of Babylon, as many scholars have asserted. This initial separation is confirmed by archaeology, notably by excavations conducted on the Istabl ‘Antar plateau in the south of Fustat (Gayraud 1998a), and lasted until the turn of the eighth century, when the growing city ultimately embraced Babylon. If the transition between a segregated to a mixed city is difficult to understand, literary and documentary sources reveal who these Christians were — beyond their religious affiliation — where they came from before settling in Fustat, and eventually how they coexisted with Muslims in the first centuries of Islam (figs. 3.1–2).

SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIANS OF FUSTAT

Reconstructing the history of the Christians of Fustat during the first three centuries of Islam is a hard task. The earliest textual sources go back to the ninth century, about two centuries after the conquest of Egypt (Ibn ‘Abd al-Hakam 1922). This admittedly gives rise to the question of the reliability of such literary texts (Crone 1977), which can be overcome by cross-checking different sources that come from different religious milieux. The first lives outlined in the *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, translated from Coptic to Arabic in the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries, are invaluable for our understanding of the Christians of Egypt in general, and of Fustat in particular. The biographies of Benjamin (patriarch from 625 to 664) and Isaac (patriarch from 689 to 692) (Amélineau 1888; Bell 2009) have reached us in their Coptic version and contain much information of interest about the Christian religious and lay elite, the main churches of the Muslim capital, and, in a wider perspective, the relations between

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO

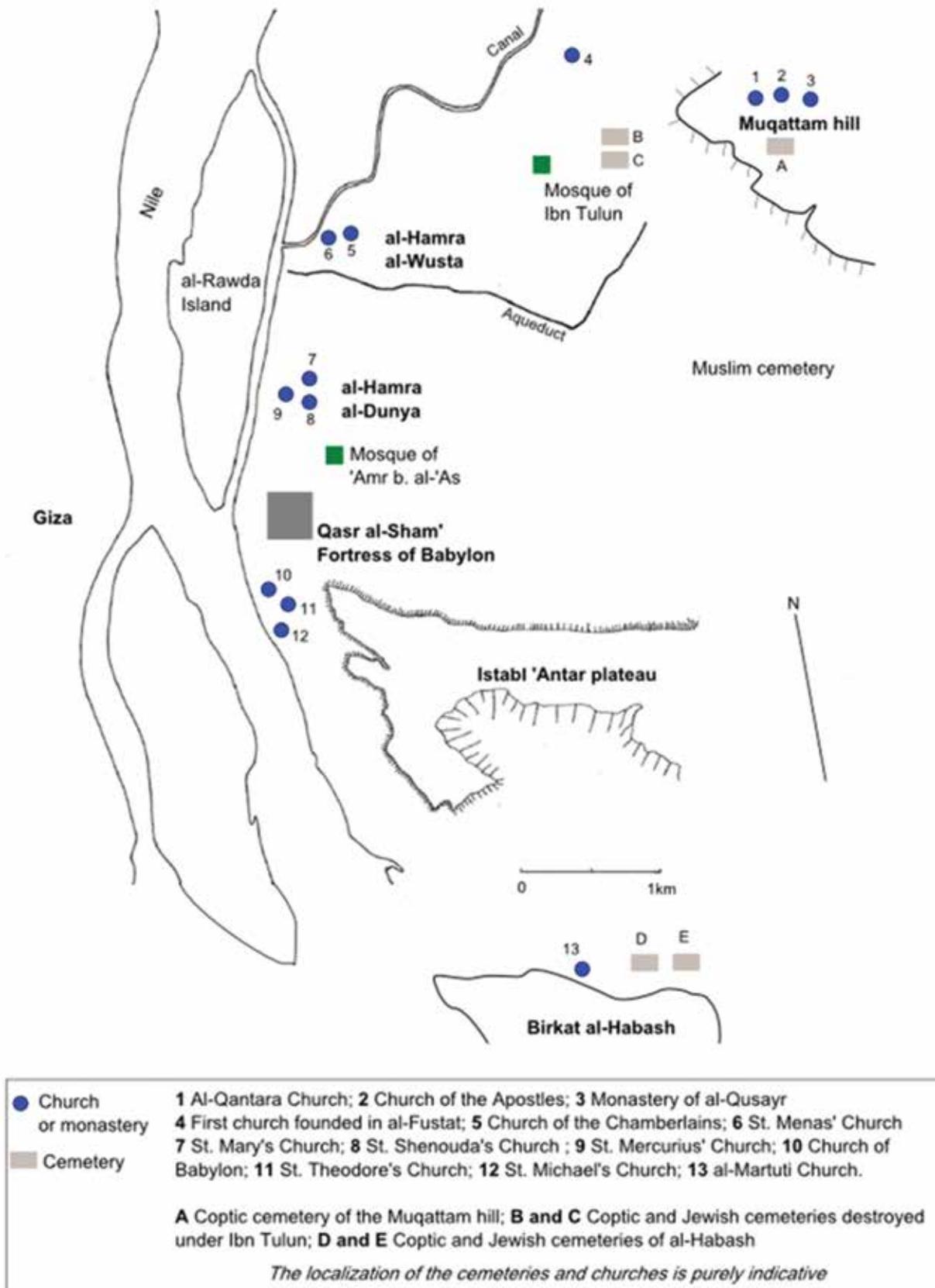


FIGURE 3.1. Location of Christian sites in and around Fustat (map by A. Dridi)

3. CHRISTIANS OF FUSTAT

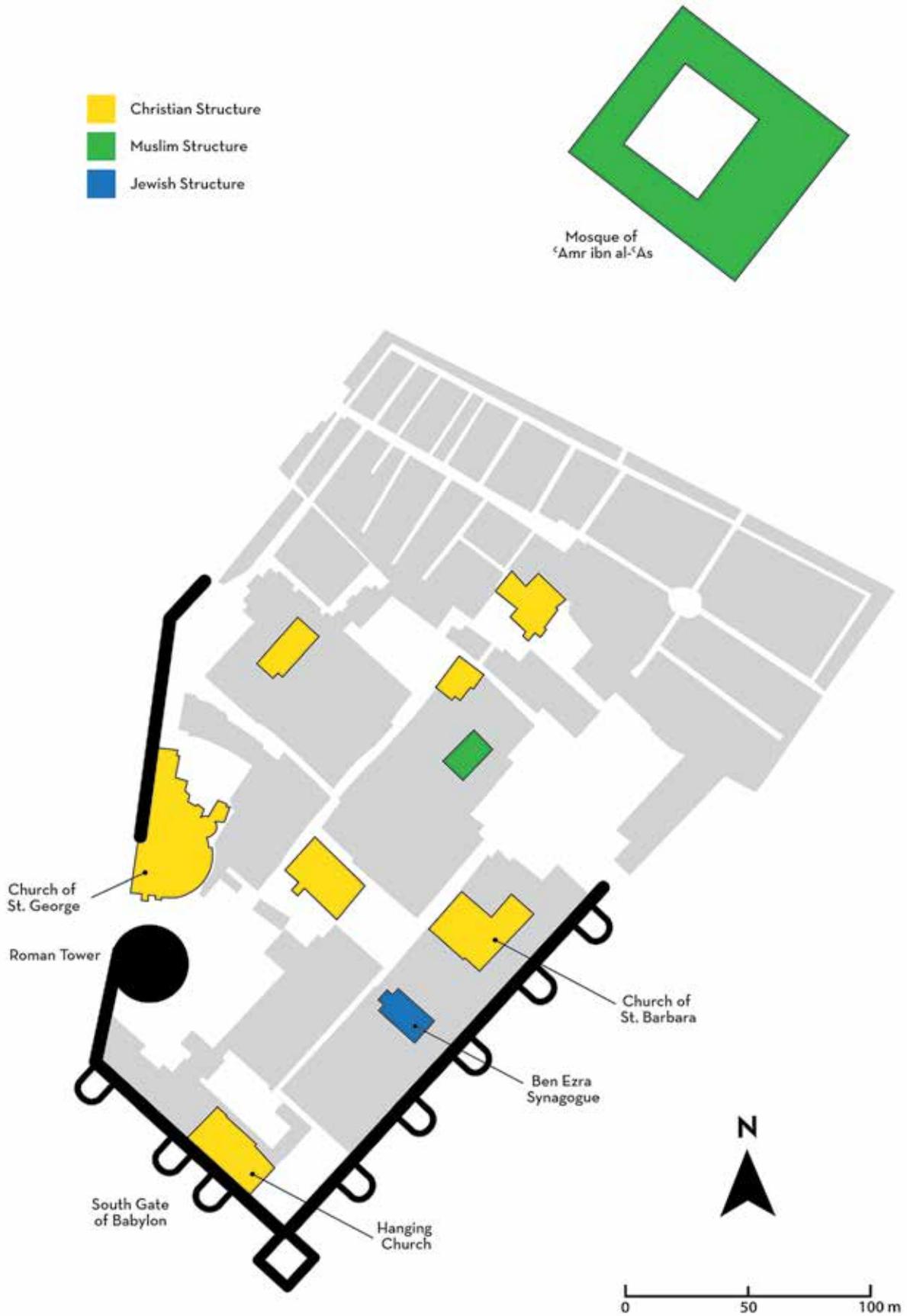


FIGURE 3.2. Religious structures within and near the fortress of Babylon

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO

Christians and Muslims in the first century of Muslim rule in Egypt. This evidence is complimented by several Muslim sources, among which the earliest is the *Futuh Misr (The Conquest of Egypt)* by Ibn ‘Abd al-Hakam. Late historical works from the Mamluk period (Ibn Duqmaq 1893; al-Maqrizi 2002–2004) are also useful, as they copiously quote lost sources about Fustat (*al-Khitat* by the Egyptian historian al-Kindi is one example).

To this non-exhaustive list of literary works must be added contemporary sources: papyri and ostraca. Unfortunately, those found in the area, during excavations on the Istabl ‘Antar plateau, remain silent on the issue of Christians. Papyri from Middle and Upper



FIGURE 3.3. Facade of the Coptic church of el-Mu'allakah. Old Cairo, Egypt. Photo by Eliot Elisofon, 1959 (Eliot Elisofon Field photographs, 1942-1972. EEPA EENG 06336. Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution)

Egypt (among others Bell and Crum 1910; Rémondon 1953) and the Fayyum Oasis — in Greek, Coptic, or Arabic — mention the cities of Fustat/Fossaton and Bab al-Lyun/Babylon — either in Arabic, Greek, or Coptic. These texts provide important information about, among other things, the region's topography and its Christian population (Dridi, forthcoming). These documents are of great importance as they refer to individuals who do not belong to the Christian elite and, hence, are unknown from literary sources. Some Coptic funerary stelae (for example, Catalog No. 13) found in Old Cairo and Saqqara (Lefebvre 1903; al-Hawary, Rached, and Wiet 1932; Hasitzka 1993) provide invaluable testimony of a strong Christian tradition in the first centuries of Islam. These documents are all the more important as the material culture of Fustat (beads, coins, medical instruments, textiles, and other artifacts) tends not to be religiously specific (Bacharach 2002; Rodziewicz 2012). Even when an item contains Christian signs (a cross pattern, for example, as on Catalog No. 14), it does not allow us to draw firm conclusions about the Christian community of Fustat (fig. 3.3).

IDENTIFYING THE CHRISTIANS OF FUSTAT

This paucity of evidence highlights a major limitation of our study: identifying a Christian in our sources implies that the individual is mentioned as such. Although religious identity was significant in medieval Egyptian society, individuals defined themselves and were defined by others according to other criteria as well. Moreover, as anthroponymical studies have shown (Legendre, forthcoming), it is hazardous to infer a religion from a name. Though an exhaustive study is not possible, literary and documentary sources allow us to identify different Christian groups living permanently or temporarily in Fustat.

The first Christians to enter Fustat were not Egyptian, they were from other regions of the Muslim world — only some of whom converted to Islam — and belonged to the Muslim army of ‘Amr ibn al-‘As. Muslim and Christian authors say that these men belonged to the Banu Yanna, Banu Azraq, and Banu Rubil tribes (Ibn ‘Abd al-Hakam 1922, p. 129; Abu al-Makarim 1895, p. 42), and that they were settled in the north of the capital, in an area called al-Hamra (see fig. 3.1). We do not know much about what happened

3. CHRISTIANS OF FUSTAT

to these Christians, but at the turn of the eighth century the al-Hamra quarter was inhabited by a well-off Christian population, probably civil servants, clergymen, and wealthy merchants, who were able to repair their places of worship. They also maintained close relations with the Muslim authorities: in 725, Christians of the area denounced to the governor a group of Muslims who prevented their wives and children from going to church during Lent. The governor supported the Christians and put a halt to the situation (Abu al-Makarim 1895, p. 103), likely influenced by the vital role played by Christians in the new Muslim administration. The Christian secretary Athanasius, a native of Edessa (in present-day Turkey), is representative of the influence of Christian officials in the Fustatian society during the Umayyad period. As told in the *History of the Patriarchs*, he was the tutor of ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Marwan, who was governor of Fustat from 685 to 705, and played an important

role as intermediary between the Christian community and the Muslim authorities. When the governor decided to move his capital to the south of Fustat to escape the plague, Athanasius was allowed to build two new churches, which he dedicated to saints Cyr and George.

A century later, under the Caliphate of al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–861), all Christian officials were replaced by Muslims. In 861, the Christian official in charge of the Nilometer (*miqyas*, a graduated pillar or other vertical surface serving to measure the height to which the Nile rises during its annual floods, as well as to gauge the clarity of the water) of Fustat was dismissed in favor of the muezzin of ‘Amr Mosque, ‘Abd Allah Abu al-Raddad, whose office became hereditary (Qalqashandi 1914, p. 299). At the end of the Abbasid period, and again under the Tulunids, some Christian officials were called back to the administration.



FIGURE 3.4. Interior of the church of St. Barbara (image courtesy GC Stock/Alamy)

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO

The religious elite also played an important role in the Christian community of Fustat itself (fig. 3.4). The city was indeed an important bishopric, as were Babylon and Memphis (Westerfeld 2013).² During the eighth century, more and more synods were held in the new capital instead of Alexandria, which, however, remained the patriarchal see until the eleventh century. This shift can be explained by the increasing presence of the Coptic patriarch in the new capital of Egypt, especially for important events. For example, Patriarch Isaac was appointed in 689 in the church of St. Sergius in the presence of several bishops and the Christian laity of Egypt. According to the *History of the Patriarchs*, his election is the first to have occurred in Fustat. Later, in 742, the Melkite patriarch Cosmas was appointed in the city after a ninety-year vacancy of the patriarchal see.³

This highlights an important fact: the Christian population of Fustat was not uniform in the religious point of view. The Coptic (or Monophysite, believing that Christ has one nature) majority was living alongside a Melkite (or Diophysite, believing that Christ has two natures) minority, which did not have churches in the capital until the second quarter of the eighth century. Indeed, as related in the *History of the Patriarchs*, after the Arab conquest of Egypt, the Muslim conquerors seized the Melkite places of worship and handed them over to the Copts. In 725, the Melkites were able to recover some of their prayer-houses but not those located in the vicinity of Fustat. Moreover, the religious diversity of the Christians of Fustat was not limited to the Monophysite/Diophysite duality. The Coptic community itself was crossed by several religious trends. For example, the Barsanuphians, a community firmly established in the capital, represented a dissident trend within Monophysism, as they did not recognize the patriarch's authority going back to the fifth century. At the beginning of the eighth century, under Patriarch Marc II, they gave up their secession and returned to the Monophysite community. According to the *History of the Patriarchs*, they possessed churches and monasteries in Fustat, probably on the east bank of the Nile.

The Christian community of Fustat was not only heterogeneous from the religious point of view, but it was also made up of different socioeconomic groups (fig. 3.5). While the literary sources focus on the Christian elite of the capital, papyri inform us about other strata of the population, especially workers



FIGURE 3.5. Exterior of the Hanging Church (photo by L. Krenz)

from the Egyptian countryside who settled temporarily in Fustat. Papyri from the Senouthios *anystes* archive, which dates back to 643/44 — only two years after the foundation of Fustat — mention the sending of building materials and workers from the Hermopolite region (Middle Egypt) to Babylon. Papyrological dossiers from the end of the seventh century and beginning of the eighth century (Apollonos Ano and Aphrodito archives; see *Chapter 4*) also refer to workers — called “the men of Babylon” in some documents — sent to Babylon to build the new capital. Who were these workers? First, we can confidently assume that they were Christians in their great majority, and more rarely Jews. Second, they were conscripts, in other words, they were required to leave their villages to fulfill their duties in the capital. These men were caulkers, carpenters, blacksmiths, leather curriers, and so on, and worked in the arsenal, located on al-Rawda Island, close to Babylon, and at other building sites such as granaries, barns, mosques, the

3. CHRISTIANS OF FUSTAT

governor's palace, and others. The papyri indicate that these workers usually stayed in the capital between a month and a year, but we do not know exactly where they lived. Excavations by the French Institute for Oriental Archaeology in Cairo have uncovered small, raw brick dwellings that may be Christian workers' habitations (Gayraud 1998a, p. 439). If this is the case, these conscript workers were living far from the Christian al-Hamra quarter described above and presumably did not have much contact with the Christians permanently settled in Fustat. Papyri also show that some of them tried to run away from the capital, sometimes in great numbers.

Although the existence of Christian conscripts in Fustat is attested in papyri, all Christians who worked temporarily in the capital were not forced. A number of Umayyad- and Abbasid-period "safe-conduct" documents on papyrus show that some workers were permitted to travel from their place of residence for a limited time specified in the permit, most often to work (and earn enough money to pay their taxes). We know of three safe conduct agreements authorizing Christians (a slave and two monks) to stay in Fustat for work (Ragib 1997).

CHRISTIAN TOPOGRAPHIES OF FUSTAT: AN OVERVIEW

The picture of the Christians of Fustat presented here does not purport to be complete. It shows, however, that those Christians constituted different socio-economic (and even religious) groups rather than a homogeneous community. Along the same line, the city was made up of different areas — some of which were predominantly Christian — corresponding to different Christian groups. The area of al-Hamra was mostly inhabited by the Christian elite (whether clergy or laity), while al-Rawda Island was chiefly frequented by Christian workers. Apart from the initial period described above, Muslims and Christians lived side by side in neighborhoods "predominantly Christian" or "predominantly Muslim." No segregation policy was implemented in Fustat (Denoix 1992, p. 91). Besides al-Hamra and al-Rawda, other areas were inhabited by a large number of Christians: such is the case, for instance, of the fortress of Babylon (usually called Qasr al-Sham^c, "fortress of the candles") located in the center of the town. On Fustat's outskirts,

Christian populations lived near Lake al-Habash, in the southwest; the city of Hulwan, founded south of the capital by the governor 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Marwan in 689/90; and Giza, on the west bank of the Nile. The main churches of the city were to be found in those quarters. It is very likely that the great majority of them date back to the early Islamic period.

The first church of Fustat, al-Hakam claims, was founded sometime between 667 and 682 north of the area that had been assigned to the Christians and Jews of 'Amr's army, in the northern part of the capital. Archaeological data (Sheehan 2010) have shown that the churches of the Qasr al-Sham^c were built during the same period, and thus cannot be dated back to the pre-Islamic period, contrary to what many scholars have argued (Badawy 1947; Butler 1978; Habib 1967). Indeed, until the Arab conquest, Qasr al-Sham^c kept its military role: churches could not have been built before the Trajan canal — which flowed through the fortress — was filled in at the end of the seventh century. Moreover, the first church within the walls of the fortress mentioned in the sources is that of St. Sergius, where the patriarch Isaac was appointed in 689 (Mena of Nikiou's *Life of Isaac*, Bell 2009). These few examples are relevant as they show that, up to the last third of the seventh century, the fortress of Babylon and the northern neighborhood of Fustat were not considered as part of the capital. The former belonged to the city of Babylon — which gradually melted into Fustat — and the latter was located "beyond the bridge," as al-Hakam says, in other words, outside Fustat. As the city progressively got bigger it included those buildings, raising the question of whether they were legally standing in the Muslim capital. In 735, the governor al-Walid ibn Rifa'a allowed the restoration of the church of St. Menas and provoked the anger of a group of Muslims who maintained that it was not legally standing in the city (al-Kindi 1912, pp. 77–78). In 785, another church in the area, dedicated to the Virgin, was destroyed by order of Governor 'Ali ibn Sulayman al-'Abbasi (ibid., p. 131). His successor Musa ibn Isa allowed the Christians to rebuild it. There are many other examples of destruction, construction, and restoration of Christian places of worship in the three first centuries of Islamic domination, which appears to have been a period of "legal gestation." Up to this period, there existed no clear policy toward Christians in general and their religious buildings in particular.

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The statute of the Christian cemeteries was much less complex during this period. Those of Fustat were almost all located outside the city and strictly separated from the Muslim ones. There were three Coptic cemeteries during the pre-Fatimid period: one located in the southeast of the city, close to the Muqattam hills; another one inside the fortress of Babylon (thus very close to the center of the city), beside the church of St. Barbara; and another in the current location of the Citadel of Saladin (Ragib 2010). When the governor Ibn Tulun founded his capital north of Fustat, he destroyed, for his own convenience, this latter burial ground and a Jewish cemetery located alongside it (al-Kindi 1912, p. 215). The Melkites buried their dead in churchyards. Eminent Christians from the Melkite community were, for example, buried at the church of St. Theodore, to the south of Fustat (Abu al-Makarim 1895, p. 136).

In the space of two centuries, Fustat switched over from a Muslim garrison to a pluri-religious city where a Christian minority lived beside the Muslim majority. Yet in the pre-Fatimid period, the Egyptian capital counted more than twenty Christian prayer-houses, well integrated into the urban landscape.

When in 969 Cairo was founded northeast of Fustat as the new Fatimid capital, the city swiftly received an important Christian population. The two Christian quarters, Harat Zuwayla and Harat al-Rum, are clear evidence for this. The period from the Arab conquest of Egypt up to the Fatimid period is undoubtedly the height of the Christians of Fustat-Cairo, who faced their first systematic persecutions — the destruction of their prayer-houses particularly — during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, under the Mamluks (El-Leithy 2006).

NOTES

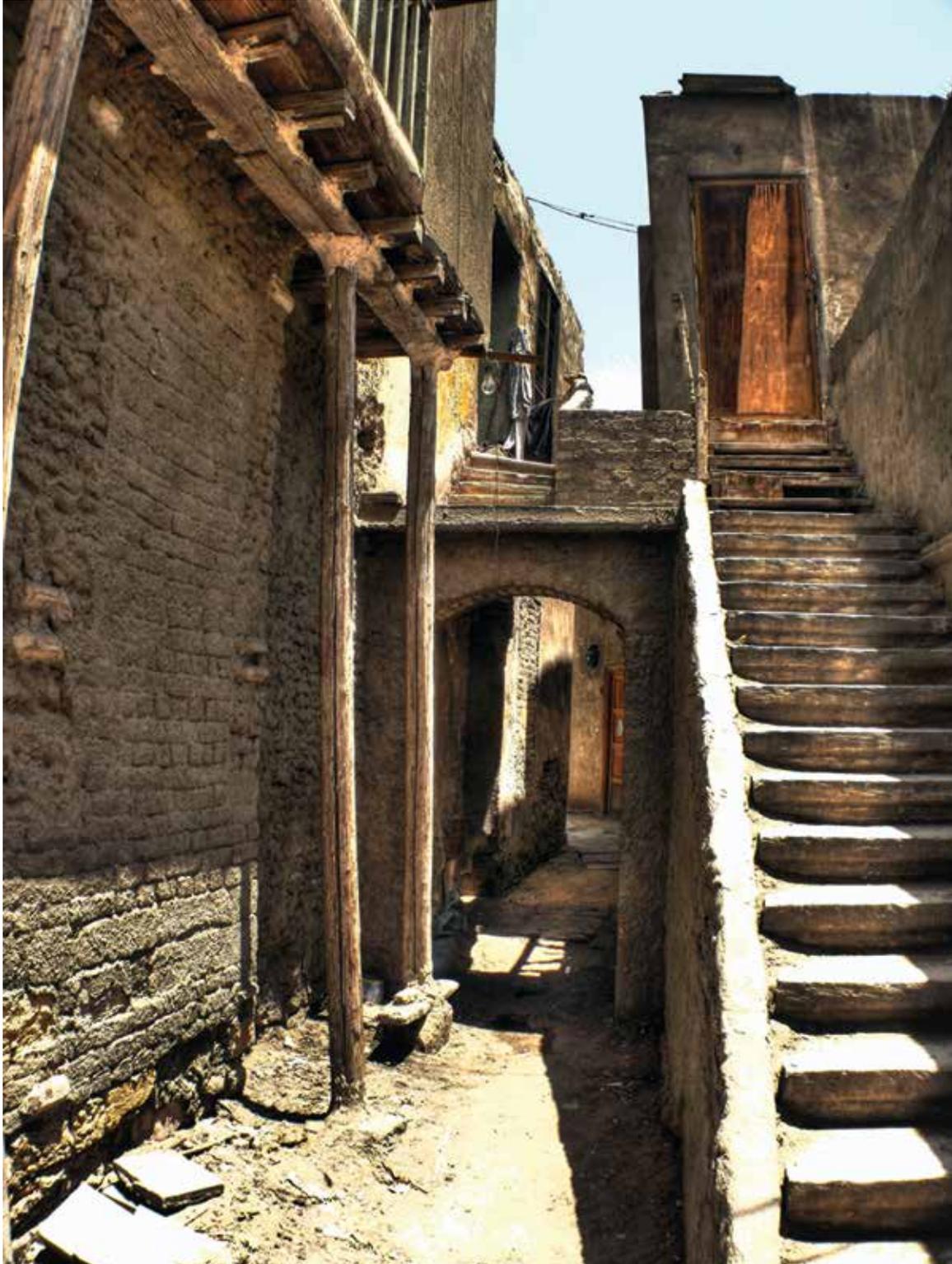
¹ As literary sources and archaeology show, Fustat was founded in an uninhabited site, which does not mean that no local population was to be found in its immediate vicinity.

² Babylon was a bishopric from at least the middle of the fifth century, as attested by the presence of a bishop of Babylon at the Council of Ephesus in 449.

³ Melkites are Eastern Christian adhering to the Orthodox faith as defined by the councils of Ephesus (431 AD) and Chalcedon (451 AD) and as accepted by the Byzantine emperor.

II

COMMUNITY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE



4. FUSTAT AND ITS GOVERNOR: ADMINISTERING THE PROVINCE

ARIETTA PAPACONSTANTINO

As the new capital, Fustat was the seat of the governor of the province of Egypt (see map on p. 18). From the point of view of the caliph, Egypt was an important province in many respects, not least because of its dense population and its extraordinary fertility. Geographically, it presented an alternative access to the Hijaz — that is, Mecca, Jeddah, and Medina — and it held the key to the naval connection between the Mediterranean and the

Indian Ocean. Fustat was the spearhead, in the early eighth century, of the Islamic conquest of North Africa and Spain, and later controlled the land route between the seat of the caliph in Syria and these newly conquered lands. The post of governor of Egypt was thus very important, both militarily and financially. The first to hold the post was ‘Amr ibn al-‘As, the commanding general of the conquering armies of Caliph ‘Umar. After a civil war that ended



FIGURE 4.1. Early Islamic-era (ca. 8th c. AD) ruins of the town of Djeme (Medinet Habu) in western Thebes. Early Islamic Aphrodito may have appeared similar (P. 44231/N. 29481)

with the foundation of the Umayyad Caliphate in 661, the competent and loyal ʿAmr was sent back for a second mandate as governor of Fustat by the new caliph Muʿawiya. We know comparatively little of the early governors of Fustat. Most narrative sources present them in a negative light: Christian texts speak of them as conquerors and oppressors, while Muslim texts, dating largely from the Abbasid period, tend to insist on their negative aspects to highlight the incompetence of their hated predecessors, the Umayyads.

There is one period, however, for which we have an exceptional set of documents, namely, part of the governors' correspondence with a pagarch, that is, the administrator of a district (pagarchy), whose seat was the town of Aphrodito in Middle Egypt (modern Kum Ishqaw, near Tima; see fig. 4.1). Probably archived at the pagarch's office, these texts on papyrus were found in 1901 by villagers who were digging a well, and were sold before the antiquities service made it to the site. Their archaeological context is therefore lost and their precise conditions of preservation impossible to recover; we will never know whether they were properly archived in some building, whether they had been thrown out onto a dump, or whether they were found with other, unrelated documents. Whatever the case, this trilingual collection of documents (Arabic, Greek, and Coptic) gives us a first-hand view of the nitty-gritty of a governor's administrative activities, gives much information on the running of the province, and offers very interesting insights into both the governor's chancellery and the local administrators in the valley and the relaying of instructions and information.

CONTENT OF THE APHRODITO PAPYRI

The documents range in date from 705 to 721 and cover the terms in office of seven different governors and the reign of six different caliphs. The vast majority of the Greek texts and all the Arabic ones, however, date from the term in office of Qurra ibn Sharik, who was governor of Egypt from 709 to his death from the plague at the end of 714, during the reign of the caliph al-Walid ibn ʿAbd al-Malik. Because of this, the texts are commonly referred to as the Qurra dossier. The corpus comprises around 400 published documents in Arabic, Greek, and Coptic, as well as

a number of unpublished ones. Those coming from Qurra's chancellery in Fustat are in either Greek or Arabic, while the ones produced locally are mostly in Coptic, although we know that the local administration also employed secretaries for Greek and Arabic. The Greek and Arabic documents produced in Aphrodito, however, would have been sent to Fustat, which explains why they were not found with the rest of the texts, while the Coptic ones deal with local matters and remained in the town.

Most of the documents are in some way related to the extraction of resources, which took several different forms. In addition to the annual public taxes, there were a number of extraordinary levies, often in kind or in labor, destined to fund the caliph's building projects, the naval raids against Byzantium, and the conquest of North Africa and Spain and its consolidation. The cost of transport of the money and goods, as well as the salaries of the requisitioned individuals, also had to be paid by the local communities that provided them. The Aphrodito papyri show the degree of organization this required in order to be carried out efficiently. The pagarch was responsible for drawing up registers of taxpayers, which the governor sent agents to control to avoid any tampering. On that basis, the assessment of the taxes was made centrally and sent down to the various tax units in bilingual (Greek and Arabic) tax demand notes. Collecting the taxes and sending them to Fustat was the responsibility of the pagarch. The taxes were collected in gold, centralized at the pagarchy, counted, and controlled, and then sent by guarded boat some 400 kilometers up the Nile to Fustat. The complex logistics of this operation should not be underestimated, nor should its expense, which was entirely supported by the pagarchy.

All steps of this process naturally produced many of the documents that have come down to us (Catalog Nos. 23–24). What produced even more texts, however, was the failure of the local authorities to do the job properly, either because of deliberate obstruction intended to shield the local population, or because of genuine incompetence and lack of means of enforcement. This resulted in a number of letters addressed by Qurra to Basilios, the pagarch of Aphrodito, accusing him of being late with the taxes (fig. 4.2), of allowing residents of his pagarchy to run away to avoid paying or being drafted, and also of harboring fugitives from other pagarchies, of not sending the right

4. FUSTAT AND ITS GOVERNOR

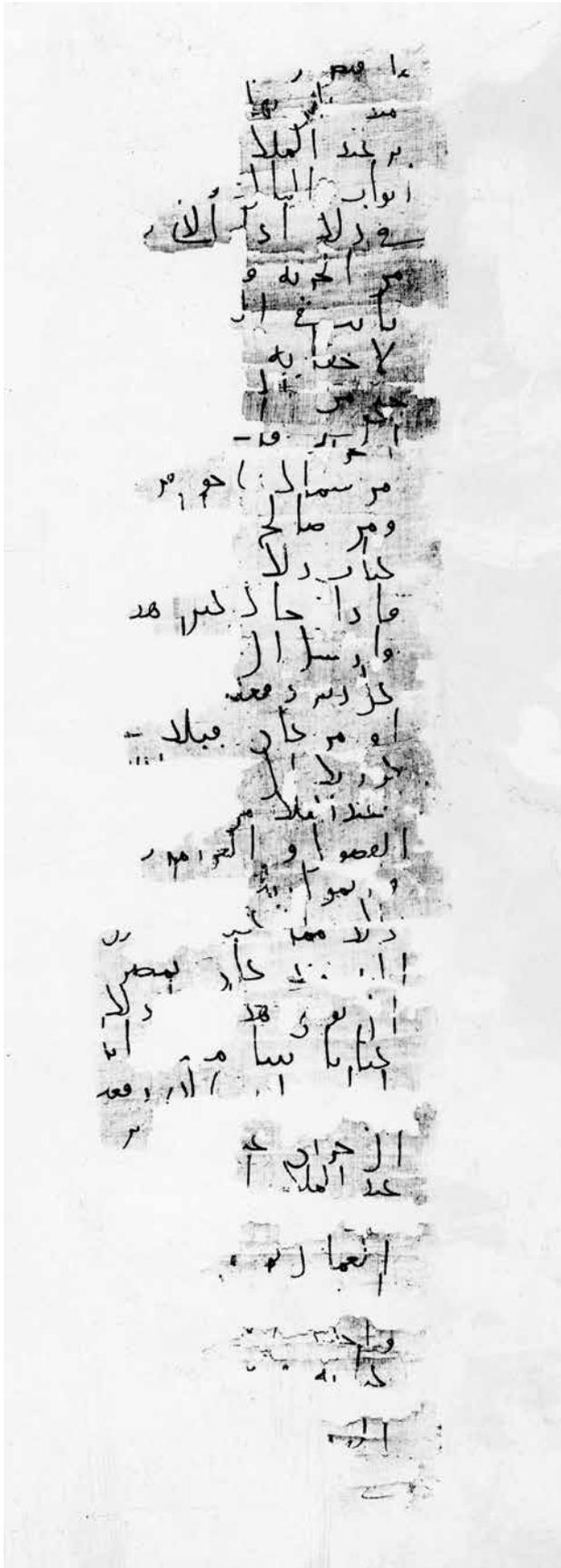


FIGURE 4.2. Letter from Qurra to Basilios concerning the payment of taxes in arrears. In Arabic, written in 709 or 710. Kum Ishqaw (Aphrodito), Egypt, Islamic period. Ink on papyrus, 87.5 x 20.5 cm. OIM E13759 (P. 22330/N. 11680)

amount of requested goods, of using the tax money to pay for transport while this should have come from other sources, and even of sending coins with a lower gold content than expected. Qurra's letters use harsh rhetoric and threaten the pagarch with awful punishments, which, however, never seem to materialize. They also reveal that he had at his disposal a number of agents, all of whom have Arab names, who could be sent to check the local administrators' work and documents, and report back to him directly.

Qurra's letters were written in Greek and Arabic in the name of the governor himself, but of course they were not written directly by him. This was the work of his chancellery, which seems to have been a very busy office. The names of several secretaries are known from the documents, as they sometimes signed the ones they had written (fig. 4.3). They seem to have been specialized by language, and possibly also by area of expertise. Documents in Arabic, for instance, cover judicial issues that never appear in Greek, while Greek tax documents are generally more detailed and specific. The chancellery would also have received the documents coming in from the various administrative units like Aphrodito, but no lucky discovery has allowed us to find even traces of them in Fustat. We do know, however, that the pagarchy in Aphrodito employed an Arabic-language secretary, who presumably drafted documents addressed to the central authorities.

GOVERNMENTAL INFLUENCE IN THE PROVINCES

The extent to which the governor was able to enforce his measures and rules is unclear. He was in a difficult position between the caliph, who expected the province to be peaceful and productive, and local elites, who used what little power they had to limit the financial and human drain on their district and increase their own influence. The contours of their power can be inferred from Qurra's protestations and lie essentially in the mastery of local knowledge.

The information-gathering necessary for the smooth running of the province was impossible to carry out without the collaboration of those who knew the area, even if then the governor's agents could control for accuracy. The issue of the fugitives, a traditional tax-avoidance technique and clearly a



FIGURE 4.3. Letter from Qurra to Basilios concerning money owed to Ibadah ibn Abnilah, dating to December 9, 709–January 6, 710. The letter was written by Muslim ibn Labnan and copied by al-Salt. A clay sealing at the bottom depicts a quadruped and a star, possibly the seal of Qurra. In Arabic, with a badly preserved line of Greek on the verso. Kum Ishqaw (Aphrodito), Egypt, Islamic period. Ink on papyrus, 53.7 x 20.0 cm. OIM E13756 (P. 22327/N. 11677)

common one at this time, was underpinned by solidarity networks that were opaque to Fustat, but certainly not to the families who had lived in the area for centuries. In one letter, Qurra asks the pagarch of Aphrodito to send him the list of the sailors who came back from the last raid in North Africa, because he has no other way of finding out who and how many they were. Thus the governor was largely dependent on the local administration (pagarchs, village headmen) for information. This situation was all the more stressful as the need for cash, men, and supplies was seasonal and became especially urgent at certain times of year. This was because the raids could only be carried out during the summer, and the soldiers had to be paid in advance, while the requisitioned sailors manning the ships also had to be provided in time. The peasants, however, could not afford to pay their taxes before the harvest, much less the levies in kind. Neither could the agricultural economy lose men at the time of harvest. Therefore things had to work with great regularity for the entire operation to succeed, and creating delays was one of the easiest and most disruptive things a local administrator could do. In one letter to the pagarch, Qurra almost pleadingly explains these conditions and the reasons for the urgency (Catalog No. 23).

In Fustat, the governor had the difficult task of controlling the soldiers stationed there. The situation at the caliphal court was not stable, and Qurra had taken the job from al-Walid's own brother, so his position must have felt fragile in a city full of entitled soldiers. Keeping them well fed and paid was essential for his peace of mind, and that also is evident in this letters. This was another area where local potentates could cause difficulties by simple delays.

THE JUDICIAL ROLE OF QURRA IBN SHARIK

One last aspect of the governor's duties was his judicial role. Some of the Arabic documents sent by Qurra to the pagarch of Aphrodito highlight this side of his activity, which is not mentioned in the generally negative narrative accounts of Qurra's life. They deal with private litigations between residents of the pagarchy and are responses to requests made directly to the governor by the parties, seemingly circumventing the local authorities. Like the petitions presented to the Roman imperial courts, these

4. FUSTAT AND ITS GOVERNOR

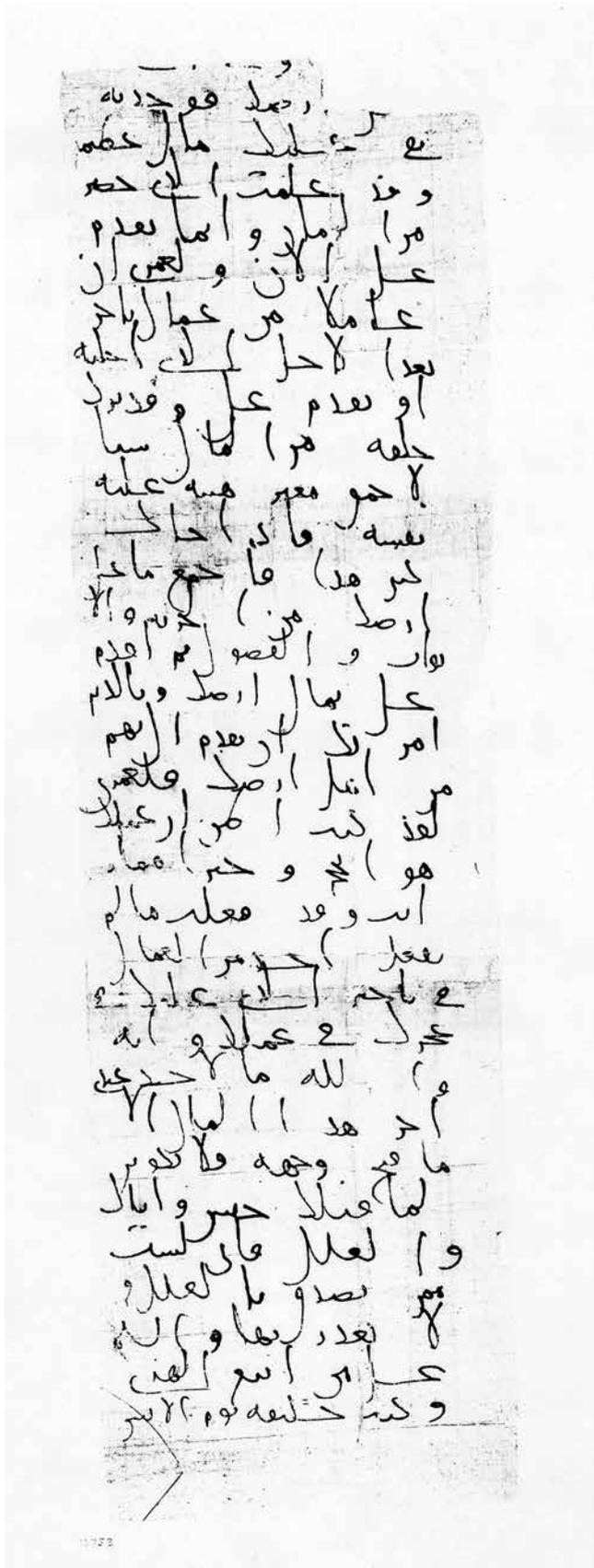


FIGURE 4.4. Letter from Qurra to Basilios reminding him that he owes Qurra a large amount of money, warns him to collect it and not provide any excuses as they will not be accepted. In Arabic, written in September 709. Kum Ishqaw (Aphrodito), Egypt, Islamic period. Ink on papyrus, 74.7 x 21.5 cm. OIM E13758 (P. 22329/N. 11679)

were presumably drafted by someone who had the requisite technical knowledge and capacity to draft such an official document — most probably in Arabic. Those originals that were sent to Fustat are now lost, and all we have are the governor's responses. These were addressed to the pagarch and take the form of recommendations on how to deal with the cases.

Contrary to later Abbasid and Christian accounts of his period in office, Qurra seems to have taken justice very seriously (fig. 4.4). Several times he writes to the pagarch to pre-empt any temptation he might have of showing unfairness in the assessment of the taxes or fines by under-charging his friends and over-charging others. He also insists heavily on the accessibility of the official and his availability to hold court, hear complaints and arbitrate, and on offering fair judgement. He shows concern about the capacity of the villagers to pay and is aware of the importance for this of the quality of the harvest. His letters show a strong sense of duty, and it is clear that he had high expectations of his subordinates. Much of his rhetoric is couched in terms of duty toward the state: "For the profitable official," he tells the pagarch, "zealously collects the just dues of the Commander of the Faithful with prudence and good will, not losing or destroying anything" (Bell and Crum 1910, no. 1349). Or elsewhere: "For we shall not level the capable and efficient man who zealously performs his duty with the one who through corruption falls short in the tasks entrusted to him by us" (ibid., no. 1337). Similarly, in Catalog No. 23 Qurra discusses the duties of the villagers: "For cultivation by the people of the land is their chief duty, after their duty to God, and constitutes their prosperity and their welfare" (lines 13–16) (Abbott 1938, p. 46).

The papyri discovered at Aphrodito, in the province of Egypt, shed important light on the development of the Caliphate, a political entity that had far-reaching political, linguistic, religious, artistic, and legal consequences and ultimately transformed the social structure of the Middle East and the face of the Mediterranean. Papyri from the early period show how this transformation was partly based on a renewed administrative ethos, founded on a political conception that redefined the notion of *res publica* where the Commander of the Faithful became co-terminous with the state — a distinctively medieval conception of kingship, which had already been nascent during the later Roman empire.

5. INDUSTRIES, MANUFACTURING, AND LABOR

MAYA SHATZMILLER

The economic performance of any manufacturing sector is determined by a series of essentials: population size, natural resources, technological innovation, human capital, government intervention, as well as by each city's unique historical, physical, and geographical features. In the case of Fustat, early urban development was hampered by a deep demographic decline in Egypt, caused by the Justinian plague (Alston 2001). A century of plague recurrences followed the initial outbreak of 541 AD and, combined with limited Arab migration to Egypt, resulted in slow population recovery. However, as recent work has shown, the demographic shock in the Middle East also improved the economic welfare of the survivors (Pamuk and Shatzmiller 2014). High wages paid to skilled and unskilled labor allowed workers to enjoy high standards of living and use the increase in their purchasing power to generate demand for basic and non-basic manufactured goods, including literacy and literacy-related items.

This early pull of demand in the post-Justinian era drove manufacturing in the Middle East into high gear and boosted the performance of the sector. The expansion of Fustat's industrial capacity also played a role in initiating growth in related sectors of the economy. Intensive demand for raw materials stimulated agricultural productivity and exploitation of natural resources. Increased mining of precious metals and improved minting techniques allowed monetary circulation to grow in urban centers as well as in rural areas, as documented by taxes paid in cash. The intensive growth of the urban manufacturing sector also privileged the development of markets, long-distance trade, and tools related to financial transactions.

By the tenth century, evidence ranging from chronicles, legal documents, professional manuals, and artifacts unearthed in archaeological excavations in Fustat points to the existence of urban industries

and material culture not unlike those found in other cities across the Islamic Middle East. In the case of Fustat, however, in addition to the regular sources used for the history of urban labor and manufacturing, we are fortunate to also have the unique and rich coverage provided by the Judaeo-Arabic documents of the Cairo Genizah (Goitein 1967b; see *Chapter 2*). Important topics in the history of labor relations, such as partnership, an institution that would have otherwise remained largely unknown to us, are elucidated thanks to the Genizah documents. The overall analysis of medieval economic institutions has also benefitted from the mechanisms of long-distance trade of medieval Egypt and North Africa that are revealed in these documents (Greif 1993). However, this chapter focuses on the role and place of the individual in the manufacturing sector, rather than that of institutions.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES OF FUSTAT

The main manufacturing industries of Islamic Fustat can be conveniently classified according to the nature of the raw material they used: textiles, food, construction, metal, wood, leather, pottery, glass, paper, and chemicals. The efficiency and productivity levels of each industry not only depended on the regular supply of raw materials, local consumption, and export needs, but also on the quality of human capital expressed in the degree of division of labor, patterns of labor organization, and human capital formation.

A widespread division of labor was a common feature of the medieval Islamic manufacturing industries. A quantitative study of Arabic trade names, each used as an occupational indicator, collected from a wide range of sources, including the Cairo Genizah, revealed the existence of 598 distinct manufacturing occupations (Shatzmiller 1994). According to this

study, the textile industry had the highest division of labor in relation to all other industries in the city and textile workers were the most specialized group of the labor force. Spinners, weavers, fullers, carders, dyers, and cloth beaters specialized in working with different fibers, while others specialized in performing specific tasks, such as button makers, lace makers, makers of turbans, makers of skirts, furriers, embroiders, and makers of strings and ropes, tassels, and ribbons. Others specialized in making large items, such as tents, carpets, curtains, cushions, and bedding, while yet others were specialized according to the techniques they used, for instance, dyers of cotton, wool, silk, and linen, threads, or cloth.

The methodology used for mapping the division of labor, “occupational classification in economic sectors,” also makes it possible to estimate the size and distribution of the urban labor force in each of the industries. The textile industry retained the largest portion of the city’s labor force, somewhere between 18 and 21 percent. Those specialized in making different culinary dishes and food ingredients employed a similar share of the labor force as that of the textile workers. Those who worked with metal or leather, and those who worked in construction each constituted between 8 and 16 percent of the labor force, while makers of wooden items, pottery, paper, ivory, wicker, and processors of chemical substances each constituted between 1 and 6 percent. The smallest group was the highly specialized makers of chemical substances, among them herbalists, pharmacists, and distillers of petroleum, makers of glues, dyes, paints, drugs, perfumes, metal substances, and minerals. Among the products they manufactured were distilled and extracted essential oils, varnishes, organic and inorganic pigments, and medicinal drugs, ink, lime, distilled fats, and perfumes. Some of these products were used by other industries, such as dyes, paper, glass, and leather, but were essential to the items produced by the textile industry.

The urban textile industry had another distinctive feature: it was the largest employer of women. Occupations such as embroiderers, dyers of silk garments, and thread makers, but especially spinners of every conceivable thread — flax, cotton, wool, silk — held a monopoly on the female labor force. This gender-based division of labor empowered women, Muslim and Jewish alike. It not only gave women power over the rhythm of production in the textile

industry, it also improved their status within the family. As wage earners they contributed to the increase in per capita income and to the increase in the combined household income. Their economic power led to articulation of women’s property rights in Islamic and Jewish law, and to its enforcement by the courts (Goitein 1967a; Shatzmiller 2007).

ORGANIZATION OF THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Manufacturing took place in different locations throughout the city. The self-employed artisan shop was the most common unit of production and was frequently encountered in the commercial quarters and concentrated in the neighborhood of the Friday mosque. A secondary workshop was the royal or state-organized textile workshop, the *tirāz* workshop, which manufactured luxury textile items destined for distribution to dignitaries as gifts. The *tirāz* workshop was not a common feature in all urban textile-manufacturing centers, but was prominent in Egypt due to the large scale of textile production there and its high quality. It was unique as a workshop since its products were not normally commercialized or widely circulated; nonetheless, the special techniques and manufacturing skills that were practiced or developed in the royal workshop were diffused, imitated, and shared by other artisans. In addition to these two workshops, which were staffed by males, textile-related items were also manufactured in private homes, mostly by women. This may be described as an early “output” system, given its highly organized nature. Its origins may have been in the countryside, where weavers supplied orders for urban markets, but later, with the rise of division of labor in urban centers, the system began operating on a regular basis. Led by commercial agents, male and female entrepreneurs placed orders for threads or cloth, provided the raw material, paid for the job, sometimes ahead of collecting the finished items, sold them to customers, and paid the government taxes on labor and sales (Shatzmiller 2000).

The Islamic law of hire, *ijāra*, provided a limited number of legal provisions for the regulation of labor relations. Grouped under four headings in the legal manuals, they were the general *ijāra*, namely the hire of an artisan or an unskilled laborer, which was done

5. INDUSTRIES, MANUFACTURING, AND LABOR

mostly orally without a written contract; the *istināʿ*, the hire of a specific manufacturing skill, for instance that of a well digger or a wet nurse, which required a written contract; the *taḍmīn al-sunnāʾ*, the legal protection given to a hired laborer working with raw material provided by the customer; and the *sharika*, the labor partnership, permitting two or more artisans to associate under the law for the purpose of investment, manufacturing, and division of profits and losses (Udovitch 1967, 1970). The Genizah documents from Fustat provide an extensive view of the size and variety of such partnership investments. They include partnerships in dyeing, minting, weaving, lead working, tailoring, baking, glasswork, wine-making, pharmaceuticals, carpet weaving, melting, silk work, silversmithing, sugar making, leather tanning, and cheese making.

TRANSMISSION OF MANUFACTURING TECHNIQUES

The fine division of labor as well as the premium placed on professional skills in the organization of the manufacturing sector reflects a high quality of human capital in the sector, yet the institutions usually responsible for human capital formation are missing. It is now clear that professional guilds, the institution that regulated apprenticeship in Europe, did not exist in the medieval Islamic city, since there is no Arabic term corresponding to a professional guild and no description of its functions. Neither the hiring of an apprentice nor his legal status, or that of child labor, for that matter, were determined by the law. In their absence elements of human capital formation, literacy and numeracy skills, individual professional and technical skills acquisition, generational transmission of manufacturing techniques have occurred differently (Shatzmiller 2013). An apprenticeship system in the artisan shop developed, displaying professional hierarchy of masters (*muʿallims*), workers (*ʿummālūn*), and apprentices (*mutaʿallimūn*). Youths were apprenticed to masters and, with or without a contract or official diploma, could rise to the rank of a master. Sons frequently learned the trade from their father, inheriting his title of *muʿallim*. The Genizah documents provide one example of an apprenticeship contract, but it is unclear how common such contracts were. This document, signed in 1027

in Fustat, is a contract between a father who is hiring out his son to a weaver for four months, in return for a monthly payment of 15 dirhams, which would then be changed to the regular wages of workman.

Much more significant, not only to the question of transmission of manufacturing techniques, but also to the entire question of human capital and that of the standards of literacy in the Islamic city, is the evidence provided by the written professional manuals. These were composed as early as the ninth century, first for bureaucrats in the court administration, then as tools for teaching reading and writing and other literacy and numeracy skills, manifesting the standardization of the Arabic language. For instance, manuals for Qurʾan readers specified rules for pronunciation and punctuation, and the reader (*muqriʿ*) was given a chart of all the variant readings, which he consulted when his memory lapsed. Manuals were written for tax collectors and bookkeepers, for workers in the royal mint, secretaries, market inspectors, notaries, bookbinders, soap makers, ink makers, drugs makers, arms makers, cooks, construction workers, brokers, and middlemen (*samāsira*). The translation movement generated works of applied sciences including manuals for physicians, astronomers, mathematicians, and navigators. The content of these manuals, written by artisans for artisans, ranged from the highly technical with no literary sections, to mostly literary sections and very few technical ones, but most were rich in technical details. A manual for water carriers was uniquely intended for a non-literate audience, as a mnemonic tool to help the water carrier memorize the pious verses related to his services. Equally intriguing are the manuals written for agricultural practices, crop cultivation, fertilization of the soil, and irrigation techniques such as the digging of *qanats* (irrigation wells and tunnels). Agricultural calendars specified crops and practices for monthly applications. The content of the manuals implies the existence of a literate workforce in the medieval Islamic city.

Other mechanisms used in the transmission of manufacturing techniques were manifested by the way ethnic groups practiced, preserved, and transmitted artistic decoration techniques. For instance, Copts preserved and transmitted the techniques of ivory carving, while polychromatic incrustation and mosaic work were a monopoly of Christians in both the Middle East and Spain. Islamic metalwork

produced in Syria in the mid-thirteenth century contains many Christian symbols and details from Christ's life, an indication that Christian artisans and Christian motifs were tolerated in the Islamic city. Jews dominated silk dyeing and the manufacture of metal and glass items. *Qanat* digging was a highly specialized skill that was passed on among members of tribal groups, such as the *moqanis* of Baluchistan, which were all Afghans of the Ghilzai tribe, or the *qanat* diggers of southern Morocco, who came from the Todgha inhabitants of the oases. Other examples include rock crystal carving, which was perfected in Sasanian Iran, and later successfully transferred to Islamic cities

The movement of artisans, which frequently accompanied the building of new cities, also played a role in the transmission of techniques. Whether moved by force or coming voluntarily to the construction site, artisans often brought new or alternative techniques and technologies with them. Contemporaries observed the movement of techniques across the borders: al-Jahiz, the ninth-century author, reported hydraulic engineers, expert agronomists, and marble workers coming to Baghdad from China. The tenth-century author al-Hamadani reported thousands of Persians who brought gold- and silver-mining techniques to the Yemen. Architects designed buildings in cities away from the place where they lived, or traveled distances to install their designs. The Egyptian carpenter Abu Bakr ibn Yusuf made the components for the minbar in his atelier and traveled with them to Mecca to install them. The migration of Muslim artisans from North Africa to Spain helped

transfer papermaking and textile-making techniques. Builders brought the use of wooden ceiling beams to Egypt from the Maghreb in Fatimid days while the inhabitants of the city of Sfax (in modern Tunisia) imitated the textile fabrication techniques and style used in Alexandria. The names of the city gates of Marrakesh suggest that in the eleventh century leather artisans from Aghmat chose to settle in the new capital. Finally, the forced movement of artisans after Baghdad fell to the Mongols in 1253 brought sophisticated manufacturing techniques to Central Asia (Shatzmiller 2012).

