

INDIA TRADERS
OF THE MIDDLE AGES:
DOCUMENTS FROM THE
CAIRO GENIZA

“INDIA BOOK”

by

S.D. GOITEIN
AND
MORDECHAI A. FRIEDMAN

BRILL

India Traders of the Middle Ages

Études sur le Judaïsme Médiéval

Fondées par
Georges Vajda

Dirigées par
Paul B. Fenton

TOME XXXI

India Traders of the Middle Ages

Documents from the Cairo Geniza
(‘India Book’)

By

S. D. Goitein

and

Mordechai Akiva Friedman



THE BEN-ZVI INSTITUTE
JERUSALEM



BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON
2008

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Goitein, S. D., 1900–1985.

India traders of the middle ages : documents from the Cairo Geniza : India book, part one / by S. D. Goitein and Mordechai Akiva Friedman.

p. cm. — (Études sur le judaïsme médiéval ; v. 31)

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN-13: 978-90-04-15472-8 (hardcover : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 90-04-15472-8 (hardcover : alk. paper)

1. India—Commerce—History—To 1500—Sources. 2. Commerce—History—Medieval, 500–1500—Sources. 3. Cairo Genizah. I. Friedman, Mordechai Akiva. II. Title. III. Series.

HF3785.G65 2006

382.089'92401824—dc22

2006101956

ISSN 0169-815X

ISBN 978 90 04 15472 8

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

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PREFACE

The superb groundbreaking and seminal study of the Judeo-Arabic documents from the Cairo Geniza, conducted by S. D. Goitein (1900–85), a preeminent Medievalist and scholar of Jewish and Islamic Studies, revolutionized research in many diverse areas of these fields. His work did more to illuminate the momentous contribution of the Geniza manuscripts for the world of scholarship than that of any other individual. Goitein first ventured into Geniza research, a field, which he previously had ‘studiously avoided,’ rather by accident, in 1948 during an unsuccessful diplomatic mission to Budapest, Hungary, undertaken for the nascent State of Israel. His protracted stay afforded him the opportunity to examine a few Geniza fragments from the David Kaufmann Collection. However, his metamorphosis from being primarily a scholar of Islamic studies to becoming the leading light of Geniza scholarship began a couple of years later and was inextricably bound to this book. Goitein told the story on several occasions, but it is worthwhile repeating here:

In connection with my Introduction to Islamic Law, which I read to the Law Faculty of the Hebrew University (printed in book form Jerusalem, 1957) I became interested in the court records from the Cairo Geniza, some of which had been published and seemed to show an interesting interplay between Jewish and Islamic laws. During my yearly visits to Europe, where I gave summer courses to Jewish teachers, I examined Geniza manuscripts containing such records. But how great was my surprise, when, while commuting between Oxford and Cambridge, I discovered eleven court records from the years 1097–1098 forming the dossier of a law suit against a Tunisian merchant [Joseph Lebdi], who had set out from Egypt via Aden to India, carrying with him goods entrusted to him by other merchants, but had lost most of them in shipwreck and other misfortunes. I was electrified. The India trade was the backbone of medieval international economy. America was discovered because Columbus was seeking a direct route to India. But no documents about the subject had been known thus far in any language prior the Portuguese. If such material could escape Jewish scholarship, it was evident, that the socio-economic research on the Cairo Geniza, based on its Arabic documents, had not yet begun.¹

¹ Goitein, “Geniza Research,” 141–42. Cf. below, page 4.

In preparation for the present study, which he informally called his 'India Book,' Goitein began painstakingly and assiduously collecting and deciphering Geniza documents concerned with the Indian Ocean trade and traders, their backgrounds and families. His work established many milestones in Geniza research during the early 1950's. In 1954, he selected documentary fragments from the Cambridge University Library's Or. 1081 collection. The first manuscript turned out to be a fascinating letter, written to Moses Maimonides by his brother David, on his way to India (= VI, 4). The scholarly world was introduced to the important Taylor-Schechter New Series, when in the following year, Goitein removed a fragment of a letter written by Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan, 'Prince of Yemen,' to Abraham Ben Yījū, India (= II, 24), from a long-neglected container in that library's attic.

Though work on his India Book continued apace, Goitein gradually came to the realization that he could not undertake that study without a full exposition of the social realities in Egypt and the countries circling the Mediterranean basin, the point of initiation and final station of most of this socio-economic activity. When in 1958, he was invited to contribute a study on Geniza society to the Near Eastern Center of Los Angeles, Goitein decided on a major shift in his scholarly activity: "I was off India and on the Mediterranean."²

As evidenced by his momentous multi-volume *A Mediterranean Society*, which, with numerous related studies, occupied him for the rest of his life, Goitein was certainly 'on the Mediterranean.' But it would not be accurate to say that he was 'off India.' Much of the data embedded in the India Book texts was integrated into *A Mediterranean Society*. For a while, it even seemed as if publication of the India Book itself was imminent. When Shaul Shaked's *A Tentative Bibliography of Geniza Documents* was published in 1964, the manuscripts of Goitein's book-in-preparation were listed along with the published material. New items were constantly added to the collection. Goitein edited selected India Book texts in successive publications and included several of these items in his books, *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders* (1973)³ and *The Yemenites: History, Communal Organization, Spiritual Life* (1983).

² Goitein, op. cit., 142; id., *Med. Soc.*, 1:viii.

³ In a report on his research plans dated June 1, 1973 Goitein wrote: "I resolved to [publish] *Letters of Traders* as a separate book but to add to the Mediterranean selections a fair share of material from my 'India Book,' in order to remind the interested public that work on this compartment of Geniza research was still vigorously pursued."

One could say that he had an extended love affair with the India Book that prevented him from accepting with equanimity his forced separation from it. He repeatedly allowed himself to be drawn back. On at least one occasion, I had the chutzpa to advise him to finish with the Mediterranean scene before re-embarking on the journey to India. Echoes of his feelings, his plans and actions, surfaced in his correspondence. I refer to a number of his letters (written in Hebrew) to me. June 20, 1976: "With a heavy heart but sound mind, I now tend to accept your warning. I shall not occupy myself with the India Book for one day or even half a day, but—with the help of He who gives strength even to one who is not tired—I will devote all my time to finishing *A Mediterranean Society*." This commitment was short lived. Goitein was unable to resist the lure of the India fragments. In 1979, there was a surge of activity. On March 10, he wrote that he had completed the Short Description of the Manuscripts Used, "and now I am beginning to write the book." May 16: "My whole day is spent on the India Book. The task is enormous; I hadn't imagined how much so. But the more work there is, my strength increases." And September 24: "I am eager to return to the India Book, 'my might and first fruit of my vigor' (Gen. 49:3). If I am unable to complete it, I rely on you to undertake the task, because the material and its format are prepared." Goitein's final letter to me, dated January 5, 1985, exactly one month before his death, was written shortly after he had completed writing *A Mediterranean Society*, and this letter highlighted his long-anticipated shift in scholarly activity—"off the Mediterranean and on India": "The manuscript of the fifth and final volume is already in the hands of the publisher. On the very day I mailed it (December 17th)—like a 'commencement ceremony'—I began reworking new material for the India Book, this time 'seriously.' I mean: the book will be completed!"

My involvement in the project began in 1962. At the time, I was one of Goitein's many successive research assistants. He instructed me to compare his transcriptions to the manuscript Photostats of close to 300 texts, which then comprised the collection. I cannot claim that my notes were of much value, but as the years passed and I became more involved in Geniza research, I appreciated the opportunity that had been afforded me to become acquainted with this important undertaking. Goitein encouraged his students in many ways and referred to us as his collaborators or continuators. When, in his last years, he asked me to continue the work on the India Book, should he not live to achieve his goal, I could not refuse.

I know very well that the disciple's endeavors cannot possibly match the exemplary standard, which the master would have set, had he completed this magnum opus.

* * *

Almost from the beginning, Goitein arranged the documents in seven chapters. Each of the first five was associated with an important trader, the sixth with numerous merchants who had each left behind only a few papers and the seventh with fragments of general interest to the India trade (see below, pages 13–14). New items were added to the collection and numbered sequentially, even though they may have referred to a merchant, most of whose papers were collected in a different part of the corpus. These numbers (eventually 1–380) are cited in most of Goitein's publications. In 1979, when, with the addition of more manuscripts and his renewed involvement in the project, the sequential list became burdensome, Goitein rearranged all of the documents according to a 'New List,' following the original seven chapters. (He also decided on the title of the book at that time.) Thus, no. 64 in the 'Old List' became III, 18 (= chap. 3, no. 18). Goitein cited the New List numbers—which also contain some items not found in the Old List—in his subsequent publications and drafts for this book, and I, of course, have continued this usage. A comparative table of the Old List and New List numbers appears at the end of the book. Presently, the collection includes some 459 documents, comprising 523 shelf marks,⁴ including a few items, which I have added.

Goitein transcribed most of the texts in the collection and indexed data contained in them on card files. In the 1950's, when there were some 130 items in the entire collection, he translated and annotated most of the manuscripts that then comprised chaps. 1–3. Various aspects of his planning for the book changed a number of times. Chaps. 1–2 were prepared in Hebrew; chap. 3, in English, and Goitein planned editions in both languages. At one point, he also envisioned an edition, in which the Judeo-Arabic texts, that is, Middle Arabic written in Hebrew characters, would be transcribed in Arabic characters, for the benefit of Arabists, who do not read Hebrew; this remains a desideratum.

⁴ In some cases, different fragments are combined to make one document. However, one manuscript can also contain more than one document. When Goitein added a new document in the middle of a chapter, he sometimes designated it with the same number as the preceding item but added the letter 'a' to the new one. At other times, he added 'a' to the number of the preceding item and 'b' to the new one.

Among the questions yet to be explored in depth is the fundamental issue of the socio-economic realities that underlie the chronological boundaries of the Indian Ocean trade attested in these papers. “Most of the records come from a comparatively short period, approximately 1080–1160 C.E., with a mere sprinkling of documents from the years 1160–1240. What was true for these years must not have been necessarily applicable to the early eleventh or the late thirteenth centuries” (page 14). Goitein touched briefly on the question in other publications and in his unpublished papers explained:

During most of the eleventh century middle class merchants in Muslim Spain and Sicily, North Africa, Egypt, and Palestine-Syria took little interest in the India trade. There was enough to occupy them in the Mediterranean area. By the end of the eleventh century, when the Italians dominated shipping in the Mediterranean, the route to India had become the main field of activity for middle class overseas traders from Muslim countries. The India trade was mainly in the hands of great Muslim merchant families by the second half of the thirteenth century, and the middle class faded out.⁵

The drafts, which Goitein considered ‘final versions’ of the documents in chap. 1 and the first part of chap. 2 (the first 26 of 74 documents), were prepared, in English, from 1979 to the early 1980’s and comprised some 225 double-spaced typed pages. These have been incorporated with minor editorial revisions and additions in the present book. The few published studies in which Goitein edited other documents from the India Book served as the basis for the translations and annotation of those texts. Whenever possible, translations and annotation of other texts were based on the first drafts from the 1950’s. While these required fairly extensive editing, both in format and wording, a comparison with the drafts that Goitein prepared in later years showed that by and large he preserved his earlier work. When Goitein’s later research superseded comments in his earlier writings, I attempted to replace the old with the new. Attention was usually called to these changes.

I supplied the translations and descriptions of documents not found in those drafts or publications. For these texts, Goitein’s notations guided me in deciding, which should be translated in full and which should be only described and summarized. I have rechecked the transcriptions of all the Geniza documents translated and described in this book, mostly

⁵ Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:149; id., *Letters*, 231, where ‘the beginning of the thirteenth century’ is apparently a misprint for ‘the beginning of the twelfth century.’

by examining the original manuscripts. In a few instances, I supplied missing transcriptions. Obvious typographical errors or the like in Goitein's papers were corrected without any notation. Where I considered it necessary for style or clarity, Goitein's comments or translations were rephrased. As a rule, the few substantive changes in translations or comments, whether the result of a correction in Goitein's transcription or a different interpretation, were clearly marked for all documents found in his 'final version' drafts or in preliminary publications. My changes were not always marked in the case of Goitein's first drafts and working papers, if it was clear that the transcriptions, translations or comments were incomplete or the result of an apparent oversight. Otherwise, alternative translations, etc., were expressly indicated. All such changes or additions were bracketed and set in a different font. This procedure was followed for the few documents that I added to the collection as well as for other sections added.

Goitein noted in his papers that he did not explain many points in his comments and notes that accompanied the translations of documents, since these were to be discussed in the Introduction to the book. Unfortunately, he left neither a plan nor, for all intents and purposes, materials intended for the Introduction. This necessitated both supplementing textual comments and constructing an Introduction. His introduction to sec. 2, chap. 1 (The Lebdi Documents) became Introduction, chap. 2A. I adapted some of his other writings for Introduction, chaps. 1 and 2B, and I wrote the other sections in the Introduction (chaps. 2B1–3B). The resulting Introduction is not comprehensive but rather consists of selected studies.

Future research will hopefully complement these studies on the basis of the documents translated in sec. 2 and especially after the publication of additional material from chaps. 4–7. I have written a study on the status of women as reflected in the documents that form this collection, which is scheduled to appear in the forthcoming *Festschrift* in honor of Prof. Abraham Grossman.

The decipherment and translation of the Judeo-Arabic texts from the Geniza, which form the basis of this study, present multiple and often insurmountable obstacles in the path of the researcher. Whether during the passage to or from India or during centuries in the Geniza chamber in Fustat-Old Cairo,⁶ most fragments suffered mutilation of

⁶ I have followed Goitein's usage of spelling this often-repeated place name 'Fustat,' rather than 'Fuṣṭāt,' with diacritics.

some degree, and their language is evasive. Besides peculiar vocabulary, with meanings not given in any dictionary, and irregular grammatical forms, the style is more often than not ambiguous. For example, the writer of a letter often refers deferentially to the addressee, and for that matter to himself, in the third person, alluding metaphorically to their relationship as master and servant. But since he rarely expresses or repeats these words, we must surmise from the context, which was intended. Because of these reasons and other difficulties, including my own inadequacies, many of the translations are tentative.

The availability of multiple, related texts in the collection should assist in overcoming some of the complexities in understanding a particular document. Readers, who are interested in examining the texts in the original, will be able to consult a Hebrew-language publication, to soon follow the present volume, in which full editions of the Judeo-Arabic documents appear. An additional study including the papers of Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel (chap. 4 of the collection) is in an advanced state of preparation.

Work on this volume extended over a long period. During this time, I attempted to keep abreast of the most important relevant publications but undoubtedly missed many. As the manuscript was being sent to the publisher, the much-anticipated study by J. Blau, *A Dictionary of Mediaeval Judaeo-Arabic Texts*, Jerusalem 2006, appeared, and unfortunately I was unable to benefit from this important work.

Attention is called to the following symbols. In the translations, // // = written between the lines of the manuscript; << >> = added in the margin; [] = missing in the manuscript; [[]] = deleted in the original. My contributions, whether whole chapters or documents added to the collection or small additions or comments, are placed in brackets { } as opposed to square brackets and parentheses and set in a different font; {alt. tr.:} = alternative translation. Editorial changes that are not bracketed include titles supplied to many documents and revisions in others, the division of many of the documents into paragraphs and bibliographical data for previously published documents. I standardized the format for presenting the comments and notes that accompany the documents, bibliographic references, etc. No attempt was made to supply complete bibliographical references for citations of Geniza documents in scholarly literature; the interested reader should consult available bibliographies of the different collections. For biblical verses, I have used the New JPS translation and have replaced other translations used by Goitein. Words in the original texts that are

written in Hebrew or Aramaic, rather than Arabic, have been printed in italics in translation.

Unless otherwise specified, all dates are C.E. Other eras are cited in the documents: E.D. = Era of Documents (beginning fall, 312 B.C.E.), A.H. = Hijra year; A.M. = traditional year from Creation (5767 A.M. = 2006/7 C.E.). After a man's name, b. = *ibn, ben, bar*, Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic for 'son of.' After a woman's name, d. = 'daughter of.' This work does not contain a glossary, and definitions of technical terms are found at their first appearance, as noted in the Index. Attention is called here to the following terms, which are repeated frequently: *bahār* = a sac usually containing 300 pounds; *Furda* = the customs house of Aden; *kawraja* = score, parcel of 20 units; *mann* = approximately two pounds; *mithqāl* = a full-weight gold dinar; *qirāt* = $1/24$ of a dinar (or house); *ratl* = approximately one pound. References to verso of a document are indicated by *v*; otherwise, the reference is to recto. Citations are often made according to the line in the original text. Because of different word order in English, sometimes a note will be found in the adjacent line.

* * *

This research and the preparation and publication of this volume were made possible thanks to the support and cooperation of many institutions and individuals. I would like to express my deep gratitude to the librarians and staffs of the libraries, which house the manuscripts that Goitein and I used (see the Index of Geniza texts), and to the staff of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem. This research was supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, by the Israel Science Foundation (grant No. 717/99-2) and by the Joseph and Ceil Mazer Chair in Jewish Culture in Muslim Lands and Cairo Geniza Studies, Tel-Aviv University. I had the pleasure of working on this project at the Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies during the spring of 2000.

My friend Prof. Joel Kraemer read a first draft of most of the manuscript, corrected many errors and made valuable suggestions to improve the text. Needless to say, the responsibility for the book's contents rests on Goitein and me alone. A few sections of the book were written originally in Hebrew, and the following are based on translations by David Louvish: chaps. 2C-C1 and 3B of the Introduction and Documents, II, 33-36, 44. For the language editing, I had the good fortune

of benefiting from the expertise and sound advice of my friend Rafi Rosenbaum. My proficient research assistant Dr. Amir Ashur provided most valuable support. The Indexes were prepared by him as well.

Finally, my debt to my wife Marilyn, for her love, steadfast encouragement and patience, is boundless. My share in this work and all of my undertakings owe everything to my lifelong partnership with her.

I am most grateful to the Ben Zvi Institute and its successive heads, Professors Haggai Ben-Shammai and Menahem Ben-Sasson and most recently Aharon Maman, and its Academic Secretary Michael Glatzer, for their support of the project and undertaking to publish the book. Heartfelt thanks to Prof. Paul B. Fenton, for accepting this volume to the *Études sur le Judaïsme médiéval* series and to the staff of Brill for their assistance and cooperation in producing the volume.

Tel-Aviv University, 2006
Mordechai A. Friedman

SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS ON THE INDIA TRADE IN MEDIEVAL TIMES—A PREVIEW*

Until a few years ago, no letters or documents illustrating the medieval trade with India had been known to exist on either the Arabian or the eastern shores of the Indian Ocean. Yet the India trade was the backbone of the international economy in the Middle Ages in general and within the Islamic world in particular. More than anything else, it stimulated inter-territorial traffic, furthered the rise of a flourishing merchant class and created close and fruitful links between the countries of Islam and the Far East on the one hand and Europe on the other. In later medieval times, it was the search for the direct sea route to India that led to the discovery of America and other hitherto unknown parts of the globe and thus inaugurated the age of the unification of all mankind.

The archives of the cities and kingdoms of Italy, France and Spain have preserved records concerning their trade with the countries of the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean, especially from the twelfth century onwards. This was to a large extent a transit trade, a re-export of Oriental goods, originally brought from the countries of the Indian Ocean to Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. However, no such archives have existed, or have been saved in the countries of Islam.¹ Yet it is difficult, if not impossible, to draw a detailed picture of such a complicated socio-economic phenomenon as an extensive international trade without the help of letters and documents illustrating how this trade was actually conducted. Fortunately, it has been possible to assemble during the last decades a collection of records, written mostly in the Arabic language, albeit nearly exclusively with Hebrew characters, which provide much of the desired information. These Judeo-Arabic documents are mostly of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. They had been originally preserved in the so-called Cairo Geniza and are presently dispersed throughout many libraries of Europe and

* {Based on Goitein, *Studies*, 339–60, with minimal editing of the text and with some additions.}

¹ Cf. Sauvaget & Cahen, *Introduction*, 16.

the United States.² A first report about the Geniza papers as related to the India trade was provided in *Speculum*, the Journal of the American Medieval Academy, in April 1954.³ Meanwhile, many new finds have been made and the whole material was subjected to a systematic re-examination. In the following pages, a preliminary report about the main results of this scrutiny will be provided.

In order to forestall misunderstandings, I should like to remark at the outset that the share of the Jewish merchants in the India trade seems to have been comparatively modest. The import of these papers for the study of that commerce lies in the simple reason that thus far they are the only ones that have survived.⁴

The present writer's occupation with this valuable material came about quite fortuitously. Being interested in the interplay of Muslim and Jewish law, as attested in many records of the rabbinical courts found in the Geniza, I began collecting such records. One day, while browsing through an ancient stock of Geniza papers preserved in the Cambridge University Library in England, I came upon the minutes of a court session that dealt with a business trip to India, made by Joseph Lebdi, a merchant from Tripoli, Libya. Examining other Geniza collections preserved in the same library, and while commuting between Oxford and Cambridge, I was able to piece together the entire dossier of this case, comprising the records of eleven sessions held between November 9, 1097 and August 18, 1098. Four other documents connected with this lawsuit were also found. This was a startling discovery. For up to that time, only very few and disconnected Geniza fragments dealing with the India trade had been published (including one treated by the present writer). If such precious material about as fascinating a subject as the India trade during the eleventh century had escaped the attention of the scholars up to that time, one was entitled to assume that the Geniza contained much more information about it not yet registered. Subsequent visits to the libraries concerned proved that this assumption was more than justified. Slowly, the disjointed fragments became meaningful

² Cf. Goitein, *Studies*, 279–95 {and id., *Med. Soc.*}.

³ Goitein, "From the Mediterranean."

⁴ {The situation has not changed significantly since these remarks were written. One noteworthy discovery of documents from the countries of Islam concerning the Indian Ocean trade is the archive from the thirteenth century Red Sea port al-Qūṣayr (on which, see Guo, *Commerce*). That archive, however, is of a rather limited geographical and chronological scope, and the published editions of the texts are often unreliable; see Friedman, "Qūṣayr."}

and the personalities of the more important merchants and communal leaders took shape. In the article of 1954, referred to above, the present writer was able to report about one hundred and thirty Geniza papers dealing with the India trade. At the time of the writing of these lines, the number of relevant items has risen to three hundred and thirty. However, no substantial increase is expected, except of course in case some new Geniza collections should be discovered.⁵

This search for Geniza records needs some elucidation. As has been explained elsewhere, the Geniza was not an archive, but just the opposite, it was a kind of wastepaper basket, into which discarded writings were thrown often after they had been torn apart so that all its contents were topsy-turvy.⁶ Thus one leaf of the minutes of a court session dealing with the case alluded to above was found in Cambridge and the second in Oxford. Of a letter sent from Aden, southern Arabia, to India, three fragments have been preserved in three different collections, and there are many more cases of documents pieced together from fragments preserved in two or three separate collections of manuscripts.

As a rule, there is no connection whatsoever between one Geniza fragment preserved in a library and the other following it in the same series. Under these circumstances, there is no other way for the student other than to try to scrutinize all the existing Geniza documents (about ten thousand),⁷ a task made difficult not only by their sheer number, but also by the poor state of preservation of many of them and the additional difficulties of paleography, language and subject matter. The existing catalogues of Geniza collections are of no help, since they are not detailed enough to indicate whether a fragment refers to the India trade or not. Thus, the best of all printed catalogues, that of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, gives one instance of a letter from India, while in fact over thirty documents in that collection deal with our subject. {Recently published catalogues have not significantly changed the situation.}

There are, however, some mitigating circumstances. A considerable part of the material preserved represents the remnants of archives of

⁵ {Goitein wrote this section in July 1965. Neither the manuscripts added by Goitein to the collection in later years nor the few pieces, which I subsequently added, with which it numbers some 459 documents, have significantly altered the essential points of this review.}

⁶ Cf. Goitein, *Studies*, 287. {Also see id., *Med. Soc.*, 1:7.

⁷ This number was a preliminary estimate of the Geniza manuscripts with specifically documentary, non-literary content; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:9–14.

families or individual merchants. Once the pieces that originally had emanated from one and the same source have been reunited, many puzzles are resolved and coherent stories can be reconstructed. Similarly, in each period certain personalities and issues were predominant, a circumstance which also enables us to coordinate the *disjecta membra* of the Geniza. Finally, the letters, contracts and court records are mostly written in a clear and factual fashion, so that even small fragments often contain a complete and intelligible piece of information.

The term India trade is taken here in the widest sense of the word, comprising commercial activities and travel stretching from the ports of the Red Sea in the West to the shores of Sumatra, Indonesia, in the East. As may be remarked in passing, not a single Geniza letter referring to direct contacts with China has been discovered thus far.⁸

{Goitein's definition of the boundaries of the India trade approximates two geographical terms used in medieval Arabic, (*al-*)*Hind* and *bahr al-Hind*. *Hind* is used in reference to a wide expanse, the exact limits of which vary somewhat. As narrowly defined, it denotes the regions east of the Indus. In its wider usage, it designates the entire region from Makran (which straddles modern Iran and Pakistan), in the West, to the Indonesian Archipelago and mainland Southeast Asia, in the East. In reference to the larger area the terms *bilād al-Hind* or *diyār al-Hind* ('the lands of Hind') are often used.⁹

In the Geniza documents we find the three terms, *al-Hind*, *bilād al-Hind* and *diyār al-Hind*, listed here in descending order of frequency. These seem to be used more or less interchangeably, and I have not identified any particular pattern in the use of one term or the other as concerns the geographical area intended. I assume that they refer to the same areas intended by the same terms in Arabic sources.¹⁰ Most of the India traders, whose papers were preserved in the Geniza, were usually active along the western coast of India. Abraham Ben Yijū, who spent most of his seventeen years in the East on the Malabar Coast of Southwest India, is spoken of as having been in *bilād al-Hind* or in *al-Hind*.¹¹

⁸ Cf. Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, 107; id., *Letters*, 25. The eastern limits of the India trade attested by the Geniza documents applied during that period to Arabs as well. See Wink, *Al-Hind*, 1:55–56; Abulafia, "Asia," 446.

