

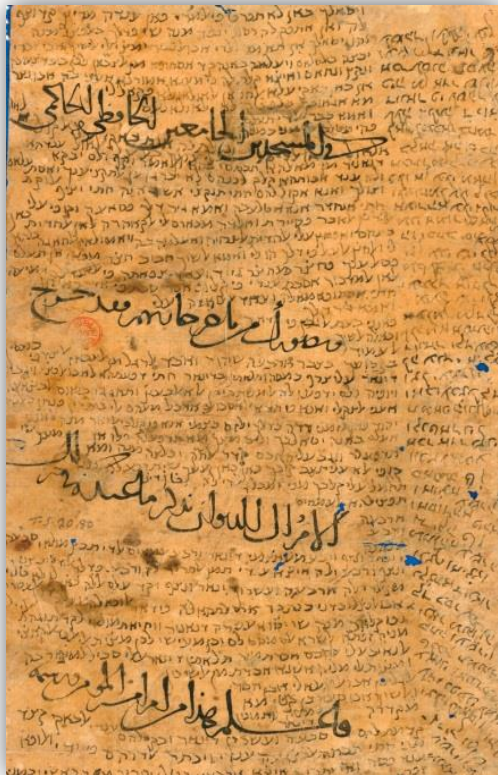
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Arabic in the Cairo Geniza: From "Scribbling" to State Documents

Series abstract:

Among the many unexpected finds the Cairo Geniza has yielded are hundreds—possibly thousands—of medieval documents of state in Arabic script. Among these are decrees, rescripts, petitions, tax receipts and fiscal accounts from period of the Fatimid caliphs in Egypt and Syria (969–1171). Most of these Fatimid state documents were reused for Hebrew-script texts, hence their survival in the Geniza. Perhaps paradoxically given that they did not survive in an archive, they offer glimpses of the complexity and sophistication of medieval Middle Eastern techniques of administration, archiving and document deacquisition. They also shed light on the proximity and palpability of state institutions to one of the largest and best documented Jewish communities of the Middle Ages.



Lecture 1:

The Cairo Geniza and the Lost Arabic Archives

11 May, 2017, 12:00-13:45 (Eshkol Observatory)

Lecture 2:

Technical Texts (How They Work and What They Tell Us): Petitions, Decrees and Memoranda of State

14 May, 2017, 16:00-17:45 (Rabin Observatory)

Lecture 3:

From Arabic to Hebrew Script:

Fustat's Serial Recyclers

15 May, 2017, 19:00-19:45 (in the frame of the

conference 'From Fustat to Haifa:

An International Workshop of the Israel Science

Foundation Celebrating 120 Years of Geniza

Research') (Eshkol Observatory)

A fragment from the closing section of a Fatimid caliph decree mentioning the mosques of al-Ḥāfiẓ and al-Ḥākīm in Cairo, reused for a Judaeo-Arabic letter to the India trader Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Netan'el in Alexandria, 1140. Cambridge University Library, T-S 20.80.