In literature investigating economic growth in pre-modern societies the point has been made that technological innovation will not occur in a society that is "malnourished, superstitious or extremely traditional with tight social constraints preventing it from being open to diversity and tolerance" (Mokyr 1990, p. 12). Medieval Islamic societies exhibited none of the above. On the contrary, the evidence shows that economic performance benefitted from an overall high degree of diversity. The existence of an ethnic and religious mix, a variety of languages and traditions, and openness to new ideas, intellectual stimulus, and ways of doing things, created a climate conducive to invention and innovation. In return, early Islamic societies benefitted from high standards of living, special groups, and ethnic and religious minorities who were able not only to integrate socially and economically but also to contribute, participate, and benefit from the vibrant economy they helped to create.

6. LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AT FUSTAT

TASHA VORDERSTRASSE

When one looks at the medieval city of Fustat, one is struck not only by its religious diversity but also by the wide variety of languages that were spoken there. There is considerable evidence from a range of different sources pointing to the linguistic diversity of the population that lived and worked in the city. Most notably, the Cairo Genizah attests to a wide variety of different languages including Judaeo-Spanish, Yiddish, and Judaeo-Persian (Reif 2002, p. 33). These languages were generally written in Hebrew characters because it was in this alphabet most Jewish students were taught to write (de Lange 2006, p. 490). The Genizah texts and

other documents clearly show that Fustat was a town in which a wide variety of languages was spoken, a phenomenon that continued certainly into the nineteenth century. It is important to make a distinction between languages that were actually spoken in Fustat and those found on reused paper fragments where it is not clear if the language was actually spoken or not. Armenian, Georgian, and Syriac would have been spoken in the private sphere rather than in the public sphere, or perhaps spoken between members of a particular community whose first language was not Arabic.¹



FIGURE 6.1. Fragment of Qur'an. 7th-8th century AD. Ink on parchment, Arabic, 21 x 35 cm. Unknown provenance. OIM A6959

ARABIC, JUDAEO-ARABIC, HEBREW, AND ARAMAIC

The majority of the population of Fustat spoke Arabic, which, given the fact that the original population of the city were Arabs, should not be considered surprising (fig. 6.1). The textual evidence discovered

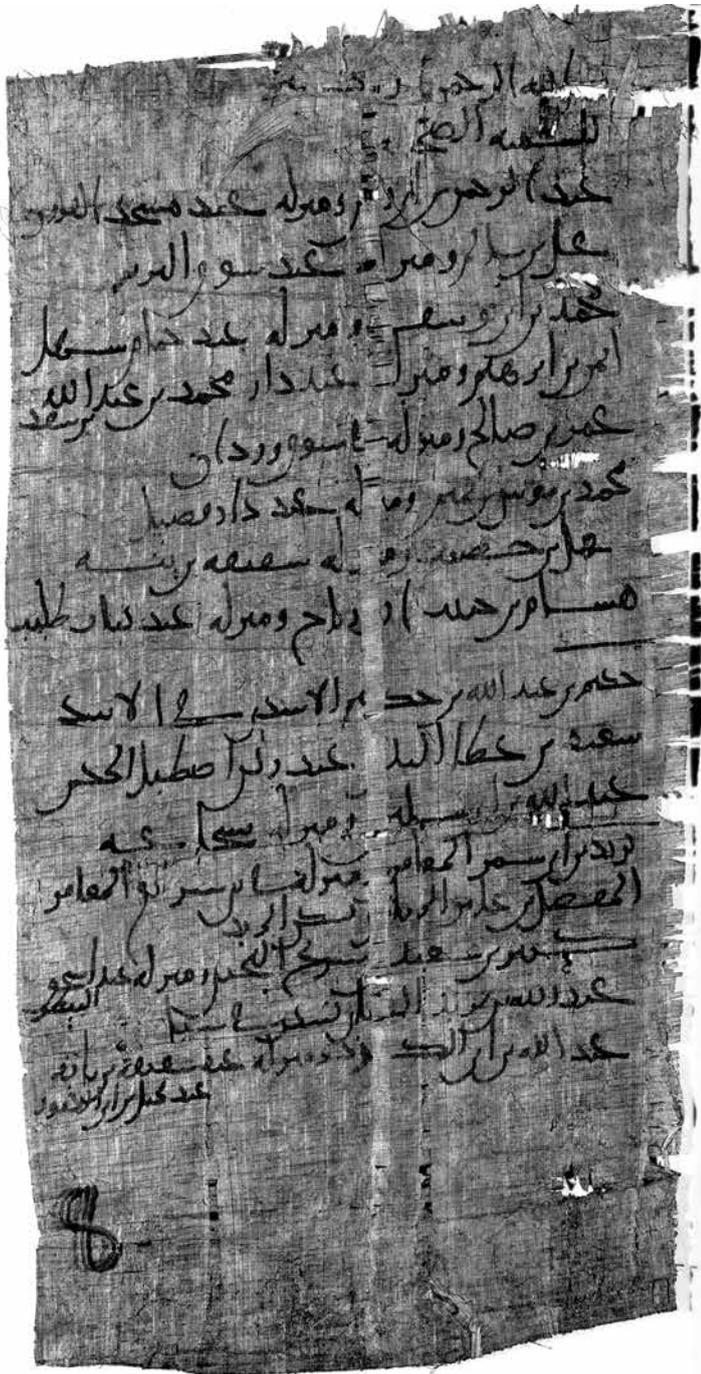


FIGURE 6.2. A list of “companions” and their addresses in Fustat. Egypt, 7th–8th century AD. Ink on papyrus, Arabic, 26 x 16 cm. OIM E17656 (P. 56034/N. 36311)

in the course of archaeological excavations at the site of Fustat attest to a primarily Arabic-speaking population. These written documents, including a marriage contract and the acknowledgement of a debt dating to the tenth/eleventh century, attest to a variety of different activities among the population (Richards 1989, pp. 68, 73–77). The private Awad collection, consisting of objects from Fustat not found in archaeological excavations, includes a number of Arabic medical prescriptions (Awad 2002). Arabic was the language of administration in Fustat and administrators used it from at least the eighth century onward to communicate with the population in the countryside (see below and *Chapter 4*). No such texts survive from the seventh century, so the earliest date for the use of Arabic in the documents communicating with the local population is unclear (Sijpesteijn 2010, p. 122). The Arabic papyri also shed light on the early Islamic settlement at Fustat and those who lived there. A document published by Petra Sijpesteijn (2008) lists sixteen companions, possibly of the Prophet Muhammad, and their addresses, which were all located in central Fustat (fig. 6.2).

Perhaps around half of the documents in the Cairo Genizah are written in Judaeo-Arabic, which is Arabic written in Hebrew characters, demonstrating that members of Fustat’s Jewish population adapted the Arabic language to fit their needs and made it distinctly their own. In addition, other documents in the Genizah are written in Arabic in Arabic script, although this was rare. Such documents were likely written by Jews who worked closely with the Islamic community, in the administration, in medicine, or in trade. There are also Arabic documents in the Genizah written by Muslims (Khan 1986, 1997; Reif 2002, p. 32)

In addition to Judaeo-Arabic and Arabic, the Jewish population also used Aramaic and Hebrew for a variety of different purposes. Hebrew was the language that was used for biblical text readings, prayers, liturgical poetry, and other religious purposes, and it was learned by young Jewish students at primary school (see *Chapter 7*). Hebrew was also used for writing letters, and some documents contain a mixture of Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic (Reif 2002, pp. 31–32). Aramaic, on the other hand, had a largely scholarly role, being used in Jewish religious law. An interesting indication of the interactions between these languages comes from an eleventh-century booklet from

6. LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AT FUSTAT

the Cairo Genizah containing magical recipes written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Judaeo-Arabic. One of these is a spell to annihilate someone, with instructions on how to do this and whom to adjure to destroy the individual. The adjuration is in Aramaic but the rest of the text is written in Judaeo-Arabic, suggesting that the Aramaic instructions had to be translated because the spell-caster would no longer have understood the instruction if they had still been written in Aramaic (Bohak 2008, pp. 145–46, 220).

COPTIC AND GREEK

Neither of the two languages spoken in Egypt at the time of the Islamic conquest, Coptic and Greek, survive as spoken languages in Egypt today, although Coptic remains an important liturgical language for

Coptic Christians in Egypt (fig. 6.3). Nevertheless, Coptic is not widely attested from Fustat and there are few texts written in Coptic from the site (see *Chapter 3*). A few texts written in Coptic also appear in the Genizah, where magical texts written in that language have been found (Meyer and Smith 1999, pp. 197–99; Bohak 2008, p. 219). Coptic continued to be used by the population in Egypt for a considerable period of time (fig. 6.4), disappearing in the fourteenth century (Sijpesteijn 2010, p. 106), but its use at Fustat seems to have been limited, at least from a written point of view. There are papyrus documents attesting to the expenses of Coptic-speaking individuals at Fustat (see, for example, the documents from the British Museum that attest to commercial transactions concerning Fustat; Crum 1905, pp. 218–19, from Medinet Habu; pp. 268, 284, 457, from Ashmunein). The presence of Coptic churches in Fustat and the



FIGURE 6.3. Entrance to the church of St. George in Old Cairo with its trilingual sign giving the name in Coptic, Arabic, and English (photo by L. Krenz)

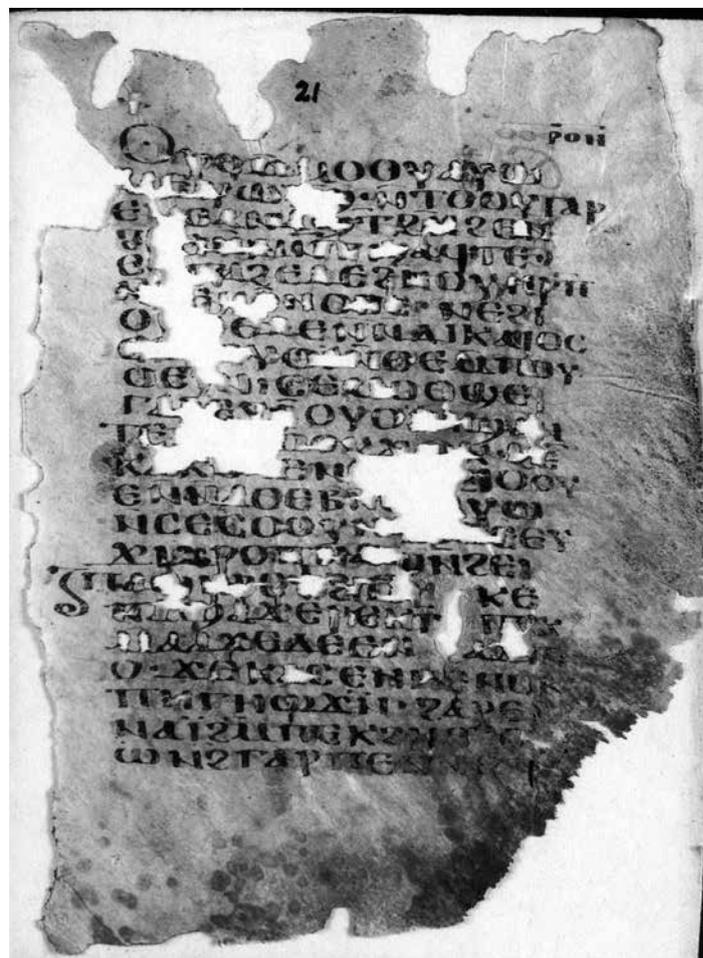


FIGURE 6.4. Folio from the Proverbs of Solomon. Purchased in Cairo, 1920. Byzantine, 6th century AD. Ink on vellum, Coptic, ca. 8 x 11 cm. OIM E10485 (P. 25782/N. 10026)

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO



FIGURE 6.5. Fragment of the Gospel of Mark, recto and verso. Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, early 5th/6th century AD. Ink on vellum, Greek, 4.5 x 8.3 cm. OIM E2057 (P. 2282-3/N. 846-7)

fact that individuals who wrote primarily in Coptic visited in Fustat argues for the fact that the Coptic language was spoken more widely than it might initially appear.

Greek, on the other hand, was initially a very important language for the administration of early Islamic Egypt. In contrast to Coptic, it was not the main language of the population in Egypt when the Muslims arrived, although it was an important written language for administration and scholarship (fig. 6.5). Initially, the local Greek- and Coptic-speaking officials were not replaced and Greek continued to be the language of communication between the governor and the countryside in the early eighth century, as the letters written from Governor Qurra at Fustat to the pagarch in Aphrodito demonstrate (Richter 2010; see also *Chapter 4*, and Catalog Nos. 23–24). Already by 706 it was decided by the Egyptian governor to use only Arabic in the administration. Clearly the continued use of Greek in the Qurra papyri and other documents shows that this rule was ignored, at least initially (Sijpesteijn 2010, p. 106). Nevertheless, the last dated Greek papyrus is dated to 796/97 (Sijpesteijn 2007a, p. 446, no. 49), suggesting Greek had largely died out by the ninth century.

If the papyrological evidence were all that existed from Egypt, there would be little known about the later use of Greek. The Genizah points to the continued use of Greek by Jews in Egypt, although it was Greek written in Hebrew characters that also contained Hebrew words. This includes Jews living in Fustat and Alexandria, as well as one document from

Matsoura in Lydia in what is now western Turkey (de Lange 1996; Olszowsky-Schlanger 2014).

SYRIAC

In addition to Arabic and Coptic, both of which were either spoken or used in the city, other Middle Eastern languages were present in Fustat as well, particularly Syriac. While the monastery of Deir al-Surian in the Wadi Natrun, located in the desert of the northwestern Nile Delta, is the most visible sign of Syriac Christianity in Egypt, there was also a Syriac Christian population that lived in Fustat and was closely connected to the monastery. In particular, Christians from Tikrit (normally referred to as Takrit or Tagrit by scholars of Syriac) seem to have played a major role in the Syriac-speaking community of Fustat. Tikrit was located on the Tigris River, north of Baghdad and Samarra, where there was a prominent Christian community. Apparently the majority of people living there were Christian and it was the seat of the Primate of the Eastern Syrian Orthodox church (Hunt 2003, p. 107).

Christians from Tikrit had two churches in Fustat: one built in 685 and the other in 705. Their presence in Fustat is primarily attested through manuscript colophons preserved at Deir al-Surian (Wright 1870–1872, cat. no. DCXXXI; van Rompay and Schmidt 2001; den Heijer 2004). Unfortunately, these descriptions are not particularly detailed, but other sources suggest that by the eighth century Syrians from Tikrit

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had a colony at Fustat and had built a monastery there. One ninth-century manuscript colophon states that, in Mesopotamia in 926/27–932, Moses of Nisibis was given three manuscripts to present to the church of the Syrians at Fustat. Another manuscript colophon records how Simeon bar Cyriacus of Tikrit presented a book for use at the church of the Tikritans in Fustat (Wright 1870–1872, cat. nos. CCCXXXVIII and DCXXXI; Evelyn White 1932, p. 312; den Heijer 2004, p. 934. For Moses of Nisibis' trip in general, see Innemée and van Rompay 1998, p. 188; Hunt 2003, p. 100). Nothing further is known about either of the Tikriti churches in Fustat; it is not even clear that they were actually two separate churches.

Individuals from Tikrit were active in donating manuscripts to Deir al-Surian in the ninth and tenth centuries as well as being involved with mural painting and perhaps other restorations of the monastery's church. These individuals may have lived in Fustat, which could explain their involvement in the monastery. While sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts suggest that Fustatian Tikritis purchased the monastery for Syrian monks living in Egypt, the late date of the texts means that we cannot rely upon them as necessarily accurate (Evelyn White 1932, pp. 309, 313–14; Innemée and van Rompay 1998, pp. 191–92; van Rompay and Schmidt 2001, pp. 41–42, 53; Hunt 2003, p. 107; Immerzeel 2004a, pp. 1303–20; Immerzeel 2008, pp. 66–67). Nevertheless, it seems significant that these later authors wished to establish a connection with Fustat, even if it was not actually true.

It is possible that a wealthy Tikritan in Fustat may have been the donor responsible for the stuccoes at Deir al-Surian, due to their resemblance to stuccoes from Samarra and those in the mosque of Ibn Tulun at Fustat, completed in 879 (for this suggestion, see Immerzeel 2004a; 2004b; 2008, p. 67; see Hunt 2003 for an overview of the stuccoes). This theory remains conjectural and has not been suggested for similar stuccoes from the nearby monastery of Deir Abu Makar, although this argues that the monasteries are connected (Hunt 2003, pp. 99, 104; Immerzeel 2008, p. 67). Further, Lucy-Anne Hunt has pointed out the resemblance between the stuccowork at the Surian monastery and a woodwork fragment from Fustat, as well as between the Abu Makar stucco and another wood piece from Fustat (Pauty 1931, p. 18, pl. 14; Hunt 2003, p. 99, fig. 7, pp. 104–05, no. 55, fig. 16),

which, unlike the other examples, cannot be attributed to a particular building. Hunt suggests that this material could come from the Tikriti community at Fustat, who might have commissioned woodwork and possibly stuccowork, perhaps using carvers from Iraq (Hunt 2003, p. 105). This remains entirely speculative, however. It is also possible that these motifs were used across religious boundaries and the woodwork fragment at Fustat could have been used by members of any of Fustat's many communities.

After the very beginning of the eleventh century, Tikritis were no longer involved in donating manuscripts to the monastery of Deir al-Surian (Evelyn White 1932, pp. 439–43, 446; Innemée and van Rompay 1998, pp. 176–77, 182–86). There is evidence that the head of the Tikritis in the early eleventh century, Abu 'Ali Zakariyya, had scribes copying manuscripts in his house, although this may simply be a reference to the fact that he had two manuscripts commissioned (Wright 1870–1872, cat. nos. CCXXI, CCXXII, DCXC; Evelyn White 1932, p. 446; den Heijer 2004, p. 934).

In addition to evidence for a Syriac-speaking Christian community in Fustat, there is also evidence for a Syriac-speaking Jewish community. This evidence is in the form of manuscript fragments, the majority of which are palimpsest fragments, including Christian texts, that were simply reused (Lewis and Gibson 1900; Niessen 2009, pp. 213–15). These, however, do not point unequivocally to a Syriac-speaking community at Fustat, merely the reuse of Syriac manuscript fragments. One indication of Syriac speakers in the Jewish community at Fustat comes from a newly discovered fragment of Judaeo-Syriac (Syriac written in Aramaic) that contains a list of Syriac medical terms (Bhayro 2012, pp. 157, 165). Although he suggests that the fragment comes from Syria, its presence in the Genizah argues that someone there did know Syriac, but the community does not seem to have been particularly large.

PERSIAN

Persian speakers are attested at Fustat even before the founding of the city. Two Middle Persian papyri dating to before the Islamic conquest mention the fortress of Babylon (*Bābilōn* in Middle Persian). Sasanian Persians began their conquest of the Middle

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East in 618; by 619 they had reached Egypt and occupied the fortress of Babylon (Weber 1992, p. 150, P. 45; Daryaee n.d., no. 14). Control of Egypt was wrested back by the Byzantine emperor in 629, but some Persians remained in the area and seem to have been involved in the founding of Fustat over a decade later. There are also Judaeo-Persian texts in the Cairo Genizah, pointing to the presence of Persian speakers in Fustat's Jewish community. Some of the letters contain Persian written in Hebrew script in combination with words and phrases in Arabic script, which are largely blessing formulas, formal addresses, and personal names. There are also other instances of longer phrases written in Arabic script along with phrases in Judaeo-Persian. Shaul Shaked suggests that the authors in both cases were native Persian speakers living in an Arabic-speaking environment. Additionally, the opposite is also attested, that is, letters written in Judaeo-Arabic with occasional phrases in Judaeo-Persian, which Shaked suggests might have been part of a secret code. Whether or not this is the case, there are also Arabic texts written in the Arabic alphabet combined with those written in Judaeo-Persian (Shaked 2010, pp. 322–29).

ARMENIAN

Although there is abundant evidence for the presence of Armenians in Egypt, there is limited linguistic evidence for the script. Evidence of Armenians before the Islamic conquest is limited, but there were various individuals of Armenian origin who were military slaves. One freed slave of Armenian origin, al-Amir 'Ali Yahya Abu'l-Hasan al-Armani, was governor of Egypt in 841. At Fustat, Greek and Armenian Mamluks lived in a special neighborhood known as Hayy al-Rumi. In the Fatimid period, there were prominent Armenians in Egypt, and six Armenian viziers ruled in Egypt between 1073 and 1163, including the most famous of these, Badr al-Jamali, who was vizier between 1074 and 1094, on behalf of the Fatimids. There were an estimated thirty thousand Armenians in Badr's army, consisting primarily of either Muslim converts or Armenians who did not follow orthodox Armenian Christianity. There were also Orthodox Armenians living in Egypt; their numbers rose to over one hundred thousand. According to Abu al-Makarim (previously known as Abu Salih), there

were Armenian churches in Cairo and other major Egyptian cities. Armenian Muslims also made major contributions to architecture in Cairo, although not in Fustat itself (Canard 1954, 1955; Dadoyan 1997, pp. 82–178; den Heijer 1999).

The prominence of Armenians in Egyptian life, particularly during the Fatimid period, is not reflected by a corresponding plethora of Armenian-language sources. One Armenian text has been discovered in the Cairo Genizah, a list of Armenian words transliterated into Hebrew and their Judaeo-Arabic equivalents (Russell 2013). The Armenians who lived in Egypt seem to have assimilated to local culture, such as the Armenian icon artist Yuhanna al-Armani, who decorated churches in Fustat with icons that appear to be completely Coptic in their artistic style (Guirguis 2008).

GEORGIAN

The situation for Georgian is analagous to that of Armenian. Although Fustat's Armenian population seems to have been larger than its Georgian one, more evidence for the Georgian language has been preserved than for Armenian. Georgians are primarily attested in Egypt in the late Ottoman period. It has been suggested that Caucasian Mamluks, particularly those from Georgia, dominated the Egyptian military elite. The Safavid Iranians had employed many Georgian Mamluks in the seventeenth century; after the collapse of the Safavid empire in 1722, the Ottomans had the opportunity to purchase Georgians and Abkhazians, who they then brought to various parts of the empire, where they played prominent roles, notably in Iraq and Egypt (Crecelius and Djaparidze 2002; Hathaway 2002, pp. 1, 46–47, 64, nos. 46, 101–02, 169–70).

Georgian textual material from the Genizah, like the Syriac material, consists of palimpsest fragments (Blake 1932; Hedley 1933; Birdsall 1972), in addition to two fragments in Georgian (MS Georg. d. 3(P)). The evidence again argues for the assimilation of Georgians into the wider Fustatian community.

In addition to the documentary evidence from the Genizah, both Georgian and Armenian pilgrims visited places in Egypt, such as the Sinai, and some traces of the inscriptions they left are still visible (Stone 1982). Armenian inscriptions dating to the

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late eleventh/early twelfth century on a fresco at the White Monastery at Sohag, in Upper Egypt, also point to the activity of these groups in Egypt (Dadoyan 1997, pp. 103–05, 191).

LADINO AND YIDDISH

There are also signs of European languages likely spoken at Fustat. There does not seem to have been an extensive use of Latin at Fustat, however, one Latin magical papyrus was supposedly found at Fustat and dated to the fifth/sixth century (Daniel and Maltomini 1988), but far more certain are the texts from the Cairo Genizah that point to the presence of Judaeo-Spanish and Yiddish speakers in Fustat.

There were many connections between Spain and Egypt, as evidenced by the pottery found at sites such as Fustat and Alexandria (Catalog No. 72). People were clearly moving between these regions, with Jewish-Spanish travelers, merchants, and others coming to Fustat (Bareket 1999, p. 59). It should not be surprising, therefore, that Judaeo-Spanish, also called Ladino, is attested in the Genizah documents (Quintana 2008).

The presence of Yiddish is perhaps more surprising, but the amount of textual evidence for this language is not very great when compared to material preserved in Ladino. The most important Yiddish documents are the *Dukus Horant*, a fourteenth-century narrative poem that is not attested elsewhere in German literature, and five letters written in the 1560s by a woman living in Jerusalem (Frakes 2004).

The challenges of communicating with European merchants who either visited or lived in Egypt is demonstrated by a manuscript that contains a list of Old French words transliterated into Coptic with Arabic translations. This book was clearly produced for an Egyptian who could read Coptic, probably a Christian. Coptic was chosen to transliterate the Old French because vowels could be written, unlike in Arabic. Although it has been suggested that this was a

manual for merchants traveling to the Crusader-controlled city of Acre, it could have also been used to communicate with French merchants visiting Egypt (Aslanov 2008).

CONCLUSION

The linguistic material examined here, primarily but not exclusively from the Cairo Genizah, points to the rich linguistic background of the communities living in Fustat. It also points to the importance of the Genizah material, since without it, we would not know about the Yiddish, Ladino, or Armenian speakers in Fustat, although we would suspect their presence at the site. It also shows us that as the Genizah material is studied in more detail, it is likely to turn up further information. Already, Cambridge University Library has published on its website a text from the Genizah that is in a previously unknown Dravidian (South Indian) language, a fragment of Karahmanli (Turkish written in Greek), and notes the presence of Judaeo-Occitan (a Romance language spoken primarily in southern France). Some claim that there are examples of Chinese in the Genizah (Wolf et al. 2010, p. 158; Hoffman and Cole 2011, p. 17), however, this remains unconfirmed.² Nevertheless, the material from the Genizah, as well as the rich source of Syriac texts, point to a diverse, cosmopolitan, and multilingual community at Fustat.

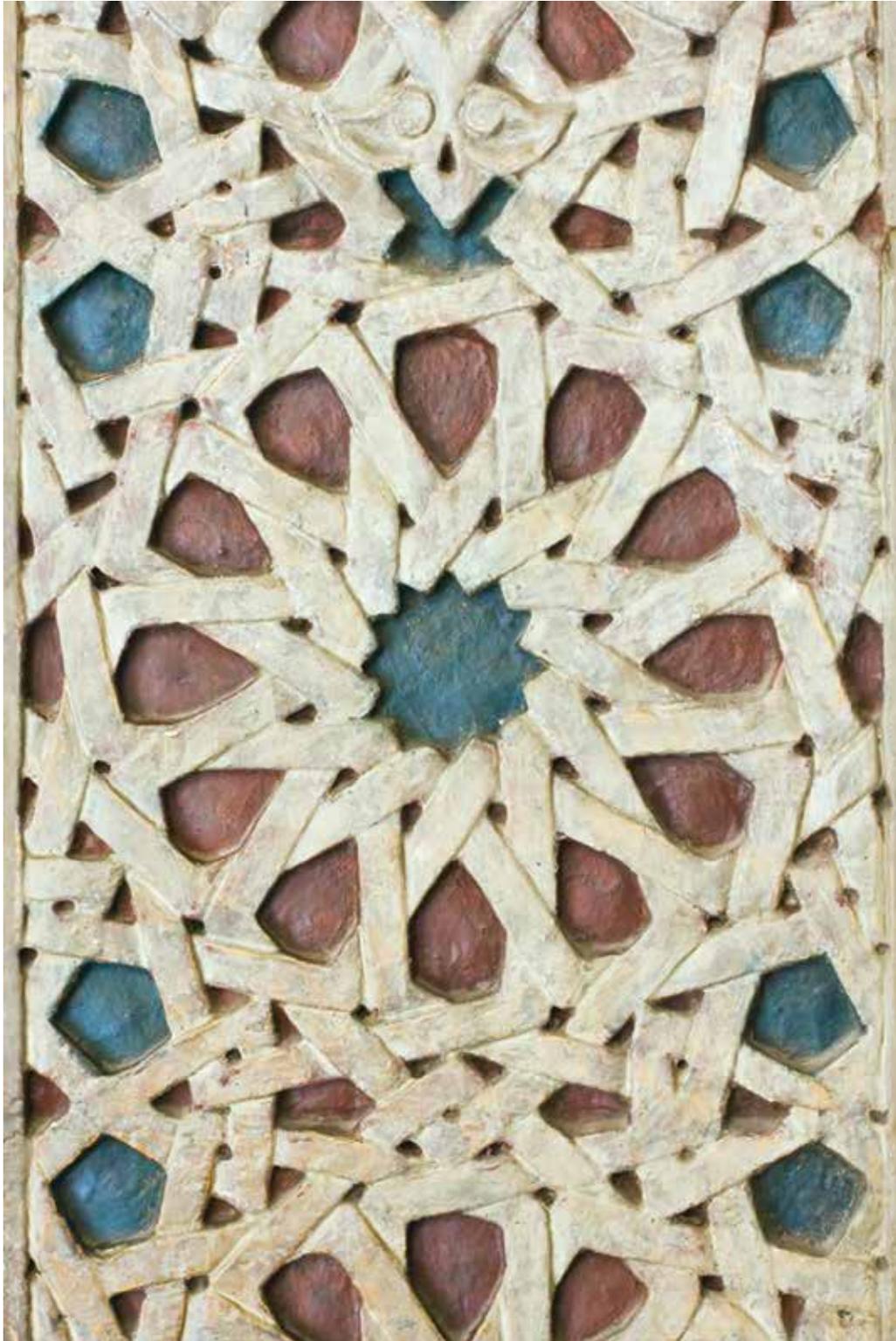
NOTES

¹ For a similar study of different languages in one city that were used in a public and private sphere see Gascou 2011.

² I would like to thank Dr. Outhwaite for discussing this matter with me and confirming that, to his knowledge, there are no Chinese texts present in the Cambridge University Library collection. None of the citations that state there are Chinese texts in the Genizah give references that would allow the statements to be verified.

III

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS



7. CHILDHOOD AT FUSTAT: ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND TEXTUAL SOURCES

TASHA VORDERSTRASSE

The joy and energy of childhood may be universal, but it can be difficult to pinpoint activities of children in the past because they are often less documented than those of adults. At Fustat, the presence of children is attested by both archaeological and textual evidence, although the full picture of growing up can be challenging to grasp from either source. Archaeological artifacts from the Fustat excavations provide evidence for childhood play through toys such as dolls. In contrast, textual sources from this period focus on the more serious task of the education of children, which was largely segregated on the basis of sex and religion. It is clear that the different communities in which they lived shaped the children of medieval Fustat. This chapter first addresses some of the challenges involved in reconstructing the presence of children in the archaeological record, before building a picture of childhood at Fustat through both archaeological and textual evidence.

People in the medieval Islamic world generally understood children and their development based on earlier Greek works on the subject. Children were thought to undergo certain phases of development, including the discernment between good and evil (occurring at about age six or seven), and puberty (which for boys occurred at about fifteen). The experiences that children had early on in their lives were thought to have an impact on them in later life. Therefore, young children were to be kept calm and guarded against shocks, as well as to be raised with good experiences so that they would become good later in life (Giladi 1992, pp. 4, 23, 31, 33, 49–54). All children, particularly girls, married early, however, so it is important to note that many children would have been considered “adults” at a time that in modern contexts they would still be considered children (Perry 2006, p. 97).

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD

The study of the archaeology of childhood has been neglected for the early Islamic period (Taxel, Iserlis, and Yannai 2013, pp. 222, 224). Additionally, it can be challenging to detect the presence of children in archaeological contexts. The direct presence of children can be most easily recognized in the archaeological record in burials (Dommasnes 2008, p. xiv), but children are not always found in mortuary contexts. Indirect evidence of children through artifacts can also be difficult to define (Baxter 2006, pp. 1, 3). Artifacts described as “toys” are not necessarily to be interpreted as such and in some contexts might not have been used by children at all. It is likely that some toy-like objects might actually have been used by adults in rituals. In addition, children also could have used adult objects for their own learning purposes. Objects whose function is now unknown might have functioned as toys (Rahmani 1981, pp. 78–79; Quirke 1998; McKerr 2008, pp. 38–41; Crawford 2009, pp. 59–64; Waraksa 2009, p. 164; Teeter 2010, pp. 6, 110–11; Taxel, Iserlis, and Yannai 2013, p. 225) or been made into objects for play (Adams 1992, p. 84; Adams, ed. 1996, p. 200; Pitarakis 2009, p. 218).

Even when archaeologists identify artifacts as toys related to childhood, their exact use is not necessarily straightforward. It can be difficult to know what may have been made *for* children and what was made *by* children. In order to determine the use of such items, identifying their archaeological context is important (Beaumont 2012, pp. 128–29). For example, in the case of doll clothes and other textiles from medieval and Ottoman-period Qasr Ibrim, in Lower Nubia, Nettie Adams contrasted doll clothes made by children (which, she states, “must have been a favorite pastime for little girls since we find so many of them”; Adams 1992, p. 84) with a “skillfully made” miniature cap that she suggests was made by an adult

for a child (*ibid.*, p. 84). In another example, doll clothes from the site of Moshchevaja Balka, in the northwest Caucasus, contemporary with the Fustat material, are very finely made from silk, showing that considerable care and expense could be taking in the production of toys for children (Ierusalimskaia 1996a, pp. 43–45; Ierusalimskaia 1996b).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE: TOYS

In general, our knowledge of toys in ancient Egypt is better than for other regions of the Middle East because the exceptionally dry climate contributes to the preservation of many organic materials. The variety of toys from Roman sites in Egypt is quite impressive. Excavations at Karanis, for instance, have yielded pull-toys such as horses as well as dolls, miniatures, clay buzzers, and animals (Wilfong 2012, p. 237), items paralleled at other Egyptian Roman and Byzantine sites. Brigitte Pitarakis interprets pull-toys and rattles as being the playthings of children younger than the age where they can distinguish good and evil, while she suggests that whistles, balls, knucklebones, and dolls belonged to older children (Pitarakis 2009, pp. 219–27). It is likely, however, that while toys may have been meant for children of various ages, children of all ages played with them.

The archaeological evidence for the presence of children at Fustat consists primarily of dolls (Catalog Nos. 37–39). As noted above, however, careful observation helps determine whether these figures were toys or if they had some other purpose. Dolls found in the Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic periods can be divided into two types: those used by children and those used in the performance of magical rituals, such as curse spells, which occur in Christian, Muslim, and Jewish contexts (Meyer and Smith 1999, pp. 222–24; Ogden 1999, pp. 71–79; Hansen 2002; Dieleman 2006, pp. 24–25; Frankfurter 2006, pp. 41–42, no. 7). One such magical figurine was found at Fustat, although the exact archaeological context is unknown and therefore the date is uncertain. This wax figurine was found inside a pot, its left leg and both arms broken off and wrapped separately, its neck slashed, and five rose thorns pierced its face at the level of the eyes, ears, and forehead (Bachatly and Rached 1934; Hansen 2002, pp. 430–31). It is not possible to state to which of the many communities at Fustat the

figurine belonged. Although a name was written in Arabic, this language was used widely by the various communities of Fustat.

The dolls from Fustat in this catalog can be identified as straightforward toys, not magical figurines. Therefore, their presence in the excavations indicates that they were used by children, probably by young girls. These dolls are made of bone and are of a type commonly referred to as “Coptic dolls,” despite the fact that they are attested not only in Egypt but also throughout the Near East from the seventh/eighth through eleventh century AD and beyond. Coptic dolls consist of two types: those where the entire figure is made from bone (fig. 7.1), and those where a head of bone was attached to a cloth body (Scanlon 1968, p. 16; Rahmani 1981, pp. 79–80; Pitarakis 2009, pp. 243, 246; Rodziewicz 2012). An example of



FIGURE 7.1. Bone doll. Akhmim, Egypt, early Islamic period. Animal bone, 8.4 x 2.8 x 1.0 cm. OIM E17263 (D. 028094)

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FIGURE 7.2. Doll with hair. Akhmim, Egypt, 650–950 AD. Ivory, 10.7 x 3.0 x 1.3 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, O4.1949 (courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Emily Esther Sears Fund)

this latter type is preserved from Nessana, a town in the Negev desert (Colt 1962, p. 50, pl. 28:5; Rahmani 1981, pp. 76–78; Pitarakis 2009, p. 246). Dolls made from bone are distinct from other doll types found at Fustat made of terra-cotta, such as numerous nude female and horse-and-rider figurines. George Scanlon, director of the 1964 and 1965 Fustat excavations, dates these to the early eighth century (Scanlon 1968, pp. 3–5; for similar dolls from Egypt, see Palanque 1903).

Unlike the terra-cotta figurines, the dolls made of bone are all of naked females (Rodziewicz 2012, p. 9). These would have been clothed, had elaborate wigs of wool (which rarely survive) or bitumen, and in some cases would have also been wearing jewelry. Some dolls are decorated with elaborate designs around their bodies, which might represent tattoos (Elderkin

1930, p. 479; Rahmani 1981, p. 80; Moraitou 2012; Pitarakis 2009, p. 247). In the rare cases where wool hair has survived, it is long enough that it could have been braided or arranged in elaborate hairstyles. Examples include a doll from Akhmim (now destroyed) with an elaborately braided and styled wig (Fluck 1999), and two early Islamic dolls, one in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (fig. 7.2), and the other in the Benaki Museum in Athens, which has very long real hair (Pitarakis 2009, p. 246, figs. 28–29). The doll at the Benaki was preserved wearing a fairly simple outfit; other preserved doll clothes from Egypt are sometimes elaborately decorated (see Adams 1992, p. 84, fig. 8, for Ottoman examples; Adams, ed. 1996, p. 200, pl. 61a; Fluck 1999; Pitarakis 2009, pp. 243, figs. 28–29). These dolls may also have had accessories, but these have not survived. The archaeologist Flinders Petrie records finding dolls in Late Roman tombs at Hawara, including a doll bed and other doll-sized items (Petrie 1889, pp. 12–13; Walker and Bierbrier 1997, pp. 54–56; Pitarakis 2009, p. 249).

One assumes that it was primarily girls who used the dolls, but that is only what would have been considered the social norm. It is likely that children shared their toys (Beaumont 2012, p. 131) and it cannot be excluded that young boys played with dolls. A grave at Antinoe contained a doll's dress and a wooden horse with wheels (Gayet 1900, pp. 244–45; Calament 2005, p. 292). While Pitarakis interprets this as the grave of a girl (Pitarakis 2009, p. 223), there is no reason to assume the sex of the child who was buried.

TEXTUAL SOURCES: EDUCATION

Whereas the best surviving archaeological evidence for children at Fustat seems to point to the presence of girls, textual evidence provides far more evidence for boys, since boys tended to be educated with more formality than girls. Textual evidence from Fustat is better documented for Jewish and Muslim children than for Christian children. Surviving texts suggest that children were largely segregated by religion and taught at their particular religious institutions, whether that was their synagogue, church, or mosque. Although the texts make it clear that at least some children did attend schools of a religion different from their own, this was not considered particularly desirable. The education that the children received,

primarily from their own community, included not only religious instruction (such as memorization of the Qurʾan for Muslim children) but also instruction in other areas such as sciences, penmanship/calligraphy, arithmetic, and other languages. Although attending school was widespread and many children were somewhat literate, the standards were not particularly high. Some teachers taught in informal settings, such as in their own homes. Parents who were wealthy enough could afford for their children to have tutors who lived with them in the house, such as the well-known Jewish money-lender Wuhsha, whose will set aside money for the education of her son which would pay for a teacher to live in the house with him, in order to teach him the Bible and prayers (von Grunnebaum and Abel 1947; Tritton 1957, pp. 1–26; Goitein 1978a, pp. 174–75, 177, 186–87, 624, no. 11; Petry 1981, pp. 80, 247; Giladi 1992, pp. 55–56; Seymore 2001, p. 65; Melchert 2004; Gillot 2012, pp. xxxi–xxxv; Hirschler 2012, pp. 83–90). Such children presumably could afford a better quality of education such as non-religious education by expensive private instruction (Seymore 2001, p. 65). Alternatively, children who wanted to pursue vocational training would either follow their fathers, who would teach them, or other craftsmen would undertake the training of boys and be paid for it (Goitein 1978a, p. 191).

Beyond this elementary education, older students could pursue advanced education, such as those training to be officials, religious scholars, physicians, and merchants. This was the case for Muslim students in *madrāsas* endowed by pious religious elites, which developed in the tenth/eleventh century. The first *madrasa* was established in Egypt around 1097 and the first in Fustat appeared in 1170. At Fustat, various congregational mosques such as al-ʿAmr and Ibn Tulun supported schools. The Mamluk sultan Hasam al-Din Lajin financially supported the study of medicine at the mosque of Ibn Tulun, for instance (Tritton 1957, pp. 27–46; Leiser 1976, pp. 7, 25, 111–14, 118–19, 122–38, 144–404; Goitein 1978a, pp. 179, 185–86; Makdisi 1981, pp. 9–10; Petry 1981, pp. 138–39; Berkey 1992, pp. 7–9, 17, 51–52; Seymore 2001, p. 71).

From surviving textual sources, we know that some children had a more informal education, particularly if they could not afford the education that they desired. There were provisions for education for orphans, for instance (Goitein 1978a, pp. 134, 171, 173–74, 184, 186; Petry 1981, p. 139; Reif 2002, p. 25;

Cohen 2005, pp. 238–39), but many others did not have the resources for schooling, particularly if they did want to go on to higher education. The Egyptian physician Ibn Ridwan (died ca. 1061), who was born in Giza but lived most of his life in Fustat, is a good case in point. Ibn Ridwan, as the son of a poor baker, had an earlier education that began in Fustat at age six and then he continued to study in Cairo when he was ten. Since he was poor and could not afford school fees, he earned money by giving astrological readings, lessons, and medicine. When he finally was able to study with a medical teacher, he discovered that the man did not know anything. He therefore taught himself to be a doctor from books, as the contemporary scholar Ibn Sina (Avicenna) did. According to Ibn Ridwan, this autodidacticism was something that anyone else was capable of doing. He considered teachers unnecessary since most of them did not even bother to explain the medical books that they theoretically taught to their students. However, despite becoming chief physician to the Fatimid caliphs al-Hakim and al-Mustansir and writing at Fustat the most detailed extant description of the brightest stellar event ever recorded, SN (supernova) 1006 (fig. 7.3), he was criticized by fellow physicians for not having learned with a teacher. It was believed that a teacher was necessary to explain unclear or difficult words or sentences in books read by students. If they

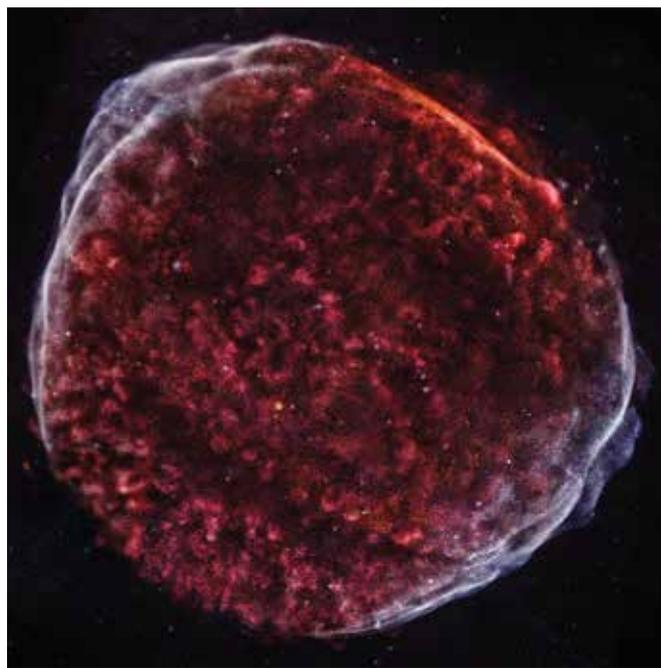


FIGURE 7.3. Remnant of supernova 1006, which was observed by Ibn Ridwan at Fustat (NASA/CXC/Middlebury College/F. Winkler)

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were self-taught, physicians could misread texts and make mistakes (Schacht and Meyerhof 1937; Leiser 1983, pp. 51–53; Seymore 2001, pp. 8, 11–18, 35, 64, 68–71, 172–74; Reisman 2009, pp. 559–60, 567–69. For Ibn Ridwan’s description of supernova 1006, see Goldstein 1965, pp. 105–07, 112–13).

As noted above, the majority of children who received an education were boys. Our knowledge about the education of girls is limited. Girls were not commonly encouraged in formal studies, although there were female elementary teachers and scribes. Female literacy was considered to have limited function, and the cost of education was a hurdle for many parents. Women’s primary role in the domestic sphere meant that they had little use for reading and writing. That is not to say that women did not learn to read and write, and some women wanted their daughters to learn. In one letter from the Genizah that has been cited on several occasions, a dying woman wants her daughter to learn to read and write and asks her sister to provide for the education of the girl. In the Islamic sphere, however, women were usually excluded from formal education, although some attended special elementary schools (*kuttab*) for girls only that had women teachers. In general, women and men were not supposed to study together, but there were occasions when they did (Leiser 1976, pp. 413–16; Goitein 1978a, pp. 184, 353, 355–56; Berkey 1992, pp. 167, 169, and 171; Kraemer 2002, p. 185; Olszowy-Schlanger 2003, pp. 53–54; El Cheikh 2007, pp. 58–60).

For Jewish families at Fustat, evidence for childhood education comes from fragments of children’s Hebrew alphabet primers. These primers usually contain the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the letters were punctuated in the different ways that they could be vocalized. The children could use model alphabets and texts to copy letters. These were usually then followed by excerpts from Leviticus as well as Genesis and Psalms, which were then used to teach children. Although Jewish children spoke Arabic in their daily lives and were taught Arabic in their elementary education (only a few Arabic alphabets and exercises survive; fig. 7.4), it was important that they knew Hebrew so they could read the Torah (Narkiss 1972; Goitein 1978a, pp. 178, 184; Olszowy-Schlanger 2003, pp. 51–53, 56–57, 59, 65). In addition to these primers, pottery ostraca, papyri (fig. 7.5) (Criore 1996, 1997, 2005), and writing boards were widely used by children to learn languages and writing skills.



FIGURE 7.4. Grammatical analysis and clarification of the rules that govern a declinable noun when it is used in a verbal sentence with multiple objects, with terminology following the Basran school of grammar. Egypt, early 10th century. Arabic, ink on papyrus, 12 x 17 cm. OIM E17619 verso

Writing boards have survived, particularly in Greek and Coptic (see Catalog No. 31), although none have been recovered at Fustat. In a twelfth-century letter preserved in the Genizah, however, a man writes that his son was very enthusiastic for his studies, but that his fellow students broke his writing board over his head (Goitein 1978a, pp. 179, 182; Olszowy-Schlanger 2003, p. 56).

CONCLUSION

Childhood at Fustat is represented both by archaeological evidence for childhood play and textual evidence for how children were educated. It is interesting that while the archaeological evidence is more

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FIGURE 7.5. Part of Hadrian's autobiography, a school text written on the verso of a tax list. The first fifteen lines are written in one hand and the next five written in a different hand. The editors of the text have suggested that the schoolmaster wrote out the text and the student was supposed to copy it (Grenfell, Hunt, and Hogarth 1900, pp. 112-16). This form of learning continued into the early Islamic period. Kom el-Asl, Egypt, Roman, 2nd century AD. Ink on papyrus, 22.0 x 10.3 cm. OIM E8349 (P. 65877/N. 44651)

distinct for the presence of girls, textual evidence provides more focus on boys. These two perspectives also present different views of the relationship between Fustat's communities. The fact that the dolls found in the Fustat excavations all resemble each other closely indicates that the children of the different religious groups all played with the same toys. Therefore, once again we see that the multiculturalism and multilingualism that is reflected in the texts is not seen the archaeological record.

8. FROM FUSTAT TO PALESTINE: IDENTIFYING FATIMID JEWELRY USING THE GENIZAH DOCUMENTS FROM THE BEN EZRA SYNAGOGUE

AYALA LESTER

This chapter deals with two diverse groups of jewelry, ranging from the luxurious and prestigious to the simple and mundane. The first group includes exceptional pieces that were found in seven hoards, excavated between 1961 and 2005, in Jerusalem, Ramla, Caesarea, and Tiberias, all dated to the Fatimid period. The second group, originating from Fustat, incorporates commonplace jewelry articles of types frequently found in excavations in cities and villages throughout the area. Presented here are attempts to associate these jewelry pieces with allusions to such materials in documents found in the Genizah of the Ben Ezra Synagogue, dated between the eleventh and the thirteenth century. Also investigated are the possible relationships between the jewelry pieces excavated at Fustat and those from the Palestine hoards. Three pieces — the silver bracelets (Catalog No. 54) and the earring (Catalog No. 53) — are dated to the Fatimid period, while the string of beads (Catalog No. 58), the glass bracelet (Catalog No. 59), and a finger ring (Catalog No. 61) present typical Late Islamic characteristics.

The seven caches contained a total of more than a hundred pieces of jewelry, including anklets, bracelets, armllets, earrings, and finger rings, fabricated using gold and silver together with pearls and various beads of rock crystal, amber, lapis lazuli, semiprecious stones, and glass. The Fustat jewelry pieces, now in the collection of the Oriental Institute, include pendants, pins, necklaces, bracelets, and earrings made of brass, glass, and semiprecious stones. Some of these objects are in the exhibition and are discussed further in this catalog; see Catalog Nos. 53–61. Together these pieces reflect the broad social strata of the individuals whose documents found their way to the Genizah, whether Jews, Muslims, or Christians.

S. D. Goitein, in his monumental six-volume study of the Genizah *A Mediterranean Society*, discusses the

different types of jewelry mentioned in the Genizah documents, mainly as part of brides' trousseau lists. At the end of volume four, an appendix includes five trousseau lists of women from Jerusalem and Fustat, dated between 1028 and 1156, from the Fatimid era to the eve of the Ayyubid period (Goitein 1983, appendix D, docs. I–V, Xa–e). This eclectic group of documents describes a social infrastructure with people ranging in status from those of modest means to well-to-do couples of the upper classes of the Jewish communities. The lists begin with jewelry pieces — mentioning first the most expensive pieces made of gold, sometimes adorned with pearls, amber, and niello — and continue with the dressing table and articles associated with it.

These lists disclose a reality in which even a girl from Jerusalem living in modest circumstances has a few pieces of jewelry valued at nine dinars. This bride was portrayed by Goitein as typical of a large section of the population represented in the Genizah documents. Her trousseau follows the standard arrangement, starting with “The Gold” — which means jewelry in general — and then specifying clothing and household and toilet utensils (Goitein 1983, pp. 314–17). Other lists of jewelry pieces and cosmetics were valued at 171 and 155 dinars (*ibid.*, appendix D, docs. I and Xc, pp. 315, 342–43).¹ These sums are quite substantial if we take into consideration that the average monthly income of a lower-middle class family was two dinars (Goitein 1967b, appendix B, p. 359; Evans and Wixom, eds. 1997, no. 275). A master artisan earned an average of six dirhams per day. Unskilled craftsmen earned between two and two and a half dirhams a day (Goitein 1967b, pp. 89–90). Thus a master artisan earned between four and five dinars per month and a simple craftsman had an income of about two dinars a month.

THE JEWELRY HOARDS

The Palestinian jewelry hoards are all dated to the Fatimid period. They are composed of gold and silver pieces with a prevalence of silver, because of its subordinate value. The gold jewelry pieces are usually small — earrings and finger rings — and are valued between a few dinars and eight dinars. The hoard from Caesarea, a wealthy city in the Fatimid period, inhabited by rich merchants (Goitein 1967b, p. 188), is exceptional, comprising openwork pieces made of filigreed gold wire *mushabbak* (literally, latticework), whose value was estimated at a few dozen dinars per piece. The hoards are reviewed briefly below, with emphases given to those from Jerusalem, Ramla, and Tiberias, which relate to our discussion.

Two hoards were discovered south of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem within the ruins of the Umayyad palace. Hoard A includes heavy silver armlets and bracelets and a single bracelet made of silver wire (fig. 8.1). Hoard B is comprised of several different single gold earrings, a pendant, a finger ring, conical beads that were probably once part of a bracelet, and a group of clipped gold coins (fig. 8.2).

During salvage excavations in the city of Ramla in 2005 and 2006, a hoard of nine bracelets and armlets was discovered. Included in this cache were a matched pair of silver armlets and two matched pairs

of bracelets, one silver and one gold. Other items were a single gold bracelet, a silver armlet with an amulet case, and a bracelet of silver wire (fig. 8.3).

The largest jewelry cache was found in Caesarea in 1961. This hoard comprised two parts, a glazed juglet containing large gold beads, pearls, small amulet cases, and beads, and a jug with six silver bracelets decorated in repoussé (fig. 8.4).

Three small hoards were found in two different excavations at Tiberias. During excavations carried out in 1973 and 1974, south of the southern gate of Tiberias, a small juglet with seven pieces of jewelry and sixteen gold coins was found. The hoard included a single spherical earring, a finger ring, a few basket-shaped earrings, as well as a pair of crescent-shaped earrings (fig. 8.5). The latest coin is dated to 1024 (Berman 2004, no. 361*). Two additional jewelry hoards, dated to 1036 and 1063, were found in Tiberias in 1989.

The material found in these seven hoards is quite unique, in contrast to the conventional articles found at cities and villages within Egypt, Palestine, and Syria (Scanlon and Pinder-Wilson 2001, pl. 47:i, fig. 47:a–b, e–j; 2; Whitcomb 1983, fig. 5; Lester 1996, figs. XVII:1–11, photo XVII.3; Khamis 1996, fig. XVIII, photos XVIII.31–35; Hadad 2005, pls. 47–48). However, some of these pieces match descriptions of jewelry articles in the trousseau lists from the Cairo Genizah.



FIGURE 8.1. Silver armlets and bracelets of the Fatimid period discovered in Jerusalem south of the Temple Mount (Hoard A) (courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority [IAA], Jerusalem)



FIGURE 8.2. Gold jewelry of the Fatimid period discovered in Jerusalem south of the Temple Mount (Hoard B) (courtesy of the IAA, Jerusalem)

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FIGURE 8.3. Gold and silver bracelets of the Fatimid period from a hoard found during excavations at Ramla in 2005/06 (courtesy of the IAA, Jerusalem)

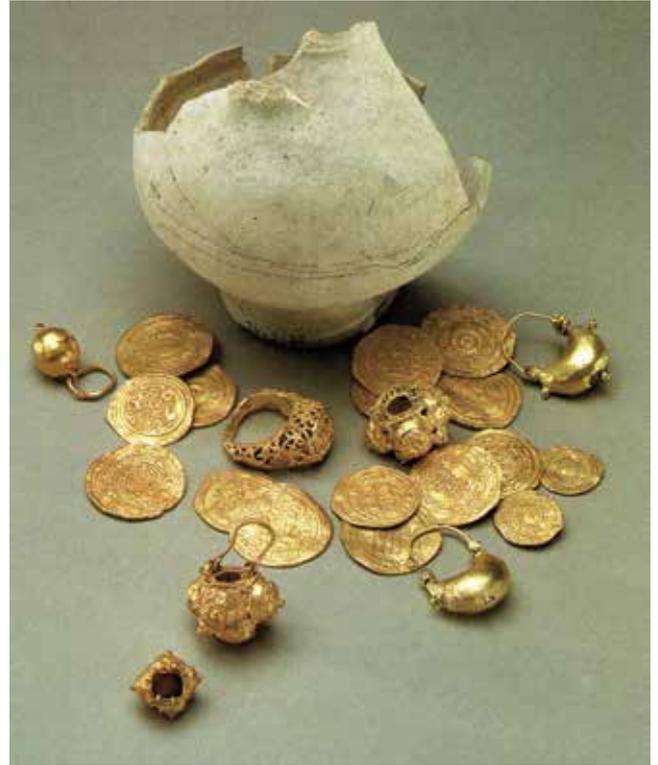


FIGURE 8.5. Fatimid jewelry hoard discovered during excavations of Tiberias in 1973/74. Dated 1024 CE (courtesy of the IAA, Jerusalem)

FIGURE 8.4. Fatimid jewelry hoard discovered during excavations of Caesarea in 1961 (courtesy of the IAA, Jerusalem)

One of our goals, within the research of Islamic material culture, is to associate documents with articles found within the archaeological context. The joining of these two disciplines — textual studies and archaeology — helps provide a broader understanding of the period and disambiguates various aspects of daily life within the Syro-Egyptian region. The following discussion contributes to an understanding of this approach.