⁹ Cf. Maqbul Ahmad, "Hind," Wink, *Al-Hind*, 1: 5, 81, 109, 190, etc.

¹⁰ It is clear that the terms *bilād al-Hind* or *diyār al-Hind* included *al-Hind*, but the opposite might not be the case. I do not know on what basis Gil & Fleischer, *Yehuda ha-Levi*, 265, 438, n. 9, defined (*bilād*) *al-Hind* in some Geniza texts as northeastern India.

¹¹ See, e.g., II, 16, line 25, II, 28–29, line 21, III, 50, line 2. Also note the parallel between II, 49, line 4, *diyār al-Hind*, and IV, 1, line 8, *al-Hind*.

In some texts, it is clear that the writer intended designating a geographical area that extended beyond India to the east. Thus when a legal authority in Aden, 1156, wanted to reinforce his ruling that all who had been on a ship that had sunk perished, he stated that none of the travelers, who arrived in Aden from the entire Indian Ocean, had seen any trace of the ship or heard of it: “Travelers arrived in these two years in ships from every sea: from all the lands of *Hind* and its provinces (*sāʿir bilād al-Hind wa-ʿamālhā*), from the land of the Zanj and its provinces,” etc.¹² A legal question addressed to Abraham Maimuni concerns a trader who had traveled to *bilād al-Hind* and was reported to have died in Faṣṣūr, a port on the island of Sumatra.¹³

The pivotal role of Yemen, especially Aden, in the India trade is discussed repeatedly in this book. But in speaking of the boundaries of the India trade, the Egyptian Jews combined two terms: *diyār al-Yaman wal-Hind* (‘the lands of Yemen and Hind’).¹⁴ In translations of texts in this book, *al-Hind* has usually been translated ‘India,’ but the reader should keep in mind that the area designated by the modern term was not necessarily intended.

There is some ambiguity in Arabic sources as to the limits of *baḥr al-Hind*, ‘the sea of Hind,’ as well, though often the entire Indian Ocean was clearly intended. Sometimes, its western boundary is given as Aden.¹⁵ This term rarely appears in the texts of this book, and I have noted only two instances.¹⁶ A merchant about to set sail on the Indian Ocean refers to *al-baḥr al-kabīr*, ‘the great sea.’¹⁷ As is the case in Arabic sources, the Indian Ocean (like the Mediterranean) is sometimes designated in the Geniza letters by the name of the adjacent coastal area. So, David Maimonides mentioned in his letter to his brother Moses, the man who would accompany him in his journey to *al-baḥr al-Mālī[bārī]*, ‘the Mala[bar] Sea.’¹⁸ There is no reason not to assume that when we find *baḥr al-Hind*

¹² No. II, 71, margin, lines 1–3.

¹³ No. VII, 30. A translation of the upper left fragment (now numbered ENA 4020, f. 41) of the document is found in Goitein, *Letters*, 228–29. After “traveled to the land of India,” Goitein, who was not familiar with the right half (TS Misc. 27.3.2), restored, in translation: “he traveled to Faṣṣūr,” but these words do not appear in that fragment.

¹⁴ No. I, 10, line 16 (see 196, n. 1), verso, line 10, I, 11, line 2 (there, without *diyār*).

¹⁵ See Hartmann, “*Baḥr al-Hind*.”

¹⁶ Nos. VI, 41, line 6, VII, 13, line 7.

¹⁷ No. VI, 1, margin, lines 9–10. According to Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 231, n. 32, *al-baḥr al-kabīr* usually refers to the Red Sea.

¹⁸ No. VI, 4v, line 3. Compare, VII, 54, line 9, *baḥr ʿAydḥāb*, in reference to the sea off of that Red Sea port.

in the Geniza papers it referred to the entire expanse of the Indian Ocean intended in Arabic sources. The same evidently was intended in contemporary Hebrew sources, where the equivalent *yam Hōdū* was used. This writer's earlier suggestion that when Maimonides referred to his brother David as drowning in that sea, he intended the sea adjacent India is subsequently, gratuitous.¹⁹

A number of items, not related to the area of the Indian Ocean, as defined above, but connected with prominent India traders, have also been included. For when we find a merchant one year in India, and the following year in Spain and Morocco selling Oriental products, it stands to reason that his activities in the farthest West were closely connected with those in the countries of the Indian Ocean.²⁰ In addition, some documents that throw light on the personality and the cultural level of the merchants concerned were also taken into consideration. About eighty of the three hundred and thirty items referred to above have only an indirect bearing on the subject.

On the other hand, hundreds of Geniza papers not included in the collection described here are of importance for the history of the India trade. These are letters dealing with the commerce between the countries of the Mediterranean basin, mainly during the eleventh century, in which regular mention is made of the products of the Orient alongside those of the countries directly concerned. For reasons of expediency these Mediterranean papers are dealt with separately.²¹

Most of the Geniza papers related to the India trade are letters. Many were sent from Aden or another town in southern Arabia, from a Red Sea port, or from India to the capital of Egypt {or to Old Cairo—Fustat} or vice versa. Others—the most interesting ones—went from Aden to India or vice versa, or even from one place in India to another. Still others were exchanged between Arabia and ports of the Red Sea. It is astonishing that all these letters have found their way into the Cairo Geniza. Many of them must have remained in India (whose climate and termites are not very merciful to paper) for a considerable number of years and then were exposed to erosion as a result of travel by sea

¹⁹ See Maimonides, *Epistles* (Shailat), 229; Friedman, "Maimonidean Letters," 201. For the use of the Hebrew term, see, for example, *Itinerary of Benjamin*, 62: "and one goes down the river which falls into the Indian Ocean (in the Hebrew text: *yam Hōdū*) unto an island called Kish." For the island of Qays, also spelled Kish, in the Persian Gulf, see II, 23, line 10, note and introduction to II, 46.

²⁰ This applies in particular to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel; see below.

²¹ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*

via Arabia to a Red Sea port and from there to a trek through harsh desert conditions, until a town on the Nile was reached. The journey on the Nile, which also required several weeks, was by no means safe from danger. Despite all this discomfort, the merchants kept their records for so long a time in order to protect their rights. Neither Muslim nor Jewish law of that period knew forfeiture by the statute of limitations and, as an Arab proverb has it, “the bankrupt rummages through the business papers of his father” (in order to find a forgotten claim against a debtor).²²

Due to the precariousness of communication, letters were usually sent in duplicate or even triplicate in two or three different ships, and many statements referring to this custom are found in the Geniza papers. The present writer has repeatedly found fragments of two and even three copies of one and the same letter. This proves, of course, that in the cases concerned, all the copies had arrived safely and were carried by the receiver all the way from India to the capital of Egypt. Copies of the same letter are often written in different hands, which show that a larger firm employed two or more clerks. The original, written by the head of the firm, would also be sent along.²³

A few family letters sent, e.g., from Aden to Sicily, or from Dahlak on the southern tip of the Red Sea to Tripoli, Libya, or from Alexandria to India, have been found in the Geniza, but not a single business letter going from a place south-east of Egypt to a Mediterranean country west of Egypt, or vice versa. This can hardly have been due to mere chance. Rather, it indicates that Old Cairo served as terminus both for the Mediterranean and the Indian trade. Although, as we shall presently see, most of the India travelers came from the Western countries of the Mediterranean, it was impracticable to do business between India, or even Arabia or East Africa, and Sicily, Tunisia or Spain directly. The fluctuation of prices on the bourses of Old Cairo was so great and the time required for travel from the western Mediterranean to the countries of the Indian Ocean so long that it was of no avail to place orders

²² Cf. 224, n. 2. M. Shevu'ot 7:7: “We did not find among our father’s documents that this contract was collected.”

²³ For this practice, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:304, 476, n. 17. Examples of multiple copies of letters or accounts in chaps. 1–3 are found in II, 13–15, II, 16–19, II, 21–24, II, 56–57, III, 12–14; references to such copies are found in II, 11av, lines 22–23, II, 21–24v, l. 1, II, 49, line 14, II, 67v, line 21, II, 71v, lines 55–56, III, 4, line 13, III, 6v, line 2; also see 564, n. 2, 591, n. 28, 616, n. 11, 654. An additional example is cited in Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 178, n. 191.}

from one of those distant parts to the other. One sold and bought in Old Cairo. Even from Alexandria one would normally order Oriental goods from the capital of Egypt, not from any point beyond it.

Business letters invariably open with polite and often very dignified phrases, which occupy between four to sixteen lines; depending on the circumstances, five to eight lines being the average. From the wording of the introduction one can immediately recognize the respective social position of the two correspondents, as well as the state of business between them. Unfortunately, the recipients had the habit of cutting off this preamble, which was not needed for reference, and used the free space on the back as scrap paper. Since that space usually contained the address, this habit is, from our point of view, rather disconcerting. One may ask how the recipients themselves remembered the names of the senders; for letters, as a rule, were not signed, but bore the sender's name on the left side of the address. The answer is that the identity of the sender was recognized by his handwriting or that of his clerk.

The first part of the main body of a letter acknowledges the arrival of the goods, letters or messengers sent by the addressee or announces their loss through shipwreck or attack by pirates. The letter then describes the actions taken with respect to the addressee's orders. In the second part, the writer would deal with his own shipments. Personal or communal affairs would also be referred to, as a rule briefly, but sometimes at great length.²⁴ Near the end, the presents accompanying the goods ordered would be enumerated, a section usually opening with the phrase; "I am enclosing also items of no value or significance whatsoever." In the Mediterranean correspondence, one out of fifty letters would contain such a section. In letters going between Aden and the Malabar Coast it is commonplace. Thus one is induced to assume that the regular attachment of presents to commercial shipments was a custom taken over from the Indian merchants.²⁵

Practically every letter concluded with greetings to the recipient's household (including his Indian business agent, who was legally his slave)²⁶ and his friends {as well as notables and other associates}. For us, these greetings are of great importance, for the names mentioned in

²⁴ As, for example, in the letters published in Goitein, "Kīsh." {See II, 21–24, II, 46.

²⁵ In III, 4, line 11, the writer notes that he is sending gifts as a token of appreciation for the services, which the recipient renders him in India.

²⁶ This refers specifically to the letters sent to Abraham Ben Yijū.

them often enable us to identify the addressee and in some instances also the writer, in case the address has not been preserved.

Items of private correspondence of the India merchants have also found their way into the Geniza. Novices in those foreign parts would describe the terrors of the Indian Ocean, which was so different from the quiet waters of the Mediterranean, and the ships which were held together by ropes instead of nails,²⁷ or complain about their loneliness and miserable home-sickness. The merchants would send home presents and goods for the use and maintenance of their families or more distant relatives, as well as donations for religious scholars or institutions. Announcements of such shipments as well as thanks for their receipt, often very elaborate, have been preserved. The presents were of the greatest possible variety, ranking from Oriental spices and costly textiles to Chinese porcelain or an Indian slave girl of six, whom the merchant's wife back home would bring up to become her personal attendant.

As far as we are able to ascertain, merchants normally did not take their wives while traveling to the countries of the Indian Ocean. Since it was customary to remain in the East for several seasons, long years of separation ensued, and sometimes tensions resulted, which are reflected in the Geniza letters. Travel, no doubt, had also a romantic aspect. The beauty and charm of the women of Yemen are praised in both the Hebrew and the Arabic literature of the period. In one instance, a traveler from Spain married a Yemenite girl; the representative of the Jewish merchants of Old Cairo most prominent in the Geniza papers {Abū Zikrī Kohēn} was married to a lady from Aden. It should be remarked that not only the wives, but also the parents, sons or brothers of the India travelers displayed great distress over the long absence of their beloved. All in all, the family letters are a valuable source of information for the social aspects of overseas commerce.

The second largest group of Geniza papers referring to the India trade is composed of documents of legal character. Invariably, a merchant embarking on so long a journey did business not only for himself, but also for others, or acted at one and the same time as an agent for

²⁷ This difference in ship construction aggravated fears. "We set sail in a ship with not a single nail of iron in it, but held together by ropes; may God protect with His shield!" (VI, 1, lines 14–15; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:340). Lewis, "Maritime Skills," 247: "nails were also used at times." Meyer, *Glass*, 111–12: "It might be safer to say that many or most of the medieval Indian Ocean ships were sewn rather than *all* of them." On the dangers of sea travel, see below, 157–64.

one or, usually, several investors. In such a case, a deed of *commenda*, or 'partnership according to Muslim law,' as it was called in Jewish legal parlance, would be drawn up. When the traveler came home, or even when he returned only from India to Aden, he would make a statement about his dealings in the interest of his partners and deposit it with the local rabbinical or Muslim court. The partners, on their part, would write out a release showing that the transaction had been concluded to their complete satisfaction. Naturally, things did not always go smoothly. The resulting disputes would be aired before the rabbinical court, which had largely the character of a merchants' court, since most of its members were experienced businessmen. Custom, reason and expedience, rather than any written law, formed the basis of their decisions. Since shipwreck was a recurrent feature of seafaring on the Indian Ocean, statements about men perished and goods lost, or goods retrieved by divers, were made before the nearest court and forwarded to the parties concerned. The estates of merchants whom death overtook on their travels would be carefully listed, in order to preserve them for their heirs back home—to ensure, as far as they could be saved from the rapacity of the Sultans in whose territories the death occurred. Discord about communal leadership (which was not unrelated to business, the safety and efficiency of which depended largely upon the local representative of the merchants) is also reflected in legal documents. Even poems extolling the merits of these leaders are not without historical value.

In addition to letters and legal documents, the Geniza has preserved a variety of smaller items related to the India trade. Memos accompanying shipments specify the goods sent, their quantity and often their price and sometimes instructions on how to dispose of them. We have some accounts of a brass factory in India, specifying the materials used and the wages paid.²⁸ Unfortunately, documents of this type are comparatively rare, presumably because there existed no religious scruples about their destruction, since they did not contain the name of God.²⁹

As to subject matter and personalities mentioned, the Geniza records on the India trade collected thus far refer to the following topics:³⁰

²⁸ See III, 18–20, 28a.

²⁹ This relates, of course, to the larger question of the nature of the Geniza. On the deposit there of items on which God's name did not appear, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:1–2.

³⁰ The following seven topics, corresponding to the seven chapters of the book, have been edited to reflect the minor changes in Goitein's subsequent planning.

1. Joseph Lebdi of Tripoli (Libya). His journey in 1095–97 to Nahrwāra (Anhalwāra) in the Gujarat, India, his dealings with Ḥasan b. Bundār, representative of the merchants in Aden, and his lawsuits with customers in Egypt and Tunisia whose goods he had carried with him on his journey. Other documents further record travels and commercial ventures of Joseph Lebdi and his son, and details about his family.³¹
2. Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan b. Bundār, a shipowner, representative of merchants in Aden and Naḡid (Prince) of the Land of Yemen; his ancestors, agnates, cousins and descendants, their business correspondence and other papers related to them. His father was representative of the merchants in Aden at the time of Joseph Lebdi's trip and is mentioned as such also in other Geniza papers from the second half of the eleventh century. Maḍmūn himself was active during the first half of the twelfth century (he died in 1151) and was succeeded by his eldest son. Another Maḍmūn (b. David), presumably his great-grandson, held the same position in Aden around 1220.³²
3. Abraham b. Yījū of al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia, resident in India during the years 1132 through 1149. The letters addressed to and sent by him during this period constitute the most important part of the preserved India papers. Ben Yījū also possessed a brass factory in India, about which we hear much. After his return to Aden, he spent several years in Yemen but after his only son died there {another son having previously died in India}, he returned to Old Cairo in order to marry off his only daughter to a member of his family, who had emigrated from Tunisia to Sicily during the years of his absence. Three nephews accepted the invitation of the old India trader and traveled from Mazara, Sicily, to Old Cairo. The rich heiress' marriage contract {dowry list} with her eldest cousin is preserved in the Russian National Library, St. Petersburg.³³
4. Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel al-Dimyātī (family name derived from Damietta, the Mediterranean port on the right arm of the Nile) of Old Cairo. In a letter from Spain he was called “the man who is

³¹ See below, 27–36. While Goitein used ‘Nahrawāra’ in his writings, I have adopted the more accepted spelling Nahrwāra. As Goitein noted, this is Anhalwāra, modern Paṭan. See Hardy, “Anhalwāra” and Maqbul Ahmad, *India*, 177 (index).

³² See below, 37–47.

³³ See below, 52–89.}

the center of all the leading personalities of his time”—a designation well deserved in view of his extended travels, his wide cultural interests and his high social position. We are able to follow his commercial and other activities in Egypt, India, Yemen, Morocco and Spain from approximately 1125 {1129} through 1146.

5. Abū Zikrī Kohēn Sijilmāsī, from Sijilmāsa (once a great caravan city in Morocco), a representative of merchants in Old Cairo who made prolonged journeys to India and also entertained close relations with his home country Morocco. Dated documents: 1132 through 1148 {1131–ca. 1149}.
6. Other traders. Some other India traders whose letters or documents have been preserved: four novices, the early birds, North Africans, Alexandrians, miscellaneous.
7. Documents of general relevance for the India trade: contracts, court records, inventories, and other documents of legal character; business letters and accounts, the writers of which are otherwise unknown or whose names are not preserved; letters concerning personal or communal matters.

Several hundreds of other merchants and travelers are mentioned, and for many of them the approximate time and place can be fixed. Some Muslims, known from literary sources, such as Bilāl b. Jarīr, the actual ruler of southern Yemen in the 1140's, or Rāmishṭ, the great shipowner, who was buried in Mecca in April 1140, are copiously mentioned. A Christian Indian and a number of Hindu merchants are also referred to, some of them repeatedly.

Trying now to point out which categories of information are provided by the material just described, we would like to remind the reader that in view of its specific character, utmost circumspection is recommended in its perusal. Most of the records come from a comparatively short period, approximately 1080–1160 C.E., with a mere sprinkling of documents from the years 1160–1240. What was true for these years must not have been necessarily applicable to the early eleventh or the late thirteenth centuries. Most of the hundreds of merchants mentioned came from a comparatively closely-knit group. This has the advantage that we are able to study at least one segment of the India trade very intimately. However, generalizations on the basis of this material should be made only with great caution. Even within this limited group, chance or the whims of men played an important role with regard to the information that has come down to us. For example, no less than sixty-two {now: more than eighty} orders of payment signed by a single merchant

(Abū Zikrī Kohēn) have been preserved.³⁴ However, of all the hundreds of other persons who have left us their writings, taken together, less than five orders of payment have been found. This proves, of course, that normally such material was not deposited in the Geniza. Only the aforementioned merchant and one or two others had religious qualms about its destruction.³⁵

Naturally, the Geniza records contain particularly rich information about the goods exchanged between the countries of the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, their prices in the different cities in which they were traded, their modes of transport, customs duties and other expenses connected with them, and details about their relative importance. A provisional list comprises seventy-seven commodities going West and one hundred and three exported to the East.³⁶ Those coming from or through India and other countries of the Indian Ocean may be classified as follows:

³⁴ Contained in V, 32–42.

³⁵ The orders of payment of money are all dated and closely resemble the formulas used by us: “Kindly pay to bearer (without name) such and such a sum (in *words*) of dinars only”. In addition, often, but not always, the number is written in Coptic numerals at the head of the order. A tiny piece of paper, the size of half of a modern check was sufficient for an order of one hundred dinars (worth about \$5,000). Most of the orders bear on the right upper corner the letter *b*, an abbreviation of the Aramaic formula {*bi-shmākh rahmānā*} *In Your name, O Merciful* (which corresponds to and may have been the model for the Muslim formula *In the name of God, the compassionate and merciful*). In addition, the Hebrew word {*emet*} for *Truth* often was written on the head of an order of payment. Since Truth was one of the epithets of God, some merchants might have had scruples with regard to the destruction of papers on which such orders were written. As may be remarked in passing, the Hebrew word for Truth was regarded in this connection as an acrostic or abbreviation of Ps. 85:12 “Truth springs out from the earth” in the meaning: any misuse of the order will be discovered in due course. The orders to pharmacists, grocers, wine merchants, etc., for the delivery of commodities to bearers are never dated. {The figures for the value of a dinar are no longer relevant. Two dinars were sufficient for the monthly income of a lower middle class family; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:359. For the superscription *bi-shmākh rahmānā*, see Goitein, *Yemenites*, 342; id., *Med. Soc.*, 5:325, 525, n. 13; Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 176, n. 152, and literature cited there; id., “Institution,” 40–41, 45. For the use of ‘truth’ discussed here, cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:241. BT Ta’anit 8a associates Ps. 85:12 with the divine reward of rain for discharging a trust and, by implication, the dire consequences of failing to do so.}

³⁶ This table was drawn up upon the assembling of about one hundred and fifty Geniza papers related to the India trade. Although the number of such records has meanwhile doubled {now: more than tripled}, no substantial change in the relation of the various groups could be observed, although the actual number in most of the groups will have to be increased. The fact that one hundred and fifty papers provided approximately the same picture as three hundred and thirty is encouraging. It seems to prove that the Geniza is indicative of the actual situation; at least as far as the group mainly represented in it is concerned. {For the following lists of goods, cf. Meyer, *Glass*, 101–3.

A. Spices, aromatics, dyeing and varnishing plants and medical herbs	36 items
B. Iron and steel (a chief commodity)	6 varieties
C. Brass and bronze vessels	12 items
D. Indian silk and other textiles made mainly of cotton	8 items (only!)
E. Pearls, beads, cowrie shells and ambergris	4 items
F. Shoes and other leatherwork	2 items
G. Chinese porcelain, Yemenite stone pots and African ivory	3 items
H. Tropical fruits, such as coconuts	5 items
I. Timber	<u>1 item</u>
Total	77 items

This list requires some explication. Group A outranks by far all the others not only in number, but also in the frequency of occurrence and in value. It may be, however, that this prominence was partly due to the fact that the professions of perfumer, druggist, apothecary and dyer were extremely popular among the Jews in the countries of Islam. Thus the denomination of the traders might have had something to do with the character of their trade.

Different types of iron and steel loom large in the Geniza records, but only as raw materials. Indian swords, so famous in Arabic literature, are never mentioned. Whether the Middle East Muslims preferred to manufacture their own weapons, or whether the Jews, for one reason or another, refrained from trading in this commodity, needs further elucidation.

The details about the fabrication of copper vessels are very remarkable and certainly deserve the attention of the specialists. Southwestern India was famous both for its copper mines and its bronze and brass industry. The Geniza shows us: (a) that large quantities of copper, lead and other raw materials of that industry were imported to India from the countries of the West; and (b) that old or broken vessels and implements of all descriptions were sent from Aden to India and worked there into new utensils according to order, i.e., according to specifications provided. This seems to indicate (a) that the demands of the bronze and brass industry of southwest India were far larger than the local copper ores were able to satisfy; and (b) that the Indian industry was so highly regarded that the Adenese merchants took the trouble and the risk

to order vessels from India rather than from Yemenite coppersmiths, although these too must have had a long tradition behind them.

As for textiles, Indian muslin {Indian red silk}, called *lānis* {*lānas*} in some letters and *lālis* {*lālas*} in others,³⁷ as well as muslin clothing are frequently mentioned, but mostly as presents sent by the India traders to their wives, to business friends or to religious dignitaries. On the other hand, Indian cotton fabrics were traded in considerable quantities, but still were only of secondary importance. Since textiles took up much cargo space, only precious textiles were, as a rule, considered worthwhile to ship; but the Jewish traders represented in the Geniza catered mostly to middle class customers.

Similarly, Chinese porcelain and such rarities as Yemenite stone pots appear in lists of presents (or household goods ordered), but not as objects of regular commerce.

Timber must have been one of the major exports of India, but the shipbuilders of Arabia most probably carried the timber needed by them on their own dhows, while the building industry in the Egyptian cities must have made use of importers other than those represented in the Geniza. In any event, Indian timber is almost absent from our records.

In the whole of the 'classical' Geniza, i.e., the documents coming from the tenth through the thirteenth centuries, there is not a single reference to slave trade by Jews, either in the Mediterranean and African or Indian waters. Naturally, slaves are frequently referred to, especially as domestic help and as business agents, and we read about the acquisition and sale of such persons, but nowhere are Jews the merchants handling this business. According to literary sources, Jews traded in slaves during the ninth century, and the sixteenth century Geniza records prove that, at the time of the great Ottoman conquests, they again became active in this line, but for reasons which cannot be discussed here, they did not participate in the slave trade during the period covered by this study. Consequently, the Geniza papers do not contain any information about this important part of the Indian and African trade.³⁸

As eastbound, i.e., sent from the ports of the Red Sea or from Aden, the following categories of goods have been noted in the Geniza papers:

³⁷ See 307, n. 10.

³⁸ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:130–47. Also see below, pages 453–54, 481.}

A. Textiles and clothing	36 items
B. Vessels and ornaments of silver, brass, glass and other materials	23 items
C. Household goods, such as carpets, mats, tables, frying pans, etc.	7 items
D. Chemicals, medicaments, soap, paper, books	19 items
E. Metals and other raw materials for the copper industry	7 items
F. Coral (a staple article of great importance)	1 item
G. Foodstuffs, (cheese, sugar, raisins and olive oil) and linseed oil for lamps, etc.	<u>10 items</u>
Total	103 items

This list, which, after an exhaustive study of the Geniza material, will be certainly enlarged by many items, is impressive, but misleading. If one compares it with the list of westbound goods given above, one may jump to the conclusion that India and the Orient mostly sent agricultural produce and raw materials, while the Middle East exported mostly industrial products and consumer goods. Thus one might be led to assume that the situation bore a certain similarity to the relations of Europe with her spheres of colonial expansion in modern times.³⁹

This, however, was not the case. The industrial and consumer goods sent to India were of the greatest variety, but their value, as a rule, amounted to comparatively small sums. They were used by the Middle Eastern merchants and their families, not by the local population. Only in exceptional cases, as in that of Joseph Lebdi's India trip, most of the Oriental goods were purchased at the prices obtained for Middle Eastern products. Mostly, gold and silver, in particular Egyptian gold pieces, the dollars of that period, accompanied orders for Indian goods. Raw materials for the Indian bronze industry, however, were sent as an equivalent.

