point or the centre for all Mediterranean countries of that great trade to India and other Eastern countries which made Aden such an important business centre and at the same time a flourishing Jewish community [1]. The Mamluk domination of Egypt, however, led to a steady decline of that trade—and consequently the direct information concerning the relations between the Jews of the Yemen and the other Jewish communities became scanty. But it would be a fallacy to infer from this that they had altogether ceased. An examination of the considerable number of Hebrew and Hebrew-Arabic manuscripts written in the Yemen during the xiiith-xvith centuries which have found their way into European and American libraries, proves convincingly that the spiritual life of this community was in full conformity with that of other Oriental Jewish communities. Thus it is not surprising to find Jews from Aden coming to and living in Palestine during the xvth century [2]. Things changed again with the conquest of most of the lands of the old Caliphate by the Osmanli Turks : In 1546 they entered even San'a, the capital of the Yemen, and although their possession of that country always remained most incomplete and precarious, it stimulated international travel and trade. Indeed, starting with the second part of the xvith century, more direct information about the relations between the Yemenites and the other Oriental communities is available [3], but the preponderance of Egypt in this relationship was not yet as marked as before. Constantinople, Palestine and Saloniki had likewise become important, while the

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[1] A very detailed and richly documented account of the part played by the Jews in this trade is to be found in E. Straus' invaluable *History of the Jews in Egypt and Syria under the domination of the Mamluks* (in Hebrew), vol. 1, 1944, pp. 193-200. Cf. also David Neustadt's excellent sketch of the *Economic life of the Egyptian Jews in the Middle Ages, Zion*, vol. 2, pp. 222-224.

[2] Cf. Ya'ari's Preface to Iben Safir, p. 7.

[3] Cf. the business letter sent from Aden to Cairo, published by S. Assaf, *Zion*, vol. 4, pp. 232-236 and the additional data given in that article. By the way, the conquest and holding of the Yemen was chiefly the concern of the Pashas of Egypt, cf. *Précis de l'histoire de l'Égypte*, vol. 3, part 1, p. 24 : Dès cette époque le Yemen, devenu province de l'Empire, jouera un rôle assez important dans les préoccupations de l'Égypte.