Sufis and Sufi culture, categories that Reid seeks to transcend; but if it is first and foremost the *features* of piety that are at stake, then what they have to say must have relevance to her inquiry. Of course, this quibble is not meant to diminish in any way the incredible richness that Reid brings to the investigation of devotional piety in those societies to which her book is devoted.

JESSICA L. GOLDBERG, *Trade and Institutions in the Medieval Mediterranean: The Geniza Merchants and Their Business World*, Cambridge Studies in Economic History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Pp. 450. $114.00 cloth, $91.00 e-book.

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Among the vast trove of documents dispersed from the Geniza of Cairo's Ben Ezra synagogue at the end of the 19th century, most of which are now preserved in Cambridge University Library, are roughly 1500 items written by medieval Jewish merchants. Some 900 of these, dating from the years 990 to 1080, form the key body of primary sources exhaustively examined and analyzed here by Jessica Goldberg. This "commercial corpus" (as Goldberg calls it, p. 37) largely comprises letters written in Judeo-Arabic that were passed between merchants based in Cairo's main business quarter of Fustat and their agents and associates located in the ports of the eastern and central Mediterranean basin. As precious witnesses to the history of the Mediterranean economy in a time from whence few other comparable sources survive, these documents have already featured in the pioneering studies of S. D. Goitein, as well as in several contributions by Abraham Udovitch, Moshe Gil, and Avner Greif. Yet while Goldberg readily admits her debt to these scholars' work, and especially to that of Goitein, her study makes a strong case for several critical revisions of their findings.

These revisions result in large part from Goldberg's shift from a European perspective to one seen "through the eyes of Geniza merchants" (p. 337). She is able to do this precisely because she proceeds inductively, letting the evidence of the letters themselves inform her about the actors, relationships, networks, commodities, and kinds of transactions involved. By doing so, she is able to steer clear of the powerful influence of earlier models that assumed the medieval European economy as the norm and that of Islam as a kind of heuristic "other" to be used for purposes of finding precedence, or for providing context and contrast. So in place of an earlier assumption that Jewish merchants in medieval Islam operated in an "informal" institutional context, with little reliance on or interference from Muslim courts and bureaucracies, and in which their own trade arrangements and relationships were based far more on "mutual trust and friendship" than on legal contracts and bureaucratic enforcement, she shows instead that these legal and administrative institutions had a profound impact on how and where these merchants conducted business.

Of even greater significance, however, is Goldberg's challenge to the narrative according to which the growth of the European economy starting in the late 11th century was mirrored in reverse by a corresponding decline in the Islamic world. This story is predicated on the characterization of the Islamic Mediterranean merchant as "middleman," engaged principally in the transit of African gold and Asiatic luxuries to Europe. According to this narrative, moreover, the Jewish merchant was the ultimate middleman thanks to his close ties with other diasporic Jews in Christian lands. Decline set in, however, when their control of transit trade was taken over by Italian Christian merchants at the start of the 12th century. Goldberg's

findings seriously undermine this scenario, as her merchants conducted *no* trade with Christian lands and confined their activities mostly to trade in locally and regionally produced agricultural commodities and textile manufactures. What luxury goods they did trade were mostly such "everyday luxuries" as olive-oil soaps or dyestuffs procured for the textile manufacturers with whom these merchants had business ties.

The picture of these merchants that emerges is one of men who, on the one hand, were deeply rooted in their local community and who carefully tended to their personal reputation while cultivating business relationships with local producers and manufacturers, and who, on the other hand, formed long-standing associations with Jewish merchants based in the other locales with which they traded, relying on them as well-connected agents and expert sources of information. The most successful of the Fustat merchants tended to be those who cultivated the largest and most strategically placed networks of business associates. During the earlier part of the century this role was played by Yusuf b. Yaʿqub Ibn ʿAwkal and, in the latter, by Nahray b. Nissim. Goldberg's analysis of roughly 400 documents associated with these men allows her to paint rather detailed portraits of their personalities, as well as of their activities and relationships, both personal and commercial. It also serves to show how the trade patterns of Fustat's Jewish merchants changed over the course of the century, shifting from a preponderance of commerce with the Tunisian centers of Qayrawan and its port of al-Mahdiyya and with Palermo in Sicily to a more eastward and regional trade with Palestine and Syria, even as they maintained trade with a more diverse group of ports in Tunisia and Sicily. This shift had nothing to do with European merchants and everything to do with diversifying risk in a time of increased political instability in the central Mediterranean. Patterns of trade shifted again in the last years of the 11th century, when a new generation of Fustat merchants began to concentrate on more far-flung trade with the Indian Ocean and al-Andalus. But this shift too had less to do with growing European dominance than with the growth of Egypt as the Mediterranean's chief locus of trade and Italian buyers' lack of interest in distinguishing the quality of goods they bought.

A detailed history of this later shift through the medium of the Cairo Geniza documents has yet to be written, and Goldberg seems to intimate that this will be her next project. One can only hope this is the case, given her intimate knowledge of the sources, grounding in both historiography and economic models, sophistication of analysis, good sense and judiciousness, and expert use of maps, charts, and tables. One also hopes, however, that when she writes that book she will have the confidence to streamline her prose, because the density and complexity of the narrative displayed here can intimidate all but the most committed of readers. Furthermore, one looks forward to a broadening of her outlook to integrate more fully the activities of the Jewish merchants of Fustat with those of other groups of merchants operating in the Mediterranean and beyond.