Three accounts, included in letters sent from Aden to India, may serve as an illustration. As accounts go, they are composed of many details, but are simplified here in order to put into relief the main facts. All reckonings are made in *Malikī*, i.e., local Yemenite dinars. At that time, 2.35 *Malikī* dinars had the value of one Egyptian gold piece.⁴⁰

No. II, 16.

³⁹ This was indeed assumed by the present writer at an earlier stage of his research into the subject; cf. Goitein, "Source for Muslim Civilization," 83.

⁴⁰ {On the exchange rate of *Malikī* and Egyptian dinars, see below, 172, n. 27.}

A. Sent from India to Aden:		
Pepper	Worth	402 Malikī dinars
Less customs, etc.		<u>-87</u>
	Balance	315
Iron		247
Less customs, etc.		<u>-27</u>
	Balance	<u>220</u>
	Total Assets	535
B. Sent from Aden to India:		
Copper		423
Plus packing, etc.		16
Lead		29 ⁷ / ₁₂
Household goods		16 ³ / ₄
20 Egyptian dinars		47
Cash (i.e., Malikī d.)		<u>7</u>
	Total liabilities	535 ¹ / ₃

An order for Indian goods is accompanied in another letter (II, 20) by a list of the following shipments:

Copper	Worth	102 Malikī dinars
Soap		5
100 Egyptian gold pieces		235
200 dinars of Zabīd		200
21 ³ / ₄ 3 dinars of Dhū Jibla ⁴¹		<u>21³/₄</u>

Another letter (II, 25) enumerates the following shipments to India:

Yemenite sweetmeats made of walnuts		2 ³ / ₄ Malikī dinars
Wheat		3
Durra (sorghum, a widely eaten grain)		1 ¹ / ₆
Several pieces of Egyptian clothing		9
Glass vessels, Egyptian and Yemenite		<u>1¹/₂</u>
(Total consumer goods)		17 ⁵ / ₁₂
Two silver ingots weighing 605 dirhems worth		124
100 Egyptian gold pieces (not preserved)		
Cash, owed to the recipient		<u>300</u>

⁴¹ Towns in Yemen. Dhū Jibla was at that time the capital.

Whenever possible, the merchants preferred sending goods instead of gold. In a certain period (1137–40), silk, coming perhaps from as far west as Spain, sold well on the Malabar coast of India, and the Adenese letters (e.g., III, 1, III, 10, III, 11) make mention of this commodity as ‘means of payment’ or ‘in the place of gold.’⁴² However, the very use of this phrase shows that it was customary to pay for the products of the Orient in cash.⁴³ Thus, the question raised by R. S. Lopez, how the Middle East made good its apparently unfavorable balance of gold in its trade with India, is still valid.⁴⁴ The material alluded to in the preceding lines seems to indicate that there is no clear-cut answer to this question. It is to be hoped that a full publication and translation of the India records from the Cairo Geniza will enable the historians of economics to study these aspects of medieval economy in detail.

{The sources reviewed above, which include three accounts all taken from the correspondence between Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan and Abraham Ben Yijū, might not give the whole picture. I believe that it would be wrong to conclude that ships usually sailed to India empty or half empty. On the contrary, they probably carried much, valuable cargo. Maḍmūn bemoaned his losses from a shipwreck on an India bound vessel:

What belonged to me would have taken care of all the packed wares kept back in Mangalore, so that all the cargo (of the returning ship) would have been mine, with no one else having a share in it. [...] Most of the cargo of the (outgoing) ship’s space was exclusively mine, and there was in the ship an unlimited amount of diversified goods. Never has a ship like this sailed to India. (II, 21, line 10–II, 22, line 13).

When Ḥalfon b. Maḍmūn’s ship sank on its way to India, about twenty years later, the loss of property was a cause of woe for all the (Jewish) traders there, because: ‘most of its cargo belonged to [him], and there was no one here who did not have some merchandise on the ship, everyone

⁴² {See page 555, n. 8.

⁴³ This is stated explicitly in III, 10, lines 47–51; III, 11, lines 31–34. On the shortage of ready cash among the merchants, see also III, 45, line 7 (concerning Sicily); Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:200; 3:121, 123, 155. In IV, 1, corals and precious metals (gold coins and silver) are shipped to India for Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel; similarly, it seems, he shipped corals and gold coins there in 1139 according to IV, 56, l. 13 and IV, 62, margin, lines 8–10.}

⁴⁴ Cf. Lopez, “Trade,” 349. {See Wink, *Al-Hind*, 1:63–64: “The explanation for this lies primarily in the very favourable export-import balance of India: self-sufficient as it was, and with an export market for all major commodities, there were relatively few imports needed. And, in conjunction with this inherent strength of the Indian economy we find a virtual absence of indigenous sources of gold and silver.”}

according to his amount' (II, 71, lines 30–31). We also read of VIPs in Aden who cornered the market for merchandise to be shipped to India.⁴⁵ All of this suggests that the question of import-export balance with India still requires further consideration.}

Turning from the goods to those who handled them, one is struck by the predominance of merchants from North Africa in the India trade. This could be concluded already from the details given above concerning the persons whose papers form the main stock of the Geniza records are discussed in this article. However, the same holds true concerning the hundreds of other persons mentioned in them. The coastal towns of the Red Sea, Arabia and India were flooded with people coming not only from the larger cities of the Muslim West, such as Barqa and Tripoli, Libya, Qayrawān and al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia, Tlemcen, Algiers, Fez and Tangier, Morocco, Malaga and the isle of Majorca, Spain, but also from small and out of the way places, such as (Jabal) Nafūsa, Libya, Urbus, Tunisia, and Der'a, Morocco. In a number of cases, our documents prove that such persons, or even their fathers, had previously immigrated to Egypt. In others, however, we definitely see merchants from Tunisia, Morocco, Spain and Sicily undertaking the long voyage to India and, in some instances, even more than once. To be sure, all this refers to the period before 1147, i.e., before Almohad fanaticism paralyzed the Jewish and Christian communities of the Muslim West for more than two generations.

In a stimulating essay entitled, "The Fatimids and the Route to India," Professor Bernard Lewis undertook to show that the Fatimid caliphs of Egypt endeavored to take the India trade out of the hands of their Iraqi rivals, the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad.⁴⁶ As is well known, the original base of Fatimid power was Tunisia, where they ruled for sixty years before conquering Egypt and from where they brought with them the Berber contingents of the Kitāma,⁴⁷ on which their military might rested. In the light of what has just been said about the predominance of the North African merchants in the India trade, one might ponder whether the Fatimids are not to be regarded as an exponent of North African expansion. Besides religious and political factors, strong socio-economic forces must have been at work in this development.

⁴⁵ See II, 27, lines 4–7, III, 11, lines 27–31. On the bartering of goods sent to India, see 617, n. 23.}

⁴⁶ Lewis, "Fatimids."

⁴⁷ {A great Berber family also spelled Kutāma (or Ketama).}

The economic history of North Africa during the first half millennium of Islam consisted of two contrasting stages: In the early centuries of Islam, North Africa was a colonial area, which attracted the enterprising merchants of Persia, Iraq and Syria. Therefore, we find in the Muslim West many persons (including Jews in the Geniza papers) bearing family names derived from Asian cities as remote as Wāsiṭ and Basra, Nīsābūr and Samarqand. By the fourth century A.H., however, North Africa itself had become so rich that inevitably it sought expansion and found an outlet for its surplus in the India and Far Eastern trade. Thus the Fatimids in their effort to push eastwards could make use of the socio-economic upsurge of their North African hinterland. In other words, it was not so much sectarian politics that furthered international trade, as the pressure of an exuberant economy that enabled Fatimid propaganda to spread eastward.⁴⁸

As to the organization of the India trade, no merchant guilds can be discerned in its Middle Eastern branch. The merchants appearing in the Geniza records normally concluded partnerships and traveled in company, but no rigid organization or coercion whatsoever can be discovered in this respect.⁴⁹ It is astonishing how many small fry participated in this overseas trade. In order to spread the risk, a Cairene businessman would join many partnerships each with comparatively small sums or with limited amounts of goods, and persons possessing little capital would venture on the long and dangerous journey relying mainly on the capital or merchandise confided to them. An important merchant would be accompanied by a slave who served him as a business agent and also as a menial, or he would send a slave out to India instead of going himself.⁵⁰

Yet this great trade did not entirely lack organized leadership. It was provided by the representative of the merchants, in Arabic *wakīl al-tujjār*, in Hebrew *peqēd ha-sōḥarīm*. No substantial difference can be discovered with regard to this important office vis-à-vis the Mediterranean and the India trades. For the latter, we are particularly well informed with respect to the *wakīls* of Aden, about whose activities we only have bits of

⁴⁸ A similar process is to be assumed for an earlier stage of Ismāʿīlī propaganda in western India; cf. Stern, "Ismāʿīlī Propaganda," 298–99.

⁴⁹ Concerning the so-called Kārim merchants, cf. Goitein, *Studies*, 351–60. {See further literature cited below, 483, n. 28.

⁵⁰ The same applied in the opposite direction. During his extended stay in India, Abraham Ben Yijū sent his slave-agent Bama to Aden to conduct business for him. See page 66.

information for a period of about a century and a half; cf. above concerning Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan⁵¹ and his father. {The representative of the merchants figures regularly in the India trade papers. Besides Maḍmūn, mention has already been made of Abū Zikrī Kohen, who served in this capacity in Fustat.}⁵²

The letters exchanged between India and Aden contain interesting information with regard to the practice of seafaring and the social and economic conditions prevailing in southwest India. As was usual on the Mediterranean, a ship sailing on the Indian Ocean was normally escorted by another, smaller, ship, belonging to the same proprietor or to his partner.⁵³ As a rule, ships traveled in convoys because piracy was rampant. Of one merchant we read that he was robbed both on his way to India and on his return. Persons perishing and the loss of goods by shipwreck are frequently referred to. Yet the route between Aden and India must have been comparatively safe. Otherwise, we would not find so many people repeatedly undertaking that journey. The most dangerous part of the passage was the moment when a boat tried to reach the open sea or, vice versa, when it broke through the coastal rollers on its way to a haven. Therefore we encounter several tales of shipwreck shortly after sailing or before arrival, and diving operations undertaken to salvage at least a part of the sunken goods are reported for both the Arabian and the Red Sea coasts. At certain periods of the southwest monsoon season, the Indian coast is particularly treacherous.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Goitein, *Studies*, 347, wrote that Maḍmūn “was recognized as the local chief justice by the Head of the Diaspora,” etc. I am not aware of evidence that Maḍmūn was recognized or functioned as such. Goitein seems to have used the term ‘chief justice’ imprecisely here, and this information is not found in his later writings. In the continuation, 348, Goitein noted that according to Arabic sources, a Jew called David b. Maḍmūn fixed the customs tariff for Aden. A mishap occurred here too. The passage, which Goitein cites, refers to the digging of wells (see below, page 43). Another Jew, Khalaf al-Nihāwandī, fixed the customs; see 344, n. 45.

⁵² I have deleted most of the section here concerning the representative of merchants, since it was superseded by the discussion in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:186–92, to which the reader is referred. See also below, Introduction IIB, concerning Maḍmūn and his family and also the important remarks on the representative of merchants in Gil, *Palestine*, 1:205; id., “Merchants,” 314–16; Margariti, “Aden,” 285 ff.

⁵³ See below, 341, n. 26.}

⁵⁴ Cf. Van Beek, “Surrejoinder,” 138–39 and the literature indicated there. The Geniza does not say at which time of year the shipwrecks on the Indian coast occurred. In the Mediterranean similar conditions prevailed. Ships went down just outside the Pharos, or light tower of Alexandria; cf. Monks, “Church,” 359–60. {See below, page 160.

This technical detail may account for an aspect of seafaring, which had puzzled the present writer for a long time. Over twenty places on the west coast of India are mentioned in the Geniza records. I had assumed that, after crossing the ocean, a ship would sail along the Indian coast and call at least on all of the major ports. However, as the Geniza indicates, this was not the case. Each ship or convoy had its own port of destination and was labeled accordingly ‘the one bound for Broach’ or Tana, or Kūlam, etc.⁵⁵ Merchants and goods traveling in a ship heading for a port different from their own destination had to change to another ship. An additional reason for this seemingly strange system was perhaps the endeavor to avoid the excessive customs duties levied in each port.

The names of the Indian shipowners, merchants and craftsmen mentioned in the Geniza records will require the attention of the experts.⁵⁶ It seems that quite a number of them are not proper names, but designations for officers or members of caste guilds. Thus PTN SWMY,⁵⁷ whose large ship foundered, after having been driven by winds to Berbera on the African coast (while the escorting smaller craft arrived safely in Aden), certainly was no other than the *paṭṭaṇa svami*, the head of a large merchants guild, who also served as a kind of mayor.⁵⁸ We are reminded of the shipowner Maḍmūn, who was representative of the merchants in Aden and, at the same time, head of the Jewish community of Yemen. Reference is made repeatedly to an Indian shipowner PDYĀR, which word is in some letters preceded by the article, characterizing it as a title or as a term of office. The PDYĀR possessed several ships, one of which was commanded by a Muslim,⁵⁹ and he was addressed in writing by the

⁵⁵ ‘Broach ships’ are mentioned in V, 6, line 13, V, 7, line 2; ‘the Kūlamī’ and ‘the Baribatani’ are referred to several times in II, 71 (see page 530); ‘the Jurbattani ship,’ III, 15, line 20.}

⁵⁶ My thanks are due to Dr. A. L. Basham of the University of London, Sir Harold W. Baily of Queen’s College, Cambridge, Professor W. Norman Brown and Dr. Leigh Lisker of the University of Pennsylvania, and to Professor Pierre Meile of Paris for help in these matters.

⁵⁷ Hebrew, like Arabic, as a rule does not indicate short vowels. The spelling PTN SWMY indicates that the Jewish merchants heard the word pronounced approximately *patan sōmī*, with which the writing *paṭṭaṇa sāmī* in one Indian inscription (Appadorai, *Economic Conditions*, 1:385, n. 217) is to be compared.

⁵⁸ See Appadorai, *Economic Conditions*, 1:385 and 397. The word literally means ‘Lord of the mart,’ as I learned from Dr. A. L. Basham, and thus corresponds to the Arabic [s]haykh al-sūq, a term found in the Geniza papers of the Mediterranean area. {See further below, Introduction IIIA, sec. 10; III, 10, line 24.

⁵⁹ Goitein’s note here on *nākhūda* is quoted below, page 126.

above-mentioned Maḏmūn. One wonders in which language the two corresponded, presumably, in Arabic. It is, however, not excluded that the Jewish representative of the merchants in Aden kept an Indian clerk for his correspondence with the authorities, shipowners and business friends in the ports of India.⁶⁰

Since the Geniza is essentially a repository of papers written with Hebrew characters, it is natural that it should deal mainly with the commercial activities of Jews and between Jews. It seems also that business was conducted to a large extent along denominational lines, simply because this was the practical thing to do. Members of one religion traveled together in order to be able to fulfill their religious duties, such as prayers and observance of the Sabbath, holidays and dietary laws. Partnerships were concluded and dissolved and many other civil cases were brought before the courts of the various denominations. These courts also dealt with matters of inheritance, so important for families whose fathers and sons were exposed to the hazards of overseas travel.

Moreover, although there were no ghettos in those days, normally neighborhoods were predominantly occupied by the members of one community or another. This was an additional reason for a certain denominational element in the organization of commerce.

Yet the same Geniza letters reveal an astonishing degree of interdenominational cooperation, matched by almost complete absence of animosity against other communities. Partnerships and other close business relationships between Jews and Muslims, or Hindus, or Christians⁶¹ were commonplace and the members of other religious communities are referred to with the same honorable and amicable epithets as the writers' own brethren. The great dangers shared in common, the feeling that every one's lot was in the hand of the same God, certainly contributed much to that spirit of all-embracing brotherhood, which pervades the India papers of the Cairo Geniza.

⁶⁰ I am unaware of any source concerning correspondence between Maḏmūn and Fdy'r. I assume Goitein intended II, 24*v*, line 2, which speaks of letters that Maḏmūn sent to India to "all the Bānyāns," but the Fdy'r is not mentioned there.

⁶¹ As stated above, only one Christian is mentioned by name in the Geniza papers related to the India trade, studied thus far {II, 14, line 11}. However, the relationship with him is referred to in a manner, which shows that it was by no means anything particular. To be sure, no European Christians were in the Indian waters at that time. {On partnerships with non-Jews, see further pages 133–34, and on partnerships in general, as reflected in these documents, see page 62 and references there.}

CHAPTER TWO

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

A. *Joseph b. David Lebdi and His Family*

1. The name of Joseph Lebdi, the central figure of this chapter, appears in our documents in at least ten different forms and combinations. If all are taken together, his full name would be: Abū Ya‘qūb¹ Joseph (or Yūsuf, the Arabic form of the name) b. David (or Dā‘ūd) al-Lebdi² (family name derived from the town Lebda, Libya), or Ibn al-Lebdi (literally ‘the son of the man from Lebda’), or Ibn al-Lebdiyya (‘the Lebdi family’),³ *al-tājir al-Ṭarābulusī* (‘the {prominent} merchant from Tripoli’).⁴

2. Lebda, the ancient Leptis Magna, once one of the most important centers of the Roman province of Africa, is situated “a two days’ march east of Tripoli,” the present capital of Libya.⁵ The Roman emperor Septimius Severus (reigned 193–211), who was a native of Lebda, beautified his hometown with magnificent buildings. Their ruins were admired by the Arab conquerors,⁶ and still provide a remarkable sight today. However, already by the tenth century, the place is described as a village, inhabited by a warlike Arab tribe involved in bloody battles.⁷

¹ Since the biblical Joseph was the son of Jacob, and since a first-born normally bore the name of his grandfather {see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:6–7}, a person named Joseph-Yūsuf would be given the *kunya*, or honorific by-name, *Abū Ya‘qūb*, ‘Father of Jacob,’ even if he did not have a son with this name, as was indeed the case with our Joseph Lebdi.

² Properly al-Lebdī (with a long ī). Because of the frequency of this word, we spell it Lebdi.

³ {Needless to say, Ibn al-Lebdiyya could also be rendered ‘the son of the woman from Lebda,’ but Goitein obviously rejected this possibility in connection with the protagonist of this chapter.

⁴ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:149: “...*tājir*... is not common in the Geniza documents and serves mostly as a designation for the ‘big merchant’”; cf., *ibid.*, VI, 114 (Index; add there: V, 152, listed in Diem, *Dictionary*, 21). Joseph Lebdi is referred to as ‘the *tājir*’ in the headings over I, 3 and I, 16; other examples in this book: III, 2, line 3, III, 52, line 10, IV, 22*v*, address, IV, 35, margin, line 3, IV, 42, margin, line 3, VII, 26, sec. b, line 2, VII, 32*v*, line 1, and the introductory remarks to II, 74.

⁵ Ibn Ḥawqal, *Geography*, 1:69.

⁶ Yāqūt, *Geographical Dictionary*, 4:346.

⁷ Ibn Ḥawqal, *ibid.* Ibn al-Aṭṭār, *Ta’rīkh*, 7:59, 225.

It must have been in that century that Joseph Lebdi's ancestors left the town, probably for Tripoli, where we find them settled later (see I, 21, 43, 44, and the genealogical table at the end of this introduction). From Tripoli they commuted to al-Mahdiyya, then the main port of Tunisia and center of the Muslim Mediterranean trade. While passing the winter of 1098/9 there, Joseph confirmed the family partnership with his brother Solomon (I, 20). Solomon set sail for Spain, but perished with all his goods, while Joseph, who had had previous experience in the India trade, embarked on an ambitious voyage to India, which seems to have been crowned with success (I, 25–29). Having specialized in Eastern business ventures, Joseph moved his household from Tripoli to Fustat, the ancient capital of Egypt, which, at that time, was still its leading mercantile center (I, 24).⁸ His son (Abu 'l-)Barakāt ('Blessings'), an India trader like his father (I, 33–36), and the rest of Joseph's progeny known to us down to the middle of the thirteenth century (I, 33–42) had their headquarters in Fustat.

3. A journey to India by Joseph Lebdi, which must have taken place approximately in 1094/5–97 and led to lawsuits lasting from November 1097 through August 1098, is profusely reported in the Geniza (I, 19, and 1–18b, in this chronological order). We learn also some very significant facts about another voyage, apparently made in 1099–1101 (I, 25–29; see sec. 6, below). This voyage, like the former one, started in al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia, and had as its destination, Nahrwāra in the Gujarāt, the country of lac, textiles, steel, and beads.⁹

⁸ {Joseph b. David signed, apparently in Jerusalem, TS NS 320, f. 24, ed. Goitein, *Palestinian Jewry*, 257–58. According to Goitein, this was Joseph Lebdi and the document was written in the last third of the eleventh century. As the reader will see, however, there the dating is problematic. Moreover, instead of Solomon ha-Kohen b. [Ba]rakāt, the second signature should be read: Solomon ha-Kohen b. [Mor]decai. He and other signatories are known from documents written approximately in the mid eleventh century; see their names in the Index to Gil, *Palestine*, III, and cf. TS 20.115. Accordingly, we must assume that Lebdi left the Maghreb as a young man (in his twenties?), made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, set out on journeys to the Far East, settled down in Fustat and raised a family at a late age. As to the identity of the signatory, the only document whose contents render the identification of 'Joseph b. David' as Lebdi beyond any doubt, is I, 14. The signatures on I, 19 and TS NS 320, f. 24 are very similar, and it appears that indeed they were all written by the same hand. Some caution in the identification is called for, however, by the very nature of the untrained handwriting, with large, square, childish letters; and the matter warrents further consideration. Also see 213, n. 6.}

⁹ For the departure from al-Mahdiyya before the first voyage see I, 16, line 20, for that before the second: I, 20. For Nahrwāra as Lebdi's destination also on the second journey see I, 25, line 13.

4. I am inclined to believe that Joseph Lebdi had traveled to India prior to these two journeys. This feeling is not based especially on Joseph's letters to Ḥasan b. Bundār, representative of merchants in Aden, South Arabia (written after Joseph's return from the first trip mentioned above). In these letters Joseph emphasizes the favors received from Ḥasan 'at all times' (I, 13, fol. 67, line 12), or 'in the past and recently' (I, 14, line 52), since these are standard phrases in correspondence.¹⁰ It would seem, however, entirely unlikely that Jekuthiel, representative of merchants in Fustat, would have entrusted Joseph Lebdi with so many precious goods in 1094/5, had he been at that time a novice in the India trade (I, 1–15). When, on the journey from which he returned in 1101, Lebdi carried 'large amounts' for Muslim merchants, both Indian and Egyptian, he must have been renowned internationally as an experienced traveler in those parts (I, 22, lines 11–13). Indeed, from the way in which his arrival at the Red Sea port of 'Aydhāb with 80 bales of lac, 50 of pepper, and other goods is reported in a letter sent from Egypt to the Maghreb (I, 25, lines 12–14) we get the impression that Joseph Lebdi was regarded as a kind of pioneer in the commerce with India.

5. For the chronology of Joseph's activities we are on firm ground only where we have dated documents recording litigations resulting from informal or formal business relations with others. There are, however, other sufficient data that enable us to sketch with reasonable certainty an approximate picture of Joseph's career.

Since the lawsuits against Lebdi opened in November 1097 (I, 1–2, 16), it is safe to assume that he had come back to Fustat from his India trip in the spring or the summer of that year. The journey must have taken at least two years, for he exchanged letters with the Bundār brothers of Aden while he was in Nahrwāra, India, and in Mirbāṭ on the southeastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula (I, 14, lines 11–21, 23–35). This tallies with I, 19, a document signed by him in Aden (as I have attempted to demonstrate) in April 1095. He might have arrived there only a few days before or (less likely) late in 1094.

6. By June 1099 Joseph Lebdi must have been again on the India route, for it is out of the question that 'Arūs b. Joseph, a person known from many sources as one of high principles, should have made a deposition in court about him in his absence, were he still in the country, or that such a deposition would have been admitted in court. That record

¹⁰ Arabic *kamā 'ahid min tafaddūlih qadīman wa-ḥadīthan*.

was made at the request of David b. Solomon, Joseph's nephew, after the death by drowning of his father (I, 20). Over two years later, in August 1101, Joseph took up the cudgels against David (I, 21). This long interval is best explained by the assumption that by that time Joseph had returned from a protracted journey. Documents from April 1103, which settled a long-standing dispute between Lebdi, his tenants, and the woman from whom he had purchased a house, speak indeed of an absence of about a year and ten months (I, 24).

7. Joseph had concluded a partnership for this journey to the amount of 800 dinars with two merchants, Faraḥ ('Joy') and Abu Naṣr ('Victor'), seemingly for the purchase of lac in Gujārāt. In June 1104, al-Wuḥsha ('Desirée'), the late Abu Naṣr's sister, sued Joseph in connection with this partnership (I, 26) at a time when 300 dinars worth of goods included in it had already been sold. The fact that this lawsuit took place three years after Lebdi's return can be explained by extraordinary circumstances. Faraḥ and Abu Naṣr were murdered in 'Aydhāb, where they had arrived with 80 bales of lac, after Lebdi had already left that Red Sea port. As a rule, the local government laid its hand on goods left by dead foreign merchants. Much time must have lapsed before the interested parties succeeded in extricating these goods from the government and transporting them safely to Fustat. The legal correspondence reflected in I, 27–28 shows that the jurisconsults were of divided opinion about the case.¹¹ It was further complicated by the fact that the three merchants carried with them many goods, of which there was doubt as to whether or not they were included in the partnership. As late as 1106/7 two brothers requested the court to register a deposition made a long time before by Lebdi that he had no claim to certain Oriental goods left by the late Faraḥ in 'Aydhāb (I, 29).¹²

After 1106/7 we do not hear anymore of Joseph Lebdi. A court record reporting the betrothal of his daughter in 1118 gives the impression that he had died a number of years before (I, 34a) while on a business trip—whether again to India, we do not know. A fragment of his last will has been preserved (I, 31).

