

This house remained in the Lebdi family, and was later occupied by and named after his son Abu 'l-Barakāt, an India trader like his father. It was situated in the Mamšūša-Maṣṣāša quarter, which bordered on the 'Fortress of the Candles,' the pre-Islamic nucleus of Fustat. In addition, Joseph Lebdi bought part of a house in the 'Fortress of the Candles,' which was known by his name. The other partner was the India trader Abu 'l-Surūr al-Levi b. Binyām. {He betrothed Joseph Lebdi's daughter, Sitt al-Ahl, in 1124.}<sup>14</sup> This house is mentioned in the engagement contract of Lebdi's granddaughter from November 1146. She received five out of twenty-four shares in the house of her grandfather and one half of the house of her father, Abu 'l-Barakāt (I, 36). Both were dead at that time. But, as was common in the Geniza period, the dead had taken care of the living.

<sup>14</sup> No. I, 34b, where he is called Abu 'l-Surūr Perahyā ha-Levi b. Benjamin.}

I, 25–29 *A Successful Voyage of Joseph Lebdi to Nahrwāra*

By June 1099, I assume, Joseph Lebdi had already left Fustat for India (see I, 20). After an absence of a year and ten months (I, 24, side a, lines 14–15), he was back in the summer of 1101 (I, 21) and at the end of the same year, "the large amounts," entrusted to him by Muslim merchants, Indian and Egyptian, had been delivered to their destination (I, 22). A letter sent from Egypt to the Maghreb reports that Lebdi had safely arrived in 'Aydhāb with 80 bales of lac and other goods coming from Nahrwāra, India (I, 25). This was about nine times the quantity of lac as that carried with him on his previous voyage, when he bought nine bales, eight of which were lost by shipwreck (I, 7, lines 9–10).

Lebdi undertook this large overseas venture in partnership with two other merchants, Abū Naṣr ('Victor'), the brother of the businesswoman al-Wuḥsha ('Désirée') {'Untamed'},<sup>1</sup> and one Farah ('Joy'), whom, because of the frequency of this name, I am still hesitant to identify. After arriving in 'Aydhāb, Lebdi hurried back to Fustat, in order to reach the business season, while he advised his partners, who had remained in 'Aydhāb, to send the lac in installments, in order not to overload the market with that product.<sup>2</sup> However, the two men were murdered in 'Aydhāb,<sup>3</sup> a circumstance that led to complicated lawsuits (I, 26–29, VII, 69). As explained in the comments below, their fate must be envisaged in connection with the general state of affairs in Egypt at that time.

<sup>1</sup> {Goitein ("Business Woman," 226) defined the name al-Wuḥsha: 'one without whom one feels lonely' or (id., *Med. Soc.*, 3:346): 'Object of Yearning, Désirée.' The name could also be vocalized al-Waḥsha. On the basis of the wide range of meanings covered by *whš*, the name might also be translated: loneliness, estrangement, coldness, ugly, or more likely: untamed. Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmā*, 2593, thus explains the male name Waḥsh.

<sup>2</sup> No. I, 27, line 16, suggests that sending the lac in small installments was Farah's initiative.

<sup>3</sup> As noted in VII, 69, line 4.}