TYPES OF JEWELRY

ANKLETS

Goitein says that in the early part of the eleventh century, anklets were particularly treasured and appear at the top of trousseau lists. The value placed on them was as high as 25 and 30 dinars. Two golden

anklets, valued at 30 dinars, are mentioned in a trousseau list dated from the 1020s (Goitein 1983, appendix D, doc. Xa [TS. 12. 12]). Another pair of anklets with two golden *siwār* bracelets was valued at 50 dinars (ibid., appendix D, doc. Xe).

Two pairs of silver anklets, almost identical in dimensions and weight, were found in the hoards from Jerusalem and Ramla. Made of thick, plain, rolled sheets of hammered silver, each anklet contains a grain of silver that makes a rattling noise when the anklet is shaken (fig. 8.6). This type of anklet was known within the eastern Islamic lands and the Fatimid domain during the eleventh century, and was worn in pairs as can be seen from the manuscript of ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi, *Book of the Fixed Stars*, from 1009. In it, Andromeda is depicted wearing two armlets and two anklets (fig. 8.7) (Wellesz 1959, fig. 55; Hasson 1987, pls. 1:a, 2:c). A miniature

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FIGURE 8.6. Silver anklet from Ramla. Fatimid period (courtesy of the IAA, Jerusalem)

from the *Maqamat* of al-Hariri from Iraq, from 1237, depicts a woman wearing gold anklets giving birth (Ettinghausen 1977, p. 121). Another gilt silver anklet was found in a workshop in Tiberias (Khamis 2013, no. 585). Goitein mentions a poor woman from Tyre whose heavy silver anklets were worth only eight dinars (Goitein 1983, p. 221).

Silver anklets have been found in three major cities in Palestine — Jerusalem, Ramla, and Tiberias — and this may indicate that this item was more common than is testified in the Genizah documents. These items shed light on the economic status of their owners, similar to that of a bride mentioned in a document from Jerusalem dated to 1028 (Goitein 1983, pp. 314–17). As Goitein mentions, these items were massive and heavy. Each anklet from Ramla weighed 170 grams. A silver armband and bracelet of the same shape are part of the collection of the L. A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art in Jerusalem (Hasson 1987, no. 67).

BRACELETS

Three types of bracelets found within the Palestinian hoards match Goitein's descriptions of items listed in the Genizah trousseau lists. One is the *siwār* hollow and swollen — “Manfukh” with “scorpion's tail”; the second is the *siwār*, which is decorated with granulation; and the third is the solid *samit*, which listed in



FIGURE 8.7. Figure of Andromeda depicted with two armbands and two anklets. From the *Suwar al-Kawakib al-Thabitah* (Book of Fixed Stars) by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi. Fatimid period, 1009 AD. The Bodleian Library, Oxford, Marsh 144 (after Wellesz 1959, fig. 55)

trousseau lists as a single item and is usually made of silver wire.

Bracelets of the *siwār* type are usually made from a rolled silver sheet decorated in repoussé. These bracelets are characterized by a hollow and swollen “Manfukh” main part which tapers toward the ends. The terminations are round and protrude slightly above the surface of the bracelet, thus creating the metaphor of “scorpion's tail” (Goitein 1983, pp. 200, 219). Based on their form and regional distribution, this group of bracelets matches Goitein's description. Two gold *siwār* bracelets, valued at 30 dinars, appear in a trousseau list from the beginning of the eleventh century (*ibid.*, appendix D, doc. Xa [TS 12.12]). Another two anklets and two golden *siwār* bracelets were valued at 50 dinars, as previously mentioned.

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Two pairs of silver *siwār* bracelets, from Jerusalem and Caesarea, are decorated with figures of deer and birds within a grid of lozenges (fig. 8.8). The bracelets from Ramla are decorated with scrolls and palmette



FIGURE 8.8. Silver bracelet from Hoard A, Jerusalem. Fatimid period. IAA 1986-630 (courtesy of the IAA, Jerusalem)

patterns with the central segment portraying a two-word inscription, *Baraka wa-‘izz* “blessing and power.” Another such bracelet found at Ramla, made of gold, is also probably one of a pair decorated at the center with the same inscription.

The second type of bracelet is composed of two semicircular tubular halves that are joined at the middle by a hinge and a ball-shaped clasp coated with granulation (fig. 8.9). A pair of gold bracelets decorated with granulation is listed among the jewelry in the dowry list of the daughter of a “middle class India trader” from the middle of the thirteenth century. The bracelets are described as “a pair of granulated *aswira*” and valued at 16 $\frac{1}{3}$ dinars (Goitein 1983, pp. 203–04). Two such *siwār* bracelets are part of the Ramla cache and are the only extant ones of this type. Gold bracelets of the *siwār* shape decorated in repoussé with granulation, from the L. A. Mayer collection, may also conform to the same description (Hasson 1987, nos. 70–71).

The third type of bracelet, a solid silver wire, was found in Jerusalem and Ramla. In Goitein’s discussion of *ḥadīda* bracelets he notes that, “besides adornment it must have served a practical purpose. In some cases it is described as *laḥḥ al-mandīl*, keeping the kerchief in place, namely, the kerchief which was tucked into the sleeve, and which was used not for blowing the nose but for carrying money and anything else that one would keep in pocket” (Goitein 1983, p. 219). I suggest



FIGURE 8.9. Gold bracelet from the Ramla hoard. Fatimid period. IAA 2008-645 (courtesy of the IAA, Jerusalem)



FIGURE 8.10. Silver bracelet from the Ramla hoard. Fatimid period. IAA 2008-647 (courtesy of the IAA, Jerusalem)

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that since in both the Jerusalem and Ramla caches the silver wire bracelet was a single item found in association with pairs of bracelets and armlets, it can be identified as the simple *hadīda* (fig. 8.10), a solid, simple flexible wire that could be easily adjusted to the breadth of the wrist. It has simple decoration such as shallow hatchings or tiny facets on the edges. The bracelet gives the impression of a functional article rather than a luxurious one and was used to secure precious belongings in a kerchief attached to the arm or to the wrist rather than to impress someone with its grandeur.

EARRINGS

Goitein dedicates a discussion to different kinds of earrings. He mentions the terms *turk* (pl. *atrāk*), which was common in Syro-Palestinian documents during the tenth and eleventh centuries (Goitein 1983, pp. 214–15). Another term, *hīlaq* earrings, was usually accompanied by the term *thūm* (“garlic”). It was so common that the term *thūm* itself could also mean earrings (ibid., pp. 208–09, n. 418; Jenkins-Madina 1997, no. 275). The third type that is relevant for us, however, are the *mukhammas* earrings.

In a trousseau list from Fustat dated to 1146 the list of jewelry starts with the mention of “a pair of *hīlaq* earrings adorned [with pearls]” valued at five dinars (Goitein 1983, appendix D, doc. II, p. 319). The term *zawj hīlaq thūm* (“costing three dinars”) appears in two trousseau lists dated to 1156 and 1186. Another pair from the year 1186 was valued at four dinars (ibid., p. 422, n. 418). A pair of crescent-shaped earrings made of gold sheet was found in Tiberias, which may be relevant to this description (fig. 8.11). They have three loops on the outer rim for the suspension of pearls and precious stones. The prototype of these crescent-shaped earrings is Roman-Byzantine and is either flat or voluminous with chains from which the pearls hung. This pair was found without its pearls.

Goitein cites *mukhammas* earrings valued at seven or eight dinars (Goitein 1983, p. 426, n. 470). He hesitates about the interpretation of the term and suggests something representing *khamsa*, the five fingers of the magic hand, and then summarizes: “we must wait for actual finds from the Fatimid period for confirmation” (ibid., p. 215). Earrings of the basket-shape type found in Tiberias are composed of five hemispheres; four are soldered together at ninety-degree angles to each other and the fifth is soldered



FIGURE 8.11. Gold earrings from the Tiberias hoard. Fatimid period, 1024 AD. IAA 1974-2138 (courtesy of the IAA, Jerusalem)



FIGURE 8.12. Gold earring (two views) from the Tiberias hoard. Fatimid period, 1024 AD. IAA 1974-2139 (courtesy of the IAA, Jerusalem)

tangentially below. The construction of the earring is supported by an upper ring made of twisted wire and a U-shaped hoop. Altogether, it creates the shape of a basket. The earrings were made from gold sheet decorated with twisted wire and granulation (fig. 8.12). Another version consists of hemispheres made of wires bent into heart shapes and soldered together into spheres. These basket-shaped earrings are known from the Byzantine kingdom, dated between the sixth and the eleventh centuries, and were abundant during the tenth and eleventh centuries (Ross 1968, nos. 44–46; Evans and Wixom, eds. 1997, nos. 168–69). The basket-shaped earrings of the Byzantine domain are characterized by variations in shape; some have three dome-shaped elements with an octagonal frame. They are decorated with granules, twisted wire figure-eight units, and imbrications. Marilyn Jenkins-Madina discusses the type and suggests a style extending between Egypt and Iran (Jenkins and Keene 1982, pp. 70–71, nos. 39a–d).

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Later she mentioned that its production was in major centers of the Islamic and Byzantine cultures (Evans and Wixom, eds. 1997, no. 275b).

We may take Jenkin-Madina's ideas further, based upon the Tiberias basket-shaped earrings, and propose the difference between the Islamic and Byzantine types. The Islamic earrings are always composed of five domes, a precondition to associate such an earring to this group. We have no explanation for the consistent use of the five elements, besides its possible association with the five pillars of Islam and the five daily prayers. Thus with some degree of caution, we can suggest that term *mukhammas* can be associated with this group of Islamic basket-shaped earrings, which is mentioned so frequently in the Genizah documents. Octagonal earrings, such as the earring found on the Serçe-Limani shipwreck (Jenkins-Madina 2004), are suggested to be Byzantine in origin, being composed of three hemispheres (Evans and Wixom eds. 1997, no. 274; Jenkins-Madina 2004, fig. 17-3). The entire group is dated to the first decades of the eleventh century based upon the accompanying gold coins from Tiberias and the glass weight (dated to 1024/25), also from the shipwreck (Bass 1984, p. 6).

DISCUSSION

A major issue when considering this jewelry is just for whom it was intended. Were they meant for Jewish women only or for Muslims and Christians? In order to try and resolve these questions, we must take into account several economic and cultural aspects of Fatimid society. The Genizah documents, dealing with commerce, describe dynamic trade with merchants traveling great distances. This provides a feasible situation for cooperation between Muslims and Jews (Goitein 1967b, pp. 186–92). A letter, probably written around 1130, from Madmun I ben Jepheth, the head of the trustee in Aden, to Abu Zikri Judah Kohen ben Joseph, his counterpart in Fustat, dealt with collaboration with a prominent Muslim merchant in Aden, Bilal ibn Jarir (Goitein 1973, pp. 181–85).

In addition to international commerce, there were other realms of financial cooperation such as partnerships and monetary loans. A partnership between Jewish and Muslim craftsmen, probably from the first decades of the twelfth century (silversmithing or glasswork), created a difficulty in regard to

the sharing of profits. The question was dealt with by Abraham Maimonides, who determined that the profits made on Friday belonged to the Jewish partner, while those of Saturday went to the Muslim craftsmen (Goitein 1967b, appendix C, p. 365). In another example, a Jewish *ka'ki* (pastry chef), paid back a loan given to him by a Muslim bread baker, a *farrān* (*ibid.*, pp. 254–55). Beside these, we read about Muslim and Christian tenants renting a property from Jewish owners in Fustat in 1201 (Goitein 1983, p. 295). The mention of Christians is quite rare in the Genizah documents, which mainly refer to Jews and Muslims. However, we get an overall impression from these descriptions of a very tolerant society which ascribes considerable importance to commercial reciprocity based upon honesty, integrity, trust, and confidence, extending beyond religious beliefs. Economic activity could not have taken place without such personal and social values which seem to have played a major role governing behavior within this cosmopolitan society composed of Muslims, Jews, and Christians (Goitein 1988, pp. 187–214).

All this brings us back to the jewelry. Goitein began his discussion about jewelry by citing Judah ha-Levi, a Jewish poet from Spain, describing young women on the banks of the Nile:

Oh those girls on the banks of the Nile,
[Light as] gazelles, but heavy,
For heavy are the bracelets on their arms
And their steps are narrowed by anklets.

Goitein asks: “Who were those girls on the banks of the Nile ...? Hardly Jewish” (Goitein 1983, p. 200).

We can certainly accept Goitein's conclusions that these jewelry articles were common during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, whether worn by Jewish, Muslim, and Christian women. These types of jewelry were known to all the people of the Genizah, probably even with distinctive pieces reserved for Muslim women, such as the *mukhammas* earrings with its different versions. Furthermore, the lingua franca was Arabic, thus a bracelet decorated with an inscription could serve almost everyone and every individual would want a talisman against evil, no matter what the religious affiliation. The trousseau documents with the archaeological findings attest to the wide distribution of these jewelry pieces within the Fatimid kingdom, whether in Fustat, its capital, or in Jerusalem, Ramla, and Tiberias.

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NOTE

¹ The standard coinage in use during Fatimid times was the gold dinar with the rate of thirty-six dirhams to one dinar (Goitein 1967b, appendix D, p. 368).

9. FUSTAT: THE TOWN, ITS INHABITANTS, THEIR FOOD

PAULINA B. LEWICKA

The Arab warriors who came to Egypt with the expeditionary force of ‘Amr in 639 and who garrisoned in Fustat belonged to many different tribes and hailed from different regions of the Arabian Peninsula. Because during the initial stage of the Muslim conquests the troops were either accompanied or followed by trains of their families carrying all their property with them, the operation of camping evolved into a process of settlement that

soon included entire clans. The immigration of Arab settlers continued, with varying intensity, until the mid-eighth century. Apart from the Arabs, the first groups of settlers also included two contingents of Byzantine converts to Islam, a contingent of converted Jews, and Persians who once formed a Sasanian garrison in Sana’a (Kubiak 1987, pp. 93–97, 120–27).

The settlement of Fustat constituted a Muslim island in the sea of Christianity which was the



FIGURE 9.1. Interior of house in Cairo (photo by J. Brinkmann)

dominant religion in Egypt, as well as everywhere else in the Near East at the time of the Muslim conquest. Egyptian Christians did not constitute one uniform community. A basic, somewhat simplified division can be made between the urban, Hellenized, Greek-speaking Melkite elite supported by Byzantine governors, and a predominantly rural, Egyptian-speaking Monophysite Coptic majority persecuted by Byzantine authorities. Relations between these two groups were often bitter (Wilfong 1998, pp. 177–79). After the conquest, the Muslims generally did not differentiate between them and treated the Christians of Egypt collectively as *dhimmi*s, or non-Muslims who were “protected” as long as they paid *jizya*, a poll tax for which they were specifically liable. The burden of the new tax notwithstanding, making all the Egyptian Christians equal in the eyes of the law implied that the Copts were no longer disadvantaged the way they had been under Byzantine rule. With their status improved, the Copts did not mind helping the new masters of Egypt who, having little knowledge of local circumstances and equally little interest in business or administrative know-how, needed all possible assistance. In this respect, the Copts proved invaluable, for they not only supplied the markets of Fustat but, having learned Arabic and thus become bilingual, also kept the new administration running (Lev 1991, pp. 179–94; Wilfong 1998, pp. 175–98). Not surprisingly, the number of Copts in Fustat grew quickly.

Like in many other places of the Late Antique Near East, Christians of Egypt shared their neighborhoods with Jews. Jews had lived in the area since Hellenistic and Roman times, but until the tenth century their community in Fustat does not seem to have exceeded a few thousand families (Kubiak 1987, p. 130). The Egyptian Jews formed two groups, the Palestinians and the Babylonians. The former were the descendants of migrants who had come to Egypt from Syria and Palestine. They remained in close touch with the Maghrebis, and particularly with Tunisian and Sicilian merchants, many of whom settled in Fustat in the eleventh century. The Babylonian Jews, whose ancestors had come from Iraq, maintained ties with their former homeland as well as with Spanish and Persian Jews, some of whom might also have settled in the Fustat area (Goitein 1967b, pp. 21–22, 32; Stillman 1998). The Jews of Fustat, like the Copts, learned Arabic and took advantage of the possibilities and opportunities that the emergence of the

new settlement provided. Jews, like Christians, were categorized as *ahl al-dhimma*, the “protected” non-Muslims liable to *jizya* tax.

The obvious inequality between the conquerors and the conquered notwithstanding, the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims of Egypt were maintained in the spirit of what might be called “peaceful coexistence.” The conquerors, who ruled and lived using the services and skills of Copts and Jews, do not seem to have intended Islamization of the non-Muslim majority. The non-Muslims were too numerous and too useful — the relatively high tax they paid provided the Muslim treasury with significant income. Still, the ratio of Muslims to non-Muslims slowly grew, mostly due to continued Arab-Muslim settlement, intermarriage, and Coptic demographic decline (O’Sullivan 2006) rather than to conversions.

COOKING TRADITIONS IN EARLY FUSTAT

The coexistence and cooperation resulted in a good deal of acculturation in areas that did not pertain to religion or political authority. The houses of non-Muslims often bordered on those owned by Muslims and differed only according to the income of their residents. The dwellings of the truly poor were shacks made of mud, reeds, and brick, while the houses of the broadly understood middle class were, quite probably, either two-story family houses constructed around an inner court, or apartment houses, usually of three or more stories, built of stone and bricks (Goitein 1983, pp. 56–82; Goitein 1978b, pp. 14–15; Kubiak and Scanlon 1989, pp. 11–31; Scanlon 1970, p. 188; Ostrasz 1977, p. 82) (fig. 9.1). The clothing of non-Muslims did not differ much from that of Muslims. All residents of Fustat mingled with one another, used the same money, the same means of transport, and they bought the same goods from the same dealers (Goitein 1967b, pp. 70–75). Apart from certain religiously ordained specialties, their menus were often composed of the same preparations which were made of the same ingredients (fig. 9.2).

In the early days of Fustat’s history, these ingredients were generally determined by what the Egyptian countryside produced, and included staples such as barley, wheat, pigeons, wild birds, a variety of Nile and sea fish, milk and dairy products, pulses (particularly lentils), lupine, chickpeas and broad beans, a

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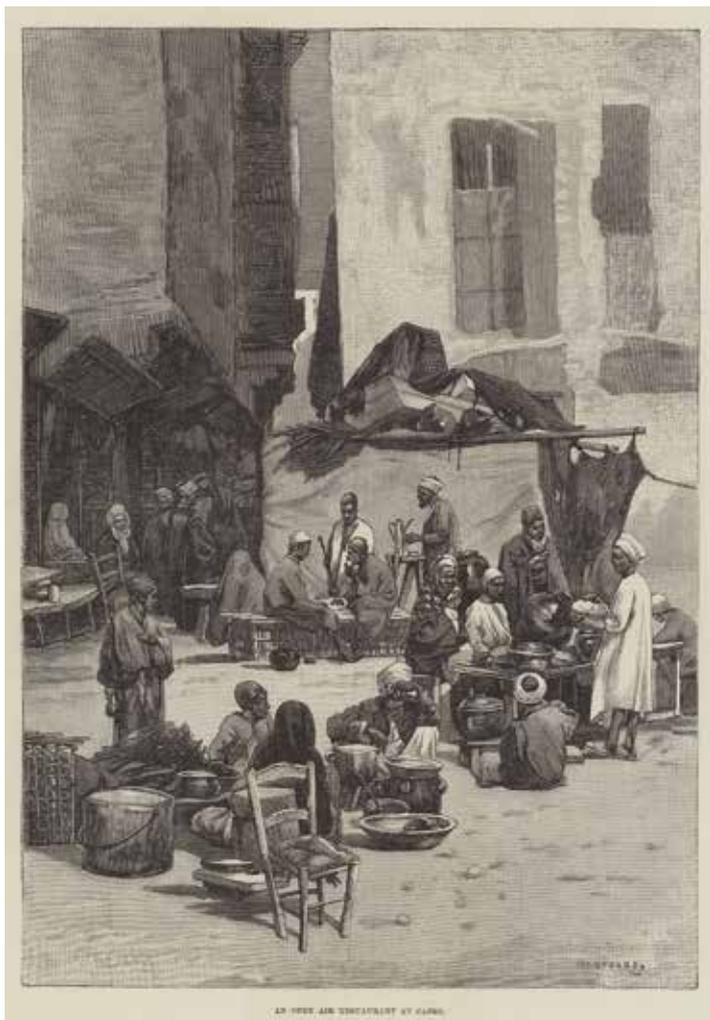


FIGURE 9.2. An open-air restaurant at Cairo. Illustration for *The Illustrated London News*, 19 January 1884 (© Look and Learn)

variety of vegetables and fruits, of which dates were particularly important, a variety of seeds, and honey. As for meat, the Islamic conquest caused important changes in the patterns of its consumption. Beef, in antiquity apparently the meat of the elites, after the conquest switched places with mutton, which in turn occupied the place of pork. Pork, which up to that time had been the meat of the more common people of Christian denomination, under the Muslim rule lost its position in the Egyptian menu.

The indigenous, pre-Islamic Egyptian cooking tradition introduced to the Fustati menu items such as *nayda* (a preparation made of germinated cooked wheat), *kishk* (crushed wheat mixed with yoghurt and then dried in the sun), *mulukhiyya* (Jew's mallow), sour milk, salty cheese, salty fish, and local bread, the Egyptian staff of life. The predominantly hot temperatures required that most fresh foodstuffs

be transformed fast, either into ready-to-eat products or into preserves that could be stored over a longer period. Meat had to be processed with the use of fire, preferably on the same day that the animal was butchered. The same was true with regard to fish. Similar considerations applied to fresh milk which, exposed to high air temperature, would not stay uncurdled for long. Bread had to be eaten fresh, preferably when still warm from the oven. If not consumed immediately, in the hot air it quickly became as hard as stone and could be consumed only when soaked in broth or like liquids.

Potable water was carried home from the Nile and stored in large conical jars made of red unvarnished earthenware that lowered the temperature of their contents by a few degrees. As the river water was usually polluted, Egyptians poured it into filter-neck bottles to purify it (fig. 9.3). With time, people of means got to like their water perfumed with various flower aromas, among which one made of rose petals had no match. But water was not the only liquid that the residents of Fustat drank. Very popular were also barley beer, *fuqqa*², or *kvass*-like near-beer and wine which, made of grapes or raisins, matured in amphorae in wine dealers' backyards (Catalog No. 40).

CHANGES IN THE CULINARY CULTURE OF FUSTAT

As Fustat developed and its population grew, its market yielded to various extra-Egyptian inspirations and influences. Consequently, its culinary culture evolved. The first big change in the local foodstyle was caused, even if unintentionally, by Khumarawayh, son of Ahmad ibn Tulun and for twelve years the ruler of Egypt (884–896). A big spender whose love for extravagant luxury had become proverbial, Khumarawayh built in the vicinity of Fustat a palace for his own and his father's numerous women and children. To feed the royal harem, palace cooks prepared huge quantities of chicken, mutton, *asida* (possibly a pudding of pounded rice boiled in milk, boiled pounded chicken, syrup, and sheep's tail fat), as well as plenty of bread, *halwa* sweets, various kinds of marzipan (*lawzinaj* and *faludhaj*), and *qata'if*, or pancakes folded around a sweet nut filling.

Since the food that the palace cooks prepared exceeded the harem's demand, they sold the surplus at

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FIGURE 9.3. Water jar with built-in filter. Fustat, 11th century AD. 17.0 x 11.3 cm. OIM E25403 (D. 027365-66)

the gate to the edifice. As the news about the cooks' foodstands spread, people started to come from afar to the harem palace gate to buy what strange kinds of food they liked (Ibn Taghribirdi n.d., vol. 3, pp. 57-58). The dishes they carried home in pots or boxes were different from what they knew (fig. 9.4). Brought to Egypt from faraway Iraq by the caliphal governors such Ahmad ibn Tulun, Khumarawayh's father, these preparations were harbingers of the sophisticated "new wave" cuisine (Waines 1989, pp. 7-15) which was being born those days in the caliphal capital of Baghdad.

The initiative of the enterprising cooks marked a turning point in the culinary culture of Fustat. First, in due course foreign, haute cuisine dishes unavoidably got out of the royal palace and, as the taste for them spread, became a part of the menu of ordinary people. Second, the idea of enjoying the take-away food, although probably not absolutely unknown in the area, now gained a new dimension. The ready-to-eat fancy dishes naturally became a tempting and competitive alternative to all the arduous daily operations of preparing food at home.

At the same time, another factor was changing the genuinely simple menu of the residents of Fustat. The emergence of the Arabic-Islamic empire caused considerable translocation and resettlement of people who, moving from country to country, carried with them the knowledge of farming techniques and plant species of their homelands. Consequently, between the seventh and eleventh centuries a number of food crops diffused westward across a large area of the Mediterranean world (Watson 1983, pp. 9-72). In the case of Egypt, sugar cane, rice, colocasia, eggplant, Swiss chard, some citrus fruits, banana, and watermelon, to name but the most important of the newly arrived plants, proved to take to the new environment and their cultivation soon covered significant parts of the arable lands along the Nile and in the river's delta. Water buffalo, so typical for the Delta countryside today, also appeared in Egypt after the Islamic conquest (Lewicka 2011, pp. 181-82). Rice, although cultivated in Egypt on a small scale before the seventh century, became a much coveted ingredient only during the centuries that followed the arrival of the Muslim armies.

9. FUSTAT: THE TOWN, ITS INHABITANTS, THEIR FOOD

When after 969 the power in Egypt was taken over by the Fatimids, a dynasty of Shi'i, Isma'ili caliphs, the food culture of Fustat was exposed to new influences and inspirations. The Fatimids established for themselves a new seat some three kilometers north of Fustat and named it al-Qahira, which is known in its Westernized form as "Cairo." This new capital was partly a garrison-town and partly a palace-city and as such was entirely dependent on Fustat, whose merchants and craftsmen supplied Cairo with all possible goods. Most probably these included ready-to-eat dishes and products which, now prepared in increased quantities in the Fustat kitchens, sold to the elite and military neighborhoods of Cairo both the idea of take-away food and the menu of Fustat.

Under the rule of the Fatimid caliphs, who turned it into a crossing point and terminus for the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean trade, Fustat was transformed into the flourishing commercial and financial capital of Egypt. The wholesalers and retailers of both Fustat and Cairo noticed an increased demand for Sicilian cheese; Syro-Palestinian fruits, pistachios, and olives; Greek, Catalan, and Provençal honey; Andalusian, Provençal, and Tunisian olive oil; Italian and Catalan saffron; and all kinds of dried fruits and nuts and other imported goods. Since the

bulk of the Indian Ocean trade consisted of spices, it is quite probable that expensive exotic spices were also appreciated and sought after in Fustat of the Fatimid epoch, at least by people of means.

A PROSPEROUS VENTURE IN COSMOPOLITAN COOKING

The prosperity of Fustat, whose population increased from one hundred thousand at the time of Fatimid conquest in 969 to three hundred thousand at the end of the eleventh century (Staffa 1977, pp. 74, 81), was brought to a dramatic halt in 1168, when one of the Fatimid viziers set the town on fire. His aim was to destroy Fustat so that it could not be used as a base by the Crusaders' troops in their attack on Cairo. After fifty-four disastrous days the city was reduced to ashes and reportedly lost two-thirds of its population. Some of the inhabitants, however, managed to evacuate to Cairo, where they camped in mosques and bathhouses and on the streets (Raymond 2001, pp. 75–77). The event, followed by the fall of the Fatimids and the takeover by the Ayyubid dynasty, terminated the prosperity of Fustat and, in the final analysis, contributed to the transformation of Cairo into a



FIGURE 9.4. Shallow glazed bowl that would have been used in dining. Fustat, Islamic period. 22 x 5 cm. OIM E25537 (D. 027431)

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thriving metropolis. However, this process would not have been possible without Saladin, the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty and its first ruler of Egypt, who decided to change the status of Cairo and to open the city up for the common people. Saladin's decision and the destruction of Fustat moved the habitation center to the ex-Fatimid capital.

The fall of the Fatimids and Saladin's coup of the 1170s, the two events that marked a turning point in the history of the medieval Near East, also caused some important changes in the culinary culture of both Fustat and Cairo. When the new Ayyubid masters of Egypt took over the caliphal palaces in Cairo, they fired some of the cooks who used to serve the fallen Fatimid dynasty. Having lost their jobs, the cooks set up outdoor public cooking businesses in the city streets. At the same time, Cairo began to attract new waves of settlers, and the Fustati fire victims who had sought refuge there were soon joined by migrants from the Delta and the Nile valley, as well as from the entire Islamic world. A mass influx of new inhabitants, most of whom joined a constantly increasing crowd of the street kitchens' customers, significantly contributed to the success of the ex-Fatimid cooks. The prosperous venture proved to be a milestone in the town's daily life: very much like the enterprise run by the cooks of Khumarawayh's harem some three hundred years earlier, it not only popularized the haute cuisine among ordinary people but also promoted the culture of take-away food (Lewicka 2011, pp. 86–88).

The dishes they offered were at least partly prepared according to the sophisticated cooking ideas that had developed some centuries earlier in Abbasid Baghdad. This so-called new wave cuisine was generally based on intensive borrowing from the Persian-Indian culinary traditions and included elements derived from the Greek medico-dietary lore,

all of which was sparsely interlaced with Bedouin Arab cooking ideas. Refined new recipes dominated the menu of post-Fatimid Cairo, augmented by fruits imported from Iran and Syria, Oriental spices, and by the products of Egyptian agriculture. Ingredients such as rice, nuts, sugar, colocasia, Swiss chard, onions, mutton, tail fat, and vinegar became *de rigueur* in the new food style, while Chinese and Ceylon cinnamon, pepper, mint, thyme, coriander, cumin, caraway, ginger, saffron, camphor, mastic, and rose water added smell and taste to the variety of predominantly one-pot dishes. As elsewhere in the Near East from time immemorial, no dish in Egypt was complete without bread. Dipped or used as a spoon, plate, or an ingredient in cooked preparations, it could either be served as a side dish to the principal food or constitute one of a preparation's essential ingredients. Be it simple food of common folk like fried eggs, salt cheese, and river mussels, or the elaborate preparations of the Arabic-Islamic haute cuisine, all were served with bread. Cooked, stewed, or fried on kitchen stands or in small portable ovens, most of the food consumed in Cairo was prepared by professional street cooks whose offer was extremely diversified, both as to the variety of dishes and their price and quality. They catered for almost everybody, from the rich to those of modest means (Lewicka 2011, pp. 57–64, 88–119).

In the meantime, Fustat was rebuilt and restored to life. The settlers arrived, many of whom moved here from Cairo, either tempted by the new opportunities or motivated by the longing for their hometown which they once had to leave. Repatriates or newcomers, they brought with them the new, post-Fatimid cosmopolitan food style which, reproduced in the streets of reborn Fustat, from then on dominated the culinary culture of the town.

IV

COMMUNITY THROUGH TIME



10. OBSERVATIONS ON ANTIQUITIES IN LATER CONTEXTS

VANESSA DAVIES

A glance through the writings of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early twentieth-century European and American travelers to Egypt gives the impression that Cairo and its environs were comprised of discrete units. Experiences tended to be pigeonholed into distinct zones: the ancient monuments of Giza and Saqqara, an “old Cairo” of minarets, historic churches, and the Khan al-Khalili, and a “European Cairo,” typified by locations like Shepheard’s Hotel.¹ The distance of the urban area from the ancient sites combined with the imposing desert landscape that surrounded them had the effect of isolating the monuments from contemporary daily life (fig. 10.1). For example, the “tombs of the Mameluke sultans,” now the district in southeast Cairo known as the City of the Dead, was described in 1828

as “situated, as it would appear, in the very heart of the Desert” (Lushington 2012, p. 65).

Another explanation posed for the tendency of Western travelers’ discourse to segregate experiences into distinct areas was a desire to separate contemporary Egyptian life, which was religiously and culturally alien to them, from the ancient monuments to make the monuments more easily accessible to a foreign audience (Colla 2007, p. 35). In this vein, scholars have recently argued that Westerners have used the term “medieval” to carve out a sort of “Islamic zone.”² With Islamic culture demarcated in that way, Westerners in Egypt interacted with and appropriated the ancient Egyptian past as something separate from and unmediated by contemporary Islamic culture.



FIGURE 10.1. Pyramids at Giza with modern city of Cairo in the background, May 2004 (photo by J. Brinkmann)

CULTURAL CONTINUITY VERSUS CULTURAL BREAK

Traditionally, the perceived breaks between pharaonic and contemporary culture have been viewed in the West through the lenses of religious and political changes, where cultural continuity was interrupted by brief but sharp disruptions, the effects of which were exacerbated by the simple passage of time.³ In this model, the break between past and present was effected in three major strokes. The spread of Christianity in Egypt dealt the first blow to the ancient ritual practices, whose demise was followed by a loss of the knowledge of reading hieroglyphs.⁴ Another layer of alienation is seen in later doctrinal changes, specifically, the understanding of the nature of Christ, which the Byzantine Christian authorities attempted to foist on largely dissenting Egyptian congregations.⁵ The conquest of Egypt by the Arabs and the resultant changes to the religious, linguistic, and political life of Egypt's inhabitants have been interpreted as severing any last remaining ties to the ancient culture.⁶ Ulrich Haarmann provides a summary of this viewpoint: "Any continuity from Ancient to Islamic Egypt had been definitively and doubly broken off with the victory of Christianity and then, three centuries later, with the advent of Islam" (Haarmann 1996, p. 606).

Recently, revisions of this view have been proposed with the survival and visibility of the ancient monuments being key parts of those arguments.⁷ Today, formerly distant sites like the City of the Dead, Giza, Heliopolis, and Memphis have been subsumed by Cairo and, perhaps in a similar vein, perspectives on the separation of the ancient and contemporary cultures have changed. Many current narratives account for the fact that ancient artifacts and monuments were features of the Egyptian landscape and cityscape throughout the Nile River valley, oases, deserts, and coastlines. Their presence affected residents in the same way that residents affected them (Knapp and Ashmore 1999, p. 8). This type of integrated view of the Egyptian landscape can also be seen in the writings of Egyptian authors of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, who discussed Cairo as a more unified entity, not the city fragmented between ancient, old or medieval, and new, modern, or Europeanized zones.⁸ Authors such as Rifa' al-Tahtawi and 'Ali Mubarak "synthesized aspects

of older traditions of ancient Egypt with European Egyptology," and they encouraged the formation of a national identity through "an informed appreciation of the past" (Colla 2007, pp. 125, 164).⁹

Several scholars have posited links in the material culture of the pharaonic era and the Islamic era, as seen in decorative motifs.¹⁰ Textual evidence also provides glimpses of cultural continuity. Islamic authors set the ancient monuments and the ancient culture in an Islamic context, making Egypt's past relevant to a contemporary audience (Pettigrew 2004, pp. 24, 32, 134–36; in addition to his sources, see Fodor 1988). Patriarch Joseph, who figures in texts of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions, was claimed to be the founder of the Fayyum settlements; an image on a temple at Akhmim was interpreted as prefiguring the coming of the Prophet Muhammad; the hieroglyphic inscriptions were seen to be repositories of ancient knowledge, and the monuments were sites of physical and miraculous "wonders" (*ajā'ib*).¹¹ If the inability to read hieroglyphic inscriptions contributed to the view that they contained mysterious and esoteric information, the fact that these texts had been recorded in stone only enhanced their perceived value. Islamic authors saw the durability of the inscribed surface as a sign of the texts' importance (Haarmann 1996 p. 613; Pettigrew 2004, p. 178). The very survival of the hieroglyphic texts into the Islamic era underscored the perceived significance of their lost content.

PLUNDER, REUSE, AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PAST

Whether viewed with appreciation or trepidation, pharaonic-era tombs and temples sometimes suffered negative consequences because of their perceived associations with fantastic objects and wondrous events. Visitors, both native and foreign, robbed sites of curios, mementos, and objects deemed valuable enough for resale (Haarmann 1996, pp. 610–12; Pettigrew 2004, pp. 153–58). A perception that such wonder might be dangerous or malicious prompted the fearful to inflict damage on the images and structures in an attempt to control or eradicate the power.¹²

Despite fears that the ancient inscriptions held some sort of power, or perhaps because of that belief and a desire to harness their power, stone blocks from pharaonic monuments were reused in Islamic-era

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architecture. Blocks used in the pharaonic era have been found reused in the Fatimid-era walls of Cairo and in various architectural settings.¹³ Such reuse was not new to the post-pharaonic era. Throughout pharaonic Egyptian history, structures were regularly dismantled and their stone used in other contexts.¹⁴ Stones used in Old Kingdom constructions have been found reused in Middle Kingdom buildings and again in New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period structures.¹⁵ Ptolemaic and Roman constructions in Alexandria were furnished with inscribed stones that were hauled away from sites like Heliopolis and sometimes reworked for a new function (McKenzie 2007, pp. 185–86). Temples and tombs that were not, or could not be, dismantled were reused in their standing forms.¹⁶ Funerary equipment was also recycled for use by later owners (recently, see Cooney 2011; Cartron 2012).

Other interactions with the ancient monuments involve the reuse or reimagining of artistic and architectural designs from earlier eras.¹⁷ The tall, vertical buildings typical of Fustat have been related to the so-called tower houses of pharaonic Egypt (Lézine 1972; Ibrahim 1984; Raymond 2000, p. 65). A Coptic image uses the symbolism of the bound antelope motif in a way similar to the use of the motif in the pharaonic-era symbolism. The older use of the motif communicated dominance of the Egyptian deity and subordination and subsumption of enemy powers, while the Christian reading of the image depicted the bound antelopes subject to the cross, thus communicating the power and protection afforded through Christianity (Frankfurter 2004, pp. 100, 109). Certainly, dramatic changes swept through Egypt over the millennia. Incoming population groups brought new languages, new customs, and new political and religious systems. Yet, despite these innovations, the ancient art, architecture, and artifacts that peppered the landscape served as visual reminders of the past and came to acquire new meanings in the social setting of post-pharaonic Egypt (Vorderstrasse 2012, pp. 463–64).

The engagement of late antique and contemporary Egypt with the pharaonic past has not been limited to the copying or physical appropriation of art and architectural material. A belief in the power of ancient monuments to enable human fertility prompts other types of interactions (Hansen 2006, pp. 184–85, 187–93; Omm Sety 2008, pp. 82–89. See also

the rituals described in Inhorn 1994). In antiquity and in contemporary times, sandstone blocks of temples have been scraped in order to produce a powder, which is viewed as conducive to fertility.¹⁸ Evidence of this practice appears as deep grooves on temple walls (for example, see Epigraphic Survey 1986, pl. 8). Other practices might leave no physical trace, such as stepping over an efficacious object or visiting efficacious zones to circumambulate or to experience a jolt of fear that will produce a desired result.¹⁹

Despite the dissociation often found in Westerners' narratives, local populations were obviously aware of and engaging with their landscape throughout Egyptian history. Evidence of such engagements are still clearly discernible when large blocks of stone inscribed in the name of one king were used in the constructions of a later king. Interactions with the past might also occur on a less public level, such as adapting an artistic motif or acquiring small artifacts, such as the pharaonic-era shabtis found at Fustat. How, though, does one know when the recycling of an object is meaningful for the secondary user or simply handy? When is reading into reuse taken a step too far?²⁰

THE SHABTIS OF FUSTAT

The precise origins of the shabtis at Fustat (Catalog Nos. 27–30) are unknown, and consequently, little can be said about the reasons for this particular reuse of pharaonic material in an Islamic settlement. Shabtis found in the city's maze of water and sanitation pits might relate little about their use, but would show that the objects had been discarded, dropped, or abandoned.²¹ If the shabtis had been found in the foundation deposit of a building constructed in the Islamic era, this might indicate that the objects had been held in some esteem or were thought to have protective qualities.²² If the excavators had unearthed the shabtis in a domestic context, archaeological context could indicate reasons for reuse, either for a practical purpose or for any number of other reasons, including curiosity, aesthetic appreciation, or sense of connection with the past.

One pharaonic-era find in a later context has been interpreted as representative of a desire to connect with the past or a regard for it (Whitcomb and Johnson 1987; Johnson and Whitcomb 1989). The

Eighteenth Dynasty statue fragment was excavated in Luxor in a context that dated to approximately two thousand years after its carving. The schist head, attributed to Hatshepsut or Thutmose III, was accompanied by other artifacts, including a head of a Serapis statuette, bronze fittings from a wooden casket, and pottery dated from the fifth through the seventh centuries AD.²³ The collection of finds, as well as their discovery in a room whose wall plaster had been embellished with a multi-colored painted design, led to the suggestion that the assemblage indicates interactions between the town's contemporary present and the material culture of its past (Johnson and Whitcomb 1989, p. 141).

The reuse or reimagining of pharaonic-era stone in later contexts has also been viewed through the lens of ideological control of the past, a desire either to control or to neutralize a perceived power, and from the point of view of simple functionality, representing an opportunistic recycling of a building material that was costly and time-consuming to quarry.²⁴ In a study of Coptic and Byzantine stone slab tables reused in medieval Islamic contexts, Barry Flood discusses the importance of complicating contemporary interpretations of such reuse and argues for a less static understanding of reuse, one that takes into account differing motivations for reuse across geographical location and across time (Flood 2001, especially pp. 63–64). His varied interpretations include the deliberate copying of artistic and architectural motifs as an attempt to tie the past to the contemporary, changed present and reuse motivated not by a desire to show domination of another culture, but rather by a view of the objects as flexible and able to adapt to new functions and new ascribed meanings.²⁵ Similarly, Michael Greenhalgh recently compiled a list of various aspects of ancient stone reuse, including reuse in contexts and for purposes different from the original as opposed to the same or similar to the original purpose; reuse where the stone was unaltered and found at a short distance from its original place of use as opposed to those that had been hauled away to far-flung locations; and buildings that were taken apart because they were old or unused as opposed to those dismantled to retrieve the valuable constituent parts (fig. 10.2) (Greenhalgh 2011, pp. 82–88).²⁶ From these details, he argues that one can read motivations behind stone's reuse, such as to harness magic, to ward off evil, to manipulate events, as

a show of status of ideological, political, or military triumph, or in appreciation of aesthetic beauty or an imagined historical past. Meaning, of course, may be solely in the eye of the contemporary interpreter, as Greenhalgh notes, and the line between “just where a certain block stops being apotropaic and becomes either decorative or inconsequential, we usually cannot say” (ibid., p. 90).

THE LURE OF THE ARTIFACT

Although a modern audience might not know precisely why an artifact was reused or why an engagement with historical artifacts occurs, such instances seem to have a special draw.²⁷ A discussion of motivations behind reuse is attractive because it involves creating or exposing a connection between a past and a present. The researcher of ancient text, art, artifact, and environment tries to interact with the past, to understand it, and to bring it to life in the present. An instance of reuse of older objects and building materials provides a mirror to one's own actions, and presents an opportunity to project onto past reuses of objects motivations that feel relevant and to which the researcher can relate. This is true even for Greenhalgh, who stridently emphasizes the functional aspect of stone reuse.

Anyone who has built a wall will know the value of a firm corner and of straight edges; so attempts to argue that this Roman altar or that funerary inscription represent the triumph of Christianity over paganism, or an interest in the aesthetics of lapidary capitals, should be firmly resisted, unless it can be shown that the object in question has been brought a great distance. This is unlikely, and the large number of examples of “convenient reuse” alongside the great consular roads should warn us to be very careful about endowing such reuse with meaning. (Greenhalgh 2011, p. 85)

Despite his warning against over-interpreting the reuse of stone, there is a more subtle aspect to the critique. Greenhalgh argues for a functional understanding of most instances of reuse, firmly rooted in “the value of a firm corner and of straight edges.” His functional argument, however, is underpinned by his admiration for the stone. He reveals his sincere appreciation of the material when he states the “inevitable conclusion” that “the medieval attraction to

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FIGURE 10.2. General area of excavations at Fustat showing capital and column lying in the ruins. It is unclear if these objects are in their original position or have been moved, but this demonstrates how easy it could be to move objects at sites (photo by L. Krenz)

marble was certainly to the beauties of the material itself — and possibly in some unverifiable instances to the associations it evoked” (ibid., p. 91). This explanation for architectural reuse emphasizes the trait that Greenhalgh views as most important: the functional perfection of marble, which is a characteristic so sublime to him that he can only describe it in aesthetic terms. In his view, the highly valued building properties of the stone, “the beauties of the material itself,” provide the motive for the reuse of marble (ibid., p. 91). While sidelining ideological or aesthetic motivations that a modern observer might posit for the reuse of ancient stone, Greenhalgh constructs his own model that connects a contemporary view with the past.

At the same time that one might be drawn to consider the reuse or reimagining of material, cultural

restrictions and contemporary sensibilities seem to combine to restrict efforts to interact with artifacts. Museum display cases separate and protect artifacts from the public. Cultural mores and, often, local law aim to control behavior so that the curious do not touch artifacts in situ and the adventurous do not clamber over the ancient ruins. Yet, even while some avenues of exploration remain closed to the interested observer, other paths have been opened via new technology. The Internet provides an endless stream of images and videos that bring users ever closer to artifacts despite the vast physical distance that may separate audience from object. Satellite imagery reveals ground features that are often imperceptible to earthbound viewers (Parcak 2009). Three-dimensional reconstructions of artifacts have opened up a new realm of tactile explorations of artifacts.²⁸ These

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technologies provide interactions on levels that were not previously accessible, and they reflect a human desire to interact with the past in novel and unexplored ways. This desire for interaction is what we read into instances of reuse to explore motivations ranging from appropriation and incorporation, to domination and conquest, to appreciation of a solid and beautiful building material. Coming upon examples of the reuse and reimagining of ancient material in later contexts, such as the pharaonic-era shabti found at Fustat, elicits a spark of excitement because it indicates an interaction with the past, the very experience that we ourselves try to achieve.

NOTES

¹ Narratives that express this view include Rees 1995; Manley and Abdel-Hakim 2004; Sattin 2011; and Manley 2012. The standard work on various factors — social, environmental, and historical — that contributed to the contemporary city is Abu-Lughod 1971. For more recent perspectives on how this dichotomy was created in the nineteenth century, see AlSayyad, Bierman, and Rabbat 2005. See also Fahim 1998, p. 10.

² On the descriptor “medieval” as a way for Europeans to distance themselves from, and thus appreciate, Islamic art and architecture in Cairo, see Reid 2002, p. 220. On the words “medieval” and “Arab” used synonymously to refer to the art and architecture of Cairo and to mark them out as “not Ottoman” and “not modern” (in a European sense), but also “not capable of becoming modern on its own,” see Sanders 2008, pp. 46–53. Cooper-son (2010, p. 1111) also takes this approach in his description of various modern treatments of the caliph al-Maʿmun’s alleged forced entry into Khufu’s pyramid in the ninth century AD.

³ Haarmann 1980, 1990, 1996; Cook 1983. For the role of Egyptology in perpetuating this view, see El Daly 2003b, p. 148.

⁴ See Bagnall 1993, p. 261, but with the caution that the decline of the ancient religious practices and the rise of Christian practices in Egypt are not “so simply related, like children at opposite ends of a see-saw.” On the Christianization of Egypt not resulting in an immediate loss of knowledge of hieroglyphs, see El Daly 2003a, pp. 56–57.

On more recent interpretations of religious practice at Philae, long considered to be the last remaining holdout, including the view that Justinian’s order to close pagan temples in 527 AD did not result in an immediate cessation of Egyptian religious practice at Philae, see Dijkstra 2008, 2011. See also Frankfurter 1998.

Much has been written on the multilingual nature of Egypt in the Late Antique period and in the early Islamic era. See, for instance, Bagnall 1993; Adams 2003; Cotton et al. 2009; Fournet 2009; Papaconstantinou 2010.

⁵ Davis 2004; MacCoull 2007; Brakke 2008, pp. 355–57; Swanson 2010, pp. 4–6. In searching for evidence of cultural continuity

between pharaonic-era and Byzantine Egypt, Bagnall (2007, pp. 8–9) proposes the practice of mummification, although noting that it had changed much from its earlier incarnations.

⁶ Even Sijpesteijn’s attempt to show “a unity and a history to the communal past of Arab Muslims and Egyptians” hinges on the tale of Queen Daluka, which “symbolises a break with the rejected past of Pharaoh’s Egypt”; Sijpesteijn 2011, pp. 101–02. For the ancient culture as “neither the focus nor the passion of many of its rulers, let alone much of its population from the end of the Pharaonic Era to the present time,” see AlSayyad 2011, p. 17. For the lack of local resistance to the Muslim invasion of Byzantine Egypt, see Kaegi 2010, p. 86. On the major disruptions to Egyptian life being in the administrative realm, see Sijpesteijn 2007b.

⁷ Reid 2002; El Daly 2003a; Pettigrew 2004; El Daly 2005; Colla 2007; Smith 2007; Elfenbein 2008, especially pp. 125–40; Cooper-son 2010; Hassan 2010.

⁸ On such distinctions between the ancient and contemporary cultures not being a feature of the writing of Egyptians like ʿAli Mubarak, Rifaʿa al-Tahtawi, and Muhammad al-Muwaylihi, see Ahmed 2001, pp. 5–6; idem 2005, p. 146. See also Reid (2002, pp. 163–67), who characterizes those writings, and similar ones by Syrian Christians, as Eurocentric because of their emphasis on the importance of Europe in world history and on classical texts and authors.

⁹ In contrast, Reid (2002, pp. 167–71) views the situation as a European move to incorporate Egypt’s ancient heritage into a Western tradition of classical discourse that resulted in the “marginality of Egyptians to the West’s Greco-Roman classics.”

¹⁰ Grube 1962, fig. 1:a–e; Scanlon 1984b, p. 121. On an “assumed continuity between the past and the present” reflected in Arabic authors’ practice of referring to both ancient and contemporary Egyptians with the word *qipt* or *gypt* (pl. *aqbāt*), see El Daly 2003a, p. 43.

¹¹ Haarmann 1996, pp. 612–13; Pettigrew 2004, pp. 2–3, 17–18, 146–47, 182–91, 203. See also Elfenbein (2008, p. 127), who concludes that although Arabic sources from the Middle Ages contain many negative responses to Egypt’s ancient past, “sufficient space remained for creative ways of incorporating this heritage into the broader sweep of Islamic history” until the field of Egyptology began to dominate the discourse. On the tradition of the literary figure of pharaoh in pre-modern Arabian texts, see Hirschler 2010.

¹² Pettigrew 2004, p. 17. On the efforts of Islamic authors to curb such damage, see Haarmann 1996, pp. 624–25; Pettigrew 2004, pp. 175–77.

¹³ For pharaonic spolia in the walls of Cairo, see Heiden 2001, 2002; Pradines et al. 2009, pp. 193–94. On reused blocks in other architectural settings, see Meinecke-Berg 1985; Greenhalgh 2009; Heiden 2009; Lorand 2013. For an argument against viewing the reuse of material culture as a sign of cultural decline, see Hansen 2003.

¹⁴ The standard work on this subject is Björkman 1971.

¹⁵ For Old Kingdom stones reused in by Amenemhat I, see Jánosi 2008. For multiple instances of stone reuse in one area over many centuries, see Uphill 1984.

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¹⁶ On approaches to studying the reuse of temples, see Dijkstra 2011. For a study of a reused tomb, see Ockinga 2007. On the values of building materials in relation to their selection for reuse, see Loth 2007.

¹⁷ On distinctions between objects that were reused and those that were reworked or reimagined, see Flood 2001, 2006.

¹⁸ Grinsell 1947, p. 357. Traunecker (1987, p. 226) argues that this practice was occurring already in the New Kingdom. On the continued belief in the power of the ancient texts, especially among rural, Christian populations, see Haarmann 1980, p. 65; Haarmann 1996, p. 612. On the more recent observation that “women now vehemently deny” doing such a thing, see van der Spek 2007, p. 185.

¹⁹ An early treatment of this topic can be found in Blackman 1968, pp. 97–108. More recently, see van der Spek 2007, pp. 185–86.

²⁰ On the different intentions that motivated the hiding or the making visible of the images carved on reused blocks, see Heiden 2009. On apotropaic uses of pharaonic blocks in post-pharaonic Egypt, see Flood 2006, pp. 155–56. On the importance of doors as places to display spolia in Syria, see Gonnella 2010.

²¹ On the pits, see Scanlon 1974b. On Fustat’s disturbed stratigraphy due to many individuals’ explorations prior to his excavation, see Scanlon 1965, p. 23.

²² On the discovery of small pharaonic-era items, such as shabtis and stelae, in such contexts, see Heiden 2009, p. 198.

²³ The earlier pottery was apparently mixed into this level from the stratum below; Johnson and Whitcomb 1989, pp. 137–38.

²⁴ For the former view, see Haarmann 1996, p. 612. For the latter, see János 2008; Greenhalgh 2009, 2011.

²⁵ For the former, see Flood 1997. For the latter, see Flood 2009. On the functionality of pharaonic-era stone blocks as a primary reason that they were reused in later architecture in Egypt, with the thrill of a treasure hunt as a secondary motivation for deconstructing ancient monuments, see Meinecke-Berg 1980.

²⁶ See also Greenhalgh’s earlier work (2009).

²⁷ This interest has been particularly fueled in recent years by contemporary concerns regarding reuse and recycling. For a discussion of engagement with the past and social memory in terms of ancient and contemporary cultures, see Van Dyke and Alcock 2003.

²⁸ See the blog posts written by Bailleul-LeSuer (2013a, 2013b). Such technology has the potential to greatly enhance the museum experience of those who are visually impaired.

11. FUSTAT TO CAIRO: AN ESSAY ON “OLD CAIRO”

DONALD WHITCOMB

The modern capital of Egypt is Cairo, the largest city in the Muslim world with an almost eighteen million population in the city and metropolitan area (roughly equivalent to the entire population of Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon). This mega-city holds a fascination for urbanists; it is a combination of modern metropolis, medieval patterns of an Islamic city, all in the context of the ancient civilization of Egypt (fig. 11.1). Understanding pre-modern Cairo, and indeed all of Egypt, begins with the late eighteenth-century expedition of Napoleon Bonaparte, which heralded a colonial interaction with European nations. This began a modernization of the great city of the Fatimids and Mamluks (tenth through fifteenth centuries) and most recent Ottoman heritage from the sixteenth century onward. One may still see monuments of this early medieval period, when Cairo had a population of over one million at a time when Paris and London barely supported a population of one hundred thousand (without the benefits of fine monuments or even a sewage system).

The engineers who accompanied Napoleon in 1798 made a map of Cairo that shows the contours of the city; and to the south are ruin fields, the mosque of ‘Amr, and a settlement labeled “vieux Kaire” and “Masr el Atiqa,” that is, Old Cairo (fig. 11.2). About one hundred years later, Cook’s guide for visiting Egypt (1897) shows a map of the city with Old Cairo to the south and “Fostat” as the name of the ruins (fig. 11.3). The visitor in the early twentieth century would cross the river from Old Cairo to see vestiges of pharaonic Egypt, particularly the sphinx and pyramids at Giza. Further ancient monuments were found at Saqqara, Helwan, and the remains of Memphis to the south, as well as Heliopolis to the north.