8. The most detailed coherent account about Joseph Lebdi is found in the dossier of the long lawsuit against him by Abū Ya'qūb (Ibn) al-

¹¹ {According to I, 27a, page 2*v*, lines 13–18, the three-year delay seems to have been the decision of the presiding judge.

¹² It is not explicitly mentioned there that the claims, which Lebdi had renounced against Faraḥ, were for Oriental goods left in 'Aydhāb, but this conclusion follows from the data on their partnership.

Ḥakīm ('Father of Jacob, [son of] the Doctor,' the physician),¹³ Jekuthiel b. Moses, 'Representative of the Merchants,' in Fustat.¹⁴ In *Med. Soc.*, 3:207–8, I surmised that this Jekuthiel¹⁵ was the grandson of his namesake, a Maecenas of Hebrew letters in Spain, who was murdered in 1039, whereupon his son Moses emigrated to the East, where he appears in several Geniza letters and documents. In any case, by the end of the eleventh century, Jekuthiel b. Moses had become a very influential and often-mentioned personage in Fustat, involved in both the Mediterranean and India trades (for the latter see also II, 1, and Index). He signed as second—that is, immediately after the presiding judge, followed by thirteen other signatories—an often cited marriage contract between David b. Daniel, 'the Prince of the Diasporas of all Israel,' and a Karaite woman. He also served as assistant judge.¹⁶ In the wording of our documents one notices that the well-educated local notable and the foreign merchant with little education were referred to in different ways. However, one feels also that already at that time Joseph Lebdi was a merchant of substance, who, relying on his economic power, knew how to stand up against high-handed practices.

¹³ Abū Ya'qūb Jekuthiel is referred to in the India Book papers (and elsewhere) as al-Ḥakīm and (to the best of my knowledge) never as Ibn al-Ḥakīm. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:14–15, takes al-Ḥakīm here as a surname, which does not indicate Jekuthiel's profession, "because his father, and perhaps a more remote ancestor, was a physician." While his father was a physician, I believe that were he not one, we would find at least some references to him as *Ibn* al-Ḥakīm. Accordingly, we should not exclude the possibility that he too had medical training and perhaps functioned sometimes in that capacity, a combination of learning, community leadership and vocations not uncommon in Geniza papers (see Goitein, *ibid.*, 2:245, 258). Also note Baneth, "Autographs," 298, n. 4, in reference to another document: "In my opinion, *al-ḥakīm* here, as in good Arabic style in general, does not mean a physician, but a philosopher, one proficient in the secular sciences, in contrast to '*al-ḥākhām*,' one learned in Torah."

¹⁴ I, 1–15. Jekuthiel (called in short 'The Doctor,' al-Ḥakīm) had the same *kunya*, or honorific by-name, Abū Ya'qūb, as Joseph Lebdi, which causes some confusion. About the office of *wakīl al-tujār*, or representative of the merchants, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:186–92 {and above Introduction I}. In legal documents, Jekuthiel is formally introduced with the corresponding Hebrew title *peqūd ha-sōḥarīm*, e.g., I, 12, line 5; ENA 4010, f. 17, lines 6 and 14 (a lawsuit of his against Abu 'Alī Japheth b. Abraham, the 'Pride of the Community'; see I, 24); TS 16.47, line 8 (another lawsuit).

¹⁵ Unfortunately, someone dabbled with the Index of that volume changed the English spelling Jekuthiel, used by me, to Yekuthiel, the Hebrew pronunciation. Therefore, the reader will find all the references to our man found in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:522, s.v. Yekuthiel {corrected in vol. 6, Indices}.

¹⁶ Marriage: TS 24.1 {see Jefferson, *Bibliography*, 219}. On the reverse side of I, 10–11, where Jekuthiel appears as litigant, he signs as one of the three judges, ULC Add 3414, f. 2.

9. While reading the long dossier of ‘the merchant from Tripoli’ (I, 1–18 b), one is surprised to find that during the entire proceedings no contract is produced or even referred to in court. The answer can only be that no such written document, confirmed by witnesses at a notary or a court, existed. Jekuthiel certainly had noted in his account book all the goods delivered to Lebdi and possibly also some of the instructions given to him, but did not care to enter with him into a formal contract. This type of ‘informal commercial collaboration’ was common in Islam and is richly reflected in the Geniza documents.¹⁷ It implied, of course, reciprocity, meaning that Joseph Lebdi had enough business errands done for him by Jekuthiel to justify his own efforts for him on his trip to India. We read, by chance, about two quantities of indigo, one worth 100 dinars, and another 40, which Jekuthiel purchased for him (I, 3). No doubt, there were other such services rendered.

The nature and scope of Joseph Lebdi’s own business is well illustrated by I, 22, an inventory of his assets, which he had to include in an oath to be taken for the benefit of his nephew David. The value of this deposition is somewhat impaired by the fact that it was preceded by another one which is referred to, but not preserved. Yet it is possible to restore the missing links.

The assets consisted of four parts:

- (a) a large sum of 2,000 dinars, detailed in the previous court record;
- (b) goods and sums owed to Joseph by the sons of Bundār in Aden;
- (c) goods and sums held by him and his assets temporarily in the hands of others;
- (d) two houses; see I, 23 and 24.

As explained in the Comments to I, 22, all the goods held by Lebdi were articles for export to Aden and India. Thus we shall not be far off the mark, if we assume that the round sum of 2,000 dinars, listed as the first item, represented the approximate total of sales of goods brought to Fustat from the India route. Lebdi had returned from Aden and was preparing for another voyage. The prominence of costly textiles is noteworthy; textiles were the primary goods entrusted to Lebdi by Jekuthiel

¹⁷ See Udovitch, *Partnership*, 273, and Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:164–86. When formal contracts were made, as in I, 30, where Lebdi, as a stationary investor entrusts an itinerant partner with goods, the total value of the partnership and its conditions are fixed in writing and attested to by witnesses. {A formal contract of partnership between Lebdi and his partners is referred to also in I, 26–28.}

(I, 1, lines 5–12; I, 4–5), and they were the most important purchases made by Lebdi in Nahrwāra, India, for the Bundār firm in Aden (I, 14, lines 13–14, 20). Thus, while he carried, of course, standard merchandise of the West, such as copper and corals, and of India, such as lac and pepper, he seemed to have had special expertise in textiles. That is why he sold textiles in the Red Sea port of Dahlak, against the express instructions of Jekuthiel; and that is the reason why he directed the journeys, of which we know, to Gujarāt, the Indian district, from where textiles were exported to the West. His son Abu 'l-Barakāt also returned from India with textiles as the most precious part of his purchases (I, 33, line 4).¹⁸ On the other hand, a trader in far away countries had to be flexible and have the ability to deal with a great variety of products. Both father and son displayed this versatility. It is also noteworthy that, with the exception of the staple exports of Gujarāt, textiles and lac, Barakāt carried 'light goods,' that is, spices of limited weight and volume, brazilwood, cinnamon, and ('Chinese') rhubarb—items never mentioned in the papers of his father.¹⁹

10. The wealth amassed by Joseph and Barakāt Lebdi on their arduous India trips is reflected in the rather substantial dowry given to Barakāt's daughter after his death (I, 36). With these two men, however, the vigor of the family {in international trade} seems to have been exhausted. The men of their progeny were *'attārs* ('perfumers') or sugar makers {and men of learning}, sedentary occupations, in which capacity, though, they had the opportunity to remain in contact with the India trade.²⁰ David b. Solomon Lebdi, who, after his father's death, had entered into a 'partnership' with his uncle Joseph, that is, was trained by him (I, 22), had also a share in the trade in the India route (I, 32), but we do not know how far south he got,²¹ and, anyhow, we do not hear of him anymore.

11. A certain insight into Joseph Lebdi's personality is gained from the two letters about his troubles with Jekuthiel and other matters, which

¹⁸ Even if we assume that Ishāq al-Nafūsī, Barakāt's business friend, instructed him to give preference to textiles, al-Nafūsī certainly would not have done so, had he not relied on Barakāt's experience in this field.

¹⁹ See I, 33, lines 5 (260, n. 6), 14–16, 18–19. All these goods were purchased in Aden, most probably while Ishāq al-Nafūsī sojourned on the Malabar coast, or in another country of the Indian Ocean.

²⁰ Cf. also the strange detail about *'ūd*, or aromatic wood, in the deathbed declaration of Barakāt's grandson and namesake in I, 39. {For descendents of Joseph Lebdi who were men of learning, see I, 41.}

²¹ See 255, n. 3.

he sent to Ḥasan b. Bundār of Aden (I, 13, 14). One is impressed by the pleasant, polite, and considerate way in which Joseph's complaints and requests are expressed. He spares Ḥasan the less savory details of his quarrels with Jekuthiel and goes so far as to blame himself together with him.²² He does not cease to excuse himself for asking Ḥasan to do him 'favors,' which in fact, were mere duties expected of a representative of merchants, and tries to save him as much inconvenience as possible.

Likewise one is impressed by his sensitivity, his passing over his own misfortunes, both on the way to and from India, including a catastrophic shipwreck, described by mere hints, and the gracious way in which he offers his services to the Bundār brothers and gives them a free hand in disposing of the goods sent to them (I, 14). Behavior like this was expected from a respectable merchant in those days. But not everyone lived up to those standards.

One further trait in Joseph's personality must be noted. When (in I, 13, fol. 67v, line 6) he arrives at the worst disaster befalling him on that journey, the loss of most of the pepper bought for him and for Jekuthiel, he urges Ḥasan to make a just division of the remnants salvaged, a most difficult task, for which enlightenment by God must be sought.²³ The man in the street, like religious thinkers of the age, believed that one's actions and thoughts were controlled by God. When difficult decisions had to be made, this belief influenced one to seek guidance by 'the light of God.' Lebdi, who had faced so many ordeals, was confident that that light would lead to making the right decisions.²⁴

12. Above, sec. 4, it was surmised that Joseph Lebdi was regarded as a kind of pioneer of the Jewish India trade centered in Fustat. But he was by no means alone in the field. Many of his contemporary India traders are referred to in the Geniza, albeit mostly in passing, or with only a few details. The fact that so much has been found about Joseph Lebdi and his family probably was due not to mere chance, but to special circumstances. In the house inherited from the founding father of the Fustat branch of the Lebdi family, some of his papers, together with those of his son, were kept in a chest. To these, some other family papers, such as documents about a betrothal or an engagement, a record about the acquisition of real estate, a deathbed declaration, a partnership contract, and similar papers were added. Then, something happened, and

²² Cf. 200, n. 8.

²³ Cf. I, 13, fol. 67v, lines 2-5.

²⁴ See Goitein, "Religion," 13-14. {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:331.

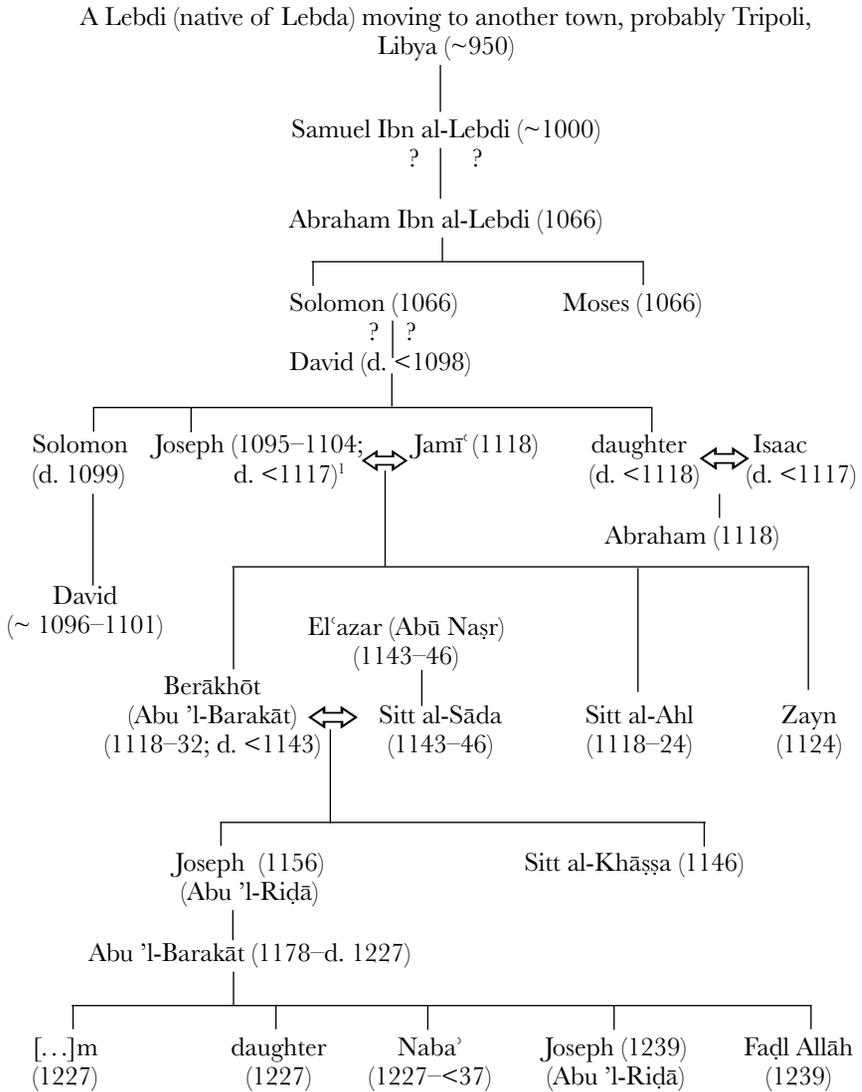
the contents of the chest, or what had remained of them, were disposed of in the Geniza chamber, where, in the course of the centuries, they became mixed up with thousands of other fragments. Finally, together with the entire Geniza the remnants of our hypothetical family archive were dispersed in libraries all over the world. However, since it had once formed a unit (albeit probably not a very orderly one), it was somehow possible to put together again what had been accumulated in the course of generations.²⁵

The data about the Lebdi family provided in the preceding pages might be tentatively summarized in the following genealogical diagram.²⁶

²⁵ The chest appears in I, 39, and aromatic wood and gold belonging to Lebdi's great grandson was placed in it, but nothing is said about papers. For additional information on the Lebdi family, see Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:870 (index), and especially note TS AS 152, f. 7 (ibid., 3:543–44, no. 463), line 3, where a ship of Ibn al-Lebd[i] is mentioned; Gil dates the document ca. 1060.

²⁶ The data in the diagram prepared by Goitein have been supplemented by later findings.}

Lebdi Genealogy



< = preceding; ~ = ca.; b. = born; <--> = married; d. = deceased; other dates are those found in or reconstructed for the documents, in which an individual is mentioned.

¹ Joseph Lebdi was still alive in 1104 (I, 26) His death preceded I,34a (1118) by some time, certainly more than a year.

B. *Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan-Japheth and His Family**

Most of the documents in the India Book are letters written between different localities, between Aden or towns in southern Arabia or other Red Sea ports, and India. Others were sent between various towns within India, or between them and the capital of Egypt. The hub of this commercial activity and the associated correspondence was in Yemen, particularly in Aden. During the twelfth century, the city was under the suzerainty of the Fatimids, and later the Ayyubids of Egypt and formed a great emporium on the sea route to India. Already at the end of the eleventh century, a Jew acted as representative of the merchants in Aden. His name was Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan, in Hebrew Japheth, b. Bundār, the latter being a name of Persian origin and, accordingly, his family is likely to have immigrated to Yemen from Persia.¹ {No information has been preserved about this Bundār or his father al-Ḥasan (known from II, 44v, line 19). In a letter of thanks to Bundār's son Abraham, the early-twelfth century Fustat scribe Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh refers to Bundār as *ha-sar ha-adīr ha-meyuqqār*, 'the great, esteemed notable (or, prince, leader)' (II, 11a, line 18), which possibly indicates that he held some community or government post.}

The representative of merchants represented foreign merchants in local lawsuits, supervised the sale and purchase of goods for overseas traders, took care of custom payments, stored the goods of clients in a large warehouse which also served as a clearing house for transactions and a post office, and functioned as a banker.² Japheth b. Bundār bore the title *sar ha-qhillōt* (see II, 11b), 'Leader of the Congregations,' which indicated that he was not only the representative of merchants in Aden

* {The following is based largely on parts of the original draft manuscript of Goitein, "Aden" (which had been abbreviated for publication; incorrectly listed in Attal, *Bibliography*, 71, as "Aden [Modern Period]," cols. 262–63), with added annotation, some revision and editing, some of his other writings, as well as some other additions (only some of which have been marked with brackets).}

¹ The likelihood of the family's Persian origin is mentioned in a number of Goitein's writings. See on this question Goitein, *Yemenites*, 78–79. Japheth b. Bundār figures in a number of documents concerning Joseph Lebdi's court case of 1097–98, e.g., I, 1v, lines 6, 14 (where he is referred to as *al-wakīl*, i.e., *wakīl al-tujjār*, representative of the merchants), ff; I, 7, line 13; I, 13, 14 are letters written to him at that time by Lebdi. Japheth is also mentioned in a number of the documents in II, A.

² For the office of representative of the merchants, see especially Goitein, *Studies*, 345 ff.; *Med. Soc.*, 1:186–92. {Also see the important discussion in Margariti, "Aden," 285 ff.}

but was probably the head of the Jewish community there and of other communities.³

Japheth's son Maḏmūn was the central figure in Yemenite Jewry during the florescence of the India trade. Dozens of documents are connected with him, including letters written by him or his three clerks, letters addressed to him, court records and poems written in his honor. These texts are of the greatest value for the study of the socio-economic history of the India trade. Maḏmūn served as representative of merchants in Aden in the fourth and fifth decades of the twelfth century and was recognized as the official head of Yemenite Jewry. Besides his designation 'Nagid of the Land of Yemen,'⁴ he held six other Hebrew titles. These were conferred on him partly by the Exilarch of Baghdad and partly by the Gaon Maṣlīah, the Head of the Palestinian Yeshiva, who, at that time had his seat in Cairo.⁵ Maḏmūn was further styled 'confidant of the lords of the seas and the deserts' (II, 36, lines 11–12), which means that he had made agreements with the various rulers and pirates who controlled the sea routes between Egypt, Arabia, Africa and India, as well as those chieftains who held sway over the hinterland of the south-Arabian ports.

{Maḏmūn's appointment as Nagid took place ca. 1140.⁶ But for some reason, when in 1146 the judges in the service of the Nagid Samuel b. Ḥanayā in Egypt addressed Maḏmūn, they did not call him Nagid.}⁷

Maḏmūn served as superintendent of the harbor of Aden, and as such had control over the customs, and as representative of the merchants was of influence in fixing the market prices. He was also a shipowner,⁸ and he suffered great losses when at least one of his ships traveling to

³ As we learn from I, 1*v*, lines 5–7, Japheth b. Bundār himself was an India trader and traveled to Manībār (Munaybār), the Malabar Coast, to buy pepper. {Margariti, "Aden," 317, calls attention to this. Her statement that there is no indication that his son Maḏmūn b. Japheth ever traveled from Aden is to be corrected, since in II, 32, margin, lines 10–13, he writes of his hope to meet someone in 'Aydhāb; also see the note to III, 15, line 32.}

⁴ For the office of Nagid in general, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:23–24; for the Nagid of Yemen, 26–27, 526, n. 20.

⁵ In II, 41, line 14, Ben Yijū notes that Maḏmūn had seven titles bestowed upon him by the Exilarch. However, these include some titles that were probably awarded by the Palestinian Academy. In II, 36, lines 10–11, we read that 'exilarchs and heads of academies' had appointed Maḏmūn. See the discussion in Goitein, *Yemenites*, 40, 79–80.

⁶ {See page 404.

⁷ See pages 525–26.}

⁸ See page 143.

India foundered.⁹ Maḏmūn had a close business association with Bilāl b. Jarīr, the Muslim governor of Aden. The two entered a partnership to {construct and} outfit a ship that sailed to Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka; see II, 32, lines 22–28; III, 11, lines 27–29). They also cooperated in another large business venture in Egypt (see II, 32, line 32).

{Maḏmūn and Bilāl cooperated not only on business affairs but also on affairs of state. Needless to say, these matters were also connected with business. Maḏmūn outfitted both ships of commerce and ships for the navy. Bilāl commanded the forces of one of the two rival sultans in Yemen, and Maḏmūn outfitted military vessels, which Bilāl's forces used to attack the enemy. Maḏmūn took advantage of the opportunity, and the commanders of four navy boats were given orders to try to apprehend a delinquent debtor, who had absconded to Zabīd in western Yemen.}

¹⁰

Bilāl was known for his bossy tactics. He was in the habit of demanding the first choice of goods in the port, such as *drky*, a yet unidentified commodity exported from Aden to India, which was sometimes not available (see II, 27, line 5). Khalaf b. Isaac, Maḏmūn's cousin, accuses him of the same behavior (see III, 11, lines 27–29). Another Adenese merchant complains bitterly that Maḏmūn confiscated two shops (see III, 32, lines 19 ff.). And 'Iwāḏ, Yeshū'ā and Ḥasan, sons of the late Jacob ha-Kohen of Dhū Jibla, then the capital of Yemen, complained that Maḏmūn had not carried out the instructions of his late brother Bundār concerning the estate of their father, and their disrespectful behavior engendered a caustic rebuke (see II, 35–36).

Complaints about Maḏmūn's behavior are clearly the exception to the rule. He took a personal interest in the well-being of his coreligionists and his business associates and looked after their needs. In the overwhelming majority of India Book letters, in which he is mentioned, he is spoken of with great deference and the highest regard.¹¹ Maḏmūn also made use of Bilāl's good offices in order to protect the interests of Jewish traders. When Abraham Ben Yijū, the Tunisian import-export trader and proprietor of a bronze factory who spent some eighteen years

⁹ See II, 20 margin-verso, line 7; II, 21, lines 8 ff.; V, 6, lines 11–13.

¹⁰ {No. V, 9; see the discussion in page 704. For the story of a twentieth century Jewish arms supplier to the Imam of Yemen, see Tobi, *In the Imam's Service*. As V, 9, shows, such cooperation between Jews and sultans was attested in Yemen already in the twelfth century.}

¹¹ Besides the letters in chap. 2, Maḏmūn is mentioned in the following India Book documents: III, 3, 9–11, 14, 15, 17, 23, 29, 32, 38; IV, 5, 8, 9, 72; V, 2, 4, 6, 9, 11; VI, 3, 26, 28, 31; VII, 41, 49, 60.

making a fortune on the Malabar Coast of India (to whom chap. 3 is devoted), expressed hesitation concerning his return to Aden, Maḍmūn assured him that he had received assurances from Bilāl for his protection (see II, 28, lines 18–19).

Maḍmūn worked in close cooperation with other prominent Jewish merchants in Aden, some of whom were his relatives (II, F, II, G and II, H concern the letters of his first cousins Joseph b. Abraham, Khalaf b. Isaac and Maḥrūz b. Jacob respectively). Ties of friendship and family connected Maḍmūn with many Jewish merchants from Mediterranean countries. He was married to the sister of Abū Zikrī Kohen Judah b. Joseph (to whom chap. 5 is devoted). Abū Zikrī himself was married to Maḍmūn's cousin, Maḥrūz b. Jacob's sister. Abū Zikrī was a great India traveler who was the representative of merchants in Old Cairo. He was originally from Sijilmāsa, an important city of Morocco, situated on the fringes of the Sahara.

Together with business and family ties, communal and spiritual connections were formed between the Jews of Aden and practically all the Jewish communities of the Islamic world. 'Aden and India' formed one juridical diocese. In other words, the Jewish merchants and craftsmen, active for shorter or longer periods in about twenty different ports of India and Ceylon, were under the jurisdiction of the rabbinical court of Aden.¹² In Yemen itself, the authority of Maḍmūn extended as far as Ṣa'da (see below), the northernmost important Jewish community of the country. In its turn, the rabbinical court of Aden regarded itself as subordinate to that of the Egyptian capital, which had been established by the Head of the Palestinian Academy. A statement about a release granted in 1133 by a Jew from Aleppo, Syria, to another from Tripolitania, Libya, on the basis of Maḍmūn's account books, refers to Aden as being under the *rashut* (see below), or authority of Maṣliāḥ, the Gaon of the Palestinian Yeshiva, resident in Cairo.¹³ Twenty years later, in a letter addressed to Old Cairo, the rabbis of Aden describe themselves as instituted by their Head of the Diaspora and their Nagid, but add that they acknowledge 'our masters in Egypt' as an authority higher than themselves.¹⁴

¹² On this question, see further 196, n. 1; 557, n. 18.

¹³ {No. VI, 26; see III, 17 for indirect evidence of mention of Maṣliāḥ in the Yemenite *rashut* formula a year earlier.

¹⁴ The reference is to II, 71*v*, lines 29–32, where it is noted (in pages 531–32, 537, n. 39) that this was polite rhetoric.

Owing to its connections with both the West and the East, the Jewish community of Aden was drawn into the rivalry between the Jewish centers of Iraq and Palestine-Egypt. When the Palestinian Gaon Maṣṣīāḥ took up residence in Cairo in 1127, he was not unanimously recognized in that city, which contained a large congregation of Iraqi Jews. The India travelers transferred the dissensions of the Cairo community to Aden, where they erupted in the spring of 1134 {1131}.¹⁵ The Geniza had preserved six complete or fragmentary documents that refer to this affair (IV, 4–9). On the Sabbath before Passover that year, a scholarly Jew from Ṣaʿda was asked to lead the community of Aden in prayer. Following his home custom, based on the written instructions received from Maḏmūn, he mentioned in the *rashut* formula of allegiance,¹⁶ first the Head of the Diaspora and then the Palestinian Gaon Maṣṣīāḥ. However, Cairene opponents of Maṣṣīāḥ, who happened to be present, objected to his public recognition; and the scholar from Ṣaʿda was forced to publicly recant his error by a cousin of the Head of the Diaspora, then staying in Aden (and perhaps sent there to counterbalance the influence of the Palestinians). At one point Maḏmūn seems to have become convinced that only one Jewish authority (the Iraqi Head of the Diaspora) should be mentioned in public prayer, but he tried to steer a middle course and overcome the tension in the community.

