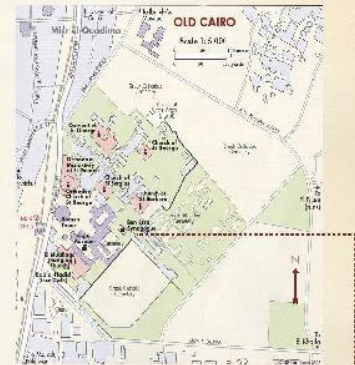


The Cairo Genizah

A thousand years ago, one of the most important centres of Jewry in the world, particularly in the East, was the community of Old Cairo (Fustāt). The Fustāt community was a centre of considerable social, economic, and religious activity. This community had close connections with the Jewish communities of Babylon, The Land of Israel, Spain, Sicily, North Africa, India, Yemen, and others.



Map of Eurasia showing the trade network of the Radhanites, c. 870 CE, as reported in the account of ibn Khordadbeh in the Book of Roads and Kingdoms. (<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Radhanites.png>)



Map of present day Old Cairo (Fustāt) and Ben Ezra Synagogue



Ben Ezra Synagogue before the renovation



Ben Ezra Synagogue after the renovation

The Jewish Community of Fustāt was divided between Babylonian and Palestinian Synagogues. The later followed the custom of the Land of Israel and worshipped at the Ben Ezra Synagogue. One of the rooms in this synagogue was utilised as a Genizah, or depository, from the eleventh to the nineteenth centuries.



The entrance to the Genizah



Ben Ezra Synagogue today