There was little to see of the Classical or Byzantine periods, a time when the entire length of the Nile was dotted with villages and monasteries. This is the

picture of settlement described in Kubiak’s book *Al-Fustat: Its Foundation and Early Urban Development* (1987) on the history of Fustat.¹ The great exception was the fortress called Babylon (now also known as Qasr al-Sham‘). This was a typical camp of the late Byzantine period, identical in size and configuration to walls and towers of the camp that encloses Luxor temple. The southwest corner of the otherwise rectangular Babylon fort, built at an angle to align with the Nile,

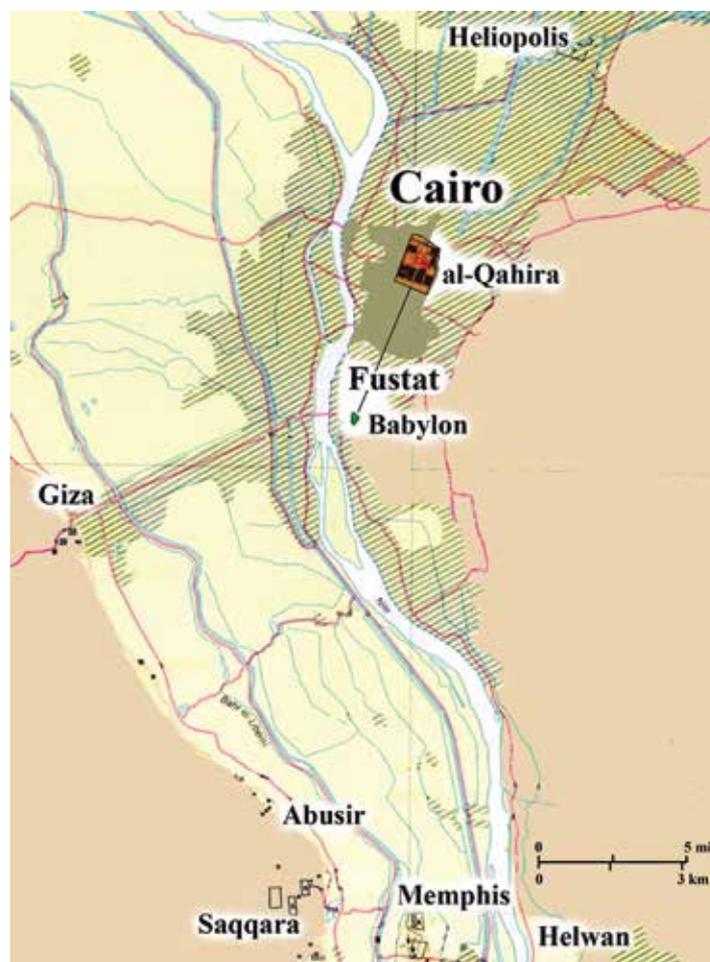


FIGURE 11.1. Modern Cairo and ancient place names (after Baines and Malek 1980, p. 135)

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO



figure 11.2. Cairo and Old Cairo about 1798 (after Commission des Sciences et Arts d'Égypte 1809, pl. 15)

was and fitted with two enormous drum towers; many now believe a canal entered the camp here and continued northeast as far as the Red Sea (this canal is usually called the Amnis Traianis after the Roman emporor Trajan, who revived it in the early second century AD). One of these towers now serves as the foundation of the church of Abu Sarga, behind which is the Coptic Museum.

The Muslim army under 'Amr ibn al-'As laid siege to this fortress in 642 and camped immediately north on the plain. His camp formed the nucleus of the *miṣr* or early Muslim urban foundation, named Fustat (possibly referring to 'Amr's tent). Indeed, medieval geographers describe an urban core called the Ahl al-Raya ("people of the banner"), around which the *khittat* or tribal districts were laid out (fig. 11.4). As Kubiak notes, Fustat "was the fourth [permanent base] (after al-Basra, al-Kufa and al-Djabiya) since the Islamic expansion began; therefore the ruling bodies of the Arabs must have known that it really meant

the foundation of the new capital of the province, not just a camp; ... Settlers ... were conscious that ... a particular piece of land ... might be their home for generations ... and the lots taken by individuals or various tribal groups had to be fairly large ..." (Kubiak 1987, p. 66).² The *khitta* of each tribe was measured out with its own mosque and numerous residential compounds (each known as a *dār*, with the largest becoming elite estates); fortunately the plain was wide and apparently unoccupied. Non-Arab auxiliaries in the army (Greeks, Persians, and Jews) were settled along the river edge in three districts called the *hamrawat* ("those of the red color"?).³

Babylon was an amazing phenomenon, "an alien body in the city's flesh" (Kubiak 1987, p. 106), a strong fort in the center of the new Islamic town that continued to function as a Coptic quarter. It also held a large Jewish community served by two important synagogues (the Ben Ezra has been excavated and extensively studied; see below). Neither Copts nor

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Jews were confined here, but resided throughout the town, as S. D. Goitein emphasizes in *A Mediterranean Society*, his great study of the Genizah. A standing Arab garrison with a vague *sahib al-qasr* is mentioned, but there was not even a small mosque until the tenth century. The Copts continued to run the complicated bureaucratic machinery (especially the taxation system) from here, as well as the necessary urban economic infrastructure.

The Umayyad dynasty seems to have been a period of growth and prosperity in Fustat, with new palaces built under the patronage of Maslama ibn Mukhallad, the governor of Mu'awiya, and 'Abd al-'Aziz, the brother of 'Abd al-Malik. Another governor, Qurra ibn Sharik, sent financial support for the building of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The

congregational mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'As experienced constant expansions and even re-buildings. One of the greatest enlargements was under Salih ibn 'Ali, the first Abbasid governor. In about 750 the Abbasid dynasty moved the Caliphate to Iraq and founded Baghdad as its new capital. They were also concerned to revive the capital of Egypt, and founded a new settlement on the northern periphery of Fustat called al-'Askar ("the army camp") in 760. The ninth century was a time of bitter dynastic and social conflicts and a new army was sent to Fustat under Ahmad ibn Tulun. He had been raised in Samarra, another new and vast city north of Baghdad; in 870 he established independent rule in Egypt and founded a new palatial city north of Fustat called al-Qata'i ("the wards"). Nothing remains of this town but the

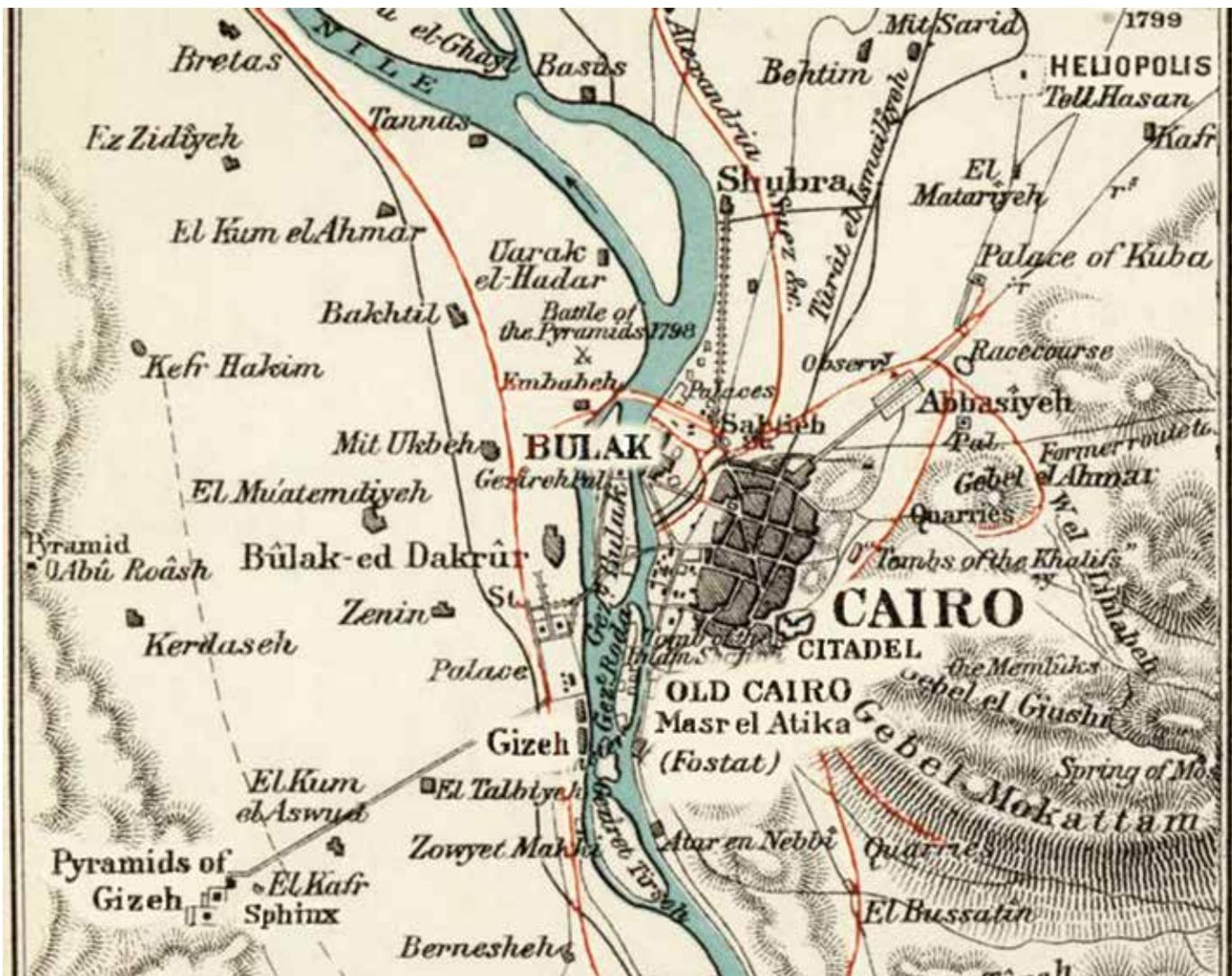


FIGURE 11.3. Cairo and Old Cairo/Fustat in 1897 (after Cook 1897)

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO

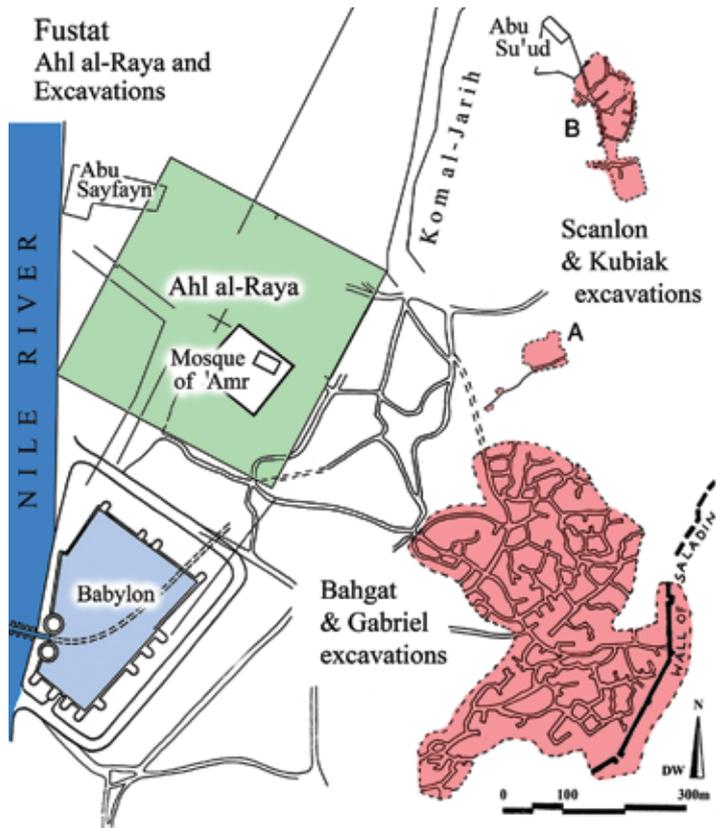


FIGURE 11.4. Excavations at Fustat (Whitcomb 2010, pl. 1)

Ibn Tulun Mosque, still one of the largest and most beautiful mosques in Egypt.

Thus Fustat, the great capital of Egypt, grew by new dynastic expansions to the north (fig. 11.5). One may consider urban organization at Fustat in light of descriptions offered by the great late tenth-century Arab geographer al-Muqaddasi. He describes Fustat as the *miṣr* (meaning for him the metropolis) centered on its “lower” mosque built by ‘Amr ibn al-‘As, the conqueror of Egypt. There was also an “upper” mosque, built by Ibn Tulun, far larger and more magnificent, built in 870 in the Iraqi style. As a town should have only one congregational mosque, Fustat was, in effect, two towns in one (*miṣrayn*). Al-Muqaddasi had a system for a hierarchy of urban places: at the top was the *miṣr* where the ruler and administration of the province was found, smaller towns were *qasaba* (al-Muqaddasi 1906, p. 199; Whitcomb 2010). But Egypt was different: he admits that most towns could not be counted as such because they did not have a mosque (and that was because, in his words, the majority of the population was still Coptic in the late tenth century). Indeed he notes that “the capital has now become the greatest glory

of the Muslims ... [nevertheless] the customs of the Copts prevail here (al-Muqaddasi 1906, p. 193).

Al-Muqaddasi goes on to describe the newest foundation, brand new in his day, established soon after the conquest by the Fatimids, who arrived from North Africa in 969. They founded a great palace complex and army camp they called al-Qāhira, “the victorious” (from which we now have the modern name Cairo). Cairo had its own large and “splendid mosque” (Al-Azhar) and the imperial palace in the center (actually two palaces that are long gone but the street between them is still known as *bayn al-qasrayn*, “between the palaces”). The new *madina* (“city”) was again to the north and at some distance. Al-Muqaddasi states that Cairo had grown to join Fustat and the entire metropolis now surpassed Baghdad in size and prosperity (fig. 11.6). Indeed, he states that Cairo contained forty public baths and beautiful marketplaces, suggesting that it was already becoming an urban residence (al-Muqaddasi 1906, pp. 199–200).

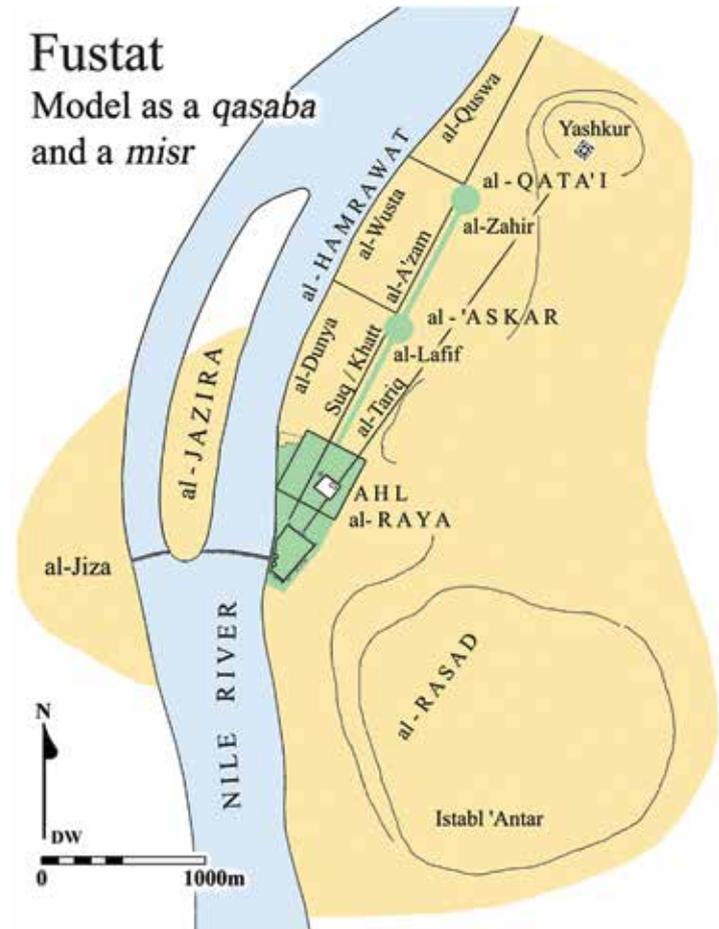


FIGURE 11.5. Model as a *qasaba* (town) and *misr* (city). Fustat (Whitcomb 2010, pl. 5)

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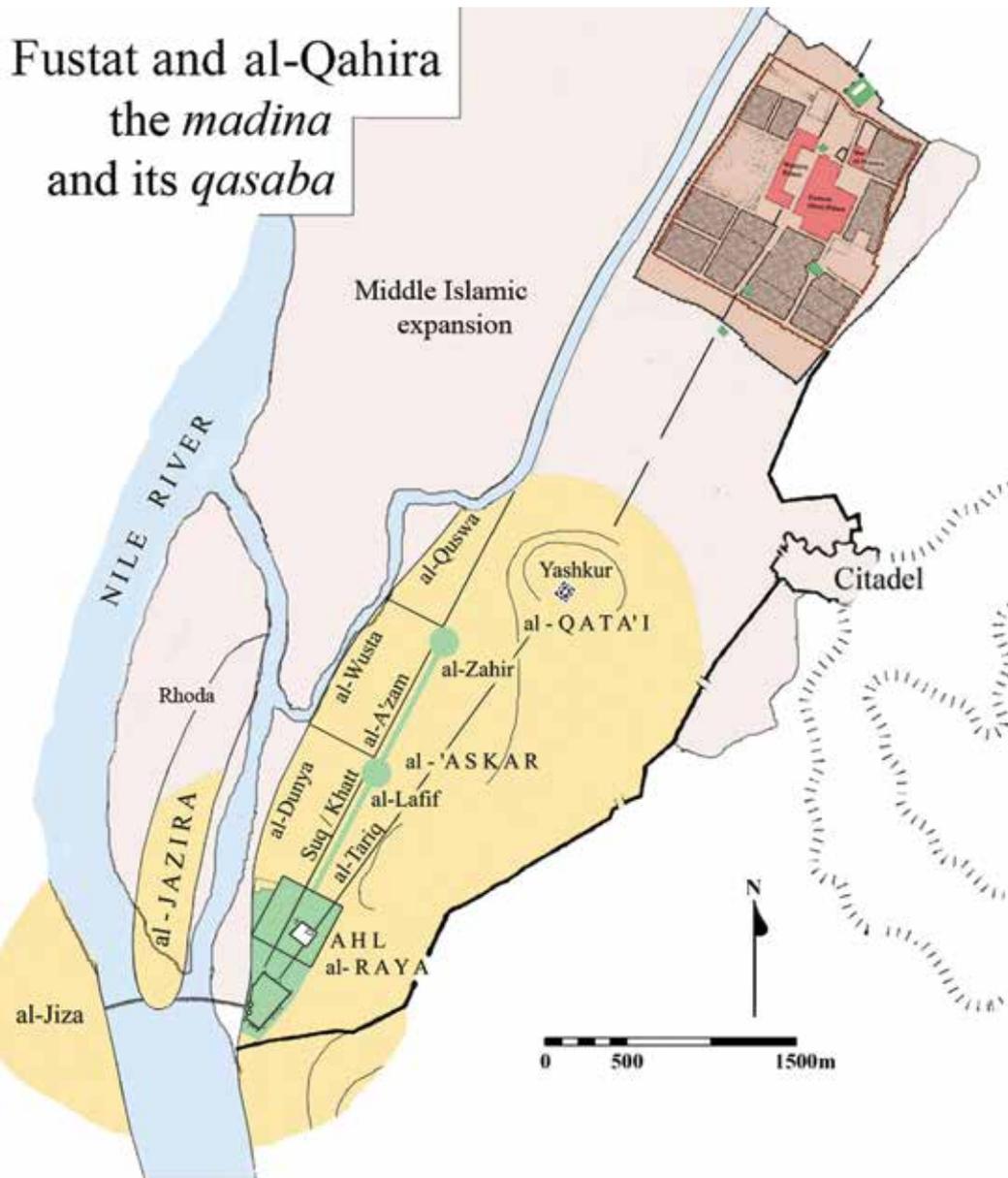


FIGURE 11.6. Fustat and al-Qahira the *madina* and its *qasaba* (after Whitcomb 2010, pl. 5 and Raymond 2000, p. 81)

Al-Muqaddasi is the first to describe the tower houses of Fustat: “they are four or five stories high, ... light enters them from a central area; I have heard that about two hundred people live in one building” (ibid., p. 198). Such houses seem to have been an Egyptian tradition, as witnessed at Karanis in the Fayyum or Coptic buildings excavated by the Oriental Institute at Jeme (Medinet Habu), near Luxor. Subsequent development would shift residences northward, near Cairo, taking brick and stone building materials (and leaving less for archaeologists); sections of Fustat would become ruinous and a place for trash deposition (more

attractive for excavations). The decline of the old city center and the move of business and people to new “suburbs” is a phenomenon well familiar to modern city dwellers.

The original Fustat would continue as the port for the city until replaced by Bulaq in the fifteenth century. The center of trade was near Babylon, the old fort, where the Genizah of Ben Ezra Synagogue has produced evidence of the wide connections of Jewish merchants. Genizah documents date mostly from 1000 to 1250 AD and number well over 200,000. Today they are scattered in various museums around the world. The great scholar S. D. Goitein spent his career

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assembling the economic and social information of this community; he constantly reminded his readers that this documentation of the Jewish community was in general typical of the wider society of Fustat and the Middle East (Goitein 1967b, pp. 70ff.).

The great irony of archaeological research in Fustat, the capital of Egypt, is that the early efforts of Aly Bahgat and the later campaigns of George Scanlon, the latter in al-‘Askar, have disappointed many; in the words of Bahgat (1921, p. 121), “it seems certain we have no remains from the earliest Islamic city,” and Kubiak states that “the greater part of the archaeological material is without a firm chronology” (Kubiak 1987, p. 113; also see Treptow 2013). The recent work on Al-Azhar Park, massively funded by the Aga Khan Foundation, offers some hope for archaeology of the Fatimid and later remains. This park is outside the eastern walls of the city, where Stéphane Pradines and other archaeologists have found multiple walls and connected buildings (Pradines and Talaat 2007).

Saladin began his campaigns against the Crusaders from Egypt. He initiated the fortification of the entirety of Fustat with a great wall, and the militarization of the citadel in the late twelfth century. This consolidation made the city “medieval” in many ways; and as the Nile made a westward shift, the increase of land allowed urban expansion around Cairo. Gradually Cairo became the urban center with

residences, markets, and especially mosques, *madrastas* (colleges), and other fine architecture (for a recent study, see Warner 2004). The monuments, symbolized in myriad domes and minarets, recall the Fatimids, then the Ayyubids of Saladin, and later the Mamluks of Baybars, who would stop the Mongols, defeat the Crusaders, and expand an Egyptian hegemony over Syria-Palestine. The Mamluks, from the thirteenth through fifteenth century, left an architectural legacy that is part of the living metropolis of modern Cairo. Indeed, one of the tensions of modernizing the capital of Egypt, with its enormous population, is the preservation of the medieval city and its monuments (Fahmy 2005). Concern for historical architecture has long been discussed by art historians; a heightened awareness was the result of the damage from the 1992 Cairo earthquake, and that of Aqaba in 1995.

NOTES

¹ Kubiak wrote this book, his dissertation at the University of Warsaw, when he directed the Fustat excavations with George Scanlon. It stands as a fine complement to the excavation results.

² Kubiak emphasizes that the Ahl al-Raya was “a multi-tribal division to which ... belonged most of the distinguished Sahaba [Companions of the Prophet]” (1987, p. 68, and chapter 7).

³ More often the “hamra”; cf. Kubiak 1987, pp. 99–102. He also notes the extreme example of these “mixed” communities.

12. A HISTORY OF EXCAVATIONS AT FUSTAT

TANYA TREPTOW

“Old Cairo” is a living neighborhood just south of downtown Cairo, closely connected to the modern city center by road and metro rail (fig. 12.1). Compared to the downtown area Old Cairo can feel a bit sleepy, but the neighborhood is an active center for numerous industrial productions, such as large-scale pottery making. Local businesses line the main streets while low-lying residential complexes spiral outward toward the periphery of Cairo. This

area is also famous for a dense cluster of historic religious buildings at its core that mark some of the earliest communities of Cairo (figs. 12.2–4). Tourist shops and restaurants line main streets, catering to streams of visitors who come see some of Egypt’s iconic examples of mosques, churches, and synagogues. Cairo’s renowned Coptic Museum is in walking distance and compliments the area’s architectural history with a rich collection of artifacts.



FIGURE 12.1. Aerial photo of Old Cairo from the southwest (photo by Rajan Patel, courtesy of the American Research Center in Egypt)

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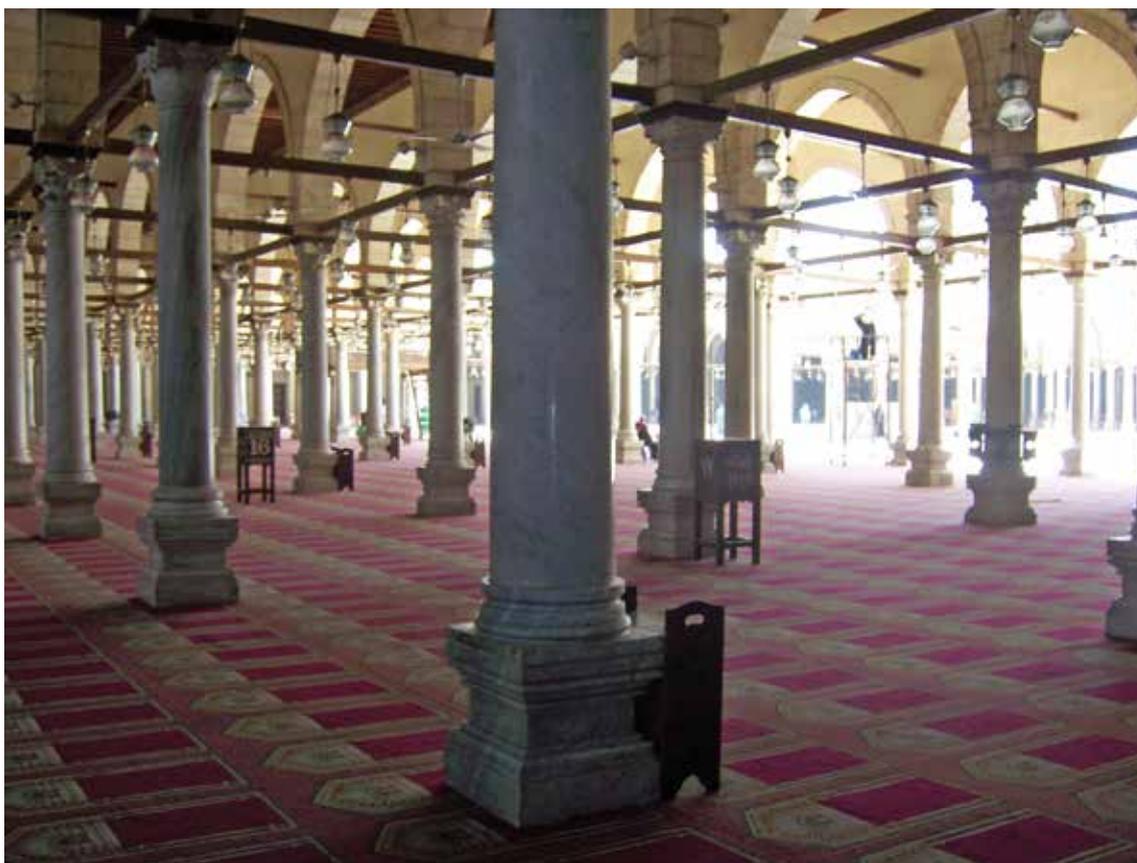


FIGURE 12.2. Interior of the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'As (photo by T. Treptow)



FIGURE 12.3. Mari Girgis and entrance to the Mu'allaga (Hanging) Church (photo by Michael Jones)

12. A HISTORY OF EXCAVATIONS AT FUSTAT

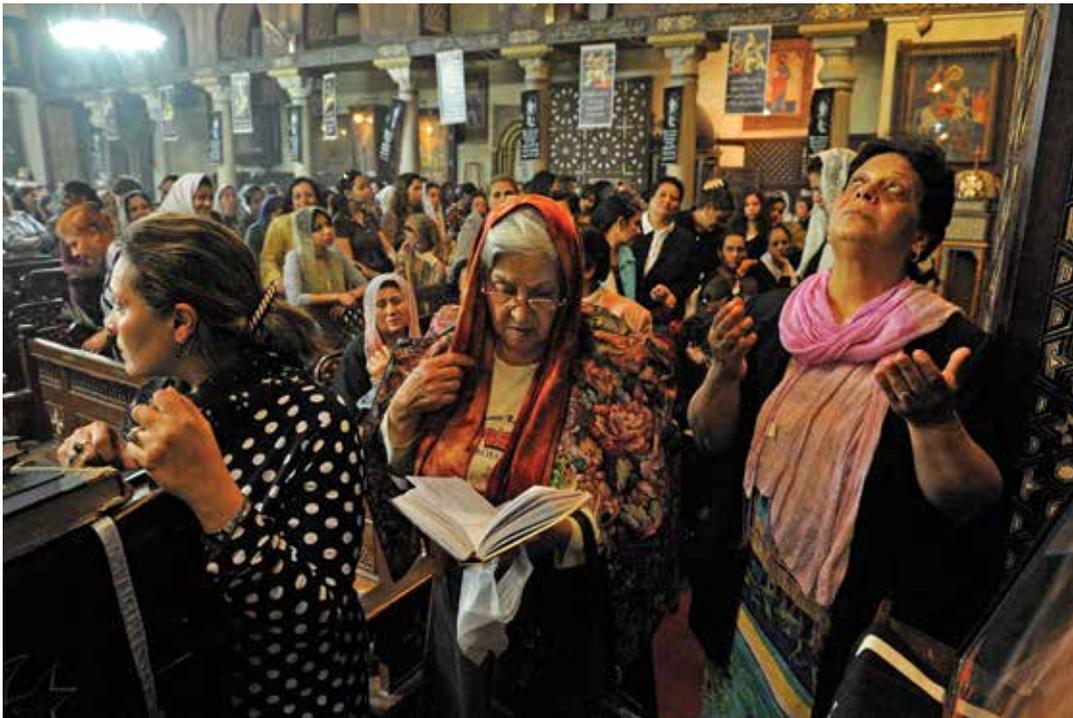


FIGURE 12.4. Mass in St. Virgin Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church, also known as the Hanging Church (El-Mu'allaqa), during the Holy week before Easter. Worshipers in the Coptic Church are separated during the mass, women on one side and men on the other (photo © Matjaz Kacicnik)

Few tourists venture to the eastern edge of the Old Cairo neighborhood where another historical treasure lies. The archaeological site of Fustat is just as monumental in scope as the standing architecture of Old Cairo, even if it is less visually impressive. For the past 100 years, archaeologists have conducted excavations of these archaeological remains in order to tell the story of Cairo's earliest urban settlement, when the city was known as Fustat. These excavations also helped to create a new discipline of Islamic archaeology in

Egypt that encourages the study of both standing and buried remains of the Islamic period in Egypt. As one comes upon the site, the modern neighborhood drops off abruptly and opens into a vast undeveloped plain containing a low-lying maze of mounds, building foundations, and ancient roadways (figs. 12.5–6). While these buried historical remains also lie under the entirety of the Old Cairo neighborhood, they are only fully exposed in peripheral areas, where they are under official governmental protection.



FIGURE 12.5. View of the residential foundations at the site of Fustat, looking north (photo by T. Treptow)



FIGURE 12.6. Foundations of the medieval city walls at the site of Fustat, looking north (photo by T. Treptow)

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Each archaeological team that has conducted excavations at Fustat has had to adapt their scientific goals to respond to the competing needs of the adjoining Old Cairo neighborhood. Although the site appears to be cut off from the ebb and flow of modern activity, it has an ongoing and close connection to life in Old Cairo, as well as Cairo as a whole. The archaeological site has been a resource to Old Cairo residents in numerous and perhaps unexpected ways. It has served as a source of fertilizer and building materials, as an impetus for cultural preservation in the neighborhood, and as a source of artifacts imbued with historic pride.

FUSTAT IN THE LIFE OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY OLD CAIRO

By the nineteenth century, the central core area of Fustat was known as Old Cairo and had been continuously settled since the city's founding in 642 AD. However, in the late medieval period some residents gradually shifted north into newer, more prosperous districts of Cairo. Others shifted west into the central market areas of Old Cairo. Areas on the periphery were left as abandoned ruins, gradually crumbling into open hills and plains. These ruins were well known to residents who continued to live in Old Cairo, as they were rumored to contain buried remains of ancient treasures.

This peripheral area played an important role in the lives of Old Cairo residents during the early modern period, as it was used by nearby communities as a resource for agriculture and construction. The soil in the area was nutrient-rich from the accumulations of organic deposits created through centuries of human settlement, and ideal when used as a fertilizer. Many farmers came from the nearby agricultural areas across the Nile in order to collect the soil, called *sebakh*, to lay on their fields before planting. Because the site also contained extensive foundations of abandoned buildings, it was considered to be a repository of construction materials. Enterprising businessmen would come to the hills to pull out bricks and other stone materials to recycle in modern building projects around Cairo. At this point in time, the area was appreciated for its practical value, not for its historical or cultural value.

It was only in the 1890s that the site of Fustat was recognized officially by Cairo's government as a place of historical significance. Already by the mid-nineteenth century, the Egyptian government had begun to establish legal protections for Islamic-period monuments and other forms of cultural heritage throughout Egypt (Khater 1960; Leturcq 2004; Colla 2007). However, Fustat did not contain recognizable standing monuments so it slipped through the cracks. The Egyptian government took formal responsibility for the protection of this area in 1893 in response to claims that private individuals were illicitly digging for historical treasures within the hills (Comité de Conservation, *Bulletin* 55 [1893], p. 29; *Bulletin* 60 [1893], p. 117). Responsibility for the site was shared by several governmental institutions, but the realities of management fell to the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe (Committee for the Conservation of Monuments of Arab Art), which also controlled the newly established Museum of Arab Art (now the Museum of Islamic Art). The Comité was composed of a powerful group of Egyptian officials and European scholars, but despite their political influence the Comité had limited control over the site. Formal ownership of the area had been unclear for decades. As a result, the Comité set up formal guard stations throughout the site but continued to allow local residents to dig the *sebakh* for commercial use as they had previously.

The Comité was more concerned about the recovery of historical artifacts than with context of the finds. They incentivized *sebakh* diggers to turn over artifacts or architectural decorations they discovered to guards but did not record any relationships to locations or any associated objects (Comité de Conservation, *Bulletin* 71 [1896], p. 154). As such, this method of recovery was not yet a true archaeological method, which requires the study of relationships between objects, architecture, and stratigraphy to understand changes in human society over time. However, the collection of artifacts by guards did serve to enrich the Museum of Arab Art greatly over the course of the next decade (Comité de Conservation, *Bulletin* 60 [1893], p. 94; *Bulletin* 63 [1894], p. 87; *Bulletin* 65 [1895], p. 108; *Bulletin* 78 [1897], p. 134). Some scholars within the Comité made requests for a more scientific exploration of the architectural remains at the site by using the latest archaeological methods of systematic excavation. However, lack of funding and difficulties

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of administration impeded these efforts (Comité de Conservation, *Bulletin* 71 [1896], p. 154).

It was only in 1914 that Aly Bahgat, the assistant director of the Museum of Arab Art, was able to successfully argue for formal excavations at Fustat. However, even at this point the excavations were not a pure scientific venture. Bahgat had to contend with the needs of modern communities and would need to justify the value of excavations and historical preservation against economic uses of the site.

EXCAVATION AND COMMERCIAL INDUSTRY AT FUSTAT

Aly Bahgat (1858–1924) was an Egyptian of Turkish origin who worked his way up through the bureaucracy of the colonialist government to become a translator for the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe and ultimately the director of the Museum of Arab Art (El-Razeq 1923/24; Leturcq 2008). By the early twentieth century, many Europeans and also some Egyptians were forging their archaeological careers by excavating at ancient Egyptian archaeological sites (Reid 2002). In contrast, almost no excavations were conducted at Islamic-period sites. Within this vacuum, the Museum of Arab Art and Aly Bahgat played a pioneering role to promote the value of excavating Islamic-period archaeological sites.

Bahgat is often considered the founding father of the study of Islamic archaeology in Egypt (fig. 12.7). As part of his initial role as assistant director of the Museum of Arab Art, he was responsible for making acquisitions to enhance the museum's collection. He made numerous trips within Egypt and throughout the Middle East to meet with art dealers. However, the museum's budget for acquisitions was low and inconsistent, so Bahgat had to find a novel, alternative method to aid the growth of the museum. If buying objects was beyond the capabilities of the museum budget, the museum could instead recover artifacts through excavation. Bahgat asked the museum board to consider supporting excavations within "the hills and mounds of Old Cairo" to enrich the collection (Comité de Conservation, *Bulletin* 176 [1910], p. 56). Through these excavations, Bahgat would make an appeal that the museum had a responsibility to excavate in order to contribute to study of archaeology as well as to collect artifacts.



FIGURE 12.7. Portrait of Aly Bahgat (from Iskariis 1921)

Bahgat conducted the first systematic excavations at the archaeological site of Fustat from 1912 to 1924. Although he was supported by the Museum of Arab Art and the larger Comité for the duration of the excavations, the organizations provided minimal financial resources to accomplish the work. Bahgat had to search for ways to reduce excavation costs in order to accomplish any scientific objectives. His solution was to enable *sebakh* diggers to participate in the archaeological process, as long as it was in a managed and careful way. He regulated commercial digging at the site in such a way that it would reveal approximately one large contiguous area of the city, located to the east of the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'As in Old Cairo (figs. 11.4, 12.8).

Over the course of fourteen years, Bahgat would refine his techniques of excavation and publish his findings in collaboration with other scholars, such as Albert Gabriel and Félix Massoul (Bahgat 1914b; Bahgat and Gabriel 1921; Bahgat 1923; Bahgat and Massoul 1930). Most of Bahgat's effort was focused on recording historic architecture and preserving notable artifacts from the medieval site. During the excavations, he was able to enrich the Museum of Arab Art with thousands of archaeological pieces (Bahgat 1914a). Throughout the excavations, Bahgat's reliance

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FIGURE 12.8. Aly Bahgat (seated) at the excavations of Fustat (from Bahgat 1928)

on commercial digging made it impossible for him to record the stratigraphic layers of artifacts and architecture. Instead, he focused on creating maps to document the general patterns of settlement and on drafting drawings to record the layouts of a number of house complexes. He also worked to analyze ceramics found during the excavations and attempted to date them through comparisons of their forms and decoration (Bahgat and Massoul 1930).

Due to Bahgat's unusual inclusion of *sebakh* diggers in scientific archaeological work, contemporary scholars held polarized views on his methods. Some doubted Bahgat's professional expertise, while others acknowledged the unique difficulties of funding for excavations of Islamic-period archaeological sites. Some noted that the area of Fustat was largely disturbed due to earlier treasure-hunting, so typical methods of careful, stratigraphic excavation would be difficult to implement in some areas. Criticism of Bahgat is an indication of how the archaeological community was influenced by broader national

politics at the time. A power struggle was brewing between Europeans who maintained a colonial control in Egypt, and Egyptians who felt that the control of antiquities was central to their identity as Egyptians (Colla 2007). Bahgat's practices of archaeology at Fustat were often critiqued by Europeans who valued scientific pursuit at all cost and were impatient with compromises made by an Egyptian who was empathetic to the local complexities of Fustat and Old Cairo.

Bahgat himself was greatly influenced by the comments and criticism of his archaeologist contemporaries, and subsequently urged for more scientific precision in excavations at Fustat. He urged the Comité to provide additional funding to conduct independent, scientific excavations. At the same time, he connected himself much more closely with the broader archaeological community by writing reports on Fustat that compared it to other Classical archaeological sites, such as Pompeii, Delphi, Olympia, and Delos (Bahgat 1922, pp. 304–05).

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Although Bahgat continued to work at the site, he died unexpectedly in May of 1924, leaving unpublished the final consolidation of his analysis and no clearly designated successor. The Museum of Arab Art continued sporadic excavations at the site of Fustat, but there was little support from leadership in the museum and almost none of these efforts were published (Treptow 2013, pp. 139–44). This situation would only change once authority for excavations was removed from the Museum of Arab Art and placed directly under the control of Egypt’s overarching Department of Antiquities in the 1950s.

FUSTAT UNDER THREAT OF MODERN DEVELOPMENT

A revitalized campaign of excavations at Fustat was a direct response to a new threat to the site from modern development. During the early 1960s, the Governorate of Cairo had started an urban renewal project to develop low-income housing to the east of the Old Cairo neighborhood, within the open plain containing the archaeological remains of the city of Fustat (Scanlon 1965). Despite earlier excavations by Aly Bahgat, vast areas of the site had never been explored. Dr. Anwar Shukry, director-general of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities, urged for excavations to be undertaken as quickly as possible in as broad an area as possible. Shukry faced fierce debate within the Department of Antiquities on whether to involve foreign institutes in salvage operations at Fustat. Ultimately, he succeeded in deeming foreign involvement a necessary step due to the critical state of modern encroachment (G. Scanlon, personal correspondence, Cairo. February 24, 2010). In the mid-1960s the Department of Antiquities put out a call to foreign archaeological institutes to undertake rescue excavations at Fustat, and George Scanlon at the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) responded. Scanlon was initially a Fulbright scholar at ARCE, but in 1959–1961 he had volunteered for director of ARCE. ARCE was interested in expanding its archaeological credentials in Egypt, and Scanlon argued that the best place to conduct an excavation would be at the site of Fustat, “the first seat of the Arabs in Egypt, now threatened by the expansion of modern Cairo” (American Research Center in Egypt, *Newsletter* 49 [1963], p. 2).

George Scanlon (1925–2014) led excavations at Fustat from 1964 to 1980 in collaboration with the historian Władisław Kubiak (1925–1997). The excavations were conducted with the support of ARCE and Egypt’s Department of Antiquities. This was the first large-scale campaign of excavation at Fustat since Bahgat’s excavations had ended in 1924 (fig. 12.9). With this work, Scanlon and his colleagues helped revitalize interest in Islamic-period archaeological sites in Egypt. Fustat would serve as a baseline of comparison for many future archaeological campaigns at Islamic sites throughout Egypt.

To plan the excavation, Scanlon worked closely with colleagues in Egypt’s Department of Antiquities from the newly created office of “Islamic Archaeology.” The team received permission to begin

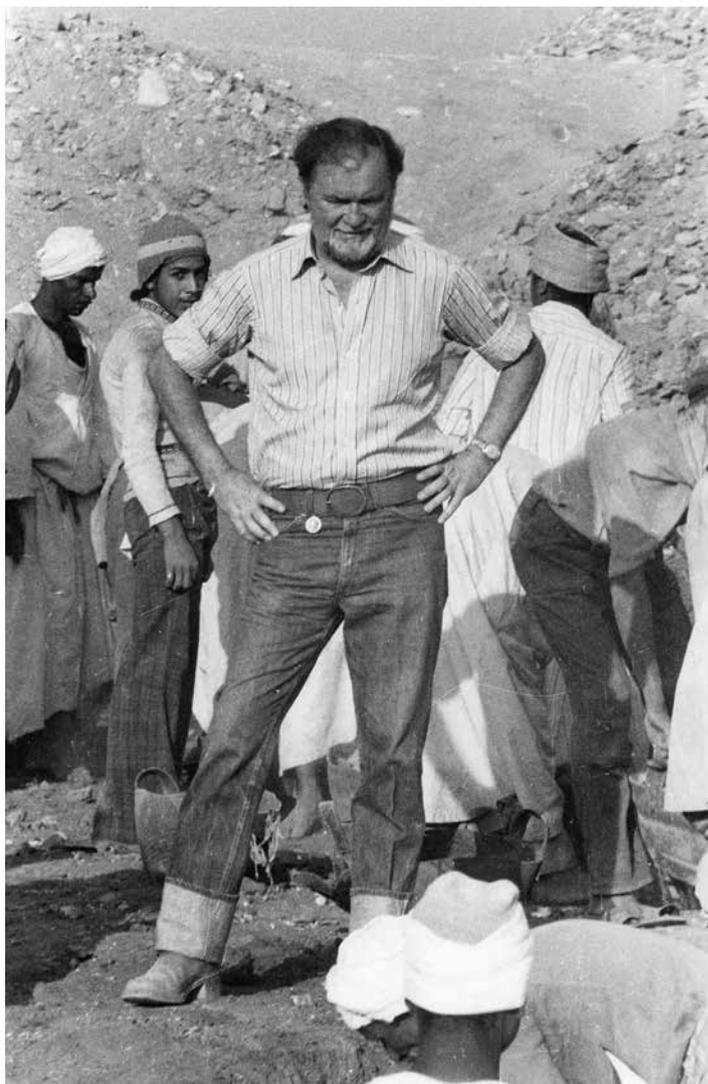


FIGURE 12.9. George Scanlon at the excavations of Fustat (courtesy of the American Research Center in Egypt)

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO

excavations in the early months of 1964. At the outset, Scanlon chose to put in trenches at three locations spread across the site in order to evaluate how far archaeological remains extended and to make a case for limiting development within those the areas. Scanlon also intended to expand on Bahgat's previous research at Fustat, as he felt it had been overly focused on individual complexes rather than understanding the structure of the site as a whole (Scanlon 1965).

Through renewed excavations, Scanlon was able to fill in the blanks to make a detailed analysis of the layout of streets and domestic complexes in the medieval city of Fustat. Excavations found that dense settlement existed throughout the site. During nine seasons of excavations, Scanlon focused on mapping the urban space by documenting the relationships between the street network, sewage systems, and building structures of both residential and public areas. In the early years of the excavation, Scanlon struggled with archaeological methods, as the site was greatly disturbed from previous digging. However, his approach and reliance on archaeological techniques widened as his knowledge of the site grew and as he interacted with other archaeologist colleagues. The results of each season of work were published regularly, bringing wide attention to the site (Scanlon 1965, 1966, 1967, 1973, 1974a, 1976, 1979, 1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1982, 1984a, 1986; Kubiak and Scanlon 1989).

Throughout excavations, Scanlon had to limit his own interests and goals because of the realities of encroaching modern development. After the 1972 season at Fustat-B, the Governorate of Cairo had opened large tracts of the site for housing developments, resulting in hurried seasons thereafter (Scanlon 1984a, p. 1). To complicate the situation, in 1979 the Governorate of Cairo permitted the dumping of rubbish in some sections of the site, making those areas difficult to access. Despite receiving emergency funding from several institutions, the project had its final season in 1980. Some within ARCE were disappointed that specific research goals remained unfulfilled, especially in understanding the earliest periods of settlement at the site. Although also disappointed, Scanlon held that the original goals for the excavation were largely accomplished. The salvage excavations had proven the richness of artifacts at the site and convinced the Cairo Governorate to limit real-estate developments to the fringes of Fustat. Despite rubbish dumps in

some sectors of the site, much of the area would be largely accessible for additional research in the 1980s and 1990s.

FLOURISHING EXCAVATIONS AT FUSTAT

Although Scanlon's excavations were unable to fully explore the very earliest historical roots of the cities of Fustat and Cairo, they were immensely influential as a focal point for future research on Islamic archaeology in Egypt. Scanlon's collaboration with the Department of Antiquities at Fustat helped to establish the Department as a key institution that would manage all future archaeological excavations of Islamic sites in Egypt. Soon after initiating Scanlon's Fustat excavations in the mid-1960s, the Islamic and Coptic Sector of the Department began its own excavations of threatened sites throughout Egypt, focusing on Middle and Upper Egypt (Treptow 2013, p. 174). Scanlon's site reports also helped to disseminate information about Fustat to an international community of archaeologists. Ultimately, a number of archaeological institutes and universities, both Egyptian and foreign, were inspired to continue the exploration of Fustat.

Scholars created a network of collaborative dialogue on Islamic archaeology in Egypt that began to connect the stories of standing historic buildings of Old Cairo with the stories of the people and communities who lived there. The University of Cairo was the first institution to invest in excavations at Fustat after Scanlon's excavations. Dr. Soad Maher Muhammad, the dean of the Department of Archaeology, led excavations at the periphery of the Fustat area from 1972 to 1974 as part of an initiative to provide students with opportunities to practice archaeological fieldwork. The primary goal of three seasons of excavation was to explore the context of a large mosque found in the area and to identify its historical background (Muhammad 1976).

Other archaeological teams also successfully gathered resources to conduct large-scale and long-term excavations at Fustat. A Japanese team from Waseda University, led by Mutsuo Kawatoko, excavated at Fustat from 1978 to 1985. The original intent of the Waseda excavations was to better understand the historical development of Fustat around the 'Amr Mosque, hypothesized to be the wealthy

12. A HISTORY OF EXCAVATIONS AT FUSTAT

neighborhood of Khitta Ahl al-Raya. However, private ownership of the area made excavations impossible, so instead the team focused on an area 300 meters to the southeast of the ‘Amr Mosque and were able to determine the general chronology of settlement from the early Islamic to the Ayyubid period (Sakurai and Kawatoko 1992).

The French Institute for Oriental Archaeology in Cairo sponsored excavations at Fustat in an area called Istabl ‘Antar from 1985 to 2005. The excavations were directed by Roland-Pierre Gayraud, an archaeologist who specialized in Islamic-period ceramics and was interested in exploring changes to density and organization of Fustat’s peripheral areas. The excavation team put in a number of trial trenches in an area of southern Fustat that consisted of a raised plateau with visible remains of an ancient

aqueduct. Gayraud expanded excavations in several directions using a method called horizontal stripping to expose the chronology of the site, layer by layer. Based on the excavation findings, Gayraud was able to conclude that the area was first used in the Abbasid period as a necropolis (a cemetery with elaborate tomb monuments), which continued in use during the Fatimid period (Gayraud 1995, 1998a, 1998b; Gayraud et al. 1995). The team excavated fairly rapidly because of a continuing fear that they would lose the concession of the site to modern developers.

Archaeological exploration of Old Cairo and Fustat continues today, although every project faces the challenge of balancing historical preservation with practical needs of modern communities. The neighborhood of Old Cairo continues to expand, and archaeological teams have gone in ahead of civic building and drainage projects to investigate the urban center of Fustat (Sheehan 2010). Although few tourists visit the archaeological site of Fustat itself, many visitors are awed by the surviving streets of Old Cairo (fig. 12.10) and by artifacts on display at the Coptic Museum and the Museum of Islamic Art. The local community of Old Cairo still struggles to figure out how to incorporate the archaeological site within current community developments. A pottery school was built adjacent to the site to educate local Egyptians in historic ceramic-making techniques. There are also continuing plans under negotiation to draw in foreign tourists, with additional bazaars and themed experiences — some of which would incorporate the archaeological site. Various proposals aim to use the open land as a public archaeological park, or even to develop parts of it into amusement park. To the east of the site on a large ridge, a new museum is actively being developed to highlight the technical achievements of Egyptian civilization. From here, visitors will be able to look down at the earliest urban foundations of the city of Cairo. There are currently no large-scale excavations planned at Fustat, although Egyptian archaeologists continued to catalog artifacts and safeguard the site from a local archaeological office on the grounds.



FIGURE 12.10. Visitors to Old Cairo (photo by Michael Jones)

IV

CATALOG

RELIGION

The city of Fustat was a meeting place of the three major religions of the Middle East: Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Christianity and Judaism had been in Egypt for centuries, while Islam, itself a recent religious development (fig. C1), arrived in Egypt in 641 with the Islamic conquest. It was the favored religion since it was the religion of the government that ruled Egypt in the medieval period. It spread widely in Egypt not only among Arab Muslim immigrants, but also among members of the local population who converted to Islam. Converts are attested soon after the Islamic conquest and increased through time (Mikhail 2014, pp. 59–78).

As the oldest religion of the three, it is not surprising that Judaism would have been present in Egypt the longest. According to the Bible, in Genesis and Exodus, the Jewish people were held in servitude in Egypt before they were able to leave. The earliest definite evidence for Jews in Egypt comes from Elephantine, where they were stationed as mercenaries. There was a Jewish temple constructed at the site before 525 BC, possibly as early as 650 BC, and many texts that refer to Jews date to the fifth century BC. Jews continued to immigrate and settle in Egypt in the succeeding centuries (Mordejewski 1995). Thanks to the Cairo Genizah documents, we have considerable information about Jewish life in medieval Fustat (see Chapter 2).

Christianity seems to have arrived in Alexandria by around 50 AD. Apollos of Alexandria is mentioned several times in the New Testament as a contemporary of St. Paul. Although he was active outside of Egypt in Ephesus and Corinth, he was apparently introduced to Christianity in Egypt. At least, according to a fifth-century addition to Acts 18:24 in the bilingual Greek-Latin Bezae codex of the New Testament, he had been educated in his homeland. While Christianity seems to have reached Egypt at a quite early date, the

exact form that this early Christianity took remains unclear. It spread widely throughout Egypt, particularly after the conversion of the emperor Constantine and the Roman empire to Christianity in the 300s AD (Griggs 2000, pp. 16–17).