The details and further developments in this momentous affair will concern us in chap. 4. Suffice it to say, relations between Maḏmūn and Maṣṣīāḥ, on the one hand, and the influential Jewish traders from Egypt and the West, on the other, remained excellent. The Yemenite communal leadership was relatively independent in its association with the Jewish centers of Iraq and Egypt. However, the close commercial connections between Aden and Egypt, the continued presence of scholars of repute in Old Cairo (strengthened by Maimonides' arrival there) and the general shift of Jewish creativity from Iraq to the countries of the Mediterranean acted to make the Jews of Aden more dependent on the Egyptian Jewish center.

{Maḏmūn had three sons, Ḥalfon (Khalaf), Bundār and Japheth. The latter is mentioned once in one (II, 37) of the five panegyric poems that Ben Yijū wrote in honor of Maḏmūn that have been preserved (II, 37–40).

¹⁵ According to an addition in Goitein, *Yemenites*, 57, the events probably took place in 1132. The matter will be further discussed in the Introduction to chap. 4.

¹⁶ On this formula see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:19–22; Friedman, "Responsum on *Reshut*."

Japheth probably died at an early age. Ḥalfon and Bundār were active in international trade and apparently also in Yemenite communal affairs while their father was still alive.¹⁷ Maḍmūn's death (in 1151) hardly came as a surprise, since he had been sick for some time (see II, 61), but the deep grief of his protégés and of the general Yemenite Jewish community is attested in several of our documents. Foremost among them is the detailed dirge written by Ben Yijū (II, 41). He apparently learned of Maḍmūn's death from the letter sent him by Yeshū'ā b. Jacob ha-Kohen, who, as we have seen, had previously complained about Maḍmūn:

I was informed of the death of the late master and lord Maḍmūn, *the Mordecai of our time, the eminent pillar, the Nagid (Prince) of the land of Yemen, Leader of the Congregations, Crown of the Communities—may his soul be bound in the bond of life together with the righteous and pious!—son of his honor, great and holy master and lord Japheth—may he rest in Eden!* (III, 38, lines 13–17).

On October 12, 1151, a novice in the India trade writes from abroad to his correspondent: “Don't ask how grieved we were by the death of the most illustrious Sheikh Maḍmūn—*may God place him in Eden with the righteous and the pious!*” (VI, 3, lines 11–13).}

The Successors of Maḍmūn. After Maḍmūn's death, Ḥalfon his eldest son was styled ‘our Nagid,’ as attested both in a document from the year 1153 (II, 71) and on his tombstone, which states that he died October 26, 1172.¹⁸ Like his father he was a shipowner, and the document alluded to describes in detail the sinking of one of his ships while sailing from Aden to Kūlam (Quilon), the famous port city on the Malabar Coast of India. Several Geniza papers illustrate his activities (see II, 61–64, 71–72). Another Nagid Ḥalfon, son of a Nagid Maḍmūn, died in August 1248, and two years later, in April 1250, his brother Yeshū'ā, also styled Nagid, was laid to rest. It is highly probable that these Nagids were descendants of the first Maḍmūn. It cannot be ascertained whether the same is true of Maḍmūn, son of Rabbi Ḥalfon, who died in 1217/8.¹⁹

It seems, however, that Maḍmūn b. David, who is praised in a poem as a Nagid, scion of Nagids (II, 69), and who is referred to as the leader of the community in two Geniza documents, was the grandson of Ḥalfon

¹⁷ See II, 61 and III, 38, lines 20–22.}

¹⁸ See below, 498, n. 6.

¹⁹ Translations of their tombstone inscriptions are published in Subar, “Tombstones.”

b. Maḍmūn. In his lifetime, Yemenite Jewry was coerced to apostatize to Islam, and one of the documents describes in detail his painful consent to conversion in order to save the lives of his fellow Jews (II, 66). A highly interesting letter by him, dated July 9, 1202, announces the community's return to Judaism and makes reference to Maimonides (II, 67).²⁰ Most probably, this Maḍmūn is identical with Shemaryā b. David, the Nagid of the Land of Yemen, to whom the Spanish Hebrew poet Judah al-Ḥarīzī dedicated (a copy of) his *Taḥkemōnī*,²¹ for both the Arabic and the Hebrew names mean 'protected by God.' This Nagid Shemaryā also was a representative of the merchants. In one Geniza document, he forwards from Aden to Alexandria a large sum left by an India traveler who had died on his way. The money was entrusted to a Muslim Qadi, which suggests that in those days Jews did not frequent the India route.²² An Arab literary source reports that a Jew called Dā'ūd (David), b. Maḍmūn was responsible for digging three wells in Aden.²³ Perhaps he was a son of the Nagid Maḍmūn b. David. The author of the famous Yemenite *Midrāsh ha-Gādōl*, David b. Amram 'Adanī, who lived at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century, is also called Nagid, and he might have been a descendent of the Maḍmūn family.

{A recurrent theme in these papers is the substantial support by Yemenite Jewry, especially the wealthy Jews of Aden, of the Palestinian Academy located in Cairo and of various Egyptian Jewish scholars and religious functionaries. Maḍmūn I, his family members and descendents and other well-to-do merchants sent regular contributions, consisting partly of money and partly of precious oriental spices and textiles, to the Gaon and members of the rabbinical court in Cairo, from whom various letters of thanks have been preserved. Maḍmūn once sent Maṣliāḥ a set of translucent Chinese porcelain, accompanied by a religious query, often repeated in later sources, whether china could be regarded ritually as glass rather than pottery (II, 33–34).

The grants varied in size from large foundations of hundreds of dinars for institutions to two dinars, approximately a month's support for a lower-middle-class family, for some individual beneficiaries. Data on this subject

²⁰ Maḍmūn II is also mentioned in II, 74, 75 {and II, 67a}.

²¹ Cf. 513, n. 1.

²² No II, 73. Shemaryā is also mentioned in II, 68.

²³ Ibn al-Mujāwir, *al-Mustabṣir*, 131.

appear in letters by traders, who requested their correspondents to disburse the gifts, and by the recipients, who expressed their thanks, as well as in appeals by those in need.²⁴ In an article published in 1962 and reprinted in his book, *Yemenites*, Goitein summarized seven such documents from the 'India Book,' four from chap. 2 (the already mentioned II, 33–34, and II, 44, 53, 54), and noted his anticipation that more documents on the subject would be found in the India Book.²⁵ No. II, 44, includes instructions to give twenty dinars to the Jewish poor in Egypt. The Egyptian capital was a sanctuary for refugees from wars and persecution from many lands, while Aden was a city of wealthy merchants, who in order to give charity to the poor had to send funds to distant Cairo.²⁶

To complement the study of this theme, I cite here seven additional, relevant documents from chap. 2.

II, 11a. The court clerk Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh, Fustat, writes to Abraham b. Bundār, Maḍmūn's uncle thanking him and the 'Leader of the Congregations,' which could refer to Ḥasan b. Bundār or his son Bundār II, for a gift of *lānas*, red Indian silk, sent him:

This is to inform you that last year, I was afflicted by a serious, grave illness, from which hardly anyone recovers. I remained a case to be pitied, *with no strength*. I was forced to sell my Sabbath clothing and everything in my household, this despite the attention paid me by members of the congregation—*may they be blessed by God!*—and the care and treatment given me by all the doctors—may God grant them a good reward! Hope was lost for me. I borrowed 12 dinars, and no one believed that I would live. *But the Creator of the world decided to act for His great name's sake and saved my soul from death*. He granted me health, as He customarily does with never-ending kindness. I embarked on my path (to recovery), perplexed in my soul and by the burden of debt and the stressful state that befell me. Then God's salvation came to me in the form of what your excellency was kind enough to send with Abu 'l-Surūr b. Binyām. . . . I took delivery from him of six bolts of *lānas*, three from *your holy excellency* and three from *his excellency, our nobleman, the 'Leader of the Congregations'—may he live forever!*—after [[I had paid]] I was obligated to pay a tax of one dinar plus. I, your servant, sold it all [[for six Egyptian dinars]]. From the total, customs were deducted. From the balance, I paid the debts, of which I was concerned and apprehensive. I was glad that God did not deny the two of you His reward for (helping me in) my illness and that my recovery and rescue was by the two of you, rather than someone else, and that you would receive the bountiful reward, because you deserve it and

²⁴ {For a recent study of letters of appeal, see Cohen, *Voice*. Some of the items cited here can be added to his anthology.

²⁵ Goitein, *Yemenites*, 26–27, 32. The other three documents are IV, 10, VII, 65, 66.

²⁶ Goitein, *Yemenites*, 26–27.

because of God's acceptance of your high position and station. I, your servant, have become your devotee forever, dependent on your charities, thankful and supplicant for what I hope God will answer me for your sake, to the extent that I have undertaken to incessantly pray for you, at the conclusion of my prayers and when I eat and drink. This is only part of what you merit for your servant, who acknowledges your kindnesses and lives from your bread. Your care for me is with God, because of your piety. *May the Omnipresent, may He be blessed, open to your excellencies His great treasure and grant you relief in time of trouble and aid you, and combine each penny (of merit) until it becomes a great account, and consider this a burnt offering on the altar!*

II, 43. Joseph b. Abraham, Maḏmūn's cousin, writes to an India trader traveling in Egypt, requests him to sell pepper for him, and adds:

Also please (17) deliver in my name to my lord Sheikh //Rabbi// Isaac and Rabbi Ḥalfon . . . (18) the scholar (?), the cantors of the synagogue, five Egyptian *mithqāls* (gold coins). (19) Greet them in my name and apologize for me (your servant) to them concerning the (small) (20) gifts of honor.

II, 45. A panegyrical letter, written by the Scribe of the Academy in Fustat to Joseph b. Abraham, was presumably occasioned by a gift sent by Joseph. Only the beginning of the letter is preserved.

II, 47. Maḏmūn's cousin Khalaf b. Isaac writes from Aden to the notable India trader Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, then in the Sudanese port 'Aydhāb, and requests that he deliver for him oriental spices including aromatic wood, civet and cloves, as gifts to the religious dignitaries of Egypt, namely 'my lord your brother, the diadem,' undoubtedly Eli ha-Levi b. Nethanel 'Diadem of the Discerning,' 'our lord,' viz. the Head of the Palestinian Academy in Cairo Maṣliāḥ, the *Rayyis* Abu 'l-Najm, the cantors Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh and Abū Sa'īd and the banker Abu 'l-Faraj.

II, 62. In October 1152, Maḏmūn's son, Ḥalfon, acknowledges condolences over the death of his father sent him by an Old Cairo cantor, to whom in turn he forwards a gift of two *mithqāl* gold pieces.

II, 63. Two years later, Ḥalfon, answers the letter of a poor Egyptian teacher, who complained of his bad health and thanked Ḥalfon for the gift, sent him the previous year. Evidently, the poor religious functionaries of Egypt hoped to receive annual support from the wealthy Jews of Aden, and the sum of two gold pieces, which Ḥalfon sent again, was quite a generous endowment.

II, 69. A poem of praise of Maḏmūn II b. David, written by an Egyptian Jew from a good family who had fallen on bad times, was obviously intended to elicit a gift as well.

The above survey of Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan and his family presents bare essentials only. The material merits elaboration in a monograph-length study devoted to this fascinating twelfth century Jewish potentate of Yemen.

In conclusion, we present the following genealogical diagram of Maḍmūn's family, based on the documents in this book.²⁷

²⁷ The genealogy is based on Goitein, *Yemenites*, 82, and additional documents. As the names Abraham and Ḥalfon appear in this family, perhaps Abraham b. Ḥalfon, the early-thirteenth century poet from Aden (see Tobi, *Abraham b. Ḥalfon*, 30–32), was one of its members.}

{B1. *Maḥrūz b. Jacob*

Maḥrūz b. Jacob, a shipowner (*nākhudā*) and Indian Ocean merchant, figures frequently in the documents of this book. Specifically, he wrote, received or was mentioned in at least twenty-seven texts, some of which name him but not his father.¹ Six of the manuscripts are dated, the earliest in 1131/2 C.E., when he purchased a home in Fustat, the latest in 1152, when he was no longer alive.² As can be deduced from one of the undated letters, he died somewhat earlier, probably ca. 1150.³ A letter from Egypt, January 1133, speaks of his recent arrival from Aden.⁴ In January-February 1134, he was expected to leave Aden soon, on his way back to Egypt.⁵ He was in Fustat in March 1135, and in November 1144, we again find him in Aden.⁶

None of the twenty-seven documents contains any hard evidence that Maḥrūz was related to Maḍmūn. Other than the title of chap. 2, sec. H, Goitein wrote of the relationship in a few other place but offered no explanation.⁷ I assume that he based his hypothesis on the memorandum, in which Maḍmūn wrote that he was sending gifts and letters to Maḥrūz and his sister in Egypt from their mother in Aden.⁸ This presumably suggests a close familial tie between Maḍmūn and Maḥrūz's mother. The two men were contemporaries, and, as we learn from the same document, Maḥrūz's sister was married to another closely associated contemporary, Abū Zikrī Kohēn Judah b. Joseph, the representative of merchants in Fustat, whose papers form the subject of chap. 5. Goitein apparently deduced the specific nature of the presumed relationship between Maḥrūz's

¹ {Nos. II, 30–31; II, 34; II, 45a; II, 49; II, 55–61; III, 2–3; III, 8–9; III, 23; IV, 10; V, 1–2; V, 4; V, 6; V, 10; V, 14; V, 20; VI, 22; VI, 40. The 27th is not part of the India Book collection: ENA NS 48, f. 13 (formerly 'JTS Geniza Misc. 13'), apparently from Alexandria, ca. 1140 (see references in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:502; *ib.*, 229, no. 12, is incorrectly listed on page 458, n. 83, as no. 11; now printed in Frenkel, "Alexandria," 2:39–42). Goitein, in his preliminary discussion (below, n. 10), noted that Maḥrūz was mentioned in twelve documents, which indicates the progress subsequently made in the research. The name Maḥrūz ('Protected' by God [Goitein, *Letters*, 62]) is rare, and I am unaware of anyone else called this in the Geniza papers. Furthermore, the name does not appear in Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmā'* (the female Maḥrūza appears there on page 2352 and is defined 'chaste,' etc.).

² No. II, 60; II, 45a, respectively.

³ No. II, 61*v*, line 2.

⁴ No. V, 1, line 9.

⁵ No. V, 2, lines 16–17.

⁶ No. II, 59; V, 10, line 8, respectively; the latter speaks of phylacteries sent to him.

⁷ Below, 304, n. 10, 366 (see n. 1); Goitein, *Yemenites*, 100.

⁸ No. II, 34, side d, line 4.

mother and Maḍmūn, namely that she was his paternal aunt, from these data.

Further evidence of the familial ties, also unfortunately ambiguous, can be adduced from Maḍmūn's letter to Abraham Ben Yijū, in India, in which Maḍmūn requested that the Tunisian trader assist Sheikh Maḥrūz 'for the sake of the *ʿaṣabiyya*,' which means esprit de corps or agnation.⁹ One of Abū Zikrī's sisters seems to have been married to Maḥrūz, and the two men thus had an 'exchange marriage.'¹⁰ Another sister married Maḍmūn.¹¹

In Maḍmūn's memorandum, which speaks of the delivery of the letters and gifts to Egypt, Maḥrūz is identified as *al-ʿAdanī*.¹² Undoubtedly, he was born in Aden. He frequently visited there, his mother lived there, and his widow and children resided there after his death.¹³ But he traveled widely. He probably left Aden for Egypt at a relatively young age and frequently traveled between those two mercantile centers. Shortly after having arrived safely in Aden from India, Maḥrūz wrote his nephew Sulaymān b. Abū Zikrī in Egypt and informed him that he was sailing back to India that very day; but he promised to return to Egypt the following year.¹⁴

Maḥrūz is referred to as 'the *nākhudā*' at least eleven times, in some documents repeatedly so.¹⁵ He owned a ship that sailed on the Aden-Man-galore (Manjarūr) route. Sometimes, he traveled this route on someone else's ship; other times his ship seems to have made the run without him.¹⁶ When traveling out to India, Maḥrūz carried gifts, which Maḍmūn's cousin Joseph b. Abraham sent to Ben Yijū.¹⁷ Maḥrūz stayed in India for an extended period (or for extended periods). If Maḍmūn's letter of recommendation for him to Ben Yijū was written, as it seems to have been, ca. 1136,¹⁸ it follows that about that time Maḥrūz first sailed to India. Once

⁹ No. II, 30, lines 22–23.

¹⁰ In *Yemenites*, 100, Goitein, remarks that Maḥrūz was married to Abū Zikrī's sister, this deduced from the regards sent him by Maḥrūz's 'household' (viz., his wife) in II, 59, line 22. Also note that in II, 58, top margin, line 9, Abū Zikrī sends regards to Maḥrūz's wife. It thus seems likely that both Abū Zikrī and Maḥrūz married the other's sister. For such 'exchange marriages,' see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:32.

¹¹ See III, 29, line 9.

¹² No. II, 34, side d, line 4.

¹³ No. II, 61*v*, line 2.

¹⁴ No. 56, lines 5–11.

¹⁵ II, 61*v*, line 2; III, 2, line 3; III, 3, line 20; III, 8, lines 7, 10, 33, margin (x2); III, 9, line 22; III, 23*v*, lines 9, 12.

¹⁶ He traveled on Maḍmūn's ship (III, 9, lines 22–23). Joseph b. Abraham sent goods to Ben Yijū with Maymūn the Muslim merchant, traveling on Maḥrūz's ship (III, 2, lines 2–3).

¹⁷ No. III, 3, line 20.

¹⁸ No. II, 30.

he wrote from Mangalore of a shipment he had made, “this year.”¹⁹ Joseph b. Abraham sent provisions there for “the most illustrious *nākhudā*, my lord Maḥrūz.”²⁰ Maḥrūz delayed in Mangalore with hope that his brother-in-law Abū Zikrī would join him on the return trip to Aden.²¹ On a trip from India to Aden, Maḥrūz transported iron, ‘eggs’ and cardamom to Maḍmūn.²² He wrote from the Red Sea port Sawākin on his way back from the Kārim flotilla, in which he was one of the seven Jews who had sailed.²³ From Abū Zikrī’s letter to Maḥrūz, it is clear that he was getting ready to set out on another journey from Egypt to the East.²⁴

Maḥrūz was not only a shipowner but also an active participant in the India trade. A large consignment that he had shipped in the boat belonging to the *nākhudā* Al-Fawfalī was lost, when that vessel floundered.²⁵ In order to recoup his losses, Maḥrūz made a return trip to India from Aden, rather than travel home to Egypt. This journey was crowned with success.²⁶ He also shipped pepper in Maḍmūn’s ship.²⁷ Maḥrūz’s various purchases for his nephew Sulaymān b. Abū Zikrī Kohen and for Abū Zikrī are discussed in one of his letters.²⁸ In another document, apparently written in Alexandria, Maḥrūz is spoken of in connection with the sale of lac, a common India export commodity.²⁹ His name is often mentioned in connection with various merchants active in the India trade. He wrote from Mangalore to Abū Zikrī in Broach, Northern India, not to hesitate to avail himself of the assistance of the *nākhudā* Tinbū, an Indian, since between him and Maḥrūz were “bonds of inseparable friendship and brotherhood.” Such expressions of close relations with an Indian business associate deserve special attention.³⁰

We know very little of Maḥrūz’s immediate family. His father, referred to as the distinguished *sar*, notable, and the *ḥāsīd*, pietist, was no longer

¹⁹ No. II, 55, line 44.

²⁰ No. III, 8, lines 7 ff.

²¹ No. II, 55, lines 27–31.

²² No. II, 31, lines 12–13. See pages 369–70 for the definition of ‘eggs.’

²³ No. V, 4, lines 7–8. Other unique information on the Kārim is found in Maḥrūz’s letter II, 56–57; see 483, n. 28.

²⁴ No. II, 58, margin.

²⁵ No. II, 55, lines 16–17.

²⁶ No. II, 56–57, lines 21–23, II, 55, line 18 (in this order).

²⁷ No. II, 55, lines 41–45.

²⁸ No. II, 56–57, lines 12–20.

²⁹ ENA NS 48, f. 13, line 15.

³⁰ No. II, 55, lines 37–40. See below, pages 131, 152, 155, 312.

alive in 1131/2.³¹ Isaac, Maḥrūz's grandfather was still involved in international commerce and engaged in business with India traders, at the time that Maḥrūz was active in these matters.³² Maḥrūz had two sons, Joseph (named after his maternal grandfather) and Abu 'l-Ḥasan, and was survived by at least two children.³³

We see from II, 59 and from V, 20, both written by Maḥrūz in his own hand, that he was not a man of letters. Abraham Ben Yiju took seriously Maḥmūn's request to assist Maḥrūz and penned II, 55 for him in India. Someone else also penned the two copies of another letter, which he sent, II, 56–57.} ³⁴

³¹ No. II, 60*v*, line 7.

³² See II, 58, margin, line 7; VI, 21*v*, line 7.

³³ No. II, 58, margin, top, lines 7–8; II, 61*v*, line 2.

³⁴ Cf. the preliminary discussion on Maḥrūz in Goitein, *Studies*, 353–55.}

{C. *Abraham Ben Yijū and his Family*

I. *Preliminary Remarks*¹

The documents relevant to Abraham Ben Yijū and his family constitute perhaps the most important part of this book. Some eighty documents about Ben Yijū and his family have emerged from the Geniza, and the story of his life and his family makes an exciting tale. He was a Jew from al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia—a man of the world who traveled to Egypt, Aden and India, where he earned his living in an import-export business, as well as a bronze-ware factory that he owned. He participated in business partnerships on a tremendous economic scale with his Jewish colleagues in Aden, ventures that had interconnecting links with Jewish and non-Jewish merchants—Hindus, Muslims and Christians—from North Africa to India. At an early stage of his long sojourn in India he purchased a slave girl, whom he then manumitted. After some seventeen years, Ben Yijū returned to Yemen, finally settling in Egypt, where he was reunited with some of his family members who had in the meantime emigrated from Tunisia to Sicily. A man of some learning, his contemporaries and compatriots considered him a scholar, and he actually wrote responsa to legal queries, dabbled in writing poetry and engaged in other literary activities. He was, however, severely censured for various events in his personal and business life, and in fact experienced considerable trials and tribulations.²

His name and lineage. Ben Yijū did not have a son named Isaac; nevertheless, in letters written to him by the Adenese merchant Khalaf b. Isaac, the latter addressed him with the epithet generally associated with the name 'Abraham' (due to the association with the Patriarch Abraham), namely, 'Abū Ishāq [Father of Isaac] Abraham' or simply 'Abū Ishāq.'³ In some letters sent to Abraham in India from Aden, it appears as if his father's first name was Yijū (see below for this pronunciation of Ygw). Thus, the Nagid of the Yemenite community, Maḍmūn, the representative of the merchants, writes: "*To our esteemed master and lord Abraham!—may God*

¹ {This chapter is based on an article, which I wrote, published under the names of S. D. Goitein and M. A. Friedman: Goitein and Friedman, "Ben Yijū."

² A few translated passages from the documents concerning Ben Yijū are quoted by Ghosh, "The Slave," id., *Antique*. A few of these documents were also published by Simonsohn and Gil, "Sicily"; see the discussion *ibid.*, 26 ff., and cf. Simonsohn, *Jews in Sicily*, xlii ff.; Zeldes and Frenkel, "The Sicilian Trade."

³ 'Abū Ishāq Abraham': III, 10; III, 10a; III, 15, all in the address on the verso; 'Abū Ishāq': III, 11, line 2.

remember him favorably!—the son of his honor, great and holy master and lord Yijū.”⁴ Similarly, Joseph b. Abraham addresses a letter to Ben Yijū as follows: “His excellency, the most illustrious elder, our master Abraham son of Yijū—*may he rest in Eden!*”⁵ However, in a deed of manumission he wrote in 1132 he calls himself “Abraham son of Peraḥyā—*may he rest in Eden!—known as Ben Yijū,*” and in a letter of 1149 to his brother, for example, he signs as “Abraham b. Peraḥyā b. Yijū.”⁶ In one of his poems he lists his ancestry: “*Abraham the Ma‘arāvī* (= Maghrebi, i.e., North-African), *grandson of Nathan and son* [Heb.: *nīn*] *of Yifrah* (= Peraḥyā),” while later on in the same poem he refers to himself as ‘Ben Yijū.’⁷ In another poem, of which we possess two copies with slight variations, we read: “*I, Abraham son* [Heb.: *nīn*; v.l.: *bar*] *of Peraḥyā son* [Heb.: *benō*; v.l.: *nīn*] *of Yijū*” (II, 38; II, 39, verse 18).

It follows that Nathan, Abraham’s grandfather, was also called Yijū.⁸ Sometimes Abraham is referred to as ‘Ben Yijū’ or even just ‘Yijū,’ proof that this was considered his surname.⁹ Instead of *Ygw/Yjw* (in Arabic script: *يوجوا*) one sometimes finds *Yšw* or *šw* (in Arabic: *يشوا*; *اشو* or *ايشو* [*ʾiṣw*]).¹⁰ Clearly, the name was pronounced Yijū (or Yishū, Ishū, Īshū). As Goitein observed:

This is the name of a Berber tribe; our Abraham b. Peraḥyā’s grandfather was presumably under the protection of that tribe and took its name. The name still exists today (as Benichou) among North African (and later French) Jews.¹¹

⁴ No. II, 13.

⁵ No. III, 8. Perhaps some Adenese and Yemenite Jews, unfamiliar with the Tunisian surname (see below), assumed on the basis of the name ‘Abraham Ben/Ibn Yijū’ that Yijū was his father’s name.

⁶ Deed of manumission: III, 17, line 10; letter: III, 29*v*, line 3.

⁷ No. II, 37, vs. 48 and 54.

⁸ Cf. the address in a letter written to him by Khalaf b. Isaac from Aden, III, 16*v*: “Abū Ishāq Abraham, *son of his honor, great and holy master Peraḥyā son of Yijū* from al-Mahdiyya—*may he rest in Eden!*”

⁹ No. III, 30: Peraḥyā b. Joseph writes from Sicily to Al-Mahdiyya, inquiring after his uncle “Abraham known as Ben Yijū” (line 7). In another letter, III, 45, he writes his father, calling him in the address (verso) “Joseph *Teacher* b. Peraḥyā Yijū.” The inscription on packages that Joseph b. Abraham sent Abraham Ben Yijū in India was just *Yijū*: III, 3, line 18. Another package bore the inscription “Abraham Yijū”: III, 6, line 6. Additional instances can be cited.

¹⁰ For example, in III, 22, recto, line 1: “Abraham Ben Yishū,” but in the verso, line 1: “Abraham Ben Ishū.” For an example of each of the Arabic versions cited see III, 25*v*; III, 3; II, 17; II, 14.

¹¹ Goitein, *Yemenites*, 99, n. 29. Cf. id., *Med. Soc.*, 3:6, 426, n. 21; *Letters*, 206, n. 17 (= III, 29); *Studies*, 336–37, n. 3, where Goitein comments, citing as proof these spellings

The name Yijū—associated with the name Ezekiel—may be found in our day among the ‘Bene Israel’ of India.¹² However, it is highly improbable that there is a connection between the name in that community and the family name of our Ben Yijū, which could be construed as indicating that the ancestor(s) of these Yijūs were descendents of or otherwise related to that Tunisian merchant. For the present, the similarity would seem to be a mere coincidence.

Peraḥyā (= Simḥā in Hebrew, [Abū ’l-]Surūr in Arabic) Ben Yijū had three sons in Al-Mahdiyya: Joseph, Abraham and Mevassēr, and at least one daughter, Berākhā; there may have been another daughter, named Yumn (= good fortune).¹³ All we know of Peraḥyā is that he was a scribe, since the Adenese businessmen Joseph b. Abraham and Khalaf b. Isaac, in three letters they sent to Abraham in India, refer to the latter as “*son of his honor, great and holy master Peraḥyā the scribe* [Heb.: *sōfēr*].”¹⁴ Abraham was somewhat of a calligrapher. He too must have been educated as a scribe and perhaps practiced that trade in his youth, for he refers to himself as *lavlār*, another Hebrew word for ‘scribe.’¹⁵ We shall have occasion to discuss the lives of his brothers and their sons below. (Daughters are rarely referred to in their letters.)

II. *Ben Yijū in India*

Early days in India. We know nothing about Abraham Ben Yijū’s early days in North Africa or the details of his journey to the East. He is first

and the currently known North African name, that D. H. Baneth’s reading of the name as ‘Yago,’ from *Ya’aqov*, Jacob, is no longer tenable (Goitein, “From the Mediterranean,” 191, n. 17; id., “Jewish Trade,” 76, translation of line 12: ‘Yago’). For other persons named Yijū in Geniza documents see Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:857 (Index), and cf. Simonsohn and Gil, “Sicily,” 27, n. 11. For another example of a Jew whose family name came from the name of an Arab tribe, or confederation of tribes (Muwaffaq al-‘Ashā’irī), see the note to III, 11, line 15, and for a possible additional one, see the introduction to III, 49.

¹² I am indebted to Mr. Isaac Sankar and Mr. Yohanan ben David for this information.

¹³ For Yumn see 684, n. 25.

¹⁴ Nos. III, 9v, III, 10v; III, 10av. Ghosh (“The Slave,” 187) writes that Peraḥyā was “a scholar and religious teacher,” or (id., *Antique*, 154) “a Rabbi, a respected scholar,” inferring this (ibid., 368) from the fact that Khalaf addresses him as ‘R.’ (based on the translation of III, 10 in Goitein, *Letters*, 192; cf. III, 1v, address, line 1). However, unlike the title *harav* or *rabbēnū*, which occur as independent nouns, not as an attribute of a proper noun, the abbreviation ‘R.’ (= *rabbī* or *rabbēnū*), as an attribute of a proper noun, should not be understood as anything but a polite form of address.

¹⁵ In the above-mentioned poem, II, 37, vs. 47. Abraham may have written III, 40c as a copyist before setting out to the East; see ibid. He wrote II, 55 on behalf of another merchant. See 592, n. 37.

mentioned—albeit not explicitly—in a letter sent from Aden to India, probably in 1133. Neither sender’s nor recipient’s name has survived in the document, but the handwriting is that of Maḍmūn b. Japheth’s personal secretary, and as noted by Goitein, it is clear from the content that it was sent to Ben Yijū. The writer recalls that the addressee had been in Aden some time in the year 526 AH, which lasted from November 23, 1131, to November 11, 1132 (“The pepper that had been bought for you, mentioned in your letter, amounts to thirty *bahārs*; of this you received by your own hand here in Aden—may God preserve it!—in the year five hundred and twenty-six, 56 dinars . . .” [II, 20, lines 7–10]). Ben Yijū apparently left for India in the first part of that year and, although there is no hard evidence to that effect, this was probably his first trip to that country. Unlike Maḍmūn’s other letters to Ben Yijū, the greetings at the end of the letter contain no regards to any member of the addressee’s family, mentioning him alone; which suggests that he had only recently come to India. Maḍmūn was in fact answering a previous letter from the addressee, which had described the hardships he had experienced en route to India. Maḍmūn consoles him with a prayer that God “make the outcome good.” I understand this routine blessing, in context, to mean that the riches Ben Yijū would amass in India would compensate him for his ordeal by sea. The main part of the letter is concerned with various accounts relating to business transactions between the seasoned merchant and his young friend. These accounts totaled the huge sum of 623 $\frac{2}{3}$ Malikī dinars (the contemporary Yemenite currency); we do not know where Ben Yijū, at this early stage in his career, had acquired funds enabling him to conduct business deals on such a scale.

The slave girl Ashū (= the emancipated woman Berākhā). What were Ben Yijū’s first steps in India? He wrote the earliest dated document in his archives—a draft or copy of a deed liberating a female slave—on Monday, October 17, 1132, “in the city of Manjarūr which is in the land of India in Tuḷuva of Malībārāt, the royal city . . . on the shores of the Great Sea.” Manjarūr is Mangalore, a well-known port city on the Malabar coast (‘Malībārāt’) in southwest India, in the Tuḷuva region. Goitein discovered this document, which is of great interest for several reasons, on a visit to St. Petersburg (then Leningrad) in 1965; it was on that occasion that he laid the first foundations for the reexamination of the Geniza documents kept there—a project which is now in full swing. A few months after the estimated date of his arrival in India, Ben Yijū bought and liberated an Indian slave girl, to whom he refers in this document as “*Ashū the slave girl, the proselyte, of Tuḷuva.*” *Ashū* is Sanskrit for ‘nimble,’ an apt name for a slave. It is

inconceivable that a young Jewish merchant, having just landed in India, would have immediately purchased a handmaiden for ‘good money’ and liberated her for purely altruistic reasons (following an halakhic opinion that such an act is religiously meritorious). The conjecture that Ben Yijū, after buying the girl and liberating her, then made her his wife, cannot be far from the truth; indeed, in all likelihood this was his original intention.¹⁶ In what follows, we will endeavor to corroborate this conjecture and also to reconstruct some of the reactions to Ben Yijū’s marriage.

The significance of Ben Yijū’s deed of manumission cannot be appreciated without some understanding of the halakhic status of a non-Jewish slave girl and her manumission. A manumitted slave girl becomes a Jewess, that is, a proselyte, in all respects. In the deed, Ben Yijū calls his slave “*Ashū the slave girl, the proselyte,*” even before writing the manumission formula. This was no slip of the pen, for he was presumably following the ruling that a female slave had the status of a proselyte even before receiving her freedom, if her owner, when purchasing her, had subjected her to the halakhically required ritual immersion ‘for servitude.’ The immersion procedure in fact amounted to acceptance of certain religious duties. Some authorities held that a slave girl, having undergone such immersion, enjoyed a kind of intermediate status, being neither completely Gentile nor completely Jew but something like a proselyte. Others were of the opinion that in that situation the girl’s owner could even have conjugal relations with her, but this view was totally rejected by the Geonim.¹⁷ As we shall see later, the view comparing a female slave to a proselyte even before manumission may have influenced Ben Yijū’s relationship with Ashū. When he liberated

¹⁶ No. III, 17. For Tuḷuva, see Ghosh, “The Slave,” 175 ff., and references *ibid.* For the hypothesis that Ben Yijū married Ashu and that she bore his children, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:20; *id.*, *Letters*, 202 (in the introduction to III, 29). In the last named source Goitein comments that there is no mention of Ben Yijū’s wife in the documents of the *India Book*, probably considering this an indication that she was indeed an emancipated slave (see also his comment to III, 41, line 22). However, in a letter to Ben Yijū from the Adenese merchant Khalaf b. Isaac, written in July–August, 1147 (III, 15, lines 27–28), we read: “For I enquired . . . and learned that your house and your children were in Jurbatan”; most probably, the word *bayt*, here translated as ‘house,’ referred to his wife (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:164; contra Ghosh, *Antique*, 229–30). Goitein, *Letters*, *ibid.* (in the introduction to III, 29), writes that Ashū was liberated “with so much ado,” probably meaning to say that the deed of manumission was written in full accordance with halakhah and accepted practice. Ghosh, “The Slave,” 201, writes, in a rather exaggerated vein: “And since he seems to have celebrated the occasion of her manumission with some fanfare, it seems as though he was issuing public notice of a wedding, or betrothal,” and although it is indeed likely, as stated, that Ben Yijū married Ashū, the mere fact that a deed of manumission was drawn up is no proof. See also Isenberg, *Bene Israel*, 29, n. 19.

¹⁷ See Friedman, *Polygyny*, 296 ff. and the sources and references cited there.

her, he gave her a Jewish name: ‘Berākhā daughter of Abraham’ (referring, of course, to the Patriarch Abraham, who is considered the father of all converts to Judaism).¹⁸ While numerous deeds of manumission for slave girls have been preserved in the Geniza, this is the only one that I have seen, which cites the new name given to the freedwoman.¹⁹ I remember no other occasion on which a female convert was called ‘Berākhā,’ but the name—which means Blessing or Good Fortune—was certainly appropriate both for the girl and for Abraham Ben Yijū (whose sister’s name, as we recall, was also Berākhā), who hoped that his liberated handmaiden would bring him good fortune, in his new home in India.

Most of the documents relating to Ben Yijū indicate that his permanent residence in India was the same place where he wrote the deed of manumission, namely, Mangalore (‘Manjarūr’). However, he also dispatched shipments to Aden from Fandaraynā (today: Pantalāyini), where he must have lived for some time, and also from Dahbattan (today: Valarapattanam), and engaged in business in Fāknūr. On one occasion we are told (see above) that his family was in Jurbatan. All these places are port cities on the Malabar Coast.²⁰

III. *Merchants’ Letters*

Before dealing further with episodes in Ben Yijū’s personal life, we draw attention to some affairs connected with his business in India and his correspondence with other merchants in Yemen or Aden. Most of the relevant documents are commercial letters that his partners sent him from Aden to India, though there are also a few letters sent elsewhere, as well as personal missives. These letters are an inexhaustible source of information about contemporary commerce and society. Some also offer data on historical events, such as the description of the attack launched by the ruler of Qays, an island in the Persian Gulf, against Aden in 1135, in a letter sent by Maḍmūn to Ben Yijū.²¹ Before getting down to business, these letters always begin with

¹⁸ See R. Asher b. Jehiel (Rosh), *Responsa*, chap. 15, no. 4: “It is customary to write in proselytes’ marriage contracts and writs of divorce: ‘So-and-so son of Abraham, and one writes his proper name, and the ‘father of a multitude of nations’ [Gen. 17:4, 8] is the father of them all.”

¹⁹ My impression has been confirmed by my former student, Dr. Yehezkel David, who has written a study on divorce and writs of divorce in the Cairo Geniza.

²⁰ On Ben Yijū’s links with Fandarayna see, e.g., III, 10, line 24; Dahbattan—*ibid.*, line 17; Fāknūr—page 337; Jurbatan (III, 15, line 28) see above, n. 16.

²¹ No. II, 21–24.

polite greetings and an account, whose length varies depending on circumstances, of personal news. Thus, for example, Khalaf b. Isaac begins his letter to Ben Yijū with thanks for his message of condolence on Khalaf's father's death, while also mentioning the loss of two young Yemenites at sea in the Indian Ocean. Khalaf comments that his mother had also died, in the month of Av:

I acknowledge your words of condolence over the death of my *late*²² father, *may he find mercy!* I never doubted your friendship, dear Sheikh Abū Ishāq, and know well that what happened at your place [or: with you] is like what happened with us. Those young men, the sons of Mūsā, namely Judah and Hārūn, journeyed to Broach, but the ship was struck in the Khawr (the gulf); the two perished together with the elder Abu 'l-Faraj al-Maḥalli.²³ God forbid that we should be forgetful of them. Furthermore, the death of my mother occurred this year in the month of Av; thus, even more grief had befallen me. However, at all times everything is in the hands of God, the Exalted. *He can do anything He pleases; and none can say to Him, 'What are You doing?'* May God, the Exalted, turn all matters to a good end! (III, 11, lines 1–10).²⁴

Bronze ware factory. Ben Yijū made his living in India not only as a merchant, but also, as mentioned above, as the owner of a factory that produced bronze ware. Customers in Aden ordered articles made at his factory, furnishing exact descriptions. They supplied the metals—copper and tin, generally scrap—and paid the artisans, who were paid for piece-work according to weight. The workers included slaves and a few other men, whose names indicate that they were Jews, probably from Yemen.²⁵ The owner of the factory supplied the tools and fuel, such as rice husks. Among the relevant Geniza documents are Ben Yijū's accounts for the expenses and income of the factory.²⁶

In Your name, O Merciful. His servant Joseph b. Abraham—*may he rest in Eden!* I have sent to Sheikh Abraham b. Peraḥyā Yijū, through the agency of Sheikh Maymūn, the Muslim, the [prominent] merchant, to Manjarūr, in the ship of the *nākhudā* Mahrūz—may God ordain its safety!—a bag containing copper (*naḥās*), in which are four pieces of scrap, and a brass [ten-cornered] tray, weighing 41½ pounds, and a long boiler, in a separate package, weighing 12 pounds. Total weight: 53½ pounds.

²² Hebrew *ḥay*; see 394, n. 31.

²³ I.e., of al-Maḥalla, Egypt. Broach was on the northwest coast of India.

²⁴ See further the description of letters dealing with the India Trade, above, pages 10–11.

²⁵ In his discussion of 18 (page 638), Goitein considered the possibility that some of the factory staff were local Jews; see Isenberg, *Bene Israel*, 29, n. 17.

²⁶ No. III, 18; III, 19.

If God keeps it safe and it arrives, please have made for me a [ten-cornered] tray the same size as the one sent to you and also a *marfa'* decorated with wicker work, which we call *zīr-khuwān* (a 'table-bowl'). It should fit into the center of the [ten-cornered] tray, so that when water is poured into it from a water skin, the drops should fall on the [ten-cornered] tray. The wicker work decoration should be like that of a bamboo basket; the table-bowl should weigh eight pounds, more or less, and the [ten-cornered] tray about four pounds.

Furthermore, a small candlestick, weighing about [lit. perhaps] 3 pounds, made in the form of steps; and a small *t'lm* (?), whose mouth should be no more than one and a half handbreadths, and whose *'sb'dr* should be of fine workmanship.

As to the remainder of the copper, please sell it, and with its proceeds pay the craftsman's fee. With the balance buy for me, your servant, a small quantity of fresh betel nuts, or, if they are not available, cardamom or turmeric (III, 2, lines 1–15).

Import-Export. Ben Yijū sent merchandise from India to merchants in Aden, for consumption there or for export to Egypt and North Africa. This included pepper (Maḍmūn to Ben Yijū: "The news from Egypt was mediocre. As a result goods sold poorly, and there was no demand for even a dirhem's worth of pepper or [other] merchandise..."; II, 23, lines 22–24), betel nuts, various spices, perfumes, different kinds of iron (Maḍmūn to Ben Yijū: "As for iron, this year it sold [well] in Aden—all kinds of iron—and in the coming year there will also be a good market, because there is none at all left in the city. Please take notice of this"; II, 14, lines 30–35), and many other commodities; these require detailed and careful discussion, for which there is insufficient space here.

The Adenese merchants did not usually pay for goods ordered from India with goods exported to that country, but in gold and silver. Nevertheless, they exported a good many goods to India. Among these were silk and clothing, as mentioned in the following letter from Maḍmūn to Ben Yijū:

With him (ʿAbd al-Masīḥ *al-shammās*, the deacon), I have also sent you (a gift) from me: a new, first-rate, raw Dabīqī scarf, which has a pretty band on each side, and is fit to be worn by prominent men. With him, I have also sent you (a gift) from me: a new, first-rate, raw Dabīqī scarf, which has a pretty band on each side and is fit to be worn by prominent men.²⁷

²⁷ No. II, 14, lines 15–18. In this case, as stated, the scarf was sent as a gift, but clothing was frequently sent to be sold at full price.

There were also articles and jewelry made of silver, glass and other materials; household utensils, such as carpets, tables and frying pans; chemicals and medications; soap, paper and books; metal for the bronze factory; corals; and foodstuffs, such as cheese, sugar, raisins and olive oil.

Some of the merchandise sent to India was intended specifically for sale. One noteworthy curiosity was arsenic, which was used in the Far East for both medical and criminal purposes:

Moreover, I had here a bag of yellow arsenic. I heard that arsenic in your place is in demand, and in particular the people of Ceylon search for it a great deal. I have sent [it], my lord, to you, its weight exactly 160 pounds. And it is fine arsenic. Please try, my lord, to sell it all, as you are graciously accustomed to do, for whatever price God apportions as livelihood (III, 6, lines 7–9; III, 5, lines 1–2).

In this case, Ben Yijū was acting as an agent for the sale of merchandise belonging to his Adenese partner. In other documents we read that he too imported arsenic to India in order to sell it. In some letters, Adenese merchants note that they had not been able to find any arsenic in that particular year.²⁸

For the most part, goods were not sent to India in large quantities to be sold, but in small amounts, designed for the personal use of the Jewish merchant in India and his family. Ben Yijū's account was charged for some of the goods mentioned; others were sent to him as gifts. Shipments of paper, mentioned in many letters, were particularly important, since paper was not the standard writing material in India. A traveler named Nicolo Conti, who visited India early in the fifteenth century, reports that the Indians wrote on large leaves (of the fan palm or the Palmyra tree).²⁹ The shortage of paper was particularly annoying for western merchants living there: "(I) also (sent) with him two sets of fine, large paper—government paper, the like of which no one has" (II, 14; lines 18–21). Or, elsewhere:

I have sent to you with Sheikh Abu 'l-Khayr and Bama a gift from me to you: 10 (?) *rubā'iyas*³⁰ of sugar and raisins, as well as a set of white papers. As for the paper, for two years now it has been impossible to get any (in the market), and I have given you this from (the stock) I keep for myself (II, 24, lines 7–11).

²⁸ No. III, 12, line 41; III, 15, line 50.

²⁹ See Major, *India*, 7 ("The Travels of Nicolo Conti").

³⁰ The *rubā'iyya*, known from many Geniza documents, was a measure of weight or dry volume.

The severe shortage of paper partly explains the large number of documents relating to Ben Yijū that reached the Geniza and were preserved there—the original number of such documents was surely even greater. He seems to have kept every scrap of paper. He made use of blank spaces in letters he had received to write accounts, lists, calendars—which were particularly important for a Jew living in far-removed India—as well as religious and secular poems, and drafts of his halakhic responsa. Curiously, throughout his years in India, Ben Yijū kept two copies of a letter he received there, ultimately taking them back to Egypt with him. This is most puzzling, for in one copy there is no blank space at all. “One may perhaps infer that paper was also kept for use not necessarily as writing material, but, for example, ‘to wrap around a small phial’ (Mishnah, Shabbat 8:2, concerning ‘erased paper’); ‘to use it as a stopper for his bottle’ (BT BM 13a, concerning a [worthless] deed).”³¹ When Ben Yijū found no paper, he wrote on cloth.³² Among the documents preserved in the Geniza Goitein found two pieces of cloth inscribed in Ben Yijū’s hand. The fact that cloth was used rather than paper indicates that they were written in India, not in Yemen or Egypt. This is highly significant, as we shall see below in connection with their contents.

Mutual aid and partnerships. The Jews involved in international trade in India established friendly relations among themselves, as well as a system of mutual aid. The Jewish merchants of Aden generally relied on their coreligionists in India to sell their merchandise for them and purchase other goods on their behalf, and vice versa. Thus, Joseph b. Abraham writes from Aden to Ben Yijū in India:

With the proceeds purchase for me a small quantity of iron, if available, and cardamom, and if you can—a little borax, or whatever you consider proper. For one who is present sees what is not seen by one who is absent (III, 5, line 2–III, 4, line 1).

³¹ Goitein, *Yemenites*, 93. Elsewhere (see below, page 552), he writes that Ben Yijū’s son-in-law, Peraḥyā the judge (of Al-Maḥalla, see below), had no interest in his father-in-law’s commercial and industrial papers, perhaps not even in his poetic oeuvre, and therefore had them thrown into the Geniza. However, many of the family’s papers relate not to Abraham Ben Yijū but to Peraḥyā, his father and his brother, and in yet another place (*Letters*, 328, introduction to III, 43) Goitein states that the papers were discarded on the initiative of Peraḥyā’s younger brother, later judge in Fustat (Samuel, who was actually not a judge but a teacher, see below). To my mind, the question of why the Yijū family papers were preserved in the Geniza cannot be considered apart from a general investigation into the purpose of the Geniza and preservation of Hebrew writings, perhaps because of their sanctity; however, this still largely obscure question is beyond the scope of this study.

³² See Basham, *India*, 399, for writing on sized cotton and silk.

Friends sometimes sold to one another as a favor; at other times, an agent would take a fee of about five percent. Just as Maḍmūn helped Ben Yijū to sell his merchandise in Aden, the former asked Ben Yijū, after he had become fully acclimatized in India, to help Maḍmūn's young relative Maḥrūz, who was new to the business, particularly because of their relationship: "By God, by God, act for the sake of esprit de corps with Sheikh Maḥrūz in all his affairs" (II, 30, lines 22–23).

Most transactions—at least, large-scale ones—were carried out through partnerships, ranging from simple partnerships to very complex ones.³³ People did not usually invest all their funds in one business, but spread them out among several partnerships in order to reduce the risk; indeed, while profits could be high, heavy losses could also be incurred, if a ship was wrecked or the like. A merchant, who for some reason, did not wish his merchandise to be bought or sold in partnership with others, was expected to say so explicitly. Such objections to partnerships were expressed by the Adenese merchant Joseph b. Abraham, who wrote Ben Yijū:

Please do not send me anything, neither betel nuts, nor any other goods you acquire for me, in partnership with anyone, but specify what belongs to each person and (for) every item purchased. This is the greatest favor you can do for me (III, 1, lines 20–22).

When Joseph brought his son into the business, he asked Ben Yijū not to include the son's expenses together with his own, probably so as to impose responsibility on the young man and thereby help him to learn and gain experience.³⁴ As discussed here in the continuation, the specific expressions used in instructions to associates to make purchases (or sales) and their purport sometimes were the object of contention.

Disputes and lawsuits. Business relations among merchants not infrequently led to disputes and even to lawsuits. Thus, Ben Yijū, while in India, was embroiled in an unpleasant clash with the *kārdār* (or *kārdāl*)—a Persian word meaning 'director.' Several Adenese merchants had ordered cardamom from Ben Yijū. The *kārdār*, who dealt in cardamom, had apparently promised Ben Yijū to meet the demand in due time at a bargain price, in order to inveigle him into paying a sizable advance. To pay the advance, Ben Yijū

³³ On commercial cooperation and partnerships in the Geniza see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:164–79, and *passim* elsewhere in his studies (see *ibid.*, 6:86–87, Index); Gil, "Merchants," 274–82. For partnerships in Islam and their relevance to partnerships figuring in Geniza documents see Udovitch, *Partnership*.

³⁴ Nos. III, 2, lines 17–18; III, 3, lines 11–12.

drew from the funds of his Adenese partners who had ordered the goods, but the *kārdār* did not keep his side of the agreement and failed to supply the cardamom. With regret, Ben Yijū reported the loss of their funds to his associates in Aden. He received a polite reply from Khalaf b. Isaac, who suggested that Ben Yijū threaten the *kārdār* but also pointed out that the whole loss should devolve upon Ben Yijū, who had ordered the material on his own initiative, contrary to the instructions of the Adenese merchants. In the end, Ben Yijū bought the missing cardamom from another merchant at a considerable loss.³⁵

Those instructions merit further consideration, as they shed light on business practices, reflected in Geniza letters concerning Indian Ocean commerce (most frequently in letters sent to Ben Yijū) as well as Mediterranean trade. Furthermore, the exact meaning of the formulas commonly used for such instructions has been disputed in scholarly literature. Khalaf claimed that he and other merchants did not request Ben Yijū to purchase merchandise that required barter or payment of an advance, but rather commodities, which were readily available. As evidence, he cited the instructions, which he and others habitually wrote Ben Yijū: *tashtarī bi-mā qasama ʾllāhu wa-razaqa (wa-tunfidh bihi)*, literally ‘purchase for whatever price God apportions and grants as a livelihood (and send it).’³⁶ A similar expression appears with greater frequency concerning sales, such as *tabīʿ bi-mā qasama ʾllāhu wa-razaqa*, ‘sell for whatever price God apportions and grants as a livelihood.’ Sometimes, especially in the Mediterranean letters, this is abbreviated, and one is requested to make a sale *bil-qism wal-rizq* (literally, ‘for apportionment and livelihood’). In other documents, the full expression appears but without *wa-razaqa*.³⁷

Usually a merchant sent such instructions for sales or purchases to an associate in a different locality, where the transactions were to take place. In

³⁵ For the *kārdār* see III, 1, lines 13–17, and the documents referred to in 556, n. 17.