While these religions co-existed at Fustat, one should not mistake coexistence for tolerance in the modern sense of the world. There were still tensions between the communities that are reflected in the extensive polemical works written by members of one of these religions against the others as well as in the taxation system under which Christians and Jews had to pay the *jizya* tax that was not assessed on Muslims. Further, in some periods, the discrimination increased, such as during the reign of al-Hakim, who discriminated against both Jews and Christians, culminating in the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. In fairness, however, al-Hakim not only disliked Christians and Jews, but as an Ismaili Muslim he also persecuted Sunnis (Daftary, pp. 188–89). TV

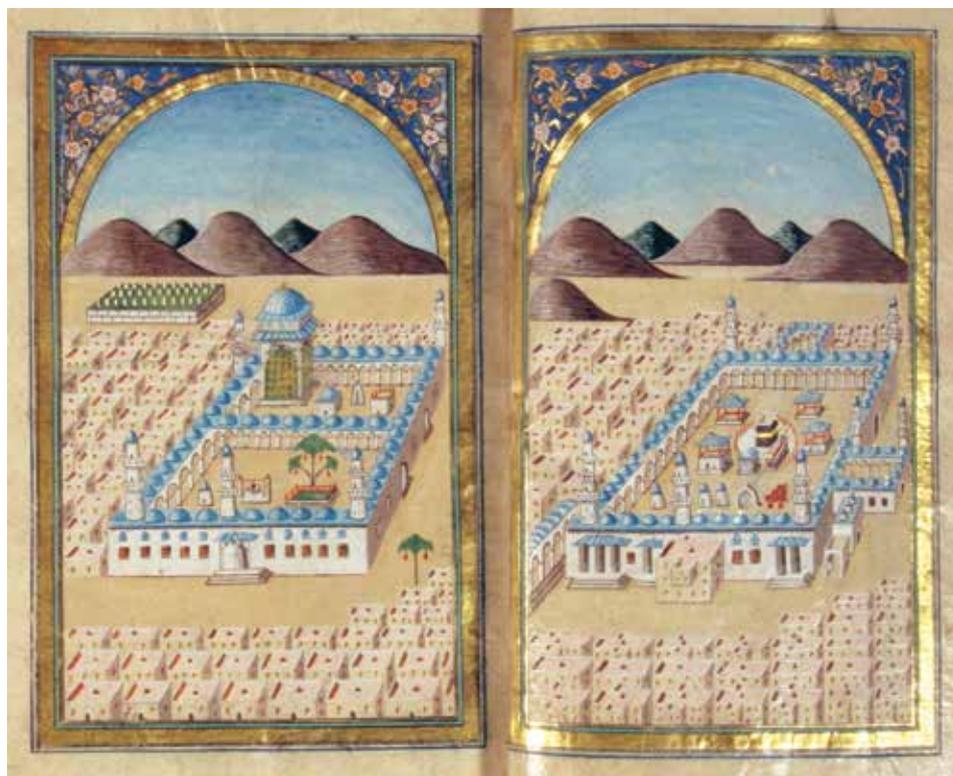


FIGURE C1. “Views of [the Islamic holy cities of] Medina and Mecca.” From *Kitab dala'il al-khairat wa shawariq al-anwar fi dkikh al-salat 'ala al-nabiy al-mukhtar*. Copy of an original fifteenth-century manuscript (attributed to al-Jazuli al-Simali, 1465) by Ahmad Ardarumi (Ahmad of Erzurum?), dated to 1764/65 AD. OIM A12048

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO

1. DOOR FROM A TORAH SHRINE WITH HEBREW INSCRIPTIONS

Wood (walnut) with traces of paint and gilt
 Fatimid, 1000s or later, with later carving and paint
 Fustat, Ben Ezra Synagogue
 87.3 x 36.7 x 2.5 cm
 Walters Art Museum 64.181
 Museum purchase in conjunction with Yeshiva University
 Museum with funds provided by the W. Alton Jones
 Foundation Acquisition Fund, 2000

This decorated and inscribed wooden door from a Torah shrine, or holy ark — a special cabinet that holds the scrolls of the Torah, is an object of exceptional interest.¹ The Torah shrine (*hekhal* or *aron ha-qodesh*) divides the sacred from the profane and marks the direction of prayer toward Jerusalem. Evidence links this wood panel to Egypt's famous Ben Ezra Synagogue, one of the great historical monuments of Judaism (see fig. 2.2; for a full discussion of this building, see Lambert and Bellaert 1994). The Ben Ezra Synagogue is the site of the nineteenth-century discovery of the Cairo Genizah,



1, front



1, back

a treasure trove of documents considered to be the single most important source for understanding daily life in the Mediterranean region during the medieval period.

For centuries, Egyptian Jews looked to the Ben Ezra Synagogue as a place for congregation, celebration, prayer, and study. The synagogue is located in Fustat — the site of a number of important Muslim, Christian, and Jewish sacred buildings — and is thought by some to have foundations that trace back to the tenth century. The earliest references to the Ben Ezra Synagogue date to the Fatimid period (909–1171). A Shi'i Islamic power from North Africa, the Fatimids gained control of Egypt in 969 and founded the city of Cairo (*al-Qāhira*, “the victorious”), which served as their capital, a few kilometers northeast of the existing city of Fustat. Under the Fatimids, Fustat became a major center for wood carving, metalwork, and the production of pottery, ivory, and glass.

In 1012, the synagogue suffered significant damage during the reign of the Fatimid ruler Caliph al-Hakim (r. 996–1021), who razed many non-Muslim religious structures. The Jewish community rebuilt the Ben Ezra Synagogue between approximately 1025 and 1040, under the rule of al-Hakim's successors, who maintained better relations with Egypt's Christian and Jewish communities. In addition to the eleventh-century rebuilding, the Ben Ezra Synagogue witnessed other restorations in the late fifteenth century, 1892, 1980s, and 1990s (Lambert and Bellaert 1994).

From Destruction to Glory: The Fatimid Period

Radiocarbon dating conducted on the Walters-Yeshiva ark door showed that the wood used for it came from a tree that had been cut down between 1043 and 1215 AD. The panel of the ark door thus securely dates to the Fatimid period, around the time of the first major reconstruction of the Ben Ezra Synagogue, when the Jewish community prospered in Fatimid Egypt's diverse and economically burgeoning society. The interior, including the wooden arks and pulpit, was refurbished at that time. While the building itself was rebuilt between about 1025 and 1040, the replacement of the interior furnishings, such as

the ark doors, may have taken many more years to accomplish, perhaps up until the 1080s. Medieval wooden remains from the Ben Ezra Synagogue dating to between the eleventh and thirteenth century are scattered in American and European museums (Lambert and Bellaert 1994, pp. 219–23).

Inscriptions

The Walters-Yeshiva panel served as the right side of Ben Ezra Synagogue's Torah shrine. When closed, the congregation would see the side of the door decorated with a central medallion with vegetal motifs and corner pieces inscribed in Hebrew with the beginning of verses 19 and 20 of Psalm 118: (above) “Open to me the gates of righteousness” and (below) “This is the Gate of the Lord.” (The rest of the verses would have been on the other door.) When open, the congregants would see a spinning roundel and an inscription from Numbers 6:24 and 6:26: “May the Lord bless you and keep you” and “the Lord lift up his Countenance onto you.”

The representation of *Adonai* (God) in these inscriptions is יי which is distinct from the Tetragram יהוה, the much more common form. Although research needs to be carried out on the usage of יי, at this point it can be said that it is attested in medieval Hebrew manuscripts. The date of the inscriptions, therefore, seems to accord with the scientific dating of the panel's wood. Interestingly, the style of writing is different on each side of the panel, indicating that the inscriptions may have been done by two different people or perhaps even during two different stages of the panel's history. The story becomes even more complex once one considers the workmanship and designs of the door are analogous to Mamluk and Ottoman designs, which are not seen before the fourteenth century.

From the Flames of Fustat: The Mamluk and Ottoman Periods

From 1250 to 1517, Syria and Egypt were ruled by the Mamluks. The conditions of Ben Ezra Synagogue worsened during the fifteenth century. In the 1470s, Fustat suffered a major fire, and the synagogue's interior was damaged. By the late 1480s, the community had repaired the Ben

Ezra Synagogue but, because of the conditions at Fustat, much of the population moved northward to Cairo. At that point, the Jewish community was using the synagogue significantly less, although they regarded the building with great reverence. Mamluk rule ended with the invasion of Syria by the Ottoman ruler Sultan Selim in 1516 and of Egypt a year later.

The compositional formula of a central medallion and corner pieces, as seen on the Walters-Yeshiva ark door, was very frequently used on Mamluk bookbindings. Another example of an ovoid medallion with radiating elements and corner pieces on an undecorated field is a mid- to late fourteenth-century Mamluk binding on volume 2 of a thirty-volume set of the Qur'an, now in the Walters Art Museum (W.561). This design came to Egypt with other influences from Persian art after the Mongol invasions disseminated craftsmen, material culture, and ideas out of Iranian lands during the thirteenth century. The composition continues into the Ottoman period and is found in different media. A most relevant example is on a Samaritan Torah case (*tik*) dated 1568 from Ottoman Syria. This Torah case was crafted after Syria transitioned from Mamluk to Ottoman hands. On this Syrian Torah case arabesque designs fill the fields of the medallions with two radiating elements and the triangular corner pieces. These ornamented areas are set upon a blank field. The composition and design of this sixteenth-century Torah case are strikingly similar to the ark door's carving. Briefly, it may also be noted that the spinning roundel on the other side of the panel is akin to the radiating roundels of Arabic inscriptions often of a Sultan's name and epithets found on Mamluk metalwork, up through the fifteenth century.

The stylistic evidence suggests that the central area of the ark door may have been carved later, most likely in the fifteenth century. One thus wonders if the medieval wood panel was not damaged in the fifteenth-century fire and then re-carved with contemporary designs. The reuse and re-fashioning of valuable materials, such as wood, which was likely imported into Egypt, is a common phenomenon in the history of art and is well attested within the Ben Ezra Synagogue.

The Ark Door in the Modern Period of the Ben Ezra Synagogue

On the basis of descriptions by visitors to the Ben Ezra Synagogue, the Walters-Yeshiva ark door was apparently still in the synagogue as part of the Torah shrine during the 1800s. In 1872, the British clergyman Rev. Greville J. Chester described the interior of the Ben Ezra Synagogue: "in the apse, and above and around the niche, in which are placed the Holy Books of the Law, are arabesques and leafwork, with inscriptions elegantly executed upon wood and plaster in Hebrew characters" (as quoted in Lambert and Bellaert 1994). Another nineteenth-century traveler, Jacob Saphir, makes reference to the state of the Ben Ezra Synagogue and the inscriptions on the ark:

It was extremely desolate and neglected; panels whole and in pieces, that had been on the walls all around and on the eastern side above the arks, and rails surrounding the bima on which were incised verses from the Psalms and names of notable people and different dates had been taken down from their place at the time that the building was being repaired and put in a special place in the upper chamber. They are so old, so worn and worm-eaten that one cannot make out any inscriptions or incisions in full. Only around the sanctuaries are left a few boards that are incised and similarly some rails that surrounded the bima still remain. On all of them are incised letters in Assyrian and Jewish script apparently of verses from the Psalms — "*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the lord*" and "*Open to me the Gates of Righteousness*" and other such verses. I could not copy any down in full as they were rotten and split. (as quoted in Lambert and Bellaert 1994)

X-ray fluorescence (XRF) indicates that visible paint (red, green, and purple-brown) and gesso on both sides of the door were applied after 1800, based on the identification of zinc (as zinc oxide) and barium (as barium sulfate) in the pigment and gesso layers. We were able to identify at least two painting campaigns, both during the nineteenth century. Areas in the inscription initially thought to be gilding were identified as brass flakes. It therefore seems the ark doors were in use and re-painted in the nineteenth century.

In the 1890s the Ben Ezra Synagogue was refurbished and new wooden ark doors with mother of pearl inlay were fitted. It is possible that the Walters-Yeshiva ark door was placed in the Genizah at this time.² Jews believe that documents inscribed with name of God or indeed any document written or printed in the Hebrew script should be stored in a Genizah. Meaning both “burial place” and the act of “burying,” the word *genizah* is from the Persian *ganj*, meaning “hoard” or “treasure.” It is often used in Semitic languages to mean “hiding” or “covering.” The practice of *genizah* takes a variety of forms: some Jewish communities bury written materials in the ground, some place them in caves or tombs, and others store them in special areas within the synagogue. The Cairo Genizah was brought to light by Solomon Schechter (1847–1915), a University of Cambridge scholar. On a visit to Cairo in the 1890s, he was shown a few Hebrew manuscript fragments collected in Fustat by the scholarly twin sisters Agnes Lewis and Margaret Gibson. Materials from the synagogue no longer in use were also stored in the Genizah. It is believed that some of the inscribed wooden panels were

taken by Schechter from the Cairo Genizah, and it is very possible that the Walters-Yeshiva panel was also taken from the building at this time. **ASL**

PUBLISHED

Shtal 1978, esp. p. 36; Bolman 2006, pp. 99–101, fig. 28; Herskowitz and Salomon 2010, centerfold between pp. 124–25, p. 139

NOTES

¹ I wish to thank Vivian Mann, Mme. Lambert of the Centre Canadien d'Architecture, and Jonathan Bloom for their generous assistance and collegiality while researching this object. This text is drawn from the exhibition “Threshold to the Sacred” I curated at the Walters Art Museum in association with the Yeshiva University Museum in 2013. The conservation science information offered here is the result of a collaborative Walters team, the central members of which were Terry Drayman-Weisser, Director of Conservation and Technical Research, Dr. Glenn Gates, Conservation Scientist, and Briana Feston, objects conservation intern, and Rachel Rosenzweig, Islamic art intern, also contributed to the Walters project.

² Note on acquisition history from Walters Art Museum website, 64.181: Ben Ezra Synagogue, Cairo [removed during renovation, ca. 1900]; Estate auction house, Oakland Park, Florida, by purchase; Barry Ragone, Miami, Florida, 1993, by purchase; Walters Art Museum, 2000, by purchase [in conjunction with Yeshiva University Museum, New York City].

ACQUISITION HISTORY OF THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE GENIZAH DOCUMENTS

The Oriental Institute's Genizah documents were purchased in December 1932 from the Dutch dealer Erik von Scherling, who acquired the manuscripts on a visit to Cairo (for more on this dealer, see Bakker, Bakkers, and Worp 2007, pp. 41–42; Dekker and Worp 2012; Suciu 2012, pp. 242–44; Jones 2013, p. 126, no. 1). The Oriental Institute acquired seven documents and all seven are published here because of anticipated scholarly and public interest in the documents. Von Scherling purchased Egyptian, Coptic, and Greek papyri directly from such dealers as Maurice Nahman and other individuals in Cairo and sold them to a variety of collectors in the United States and Europe (Bakker, Bakkers, and Worp 2007, pp. 41–43; Dekker and Worp 2012; Suciu 2012). For example, he sold Arabic papyri and Qur'anic fragments to the Selly Oak Colleges Library in Birmingham, England (Fedeli 2011, 2013).

Von Scherling sold his rare manuscripts, papyri, and ostraca through his antiquities catalog, *Rotulus*. The texts were originally described therein, likely in consultation with Arent Jan Wensinck (1882–1939), who was professor of Hebrew at Leiden University at the time. Although *Rotulus* is referred to as a catalog (see Bakker, Bakkers, and Worp 2007, p. 41), it is really a list of his acquisitions and their prices, with a small amount of commentary at the beginning about the manuscripts. Von Scherling himself termed it a “quarterly bulletin for manuscript-collectors,” though it did not appear quarterly. The manuscripts are published in the second volume of *Rotulus* (1932), where they are listed together as one lot. The description of the texts in the registration records of the Oriental Institute comes from the description that is in the catalog, where the pieces are referred to as “new unrecorded Hebrew Genizah fragments” and consist of four biblical fragments and one leaf that von Scherling suggested is a document or a letter (von Scherling 1932, pp. 35–36). These descriptions are still correct after a thorough study of the letters (Catalog Nos. 2–8).

Rotulus volume 2, number 2, where the Genizah fragments are found, also (probably not coincidentally) contains a description of the Genizah and what can be done with the single manuscript leaves. Von Scherling advocates using single sheets of vellum as lamp shades and maintains that, provided one takes leaves from “late liturgical mss. without affecting a complete, illuminated or textually valuable volume,” it is not vandalism. He does not approve, however, of using “manuscripts of a better kind for this purpose” (von Scherling 1932, p. 19).

The accession file in the Oriental Institute describes the process of the purchase from von Scherling. On December 9, 1932, James Henry Breasted, director of the Oriental Institute, informed Dr. Watson Boyes, museum secretary, that Dr. Graham, professor of Old Testament language and literature, was “negotiating for the purchase of some fragments ..., it is quite likely we shall acquire this material” (Oriental Institute Museum, Accession File 1387, letter of 9 December 1932). The purchase was apparently successful in December and the fragments arrived in Chicago at the beginning of January. In his letter written to acknowledge the arrival of the fragments, Boyes also asked for information about the provenance of the material (Oriental Institute Museum, Accession File 1387, letter of 16 January 1933). In his response, von Scherling stated that,

I have purchased these fragments, together with a collection of Coptic, Arabic, and Greek documents, from a dealer in Cairo. I may suppose it would be useless to enter in correspondence with this dealer about these fragments; if some information may be obtained from him, something which I would call in question, it would be untrustworthy taking all in all. I very much regret that I cannot help you in this matter. (Oriental Institute Museum Accession 1387, letter of 27 January 1933) **TV**

2.-3. BIBLE FRAGMENTS FROM THE GENIZAH

Paper and ink

Abbasid-Mamluk, 800s-1200s

Fustat, Ben Ezra Synagogue

Purchased from E. von Scherling, 1932

2. 28.0 x 28.7 cm

OIM A11244

3. 27.6 x 28.6 cm

OIM A11245

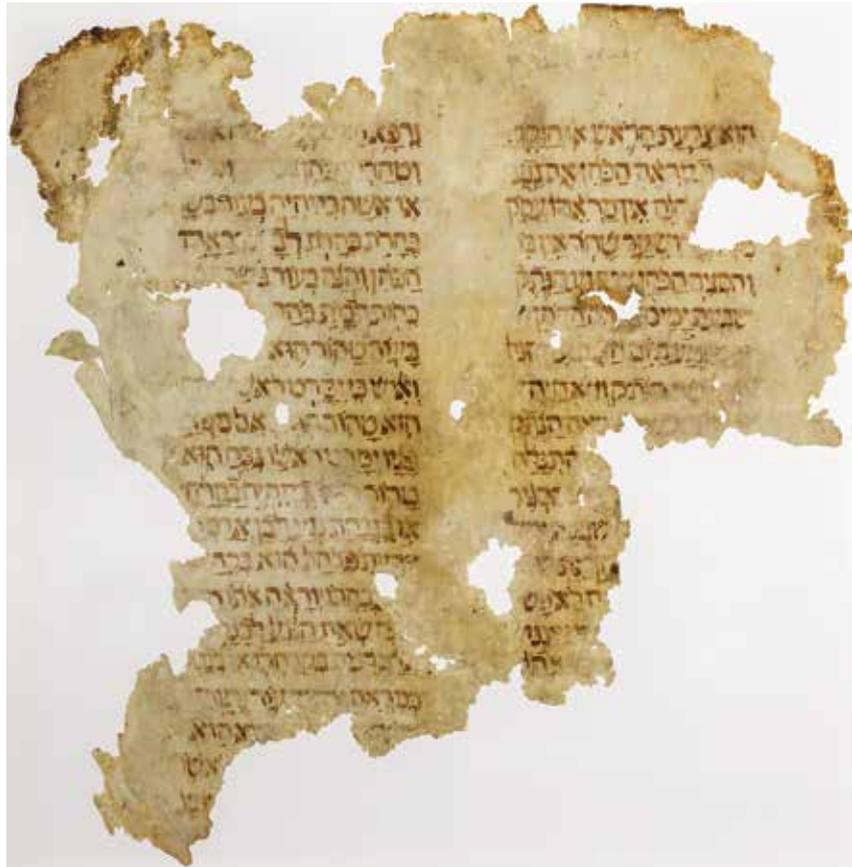
Description: Two separate leaves; Hebrew (Masoretic Text); square Hebrew script with Tiberian vocalization; two columns.

Condition (both leaves): Light staining and moderate to heavy holing and tearing (affecting about half the text on each side of each leaf).

Contents: The Masoretic Text of Leviticus.

Comment: In the traditional Sabbath liturgy of the synagogue, the entire text of the Torah (Pentateuch) was broken into sectional readings that were read over the course of a year (the current, prevailing custom, known as the Babylonian tradition) or three years (the tradition followed by Jewish communities in the Land of Israel). However, according to Jewish law (*halakhah*), such liturgical-public reading was to be done from a scroll, not a codex — from which latter the two present leaves derive (as evinced, for example, by the writing on both sides). The codex represented by these two leaves was, like other Masoretic codices, quite likely used for scholarly research, study, and/or as an exemplar from which other scrolls and codices would be copied. MW

Previously unpublished



2, recto

D. 027312



2, verso

D. 027314

Translation:¹

Catalog No. 2: from Leviticus 13:30
(beg.: הוּא צָרַעַת) to 13:57 (end.: אוֹרֵב־שֵׁתִי):

(30) it is (an itch), a leprosy of the head or the beard. 31 And if the priest examines the itching disease, and it appears no deeper than the skin and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall shut up the person with the itching disease for seven days, 32 and on the seventh day the priest shall examine the disease; and if the itch has not spread, and there is in it no yellow hair, and the itch appears to be no deeper than the skin, 33 then he shall shave himself, but the itch he shall not shave; and the priest shall shut up the person with the itching disease for seven days more; 34 and on the seventh day the priest shall examine the itch, and if the itch has not spread in the skin and it appears to be no deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean. 35 But if the itch spreads in the skin after his cleansing, 36 then the priest shall examine him, and if the itch has spread in the skin, the priest need not seek for the yellow hair; he is unclean. 37 But if in his eyes the itch is checked, and black hair has grown in it, the itch is healed, he is clean; and the priest shall pronounce him clean. 38 "When a man or a woman has spots on the skin of the body, white spots, 39 the priest shall make an examination, and if the spots on the skin of the body are of a dull white, it is tetter that has broken out in the skin; he is clean." 40 "If a man's hair has fallen from his head, he is bald but he is clean. 41 And if a man's hair has fallen from his forehead and temples, he has baldness of the forehead but he is clean. 42 But if there is on the bald head or the bald forehead a reddish-white diseased spot, it is leprosy breaking out on his bald head or his bald forehead. 43 Then the priest shall examine him, and if the diseased swelling is reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, like the appearance of leprosy in the skin of the body, 44 he is a leprous man, he is unclean; the priest must pronounce him unclean; his disease is on his head." 45 "The leper who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry, 'Unclean, unclean.' 46 He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone in a habitation outside the camp." 47 "When there is a leprous disease in a garment, whether a woolen or a linen garment, 48 in warp or woof of linen or wool, or in a skin or in anything made of skin, 49 if the disease shows greenish or reddish in the garment, whether in warp or woof or in skin or in anything made of skin, it is a leprous disease and shall be shown to the priest. 50 And the priest shall examine the disease, and shut up that which has the disease for seven days;



3, recto

D. 027317

51 then he shall examine the disease on the seventh day. If the disease has spread in the garment, in warp or woof, or in the skin, whatever be the use of the skin, the disease is a malignant leprosy; it is unclean. 52 And he shall burn the garment, whether diseased in warp or woof, woolen or linen, or anything of skin, for it is a malignant leprosy; it shall be burned in the fire." 53 "And if the priest examines, and the disease has not spread in the garment in warp or woof or in anything of skin, 54 then the priest shall command that they wash the thing in which is the disease, and he shall shut it up seven days more; 55 and the priest shall examine the diseased thing after it has been washed. And if the diseased spot has not changed color, though the disease has not spread, it is unclean; you shall burn it in the fire, whether the leprous spot is on the back or on the front." 56 "But if the priest examines, and the disease is dim after it is washed, he shall tear the spot out of the garment or the skin or the warp or woof; 57 then if it appears again in the garment, in warp or ...

NOTE

¹ All English translations are taken from the Revised Standard Version (2nd edition, 1971).

*Translation:***Catalog No. 3:** from Leviticus 16:30 (beg.: עֲלֵיכֶם) to 18:4 (end.: תִּשְׁמְרוּ):

(30) for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord. 31 It is a Sabbath of solemn rest to you, and you shall afflict yourselves; it is a statute for ever. 32 And the priest who is anointed and consecrated as priest in his father's place shall make atonement, wearing the holy linen garments; 33 he shall make atonement for the sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. 34 And this shall be an everlasting statute for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins." And Moses did as the Lord commanded him.

17:1 And the Lord said to Moses, 2 "Say to Aaron and his sons, and to all the people of Israel, This is the thing which the Lord has commanded. 3 If any man of the house of Israel kills an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or kills it outside the camp, 4 and does not bring it to the door of the tent of meeting, to offer it as a gift to the Lord before the tabernacle of the Lord, bloodguilt shall be imputed to that man; he has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people. 5 This is to the end that the people of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they slay in the open field, that they may bring them to the Lord, to the priest at the door of the tent of meeting, and slay them as sacrifices of peace offerings to the Lord; 6 and the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the Lord at the door of the tent of meeting, and burn the fat for a pleasing odor to the Lord. 7 So they shall no more slay their sacrifices for satyrs, after whom they play the harlot. This shall be a statute for ever to them throughout their generations. 8 "And you shall say to them, Any man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, 9 and does not bring it to the door of the tent of meeting, to sacrifice it to the Lord; that man shall be cut off from his people. 10 "If any man of the house of Israel or of the strangers that sojourn among them eats any blood, I will set my face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. 11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life. 12 Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, No person among you shall eat blood, neither



3. verso

D. 027315

shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood. 13 Any man also of the people of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who takes in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust. 14 "For the life of every creature is the blood of it; therefore I have said to the people of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off. 15 And every person that eats what dies of itself or what is torn by beasts, whether he is a native or a sojourner, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening; then he shall be clean. 16 But if he does not wash them or bathe his flesh, he shall bear his iniquity."

18:1 And the Lord said to Moses, 2 "Say to the people of Israel, I am the Lord your God. 3 You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes. 4 You shall do my ordinances and keep my statutes ...

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO



D. 027318

4, folios 1 recto, 2 verso



D. 027320

4, folios 2 recto, 1 verso

4. BIBLICAL FRAGMENT FROM THE GENIZAH

Paper and ink
Mamluk-Ottoman, 1300s–1500s
Fustat, Ben Ezra Synagogue
Purchased from E. von Scherling, 1932
29.3 x 19.8 cm
OIM A11246

Description: One bifolium; Judaeo-Arabic and Hebrew; semi-square Hebrew script; no vocalization; one column.

Condition: Light staining, torn at the bottom (affecting the last line or two of text).

Contents: The Judaeo-Arabic translation of the book of Joshua by Yefet ben ‘Eli, each verse preceded by a single-word lemma.

Comment: Yefet ben ‘Eli was the biblical exegete par excellence of the Karaites (a Jewish scripturalist sect, which emerged around the eighth century AD, that rejected the binding authority of rabbinic tradition; the community still exists in small numbers to this day). His translation of Joshua represents the first-known Arabic translation of the Hebrew text of this book, as well as the first-known Jewish translation of the book since the Aramaic translation known as the Targum (contained in “Targum Jonathan to the Prophets” — dated in the main to the second century AD). During the medieval period there was a thriving Karaite community in Cairo, and from the main synagogue of this community were mined many of the documents and literary remains attesting to the literary Golden Age of Karaism (ninth–eleventh centuries). A scholarly edition of Yefet’s translation and accompanying commentary on the book of Joshua, prepared by Professor James Robinson of the University of Chicago Divinity School, just appeared at the end of 2014 in Brill’s series *Études sur le judaïsme médiéval*. MW

Images previously unpublished

NOTE

¹ The *terminus a quo* (earliest possible date) of the fourteenth century is reasonably indicated by the use of Hebrew script rather than Arabic script (see the analysis of script use in the extant, datable witnesses of Yefet ben ‘Eli’s biblical commentaries in Wechsler 2002, pp. 394–95).

Translation:

Folio 1: From the Judaeo-Arabic translation of Joshua 12:5 (beg.: חֶשְׁבוֹן) to 12:15 (end.: מֶלֶךְ עַד לָם וְאַחַד):

(5) Heshbon. 6 מֹשֶׁה: Moses, the servant of the LORD, and the people of Israel defeated them; and Moses the servant of the LORD gave their land for a possession to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manas’sseh. 7 וְאַלֶּהָ: And these are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the people of Israel defeated on the west side of the Jordan, from Ba’al-gad in the valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, that rises toward Se’ir (and Joshua gave their land to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their allotments, 8 בְּהַר: in the hill country, in the lowland, in the Arabah, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the Negeb, the land of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Per’izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb’usites); 9 the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; 10 the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; 11 the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; 12 the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; 13 the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; 14 the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; 15 the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one;

Folio 2: From the Judaeo-Arabic translation of Joshua 15:8 (beg.: מִן אֶלְגֹּנוֹב) to 15:17 (end.: אַבְנֵתָה):

(8) at the southern shoulder of the Jeb’usite (that is, Jerusalem); and the boundary goes up to the top of the mountain that lies over against the valley of Hinnom, on the west, at the northern end of the valley of Reph’aim; 9 וְתֹאֲרָ: then the boundary extends from the top of the mountain to the spring of the Waters of Nephto’ah, and from there to the cities of Mount Ephron; then the boundary bends round to Ba’alah (that is, Kir’iath-je’arim); 10 וְנִסְבָּ: and the boundary circles west of Ba’alah to Mount Se’ir, passes along to the northern shoulder of Mount Je’arim (that is, Ches’alon), and goes down to Beth-she’mesh, and passes along by Timnah; 11 וְיִצְאָ: the boundary goes out to the shoulder of the hill north of Ekron, then the boundary bends round to Shik’keron, and passes along to Mount Ba’alah, and goes out to Jabneel; then the boundary comes to an end at the sea. 12 וְגִבּוֹל: And the west boundary was the Great Sea with its coast-line. This is the boundary round about the people of Judah according to their families. 13 וְלִכְלָב: According to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, he gave to Caleb the son of Jephun’neh a portion among the people of Judah, Kir’iath-ar’ba, that is, Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak). 14 וְיִוֹרֵשׁ: And Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak, She’shai and Ahi’mam and Talmai, the descendants of Anak. 15 וְיֵעַל: And he went up from there against the inhabitants of Debir; now the name of Debir formerly was Kir’iath-se’pher. 16 וְיֵאמַר: And Caleb said, “Whoever smites Kir’iath-se’pher, and takes it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter as wife.” 17 וְיִלְכַדְהָ: And Oth’ni-el the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter [as wife.]

5. WRITING EXERCISE FROM THE GENIZAH

Paper and ink
 Tulunid-Mamluk, 800s–1300s
 Fustat, Ben Ezra Synagogue
 Purchased from E. von Scherling, 1932
 10.6 x 17.0 cm
 OIM A11247

Description: One leaf; Judaeo-Arabic; Sefardi semi-cursive script;¹ no vocalization; one column. Use of hyper-plene spelling (vowel letters for short vowels; see Blau 1980, pp. 20–23 [§8]). Moderate to heavy tearing, especially at top and bottom. Light staining and creasing.

Contents: Writing exercise (a distinct repeated line on each side).

Transcription: recto: אלצעדי אמאנה אתנן נומר
 אתנן ונומר תלאתה כל וצול לידכום בשלום תרסלו
 תעלמונא (tentative, partial translation: “... all
 that arrives safely into your care, send back and
 inform us”); *verso:* כאן אמס² בהי³ כאן אמס
 תאריכו³ ארסלנא לכום צאפי אלצאר(?)
 מורסלכום אלא גאיית נומר
 (tentative, partial translation: “that of which we are informing
 you took place yesterday, (and) the account of it
 we have sent to you candidly(?) ...”). MW

Previously unpublished

NOTES

¹ Cf. the similar script in Genizah fragment T-S Ar.30.97 (Baker and Polliack 2001, pl. 12).

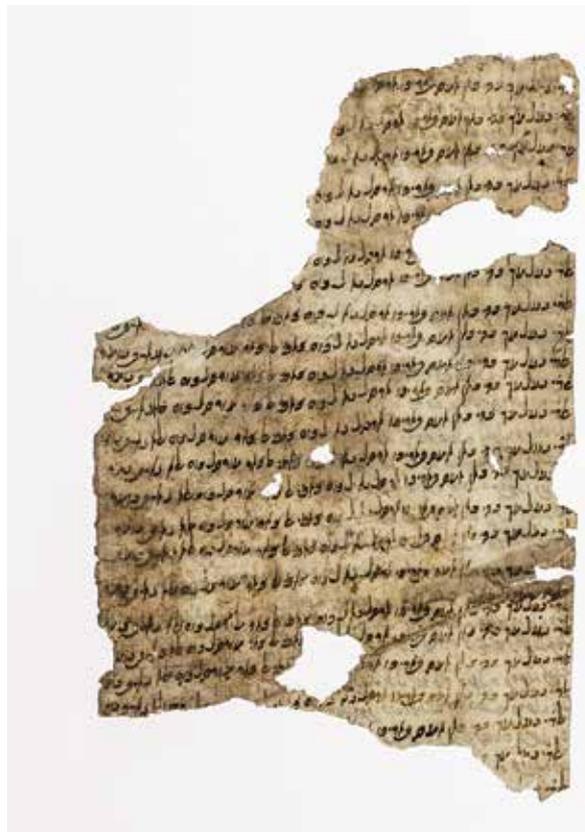
² An apparent vulgarism in place of בה (= בֵּה); see Blau 1980, p. 59 [§50].

³ Apparently in place of תאריכה (= תֵּאֲרִיכָה); see Blau 1980, p. 59 [§50].



5, recto

D. 027321



5, verso

D. 027323

6. BIBLE FRAGMENT FROM THE GENIZAH

Paper and ink

Early Byzantine-Tulunid, 600s-800s

Fustat, Ben Ezra Synagogue

Purchased from E. von Scherling,

1932

22 x 25 cm

OIM A11241



6, recto

Description: One leaf; Hebrew (Masoretic Text); square Hebrew script with mixed Babylonian and Tiberian vocalization; two columns.

Condition: Minor staining and fading, with moderate to heavy staining and tearing along the inner bottom part of the folio, affecting the last two lines of the inner column.

Contents: The Masoretic Text of 1 Samuel, from the last word of 26:9 (וְנִקָּה) to the last word of 27:5 (עַמָּד).

Comment: If the suggested date is correct, this would be among the earliest medieval witnesses to the Masoretic Text (belonging to E. Tov's "second period" of textual transmission, extending from 70 AD to the eighth century; see Tov 2001, pp. 33-35). MW

Previously unpublished

Translation:

(9) and be guiltless?" 10 And David said, "As the Lord lives, the Lord will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle and perish. 11 The Lord forbid that I should put forth my hand against the Lord's anointed; but take now the spear that is at his head, and the jar of water, and let us go." 12 So David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul's head; and they went away. No man saw it, or knew it, nor did any awake; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them. 13 Then David went over to the other side, and stood afar off on the top of the mountain, with a great space between them; 14 and David called to the army, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Will you not answer, Abner?" Then Abner answered, "Who are you that calls to the king?" 15 And David said to Abner, "Are you not a man? Who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept watch over your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy the king your

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6, verso

lord. **16** This thing that you have done is not good. As the Lord lives, you deserve to die, because you have not kept watch over your lord, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the jar of water that was at his head." **17** Saul recognized David's voice, and said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And David said, "It is my voice, my lord, O king." **18** And he said, "Why does my lord pursue after his servant? For what have I done? What guilt is on my hands? **19** Now therefore let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If it is the Lord who has stirred you up against me, may he accept an offering; but if it is men, may they be cursed before the Lord, for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the Lord, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.' **20** Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the Lord; for the king of Israel has come out to seek my life, like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains." **21** Then Saul said, "I have done wrong; return, my son David, for I will no more do you harm, because my life was precious in your eyes this day; behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly." **22** And David made answer, "Here is the spear, O king! Let one of the young men come over and fetch it. **23** The Lord rewards every man for his righteousness and

his faithfulness; for the Lord gave you into my hand today, and I would not put forth my hand against the Lord's anointed. **24** Behold, as your life was precious this day in my sight, so may my life be precious in the sight of the Lord, and may he deliver me out of all tribulation." **25** Then Saul said to David, "Blessed be you, my son David! You will do many things and will succeed in them." So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.

27:1 And David said in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than that I should escape to the land of the Philistines; then Saul will despair of seeking me any longer within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hand." **2** So David arose and went over, he and the six hundred men who were with him, to Achish the son of Ma'och, king of Gath. **3** And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahin'o-am of Jezreel, and Ab'igail of Carmel, Nabal's widow. **4** And when it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, he sought for him no more. **5** Then David said to Achish, "If I have found favor in your eyes, let a place be given me in one of the country towns, that I may dwell there; for why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you?"

7-8. BIBLE FRAGMENTS FROM THE GENIZAH

Paper and ink

Abbasid-Fatimid, 800s-1000s

Fustat, Ben Ezra Synagogue

Purchased from E. von Scherling, 1932

7. 37.4 x 26.7 cm
OIM A11242

8. 38.4 x 27.3 cm
OIM A11243

Description: Two consecutive bifolia (Catalog No. 7 laid above Catalog No. 8 in the original quire, with two more bifolia laid on top of them); Hebrew (Masoretic Text); square Hebrew script with Tiberian vocalization; two columns.

Condition: Catalog No. 7: light to heavy spotting and staining, with loss (due to tearing) of outer and lower edges, affecting the outer edges of the outer columns; Catalog No. 8: light to heavy staining, holing, and tearing.

Contents: The Masoretic Text of 1 Kings. MW

Previously unpublished



D. 027309

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Translation:

Catalog No. 7: Folio 1: from 1 Kings 9:22 (beg.: עָבָד) to 10:15 (end.: הֶעָרָב):

(22) slaves; they were the soldiers, they were his officials, his commanders, his captains, his chariot commanders and his horsemen. 23 These were the chief officers who were over Solomon's work: five hundred and fifty, who had charge of the people who carried on the work. 24 But Pharaoh's daughter went up from the city of David to her own house which Solomon had built for her; then he built the Millo. 25 Three times a year Solomon used to offer up burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built to the Lord, burning incense before the Lord. So he finished the house. 26 King Solomon built a fleet of ships at E'zion-ge'ber, which is near Eloth on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. 27 And Hiram sent with the fleet his servants, seamen who were familiar with the sea, together with the servants of Solomon; 28 and they went to Ophir, and brought from there gold, to the

amount of four hundred and twenty talents; and they brought it to King Solomon.

10:1 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. 2 She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices, and very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. 3 And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king which he could not explain to her. 4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, 5 the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings which he offered at the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her. 6 And she said to the king, "The report was true which I heard in my own land of your affairs and of your wisdom, 7 but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me; your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report which I heard. 8 Happy are your wives! Happy are



7, folios 2 recto and 1 verso

these your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! **9** Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel for ever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.” **10** Then she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and a very great quantity of spices, and precious stones; never again came such an abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. **11** Moreover the fleet of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought from Ophir a very great amount of almug wood and precious stones. **12** And the king made of the almug wood supports for the house of the Lord, and for the king’s house, lyres also and harps for the singers; no such almug wood has come or been seen, to this day. **13** And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all that she desired, whatever she asked besides what was given her by the bounty of King Solomon. So she turned and went back to her own land, with her servants. **14** Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, **15** besides that which came from the traders and from the traffic of the merchants, and from all the kings of Arabia ...

Folio 2: from 1 Kings 12:30 (beg.: הָעַם) to 13:15 (end.: אֲתִי):

(**30**) the people (went) to the one at Bethel and to the other as far as Dan. **31** He also made houses on high places, and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites. **32** And Jerobo’am appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices upon the altar; so he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made. **33** He went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and he ordained a feast for the people of Israel, and went up to the altar to burn incense.

13:1 And behold, a man of God came out of Judah by the word of the Lord to Bethel. Jerobo’am was standing by the altar to burn incense. **2** And the man cried against the altar by the word of the Lord, and said, “O altar, altar, thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josi’ah by name; and he shall sacrifice upon you the priests of the high places who burn incense upon you, and men’s bones shall be burned upon you.’” **3** And he gave a sign the same day, saying, “This is the sign that the Lord has spoken: ‘Behold, the altar shall be torn down, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.’” **4** And when the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he cried against the altar at Bethel, Jerobo’am stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, “Lay hold of him.” And his hand, which he stretched out against him, dried up, so that he could not draw it back to himself. **5** The altar also was torn down, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord. **6** And the king said to the man of God, “Entreat now the favor of the Lord your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me.” And the man of God entreated the Lord; and the king’s hand was restored to him, and became as it was

before. **7** And the king said to the man of God, “Come home with me, and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward.” **8** And the man of God said to the king, “If you give me half your house, I will not go in with you. And I will not eat bread or drink water in this place; **9** for so was it commanded me by the word of the Lord, saying, ‘You shall neither eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the way that you came.’” **10** So he went another way, and did not return by the way that he came to Bethel. **11** Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel. And his sons came and told him all that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; the words also which he had spoken to the king, they told to their father. **12** And their father said to them, “Which way did he go?” And his sons showed him the way which the man of God who came from Judah had gone. **13** And he said to his sons, “Saddle the ass for me.” So they saddled the ass for him and he mounted it. **14** And he went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak; and he said to him, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?” And he said, “I am.” **15** Then he said to him, “Come with me ...

Catalog No. 8: Folio 1: from 1 Kings 9:2(?) (beg.: שְׁנִית) to 9:22 (end.: פִּי־הֵם):

(**2**) a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. **3** And the Lord said to him, “I have heard your prayer and your supplication, which you have made before me; I have consecrated this house which you have built, and put my name there for ever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time. **4** And as for you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you, and keeping my statutes and my ordinances, **5** then I will establish your royal throne over Israel for ever, as I promised David your father, saying, ‘There shall not fail you a man upon the throne of Israel.’” **6** But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, **7** then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and the house which I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight; and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. **8** And this house will become a heap of ruins; everyone passing by it will be astonished, and will hiss; and they will say, ‘Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?’” **9** Then they will say, ‘Because they forsook the Lord their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the Lord has brought all this evil upon them.’” **10** At the end of twenty years, in which Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king’s house, **11** and Hiram king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress timber and gold, as much as he desired, King Solomon gave to Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. **12** But when Hiram came from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, they did not please him. **13** Therefore he said, “What kind of cities are these which you have given me, my brother?” So they are called the land of Cabul to this day. **14** Hiram had sent to the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold. **15** And this is

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8, folios 1 recto and 2 verso

D. 027310

the account of the forced labor which King Solomon levied to build the house of the Lord and his own house and the Millo and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and Megid'do and Gezer **16** (Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and captured Gezer and burnt it with fire, and had slain the Canaanites who dwelt in the city, and had given it as dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife; **17** so Solomon rebuilt Gezer) and Lower Beth-hor'on **18** and Ba'alath and Tamar in the wilderness, in the land of Judah, **19** and all the store-cities that Solomon had, and the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion. **20** All the people who were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites, who were not of the people of Israel — **21** their descendants who were left after them in the land, whom the people of Israel were unable to destroy utterly — these Solomon made a forced levy of slaves, and so they are to this day. **22** But of the people of Israel Solomon made no slaves; they were ...

Folio 2: from 1 Kings 13:15 (beg.: הַבְּיָתָה) to 14:2 (end.: הַבְּיָתָה):

(15) home and eat bread." **16** And he said, "I may not return with you, or go in with you; neither will I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place; **17** for it was said to me by the word of the Lord, 'You shall neither eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by the way that you came.'" **18** And he said to him, "I also am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, 'Bring him back with you into your house that he may eat bread and drink water.'" But he lied to him. **19** So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water. **20** And as they sat at the table, the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought him back; **21** and he cried to the man of God who came from Judah, "Thus says the Lord, 'Because you have disobeyed the word of the Lord, and have not kept the commandment which the Lord your God commanded you, **22** but have come back, and have



D. 028092

8, folios 2 recto and 1 verso

eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which he said to you, "Eat no bread, and drink no water"; your body shall not come to the tomb of your fathers." 23 And after he had eaten bread and drunk, he saddled the ass for the prophet whom he had brought back. 24 And as he went away a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his body was thrown in the road, and the ass stood beside it; the lion also stood beside the body. 25 And behold, men passed by, and saw the body thrown in the road, and the lion standing by the body. And they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. 26 And when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard of it, he said, "It is the man of God, who disobeyed the word of the Lord; therefore the Lord has given him to the lion, which has torn him and slain him, according to the word which the Lord spoke to him." 27 And he said to his sons, "Saddle the ass for me." And they saddled it. 28 And he went and found his body thrown in the road, and the ass and the lion standing beside the body. The lion had not eaten the body or torn the ass. 29 And the prophet

took up the body of the man of God and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back to the city, to mourn and to bury him. 30 And he laid the body in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, "Alas, my brother!" 31 And after he had buried him, he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in the grave in which the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. 32 For the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Sama'ria, shall surely come to pass." 33 After this thing Jerobo'am did not turn from his evil way, but made priests for the high places again from among all the people; any who would, he consecrated to be priests of the high places. 34 And this thing became sin to the house of Jerobo'am, so as to cut it off and to destroy it from the face of the earth.

14:1 At that time Abi'jah the son of Jerobo'am fell sick. 2 And Jerobo'am said to his wife, "Arise, and disguise yourself, that it be not known that you are the wife of Jerobo'am, and go to Shiloh; behold, ...

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9. FRAGMENT FROM A QUR'AN

Ink, gold, and colors on paper
 Mamluk, reign of Sultan Faraj ibn
 Barquq (?), 1399-1412
 Egypt
 Purchased from B. Moritz, 1929
 42.2 x 30.6 cm
 OIM A12029A



D. 027324

9

From the fourteenth century the Mamluks, following the precedent established by the Ilkhanids of Iran, commissioned opulent large-format copies of the Qur'an to be presented in endowment (*waqf*) to the charitable foundations they established in Cairo and other cities. Copies of the Qur'an could be donated to the libraries of mosques and *madrasas* and read aloud in the founder's tomb. In this period, manuscripts of the Qur'an were typically divided into thirty parts (*juz'*), so that one could be read on each day of the month, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan. Many had elaborate frontispieces decorated with intricate geometric designs (James 1988, pp. 21, 27, 30; Fraser 2005, p. 9; Baker 2007,

pp. 41–42; Wright 2009, p. 69), a type of decoration found not only in Mamluk Qur'an manuscripts, but also in contemporary manuscripts of the Gospels (Hunt 2009a), once again pointing to how artistic ideas ignored religious boundaries, even in religious manuscripts.

Catalog No. 9 is a fragment from a manuscript of the Qur'an given in *waqf* by Sultan Faraj ibn Barquq (r. 1399–1412). Only two folios are preserved in the Oriental Institute collection; these are made from lightweight paper with reddish brown fibers. The paper has been sized and highly burnished, although in some places the original smooth finish has been lost. This folio, 2b, is an elaborate title page for *juz'* 19. The rectangular

10. FRAGMENT FROM A QUR'AN

Ink, gold, and colors on paper
 Mamluk, reign of Sultan al-Mu'ayyad
 Shaykh, 1412-1421
 Egypt
 38.0 x 28.6 x 1.5 cm
 Purchased from B. Moritz, 1929
 OIM A12029B



D. 027326

10

frame — presumably the right half of an originally symmetrical composition — contains two panels of vines, leaves, and interlaces inscribed against a blue and gold ground with words from Qur'an 56:77-78: "Verily it is an honorable Qur'an [written] in a preserved book," but this text is treated as a title and done in a different ink and script to distinguish it from the Qur'anic text in black. The medallions and designs projecting into the right margin are only decorative here, although elsewhere in the manuscript they would have indicated word counts and other divisions in the text. Although Abbott had identified the script as *thuluth* it is now understood to be *muhaqqaq*, which was particularly favored in this period for copying large manuscripts on the

Qur'an. The words are fully pointed and voweled, meaning that letters sharing the same shape are distinguished by sub- and superscript dots and the short vowels and other aids to pronunciation are marked above and below the Arabic text (Abbott 1939, pp. 70-71).

It is tempting to identify this manuscript of the Qur'an with another donated by Sultan Faraj, fragments of which are now in the British Library in London (BL Or. 848) and the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (CBL 1454-1465), as well as in other collections. This manuscript was also written in thirty parts, many of which are now lost. However, it was not commissioned by Faraj himself, but rather dates to the second half of the fourteenth

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century before Faraj's reign (James 1981, pp. 39–40; James 1988, p. 178, 212, 214; Baker 2007, p. 47; Hunt 2009b, p. 108, no. 14). By analogy, we cannot assume that Catalog No. 9 dates to the time of Sultan Faraj; an inscription on folio 2a names him as the donor, but the manuscript itself could be earlier. Another manuscript in the Oriental Institute Museum (A12066; see fig 1.6) was also apparently given in *waqf* by Sultan Faraj (Abbott 1939, pp. 71–72). A similar Qur'an fragment, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.2002.1.397), has been dated to the fourteenth century.¹

Catalog No. 10 consists of fifty-one folios from a manuscript of the Qur'an given in *waqf* to the mosque of Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (r. 1412–21), in Cairo. Like Catalog No. 9, the script is *muhaqqaq*, fully pointed and voweled, but these pages are more simply illuminated: the end of every verse (*āya*, pl. *āyāt*) is marked by an eight-petal gold rosette with four blue dots. Groups of five and ten verses are marked by gold and blue marginal ornaments, teardrops for fives and circles for tens, to help the reader find his place in the text. Some additional ornaments seem to have been deliberately excised from the manuscript.

Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh built his mosque between 1412 and 1421 on the site of a prison where he had been held captive under his predecessor Faraj. After al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh became sultan, he had the site rebuilt as a royal mosque with a library and theological school. The manuscript could have been written for the inauguration of the mosque or commissioned later in the fifteenth century, as its style would suggest, for it is very similar to OIM 12030A (see fig. 1.5), which dates to the time of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh's successor, Barsbay (r. 1422–38) (Abbott 1939, pp. 78–79). **JB and TV**

PUBLISHED

Abbott 1939, pp. 69–70, 78–79, pls. XXVI, XXII

NOTE

¹ See <http://collections.lacma.org/node/205204>.

11. GRAVE STELA WITH ARABIC INSCRIPTION

Marble and pigment
Abbasid, late 700s–early 800s
Aswan, Egypt
Purchased from B. Moritz, 1929
51 x 35 x 6 cm
OIM E13708



D. 027351

This marble stela is from Aswan, located in Upper Egypt, and is inscribed but has no additional decoration. The text identifies this monument as a tombstone for Ishaq ibn al-Mubarak al-Najjar. The inscription opens with the *basmala*, “In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful” and goes on to state: “the greatest of misfortunes is the misfortune of the prophet,” which is a reference to the death of the Prophet as the greatest misfortune of Islam. The *basmala* starts to occur on gravestones in Aswan as early as 800 and was popular throughout the ninth century, largely disappearing at the time of the Fatimids (Randall 1933, p. 330; Ragib 2001, pp. 340, 347–48).

Muslim gravestones such as this one commemorate the dead individual and include not only their name, but also prayers and sometimes a date. This style of tombstone stela was first introduced in Egypt in the seventh century at Aswan to commemorate the passing of the dead. It was not until the late seventh/early eighth century that these gravestones became distinctly “Islamic” in style. Egyptian stelae are usually made from white or gray marble (although other colors occur) and are rectangular and they would have been set vertically commemorating the dead in a tomb. Since the stones typically have minimal ornamentation, calligraphy is important from an artistic point of view (Ragib 2001, pp. 324–28; Halevi 2004, pp. 120–22, 125; Redlak 2008, pp. 561–62; Bacharach and Anwar 2012, p. 62).

Preliminary handheld XRF analysis¹ of this stela indicates that the stone is calcium based and that the pigment in the inscription contains lead and copper. The epigraphy of this inscription closely resembles other tombstones from the late eighth/early ninth century, dating between 799 and 806 (Wiet and Rached 1932, pl. 5; Wiet 1939a, pls. 3, 99; Wiet 1939b, pl. 1; Wiet 1939c, pls. 3, 6–7; Ragib 2001, fig. 36). There is also another stela bought by the Oriental Institute from Bernhard Moritz (OIM

E13707) which dates to the 16th day of Shawwal in year 227 AH (842 AD) and mentions Ibrahim ibn Ishaq, who may be the son of Ishaq mentioned in this tombstone although that cannot be proved. If the stela published here is early ninth century, however, it would fit chronologically before this later tombstone.

The fact that this stela comes from Egypt should not be considered surprising, since most of the surviving “Islamic” stelae come from Egypt (Hoyland 1997, p. 90; Halevi 2004, p. 123). Tombstones from Aswan include Qur’anic inscriptions already by the early eighth century, indicating that text had already reached southern Egypt by that point. The Qur’an played an important role in the devotion to the dead, and tombstones were probably meant to be read out loud by those who passed by. In addition, Qur’anic verses were meant to be recited during the funerary ceremony (Halevi 2004, pp. 128, 130, 132, 134).

Aswan and Fustat are the main known cemeteries in Egypt from the early Islamic period. Al-Qarafa cemetery grew up directly outside of Fustat and included not only a cemetery but also mosques and other buildings (Bierman 1998, pp. 352–53; El Kadi and Bonnamy 2007, pp. 28–29, 48, 123, no. 2). At Aswan, there was also an important medieval cemetery that had mudbrick tombs and mausolea with funerary stelae in the walls that date primarily to the ninth century (Monneret de Villard 1930; Bloom 1988, pp. 23–24; Speiser et al. 2013), presumably where this stela was found. **TV and AW**

PUBLISHED

Randall 1933, pp. 329–30; Sprengling 1936, pp. 195–96

NOTE

¹ Handheld x-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyses were carried out using a Bruker Tracer III-SD under vacuum at 40 kV and 11.50 μA. Each analysis was run for 60 seconds.

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12. ILLUMINATED GOSPEL WRITTEN IN ARABIC

Ink, gold, and colors on paper with bindings
 Ottoman, 1600s
 Egypt or Syria
 Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Hans von Marwitz, 1960
 11.0 x 7.0 x 2.5 cm
 OIM A31403

This is a very small manuscript of the four gospels, likely owned by an individual for personal use. The manuscript contains seventy-six folios and is written in Arabic, with illustrations of the four evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John on the

versos of folios 1, 16, 38, and 58. The evangelists have been painted against a gold background facing the opening page of their gospel, following Byzantine manuscript conventions. Each of the evangelists stares directly at the viewer, holding a book written with pseudo script that presumably represents their named gospel. Above each evangelist's head, his name is written in Greek using black ink, except for the final evangelist, John, whose name is in red. The Greek hand is not particularly skilled, suggesting that the writer's Greek was not particularly good. The inscriptions contrast with the rest of the manuscript, which is written in Arabic. In front of each evangelist is a rectangle decorated with multicolored diamond patterns.



D. 027338

12, St. Matthew

The place of production of this manuscript is not clear, but is likely to be either Egypt or Syria. In Ottoman-period Syria there were a number of illuminated Christian manuscripts that were produced, particularly by Yusuf al-Muwwasir, a member of the icon-producing Muwwasir family. The manuscripts that have been published from this area, however, tend to be large and elaborately illustrated (Agemian 1991; Petrosyan, Khalidov, and Swietochowski 1995, pp. 266–67; Mikhaylova 1998; Polosin 1998; Calzolari and Farinelli 2001, pp. 272–77; Feodorov 2008). On the other hand, the style and color of this manuscript are similar to another example that was produced in Egypt, now in the Walters Art Museum (W.592). That manuscript was illuminated by Ilyas Basim Khuri Bazzi Rahib but unlike the above manuscript, it has over fifty illustrations. Based on this evidence, it seems to be more likely that the manuscript here was illuminated in Egypt, although this is still conjecture. TV

PUBLISHED

Krek 1961, p. 14, cat. no. 37 (not illustrated)



D. 027337

12, St. Mark



12, St. Luke



D. 027336, D. 027334

12, St. John

13. GRAVE STELA WITH COPTIC INSCRIPTION

Limestone with remains of red pigment
 Tulunid, July 23, 891 (or 892)
 Ramesseum, Luxor, Egypt
 Excavated by the Egypt Exploration Fund, 1895/96
 36.0 x 36.0 x 4.5 cm
 OIM E1569

This stela comes from excavations of the Ramesseum, the mortuary temple of Pharaoh Ramesses II located near Luxor in Upper Egypt, discovered in the 1895/96 season of excavations conducted by W. M. Flinders Petrie and James Edward Quibell on behalf of the Egypt Exploration Fund. The archaeological work at the Ramesseum revealed “Coptic” pottery, which probably should be dated to the end of the Byzantine and early Islamic period. In addition, the Ramesseum was covered with Coptic graffiti that may indicate part of the temple was used as a church (Quibell 1898, pp. 5, 13; Lecuyot 2000, pp. 122–29, no. 33).

The Coptic inscription identifies this stela as the gravestone of Maria, who died in the Month of Epiphi 22, Ninth [year of the Indiction], 607th year of Diocletian, 270th year of the Saracens.¹ Maria holds the title *hegumene*, which is a monastic administrative title and could indicate that there was a women’s monastic community in the Ramesseum, although no evidence for this currently exists (Wilfong 2002, pp. 106–07, 154; Wilfong 2003, p. 219). While we do not know much about the life of Coptic women in Thebes in this period, there is considerable information about the daily lives of women in upper Egypt dating to the previous century. Terry Wilfong’s study of women at Medinet Habu (2002) highlights how women lived in the Early Islamic period. This included not only marriage and more rarely divorce, but also women inheriting parts of houses, lending money to other members of the community, and being active in religious life through donations to the church. Our information about Maria only tells us that she clearly was a mother superior or abbess of a convent, but very little else. The “year of the Saracens” is a reference to hijra years which were based on a pre-Islamic lunar calendar and introduced by the second Islamic caliph ‘Umar in



D. 027343

13

638 to commemorate the migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622. In most Greek documents, the hijra year does not usually appear. Instead many use a system of indiction years (which are based on the idea that a census would be conducted every fifteen years), and Diocletian years (dating the current year from the reign of Diocletian) were also used. However, some documents include double dating with both Diocletianic years and the year of the Saracens, including eleven grave stelae from Egypt and nine from Nubia. These stelae date to between the eighth and twelfth centuries (Worp 1985; Bagnall and Worp 2004, pp. 68–86; Ochała 2009, pp. 134, 136, 152–53).

The Diocletian year and the year of the Saracens do not necessarily agree, as is the case with this stela. In this case, the local Diocletian year can be calculated as July 23, 891, while the hijra year can be calculated as 884, a difference of seven years. Grzegorz Ochała suggests that while it is difficult to know which would have been the correct date of death, it is likely that it was the Diocletian year date, since this system would have been more widely known in the local community. In one instance, he suggests that some mistakes may be

due to an individual calculating solar years after the hijra, rather than lunar years (Ochała 2009, pp. 140–45; see also Wilfong 2003, p. 219, no. 4). If one takes the hijra year on this stela as 270 solar years instead of 270 lunar years, the AH date becomes 892, which is much closer to the Diocletian year date. **TV and BM**

14. FLASK

Clay with slip
 Fatimid-Ayyubid, 1100s
 Fustat
 Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965
 6.0 x 4.8 cm; thickness, 0.4 cm
 OIM E25513

This small flask is made of red ware with white slip and has the remains of a painted horizontal band on top and a vertical band with diamonds in between. The flat bottom is stamped with a Jerusalem cross. This flask is the only object from George Scanlon's Fustat excavations in the exhibition that shows an obvious religious affiliation, with the cross indicating that it was used by members of the Coptic Christian community in the period of the Fatimid/Ayyubid transition.

It is possible that this piece could have been used in one of the churches in Fustat. Such small vessels would probably have been filled with holy water or oil; when the vessel was tipped to pour the liquid, the cross could be clearly seen. In this way it is similar to two ewers produced for the Armenian church in the sixteenth century, which had inscriptions on the bottom that would also be seen when liquid was poured (Lane 1957, pp. 271–72; Carswell 1998, pp. 45–48; Nersessian 2001, nos. 64–65). The use of the stylistic Jerusalem cross, in particular, on the bottom of the vessel is also significant as it may signify that this vessel was used to hold holy oil or water from Jerusalem. It is similar to an eleventh/twelfth-century example from the site of Serra East in northern Sudan (OIM E24721) that also depicts a cross on the bottom, although not a Jerusalem cross. **TV**

Previously unpublished

PUBLISHED

Wilfong 2003, pp. 218–19 (partially published, no photograph)

NOTE

¹ Wilfong (2003, pp. 219) reads this as 280th year of the Saracens, but the text is clearly 270, not 280.



14, side

D. 027415



14, bottom

D. 027414

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15. LAMP WITH CROSS REFLECTOR

Bronze

Early Byzantine–Early Abbasid,
500s–700sMedinet Habu, Egypt. Found in the
rubbish of excavation square
R/12Excavated by U. Hölscher (Oriental
Institute), 1930

13.41 x 6.50 cm; thickness, 0.3 cm

OIM E14478



D. 027357

15

This lamp has a flat base and a circular body with oil hole with a hinge for a lid that is now lost and spout with wick hole. It has a loop handle and a reflector shaped as a cross. Examples of lamps with a cross decoration may have been used in a liturgical context as some of them are quite elaborate (Bénazeth 1992, p. 1602–03; Xanthopoulou 2010, p. 4, figs. 2, 5–6). It is likely that this example was used in one of the churches in Medinet Habu.

Lighting was an important part of churches since some services were held at night. Lamps were also used in funerary contexts to light tombs in funerary rites and to keep away demons. In Nubia, lamps were found in tombs at Ballana, Qustul, Firka, and Qasr Ibrim, but they do not seem to have been found in tombs in Egypt. The oil used in such lamps as these was expensive but was also thought to have protective and healing powers when used in ecclesiastical contexts (Caseau 2007, pp. 559–60; Xanthopoulou 2010, pp. 65–66, 68). Despite the expense of bronze lamps and oil, a fifth/sixth-century church inventory from the Egyptian village of Ibion in Upper Egypt mentions bronze lamps and lamp stands (P. Grenf. 2.111, in Xanthopoulou 2010, p. 68).

This lamp is an example of what is termed “Coptic” metalwork, which can be difficult to date precisely, hence the more general dating here (Bénazeth 1992, p. 1594). The cross on the lamp once again makes the Christian affiliation of this lamp clear. In contrast, other lamps from Fustat in this exhibition show no such religious affiliations, probably because they were used to light houses. Further, even though it was most likely used in a Coptic church at Medinet Habu, the term “Coptic” can be misleading. Lamps with similar cross reflectors have an extremely diverse provenance, appearing in museums in Turkey, Syria, the Balkans, and Egypt. Similar lamps have been found at archaeological sites throughout Egypt, including at Edfu, Wadi Sarga, Luxor, Akhmim, and the Fayyum (Xanthopoulou 2010, pp. 6–8, 100–34). The example here appears quite similar to two examples said to be from Edfu (Bailey 1996, nos. Q3800–01, pp. 70–71, pl. 81; Xanthopoulou 2010, pp. 102–03, nos. LA 3.014–15) and Luxor temple (Bénazeth 2001, p. 149, no. 129; Xanthopoulou 2010, pp. 111–12, no. LA 3.057). **TV**

PUBLISHED

Hölscher 1954, p. 64, pl. 38:2

16. BOWL FRAGMENT DEPICTING THE DEPOSITION OF CHRIST

Fritware with underglaze painting

Mamluk, early 1300s

Found in Egypt

Gift of Barbara R. Sobernheim in memory of Professor
Moritz Sobernheim, 1996

4.1 x 11.8 cm

Walters Art Museum 48.2734

This fragment is from a bowl that depicts scenes of the deposition of Christ that is scattered between three museums. The fragment in the Walters Art Museum shows Nicodemus removing the nails of Christ, while the fragment from the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo (inv. no. 13724) shows the Virgin Mary holding the body of Christ. The fragment in the Benaki Museum in Athens (inv. no. 823) shows mourning women, Joseph of Arimathea, St. John the Evangelist, the cross, angels, and clouds from the top of the bowl.

Although the piece was found in Egypt, it is difficult to know whether or not the bowl was



Walters Art Museum

16

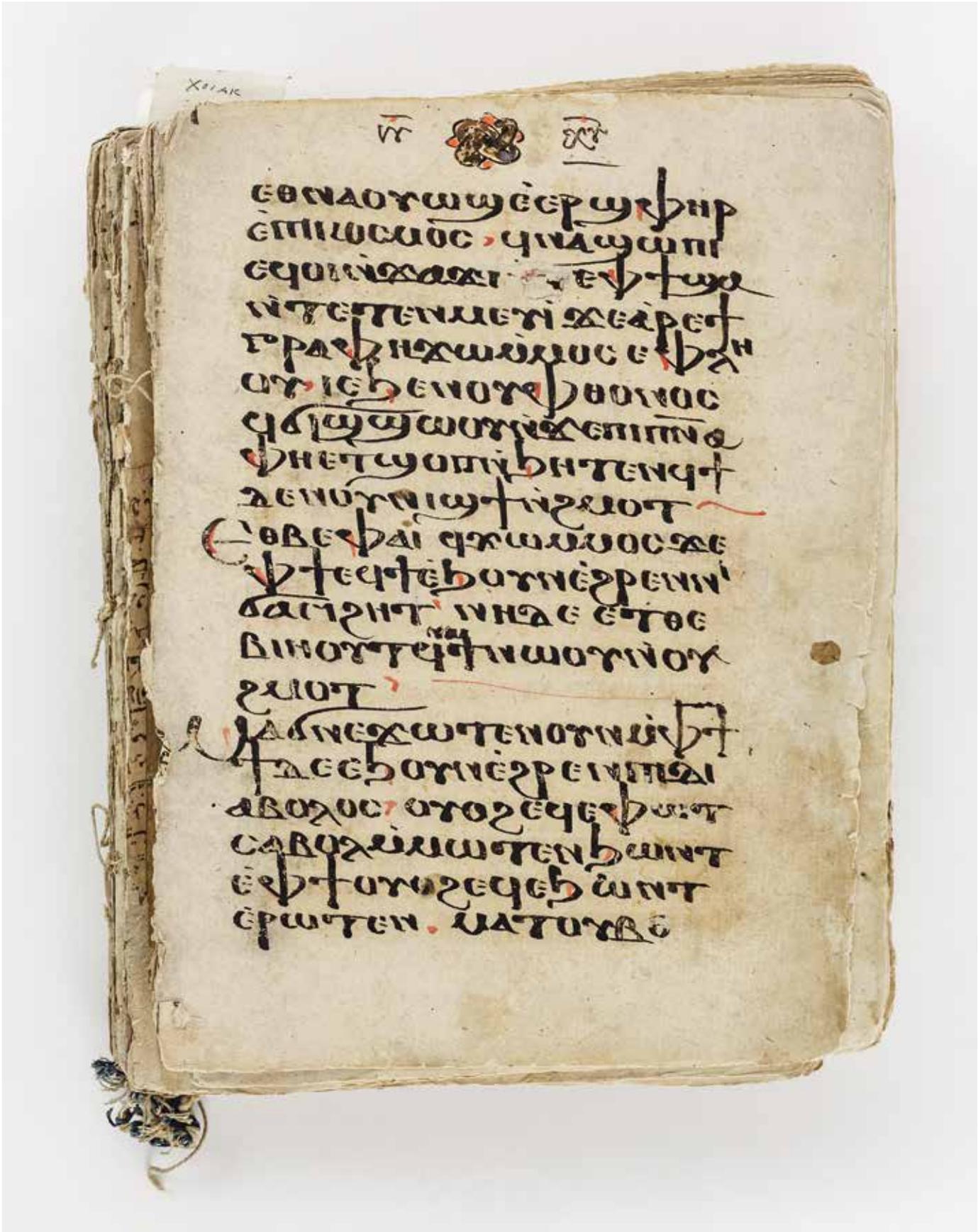
produced in Syria or Egypt, although it was clearly based on Persian prototypes. While the bowl construction is based on Persian types, the bowl scene itself is derived from Byzantine models that are found throughout the Mediterranean and Transcaucasia. The artist also seems to have derived some influence from Italy, such as the depiction of Nicodemus either bald or with a bald patch, which appears in Italian art. This can be seen in works such as Duccio's *Maestà* (commissioned in 1308 and installed in the cathedral of Siena in 1311) (fig. C2). While there is the strong influence of Italo-Byzantine art, the clouds in the sky are in a Persian style, derived from Chinese models. Such detailed Christian iconography is unusual on pottery, but this elaborate scene is particularly unique. The piece may have been used in a liturgical context or, more likely, commissioned by an individual patron. It is possible that it was decorated by a manuscript painter, given the high quality of the painting, which has been suggested for other bowls with similar painting. TV



FIGURE C2. Deposition from the Cross, detail of tile from Episodes from Christ's Passion and Resurrection, reverse surface of the *Maestà* altarpiece in the Cathedral of Siena by Duccio di Buoninsegna, 1308-1311. Tempera on wood (Bridgeman Art Library, image no. DGA503612; De Agostini Picture Library / G. Nimatallah/Bridgeman Images)

PUBLISHED

Vorderstrasse 2007



D. 027332

17. ANNUAL LECTIONARY WRITTEN IN BOHAIRIC COPTIC

Paper and ink
Modern, 18th/19th century
Abu Makar Monastery in the Wadi Natrun
Purchased from B. Moritz, 1929
20.5 x 26.1 cm; thickness, 5.3 cm
OIM A12089

This is an almost complete manuscript on European paper, written in its entirety in Bohairic Coptic with Arabic marginalia, probably datable to the eighteenth or nineteenth century. The binding was lost and likely a few pages before and after the preserved part are missing too. Consequently there is no colophon (a brief statement at the beginning or end of a book typically containing information about its creation). Thus the date and place of copy are unknown. The text is written in black ink with rubricated titles for both the dates and the reference to the readings. This is not a very careful copy, as there are often corrections performed by the first hand. There are ornamental titles at the beginning of each month, however. Occasionally there are Arabic notes on the margin done by a later hand, with translations of the dates in Coptic.

The manuscript is an annual lectionary, or calendar of scriptural readings, for the immovable feasts and the Saturdays and Sundays of each week for the Coptic months Paopi, Athyr, Choiak, Tybi, Mecheir, and Phamenot. The last month is followed by the movable cycle Lent. As usual for the Coptic tradition, the immovable and movable feasts occur within one manuscript. In the earlier Sahidic tradition from the White Monastery near Sohag in Upper Egypt, the two types of annual lectionaries for the feasts, on the one hand, and for the

Saturdays and Sundays, on the other hand, occur in two different books.

The lectionary includes only the readings of Acts and Catholic Epistles for the mass. The biblical lections from the Pauline Epistles, Psalter, and the Gospels, which are the core of the Liturgy of the Word during the mass, have to be found in a different codex. The common lections have been written only once and after that are referenced to in other occasions.

Due to damage of the manuscript the first indication of date is the 23rd of Paopi, which is followed by a brief reference to the name Dionysios. According to the synaxarium (a compilation of hagiographies), that day is the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Dionysios, bishop of Corinth, who became a martyr in the days of Diocletian and Maximianus. In most of the other dates there are references to synaxarial celebrations, and they mostly coincide with the Coptic synaxarium. As stated above, the beginning of the book is mutilated, but we can almost be sure that it also contained the month of Thoth. The manuscript is also mutilated at the end and the last indication for the readings is the fourth Saturday of Lent. **STT**

Previously unpublished

ADMINISTRATION

After the conquest of Egypt by the Muslims in 641, the seat of government in Egypt shifted from Alexandria to Fustat. Alexandria had been the seat of government in Egypt since its founding in 331 BC, serving as the capital of the Ptolemaic empire and then as the provincial capital under the Romans and the Byzantines. As in other countries they conquered, in Egypt the Muslims moved the capital to a new location. Fustat became the new capital of Egypt and therefore the most important administrative center in the country. While the new government maintained many officials from the previous administration, the move allowed them to create a completely new city structure (see *Chapter 11*). It was from Fustat that the governor ruled a country that was, at least initially, largely Christian and Coptic speaking. In order to rule this country, the government needed revenue, some of which was demanded from the provinces (see *Chapter 4*) which were subject to surveys to assess these taxes (see *Catalog No. 25*). As Egypt became increasingly independent from the weakening Abbasid Caliphate, the center of local power gradually became the only power in Egypt. After the foundation of Cairo by the Fatimids, however, the center of power shifted away from Fustat

and toward Cairo, which served as the capital of the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk empires.

Individuals could pay the taxes that supported the empire in kind or in money. Coinage was well known in Egypt and copper small change was used commonly in transactions. The Muslim government initially issued coins that copied earlier Byzantine styles in the hope that they would be accepted by the public. Eventually, at the end of the seventh century, they issued their own coinage with no images and with legends only in Arabic (Domaszewicz and Bates 2002). It is clear that while taxes may have been assessed in money, they were often paid in kind. In the marketplace, money would have been used and it was necessary for weights to be used in order to create standardization (see *Catalog No. 26*). In both cases, the ruler of the empire stood as guarantor so that the populace would have the confidence to trust the coinage or the weights being used.

Those who were in the government were often proud of advertising their positions of office in a visual way. This meant that they and members of their household would be identified with a particular office. This can be seen particularly in the Mamluk period, with its emphasis on hierarchy. **TV**



18, obverse



18, reverse

D. 027390, D. 027388

18. AYYUBID COIN WITH ARABIC INSCRIPTION

Copper

Ayyubid, reign of al-Malik al-Kamil, 1226–1234

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

2.2 x 2.3 x 0.1 cm; 3.18 g

OIM E25461

Coins, as the official output of the government, are often a visual reflection of the goals of governmental administration and the image that a government wishes to project. The coin here is no exception. Many Islamic coins do not have images on them after the coin reform of 697. Instead, most Muslim administrators in Egypt minted coins decorated only with calligraphic script, as in this example, because the Qur'an discouraged the use of figural images, which were considered to infringe on the creative powers of God.

Coins found at the site of Fustat indicate that coinage was commonly used as part of daily life to purchase goods and pay for services. This coin comes from the Ayyubid period when Sultan

al-Malik al-Kamil (r. 1226–1234) reintroduced copper coinage into Egypt for use as small change. Al-Kamil hoped to counteract the paucity of copper and poor silver coinage in Egypt. Previously, in the Fatimid period, silver coins were the primary coinage used (Bacharach 2002, p. 46).

The copper *fals* coin exhibited here was of the new type, presumably minted in Cairo, although no mint name is mentioned. There are two sizes of coin that al-Kamil introduced that do not possess a mint mark. The smaller coin was minted only between 1225 and 1226 and the larger one between 1226 and 1234. In addition to this piece, the Oriental Institute collection contains three other coins from the Fustat excavations (E25491, E25482, E25443), all weighing between 2.5 and 4.0 grams. All are of the large type of copper coinage. This type is found frequently at Fustat, as well as in the southern Levant (Balog 1977; Schultz 2001, p. 271; Bacharach 2002, pp. 61–62; Bresc 2008, p. 413; Heidemann 2009, p. 288). **TV and TT**

PUBLISHED

Schultz 2001

19. FRAGMENT OF FRITWARE BOWL

Fritware with underglaze decoration in blue and black

Mamluk, early 1300s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

4.8 x 16.4 x 0.7 cm; diameter of base, 9.0 cm

OIM E25571



D. 027454

Although artisans sometimes created this type of pottery with raised designs, in this example the design is flat. The finely drawn scene depicts a saddled and bridled horse against an elaborate floral background. The saddle is marked with a cup design with additional decoration of two deer surrounded by extensive floral decoration, all in black. The horse's bridle has elaborate reins. The blazon of the cup on the saddle is likely to designate that the horse's owner had been a cupbearer (*sāqī*; see discussion below). The reverse has a blue-green tinged clear glaze decorated with black and blue lines.

Preliminary handheld XRF analysis¹ of the black (the horse's mane), the dark blue, and the glaze on the exterior of the plate revealed the presence of iron, manganese, chromium, cobalt, and copper. Lead was also found in the glaze. There are signs that this bowl was fired with other dishes, as it seems to have spur marks from being stacked on tripod stilts. A small hole is also drilled into the base of the foot, presumably so the bowl could hang on a wall.

The well-drawn decoration and the use of the horse motif suggest that the bowl was used for display purposes during the Mamluk period in Egypt. There is considerable literary evidence from the Mamluk period on *furūsiya*, the art of equestrianism and mounted warfare. The concept of *furūsiya* originated much earlier, under the Abbasids, which in turn drew upon earlier Sasanian traditions. However, more manuscripts on this subject survive from the Mamluk period. *Furūsiya* was considered a science and it was an important feature in the life of the Mamluk elite — including farriery, archery, arts of lance and mace, war, arms and war engines, hunting, and polo (Ayalon 1977; Haldane 1978, pp. 9–10; Petrosyan, Khalidov, and Swietochowski 1995, p. 198; al-Sarraf 2004; Shehada 2012, pp. 25–26).

The horse depicted on this bowl generally resembles horses illustrated in Mamluk *furūsiya* albums (Haldane 1978, pp. 48–58; Petrosyan, Khalidov, and Swietochowski 1995, pp. 204–05), although it is better executed than many illuminated examples (see Bloom 1999, pp. 47–48, who calls the book illustrations “simple and artless”). It also has a more elaborate saddle, thus illustrating one of the few times when the ceramic seems to be of better quality than the manuscript.

Horses played an important part in Mamluk administration. For example, horses and other animals featured prominently in Mamluk processions that took place on festival days. Festivals could celebrate a number of occasions, such as victories in battle or the appointment of a new sultan. They allowed the sultan to make direct contact with serving Mamluks as well as demonstrating the power and prestige of the administration to the public. Gifts and awards were usually presented during these moments. Horses with their equipment, such as saddles and bridles, were often included as gifts. Other important Mamluk events where gift-giving occurred included biweekly polo games and hunting excursions (Shoshan 1993, p. 74; Levanoni 1998, p. 19; Walker 2004, p. 93; Shehada 2012, pp. 50–51). Al-Qalqashandi notes in his work *Subh al-a'sha* (Dawn of the Night-blind), which was completed in 1412, that Mamluk elites had their blazons applied to their horse blankets, harnesses, and other items (Leaf and Purcell 1986, pp. 59, 61). **TV, AW, and TT**

PUBLISHED

Scanlon 1967, pp. 76–77, fig. 6a

NOTE

¹ Handheld x-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyses were carried out using a Bruker Tracer III-SD under vacuum at 40 kV and 11.50 μA. Each analysis was run for 60 seconds.

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20.-22. BOWLS WITH MAMLUK BLAZONS

Pottery with white slip and yellow and green glaze
 Mamluk, 1300s
 Fustat
 Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

20. 6.0 x 4.5 x 0.8 cm; diameter of base, 3.5 cm
 OIM E25582
21. 10.3 x 8.4 x 1.0 cm
 OIM E25450
22. 10.2 x 9.8 x 1.4 cm
 OIM E25505

Catalog No. 20 is the base of a small bowl with goblet decoration on the interior. It is made of a dark red fabric with a few white inclusions. Decoration includes a brown goblet with sgraffiato decoration in two circles, as well as a border of zigzag decoration and thick line that is largely broken off.

Catalog No. 21 is a fragment of the rim of a bowl. It is made of red fabric with white inclusions, and is covered with a white slip on its interior and exterior. The interior is also decorated with sgraffiato and champlé decoration of a goblet blazon engraved in a circle between two floral borders. This decoration is infilled using a green glaze with purple and olive green. The rim edge has drips of purple glaze that almost seem to create a deliberate piecrust decoration. The purple glaze also goes over the edge of the rim, and there is yellow-brown glaze on the reverse. The everted rim of the bowl is common in pottery from archaeological contexts of the Mamluk period. Preliminary handheld XRF analysis¹ identified the presence of copper and iron in both the green glaze on the interior and the yellow-brown glaze on the exterior. Lead is also present in the glaze.

Catalog No. 22 is made from dark red fabric, with a few white inclusions. It is covered in a white slip, and decorated with yellow-brown glaze on both the interior and exterior. Sgraffiato/champlé decoration depicts a sword on the interior.



20, top



20, side

D. 027479, D. 027481



21



22

D. 027378, D. 027408

All three of these bowls are a typical Mamluk type with sgraffiato decoration and thick dark red clay body. The pottery was wheel-made and then covered with slip, incised, and fired. This vessel was then decorated with metallic oxides, covered with a lead glaze, and then fired again. Since the lead glaze is transparent, it is possible to see the engraved decoration underneath. The deep shapes used in the pottery often resemble metalwork that would have been made for Mamluk elites. The art style was specifically Cairene and was widely used in the capital (Walker 2004, pp. 10, 17–18; Gayraud 2012, pp. 80–82).

Each of these pieces contains a centralized, striking design that is an example of a Mamluk-period blazon. Blazons were normally displayed in a circle on a variety of media including pottery, metalwork, and stone to project rank and prestige. The cup is probably the most common of Mamluk blazons and signifies the office of *sāqī* (cupbearer). The cupbearer's role was to oversee banquets, prepare the table settings, serve drinks, and cut the meat. Perhaps due to how prominent they were in Mamluk ceremony, this office offered more opportunity for upward mobility than other positions. The popularity of the depiction of the cupbearer was followed by blazons of other offices including the armor bearer (*silahdār*), which is

signified by the sword. In processions, armor bearers would have swords that they would display as symbols of authority. Blazons were assigned to Mamluk elites when they were promoted, and the fact that the blazons proliferated in the early fourteenth century could be related to promotions being accelerated. Such symbols continued to be used by individuals even after they no longer held these offices, attesting to their importance as symbols of prestige.

It is likely that this type of pottery was made for general use rather than for a specific person, although the blazons appear on Mamluk pottery and there are occasionally inscriptions naming various individuals. It is more likely that these objects were used by members of the household who worked for the Mamluk elite (Carswell 1972, p. 109; Leaf and Prucell 1986, pp. 57–58, 61; Walker 2004, pp. 10, 54–55, 58, 60, 79, 93, 99, 107–09. For households in the Mamluk period, see Richards 1998; Yosef 2012). **TV and AW**

All previously unpublished

NOTE

¹ Handheld x-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyses were carried out using a Bruker Tracer III-SD under vacuum at 40 kV and 11.50 μ A. Each analysis was run for 60 seconds.

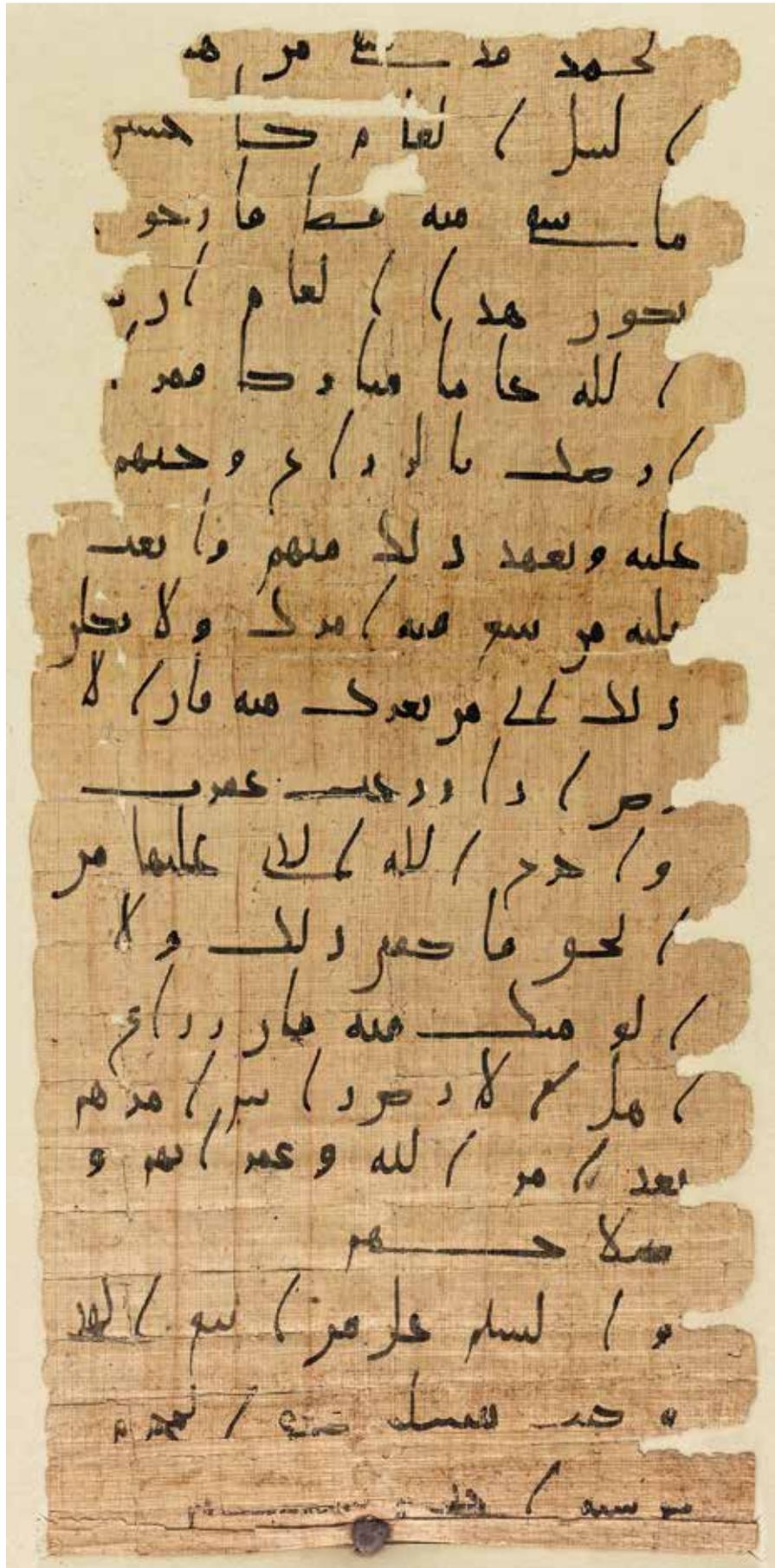
23. ADMINISTRATIVE PAPYRUS WRITTEN IN ARABIC

Papyrus and ink, clay sealing
Umayyad, November 9–December 8,
709
Kum Ishqaw, Egypt (ancient
Aphrodito)
Purchased from B. Moritz, 1929
46.0 x 21.6 cm
OIM E13755

This administrative letter was sent from Basilios, the local pagarch of Aphrodito, to an unknown administrator who was one of Basilios' representatives in the region (see *Chapter 4*). In the letter, dated to the month Muharram (November 9–December 8, 709), Basilios mentions that this was the best year of irrigation in the Nile valley ever witnessed, and urges the recipient of the letter to send people out to cultivate the land. The beginning of the text is missing and the upper left is also lost. The sealing is broken, but it seems to depict some sort of four-legged animal. **TV**

PUBLISHED

Abbott 1938, pp. 45–47



D. 027353

24. ADMINISTRATIVE PAPYRUS WRITTEN IN ARABIC

Papyrus and ink

Umayyad, January 18–February 16,
709

Kum Ishqaw, Egypt (ancient
Aphrodito)

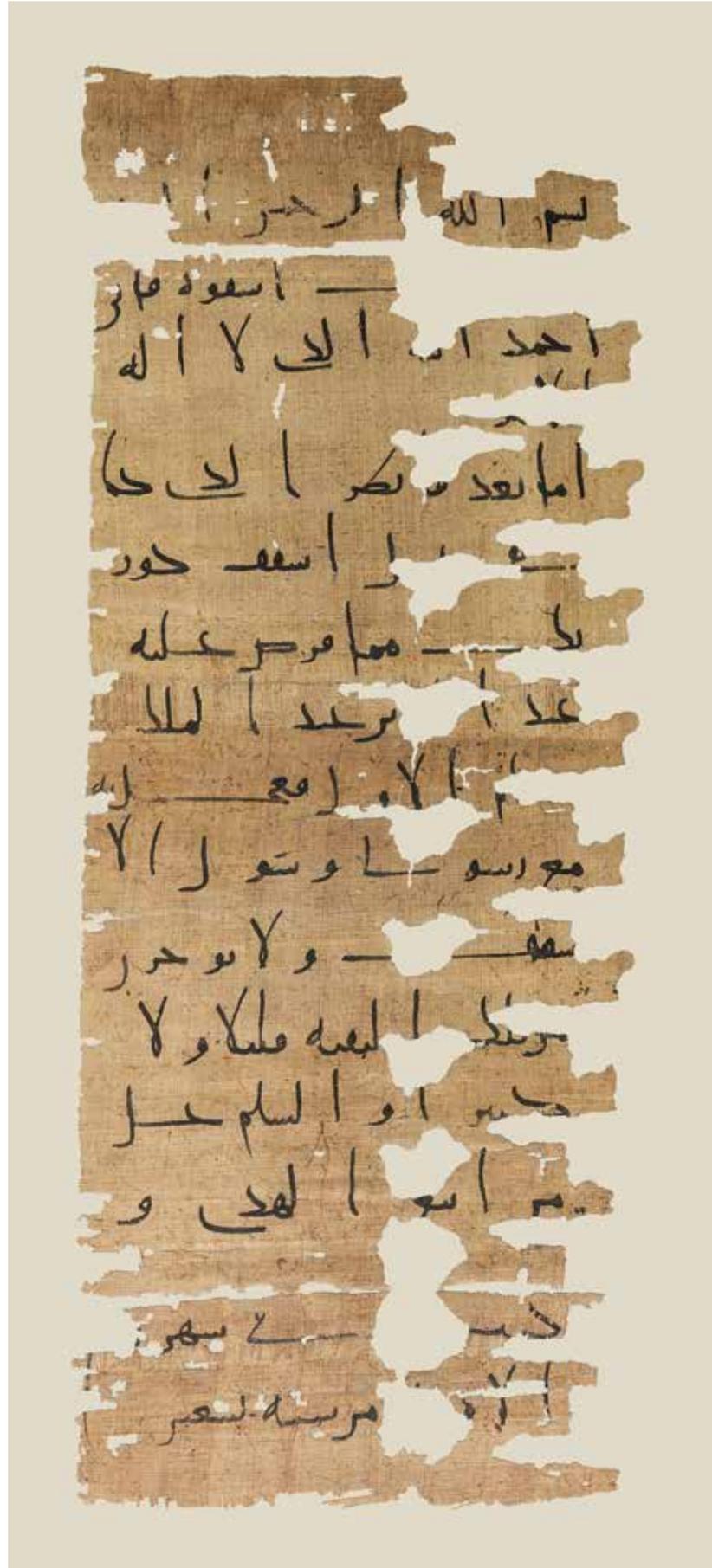
Purchased from B. Moritz, 1929

52 x 20 cm

OIM E13757

As discussed in *Chapter 4*, this very fine papyrus is the best preserved within a group of administrative papyri in the Oriental Institute Museum collection. Although this example has some insect damage and is broken on the right side, the entire document and its text is preserved. This letter was written in the month Rabi I (January 18–February 16, 709) by Egypt's governor Qurra ibn Sharik (line 2) to the pagarch Basilios of Aphrodito (line 3). It notes that there is balance due from his district that was imposed on a local bishop by 'Abd al-Malik (who was governor of Egypt previously) and that it should be collected and then quickly delivered to Qurra. As Qurra was said to have been in Fustat from the 13th of Rabi I of 90 AH, this must be the first among his orders (Abbott 1938, pp. 43–44).

This letter and others in the Aphrodito papyri consist of official correspondence written in Greek and Arabic between the governor of Fustat and local provincial administrators, as well as tax assessments to the inhabitants of the district. There are also Coptic tax registers and documents of security. The texts primarily date from the time of



D. 028097

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the governor Qurra ibn Sharik who originally came to Egypt from Qinnasrin in north Syria in 709. He was governor in Egypt from 709 until his death in 714. Qurra ibn Sharik had replaced the previous governor, ‘Abd Allah, who was deeply unpopular thanks to famine and an increase in taxes. Thanks to this collection of papyri, Qurra ibn Sharik is now the best-documented early Islamic official in Egypt. The papyri were bought on the antiquities market and scattered among various collections and some still remain unpublished (Abbott 1938, pp. 5–9, 15–16, 57, 60–69; Kennedy 1998, pp. 71–73; Silverstein 2007, pp. 71–72; al-Qadi 2008, pp. 390–98; Richter 2010, p. 196).

Governors of Egypt, such as Qurra ibn Sharik, were usually Arabs who were not from Egypt, but rather appointed by the caliphal administration. They usually, but not always, ruled only for a brief period, probably to prevent them from building a power base, meaning that local officials were necessary to govern (El Shamsy 2013, pp. 93–94). Further, the Egyptian central administrative bureau largely followed Byzantine models and used the Byzantine dating system (see Catalog No. 13), as well as retaining the officials and also using a split reed pen to write the papyri (Abbott 1938, pp. 13, 25).

This letter and numerous others were sent via a postal system from Fustat, where the ruling government in Egypt was located, to Aphrodito (modern Kum Ishqaw) in Upper Egypt (‘Athamina 1997, p. 102). It could take anywhere between ten days to five weeks for the papyri to travel from Fustat to Aphrodito. All documents would have been sealed to prevent tampering and to authenticate them. In the early Islamic period, documents sealed included tax documents and certificates that permitted individuals to travel. Nabia Abbott documented approximately fifty sealings in the Aphrodito papyri which include various human and animal figures and Arabic legends, with animal figures being the most popular (Abbott 1938, pp.

28–33; Kotsifou 2012, pp. 150–52, 154; Sijpesteijn 2012, p. 164).

In addition to the two administrative papyri that are on view in the exhibition, there are also several other Aphrodito papyri within the Oriental Institute collection. OIM E13756 (see fig. 4.3) is another letter from Qurra to Basilios and is once again sealed, this time with a quadruped and a star, which is thought to be Qurra’s personal seal. This text states that inhabitants of Basilios’ district owe ten dinars to a certain Ibshadah ibn Abnilah. Once proof has been established that this claim is true, then it should be secured for him (Abbott 1938, pp. 47–49; Sijpesteijn 2012, p. 164). Another papyrus, OIM E13758 (fig. 4.4), states that the recipient still owes a large amount of revenue. Therefore, the recipient has been ordered to collect the various taxes that are owed. The writer expresses disappointment in the recipient’s administration since he previously thought it was better than what he had seen. He states that the recipient has delayed to pay what is due and that his administration was incompetent. At the end of the letter he states that he should not use excuses but rather simply pay what he owes (Abbott 1938, pp. 49–52). The final papyrus, OIM E13759 (fig. 4.2), is the most poorly preserved item within the group. It again mentions taxes and ‘Abd al-Malik, stating that he should send what was owed, once again stating that it was in the arrears (*ibid.*, pp. 52–56).

Despite the fact that these papyri are usually referred to as the “Qurra archive” or the “Qurra dossier,” the papyri actually belong to the archive of the pagarch Basilios. The documents of this collection were part of the correspondence between Qurra ibn Sharik, the pagarch Basilios, and Basilios’ officials (Clackson 2010, pp. 88–89, no. 22, p. 103, no. 67). **TV**

PUBLISHED

Abbott 1938, pp. 42–47

25. LAND SURVEY STELA WITH
ARABIC INSCRIPTION

Stone

Abbasid, August 806–May 807

Provenance unknown (possibly Minya, Egypt)

Purchased from B. Moritz, 1929

43.5 x 30.0 x 5.0 cm

OIM E13706

Despite its poor condition, this stela is of considerable importance. It was erected as part of a land survey conducted in Egypt for the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid, who ruled the province from Iraq. The survey was implemented by ‘Abd al-Jabbar ibn Waddah, who was treasurer for the governor of Egypt, al-Khasib ibn ‘Abd al-Hamid (Sprengling 1935, pp. 224, 227).

The purpose of this land survey was to document land holdings for taxation purposes. The Islamic government had a tax on agricultural land (*kharāj*) that was calculated by a scribe (*kātib kharāj*), who had to be knowledgeable in the



D. 027350

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tax system as well as in land survey and how to determine the proportional taxation. This system was part of an Abbasid bureaucracy which had many specialized departments. Among those, the task of administering the land taxes (*dīwān al-kharāj*) was considered the most important and the officials were extremely influential. Officials and the scribes in this bureau seem to have earned more than in other departments; indeed they earned the highest salaries. Until the end of the ninth century, the land tax administration unit was organized according to province or district, but after that time it was broken up into three separate units: one for the eastern provinces, one for Iraq, and one for the western provinces (van Berkel 2013, pp. 89–90, 94–95, 104–05. For land surveys under the Umayyads, see al-Qadi 2008, p. 347).

The tax rate of Egypt, as determined in the eighth century, resulted from Egypt being acquired under military conquest, meaning that districts could be taxed at a higher rate and that taxes could also be changed when the ruling authorities wished. In Early Islamic Egypt, the term *kharāj* originally was known as a land tax leveled on non-Muslims. Arab soldiers who settled in Egypt were discouraged from cultivating land, but it did happen and many left Fustat to this end. In later years, the land tax was to be paid by all landowners, and finally a tax payable only in coinage. Each time that the taxes changed, the tax rates typically went up and this led to revolts. In 801/02, not long before this stela was erected, the governor al-Layth ibn al-Fadl's land survey caused a revolt. The surveyors were accused of using shortened measuring rods and thereby assessing taxes over a larger area (‘Athamina 1997, p. 110; Frantz-Murphy 2007; Katbi 2010; Mikhail 2014, pp. 110–12, 119–23). Another revolt took place in 806 under the governorship of al-Husayn ibn Jamil. Again, landowners refused to pay taxes and the caliph was forced to send troops to end disturbances and collect what was due. Over the coming years, there were still more attempts to avert these various uprisings. Most local disturbances that happened were due to tax increases and/or land surveys (Mikhail 2014, pp. 123–26).

The difficulty with land survey was that they “provided a stricter means of assessing taxes as well as an opportunity for avaricious surveyors to extort money from farmers” (Mikhail 2014, p. 323, no. 91).

Apparently, the Caliphate had so much difficulty getting money out of Egypt that in one case, special investigators in disguise were sent to investigate the corruption (Kennedy 1998, pp. 79–80).

It seems likely that this stela was erected as a result of the 806 revolt and this stela made it clear that the land had been surveyed for taxes. The reason for doing so can be explained by the following passage. A medieval author noted that the powerful official ‘Ubayd Allah ibn al-Habhab, the head of taxation in Egypt (724–732), undertook a complete cadastral survey of Egypt:

A census was taken of the people by name and age, animals by young and old; lands and vineyards were measured with measuring lines, as were devalued lands difficult to cultivate because overrun with esparto grass and thorns. He set up milestones in the midst of fields, on borders and the roads in all of Egypt. (Frantz-Murphy 2007, pp. 105–06) TV

PUBLISHED

Randall 1933; Sprengling 1935



FIGURE C3. Archival photo of the land stela, where the inscription is more clearly visible (P. 20141/N. 11336)

26. WEIGHT

Bronze

Fatimid, early 1100s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

2.5 x 2.7 x 2.7 cm; weight, 42.7 g

OIM E25645

Bronze weights are less common than the far better-known and better-studied glass weights which proliferated in Egypt in the early Islamic period (Schultz 2010, p. 350). These types of weights are referred to as barrel weights with octagonal sides. Examples of this type were used starting in the Abbasid period and only ceased at some point in the Ottoman period. This style likely was continued based on earlier Byzantine prototypes (Balog 1970, pp. 234–35).

The example here is not inscribed as there is a gouge exactly where the punch mark giving the name of the caliph would have been. However, it is very close in appearance to two early twelfth-century examples that date to the time of the Fatimid caliphs al-Amir bi-Akham Allah (r. 1101–1130) and al-Hafiz li-Din Allah (r. 1131–1149). Its weight of 42.7 grams is close to the al-Amir bi-Akham Allah example, which is 42.3 grams. This is the equivalent to one *wuqqīyah Mūmēni*, a weight system that seems to have been first introduced to North Africa (Balog 1970, pp. 243, 252, nos. 28–29). Styles of weights used varied by region in the Middle East; the Fustat weight resembles examples from Egypt published by Balog but not those from Caesarea in modern Israel (Holland 2009).

Weights were used in a variety of ways in the Islamic period, the most common of which was to judge the value of coins. The weighing of coins ensured that the coin being used in a transaction was “worth its weight” in metal (Bates, n.d.). It was desirable to attempt to keep a standard stable weight of coins, since the official weight and fineness of coinage changed frequently and coins of different weights were in circulation. Coins would have been necessary for cash transactions and it would seem that anyone in the community who paid in money would have needed to own a set of weights. Coins and other objects would have been



D. 027489

26, top



D. 027491

26, underside

weighed on a scale and this would have established the equivalency between the weight and what was being weighed (Holland 1986, p. 191; Schultz 2010, pp. 348–49). There was clearly a fear of fraud, however. Surviving manuals for market inspectors usually note that they should examine the weights that the merchants were using and certify that they were accurate (Buckley 1999; Schultz 2010, p. 351). TV

Previously unpublished

SHABTIS

The ancient Egyptians referred to the region where the Nile valley and the Delta joined as the site of where the gods Horus and Seth battled, known as *Kher Aha* (“the battlefield”). This location may include the area in and around Fustat, but it may also refer to the entire area south of Heliopolis. The site was a necropolis from the New Kingdom to the Late Period. Important finds from the necropolis include a fragment of stela from the tomb of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty official P’a-di-Pep. The New Kingdom is also represented by a number of stelae that are found in the area, dating to the time of Thutmose III and Ramesses III respectively, in addition to a statue of the pharaoh Merenptah. This statue is thought to come from a sun temple of the god Atum, to which a sphinx dating to the time of Amasis II also belonged. Archaeological work has demonstrated the presence of Late, Ptolemaic, and Roman-period settlement in the area of Fustat, but it is difficult to definitively argue for any settlement at Fustat earlier than the Late Period (Sheehan 2010, pp. 30–33). Therefore, the shabtis found at Fustat may have come from the

necropolis underneath the city or possibly from other nearby sites. Their context at the site is not clear and therefore it is currently impossible to speculate about how they were reused. Pharaonic remains do appear in Islamic contexts (see *Chapter 10*), but the exact circumstances of the reuse of the Fustat shabtis remains unknown. Nevertheless, they form an important reminder that on a daily basis, the Muslim inhabitants of the city found themselves in contact with the pharaonic past (fig. C4).

Small mummiform statues appeared in tombs as part of the individual’s funerary equipment beginning in the Thirteenth Dynasty. Originally referred to as a shabti, this type of statuette was later referred to as a shawabti and a ushabti, words perhaps derived from different source meanings (on possible etymologies of these words, see Schneider 1977, pp. 135–39; Spänel 1996). The form of the statuette also changed over time. In the Middle Kingdom, a shabti was sometimes placed in its own miniature coffin. Beginning in the New Kingdom, the shabti figure often held implements, such as the ankh, or tools, such as a bag, pick,



FIGURE C4. Sphinx in the foreground at Memphis, Egypt, with modern town of Mit Rahineh in the background (P. 6938/N. 3378)

or hoe. Beginning in late Eighteenth Dynasty, shabtis were also made in the image of a standing, clothed human figure. By the Third Intermediate Period, the number of shabtis included in burial assemblages had greatly increased to one shabti for every day of the year, plus an overseer for every ten laborers, and those were often placed in wooden boxes or ceramic jars.

Short inscriptions might identify a shabti as a gift from the king or might simply list the owner's name and titles. Beginning in the Twelfth Dynasty, shabtis might be inscribed with an excerpt from Coffin Text 472, which later became Chapter 6 of the Book of the Dead. According to this text, when requests to perform agricultural labor are made of the deceased, the statuette will respond with a willing statement, such as, "Here I am," thus fulfilling the deceased individual's duty to perform that labor (see Catalog No. 30). A number of documentary texts record the purchase of shabtis from a craftsman, who swears to the shabti's ability to work. (On various theories related to compensation with regard to the labor of shabtis, see

Černý 1942; Edwards 1971; Seidl and Wildung 1974; Warburton 1984–85, 2007; Poole 2005; Silver 2009.)

Although shabtis found in funerary contexts are associated with the performance of agricultural labor on behalf of the deceased, the presence of shabtis in temples and at other sacred sites suggests that shabtis also functioned as votive offerings or as representatives of the deceased person in places that were charged with meaning. Such sites near Fustat, such as Saqqara and Giza, could have been the original findspot of these shabtis.

The four shabtis from Fustat belonged to four different owners. None of the owners appear to have been particularly high-ranking individuals because no titles are mentioned on the shabtis. The dissimilarity in style of the Fustat shabtis and their broad chronological range suggest that they either derived from different sources or, if from the same source, such as a temple or necropolis, it must have been a site that saw a long-term deposit of shabtis. **VD and TV**

27. SHABTI

Blue-green faience

Third Intermediate Period-Late
Period, 1069–332 BC

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),
1965

8.2 x 2.6 x 1.5 cm

OIM E25416

This uninscribed shabti is complete except for the feet and has the only extant head in the four examples presented here. The figure wears a tripartite wig and false beard, which are fairly common attributes. A back pillar extends from the bottom of the wig. The item resting on the right shoulder might be a hoe, but the item on the opposite shoulder is too worn to identify. The arms are crossed right over left, and the hands, which appear now just as two abraded lumps on the chest of the figure, may have had additional details articulated in glaze. **VD**

Previously unpublished



D. 027368

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO

28. SHABTI

Faience with green glaze

Late Period, 664–332 BC

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),
1965

3.3 x 4.2 x 2.4 cm

OIM E25465

Only the midsection of this shabti remains. Despite the abrasion on the tops of the hands, the impressions demarcating the hands and thumb are clear, as is the sleeve line indicating that the arms are crossed right over left. Enigmatic implements are held in the hands. Stretching from one side of a back pillar to the other, one complete row

of hieroglyphs remains, which names the owner: “May the Osiris Harsiesis be illuminated ...” (On interpretations of the term “illuminated” as related to light emanating from the deceased, associating the deceased with Re, see Schneider 1977, pp. 132–33.) **VD**

Previously unpublished



28, front

D. 027391



28, back

D. 027393

29. SHABTI

Steatite

Late Period, 664–332 BC

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),
1965

4.9 x 2.6 x 1.4 cm

OIM E25447

The head, upper torso, feet, and one hand of this shabti are missing, but the position of the bent arms is discernible in the elbows that protrude slightly under the robe. The inscription consists of one column of text that reads: “The Osiris Psammetichus, son of” This Psammetichus is not likely to be any of the Twenty-sixth

Dynasty kings of that name because the name is not written in a cartouche, as one would expect of a king. (For a shabti of Psammetichus I, see Petrie Museum, University College, London 40317.) An unscribed back pillar runs the length of the reverse side of the shabti. **VD**

Previously unpublished



D. 027377

29

30. SHABTI

Stone

New Kingdom-Late Period, ca. 1550-332 BC

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

7.0 x 4.6 x 3.2 cm

OIM E25472

Of the four shabtis collected during the excavations at Fustat, this one contains the longest text, four rows inscribed on the feet and lower legs. The missing beginning of the text, the so-called shabti spell, would have contained an introductory clause that referred to the possibility that one might summon or count the deceased to do work in the necropolis: "... then obstacles are set up there. One accounts [for] you at any time, the Osiris Khaemwaset, 'I, here (I am),' you shall say."¹ This Khaemwaset is probably not the son of Ramesses II because known shabtis of his list his titles or epithets, such as *sem* priest of Ptah and son of the king.²

The rows of text begin and end on the sides of the figure, and the back has simply been left blank

with no back pillar. Fragments of paint can be seen in the hieroglyphs and in the lines that demarcate the rows. VD

Previously unpublished

NOTES

¹ For parallels to this text, see the shabtis of Raemheb and Hathor-peret in Petrie 1974, pls. 8:53, 9:67; the shabti of Kenamun in Newberry 1930, p. 2; Schneider 1977, vol. 1, pp. 107-09, fig. 3:5; UM-12, the shabti of Si-Ese III, in Moje 2013, pp. 50-51; and Leiden 3.1.5.5, the shabti of Huy in Boston, and the shabti of Yuya, all recorded in Schneider 1977, vol. 1, pp. 100-07, pl. 3:91. On the identification of the shabti with the owner, see *ibid.*, p. 147.

² For a shabti of Khaemwaset, see Louvre shabti N 478 (E 916) in Bovot 2003, pp. 246-48.



30, left side



30, front



30, right side

EDUCATION AND LEISURE

While male (and at times female) children were typically separated by religion during their education, learning in their mosques, churches, or synagogues (see *Chapter 6*), leisure activities brought them together. Education was not only religious, however, but as noted previously in this catalog, involved various forms of learning. Still, it did tend to mean that children of different religions learned apart from one another and most girls were not educated.

Adults and children from all of Fustat's communities came together through various celebrations, such as the festival of Nawruz. This festival comes from Persia and prior to the Early Islamic period marked the beginning of the Persian New Year, which occurs at the end of winter (Boyce 2009). Nawruz continued to be a popular festival in the Islamic period, and some disapproved of the various festivities involved, such as lighting bonfires and throwing water on passersby, making sweets, manufacturing and selling toys for children, and decorating the bazaars whose shops were then visited by people during the festival. Special perfumes and eggs dyed in different colors were purchased during Nawruz. It is evident the Muslims would dress like *dhimmīs* (non-Muslims), even though this was forbidden, as well as wearing other fine clothes and also eating certain foods and drinking wine publicly, even though they were forbidden to do so. Entertainment was provided by male and female singers and apparently a very good time was had by all (Shahbazi 2009). In Egypt, the festival was not celebrated in the spring but rather in September when the Nile flood was supposed to reach its peak. The Egyptians followed the tradition of having new garments, eating special foods, and exchanging gifts. Not

only would they consume alcohol in public, but they would also throw wine or dirty water on passersby. They would also dress up, often in the outfits of the opposite sex. There were also theatrical performers. Someone slightly disreputable would be elected by the Cairene crowd as the "Emir of Nawruz" and this individual would then process through the streets, visiting the houses of the wealthy and demanding money. Anyone who refused to pay this was publicly chastised in various ways (Shoshan 2003, pp. 42–43).

In addition to festivals, other forms of entertainment brought the community of Fustat together. Stories such as the *Thousand and One Nights* would be performed in public. Ibn Daniyal wrote plays that would have been street performances. His shadow play "The Amazing Preacher and the Stranger" involves a confraternity of conmen and tricksters who like Ibn Daniyal were from Iraq. These individuals include people with whom those from Fustat and Cairo doubtless came into contact on a daily basis: different types of quack doctor, snake charmer, acrobat, astrologer, seller of charms, various animal trainers and tamers, a tattooed woman who cut her own limbs and those of others, a conjurer who had wounds that had been self-inflicted, clown, sword swallower, rope dancer, torch bearer, and camel driver. A choir, composed of street and privy cleaners, who also were flayers and executioners, would sing at the end of the play. Further, the three different religions were all mocked, although Christians and Jews received more ridicule than Muslims (Guo 2012, pp. 26–27, 29). Once again, the fact that the differing communities were all mocked argues that they were probably all in the audience. **TV**



D. 027508

31, front

31. WRITING TABLET WITH EXERCISES IN COPTIC

Wood and ink
 Early Byzantine–Early Abbasid, 500s–700s
 Provenance unknown
 Donor unknown
 38.0 x 18.5 x 1.0 cm
 OIM E49447

This writing tablet is written in Coptic on both sides with black ink and would have been used in a school setting for children to learn to write Coptic, as discussed in *Chapter 7* of this catalog. On one side are seventeen lines of three-letter combinations, and on the other side are eighteen lines of two-letter combinations. The tablet consists

of one side with columns of seven “mock syllables” which are made up of three-letter syllables with two consonants and a vowel in between that varies in each syllable. The syllables in this exercise all begin with gamma. After the first column, which only consists of a two-letter syllable beginning with gamma and varying the vowel, the following columns are all three-letter syllables as described above. The other side of the tablet contains two-letter syllables and also has a subscription. After a beginning column which gives each letter of the alphabet singly, it then begins with the vowel and the consonant after it, starting with beta. The consonant letters of the Greek alphabet are always first, followed by the six letters used in Coptic.