³⁶ No. III, 12, lines 30–33. See 618, n. 23.

³⁷ In this book these phrases appear in II, 1, line 18; II, 32, lines 39–40, 55; II, 43, line 6; II, 46, line 37; III, 6, line 9–III, 5, lines 1–2; III, 10, lines 51–53, 60, 69; III, 11, lines 34–35, 44; III, 12, lines 25–26, 32–33 (the last four letters all sent to Ben Yijū); VI, 36, line 24 (there: *bi-qism*, etc.; see below). They usually refer to sales and are associated with purchases only in Khalaf’s letters, III, 10 and III, 12; similarly in TS 8 J 22, f. 10 (ed. Ben-Sasson, *Sicily*, 547, no. 111; Gil, *Ishmael*, 2:758, no. 255), lines 7–8: *li-tashtarī . . . bi-qismih wa-rizqih* and Mosseri II, 188 (ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, 2:763, no. 256), line 10: *tashtarī . . . bi-qismihim wa-rizqihim*, apparently to be translated ‘purchase what (God) apportions as his/their livelihood’ (both of these letters were written by Nahray b. Nissim, who figures prominently in the documents of this book).

a few cases the transactions were made in connection with a partnership.³⁸ When this occurred, the writer would also note how the profits (or losses) would be divided. In one Geniza study, the phrase in question was understood to mean that the seller would receive half the profits (since *qasama* can be translated ‘divide’) in addition to living expenses. As Goitein commented, this interpretation was completely without foundation (‘nothing could be more erroneous’), and the phrase merely means that the addressee was given a free hand to sell [or purchase] for whatever price he might obtain.³⁹ Goitein’s understanding of the phrase is confirmed, in my opinion, by the numerous passages in which such instructions appear in the documents recently published by Moshe Gil.⁴⁰ In a few documents, the addressee is requested to make a special effort.⁴¹ Contrary to Gil, I do not believe that the requests for diligence have any significance as far as understanding the formula in question but were merely intended to urge the addressee to obtain the best price possible on the market. As Gil himself noted, we also find: “I adjure you, if anything is difficult for you, do not do it, and sell *fil-qism wal-rizq*, for I do not want to burden you or impose on you.” In other letters, the writer emphasized that the transaction should be completed without delay. In any case, I do not find any basis for Gil’s suggestion that a sale by a particular (undefined) method of transaction was intended.⁴²

In one of the documents, it is stated that a sale be made *bi-mā qasama ʾllāhu . . . min al-rizq*, literally, ‘for whatever price God . . . apportions as livelihood’ (or ‘for whatever livelihood God . . . apportions’).⁴³ This wording

³⁸ For such a formula in a document of partnership, see Udovitch, *Partnership*, 198. Examples in Geniza documents: TS 12.5, lines 15–16; TS 20.152, line 15 (ed. Gil, *Palestine*, 2:723, 726, nos. 394, 395, respectively); TS 8 J 1, f. 10 (ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:872, no. 565), lines 22–23. In his discussion, Gil, “Merchants,” 295, does not consider these documents.

³⁹ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:185–86, 445, n. 9. Goitein does not identify the scholar in question. In the index volume (*Med. Soc.*, 6:93), the phrase was mistakenly defined by the rejected interpretation.

⁴⁰ See the citations in the Indexes to Gil, *Palestine*, 3:730; id., *Ishmael*, 4:958.

⁴¹ Examples cited by Gil, “Merchants,” 294. Similarly, in this book, III, 6, line 9–III, 5, lines 1–2.

⁴² Gil, “Merchants,” 293–95 (on 293, Gil, mistakenly cites the phrase as *ʿalā mā qasama*, etc., rather than *bi-mā qasama*). ‘I adjure you,’ etc., is a translation of TS 12.545, lines 31–32 (ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:618, no. 485; cited by Gil, “Merchants,” 294; for ‘impose on you,’ read *ukallifukum*, and correct Gil’s translation accordingly). For an earlier, brief discussion of the *bil-qism wal-rizq* formula, see Gil, *Palestine*, I, 211. Goitein’s brief comments on the phrase evidently escaped Gil’s attention.

⁴³ AIU V A 70, line 5 (ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:571, no. 789). Cf. in this book VI, 36, line 24: *bi-qism Allāhu al-marzūq*. Also note the expression, *al-rizq maqsūm* in II, 49, margin, line 3.

suggests that in the more common phrase, *bi-mā qasama ʾllāhu wa-razaqa*, the two verbs also complement each other, as a hendiadys, and in this book I have translated the phrase in this fashion. The abbreviated *bi-mā qasama ʾllāhu*, ‘for whatever price God apportions,’ evidently means the same.

A similar formula, with a slight, interesting variant, occurs in several of the roughly contemporary Arabic business letters from the Red Sea port of Quṣayr: *bi-mā ṭaʿama ʾllāh wa-razaqa*. Guo, who published these letters, translates: ‘as God so feeds and provides,’ which he defines as ‘a device used [...] to seal a deal or command a sale.’ However, had the translation ‘as’ been intended, the original should have read something like *kamā* or *alā mā*. The word *bi-mā*, the context of the formula within these documents and the parallel of the Geniza phrase all conclusively demonstrate that the proper translation is ‘for whatever price God grants as nourishment and livelihood.’ As in the Geniza documents, the intention is that the addressee is instructed to sell (or buy) at the best market price available.⁴⁴

Ben Yijū was also involved in other acrimonious disputes. Makhlūf b. Mūsā, an import-export merchant who traveled from Spain to India, claimed a considerable sum of money from Ben Yijū. Makhlūf sent Maḍmūn twenty letters in which he asked for help in collecting his debt, also threatening to appeal to the Muslim courts. In a letter to Abū Zikrī Kohen, Makhlūf wrote that he had planned to travel to Aden, to see whether he could collect any money from Ben Yijū. In addition, ‘the son of *Semokh al-Daʿwā*,’ meaning the reliable claimant, had informed him that Sheikh Iṣḥāq “was convening people in my behalf at every session,” that is, enlisting support among the Jews of Aden for his suit against Ben Yijū. Maḍmūn then wrote to Ben Yijū, suggesting, perhaps more in deference to his correspondent than out of conviction, that Makhlūf was senile, but that the affair was serious and had to be settled. Ultimately, Maḍmūn paid Makhlūf 300 dinars on behalf of Ben Yijū, and in response Makhlūf confirmed that he had no further demands on Ben Yijū, whether by Jewish or Gentile law.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Guo, *Commerce*, 121 et passim. On 181, Guo incorrectly copies *mā* for *bi-mā* (see photograph in Guo, “Quṣayr Letters,” 175). Throughout the book Guo transliterates *ṭaʿama*, the first form, but obviously, *ṭaʿama*, the second form, is intended; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:4b. See Friedman, “Quṣayr.” Diem, *Geschäftsbrieife*, 339, line 6, clearly reads *bi-mā qasama ʾllāhu* (the text preceding the phrase is missing), which presumably also is to be translated ‘for whatever price,’ etc.

⁴⁵ For Makhlūf’s complaints see II, 21, lines 1 ff.; II, 24, lines 12 ff.; II, 25, lines 12 ff.; VI, 21v, lines 6 ff. (the source of the report that Sheikh Iṣḥāq was “convening people”); VI, 22a.

Another complaint against Ben Yijū, in a letter sent by a creditor to Aden, probably to Maḍmūn, accuses the Tunisian merchant of slighting the writer, continually putting him off and avoiding him as much as one hundred times in one short day. The writer was fed up with Ben Yijū and requested the addressee to take the matter in hand and protect his rights, as he always did when someone misappropriated another person's property.⁴⁶

Bama, the Indian slave. Ben Yijū had a household retainer—an Indian slave named Bama who helped him in the business.⁴⁷ Slavery was quite normal in those days, and a slave could achieve a position of some respect in his master's house. Bama's position is evident from the regards sent him in letters addressed to Ben Yijū, in which the slave was even referred to as 'Sheikh Bama,' as if he were a distinguished merchant, or even 'brother Bama,' as if he were actually a member of the family.⁴⁸ At the very beginning of his Indian career Ben Yijū apparently sent Bama to Aden as his personal representative in selling his merchandise there. Maḍmūn believed that Bama's irresponsible behavior—he seems to have been a chronic drunkard—was proof that Ben Yijū had misplaced his trust in the slave.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Bama remained in Ben Yijū's service for the length of his stay in India and even accompanied him back to Egypt in the early 1150s.⁵⁰

IV. *Ben Yijū, a Man of Letters*

Poet. Although Ben Yijū is known to us first and foremost as a practical man—a merchant and industrialist who traveled long distances to make his fortune—he was also a man of learning. We have already mentioned his fine handwriting and his appellation *lavlār*, 'scribe.' We know of this by-name through his own poems, for he refers to himself as such in a poem preserved in the Geniza, which he wrote, of course, in Hebrew. It was not at all exceptional, in an Islamic cultural environment, to find an important businessman writing poetry.⁵¹ While Ben Yijū was indeed not particularly gifted as a poet, his poems are of interest because of what they reveal of their writer and his associates, as we shall see from one verse of a poem to be cited below. The verses of the poem rhyme, but they do not scan prop-

⁴⁶ No. III, 37. On disputes between merchants, cf. Gil, "Merchants," 305 ff.

⁴⁷ For the name see 604, n. 59.

⁴⁸ See Goitein, *Letters*, 13.

⁴⁹ See II, 23, lines 1–6.

⁵⁰ See III, 42.

⁵¹ As noted by Goitein, "Kish," 249, n. 1, with reference to Ben Yijū.

erly. Nevertheless, one has the impression that in several places he tried to achieve some kind of regular meter. In some poems he signs his name in an acrostic: ABRHM ḤZQ YGW (Abraham—*may he be strong!*—Yijū). Like some contemporary writers, Ben Yijū contemplated collecting his poems in a kind of *dīwān*, prefacing them with the formula ‘By him, too.’ He used the blank space in the page containing the aforementioned 1132 deed of manumission to jot down drafts of three or four poems of praise to Maḍmūn, the Yemenite Nagid. He wrote two other odes to Maḍmūn, one in two copies with slight variations. These poems provide some important information about Maḍmūn, his family and the Jews of Yemen, and we shall quote a verse from one of them below. Another poem is a dirge for Maḍmūn’s death. Later we shall examine a poem of praise that Ben Yijū addressed to Judge Labraṭ b. Moses, the *dayyān* of al-Mahdiyya, which has come down to us in at least two copies.⁵²

Ben Yijū copies liturgical poetry by Judah ha-Levi and others. Besides his secular poetry, Ben Yijū also wrote liturgical poems. Beneath the above-mentioned poems on the reverse side of the deed of manumission, he wrote “By him, too, a *selihā*” (a poem for days of fasting and repentance, the first line here: “I shall go to the great ones and speak to them”). And around the deed of manumission itself: “By him, too, a *selihā*” (with the first line: “Please sound the shofar of freedom; release prisoners and free captives”). He also inscribed a *selihā* on the reverse side of the paper containing the poem praising R. Labraṭ. On a page from one of the other panegyric poems he wrote, upside-down: “*piyyūṭim* for which there is a need.” He may have copied liturgical poems that he wanted to use for the synagogue prayer service. On the reverse side of a letter he had received, he copied a *reshūt* for the *Nishmat* prayer by R. Isaac b. Ghiyāth (“Today, and for the life of the duration of Your world,/The breath of every living being shall bless Your name”). On another letter, in the blank space at the end, Ben Yijū copied a *ma’ariv* (poem for the evening prayer) for the Day of Atonement (“Who is a God like You, magnificent in kingship/You t[urn] man back to dust”), which is very common in the Geniza and even reached Europe, as Professor Ezra Fleischer kindly informed me.⁵³

Ben Yijū copied two poems by Judah ha-Levi on a piece of cloth. The first is an *ōfān* for the festival of Sukkot, also very well known, which appears here with some interesting variants. Ha-Levi died in 1141, and it

⁵² Nos. II, 37–41; III, 29a, TS G 2.59v.

⁵³ The *selihōt*: II, 40 and III, 29a; *piyyūṭim*, etc.: II, 37; *reshūt*: III, 13v (see Davidson, *Thesaurus*, 2:472, k.229); *ma’ariv*: II, 29r (end)–II, 29–28v.

is remarkable that his poems were copied only a few years after being written, perhaps while he was still alive, in far-off India, as follows from the fact that Ben Yijū used not paper but cloth. One might say, therefore, that Ben Yijū himself had some part in the wide dissemination of Judah ha-Levi's poetry. In a letter to his brother written in 1149, after he had left India and had arrived in Yemen, Ben Yijū refers to an encounter with Sulaymān Ibn Gabbay, who had come to Yemen from Egypt. This Sulaymān was ha-Levi's travel companion (Arabic: *rafiq*) during his eastward voyage from Spain in 1140, and it was possibly he who brought his friend's poems to the Far East.⁵⁴

Halakhist and physician. Ben Yijū was a learned Jew, and while in Yemen wrote legal responsa. Those responsa whose draft versions have been identified deal with laws of inheritance, deeds of gift, suretyship and acquisition. Other responsa in his handwriting deal with the marriage of a slave girl. It is not certain whether he authored these or only copied them, and we shall discuss them later. On the second of the aforementioned pieces of cloth he wrote the minutes of a session of a religious court (?) in India, in which we read that a certain person had presented a *ma'ase* (that is, *ma'ase bēt dīn* = court record), probably written in Broach, northwest India. The two scraps of cloth also reveal another side of Ben Yijū's complex personality: on the reverse of one we find a medical prescription, and on the reverse of the other, a remedy for an earache—both in Arabic characters. These, too, were probably written in his own hand, possibly implying that he also possessed some medical education. This combination of merchant (and manufacturer), Torah scholar, poet, who was also familiar with medical science, though rather surprising today, was not exceptional in those days.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ The liturgical poems appear in TS 16.31 (no. 341b in the old *India Book* list, for some reason not copied into the new list). The first was published by Yarden, *Liturgical Poetry*, 176 ff.; in Davidson, *Thesaurus*, 2:294–95, it is numbered y.800. The second appears in Yarden, *ibid.*, 515. I am indebted to Professor Ezra Fleischer for these data. The encounter with Sulaymān Ibn Gabbay is mentioned in III, 29, lines 12–13; for the identification with Judah ha-Levi's companion of that name see Goitein's comment there (683, n. 18), and on Sulaymān himself see Goitein, reference there; *id.*, *Med. Soc.*, 5:459–60; and cf. Fleischer, "Remarks," 269; Schirrmann-Fleischer, *Poetry in Muslim Spain*, 436, 472; Gil & Fleischer, *Yehuda ha-Levi*, 622 (Index, Abu 'l-Rabī' Ibn Gabbay). When this book was already in proofs, I identified a large piece of cloth on which Ben Yijū wrote private, supererogatory prayers (TS 20.26).

⁵⁵ Responsa: III, 3, margin; III, 34–35 (for the responsa concerning the slave girl see below); minutes and prescription: III, 36; remedy: TS 16.31 (*India Book*, old list 341b). For *ma'ase*, see the note to I, 13, fol. 67, line 16.

V. *Ben Yijū's Family and His Return to the West*

Ben Yijū's maternal cousin in India. We return now to the story of Ben Yijū's family. As we learn from two documents (and perhaps two additional ones) in his archive, Ben Yijū was not totally isolated from his family during the long years he spent out in India. At least one member of his mother's extended family was there as well. The two documents are accounts, which Ben Yijū wrote of his business dealings in India with *Ibn khālatī*, 'the son of my maternal aunt.' In one, Ben Yijū speaks of his cousin anonymously; in the other he provides his name: Abu 'l-Khayr Ibn al-Minqār. The two accounts probably refer to the same cousin rather than two cousins, although we cannot verify this with certainty. The son of Ben Yijū's maternal aunt dealt in various Indian commodities, including cardamom.⁵⁶ In two letters written by Maḍmūn, Aden, to Ben Yijū, India, mention is made of one Abu 'l-Khayr, and the same cousin is likely to have been intended. This Abu 'l-Khayr also dealt in iron and cardamom. When he was in Aden (he also visited the highlands of Yemen), he took delivery of a shipment sent by Ben Yijū, while the latter took care of Abu 'l-Khayr's business in India. When returning to India, Abu 'l-Khayr carried for Maḍmūn money and gifts he sent to Ben Yijū.⁵⁷ Unfortunately, we have no data on which of the two, Ben Yijū or his cousin, preceded the other to India. Presumably, the first to arrive there assisted his relative in business affairs in the Far East and may have encouraged him in making the long trip to India and provided financial support for it. An imaginative and gifted writer could present us with an absorbing story of Ben Yijū's mother's family, as the background for his long sojourn and business ventures in India. But this remains beyond the purview of the present study. Nevertheless, we note that a certain Abu 'l-Khayr Ṣedāqā ('Charity') contributed money for the illumination of Ben Yijū's synagogue in Egypt in 1156, and we can only hypothesize, whether this was the same cousin, who, like others, left India and returned to the West with our protagonist.⁵⁸

Ben Yijū's three children. Two sons and a daughter were born to him in India; their mother was presumably his freed slave Ashū, renamed Berākhā

⁵⁶ He is mentioned anonymously in the account written on II, 22v (not edited; see page 337) and named in III, 18 [E], lines 3–4, 7, where we learn that he dealt in cardamom. Ben Yijū sent regards to a maternal aunt and her children in the letter he wrote from Aden to the West, in 1149 (III, 29, margin).

⁵⁷ See II, 14, lines 23–30; II, 24, lines 6–8.

⁵⁸ See III, 51, line 6. Other associates of Ben Yijū, who left India and settled in Egypt, are mentioned in that document and in III, 42.

(see above). We first hear word of his eldest son Surūr, named after his father Peraḥyā (Abu 'l-Surūr), in a letter that Maḍmūn wrote Ben Yijū from Aden in 1134, in which he extends his wishes for the child's well-being.⁵⁹ It is not possible to determine Surūr's age at the time this letter was written, but some time had surely elapsed since Ben Yijū had written Maḍmūn with the news of his son's birth, and the reader may speculate how much time had passed since Ashū was manumitted in 1132. In 1135, when Maḍmūn sent "a piece of corals for your son Surūr" (II, 24, line 11), the child was probably still an infant. Corals were used not only as jewelry but as charms against the evil eye. Ben Yijū's daughter was named Sitt al-Dār, 'Mistress of the House.' The second son is mentioned at a point where the letter in question was torn, and barely a trace of him remains. In a letter to Ben Yijū in India, probably in 1146, the writer inquires after the health of "the two children (*waladayn*, sons) and masters," probably referring to Surūr and his younger brother. In another letter, from July–August, 1148, the writer inquires after "my master your child (*waladak*, 'son')," apparently implying that the younger son had died in India during the time between the two letters.⁶⁰

Departure from India. In the course of his long stay in India, Ben Yijū probably came to Aden on business trips. Thus, for example, Joseph b. Abraham writes in a letter of ca. 1136–39: "And if you, my lord, are planning to arrive, bring it (= the merchandise) with you" (III, 4, line 1–III, 5, line 5). He seems to have arrived in Yemen, probably for an extended visit, ca. 1140; by 1145 he had relocated in India (see the introduction to III, 21). He did not leave India for good until 1149. We do not know why he stayed for such a long time. At the beginning of his career in international trade, the loss of two ships cost Ben Yijū a tremendous sum of money, and Goitein suggested that Ben Yijū remained in India for so many years in order to recoup the loss, after which he stayed on for some time in order to make some profit.⁶¹

On several occasions, Ben Yijū wrote of his intent to return to the West with his family, but each time he found some excuse to put off his

⁵⁹ No. II, 26v, line 8.

⁶⁰ In III, 29 (September, 1149), line 4, Ben Yijū reports reaching Aden from India safely with his children, meaning, I believe, his son Surūr and his daughter Sitt al-Dār. The second son is apparently mentioned in III, 41, line 14 (quoted below), where the manuscript is torn. For the quote "the two sons and masters" see III, 12, line 47; "my master your son": III, 16, line 22.

⁶¹ See Goitein's note to II, 22, line 18 (340, n. 19), where a loss of 880½ dinars is mentioned. Ben Yijū's substantial losses from shipwreck are mentioned in V, 6, lines 11–13.

departure. In the summer of 1148, for example, Khalaf b. Isaac wrote him: “Every year you write that you are leaving for Aden, but nothing happens. May God, the Exalted, ordain a happy conclusion!” (III, 16, lines 23–25). Maḍmūn, too, urged Ben Yijū to return to Aden. He referred to Ben Yijū’s concern that people might ascribe his departure from India to dubious motives. The reasons for this concern are unclear for the present; perhaps he was afraid that he might seem to be evading payment of his debts. At any rate, Maḍmūn reassured Ben Yijū, on the grounds that he (Maḍmūn) had secured a guarantee from his business partner, Bilāl b. Jarīr, ruler of Aden, that no harm would come to Ben Yijū (or that he would have safe conduct). Maḍmūn’s concern for the fate of Ben Yijū’s children should he remain in India (“for if, God forbid, your appointed time overtakes you, all that you have will be lost, and your children will join the wards of the state” [II, 28, line 21–II, 29, line 2]) implies that the Tunisian must by then have been advanced in age.

From an analysis of the letter II, 28–29 we conclude that Bilāl guaranteed Ben Yijū’s safety as early as ca. 1145. Nevertheless, Ben Yijū delayed his departure for a few more years. While still in India, though, his family in the West was constantly in his thoughts and he made efforts to help them, sending, for example, forty Malikī dinars to his brother Mevassēr and twenty to his brother Joseph.⁶² On September 11, 1149, after long years of silence, he wrote his brothers from Aden, informing them that he had at long last left India. He had recently received the ominous news of the conquest of Tunisia by the Normans of Sicily: They had occupied Tripoli in 1146, and Al-Mahdiyya and Sfax in 1148.

I heard what happened to the coastland of Ifrīqiya, Tripoli, Jerba, Qarqanna, Sfax, al-Mahdiyya, and Sūsa. No letter, however, from which I could learn who died and who remained alive, has arrived. By God, write exact details and send your letters with reliable people to soothe my mind (III, 29*v*, lines 5–7).

Despite the bad news, the main part of the letter still expresses his hopes for a better future:

I have left India and arrived safely in Aden—may God protect it!—with my belongings, life, and children well preserved. May God be thanked for this! “*Let them praise the Lord for His steadfast love, His wondrous deeds for mankind.*” [Ps. 107:31 et seq.].

⁶² The money sent to Mevassēr is mentioned in II, 29, lines 2–9; III, 15, lines 31–32; III, 29, lines 7–11. The gift to Joseph is mentioned in II, 30, lines 8–21.

Now I wish to let you know that I have enough to live on... “*come down to me without delay... There I will provide for you*” [Gen. 45:9–11].⁶³ I have a son and a daughter, take them and take with them all the money and the riches—*may the Lord fulfill my wishes for good and yours!* Come quickly and take possession of this money; this is better than strangers taking it. Also, find out who is the best of the sons of my brother Joseph or the sons of your sister Berākhā, so that I may marry him off to my daughter. After your coming here, we shall live in Aden or Fustat or Alexandria, if it will not be possible for us to go to al-Mahdiyya or to Ifrīqiya, namely, to Tunis or Qayrawān. Everything, of course, is in God’s hand (III, 29, side a, lines 3–6, 13–20).

Ben Yijū had intended to send the letter to his younger brother Mevassēr, as he had already heard in India that his brother had set out for Egypt. However, when Abraham reached Aden he had no idea where to find Mevassēr or the rest of his family, so that his letter was sent “to al-Mahdiyya, God willing, or anywhere else in Ifrīqiya.”

His brothers Joseph and Mevassēr Yijū and sister Berākhā. As it happens, Joseph and Mevassēr Yijū and their sister Berākhā had left Tunisia with their families and gone into exile in Sicily. Joseph settled in the port of Mazara. Roger II, the Norman ruler of Sicily, who had conquered Tunisia, was known for his tolerance toward the non-Christian population.⁶⁴ Joseph may have hoped that his family had found a safe haven in Sicily; it is a fact that he planned to settle there permanently. Some years ago, among the documents of the new series of the Adler Collection in New York, I found a contract in which Joseph b. Perahyā Ben Yijū rented an apartment belonging to Umm al-‘Izz d. Zur‘a for forty years, at a total rent of twenty Sicilian dinars, Ducan *rubā’īs*, half a *rubā’ī* per year.⁶⁵ Joseph, who earned his livelihood as a teacher (and cantor) is known from other documents to have been impoverished, and it is possible that these twenty dinars were not brought from Al-Mahdiyya but were the gift that his brother Abraham, then in India, had asked Maḍmūn to send him.⁶⁶

⁶³ Message sent by Joseph to his father Jacob.

⁶⁴ See Ahmad, *Islamic Sicily*, 58, 64, *et passim*; Grabois, “Roger,” col. 595.

⁶⁵ The document has been numbered in this book III, 30a. According to Simonsohn and Gil, “Sicily,” 28; Simonsohn, *Jews in Sicily*, xliii, it seems that the sister Berākhā also settled in Mazara, since III, 41v (sent there), line 4, requests Joseph to convey Abraham’s letter to her, and also sends regards to her, her husband Marwān, and their children. See also page 771, concerning a letter that Joseph had apparently written to his sister, in which he may have invited her to join him in Sicily.

⁶⁶ As mentioned in II, 30, lines 18–19 (and elsewhere, see above). Note that the gift comprised twenty Malikī dinars, each worth about one quarter of an Egyptian dinar. The sum referred to here is in quarters of Sicilian dinars, so that the total is probably of similar value.