The tablet exhibited here is typical of Greek and Coptic syllabary tablets in both its style and arrangement of letters. It is most similar to a



D. 027506

31, back

writing tablet published from Duke University (van Minnen 1995; Cribiore 1996, pp. 40–41) and also resembles a writing exercise graffito in one of the tombs at Beni Hasan (Hasitzka 1990). It is also typical of school exercises that contain Greek and Coptic letters together without any divisions. This tablet represents a fairly early stage in learning to read. The first stage was learning letters of the alphabet followed by practice with syllabaries, which is the type of text preserved here. The students learned syllables from the different syllabic combinations written by teachers on tablets or ostraca. More advanced students then continued on to lists of words, writing exercises, various passages, grammatical exercises, etc. It was not only important that the student gain a familiarity with the letters of the alphabet but also their order in the alphabet. Such writing tablets would have included not only students' exercise tablets but also

teachers' tablets that were written for students to either copy or fill in letters (Cribiore 1996, pp. 29, 31, 38; Cribiore 2005, p. 133).

The tablet has two holes drilled into the long upper side. It has been suggested that these holes were to attach other writing tablets to this one, like a diptych. In the case of one writing tablet in the University of Michigan collections, however, one of the holes has the remains of a wooden peg in it, arguing that the hole was used for another purpose. Other theories suggest that the holes were used for the purposes of suspension. Some tablets, however, have metal handles, which suggests they were either hung up or carried (Hall 1905, p. 149; Boak 1921, p. 189; van Minnen 1995, no. 17; Cribiore 1996, pp. 65–66). **TV and BM**

Previously unpublished



D. 027427

32

32. PEN

Reed, traces of black ink

Islamic

Excavated G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

7.9 x 1.0 cm

OIM E25527

This reed pen is of a type that had been common in Egypt since the Roman period. The pen was known as a *calamus*, or *qalam* in Arabic. As these Greek-based names imply (*kalamos* is the Greek term), the Islamic pen follows on the earlier traditions of pen-making that already existed in the eastern Mediterranean. This pen has been cut diagonally at one end to form a nib. The type of script that would have been used had a direct impact on the way the nib was cut and how thick it was. The extreme angle of this example helped create thinner strokes at the angles of letters on the page. Indeed, the art of cutting the pen was considered an important skill for craftsmen. Nibbing was done on a nibbing block (*miqattah*) that was usually made of some sort of hard material. The nib would usually be slit once in the middle or several times to create half nibs, although the example here has not been cut. In manuals for calligraphers, there were instructions on how to sharpen one's pen, meaning that it was clearly important to keep the writing instrument in good condition. In the Islamic period, reeds for pen-making were typically harvested in Lower Egypt, Iraq, and Persia. Such pens would probably have been stored in pen cases or boxes (Abbott 1938,

pp. 24–26; Shatzmiller 1994, p. 280; Gacek 2006, p. 705), of which elaborate examples from the Islamic period survive. Simpler pen cases would have also been used, such as a Roman-period example from the British Museum (EA 43048), a wooden pen case with three pens and an integral ink well at one end.

The point of this pen has clearly been dipped in ink, which even now survives visibly. The ink was either made from carbon or gallnut. Carbon ink consisted of soot (from things such as lampblack) mixed with gum arabic, honey, and water, while gallnut was made by mixing gallnuts (either crushed or fermented), vitriol, and gum arabic. Some inks were also perfumed with camphor or musk, and other ingredients could be added. Aloe helped to ward off pests, while honey, salt, vinegar, and yoghurt acted as preservatives and prevented mold. In order to dry the ink, the scribe would use sand or sawdust on the writing surface just after it had been written. Ink-makers and sellers are attested in the medieval period in Egypt and elsewhere although it was a minor rather than a major industry (Abbott 1938, pp. 26–27; Shatzmiller 1994, pp. 203, 208, 280; Gacek 2006, p. 705). In contrast, calligraphy was a more formalized profession. There was also specialization in the field and some calligraphers became notable experts in writing Qurʾans. Calligraphers had a lengthy training that took place in a professional school (Shatzmiller 1994, pp. 279–80). **TV**

Previously unpublished

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO

33. FRAGMENT OF THE *THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS* WRITTEN IN ARABIC

Paper and ink

Tulunid or earlier, prior to 879 AD

Egypt or Syria? (acquired in Egypt)

Purchased from James E. Pullen, 1947

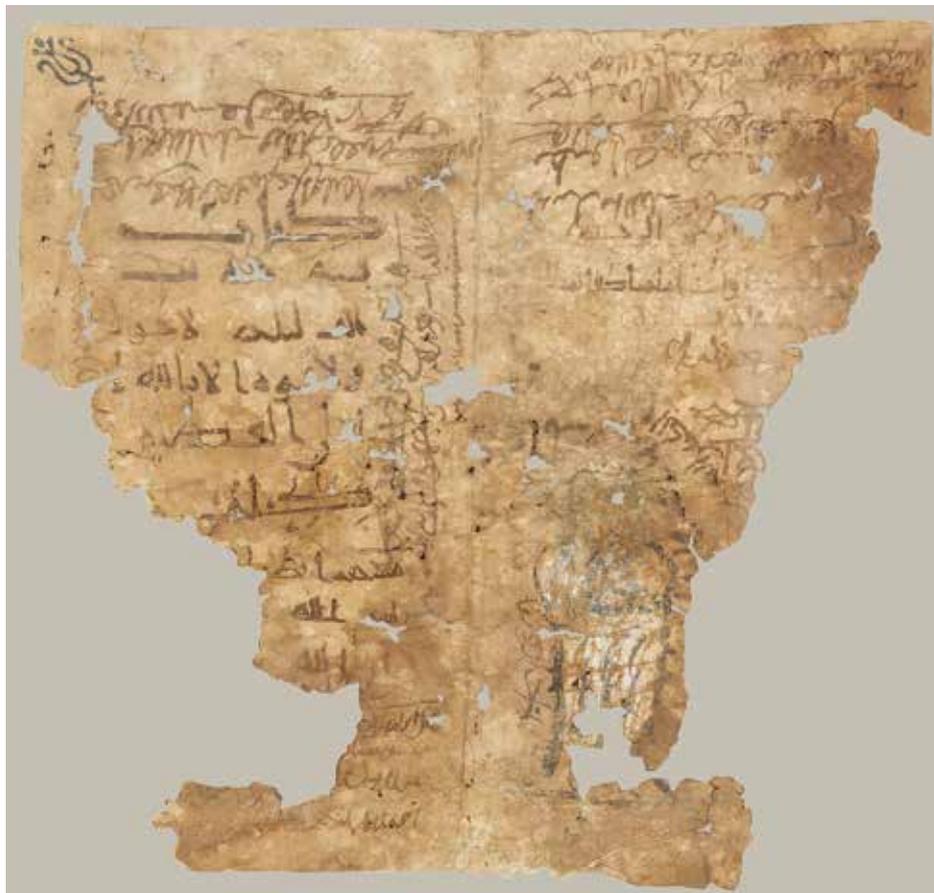
26 x 24 cm

OIM E17618

The poor condition of this manuscript belies its importance to our understanding of Middle Eastern literature. This fragment is the oldest surviving manuscript of the famous *Thousand and One Nights* and indeed is one of the oldest surviving Arabic literary manuscripts. The manuscript page has fifteen lines of Arabic text and includes a title which helps in its identification: "The Book of the Tales from a Thousand Nights." The surviving lines come from the framing story of the *Thousand and One Nights* where nurse Dinazad asks her charge,

Shirazad (Sheherazade), to tell a story that will show the faults or excellencies of man, or his distinctive characteristics, or his court manners. The text is of course not identical to the story as it now exists, but this is clearly an earlier version (Abbott 1949; Irwin 1994, p. 51). In addition, a small figure has been drawn on the recto, which was not drawn proportionally. It may have been added to illustrate some tale in the book, but it is difficult to know this for certain.

The manuscript page was also reused for writings unrelated to its original narrative. On the recto are legal formulas and various phrases such as aphorisms containing pithy truths about the world. On the verso, additional writing includes the draft of a letter mentioning the payment of funds to someone who had recently been in Antioch, as well as a formula of legal testimony from a professional witness which dates to 879 AD. As this formula was subsequent to the original writing, the underlying text of the *Thousand and One Nights* must date to before this time (Abbott 1949, pp. 137–44).



D. 019247

33, recto



33, verso

D. 019246

The question of whether or not this work actually originated in Egypt itself was already posed in its initial publication by Nabia Abbott. Abbott believed that it was unlikely that paper would have been used for an entire book in Egypt in this period, given that they were still generally using papyrus and that surviving books from Egypt in this period were either written on papyrus or parchment. Instead, Abbott believed that the most likely candidate for the place of production for the book was either Iraq or Syria. The mention of Antioch on the manuscript in the draft letter would seem to lend weight to the idea that it was produced in Syria. Indeed, the fragment also mentions “Syrian and Bedouin tales,” which Abbott believed supported her case. Abbott believed it was transferred from Syria to Egypt with the Tulunid army (Abbott 1949, pp. 144–45). This theory has been recently followed by Fred Donner in his short discussion of the papyrus (Donner 2012).

Despite reservations on the part of scholars to attribute this book to Egypt, there is no reason to

assume that it was produced elsewhere. As Abbott herself noted, there are paper documents from this period in Egypt and one presumes that it would have been possible (if probably very expensive) to produce a paper book there. Equally it could have been produced elsewhere, but there is no proof one way or the other. The earliest evidence for the full title *Thousand and One Nights* also comes from Egypt, this time from the Cairo Genizah. The text dates to around 1150 and was the notebook of a Jewish physician, who also sold, bought, and lent books and served as a notary. He primarily dealt in medical books, but clearly also had other books. He writes, “Maajid b. al-Azizi [has] the *Thousand and One Nights*,” which he borrowed from the bookseller (Goitein 1959, pp. 301–02). Nevertheless, the manuscript fragment here is the only fragment to survive prior to the second half of the fifteenth century (Grotzfeld 2007, p. 51). TV

PUBLISHED

Abbott 1949; Donner 2012

34. CHESS PIECE

Wood (boxwood?)

Ottoman, 1800–1825

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

5 x 2 cm

OIM E25483

This rook is a finely turned piece of wood, an artifact that has been carefully carved. The wood has split through time, there is one large crack going through the piece, but it is otherwise in very good condition. The excellent condition of the piece and its shape suggest that the chess piece is an English-made design that was imported into Egypt, dating to between 1800 and 1850. It is similar to chess pieces made by John Calvert, a maker of chess sets in England who operated from 1791 to 1822, with his wife taking over the business from 1822 to 1840. This piece is not stamped, so it may perhaps have been made by someone else according to Calvert's design. Chessmen of these types were produced until 1849 when the Staunton pattern chess set, a popular type used today, was introduced. Such chess pieces were made in ivory for the wealthy elite and also in ebony and boxwood (see http://www.crumiller.com/chess/chess_pages/chess_calvert.htm). The chess piece probably dates to the first quarter of the nineteenth century based on similar parallels. It does not resemble the nearly complete chess set found in the wreck of the *James Matthews*, which sunk off the coast of southern Australia in 1841 (Baker and Henderson 1979, p. 229; Cassavoy 2004, p. 340), which would further argue for a date earlier in the nineteenth century for the piece. This chess piece is distinct from medieval Islamic chess pieces, which were made according to a more abstract design (Cassavoy 1985, pp. 32–34; Contadini 1995; Cassavoy 2004, pp. 330–31, 333; Ekhtiar et al. 2011, pp. 112–13).

Chess as a game has a long history that spans much of the world. Chess seems to have originated in northern India, then spread to Iran in the sixth century and to the rest of the Middle East in the early Islamic period. Chess was introduced into Europe through Islamic Spain in the ninth century and then spread to the rest of Europe. Although



D. 027399

34

chess was a popular game, the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim suppressed the playing of chess and ordered chess boards to be burned (Cassavoy 2004, p. 337). Nevertheless, chess remained a popular game in the Middle East as well as Europe. It is likely that such a European chess piece was imported to Egypt at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with increasing contact with European countries such as France and England thanks to the Napoleonic conquest and subsequent British occupation. This is the only chess piece of its type attested from a nineteenth-century site in Egypt, but this is likely because Ottoman archaeology (and in particular, late Ottoman archaeology) is only now starting to be investigated (Vorderstrasse, in press a).

Earlier forms of Egyptian wooden chess pieces have been found in Islamic excavations, including the Fatimid-period shipwreck of Serçe-Limani. The excavators claimed that the wooden pieces were used “by less affluent citizens” but suggested that the chessmen were likely to be a possession of the ship’s master or officer or possibly a passenger. In contrast, they held that backgammon pieces would

have been owned by a less elite crew member. The excavators based this assumption due to where gaming pieces were found within the ship, as well as the idea that elite played chess and low class people played backgammon (Cassavoy 1984, pp. 64–66; Cassavoy 2004, pp. 335–37). Nevertheless, there is no need to assume that such social distinctions truly existed and they cannot be confirmed in the archaeological record.

It is certainly true that this rook is from a more modern pedigree than most of the other

objects in the exhibition. Nevertheless, it points to a long tradition of chess in Fustat, along with the continued use of the site of Fustat into the nineteenth century. An active population at Fustat is also evidenced by letters and documents in the Cairo Genizah that date to the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century (Khan 1991, 2006). **TV**

Previously unpublished

35. CHESS PIECE (?)

Bronze

Ottoman, 1600s–1700s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

2.8 x 1.8 cm

OIM E25488

This piece appears to be a pawn from the chess set. If this piece is to be identified as a gaming piece, it is not in the medieval Islamic style for pawns but rather from a later period (Cassavoy 1984, pp. 36–42). Bronze chess pieces have been discovered in Islamic-period contexts, but they seem to be less common (or perhaps less studied) than ivory and rock crystal examples. The fact that chess pieces were made in so many different materials including metal would seem to confirm the idea that chess was actually played by all sectors of society, not simply the upper class (see Catalog No. 34). This piece seems to once again have been produced in Europe and imported into Egypt.

One of the reasons for identifying this piece as a chess piece rather than a finial is the fact that the bottom of the piece is smooth and flat. There is no indication that it was ever broken off from a larger metal piece, which would have clearly suggested its use as a piece of furniture decoration. A similar



D. 027402

35

problem was identified in an exhibition of historical artifacts from the site of Fustat held at the Kelsey Museum at the University of Michigan, where an artifact of bone was identified as being either a piece of furniture or a gaming piece (Gruber and Dimmig 2014, p. 51). This once again points to some of the challenges when identifying historical objects that were used in daily life. It is not always clear what the original form of an object was or how it was used. **TV**

Previously unpublished

36. RECTANGULAR DIE

Bone

Abbasid-Tulunid, 800s–900s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

7.2 x 1.8 x 0.3 cm

OIM E25515



D. 027417

36

This die is of the rectangular shape that one sees in multiple examples from the early Islamic period. It has been suggested that these rectangular dice were used in groups of three (Finkel 2004), but this has not been discussed in detail. The circles in the middle could suggest that this die was a number five, which would argue that the other side was a six, but it is now broken. The additional circles seem to have a decorative purpose, but these dice have not been studied in detail and therefore understanding is currently in its beginning stages. Games of chance that used dice were generally considered to have dubious morality. If gambling was involved, such games were strongly disapproved of in the Qurʾan and dice games were also disapproved by the Byzantine church. Nevertheless, distinctions were made in the Islamic world between dice games for adults (whether simple games of chance or other games where dice was used) and children's games using dice, where clearly no gambling would be taking place (Rosenthal 1975, pp. 25, 34–37; Cassavoy 1984, pp. 86, 89–91). It is not clear whether children played games with their own specified dice or whether they borrowed dice from adults. In addition to games, dice could be used in augury (divination). The use of dice appears in both Islamic and Jewish magic (Rosenthal 1975, p. 91; Shaked 1985).

In addition to games of chance, dice could be used to aid the playing of other games. Certain types of chess, for instance, required dice and normal chess could be sped up by using dice (cube dice, in this instance). Rectangular dice were commonly used in a game called *nard*, a popular racing game. One moved rectangular pieces according to the throw of the two dice used in the game. The use of dice often implied the possibility of gambling. In fact, medieval authors generally assumed that people who played *nard* were gambling when they did so. Even when the game was played without any gambling involved, Muslim jurists still disapproved of it. Gambling also occurred when chess was being played (Rosenthal 1975, pp. 35–38, 41, 43; Contadini 1995).

Dice similar to this one have been found in Scanlon's excavations at Fustat, as well as examples from outside of archaeological contexts but supposedly from Egypt. The example here has been dated according to these parallels (Contadini 1995). This rectangular die is made mammal bone, but its condition means that nothing further can be said about the size or type of animal. **TV and HC**

Previously unpublished

37. DOLL

Bone

Umayyad-Tulunid, 700s-800s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

7.8 x 1.8 x 0.8 cm

OIM E25551

This doll has been cut with considerable detail and skill. It was made from the long bone of a large mammal (cow, horse, or camel), possibly a metapodial. However, identifying bone objects on the basis of species/type is difficult because of the working of the bone. The viewer is drawn to the eyebrows and eyes as the most prominent features of the face. The entire face has been sculpted carefully, with attention paid to delineating the chin as well. Some of these facial features may have been inlaid. The eyes are carved and include pupils and very long eyebrows that stretch to the ears of the figure. The ears have simply been cut as rectangles and are not pierced for earrings as is seen in some other examples (Catalog No. 39). The nose is prominent and the mouth is very small.

The main body of the figure has been scored with lines showing the neck and a “V” at the groin which suggests this is a female figure, similar to other Coptic bone dolls of this type. The legs have been indicated with an engraved line that goes partially through the bone to show the separate legs and the feet have been indicated. Despite the care taken in carving this figure, the feet have been cut at an angle, so it would not have been able to stand upright on its own. The back of the figure is undecorated. The figure is cracked and shows other signs of wear. The doll is ground and polished which suggests it was more expensive than other examples which were not worked (Rodziewicz 2012, p. 11).

The arms on the figurine are missing, but presumably would have been attached with a string that wove through the body of the figure. The fact that the arms could be raised meant that it was easier for the doll to put on clothing with sleeves. Most surviving examples of this type of doll do not have preserved arms. An exception to this is a doll from the British Museum (OA 851), where the surviving string goes through the doll's form and



37

D. 027439

attaches two moving arms. Additionally, complete arms, minus the figure, have been found at the site of Istabl ‘Antar near Fustat (Rodziewicz 2012, pp. 194-95, cat. nos. 309-12). These findings mean that dolls' arms could easily be detached from the original, perhaps through overuse.

Such a doll would likely have had a wig, similar to that which survives on a figure said to be from Akhmim, in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (04.1949). This doll, which does not have its moving arms, has a partial wig, which seems to be made of human hair that might have been glued onto the figure. In other cases from the British Museum, the hair was indicated by other materials, such as on 1951.0706.2 and OA+ 14195, where a bituminous substance was applied to the head in order to resemble hair, or OA 909 from Qaw el-Kebir, where the features are painted and it has traces of clay

hair. Another doll from the British Museum, OA 911, also has traces of clay hair.

The doll has been previously dated on the basis of parallel artifacts, but exact dating remains problematic. According to Rodziewicz, the doll was found with Umayyad and Abbasid coins of the seventh and eighth centuries, arguing that it was deposited after 774 (Rodziewicz 2012, pp. 185–86, cat. nos. 297–97a). The only difficulty is that even

if it was found with these three coins, this does not necessarily prove that the doll must be eighth century. Further, she identifies one of the coins as an Arab-Byzantine coin of the eighth century, which is impossible since these coins cease to be produced at the end of the seventh century. **TV and HC**

PUBLISHED

Scanlon 1968, fig. 4b

38. DOLL

Bone

Fatimid or earlier, 1000s or earlier

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),

1965

11.2 x 2.0 x 0.8 cm

OIM E25585

This doll is made from the rib of a large mammal, possibly cow, horse, or camel, that has been ground down, contradicting the idea that these dolls are only made from long-bone diaphyses (Rodziewicz 2012, p. 9). The doll's body is unnaturally elongated as it takes into account the shape of the rib. For instance, the doll has a very long neck. This doll has a very crude face with only the nose barely demarcated on the figure, although it is likely that the face of the doll was painted. The rest of the figure is also simply carved with breasts, and it has empty sockets where the arms would have been attached, presumably with a string through the body that would have allowed the arms to move up and down. The sex of the figure is further indicated by a simple "V" at the groin. The legs and feet have largely not been

separated from each other. The reverse of the figure has some grooves drawn on it but nothing particularly indicative of the body. The bone has been polished and worked, although some areas on the back have flaked away, presumably because of the type of material that it is made from.

Even though the construction of this doll is somewhat basic, it is likely that it was made in a professional workshop. Scanlon had suggested that dolls were simply made by individuals, but Rodziewicz argues that the standardization seen among the dolls points to the fact that they were probably made in workshops, perhaps locally in Fustat. Whichever the case, it seems likely that bone dolls were the products of local consumption, particularly since bone usually had to be worked



D. 027482

quickly (Rodziewicz 2012, pp. 11, 27, 45).

Although these dolls are primarily known as being Egyptian in type, they are distributed throughout Syria-Palestine and into Iran. In Egypt itself, they typically come from large urban contexts in Alexandria and Fustat. This origin

leads Rodziewicz to argue that they spread to areas where there was Islamic culture. She therefore discounts finds in Upper Egypt, such as from Antinoe (Rodziewicz 2012, p. 27). However, numerous bone dolls have been found in Qaw el-Kebir, for example (now in the British Museum and unpublished). The dating of this

doll is also problematic. Dolls of this type are usually dated to the Fatimid period, but Rodziewicz suggests that this example may date to the Umayyad/Abbasid period (*ibid.*, pp. 174-75, cat. nos. 279-80). **TV and HC**

Previously unpublished

39. DOLL WITH PIERCED EARS

Bone

Fatimid or earlier, 1000s or earlier
Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),
1965

5.4 x 2.4 x 0.9 cm

OIM E25460



D. 027386

39

This figurine is similar to Catalog No. 38 in its long proportions, although it is not made out of a rib. The legs are missing and only the head, neck, and torso have survived. The smoothed face is similar to that of Catalog No. 38, with its small nose and mouth. The surfaces around the nose and mouth have been smoothed and were probably originally painted. The ears have been pierced for earrings. The figure has a long neck, and the breasts are delineated by a carved “X” like on Catalog No. 38.

A hole from shoulder to shoulder through the torso of the doll is where the arms would have been attached with a string. Once again, the torso is very long, as in the case of Catalog No. 38. The back of the doll is basically plain, although it has been smoothed.

The doll has pierced ears, which is a feature on dolls of this type, including an example in the British Museum from Qaw el-Kebir in Upper Egypt (OA 912), which still has its earrings attached. In most cases, the earrings have long since disappeared, leaving only the

empty holes. The earrings were probably made from some sort of copper alloy, as green stains have been found on the ears of one example (Moraitou 2012, p. 194).

The bone is dark all the way through which indicates it has not been dyed. Usually, if these types of small bone objects are dyed, they are dyed green and the color is very obvious. The cause of the dark color here is unclear, however. Another doll, 1878.1217.03 in the British Museum, is of a similar color. It may be that it was an older bone that was reused, but this is uncertain. The color is unlikely to be post-depositional, as in that case one would expect the color to be different front and back.

The long neck of this piece is similar to Catalog No. 38 and can be considered an unusual feature. One wonders if these two dolls were made by the same maker and therefore date to the same period. Once again, this figure has been ground and polished. **TV and HC**

PUBLISHED

Scanlon 1968, fig. 4a

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

The objects in this section of the catalog include the tools for manufacturing objects, as well as the finished products. This includes objects that may have been used in textile production, such as the spindle whorls/buttons and the object whose use is currently unknown, as well as textiles themselves. In addition, there is evidence for the production of metal objects, thanks to the presence of the molds, and wine production.

The goods that were produced and consumed in Fustat were governed by certain laws. The market inspector would inspect the goods to verify that they were acceptable. Books were written to provide a description of the duties of the market inspector, which included other jobs in addition to inspecting markets. The manual of al-Shayzari is referred to on several occasions in this catalog because it provides detailed information about what could go wrong in the production of goods for the public. While the translator of this text has argued that it was produced in Syria (Buckley 1999, pp. 1–11, 14; Lewicka 2011, pp. 39–40), Lewicka believes that it was written in Fustat (Lewicka 2011, p. 87, nos. 152, 142). Whatever the case, this manual provides valuable information about the way that goods were regulated and the different frauds that were committed at the time, or at least considered important enough to be written down.

One example here, related to the textile industry, is illustrative of some of the frauds that could be committed. According to the manual, tailors must make clothing correctly. The manual then discusses what can only be considered the minutiae of clothing production: sleeves must be of the same length, the thread must not be too tight or too short, the cloth cut correctly, it must be produced within a week of being ordered, etc. But in a following discussion of a specific tailor, the manual begins to elaborate on various schemes that the tailor clearly practiced in order to cheat his customers. It was required that if clothing was made from an expensive cloth, such as silk, the fabric be weighed before it was cut and after it was made into clothing in order to ensure that none had been stolen. But apparently, this did not stop deceitful tailors, who would not use all the cloth and weight the lining of the garment using glue and sand in order to ensure that the end product weighed the same as the original fabric. Further, cloth dyers

and beaters apparently sometimes would ruin the garments of the customers and send it to the tailor without telling the owner. To prevent this, market inspectors required that if the garment was brought by one of these tradespeople and not the owner of the clothing, that the owner of the clothing, the owner of the clothing had to be present when it was repaired. Presumably, this would avoid issues of clothing being repaired and returned to the owner without their knowing it had been damaged. Further, embroiderers and ornamental stitchers were forbidden from removing embroidery from a garment and putting it in another if the bleachers and cloth beaters had given it to them. If a piece of cloth was embroidered with silk thread, such as the example in the exhibition (Catalog No. 46), one could see how it would be tempting to do this. As the market inspector states, this frequently occurred with clothing that was sent to be washed (Buckley 1999, p. 87). **TV**



FIGURE C5. Jerusalem street scene, pre-1914 (OIM, Edgar J. Banks Collection)

40. AMPHORA WITH COPTIC INSCRIPTION

Pottery, bitumen, and ink
 Early Byzantine-Abbasid, 500s-700s
 Monastery of Epiphanius, Western
 Thebes
 Excavated by H. Winlock
 (Metropolitan Museum of Art)
 34 x 23 cm; thickness, 0.8 cm
 OIM E27282



D. 027495

40

One of the most widely distributed and studied coarse wares in the Hellenistic, Roman, and Late Antique periods are amphorae. Amphorae contained a wide variety of liquid, semi-liquid, and solid objects, including grain, olive oil, wine, and garum that were transported on a wide scale throughout the Mediterranean and beyond. The value of amphorae is often seen only in the contents of the vessels themselves rather than providing

evidence of identity. The majority of these goods shipped in the amphorae are not usually preserved in the archaeological record, although there is some evidence of oil residue, grape seeds, and pitched interiors (Peacock and Williams 1986, pp. 2, 31; Bailey 1992; Whitbread 1995, p. 19). Papyri also provide important evidence about what was shipped in amphorae (Kruit and Worp 2000, pp. 98, 107-08).

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The bitumen-lined interior of this amphora makes it likely that it was filled with wine, at least when it was originally used. Bitumen would have prevented the wine from being absorbed by the amphora itself and also would have prevented anything from souring the content (Winlock and Crum 1926, p. 79). The Ptolemaic period in Egypt had ushered in a period when wine became more common, even though it had already been known in the pharaonic period, when beer was more popular. Beer once again became more popular than wine in the Islamic period. It is important to remember, however, that foreign or local jars could be reused for products produced elsewhere (Geremek 1971, pp. 162, 166, 168–69; Bagnall 1993, pp. 25, 32; Murray 1999, pp. 149–50, 152–53, 162–64; Murray, Boulton, and Heron 2000, pp. 577–78, 593–94; Mikhail 2000, p. 106). The papyrological evidence records that amphorae were reused, newly pitched to be used again, or shipped empty (Kruit and Worp 2000, p. 71).

Wine played an important role in the monastic economy at sites such as Epiphanius. It was supplied to the monastery through tithes and payments by local people and the monastery used wine as a form of payment in kind, including to tax collectors (Clackson 2000, p. 27). There is evidence that pottery for amphorae was produced at monastic workshops which monks either ran themselves or through intermediaries (Kotsifou 2012, p. 155).

Some amphorae, such as this example, have stamps or painted inscriptions which, when legible, can provide valuable information about estate owners, contents, value, weight, and origin of goods. These inscriptions verified the quality of goods contained in the vessel, prevented fraudulent sales, as well as denoted content and producers. The only difficulty is that the publication of these inscriptions tends to be poor as they are often difficult to read and are usually in shorthand, making their meaning difficult to determine (Callender 1965, pp. 36, 39–40; Lang 1976, pp. 55, 58,



D. 027494

40, detail of inscription

72, 81; Peacock and Williams 1986, pp. 9–10, 13, 106; Derda 1992, p. 135, no. 4; Whitbread 1995, p. 31). The inscription here provides two names written on the shoulder of the amphora in Coptic. These types of markings are common on the amphorae found at Epiphanius (Winlock and Crum 1926, pp. 79, 81).

Although amphorae are often thought of as being more typical of the Greco-Roman and Late Antique worlds, Egyptian evidence makes it clear that amphorae continued to be used well into the Islamic period, possibly as late as the twelfth century (Vogt et al. 2002, p. 26; Vorderstrasse, in press b). The fact that this amphora was found in a monastic context argues that it was used by the Christian community, but such differentiations cannot be made at Fustat. Wine still continued to be consumed in the early Islamic period and was enjoyed by all communities, even though it was technically forbidden in Islam. Further, since food preparation and eating habits evolved slowly, it is not possible to differentiate between the different communities through their use of amphorae (Vogt et al. 2002, p. 77). **TV**

PUBLISHED

Winlock and Crum 1926, pl. 28, A2; Wilfong and Malloy, unpublished, IIIc

41. MOLD FOR METAL BIRD

White stone

Fatimid-Mamluk or earlier, 1000s-1200s or earlier

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

5.5 x 4.9 x 2.3 cm

OIM E25536

This is a corner fragment of a white stone mold that would have been used to make several different objects. The rest of the mold has since been broken and lost. The extant surviving carving is of a bird. While circular shapes of other items that would have been made in this mold still partially survive, the remains are not extensive enough to determine what types of objects would have been made in them. Burning along one side of the mold indicates that it was actually used. There is part of an inscription, perhaps a name, on the base.

It is likely that this mold was used to manufacture a piece of jewelry or a decorative item

of some type, probably for a lamp. The bird figurine probably would have been made in metal, possibly lead. Similar figures of metal birds have been attested dating to the early Byzantine/early Islamic periods and later in Egypt. These bird figurines were used to decorate lamps and candelabra (Bénazeth 1992, pp. 224-28; Xanthopoulou 2010, p. 13, figs. 26, 76), although it has been documented that such birds could also be produced using plaster molds (Edgar 1903, no. 32286a-b, pls. 15, 32; Xanthopoulou 2007, pp. 77-78, figs. 98-99). Lead lamps with birds on the reflectors in the British Museum were acquired in Luxor and Cairo and dated to the fifth-seventh centuries AD and fifth-sixth centuries, respectively. Other examples made from copper were found in Egypt or are from excavations at Medinet Habu (Hölscher 1954, p. 64, pl. 38:2; Bailey 1996, p. 75, no. Q3820, p. 76, no. Q3822; Bénazeth 1992, p. 123; Xanthopoulou 2007, pp. 117-18, 123, 147). **TV**

PUBLISHED

Scanlon 1974b, pl. XIV, 2



D. 027429

42. MOLD FOR METAL FINIAL

White stone

Fatimid-Mamluk, 1000s-1200s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),
1965

8.5 x 6.8 x 2.5 cm

OIM E25522



D. 027421

42

This stone mold was used to create a metal object that was probably some sort of metal fitting or finial for a piece of furniture. There are black traces of burning on the mold. The mold was probably only used to create one type of object, as suggested by the smoothed edges, rather than multiple objects, such as the bird mold (Catalog No. 41)

The reverse of the mold is marked by very regular lines, indicating it may have been used for some other purpose prior to being a mold. The object it created may have been bronze, similar to the more elaborate geometric bronze finial dated from the tenth to twelfth century in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1973.338.1, no provenance but probably Egypt).

It was common to cast metal objects in stone molds, which were used for bronze, silver, and other metals such as lead. Stone molds were used to either hammer metal or, more commonly, to cast it, such as the examples here. These molds indicate that such metal fittings were made locally (Davidson 1956, p. 307). One mold in the

Metropolitan Museum of Art (1975.32.4) was even signed by its maker (Jenkins and Keene 1982, p. 147, TA 8). Metalworking was a common occupation in the Islamic world. One-fifth of the adult male population was in the metal, wood, or leather industries or was a builder (see *Chapter 5*). There are a variety of metalworkers attested, including those who made precious metal and jewelry as well as those who made specialized items such as scissors, axes, knives, arms, needles, and even spoons. Metalworkers included those who were involved in the processing of metal, which were only a small proportion of the occupations in the urban areas. This suggests that most metals were processed in mining areas, although the objects here would suggest otherwise. In addition, metal was also processed by arms makers, who made swords and other objects (Shatzmiller 1994, pp. 25, 111–17, 232–33). **TV**

PUBLISHED

Scanlon 1974b, pl. XIV, 1



D. 027419

43

43. WEAVING TOOL (?)

Bone and wood

Islamic, exact date unclear

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

4.0 x 1.1 cm

OIM E25521

The exact purpose of this object remains unclear although it is possible that it had something to do with craft production. It consists of a turned and carved bone knob with a wooden shaft. The small knob has been turned carefully and there has been an attempt to carve a floral motif between two lines in the upper part. A carved-out cavity in the top suggests that there was another object that connected to this piece that has since been lost. The wooden shaft has been broken at the end and it is unclear how long the complete artifact would have been. It is possible that the purpose of this piece was to wind thread.

Another possibility is that this object is some sort of knob or decorative item used in furniture. Again, however, there are no precise parallels and the wooden shaft seems too delicate to be the base for a door pull. This unique example points to the importance of documenting material from sites such as Fustat, as they provide evidence for objects of daily life that have not been studied previously. **TV**

Previously unpublished

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44. TEXTILE FRAGMENT

Wool

Umayyad-Fatimid, 700s-900s

Provenance unknown

Donated by the estate of Harold Nelson, 1955

14.0 x 31.6 cm

OIM E18875

This piece of tapestry is a band from a larger piece of cloth made of weft face tabby and tapestry weave with eccentric and hachures techniques. There are people and animals in the center as well as birds. The majority of the animals cannot be identified, but one of the human figures is riding what appears to be a horse. On the border there is a rinceau (foliage) decoration, fish, and birds. The dyes on the fragment are still very bright and the textile is well preserved. TV

Previously unpublished



D. 027362

45. TEXTILE FRAGMENT

Linen and wool

Early Byzantine-Umayyad, 500s-600s

Provenance unknown

Donated by the estate of James Henry Breasted, 1936

11.1 x 32.4 cm

OIM E17010

This piece of tapestry weave, described as a “Coptic” tapestry, is interesting because it consists of two distinct designs that were joined together with a band of black (Hoskins 2003, pp. 32, 34). One piece has a purple background with geometric pattern in black and yellow with a border of green and blue leaves alternating with three red dots. The other border has a similar purple color for the background of the border, this time in a geometric design. In the center are roundels, one type red with green and pink flowers, the other type green and blue roundels with a red cross containing a floral design. The piece was clearly detached from a larger item and may have been part of a curtain or a tunic. The remains of the larger (probably undecorated) part of the textile can still be seen. It was common for collectors to detach the decorated embroidered parts of textiles and discard the rest of the object.

Both of the above textiles clearly indicate that the medieval population had a taste for bright colors and that they wore garments of multiple colors together (Goitein 1983, pp. 172, 177). In textiles such as this, the main dyes used are natural dyes that vary through time. These dyes include madder, kermes (ground from the scales of insects), and indigo. In the early Byzantine period, for instance, madder was mixed with kermes at a 95 to 5 ratio to obtain red dye, while in the early Islamic period, red color was created by mixing equal parts madder and lac (from the Indian lac insect) (Wouters 1994; Trojanowicz et al. 2004, p. 116). The Genizah documents note that there was a flourishing trade being conducted in the raw materials needed for dyeing cloth and mixing the dyes for the textiles. Raw materials were grown in various locations and were shipped around the Islamic world. Indigo, for instance, may have originated in India but was also grown in Egypt



45

D. 027360

and Syria-Palestine. The most popular color in the Genizah trousseau lists was white (in its varying shades), followed by blue, green, red, black, and finally yellow. Finding the correct color textile was important and one letter from the Genizah attests to the difficulties that could be involved in obtaining a desired color, as it sometimes had to be specially made (Goitein 1967b, pp. 106–08, 419–20; Goitein 1983, pp. 172–76).

The art of textile dyeing seems to have been a specialized one. Shatzmiller lists dyers of several types, including a dyer with purple, a dyer using lapis lazuli, a dyer using vermilion, a dyer using oxidized copper, a dyer using sumac, a silk dyer (who also sold and wove silk), as well as a word for a dyer (Shatzmiller 1994, pp. 119–22). Islamic epitaphs usually only refer to someone more generally as a dyer (Diem 2004, pp. 25, 29, 38, 42). This type of textile dyeing specialization is attested in the Genizah. Purple, for instance, was an expensive dye since it was made from shellfish although a cheaper alternative could be made by mixing madder and indigo together. Due to the expense of producing purple dyes, special purple dyeing workshops seem to have existed, owned by both Jewish and Muslim craftsmen (Goitein 1983, pp. 36, 172). All of the specialized dyers were engaged in either rare dyes or rare materials, however, which may explain why they only seem to have done this one particular type of dyeing. There

seem to be numerous dyers active, and there was a separate “Street of the Dyers” in Fustat (Goitein 1971, p. 483).

Just like other trades, dyeing was a trade where fraud sometimes existed as a way to make extra money. The twelfth-century market inspector’s manual describes the various ways that dyers could cheat their customers. First, dyers used henna instead of madder to achieve a red dye, but henna-dyed clothes would fade rapidly. Others darkened clothes with oak apples, which turned the clothes black but again would wear off. Further, some people apparently took clothes in to the dyers to be dyed but unscrupulous dyers would alter their clothes and rent them out to people who wanted to dress up for festivals and holidays (Buckley 1999, p. 92).

Similar examples of textiles in similar styles to this piece (Catalog No. 44) are dated to the eighth–tenth century (Rutschowskaya 1990, p. 75). The exact dating of this piece is unknown. It is, however, of the same “Coptic” style that is produced into the early Islamic period and parallel fragments have been found at Fustat, for instance (Hoskins 2002). It is also unclear how this piece was used. It may have possibly been part of a panel on a tunic or another item of clothing. **TV**

Previously unpublished

46. EMBROIDERED TEXTILE FRAGMENT

Linen and silk

Fatimid, 900s-1100s

Provenance unknown, perhaps
Akhmim?

Donated by P. Errera, 1984

46.5 x 25.8 cm

OIM E25647

This piece of cloth is made from very thin linen that has red silk sewn in. It has been made with two pieces of cloth sewn together. These embroidered textile fragments could decorate not only clothing, but also soft furnishings such as pillows (Ellis 2001, p. 14).

Unlike the other textiles in the exhibition which feature only woven decoration, this textile has been embroidered. Embroidery is not a technique that is frequently employed in Coptic textiles (Hoskins 2002, pp. 207-08; Hoskins 2003, p. 47), but it does appear often in Islamic-period textiles. Indeed, it is not only finished textile products that have survived, but also practice pieces which either served as a way for mothers to teach their daughters how to embroider (Hoskins 2003, pp. 47, 224) or as patterns for more skilled weavers. Some of these samplers could contain fifty different patterns and motifs that could be copied by others (Ellis 2001, pp. 7, 15). TV



46

Previously unpublished

D. 027492

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47. SPINDLE WHORLS/BUTTONS

Bone

Umayyad-Fatimid, 700s-900s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),
1965

47a



47b

D. 027404, D. 027406

- a. 0.9 x 2.9 cm; 4.9 g
OIM E25502A

This piece is decorated with incised circles and triangles. The bone is from the femoral head of a medium to large mammal. A section of the femur would have been cut off and ground down to form the shape.

- b. 1 x 2 cm; 2.9 g
OIM E25502C

This piece is decorated with incised circles. It is the femoral head going into the trabecular bone of a medium-size mammal, possibly a sheep or a goat.

These two pierced circles made of bone are of a type that is commonly attested not only throughout the Islamic world, but also the Byzantine world. They have been found throughout the eastern Mediterranean and beyond, appearing in places such as eastern Iran, Portugal, and Bulgaria. The bone objects are usually described as spindle whorls or buttons, but there is no agreement about their precise function. If they are buttons, they would have been attached only with a single hole, which would have been difficult to attach to clothing (fig. C6). Further, they are not attested in graves, as one would expect if they were used as a button. If they are spindle whorls, on the other hand, they



FIGURE C6. Objects showing how Catalog No. 47a and b might have been attached to clothing. Left: leather necklace with resin disks, 17.8 cm long. OIM E7994. Right: perforated bone disk with a leather band, 3.3 x 0.4 cm. OIM E7993. Qarara, Egypt, Byzantine period (D. 027347, D. 027345)

were light enough that they could have been used only for light-weight fabrics (fig. C7). Indeed, these small bone pieces are of different sizes and weights, which one would expect because of the different materials that would have to be spun and how much twist was required (Bass 2004, p. 418; Lightfoot 2012, pp. 266–68).

Rutschowskaya is one scholar who suggests that these bone objects are buttons or even gaming pieces, in the case of smaller ones such as Catalog No. 47b. She argues that they either fastened garments or decorated them, but that others may have been beads, gaming pieces, or lids for cosmetic boxes. She believes that they could not be spindle whorls since in Egypt such objects are usually made from clay or wood and are rarely decorated. Further evidence, in her opinion, comes from the fact that one of the pieces from Istabl ‘Antar had a piece of linen thread running through its central opening (Rutschowskaya 1990, pp. 25–29). It is possible, on the other hand, that these objects might have had multiple uses.

The objects are often decorated with incised decoration which would have faced upward. If they were used as spindle whorls, the whorl is generally convex and would have been used on a hand spindle as a top-whorl. Hand spindles were common in Egypt and the Near East. The whorl would be located near the top end of the shaft with the convex side upward and visible to the spinner when they looked down. After the fiber had been carded, it would be placed on a distaff and then drawn by a spinner by twisting the fibers together in order to draw them out. The spindle would be dropped while continuing to draw and twist the fibers, and the whorl gave it weight to keep the spindle turning as it fell. Further, these objects are sometimes painted or stained in various colors including red or green (see, for instance, examples excavated at Nishapur and dated to the ninth/tenth century, MMA 38.40.1 and MMA 38.40.15). These are usually dated from the 600s to the 1000s AD although they continued to be used throughout Iran into the medieval period (see examples from Istakhr currently

on display in the Oriental Institute Museum, A24761, A24729, A22690, A22663, A22841, A22648, A22633, A22630). The use of sheep/goat bone as the material for the pieces seems to have been the most common, as it would have been widely available. The two objects in the exhibition weigh almost 3 and 5 grams, respectively, falling within the usual range of spindle whorls which are often between 1 and 7 grams. The bone pieces were made on a lathe (Bass 2004, p. 420; Simak 2005, 2006), while examples also exist in stone and clay that would have been heavier and presumably used for heavier weight thread.

The task of weaving, assuming that these objects were employed as spindle whorls, would have been performed by women spinning wool, flax, or silk in Fustat. Nevertheless, as Bass correctly points out, the presence of spindle whorls does not automatically mean women were present. The Serçe-Limani shipwreck had a number of spindle whorls and this did not necessarily suggest that there were women on board, but perhaps these were used by men to repair nets. There does seem to have been some gender differentiation, however, at least in dream interpretation texts which note that men and women wove fabrics of different types (Oberhelman 1991, p. 173, no. 28; Bass 2004, p. 420). **TV and HC**

Previously unpublished



FIGURE C7. Wood spindle whorl, early 20th century. Purchased by members of the Alishar Hüyük expedition. OIM A73084 (D. 027339)

HOUSEHOLD DECORATION

The remains of the houses of Fustat found in archaeological excavations by Bahgat, Scanlon, and others bear little resemblance to what they would have been in the medieval period. As the material from the exhibition demonstrates, they were elaborately decorated with furniture, cushions, wall hangings, rugs, and other objects and they would have been brightly illuminated with lamps and candles.

According to the Cairo Genizah, Jewish women from Fustat furnished their houses with items that they brought to their marriage. Items of furniture present in the house did not necessarily contain objects that one might expect to find in a house today. Chairs and tables, for instance, were not used and bedsteads eventually went out of fashion. Instead, they had sofas and divans, as well as cushions, bolsters, and pillows of many colors, some decorated with fringes or tassels, and other upholstered seating. There were sleeping mattresses made from decorated and sometimes extremely expensive cloth, daybeds, and covers. Other objects included drapes and curtains, carpets and mats, trunks and chests for storage, lighting devices, and incense burners (Goitein 1983, pp. 105, 107–35).

The example of reed mats is illustrative since it demonstrates the care that was taken by households to furnish their homes. They were very concerned with the appearance of the house and wanted the best that they could afford, even if that meant ordering from far away. Even reed mats could be considered decorative and were ordered specially from Alexandria, which was the main place in Egypt where they were made. They were made to order based upon the size of the room and Jewish households as far away as Kairouan made certain to special order their reed mats from Alexandria. A letter from Fustat written to Alexandria in 1140 that is translated from Goitein demonstrates their concerns. The letter writer described that someone had shown him a particularly fine type of mat and this was a type that he wanted to order. He describes the precise dimensions of the room before going on to request side mats and specify precisely what type of work should be done. This included describing the measurements of the middle of the mat and its border (Goitein 1983, p. 127). TV

48. LAMP

Pottery and glaze

Fatimid, 1000s–early 1100s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

7.5 x 10.5 cm; thickness, 0.6 cm; diameter of base, 4.8 cm

OIM E25439



D. 027374

48

This lamp has light brown fabric with black inclusions covered by a green and yellow-brown glaze. It also has floral sgraffiato decoration on the exterior. The long spout at the front of the lamp where the wick would be placed is broken, but the round loop handle is still intact. Preliminary handheld XRF analysis¹ of the green glaze revealed the presence of iron, copper, chromium, and manganese. Analysis of the brown glaze revealed the presence of iron, copper, and chromium. Lead was also detected in the glaze in both the brown and green areas.

Kubiak reports that in Scanlon's Fustat excavations oil lamps were "very common" and "occurred throughout all excavations areas and in practically all working levels" (Kubiak 1970b, p. 1). He notes that Scanlon's excavations had found several thousands of lamps, as had the earlier Bahgat excavations and various clandestine excavations. Lamps with long nozzles, such as this one, began to be produced already under the Fatimids and then dominated production after the end of the Fatimid period. This form (described by Kubiak as "Type G") represents a new type of form that had not been seen previously and is dated to the eleventh and early twelfth century, with some types continuing to be found later. Kubiak suggests that the "better" examples of this type with sgraffiato decoration (such as the example here) are an earlier phase in the stylistic development

of these lamps (ibid., pp. 1, 11–12, figs. 8a–b, fig. 10), but this seems to be based on the idea that the later lamps must have been a degenerated form of the earlier examples. There is no evidence for the progression of lamps from the "nicest" to the "degenerated," however, and therefore we cannot date the lamp on this basis.

This lamp doubtless comes from a domestic rather than an ecclesiastical context for several reasons. First, there is no religious iconography on the lamp that would indicate it was used in religious ceremonies (see Catalog No. 15). Lamps from mosques in Egypt are well known; enamelled glass lamps from the Mamluk period in particular have been well studied, although they are rarely found in archaeological contexts and probably would have been found only in the most expensive houses. Nevertheless, one eighth-century author notes that household lamps were made from clay, stone, and glass (Sardi 2011, pp. 288–96), which doubtless varied in style and quality of materials used depending on the means of a particular individual. **TV and AW**

Previously unpublished

NOTE

¹ Handheld x-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyses were carried out using a Bruker Tracer III-SD under vacuum at 40 kV and 11.50 μ A. Each analysis was run for 60 seconds.

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49. LAMP

Bronze

Fatimid-Ayyubid, 1000s–1100s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

11.6 x 8.5 cm; thickness, 0.3 cm

OIM E25547

This is the lower half of a bronze lamp that originally had a hinged top, which has since disappeared. The lamp is undecorated except for concentric circles on the bottom. The body itself is a saucer and the nozzle is quite short. In conception the lamp is similar to saucer lamps composed of two pieces that are also found at Fustat. Saucer lamps such as these are common throughout the eastern Mediterranean and have been dated to beginning in the ninth/tenth century, which Kubiak thinks is too early for Fustat (Kubiak 1970b, pp. 9–10). It has been suggested that round metal lamps imitate pottery types (Khamis 2013, p. 47), which would be unusual since

generally less expensive pottery lamps are thought to imitate metal examples, not vice versa.

Round metal lamps of this type, some made in two pieces with a hung top and others made from one piece, have been found in Egypt (with two spouts) and at the Fatimid hoard from Tiberias in Palestine (Khamis 2013, pp. 46–47), which provides a date for these types. As Khamis has observed, it can be difficult to find parallels to everyday metal objects from Islamic archaeological sites because the majority of objects published come from museum contexts. Not only are these examples usually without any provenance and clear date, they are also normally highly decorated, since museums often do not collect plainer examples (*ibid.*, pp. 6, 13). An almost exact parallel to this example was published by the British Museum, for example, but since the piece had no provenance or clear date, it was published as dating to the sixth century BC (Bailey 1996, p. 6, no. Q3539).

The hinged lid probably allowed this lamp to be taken apart and more easily cleaned (Goitein 1983, p. 135), as well as to be filled with oil. Lamps with flat bases such as this would have been placed



49, side

D. 027436



D. 027438

49, interior

on lamp bases that resembled a candlestick with a flat tray on its top. These lamp bases raised the lamp off the floor and provided better illumination for the house than if the lamp had been sitting lower. Also, if the majority of people sat on the floor in their homes, the lights would be above them, providing more illumination than if they had sat directly next to them. Other lamps would hang from chains from the ceiling or the wall (Khamis 2013, p. 27).

As noted above, such metalwork lamps would have been more expensive than the pottery examples. It was not only the materials that cost more, but also the fact that the lamp had a hinged top, which would have required some skill to construct. Bronze lamps appear in dowry lists of the Cairo Genizah, for instance, leading to the suggestion that it was women who provided the

lighting for houses upon marriage. These lamps included chandeliers, copper lamps (no lamps of more valuable metals are listed), and other lighting devices that were distinct and had different names from lamps used in the synagogue. The lamps also are sometimes listed with their accoutrements, such as scissors for trimming wicks and funnels for snuffing out the flame (Goitein 1983, pp. 132–36; Olszowy-Schlanger 1998, pp. 232, 367, 392; Goitein and Friedman 2008, p. 271). The presence of the lamps in Genizah dowry lists tends to argue that some of the lamps were elaborate and quite expensive. Indeed, one example is given where an individual in Aden ordered a lamp from western India, with very specific instructions about how it was to be produced (Goitein 1983, pp. 134–35). **TV**

Previously unpublished

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50. CANDLESTICK

White sandstone and paint
 Umayyad-Abbasid, 600s-700s, or
 Fatimid-Ayyubid, 1000s-1100s
 Fustat
 Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),
 1965
 16.6 x 24.0 x 7.8 cm
 OIM E25570



D. 027449

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This unique candlestick has been carved from white sandstone in the shape of an elephant. The elephant bears a palanquin, a covered litter that would have carried passengers. The palanquin has four sides and is hollow inside, with a circular hole about 2 centimeters wide that has been carved 3 centimeters deep into the back of the elephant. The palanquin has signs of burning around it where a flame may have burnt it. This, combined with the size of the hole, suggests that it would have held a candle. The elephant's ears, trunk, tusks, and

tail are clearly delineated. The piece appears to be very fragile, but it is actually quite stable. There are signs of faded red and black painted decoration on the elephant. Some of this black and red paint decoration seems to represent some type of blanket that would have covered the top of the elephant's head as well as his neck, continuing to behind the palanquin on the back of his body. The palanquin also seems to have been painted, as were parts of the elephant's trunk and body. This suggests it would have been quite a bright object originally.

It is difficult to find exact parallels to this item although it looks similar in shape to an elephant made from terra-cotta now in the British Museum (1804.704.85) but that is dated to the Ptolemaic period. In style it appears most similar to an unpublished clay horse found at Sasanian Mound H at Kish in Iraq (Karen Wilson, personal communication). Nevertheless, a date of the eleventh/twelfth century cannot be excluded based on ceramic and metal types that begin to appear in this period. Metal incense burners in the form of animals and birds, as well as pottery, begin to be produced in Syria and Iran. Ceramic elephants appear in this group including one from a private collection, which depicts the elephant bearing an elaborate palanquin and wearing a blanket underneath (Gibson 2008, pp. 39, 45, figs. 12, 46), as well as an example from Rayy (fig. C8). The Rayy piece, which dates to the twelfth century, was a vessel that may have been meant to carry liquid



FIGURE C8. Watercolor of elephant vessel uncovered from Rayy, Iran. Artist unknown. OIM RH 6105

or perfume, although its purpose may also have been entirely decorative. This piece was clearly for some type of domestic context, even if its use is unclear (Treptow and Whitcomb 2007, pp. 29–30). A total of fifteen such elephant vessels have been identified (Gibson 2008, p. 46, no. 27). There is also an underglaze painted bowl with an elephant and a palanquin now in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, but this bowl does not have a provenance as far as I am aware and dates to the later Mamluk period.

Further suggestion that the piece dates to the Fatimid period comes from the fact that elephants were popular in this period. Elephants were widely used in processions in Fatimid and Mamluk Cairo (Sanders 1994, pp. 64, 104; Shoshan 1993, p. 43; Shehada 2012, pp. 53–54, 74) and therefore would be an exotic animal that was recognized by various members of the population. Elephants also appear as designs on the filters of jars dating to the Fatimid period that were produced in Egypt, again pointing to their popularity in domestic contexts. Elephant handlers (*fayyālūn*) worked at the Mamluk court and generally came from India, since other veterinarians from elsewhere in the Islamic world did not know how to treat elephants, who required specialized knowledge (Shehada 2012, pp. 192–93).

Although this candlestick is not in the shape of typical Islamic candlesticks made from metal (Khamis 2013, p. 39), this one too might have held a beeswax candle. There are candlemakers attested in medieval Cairo, but beeswax candles were even more expensive than oils used to light lamps and only rich people could afford to use them. The sheer expense probably also explains why there

were individuals whose sole occupation was to sell wax and candles (Goitein 1983, p. 133; Shatzmiller 1994, pp. 103, 136, 204–05). In the eleventh century, however, the mass production of tallow candles made from animal fat meant that the use of candles spread to other segments of the population. It was in this period therefore that simple bronze candlesticks started to appear (Khamis 2013, p. 39). Therefore it cannot be excluded that such a candlestick could have held a tallow candle.

The use of cheaper tallow candles also led to deception in the production of wax candles, which were apparently not only made by candlemakers, but also by apothecaries. The twelfth-century market inspector manual describes how beeswax candles could be cut with goat tallow which would make the candle cheaper to produce but it would not burn as well. This tallow-wax candle would then be wrapped in a cover of pure beeswax and sold as a wax candle to the unwary. The duped customer would only discover the deception after he had lit the candle (Buckley 1999, p. 67).

The expense of wax candles probably also explains why the surviving candlesticks are almost all very fine inlaid pieces of metalwork that would have been very expensive. Candlesticks surviving from the Fatimid Tiberias metal hoard were far simpler, as noted above (Khamis 2013, p. 39). This piece seems unusual in that it is not made from metal and clearly would not have been as expensive as the majority that survive. Therefore, it is likely to have been owned by a well-off but not wealthy elite. TV

Previously unpublished



50, top view

D. 027451

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51. ARCHITECTURAL
FRAGMENT

Marble and paint
 Umayyad, late 600s–early 700s
 Fustat
 Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),
 1965
 15.5 x 18.0 x 4.3 cm
 OIM E25574



D. 027456

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FIGURE C9. Carved wooden door panel from the mosque of Al-Aqsa, Jerusalem. 8th century AD. Wood (courtesy of the Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford, negative no. EA.CA.5039)

This marble fragment has been painted in red and black and it is likely that it would have been more brightly painted originally. There may have been other colors present that have since disappeared. Many statues and architectural ornaments as well as ivories from the ancient and medieval periods were originally painted but most of these have not survived well. It is fortunate, however, in this instance, that we have this example to fill this gap. Preliminary handheld XRF analysis¹ of the object indicates that the stone is calcium based. Analysis of the red pigment and white substance (seen to underlie the red in some areas) revealed the presence of lead and mercury in both. The red pigment may be a combination of red lead (Pb_3O_4) and cinnabar (HgS). Alternatively, the lead detected may come from a lead white ($2PbCO_3 \cdot Pb(OH)_2$) ground layer underneath the red pigment.

This architectural fragment could have likely decorated the interior of a wealthy house or perhaps some other large building. While marble capitals are well known from Egypt and many examples have been published, particularly of basket capitals from churches dating to the early Islamic period, exact parallels for this example have yet to be found. It is similar, however, to acanthus-leaf column capitals depicted on an eighth-century wood panel from Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque. This may represent a monument, but that is not clear.

This panel, together with other panels and beams, were apparently taken from an earlier structure, perhaps a Byzantine church. This earlier use is based upon Greek inscriptions on two of the beams and the dendrochronology. The exact date of these panels is unclear and could be either Umayyad or Abbasid but the general feeling is that they date to the time of Caliph al-Walid (r. 705–715) (Marçais 1940; Hamilton 1949, p. 100, pl. 63, 16E and 16W; Baer 1985, p. 11, pls. 6, 15; Liphschitz and Biger 1997, p. 1045; Talgam 2004, p. 38).

In addition, Catalog No. 51 resembles column capitals depicted on a Coptic-language stone stela from Egypt that dates to the seventh–eighth century (Beckwith 1963, pp. 29, 56, no. 130, pl. 130; Baer 1985, p. 13, pl. 13). The stylistic resemblance between Coptic art and the Al-Aqsa mosque panels has been used to support the date of the panels to the time of al-Walid since Egyptian artisans from Aphrodito were involved in building the mosque (Talgam 2004, pp. 38, 106). Another explanation could be that the doors, the Coptic stela, and this column are simply part of a wider trend in art in this period.

As noted above, the red pigment may be cinnabar, possibly combined with red lead. Cinnabar is a natural red sulfide of mercury that

was extremely expensive. The best cinnabar was said to come from Spain, although it could also be found in Italy. Chemists had already determined in the Roman period how to extract mercury from cinnabar, and then to add sulfur into the mercury to create an artificial cinnabar that had a bright red tint. The entire process was highly poisonous and the color itself was very expensive. This could explain the presence of the red lead in the pigment, as it was simply white lead roasted until it changed to orange. This color was very common and appears in manuscripts either by itself or with cinnabar (Thompson 1956, pp. 102–03; Johnston 2011, p. 550), presumably to make the cinnabar go further. The export of cinnabar from Spain started already in the Roman period and continued when Spain was under Muslim control, remaining one of the area's major metallic exports. Its export from Spain is mentioned in the Genizah as it was transported to both Egypt and Aden (Constable 1996, pp. 186–87). **TV and AW**

Previously unpublished

NOTE

¹ Handheld x-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyses were carried out using a Bruker Tracer III-SD under vacuum at 40 kV and 11.50 μ A. Each analysis was run for 60 seconds.

52. TAPESTRY PANEL

Linen and wool
Early Byzantine, 400s–500s
Provenance unknown
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Goldman in
honor of Janet Helman, 1998
66.8 x 27.0 cm
OIM E36021

This textile depicts a naked youth who is dark purple in color and who wears a pink cloak that billows behind him, holding a flower in his upraised left hand and a palm leaf in his right hand. He stands on a column decorated with acanthus leaves. These textiles are usually made of a linen tabby or a linen and wool tapestry known as an “inserted tapestry,” which is added to the base textile in order to create a more complex design (Hoskins, pp. 25, 32–33, 39, 41–43, 45).

Many textiles were used in furnishings that could create a sumptuous effect in the house. These furnishings include not only curtains, wall hangings, and other decorative textiles that dressed the house but also portable household furnishings such as pillows. These items would have decorated the houses of more wealthy citizens (Dauterman Maguire, Maguire, and Duncan-Flowers 1989, pp. 45–47; Rutschowskaya 1990, pp. 61–62; Stauffer 1995, p. 10; Helmecke 2009, p. 48). Stauffer has

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suggested that such hangings with columns on them may have hung between colonnades or doorways (Stauffer 1995, p. 20).

The dating of this textile should be taken with a certain amount of caution since the dating of Coptic textiles is problematic in general. As has been noted elsewhere, most of the textiles are dated to the fourth–seventh centuries, but this seems to be unlikely. Dating has largely been on stylistic grounds and therefore it is quite likely that textiles may date to a later period entirely (Dauterman Maguire 1999, p. 8). This piece has been dated on the basis of stylistic parallels (Stauffer 1995, p. 20; Bruwier 1997, pp. 149–50, 152, 156, 158). This textile comes from the antiquities dealer Kelikian and is very similar to a textile now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts that depicts Nike on a column (fig. C10). They do come from the same family of dealers, but the piece in Boston was obtained in 1896 from antiquities dealer Dikran Kelekian (1868–1951) (Brooklyn Museum 1941, no. 209), while the Oriental Institute piece was acquired from his son Charles Kelekian (1900–1982) in the 1960s. TV

Previously unpublished



FIGURE C10. Nike on a column. Late Roman, 4th–6th century AD. Linen plain weave with wool tapestry insert. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Denman Waldo Ross Collection, 96.331

PERSONAL ADORNMENT

The objects displayed in this exhibition are related to beauty and beauty products, which was as important in the medieval period as it is today. The objects include jewelry, makeup applicators, and perfume bottles. The ambiguity of the use of the objects, however, means that many of these objects could have also had medicinal uses. The overall impression of the material is that they were simple items owned by ordinary people rather than the extremely wealthy. While excavations in Israel have been fortunate in finding a number of precious metal jewelry hoards and such items are listed in trousseau lists from the Cairo Genizah (see *Chapter 8*), it is rare to find precious metal jewelry in archaeological sites, much as it is unusual to find precious metal coins. The reason for this is simple: not only are these items expensive and therefore more rare, but one takes greater care in their recovery.

Despite the variety of objects on display in the exhibition, there are other aspects of personal adornment that cannot be shown. Most notably, these are the adornment of one's person, rather than the objects that one wears. The dolls, discussed in *Chapter 7* and exhibited here, however, can provide more

information about the ways in which women in particular adorned their bodies. This could include the elaborate styling of one's hair which could be dyed if it had gone gray or white. It was particularly important for men to have a black beard similar to that of the prophet Mohammad. After the hair on one's head or one's beard was dyed, it would then be perfumed (Helmecke 2006, p. 177).

The medieval Islamic world does not have the equivalent to Janet Stephens' groundbreaking work on the reconstruction of Roman hairstyles (Stephens 2008). Nevertheless, elaborate hairstyles are shown on statues of women from sites such as Khirbet el-Mafjar near Jericho. It is likely that these hairstyles were not wigs, but rather were made using a needle and thread as Stephens has posited for Roman hairstyles (Stephens 2008). Some hairstyles were simpler, such as those worn by the female dancer on a Fatimid bowl now in the Freer Gallery (fig. C11). Other individuals, such as musicians depicted on Fatimid bowls, seem to have worn their hair in two elaborate braids or in other ways.

In addition to hairstyling, there were also more permanent methods of decoration that would have been employed. One of the dolls in this catalog has pierced ears for earrings and indeed, an earring is also on display (Catalog No. 53). It is common to find earrings at archaeological sites, suggesting that individuals had pierced ears. In addition, tattooing was also practiced. Despite being condemned in Islam (Reid 2013, pp. 37–38, no. 41), tattoos have been identified on children's dolls and on a depiction of a naked woman holding a wine goblet and wearing jewelry (Moraitou 2012). The fact that tattoos appeared on children's toys, which would have been used by young girls, argues that tattooing may have been fairly common among women and was considered acceptable. Indeed, there are women described in the literary sources as tattoo artists (Guo 2012, p. 125). **TV**



FIGURE C11. Bowl with a depiction of a female dancer, possibly made in Cairo. 11th century. Earthenware painted over glaze with luster, 26.1 x 6.7 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; Purchase, F1946.30

53. EARRING

Copper

Fatimid, 1000s–1100s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

3.1 x 2.2; thickness, 0.2 cm

OIM E25525

This crescent-shaped copper earring, made in openwork, is an imitation of gold earrings, such as an earring found in Hoard B from Jerusalem (see *Chapter 8*). It is composed of a frame filled with wires that form shapes of circles within ovals, similar to the jewelry pieces made of gold wire (Hasson 1987, nos. 98, 100). As this example is a simple version of the Fatimid-period gold earring, we can suggest its dating as Fatimid as well. This simpler version could have been afforded by someone of lesser means (Albani 2010, p. 193).

Earrings made of various types of metal were popular throughout the eastern Mediterranean, not only in the Islamic, but also the Byzantine world and beyond, suggesting that this style had a wide circulation. The elite in both regions clearly enjoyed similar types of objects. This type of earring was easy to make but it was also large in size, so it appeared impressive to the viewer. These considerations may have also contributed to the popularity of earrings made in this style (Lester 1991, p. 26; Albani 2010, pp. 193, 199–200; Baldini 2010, p. 235). The simpler, less expensive earrings would have been made in molds similar to Catalog



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Nos. 41 and 42. A slate earring mold, which would have been used to make a similar crescent earring, has been found in Anatolia (Mercangöz 2012, pp. 230–31, fig. 11).

Since crescent-shaped pieces of jewelry are popular in Islamic art in general, not only as motifs in earrings but also as pendants (Bacharach and Rodenbeck 2002, p. 199), it is not surprising that such earrings are attested from Egypt dating to the Fatimid period. A silver Fatimid crescent earring was found in a vault in the necropolis at Bahnasa (Fehervari 2006, p. 105), while crescent earrings have also been found at Fustat (Bahgat and Gabriel 1921, pl. 30). [AHL and TV](#)

Previously unpublished

54. BRACELETS WITH STAMPED DECORATION

Silver and metal alloys

Fatimid, 1000s-1100s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

- a. 7.3 x 7.0 x 1.1 cm
OIM E25538A
- b. 6.8 x 7.3 x 1.2 cm
OIM E25538B

In contrast to the other items of metal jewelry in the exhibition made of copper and brass, these bracelets were made of silver, arguing that they would have been more expensive than the everyday jewelry objects found at the site. Bracelets such as these not only served as ornaments that could be worn but also as a store of value. In times of difficulty, bracelets and other objects such as these could be melted down or simply used as money, as the presence of jewelry items within coin hoards attests.

These silver bracelets are of rudimentary workmanship. They are round in section with two polyhedral finials and punched decoration of a circle and central dot, along with groups of hatches. A similar pair of bracelets is in the collection of the L. A. Mayer Museum of Islamic Art in Jerusalem. Hasson had doubtfully ascribed them to eleventh-twelfth-century Iran, referring to the polyhedral finials which were abundant in Fatimid jewelry. This tradition is quite common on Fatimid metal handles, hinges, and tips of loop-shaped earrings found at Caesarea (Lester 2011, pls. 4-4, 9-4), and various handles used for the suspension of bottles and boxes found at Tiberias (Khamis 2013, nos. 234, 328, 378, 592). Polyhedral finials appear on earrings found at Fustat and Tiberias (Scanlon 1981a, fig. 19; Lester 1991, no. 2), a fashion that harks back to the Roman and Byzantine periods (Segall 1938, pl. 45:240; Hoffman and von Claer 1968, no. 85). These bracelets can therefore be dated to the Fatimid period. **AHL and TV**

Previously unpublished



D. 027433

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55. KOHL STICK/SURGICAL INSTRUMENT

Bronze
 Tulunid-Ayyubid, 900s-1100s
 Fustat
 Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),
 1965
 0.3 x 10.1 x 1.6 cm
 OIM E25486



55

D. 027400

This is a bronze kohl stick/surgical instrument with a decorated terminal (see discussion below). **TV**

Previously unpublished

56. KOHL STICK/SURGICAL INSTRUMENT

Bronze
 Tulunid-Ayyubid, 900s-1100s
 Fustat
 Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),
 1965
 9.8 x 1.1 x 0.2 cm
 OIM E25481



56

D. 027511

This is a kohl stick/surgical instrument that has been threaded onto a simple bronze ring. Originally, other instruments would have been hung on the ring as well. Such combinations of objects, which are thought to be manicure sets, have been found in Egypt dating to the early Byzantine/early Islamic

period, including at Edfu and also at Medinet Habu, where it was undated (Bénezath 1992, p. 279). A similar piece attached to a ring was found at Fustat and interpreted as a surgical instrument (Hamarneh and Awad 2002, p. 189, fig. 7:36). **TV**

Previously unpublished



D. 027447

57

57. SMALL SPOON OR SPATULA

Bronze

Tulunid-Ayyubid, 900s-1100s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

5.0 x 1.2 x 0.5 cm

OIM E25564

This small spoon or spatula would have been used for cosmetics or to collect medicine that would then be applied to the patient. A similar small bronze spatula has been found at Bahnasa (Fehervari 2006, p. 301).

In addition to the wearing of jewelry, women at Fustat also wore makeup, as women do today. Women would have put on makeup with a variety of different applicators made from both bone and bronze. One should not assume, however, that only women used cosmetics. In the Islamic period, both sexes used cosmetics not simply for beauty purposes, but also for cleaning, hygiene, and skin protection. The most common type of makeup used by both adults and children of both sexes was kohl applied around the eyes. Kohl is generally a black color and made from antimony sulphide or galena lead sulphide, both of which are toxic. In addition, kohl also encompassed cosmetics made from different substances that would have created different colors around the eyes (O'Hea 2000, p. 219; Helmecke 2006, p. 177).

Just as today, it is clear that the manufacture of cosmetics was a lucrative business. There are

hundreds of recipes for cosmetics in medieval works, including how to make substitutions and falsifications in cosmetic preparations (Helmecke 2006, p. 277). Presumably, this was to be able to produce a cosmetic that looked similar to a more expensive one at less cost. There were specialized kohl-stick makers (*mili*) in Egypt in the tenth through thirteenth centuries (Goitein 1967b, p. 415; Shatzmiller 1994, p. 103) and in Tunis (Glick 2005, p. 168). Although the examples here are made of bronze, these objects also appear in Genizah trousseau lists where they are made of more expensive materials such as rock crystal, gold, and silver (Goitein 1967b, pp. 99-100; Goitein 1983, p. 224). The fact that kohl sticks were used widely by the population is attested by excavations such as at Bahnasa, where the excavator reports finding a large number of them (Fehervari 2006, p. 104), and also at Fustat (Allen 1982, p. 38).

One cannot necessarily assume, however, that these objects would have been used to apply substances for beauty purposes. Equally, they could have been used to apply medicinal substances. Some of these medicines would have also contained the same substances as were used in cosmetics, such as kohl for eyes or other ailments (O'Hea 2000, p. 220). Equally, objects of similar shapes found at Fustat have been interpreted as surgical instruments (Hamarnah and Awad 2002, fig. 7). These metal tools were probably used for various functions depending upon the situation and need. TV

Previously unpublished

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58. BEADS

Glass (modern string)

Ayyubid or later, 1200s or later

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

0.4 x 0.4 x 0.1 cm

OIM E25453

The thirty-five opaque turquoise glass beads on this string are identical in shape and dimensions. The string upon which the beads are strung appears to be modern. This may have been a necklace rather than a bracelet as it currently appears, as there may originally have been more beads. Similar beads have been found in several sites in Israel and are dated to the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. Necklaces with the same type of turquoise beads have been found in graves at Tell Qiri and Tell el-Hesi, dated to the Mamluk and Ottoman periods (Avisar 1987, photo 1:2, fig. 6:21–22; Eakins 1993, p. 7, pl. 65:8). [AHL and TV](#)

Previously unpublished



D. 027384

58

59. GLASS BRACELET

Glass

Fatimid-Mamluk, 1100s–1400s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

7.2 x 1.8 x 0.3 cm

OIM E25553

This bracelet is made of greenish clear glass decorated with red glass tails which were embedded obliquely onto the surface with a black and white thread creating a chevron pattern. This decoration gives the bracelet a bright and striking appearance.

Bracelets are a ubiquitous feature of jewelry in the Islamic period, and they were manufactured



D. 027442

59, top view



D. 027444

59, side view

in large quantities from the thirteenth century onward. In addition, they existed and were worn prior to that period. Further, while the example here is a single fragment, evidence from graves and ethnographic information argues that bracelets were not necessarily worn singly, but rather in multiples. Further, glass and metal bracelets were worn together, which would have created an interesting and varied visual effect. The bracelets seem to have been frequently lost in domestic contexts such as courtyards during work when it was not possible to recover them. These types of multicolored bracelets are known from Yemen and sites in Egypt and Syria-Palestine (Meyer 1992 p. 93, figs. 78-79; Boulogne 2007; Steiner 2008; Boulogne 2012, pp. 185, 191).

A document from the Genizah, dated to the beginning of the thirteenth century, mentions the purchase of 108 qintars of red glass and 105 qintars of “locally manufactured glass” (a qintar is the equivalent of 45 kilograms, or 100 pounds); Goitein 1967b, appendix C, no. 19, p. 362). It is likely that this bracelet, with its exceptional color scheme, was produced with “non-local” red glass which was imported into Egypt. These bracelets, when they are found at archaeological sites, are usually dated to the Ayyubid-Mamluk periods. Scanlon dates this particular example to the twelfth century or earlier based on the dating of other objects with which it was found (Scanlon 2002, p. 172). Due to the fact that Scanlon never published any stratigraphic information about the findspot of the object, it makes it difficult to accept this earlier dating given the fact that the parallels to this bracelet are all dated later. [AHL](#) and [TV](#)

PUBLISHED

Scanlon 2002, p. 172, color plate 3 (upper) (inaccurately described as being in the Akron Art Museum)

60. SMALL BOTTLE

Glass

Abbasid-Fatimid, 800s-900s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

2.6 x 4.6 cm; thickness, 0.05 cm

OIM E25508

This is a small glass bottle with a kick-up base, meaning that at the bottom of the bottle the base rises sharply in the middle. Bottles such as these could have held perfume or other precious oils or powders. There is no precise evidence for their function and they could have been used for cosmetic or pharmaceutical purposes (Scanlon and Pinder-Wilson 2001, p. 35), much as the kohl sticks and spoons (Catalog Nos. 55-57).

Perfume makers and druggists (*‘aṭṭār*) were common occupations attested in the Islamic world. It was one of most common terms in the Genizah documents, for example. Other common occupations were preparer and seller of potions (*sharābi*) and apothecary (*saydalāni*). There were also specialists in the preparation of specific types of items, such as preparer of medical powders



D. 027410

(*safūfi*) (Goitein 1971, p. 261; Shatzmiller 1994, p. 103; Lev and Chipman 2012, pp. 141–42). In Fustat, the Square of the Perfumers (*Murabbaʿat al-ʿAtṭārīn*) was the center of the business in perfumes and drugs, although others did operate in other parts of the city, many in prestigious areas. Jews played a prominent role in the city life of Fustat as druggists and pharmacists (Goitein 1971, pp. 263, 265).

In the Islamic period, medicinal syrups and pastes were complex recipes and producers needed to prepare their concoctions according to recognized formulas. It was important to not be careless in how much was added as ingredients could work against each other. Some syrup makers used vinegar with white lead instead of sugar or honey, which the market inspector manual points out would harm the mixture. If ingredients are sour and rancid, they could not be recooked because this would not make them any better. The only exceptions to this were rose and violet waters because they would go rancid but re cooking restores them (Buckley 1999, pp. 76–77).

Producers of cosmetics and perfumes would go to considerable lengths to make a larger profit. Equally, however, there were problems with the control of the substances that were sold,

as producers would frequently adulterate their substances with less expensive ones. In a discussion of apothecaries (which also applied to perfumers), a twelfth-century market inspector writes, “the swindles ... are so numerous that it is impossible to know all of them. So may God have compassion for the one who inspects the apothecaries and must learn how to uncover their frauds” (Buckley 1999, p. 65). Another problem with control of perfumes was that because different types of ingredients resembled each other and smelled similar, it was easy to substitute a less expensive ingredient for a more expensive one (*ibid.*, p. 70).

Scanlon reports that this type of small bottle is one of the most common types of glass objects recovered in Fustat. Many of them were recovered intact or nearly so. He suggested that this may have been due to their small size. This bottle appears to be the same small bottle that was published by Scanlon as being in the Islamic Museum in Cairo and another at Princeton (Scanlon and Pinder-Wilson 2001, p. 35, no. 14h, fig. 14h, p. 39, no. 15i, fig. 15i). TV

Previously unpublished

61. RING

Brass

Fatimid-Mamluk, 1100s-1300s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

2.0 x 1.6 cm

OIM E25523

This ring is made of brass, with a flat bezel having an undulant outline and three holes in-line. Like all jewelry, rings were made from variety of different types of precious and non-precious metals. Brass examples are not that common, however. A ring made from brass or bronze is also attested from the Fatimid-period shipwreck of Serçe-Limani, as are rings made from silver and possibly lead (Jenkins-Madina 2004, p. 291). The brass of this example suggests that it would not have been a particularly expensive item of jewelry when it was bought, but the pattern does make it highly decorative.

Rings are commonly found at archaeological sites and often noted when metal objects have been published (Davidson 1956). While rings attested from hoards are often of silver or gold, rings worn by the normal population were generally made from some type of copper alloy such as bronze or



D. 027423

61

brass. This kind of finger ring is similar to a large group of rings from the Ayyubid-Mamluk period from Hama, Paneas, and villages in Palestine (Ploug and Oldenburg 1969, fig. 31:1-4; Khamis 2008, no. 36). The shank of the finger ring is alternately made of round plates and bars and is similar to another finger ring from Hama (Ploug and Oldenburg 1969, fig. 30:2). **TV and AHL**

Previously unpublished

DINING

Pottery is one of the most common archaeological finds in excavations. The material from Fustat is not an exception to this rule. A lot of pottery was presumably found during Scanlon's excavations, of which a small amount is in the Oriental Institute collection and is exhibited here. Much of the pottery here is glazed pottery, probably used in dining. Although dining brought people together, it has been argued that much of it was not done in the public sphere.

High fuel costs meant that cooking food at home was expensive. In some parts of the Islamic world, because food prepared in the market had a negative reputation, people either cooked their food in community ovens or, if they could afford it, ate at home (Nasrallah 2007, pp. 35, 47; Lewicka 2011, pp. 118–19, 353–55). Nevertheless, Lewicka has noted most of the medieval population did not cook at home but rather ate takeout that they bought in the streets and from bazaars that sold food twenty-four hours a day. In addition, there were mobile food sellers who traveled the streets. Food would not be eaten in the street, rather it was delivered to the homes of the wealthy by their servants, although the most wealthy had their own cooks. The poor would eat at cook shops, which however seem to have served bad quality food (see *Chapter 9*; Lewicka 2005, pp. 43–47; Lewicka 2011, pp. 380–81).

People did consume snacks in public places. It is reported that street vendors sold various different nuts and sweets at the Friday mosque of Fustat. Aside

from the cook shops frequented by the poor, Lewicka suggests that the mosque was the only place one could eat and consume food until the much later advent of the coffeehouse (Lewicka 2005, pp. 55, 57; Lewicka 2011, p. 357). There is limited evidence for wine shops, but people seem to have gone drinking near the Nilometer, on the riverbanks, and on boats on the river. They could also visit other establishments to drink wine and consume hashish as well as to partake in other activities, such as prostitution (Lewicka 2005, pp. 70–76; Lewicka 2011, pp. 351, 501, 503–06). Some of these houses apparently involved people of various religions, such as in the fourteenth century, when Christian prisoners of war from Syria and Armenia (presumably from Cilician Armenia) were housed in a prison. The prison, however, does not seem to have functioned much as a prison since apparently the Christians imprisoned there — including men, women, and children — began to make wine which they sold in addition to pork. They also engaged in prostitution that seems to have catered to both male and female patrons. The Mamluks were enthusiastic visitors of this establishment until the building was leveled thanks to the outrage about what was occurring there (Lewicka 2005, pp. 77–78; Lewicka 2011, pp. 506–10). The shadow play “The Phantom,” written by Ibn Daniyal, describes a tavern where food and drink were served and where one could play games and gamble, listen to music, and watch dancers, jugglers, and actors (Guo 2012, p. 32). **TV**

62. GLASS BOWL

Glass

Abbasid-Fatimid, 800s-900s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),

1965

7.6 x 2.0 x 4.1 cm

OIM E25576



D. 027477

62

This small blue-green glass bowl with kick-up base (where the middle of the bottom of the base rises sharply) is of a type that was common throughout the Middle East in the early Islamic period. Scanlon dates this example to 750–800, but then admits that similar parallels exist at Samarra (Scanlon and Pinder-Wilson 2001, p. 23) and Nishapur (Kröger 1995, p. 42), which would argue for a later ninth/tenth century date. Scanlon seems to have arrived at this date based upon the fact that this bowl was found in a pit with a vessel bearing the name of an Abbasid finance director who would become governor of Egypt in the late eighth century. It was also found with a glass weight with the name of the last Umayyad governor of Egypt (Scanlon and Pinder-Wilson 2001, pp. 21, 78). Assuming that all these objects were deposited at once, which is not certain, it only provides the earliest date of deposit.

The exact function of this small bowl is unclear. These types of bowls would have been used frequently, since many similar examples have been found in archaeological excavations dating to the ninth and tenth centuries. In this period,

meals would have been served communally from larger bowls as well as smaller bowls (Lewicka 2011, p. 428). Small ceramic bowls are also attested in this period, which is again suggestive of dining practices. Bowls of this type could have been the small bowl (*sukurruja*) used for serving dips and condiments or the “single serving bowl” (*suḥayfa*) described in al-Warraq’s tenth-century cookery book. Dips were served as sauce for meat, such as lamb, such as one example that was made from almonds, sugar, vinegar, mustard, and safflower. Another dip recipe was made from dried whey, walnut, and garlic. Some dips were therefore served alongside other dishes rather than being combined with them in one bowl. Other dips, however, were specifically said to be added to the same dish as the meat. Dips were supposed to have various healthful properties, some of which were thought to be beneficial digestively or have healing power (Nasrallah 2007, pp. 87, 154, 168, 183, 306, 331, 818). **TV**

Previously unpublished

63. GLASS LAMP OR GOBLET

Glass (ancient and modern)

Abbasid, 750–800

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

5.7 x 7.8 cm; thickness, 0.2 cm

OIM E25592

This lamp or goblet is made of blue-green glass with red-brown threaded glass decoration. Its base had a stem that was snapped off after it was made. It has been restored with modern glass that was blown specifically to complete the object. Although Scanlon identified this object as a lamp (Scanlon and Pinder-Wilson 2001, p. 65), its shape is similar to both lamps and goblets. Based on parallels, however, a goblet seems to be more likely than a lamp. Lamps and goblets both held liquid — oil in case of a lamps, while goblets would have presumably held wine, water, or some other beverage. Such lamps would have been suspended from the ceiling in metal candelabra or they had glass handles from which they would be hung directly from the ceiling by metal chains (*ibid.*, p. 55). If the item is a drinking vessel, which seems more likely, it would have sat on a solid glass goblet base (Dussart 1998, pp. 269–70) which would have kept the glass steady on the table.

The tradition of decorating glass vessels with separate glass threads that were wrapped around the vessel goes back to the Roman period. It was also a commonly used technique in the early Byzantine period and continued into the early Islamic period. In eighth-century Egypt, the glass threads that decorated vessels were red (Scanlon and Pinder-Wilson 2001, pp. 62, 65). The blue-green color of the glass contrasted with the red decorative threads to form a striking picture for the viewer (Carboni 2001a, p. 16; Carboni 2001b, p. 110).



63

D. 027487

It is likely that people may have avoided drinking during eating, even though water vessels would have been available during meals. The tradition of waiting until after a meal to quench thirst was considered healthful and continues in some places in Egypt even today. In particular, it was considered a bad idea to drink alcohol while eating. Further, even though alcohol was forbidden, the Muslim segment of the population also drank wine, some of which was not actually alcoholic. There were also certain times of the day when it was considered better to drink wine, although no one could agree about exactly when that would be. Some suggested that the best time to drink was dawn, suggesting that one can never start to drink too early in the day (Lewicka 2011, pp. 351, 450, 496, 500–01). **TV**

PUBLISHED

Scanlon and Pinder-Wilson 2001, p. 65, pl. 32h (shows lamp before restoration), fig. 32h (incorrectly described as being in the Akron Art Museum)

**64. LUSTERWARE PLATE WITH
BIRD MOTIF**

Earthenware with luster decoration
and glaze

Fatimid, 1000s

Egypt, Museum purchase, 1951

6.35 x 24.13 cm

Walters Art Museum 48.2036



Susan Tobin / Walters Art Museum

64

This is the only complete plate in the exhibition. It does not come from the excavations at Fustat, although it was likely produced in the area. The metallic luster glaze, made from a copper and silver compound, makes the decoration appear gilded and would have been an expensive pottery type (Watson 2006, pp. 183–84). Luster glazing was a specialized trade whose technology was likely jealously guarded by those who knew how it worked (Mason 2004).

Fatimid luster can be considered a high point in the production of pottery in Fatimid Egypt (Watson 2006, p. 273). The technology for producing lusterware locally in Egypt seems to have come from Iraq (which was the center of the luster painting tradition in the Abbasid period). Mason (2004) argues that potters moved away from Basra, which ceased producing pottery at this time, to a new production center at Fustat. The potters might have also come from Syria, however, which also

produced its own lusterware in the Abbasid style. It is more likely, however, that the technology spread among different potters in the Middle East rather than as a result of the migration of potters.

Lusterware dishes would have looked highly decorative on the medieval table. This plate is fairly large, which suggests it was a communal dish out of which individuals sitting around the table would eat. Rules of etiquette stated that one should not dip one's fingers into the stew or return a piece of food back in the serving dish if the diner had already bitten into it. A plate like this would have probably contained something with sauce or in a soup (Lewicka 2011, pp. 428–29, 435, 503). As the guests around the table ate out of the dish, the food would gradually disappear to reveal the highly decorated design underneath. **TV**

Previously unpublished

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO

65. GOBLET

Pottery with yellow-brown and green glaze
 Mamluk, 1300s
 Fustat
 Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965
 9.8 x 10.0 cm; thickness, 0.8 cm; base diameter, 7.5 cm
 OIM E25424

This Mamluk-period goblet survives in part and is made of red fabric with white inclusions. The interior and exterior have been covered with white slip. Additionally, the interior has a partial yellow-brown glaze, while the exterior has a partial yellow-brown and light green glaze. The exterior has been engraved with sgraffiato decoration and champlévé, where lines were etched into the surface of the object and sometimes filled with additional glaze. In this example, the sgraffiato decoration consists of an interlocking chain motif, with circles above (perhaps a blazon).

The shape of this vessel seems unusual in Mamluk-period pottery, although Mamluk pottery still has not been widely published. The shape seems to recall glass beakers of the thirteenth century, many of which were decorated with enamel. The walls of this piece are quite thick and



D. 027370

65

not similar to glass beakers in style or delicacy. Once again it seems likely that this goblet would have been used in drinking in dining context, much like the earlier example (Catalog No. 63). **TV and TT**

Previously unpublished



D. 027380

66, top view

66. BOWL FRAGMENT WITH SGRAFFIATO DECORATION

Pottery with glaze
 Mamluk, late 1200s
 Fustat
 Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965
 12.2 x 5.7 cm; thickness, 1.3 cm; base diameter, 7.0 cm
 OIM E25451

This bowl fragment includes a ring base and part of the lower walls. It is made of red clay with white inclusions and is covered in a white slip with yellow-brown glaze and incised sgraffiato decoration. The background is densely drawn and shows a bird with one wing outstretched over a background of



D. 027382

66, side view

flowers. Spur marks from firing can be seen clearly on the bowl exterior. The exterior has white slip and a yellow glaze. Originally the yellow glaze would have covered the entire base, but has flaked off in several areas. There is a piece missing from the base, just below a firing crack. This piece seems to

67. BOWL FRAGMENT WITH SGRAFFIATO DECORATION

Pottery with glaze

Mamluk, early 1300s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965

12.4 x 4.3 cm; thickness, 0.7 cm; base diameter, 7.5 cm

OIM E25431

This bowl fragment has a dark red fabric with some white inclusions. It is decorated with a combination of white slip, incised sgraffiato decoration, and glaze. The interior sgraffiato decoration forms an image of a bird with a long bill and is covered with brown and light green glaze. The base is slipped but not glazed. The slip seems to have worn off the bottom of the base through use. While most birds on pottery vessels are not particularly identifiable, this one at least seems to be some sort of wading bird on the basis of its large bill. It is unusual to see wading birds on sgraffiato pottery, although a comparative example from Dvin in Armenia depicts a heron with a snake in its beak. [TV](#) and [TT](#)

Previously unpublished

have broken when it was fired for the first time, before it was slipped and glazed. The potter clearly did not wish to throw the bowl away, so he simply glazed and slipped over the entire piece, including the broken part. The bowl could still stand up and therefore it may have been worth keeping rather than discarding. After firing, the vessel was totally immersed (perhaps dipped) in slip before it was allowed to dry. It was then dipped in glaze and the interior carved before being fired a second time. Preliminary handheld XRF analysis¹ indicates that the yellow glaze contains iron. Lead was also detected. [TV](#), [AW](#), and [TT](#)

Previously unpublished

NOTE

¹ Handheld x-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyses were carried out using a Bruker Tracer III-SD under vacuum at 40 kV and 11.50 μ A. Each analysis was run for 60 seconds.



D. 027372

68. SMALL GOBLET WITH SLIP DECORATION

Pottery with white slip, green and brown glaze
 Mamluk, 1300s
 Fustat
 Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1965
 3.8 x 6.9 cm; thickness, 0.6 cm; base diameter, 3.6 cm
 OIM E25589

This small goblet made of a dark red fabric survives in complete profile. It is decorated with a slip that depicts a bird on the interior, with additional slip along the rim and diagonal stripes on the outside. The piece is glazed overall. Preliminary handheld XRF analysis¹ identified of copper and iron in both the green glaze on the interior and the brown glaze on the exterior. Lead is also present in the glaze.

Glazed bowls with bird decoration are small, which, given their date, suggests that they were individual place settings rather than small condiment/dip or single-serving bowls used by the entire table. As Lewicka notes, by the fourteenth century many elites in Cairo used individual bowls for meals, although this practice was frowned upon by some who favored the earlier practices of communal dining (Lewicka 2011, p. 429). Birds were a very popular motif on vessels but discovering what type of bird is depicted is difficult since they are often shown in a stylized fashion. One reason for the popularity of birds in bowls was that people ate birds at meals. In addition, birds of prey have associations with hunting, another popular motif in Islamic art. Animals caught by birds of prey, such as other birds or rabbits, could have been eaten in small bowls such as these. In Cairo, birds of various species were commonly prepared. The chicken was the most popular, followed by pigeons, quail, sparrows, geese, and ducks. The consumption of birds could be costly. It is reported that one individual spent 250 silver dirhams, a considerable sum, on various bird species including fried chicken, which was a popular fast food in this period, much as it is today (ibid., pp. 126, 200).

Even though such pottery dishes are relatively humble in comparison to metal or decorated glass examples, one can nonetheless see that they were important carriers of prestige. Mamluk-period officials decorated pottery vessels used by



68, top view

D. 027485



68, side view

D. 027484

themselves and members of their household with the blazons of their offices and also with inscriptions (Catalog Nos. 20–22). An inscription on one bowl states that it was “made for his Excellency’s kitchen.” It is unclear for whom that bowl was made precisely, but Watson suggests that it was likely part of a large serving set ordered by the kitchen staff for an elite (Watson 2006, p. 411). **TV and AW**

PUBLISHED

Scanlon 1980 (1982), p. 65, no. 4, fig. 10-d, pl. IX-d

NOTE

¹ Handheld x-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyses were carried out using a Bruker Tracer III-SD under vacuum at 40 kV and 11.50 μ A. Each analysis was run for 60 seconds.

69. BOWL FRAGMENT
DECORATED WITH BIRD
ATTACKING DEER

Glazed fritware

Mamluk, early 1300s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),
1965

15.8 x 1.4 cm; thickness, 6.0 cm; base
diameter, 7.0 cm

OIM E25575A, G



69, interior

D. 027460



69, base

D. 027458

This bowl is made from fritware (stonepaste), and depicts a hunting bird attacking a deer, with raised floral decoration. The piece has black and blue underglaze painted decoration. Preliminary handheld XRF analysis¹ of the dark blue, dark green, and the area of the bird revealed the presence of copper, chromium, cobalt, iron, and manganese. Lead was also found in the glaze. The animals are finely depicted on the bowl and it was made from fritware, not earthenware, which would have added to its general expense. It was produced very much under the influence of Persian pottery, similar to a few other pieces in this exhibition such as Catalog Nos. 16 and 19 that were also produced at the same time (Vorderstrasse 2007; Wade Haddon 2012).

The motif of the bird of prey attacking a defenseless animal was popular throughout the

Middle East in the early Islamic period. In this case the bird attacks a deer, but other examples show the attack of a non-carnivorous bird. There seems to have been a great interest in this type of design. It appeared in heraldic motifs of nobility, on decorated pottery, on sides of buildings, and in other media. One might consider the presence of such a ruthless scene unusual for dining, but clearly the individuals who used this dish had no such qualms. **TV and AW**

Previously unpublished

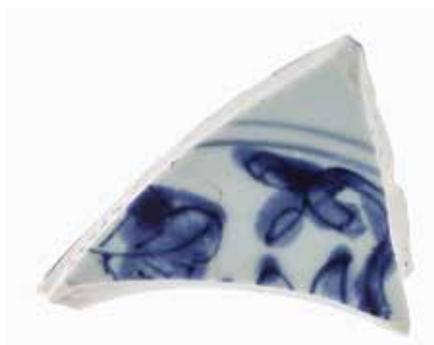
NOTE

¹ Handheld x-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyses were carried out using a Bruker Tracer III-SD under vacuum at 40 kV and 11.50 μ A. Each analysis was run for 60 seconds.

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO

70. FRAGMENT OF A CHINESE BOWL

Porcelain with glaze
 Mamluk-Ottoman, 1500s
 Ming China; Fustat
 Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),
 1964
 3.4 x 5.0 cm; thickness, 0.4 cm
 OIM E33262



70, interior



70, exterior

D. 027498, D. 027500

This base fragment of a Ming dynasty (1368–1644) bowl is made of fine white porcelain covered inside and out with white glaze with blue decoration. The exterior of the bowl depicts undulating blue clouds while the interior motif is floral.

Porcelain objects like this were typically created in China where white kaolin clay was mixed with china stone and fired to a high temperature. The results were highly prized in Europe and the Middle East. Blue and white porcelain became very popular as an export, and its main production center was at Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province. The blue was produced with cobalt from Iran — a Middle Eastern component in a common Chinese ware. Blue and white porcelain is found throughout the Middle East and Europe in large numbers particularly during the Ming period in China. These pieces were extremely popular but also out of reach of some of the population, even though large numbers suggest that many people could afford them. The desirability of Chinese designs sparked the production of large numbers of imitation blue and white pottery (Golombek, Mason, and Bailey 1996; Carswell 1985, 2000).

Chinese pottery of all types was popular at Fustat beginning with material dating to the Tang period (618–907), but it was not until the Song dynasty (960–1279) that the number of objects began to increase at Fustat under the Fatimids. B. Gyllensvärd examined over four thousand

imported Chinese sherds from the excavations conducted by Scanlon at Fustat between 1964 and 1972 and reported that the celadon Song sherds accounted for 75 percent of the total. Blue and white pottery included not only Ming but also Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) examples (Gyllensvärd 1975, pp. 93–95; Kessler 2012, pp. 432–33). On the basis of deposition levels at Fustat, Adam Kessler has argued that some of the pre-Ming blue and white must be Song period rather than Yuan. The difficulty with this is his reasoning about the process of site deposition. He first states that the occupation of Fustat ended by 1252, and he also argues that no one would have thrown out such sherds under the Mamluks (Kessler 2012, p. 434, no. 569). The difficulty with this idea is that first of all the site of Fustat did continue to be inhabited even if some of it was used as a rubbish dump under the Mamluks. Second, there is no reason why anyone would keep broken pieces of porcelain, no matter how valuable it had been originally, if it was no longer able to be mended. Whether or not this bowl was used by inhabitants of Fustat or Cairo and then deposited in the rubbish, this bowl fragment is a valuable reminder of the different imports present at the site and the importance of Chinese ceramics in particular. TV

Previously unpublished



71, interior



71, exterior

D. 027501, D. 027503

71. FRAGMENT OF AN IMPORTED BOWL WITH SGRAFFIATO DECORATION

Pottery with glaze

Ayyubid-Mamluk, 1200s-early 1300s

Fustat

Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE), 1964

5.5 x 5.3 cm; thickness, 0.5 cm

OIM E33297

This fragment from a bowl is made of a pink fabric and covered with a white slip. Decoration includes incised sgraffiato decoration on both sides with additional highlights of light yellow-brown glaze and green glaze. This piece was produced in Anatolia or northern Syria. It is a very decorative type of pottery and polychrome sgraffiato wares were popular in Fustat in this period.

As Walker (2004, p. 26) points out, previous work by Kubiak has focused most of the attention on polychrome sgraffiato pottery from northern Syria/southern Anatolia. Most well known is Port St. Symeon ware, which was produced in the principality of Antioch and then in the same region by the Mamluks after they conquered the area in 1268, as well as in the kingdom of Cilician Armenia. This pottery has a wide distribution along

the Syro-Levantine coast and into Egypt (Kubiak 1969, 1970a; Vorderstrasse 2005a, 2005b). The fact that the imported pottery from Fustat has yet to be fully published makes any assessment of this material difficult. On the basis of material found at Alexandria, however, Walker has argued that it is Cypriot, not north Syrian/Anatolian types that dominate the imported pottery corpus (Walker 2005, pp. 26-28).

Whether or not this type is particularly common at Fustat, it is one of the few sherds in the collection that was imported and as such is a valuable indication of the trade that took place between Egypt and eastern Mediterranean in this period. TV

Previously unpublished

A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS IN OLD CAIRO

72. FRAGMENT OF AN
IMPORTED SPANISH BOWL

Pottery with glaze
Mamluk, 1300-1350
Nasrid, Spain; Fustat
Excavated by G. Scanlon (ARCE),
1965
8.5 x 10.2 cm; thickness, 1.2 cm
OIM E25556



72, interior



72, exterior

D. 027445, D. 027975

This Spanish lusterware bowl fragment is made of red fabric and has a gray core. It is covered in white slip and decorated with elaborate luster painting. Preliminary handheld XRF analysis¹ of the yellow-brown and white areas revealed the presence of copper, iron, lead, and tin.

Spanish lusterware, like Egyptian lusterware, was produced after the initial Mesopotamian development of luster painting on pottery in the Abbasid period. In the tenth century, Spain became an important luster painting center, with pottery produced in Andalusia at Malaga. Lusterware was also produced in Valencia, Manises, and Paterna throughout the medieval period. At Fustat, an analysis of material from the Victoria and Albert Museum by Mariam Rosser-Owen shows that the earliest material seems to have been imported to the site in the late twelfth century. It is an important part of the corpus in Egyptian ceramics in this period, but has received little attention in comparison to other pottery types that were imported, such as the Chinese examples (Rosser-Owen 2012, p. 165). This piece is identical to a piece of Spanish lusterware at the Victoria and Albert Museum, also from Fustat, probably from Malaga (fig. C12), which was donated by a Mr. Hornblower (Rosser-Owen 2012, p. 176, fig. 12). The two fragments are closely related enough that they appear to be from the same bowl, although if this is true, they were found over sixty years apart.

Trade and contact between Egypt and Spain is well known through the Genizah documents, which attest to a large amount of commercial contact between these areas. There were always ships from Spain arriving in Egypt selling goods and merchants commonly traveled between these

regions. Maimonides, an eminent medieval Jewish scholar, for instance, notes that Jews were regular passengers on the ships that went between Seville and Alexandria (Goitein 1967b, p. 213; Roth 1994, p. 146; Constable 1996, pp. 1-2, 19, 27-28, 35-38). While this may have been true in the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods, in the Mamluk period it was the Italian city-states of Genoa, Venice, and Pisa that were dominating the trade between Spain and Egypt. Therefore the merchants from these Italian city-states trading in cloth may have imported pottery from Spain to Egypt (Rosser-Owen 2012, p. 181-82). Therefore, the presence of Spanish pottery at Fustat should not be considered surprising. **TV and AW**

Previously unpublished

NOTE

¹ Handheld x-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyses were carried out using a Bruker Tracer III-SD under vacuum at 40 kV and 11.50 μ A. Each analysis was run for 60 seconds.



FIGURE C12. Fragment of a dish, tin-glazed earthenware with luster decoration. Probably Malaga, Spain, early 14th century. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, C. 791-1921 (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

CONCORDANCE OF MUSEUM REGISTRATION NUMBERS

Registration Number	Catalog / Figure Number	Description
THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM, ASIAN COLLECTION		
A6959	Fig. 6.1	Fragment from a Qur'an
A11241	Cat. No. 6	Bible Fragment from the Genizah
A11242	Cat. No. 7	Bible Fragment from the Genizah
A11243	Cat. No. 8	Bible Fragment from the Genizah
A11244	Cat. No. 2	Bible Fragment from the Genizah
A11245	Cat. No. 3	Bible Fragment from the Genizah
A11246	Cat. No. 4	Biblical Fragment from the Genizah
A11247	Cat. No. 5	Writing Exercise from the Genizah
A12029A	Cat. No. 9	Fragment from a Qur'an
A12029B	Cat. No. 10	Fragment from a Qur'an
A12030A	Fig. 1.5	Fragment from a Qur'an
A12066	Fig. 1.6	Fragment from a Qur'an
A12089	Cat. No. 17	Annual Lectionary Written in Bohairic Coptic
A31403	Cat. No. 12	Illuminated Gospel Written in Arabic
A73084	Fig. C7	Spindle Whorl
THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM, EGYPTIAN COLLECTION		
E1569	Cat. No. 13	Grave Stela with Coptic Inscription
E2057	Fig. 6.5	Fragment from a Greek Bible
E7993	Fig. C6	Necklace
E7994	Fig. C6	Necklace
E8349	Fig. 7.5	School Exercise
E10485	Fig. 6.4	Fragment from a Coptic Bible
E13706	Cat. No. 25	Land Survey Stela with Arabic Inscription
E13708	Cat. No. 11	Grave Stela with Arabic Inscription
E13755	Cat. No. 23	Administrative Papyrus Written in Arabic
E13756	Fig. 4.3	Arabic Letter
E13757	Cat. No. 24	Administrative Papyrus Written in Arabic
E13758	Fig. 4.4	Arabic Letter
E13759	Fig. 4.2	Arabic Letter
E14478	Cat. No. 15	Lamp with Cross Reflector
E17010	Cat. No. 45	Textile Fragment
E17263	Fig. 7.1	Doll
E17618	Cat. No. 33	Fragment of the <i>Thousand and One Nights</i> Written in Arabic
E17619	Fig. 7.4	Arabic Grammatical Analysis
E17656	Fig. 6.2	Arabic List of "Companions"
E18875	Cat. No. 44	Textile Fragment
E25403	Fig. 9.3	Filter-neck Jar
E25416	Cat. No. 27	Shabti
E25424	Cat. No. 65	Goblet
E25431	Cat. No. 67	Bowl Fragment with Sgraffiato Decoration
E25439	Cat. No. 48	Lamp
E25447	Cat. No. 29	Shabti
E25450	Cat. No. 21	Bowl with Mamluk Blazon
E25451	Cat. No. 66	Bowl Fragment with Sgraffiato Decoration
E25453	Cat. No. 58	Beads
E25460	Cat. No. 39	Doll with Pierced Ears
E25461	Cat. No. 18	Ayyubid Coin with Arabic Inscription

Registration Number	Catalog / Figure Number	Description
E25465	Cat. No. 28	Shabti
E25472	Cat. No. 30	Shabti
E25481	Cat. No. 56	Kohl Stick/Surgical Instrument
E25483	Cat. No. 34	Chess Piece
E25486	Cat. No. 55	Kohl Stick/Surgical Instrument
E25488	Cat. No. 35	Chess Piece (?)
E25502A	Cat. No. 47a	Spindle Whorl or Button
E25502C	Cat. No. 47b	Spindle Whorl or Button
E25505	Cat. No. 22	Bowl with Mamluk Blazon
E25508	Cat. No. 60	Small Bottle
E25513	Cat. No. 14	Flask
E25515	Cat. No. 36	Rectangular Die
E25521	Cat. No. 43	Weaving Tool (?)
E25522	Cat. No. 42	Mold for Metal Finial
E25523	Cat. No. 61	Ring
E25525	Cat. No. 53	Earring
E25527	Cat. No. 32	Pen
E25536	Cat. No. 41	Mold for Metal Bird
E25537	Fig. 9.4	Glazed Bowl
E25538A	Cat. No. 54a	Bracelet with Stamped Decoration
E25538B	Cat. No. 54b	Bracelet with Stamped Decoration
E25547	Cat. No. 49	Lamp
E25551	Cat. No. 37	Doll
E25553	Cat. No. 59	Glass Bracelet
E25556	Cat. No. 72	Fragment of an Imported Spanish Bowl
E25564	Cat. No. 57	Small Spoon or Spatula
E25570	Cat. No. 50	Candlestick
E25571	Cat. No. 19	Fragment of a Fritware Bowl
E25574	Cat. No. 51	Architectural Fragment
E25575A, G	Cat. No. 69	Bowl Fragment Decorated with Bird Attacking Deer
E25576	Cat. No. 62	Glass Bowl
E25582	Cat. No. 20	Bowl with Mamluk Blazon
E25585	Cat. No. 38	Doll
E25589	Cat. No. 68	Small Goblet with Slip Decoration
E25592	Cat. No. 63	Glass Lamp or Goblet
E25645	Cat. No. 26	Weight
E25647	Cat. No. 46	Embroidered Textile Fragment
E27282	Cat. No. 40	Amphora with Coptic Inscription
E33262	Cat. No. 70	Fragment of a Chinese Bowl
E33297	Cat. No. 71	Fragment of an Imported Bowl with Sgraffiato Decoration
E36021	Cat. No. 52	Tapestry Panel
E49447	Cat. No. 31	Writing Tablet with Exercises in Coptic
WALTERS ART MUSEUM		
48.2036	Cat. No. 64	Lusterware Plate with Bird Motif
48.2734	Cat. No. 16	Bowl Fragment
64.181	Cat. No. 1	Door from a Torah Shrine

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBIT

Religious Communities at Fustat

Door from a Torah Shrine with Hebrew Inscriptions (Walters Art Museum 64.181)
 Bible Fragment from the Genizah (OIM A11244)
 Bible Fragment from the Genizah (OIM A11245)
 Biblical Fragment from the Genizah (OIM A11246)
 Writing Exercise from the Genizah (OIM A11247)
 Bible Fragment from the Genizah (OIM A11241)
 Bible Fragment from the Genizah (OIM A11242)
 Bible Fragment from the Genizah (OIM A11243)
 Fragment from a Qur'an (OIM A12029A)
 Fragment from a Qur'an (OIM A12029B)
 Grave Stela with Arabic Inscription (OIM E13708)
 Illuminated Gospel Written in Arabic (OIM A31403)
 Grave Stela with Coptic Inscription (OIM E1569)
 Flask (OIM E25513)
 Lamp with Cross Reflector (OIM E14478)
 Bowl Fragment Depicting the Deposition of Christ (Walters Art Museum 48.2734)
 Annual Lectionary Written in Bohairic Coptic (OIM A12089)

Administration

Ayyubid Coin with Arabic Inscription (OIM E25461)
 Fragment of Fritware Bowl (OIM E25571)
 Bowl with Mamluk Blazon (OIM E25582)
 Bowl with Mamluk Blazon (OIM E25450)
 Bowl with Mamluk Blazon (OIM E25505)
 Administrative Papyrus Written in Arabic (OIM E13755)
 Administrative Papyrus Written in Arabic (OIM E13757)
 Land Survey Stela with Arabic Inscription (OIM E13706)
 Weight (OIM E25645)

Business and Industry

Amphora with Coptic Inscription (OIM E27282)
 Mold for Metal Bird (OIM E25536)
 Mold for Metal Finial (OIM E25522)
 Weaving Tool (?) (OIM E25521)
 Textile Fragment (OIM E18875)
 Textile Fragment (OIM E17010)
 Embroidered Textile Fragment (OIM E25647)
 Spindle Whorl or Button (OIM E25502A)
 Spindle Whorl or Button (OIM E25502C)

Personal Adornment

Earring (OIM E25525)
 Bracelet with Stamped Decoration (OIM E25538A)
 Bracelet with Stamped Decoration (OIM E25538B)
 Kohl Stick/Surgical Instrument (OIM E25486)
 Kohl Stick/Surgical Instrument (OIM E25481)

Small Spoon or Spatula (OIM E25564)
 Beads (OIM E25453)
 Glass Bracelet (OIM E25553)
 Small Bottle (OIM E25508)
 Ring (OIM E25523)

Dining and Hospitality

Glass Bowl (OIM E25576)
 Glass Lamp or Goblet (OIM E25592)
 Goblet (OIM E25424)
 Bowl Fragment with Sgraffiato Decoration (OIM E25451)
 Bowl Fragment with Sgraffiato Decoration (OIM E25431)
 Small Goblet with Slip Decoration (OIM E25589)
 Bowl Fragment Decorated with Bird Attacking Deer (OIM E25575A, G)
 Fragment of a Chinese Bowl (OIM E33262)
 Fragment of an Imported Bowl with Sgraffiato Decoration (OIM E33297)
 Fragment of an Imported Spanish Bowl (OIM E25556)
 Lusterware Plate with Bird Motif (Walters Art Museum 48.2036)

Family Life

Lamp (OIM E25439)
 Lamp (OIM E25547)
 Candlestick (OIM E25570)
 Architectural Fragment (OIM E25574)
 Tapestry Panel (OIM E36021)

Leisure and Entertainment

Fragment of the *Thousand and One Nights* Written in Arabic (OIM E17618)
 Chess Piece (OIM E25483)
 Chess Piece (?) (OIM E25488)
 Rectangular Die (OIM E25515)
 Doll (OIM E25585)
 Doll with Pierced Ears (OIM E25460)
 Doll (OIM E25551)
 Writing Tablet with Exercises in Coptic (OIM E49447)
 Pen (OIM E25527)

Why Was Fustat Chosen as a Capital City?

Shabti (OIM E25416)
 Shabti (OIM E25465)
 Shabti (OIM E25447)
 Shabti (OIM E25472)

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