Mevassēr was known to have been irresponsible, and he was a source of considerable trouble to his brothers. On one occasion Maḍmūn wrote Abraham Ben Yijū in India that he had heard bad reports of Mevassēr (a ‘good-for-nothing’) and would not have taken the trouble to send Mevassēr forty dinars, as Abraham had requested, were it not for his respect for the latter.⁶⁷ Ben Yijū himself described his brother Mevassēr as “not a man, . . . indolent, possessed of a hard heart” (III, 41, margin). The letter Abraham sent his family from Aden reached Mevassēr in Messina, Sicily, in the year 1149/50, but the latter did not pass it on to his brother Joseph in Mazara. In the meanwhile, Joseph and his sons had heard that Abraham had written them from Aden. One year later, Peraḥyā b. Joseph wrote to Al-Mahdiyya in his father’s name, asking the addressee if he had seen his uncle Abraham or heard from him, or if he knew Abraham’s present location.⁶⁸

Responsa from Yemen concerning a slave girl’s betrothal. It appears that not all the Jews of Yemen and Aden received Abraham Ben Yijū favorably. Some of them, apparently self-appointed guardians of public morals and modesty, presumably deplored his marriage to his freed slave (as conjectured above) and were dubious as to her status and that of his Indian-Jewish children. These reports may relate to a time that Ben Yijū traveled from India to Yemen ca. 1140 before his last journey in 1149. The disapproval of his actions is implied in four responsa, or possibly only two, each consisting of two parts; or perhaps all four are parts of one long responsum, written by Ben Yijū, in all probability while he was living in Yemen. Three of the four parts were published in my book *Polygyny*, in the chapter on female slaves, but at that time I was unaware of their presumed relationship to Ben Yijū’s personal circumstances and of the connection between the three parts and the fourth. The persons referred to in the responsa are anonymous and are described as a certain ‘Reuben’ [that is, ‘John Doe’] who had betrothed a slave girl in India, and to a man who had begotten a son and a daughter from an emancipated slave girl. It now seems likely that ‘Reuben’ was simply a code for Ben Yijū himself, and the wife and children in question were his own. Although Ben Yijū wrote responsa in Yemen, copies of which have come down to us, we may assume that he did not write these particular responsa concerning Reuben’s marriage and children (although the possibility cannot be completely discounted); it is

⁶⁷ No. II, 29, lines 4–7.

⁶⁸ No. III, 30.

more probable that he commissioned them from some authority on Jewish law, and then copied and circulated them.⁶⁹

Reuben's (or, as we conjecture, Ben Yijū's) detractors held that he was obliged to divorce his slave-wife and betroth her a second time, since the first betrothal may have been invalid, having been solemnized before she had converted to Judaism (as we have seen, the phrasing of the deed of manumission seems to imply that Ben Yijū considered Ashū a 'proselyte' before the manumission took effect). Even were he willing to divorce her and betroth her again, he might be prohibited from living with her, because "If a man is suspected [of having intercourse] with a slave girl who was later emancipated, or with a Gentile woman who subsequently became a proselyte, he may not marry her" (M. Yevamot 2:8); in other words, having had conjugal relations with the woman when she was legally unfit to be a Jew's wife, he could not marry her after the legal impediment to her marriage had been removed. Furthermore, they argued, the son that his slave had born him was not eligible to inherit him.

The respondent relies on various arguments, some ostensibly simple but others rather puzzling. Although some support might be found for the doubtful arguments, they still remain suspect. We may assume that Ben Yijū extended considerable financial help to Yemenite Torah scholars. Based on the halakhic rulings in the responsa, one might say that his charitable actions worked in his favor when the responsa were written. Nevertheless, despite the distance, Ben Yijū may have received some help from the rabbi of al-Mahdiyya, Labraṭ b. Moses b. Labraṭ. In the aforementioned letter to his family, Ben Yijū wrote: "And kiss the soil before my lord, //our teacher// Labraṭ, the *dayyān* (*judge*), son of his honor, our master and teacher Moses, the *dayyān*" (III, 29*v*, lines 3–4). While still in Tunisia, Ben Yijū may well have studied Torah under R. Labraṭ. He in fact wrote a poem in praise of "[R. Labraṭ] son of Moses grandson of Labraṭ, who interpreted the Talmud"—one draft of that poem is written on a page of the responsum under discussion.⁷⁰ Another draft on the page contains stanzas from II, 40, tentatively dated ca. 1140.

The ruling in the responsum, that a man's son from a manumitted slave girl may inherit, seems simple, and I believe that no halakhic authority has ever contested this view. However, it may not be a coincidence that the respondent forgot to point out the necessary condition for this to

⁶⁹ The documents are now numbered III, 20b–c.

⁷⁰ The poem is in III, 29a; the draft is in II, 29*bv*. For Labraṭ see Hirschberg, "Soghmar," 240–41; id., *History*, 1:168.

occur, namely, that the son had been conceived only after his mother's manumission.

But that is not all. The responsum states that Reuben himself admitted to having betrothed the handmaiden before freeing her, by way of a 'conditional' betrothal: "You are betrothed to me after your emancipation." A man might indeed betroth a slave girl 'after she would be liberated,' if he had begun to have conjugal relations with her while she was still a slave, but freed her when she conceived his child. Presumably, a person who purchased a slave girl and betrothed her to himself on such a condition ('after you are liberated') did so in order to guarantee his investment; for a slave girl, once liberated, was considered an absolutely free person—she owed her previous master nothing and, were it not for the proviso, surely did not have to agree to the betrothal. Other Geniza documents attest that some men redeemed female captives on condition that the ransom that they paid be counted as betrothal money, or as an advance payment on the marriage money (*muqaddam*). The respondent rules that such conditional betrothal of a slave girl is retroactively valid after she is liberated, citing the M. Qiddushin 3:5: "If one says to a woman, Behold, you are betrothed to me . . . after you are liberated, . . . she is betrothed." The trouble is that all known manuscripts of the Mishnah and the Talmud read here, "She is not betrothed!"⁷¹

"*They maligned me with Mar Zuṭrā, Rav Zūtā and Zuṭī.*" As to the ruling, "If a man is suspected of [of having intercourse] with a slave who was later emancipated . . . , he may not marry her," the respondent comments that the next clause of the same *mishnah* (Yevamot 2:8) explicitly states that, retroactively, "If, however, he did marry her, he is not compelled to divorce [her]." To reinforce this ruling, the respondent cites a *barayta*, stated in the Talmud (BT Yevamot 25b, end) in the name of "Zuṭī of the School of R. Pāpī" (thus in the responsum): "If he married her, he need not divorce [her]." Now, 'Zuṭī,' much like 'Zuṭrā,' is an epithet for a small person. Our printed editions of the Babylonian Talmud read here "Rav Zuṭī," while the Munich Codex reads "Rav Zuṭā".⁷² The divergent readings are mentioned here in view of the possible relationship with the wording of a stanza in a

⁷¹ For redemption of a female captive see TS 8 K 13, f. 11, published in Friedman, *Polygyny*, 95–106; and see *ibid.*, 97, for references and discussion. Mention should also be made of Westminster Misc. 11, which contains a fragmentary discussion, perhaps from a responsum, of an injunction forbidding a person who has redeemed a female captive under duress *min al-sulṭān* [= 'from the authorities'] to marry the woman.

⁷² See *Diqdūqē Soferīm ha-Shālēm*, Yevamot, 1:302.

poem that Ben Yijū wrote, while he was in Yemen, for Maḍmūn: “They maligned me with Mar Zuṭrā, Rav Zuṭā and Zuṭī.” A literal translation, not rendering the pervasive rhyming system of the poem, follows:

They stunned me and hammered me/struck me with their tongues
 And plundered me and trampled me/a wicked company surrounded me
 Every evil and slanderous man/and every adulterer like Amnon
 And Sadducean and Boethusian/and Nathan the heretic
 And every denier of God’s Torah/skeptic and Gibeonite
 They maligned me with Mar Zuṭrā,/Rav Zuṭā and Zuṭī
 And Maḍmūn the grandee arose/and clad me in his robes
 And proclaimed with great strength/and presented me before him.⁷³

The words “Sadducean and Boethusian and . . . heretic” might be understood as referring to a dispute with Karaites in Yemen, in which Ben Yijū was involved, implying that they had scoffed at the Sages of the Talmud, whose nicknames were derogatory terms for short people: Mar Zuṭrā, Rav Zuṭā and Zuṭī.⁷⁴ There are indeed other indications that there were Karaites in Yemen at more or less the same time. Among these are Maimonides’ warning against them in the *Epistle to Yemen*, a quotation in the Yemenite *Kitāb al-Marāqī* from a Karaite commentary on the Song of Songs; Benjamin of Tudela’s report of the presence in Yemen of ‘Mourners of Zion’; and a few other indications.⁷⁵ However, the words ‘maligned’ (Hebrew *ḥērefūnī*; and also ‘slandering,’ Hebrew *malshinī*) seem to imply a personal attack on Ben Yijū. I conjecture that Ben Yijū’s enemies had spread libelous reports of him and his family members, alleging that they were not legally Jews; in this poem he is essentially replying in kind, saying that those who were slandering his marriage to his liberated slave were themselves adulterers like Amnon. Perhaps Ben Yijū’s responsum was read out in public, and some of the listeners (possibly including sectarians) cursed him and mocked his proof from Zūṭī or Zuṭā. However, Maḍmūn supported him and protected him from his detractors. This poem has been tentatively dated ca. 1141. Who knows, perhaps Ben Yijū’s subsequent return to India stemmed in part from the unfavorable reception he and his family had received in Yemen around that time.⁷⁶

⁷³ No. II, 37, vs. 25–32.

⁷⁴ As indeed conjectured by Goitein—who at that time was unacquainted with the responsum—in the introduction to II, 37.

⁷⁵ *Epistle to Yemen*, 58; Qāfiḥ, *Kitāb al-Marāqī*. See Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 120 and refs. *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Needless to say, any attempt to reconstruct these events is conjectural. “Adulterers like Amnon” refers to 2 Sam. 13.

Ben Yijū in the Yemenite interior. In later years Ben Yijū spent some time in the mountainous interior of Yemen, in Dhū Jibla, then the capital city of Yemen, and elsewhere. We do not know just how much time he spent there and why he chose to leave Aden—whether because of his enemies' slanderous barbs ('Mar Zuṭrā,' etc.) or for some other reason. Whatever the case may be, he was received with much honor in the interior. A letter in which Yeshū'ā ha-Kohen b. Jacob conveys the sad news of Maḍmūn's death addresses Ben Yijū in terms of considerable veneration, roughly translatable as follows:

To his greatness and holiness, diadem of glory, our master and lord, Abraham, the wise and the sagacious, the beloved and pleasant in all his virtues, the venerable and respected, the head of the community—may the Lord protect him!—son of his honor, great and holy master and lord Peraḥyā—may his soul be bound in the bond of life!

It is inconceivable that Yeshū'ā should have addressed Ben Yijū with the title 'head of the community' as a matter of mere courtesy; in those days, such titles were not to be trifled with. Perhaps the 'community' meant was the congregation of Tunisian merchants on their way home from India, who had stayed on in Yemen because of events in Tunisia and had made Ben Yijū their leader. Alternatively, the word 'community' (Hebrew *qehillā*) as used here may have had a broader significance. Possibly, Maḍmūn (who was known, among other titles, as 'Leader of the Congregations, Pride of the Communities') had granted Ben Yijū this honorary title, or had procured the title for him on behalf of the Baghdad or Cairo Yeshiva. Besides just "beloved and pleasant in all his virtues," Yeshū'ā ha-Kohen also called Ben Yijū "a God-fearing person and one who avoids evil." We may assume that this description, too, was not given lightly, but was intended to dismiss the evil reports of Ben Yijū's adversaries.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ "To his greatness and holiness etc.": III, 38, lines 5–8; "Leader of the Congregations, etc.": *ibid.*, lines 15–16, *et passim*; "God-fearing, etc.": *ibid.*, verso, address, and also III, 33, line 9. In his introduction to III, 31 (page 699) Goitein suggested that the Tunisians appointed Ben Yijū as their congregational leader. Needless to say, the word *maqḥēlōt* in Maḍmūn's title, translated here as 'congregations,' is simply a synonym for the more common *qehillōt*, 'communities' (in the above-mentioned poem of praise by Ben Yijū to Ben Labraṭ, TS G 2, f. 59v, the poet calls his hero "Head of the Communities [Heb. *qehillōt*] of Israel," then correcting the word to *maqḥēlōt*). This would hardly have been worth mentioning, except that Ghosh, *Antique*, 315, translates the phrase as 'Crown of the Choirs' (Ghosh, knowing no Hebrew, relied on help from 'experts'). According to Simonsohn and Gil, "Sicily," 29, Abraham was entitled *ḥazzān*, 'cantor'; however, while it is a reasonable assumption that he served as a cantor, there is no proof to that effect from III, 44 (*ibid.*, 40; cf. Simonsohn, *Jews in Sicily*, 404–5), which was sent to "The Sheikh, the *cantor*, brother

His daughter Sitt al-Dār. Ben Yijū's young daughter Sitt al-Dār did not accompany him on his trip to the interior of Yemen, but lived for three years in the home of a distinguished Adenese merchant, Maḍmūn's nephew Khalaf b. Bundār. When Ben Yijū's letter to his brother remained unanswered for some time, he betrothed his daughter to Khalaf's son. Ben Yijū subsequently suffered two tragedies. First, as already mentioned, his patron and old ally Maḍmūn died. But worst of all was the premature death of his beloved son Surūr, a blow from which he never fully recovered. His whole world fell apart: his sole heir being Sitt al-Dār, his fortune would ultimately fall into the hands of whoever married her and be lost to *his* family. The tragedy, however, only strengthened his resolve to be reunited with his relatives, as expressed in the letter to his brother. Ben Yijū had already heard that his brother Joseph had an elder son, well versed in the Torah, whose name was Peraḥyā, known in Arabic as (Abu 'l) Surūr—the name of Ben Yijū's late son (and father). Abraham decided to annul his daughter's match with Khalaf's son. Taking his daughter with him, he quickly set out for Egypt.⁷⁸

Ben Yijū's hasty departure from Khalaf's home was not only a blow for the young couple. It shattered the relationship of trust that had existed between him and his associate or associates. Ben Yijū was suspected of ulterior motives, such as seeking to avoid payment of his debts. Since international commerce was based largely on mutual trust, the allegation that a respected merchant, partner to numerous business deals over a long period, was trying to evade his monetary obligations was no trifling matter. We know of the suspicion from a letter that Ben Yijū wrote to Aden after reaching the Sudanese port of 'Aydhāb, in which he described his daughter's depressed state and, in particular, denied the accusations. To judge from the content of this letter, it is not inconceivable that he had concealed his intention to annul the betrothal, for he explained his departure from Aden as motivated by the need to sell his merchandise and spoke of his daughter's imminent return to the city.

You will be happy to know, my lord, that I arrived in complete safety at 'Aydhāb ('Adhāb').⁷⁹ *Let them praise the Lord for His steadfast love, etc.*

of Mevassēr, known as Ibn Yijū," for the letter was sent not to Abraham, then in Aden, but to his brother Joseph in Mazara, Sicily.

⁷⁸ The primary source for this section is III, 41; see also below and Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:55–56.

⁷⁹ Ben Yijū spells the name as 'Adhāb,' without *y*, meaning 'troubles,' both here and a few lines later. The defective spelling appears as well as in other documents; the writers sometimes noted the play on words (see 719, n. 1).

(Ps. 107:8). My lord, the little one, my daughter, cries night and day over your separation from her. May God facilitate //her//⁸⁰ reunion with you—God willing—in the best of circumstances! I am making a great effort to accomplish this. Were I able to make a sale in ‘Aydhāb (‘Adhāb), I would sell and return. But only what God decrees will come about. I have heard that you had mentioned that I owe you the balance of an account, and that the smaller items, left in the warehouse, do not cover the sum. Your account, my lord, is this: I owe you 5 dirhems, no more, no less! You already made an accounting with me for it. If there is good iron in the warehouse which will cover the sum, after you kindly give instructions to someone to sell the smaller items left in the warehouse, [fine]. If your servant still owes something, I am not running away. What I still owe is not worth talking about. I shall either arrive, God willing, in Aden and pay you, or I shall send something with that value, or you can collect from the *nākbudā* (shipowner) Ma‘ālī or from my lord and master Sheikh Khalaf... (III, 39, lines 6–17).

At this point Ben Yijū broke off in the middle of a line; we may assume that he had decided not to send the letter as phrased, for fear that it would only arouse further suspicion.

VI. *Ben Yijū’s Return to Egypt; His Extended Family There and Descendants*

About one year later, in September 1153, Abraham ben Yijū wrote from Egypt to his brother Joseph in Mazara, Sicily. Having received no word from Joseph, he briefly recounted his story, including Sitt al-Dār’s betrothal to Khalaf b. Bundār’s son in Aden and the many requests for her hand that he had already received in Egypt. In the rhymed address of the letter, written in Hebrew, he alludes to his brother’s trials and tribulations since leaving al-Mahdiyya: “*To the brother, who suffered scorn, / who went through fire and cold, / but is still fresh.*”

Now, my brother, it has pleased God, the Exalted, to ordain my safe arrival in Fustat—“*Let them praise the Lord for His steadfast love*” [Ps. 107:31, etc.]—and here I learned that [you have a grown son...] who is well educated, and two other sons. [I am in the possession of x thousand and x] hundred dinars and am well-off. [... Out in India] two children [or: boys] were born to me, (pleasant) as the twigs of sweet basil [...] The firstborn died in Aden [...] I have no words to describe him [...] I have left a daughter, his [their] sister, li[ke... She will receive] all my money. Now by God [quickly...] send your [eldest] son [...] so that we have joy from her and from him and marry [them...] Your letters to me should reach me in Fustat, God willing. Let

⁸⁰ Added between the lines. Ben Yijū had already written the usual polite formulas (lines 4–5), expressing his longings for the addressee and his desire to rejoin him.

your son Surūr carry them. . . . Sulaymān and Abraham will explain to you my situation and the troubles I have (III, 41, lines 9–20, 31–33, 35).

Ben Yijū refers in the letter to his heavy financial losses, totaling as much as 1,040 (Malikī) dinars. Also mentioned in this fragmentary letter are his economic means; however, unlike his letter from Aden in 1149, there is no hint here of unlimited wealth, and he apologizes that the gift sent with the letter is so modest. The letter reveals Abraham Ben Yijū a crushed, weakened man. After being away for nearly twenty years, he returned to Egypt a broken man. His beloved son had died, and he had lost most of his riches. As already noted, he never recovered. As if in a hurry, he begs his brother not to waste valuable time in a long, unnecessary correspondence through letters conveyed by messengers, and not to postpone the desirable end of reuniting the family; rather, he should send his written answer with the prospective bridegroom himself, his son Surūr, so that the marriage plans could go through with the utmost haste.

Perahyā b. Joseph and his family immigrate to Egypt; his marriage to Sitt al-Dār. Perahyā ([Abu 'l-]Surūr) and Moses, Joseph's sons, set out for Egypt. The enormous difficulties they experienced en route and in Egypt are amply documented. Moses spent some time in captivity.⁸¹ Their younger brother Samuel was still in Sicily. Joseph was greatly pained by his elder sons' departure, as he writes them in a letter, complaining of his and his wife's anguish at being separated from their sons, while both they and the sons are still in foreign parts. Joseph expressed a desire for his sons to return to Sicily with the bride: "It was my earnest desire that you should go quickly and come (back) to me, you and your cousin [. . .] and I shall complete her education in my household, so that we have joy from you and from her" (echoing his brother Abraham's words in the previously quoted letter of 1153; III, 49, lines 9–11). However, despite the fact that only a few years earlier Joseph had thought that his family would remain in Sicily for at least forty years, as we saw in the above-mentioned rental contract, it is clear that when he wrote these words he no longer had such intentions; indeed, he also requests his sons Perahyā and Moses to appeal to the Nagid of the Egyptian Jews, R. Samuel b. Ḥananyā, to help his family emigrate to the Land of the Nile.⁸² It is likely that Joseph's new plan to immigrate to Egypt was not due merely to his misery at being cut off from his sons

⁸¹ See III, 46, line 28, III, lines 5 ff.

⁸² No. III, 48*v*, lines 14–18; III, 49*v*, lines 15–20. For the rental contract, see above, page 72.

and the desire to be reunited with his wealthy brother Abraham; it may also be attributed to the changed circumstances in Sicily. Just around that time, the Norman ruler of Sicily, Roger II, previously known, as we have already noted, for his religious tolerance, changed his tune. Toward the end of 1153 he began to persecute non-Christian residents of the island in an attempt to convert them forcibly to Christianity.⁸³ The time had come, therefore, for the family to uproot itself once more and seek a new home elsewhere. As the correspondence of the Yijū family proves, their travel plans finally bore fruit. At any rate, we hear some time later of Joseph's wife, the mother of Peraḥyā, Moses and Samuel, living in Fustat at the home of her youngest son, Samuel.⁸⁴

While still in Sicily, Joseph wrote to his son Peraḥyā in Egypt, describing the prospective wedding not as a favor from his uncle Abraham, who was giving him his only daughter in marriage and leaving him—rather than some stranger—all his riches, but as fulfillment of a religious commitment:

Know that the Lord has granted you the opportunity to perform a great *mitzvah*, for you have taken your uncle's daughter (in marriage) and done as Scripture reported of the tribe of Joseph, saying, "The plea of the Josephite tribe is just" (Num. 36:5); and also: "No inheritance shall pass over from one tribe to another, but the Israelites must remain bound each to the ancestral portion of his tribe" [a conflation of two verses, *ibid.*, v. 7, 9]. May the Lord unite the two of you in good favor and grant you success in your livelihood, male children and long life, and may He fulfill in you (the verse) "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with shouting to Zion, crowned with joy everlasting," etc. [Isa. 35:10, 51:11] (III, 49*v*, lines 2–8).

Man proposes—but God disposes. After a short time, Peraḥyā's relatives in Sicily were puzzled to notice that his letters to them made no mention of the bride: "nor did my brother Abu 'l-Surūr explain what he was doing and what caused him not to mention his cousin (i.e., the bride) . . ." (III, 48, lines 13–15). Peraḥyā's silence is explained in a passage from a letter that he wrote to *sayyidnā* [= our Lord], certainly the Nagid R. Samuel b. Ḥananyā, in which he requested the latter's help in a dispute between him and his uncle Abraham. Peraḥyā briefly summarized the affair, quoting from Abraham's letter to his father in which he had asked him to send Peraḥyā as his daughter's bridegroom, promising to give him all his riches.

⁸³ See Ahmad, *Islamic Sicily*, 71.

⁸⁴ See III, 55, lines 4–5; page 790.

Perahyā had left his post as a teacher in Sicily but, upon arriving in Egypt, was treated with contempt by his old uncle, because, as Perahyā claimed, “. . . of my having little hollow pomp and little pushiness, in which I have no aptitude. And he puts [me] off [. . .]” (III, 50, margin). This was presumably the content of Perahyā’s complaint to the Nagid, that his uncle valued only outward appearances and pushiness and ignored his being a man of virtues and Torah learning. Abraham Ben Yijū may well have hoped that Perahyā would replace his deceased son and might perhaps be able to take over his business. He was disappointed by his nephew’s undistinguished appearance and lack of shrewdness—indispensable qualities for a successful businessman. And indeed, the Ben Yijū family’s involvement in international commerce was over.⁸⁵ Abraham Ben Yijū, moreover, may not have considered Perahyā such a brilliant scholar, but a rather mediocre, colorless personality.

Abraham Ben Yijū and Perahyā may finally have come to terms, but we have no proof to that effect. Perhaps it is no accident that the wedding of the Ben Yijū cousins, Perahyā b. Joseph and Sitt al-Dār d. Abraham, was not solemnized till August, 1156, by which time the bride had been orphaned (“Dowry list for Sheikh Bu ’l-Surūr //Perahyā// b. Joseph, known as Ibn Yijū. Sitt al-Dār, the daughter of his paternal uncle—*may the memory of the pious be for a blessing!*—Abraham . . .” [III, 54, lines 1–2]).

All that has survived of Sitt al-Dār’s dowry list is the register of jewelry, whose value amounts to the substantial (but not exceptional) sum of 150 dinars. The scribe, Mevorakh b. Nathan, wrote at the beginning of the list that the dowry would be subject to ‘the well-known conditions imposed by daughters of Israel.’ Perhaps Sitt al-Dār reserved exclusive rights to the use of her dowry items. Moreover, the couple may have invested the balance of Abraham Ben Yijū’s fortune in an unlucky business venture. Whatever the case may be, Perahyā does not seem to have derived much benefit from the money. Some time later he was appointed *dayyān* (religious judge) of al-Maḥalla in the Egyptian countryside and eked out a rather meager living. Writing to the family’s patron, Abu ’l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāṭī in Fustat, that he was returning 40 dirhems that the latter had lent his younger brother Samuel, he says, “God knows, I had to take them out of my mouth” (III, 52, lines 6–7).

⁸⁵ Chaudhuri, “Trade,” 59, incorrectly states that members of Ben Yijū’s family followed Abraham in the Malabar trade (the reference on 234, n. 86, to Goitein, *Studies*, 337, does not support this).

Members of the Ibn Al-Amshāṭī family were known as great merchants, also involved in the India trade. Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya b. Abraham Ibn al-Amshāṭī owned a shop in the Perfumers' Quarter, where he dealt in perfumes and pharmaceuticals. When Abraham Ben Yijū arrived in Egypt, he entrusted Abu 'l-Fakhr with various valuables.⁸⁶ Samuel b. Joseph Yijū's address in Fustat was 'care of Abu 'l-Fakhr's perfumery.' Samuel made his living as an elementary schoolteacher, but fortune later smiled upon him; perhaps the proximity to the Ibn Amshāṭīs worked in his favor. In any case, his luck changed for the better. Peraḥyā, however, became a living embodiment of the rabbinic adage that his father Joseph had quoted in a letter: "Poverty follows the poor."⁸⁷ Peraḥyā apologized to his brother Samuel that he could not help to support their aged mother, even asking for Samuel's help in paying the poll tax.⁸⁸

The 'Family of Scholars' and the House of Maimonides. Despite Abraham Ben Yijū's disregard for his son-in-law, Peraḥyā soon achieved recognition in Egypt as a man of learning. Already in February 1160, we find him signing a court record in the capacity of a judge in Fustat, where he also witnessed a bill of divorce in March 1161.⁸⁹ Apparently after a short interval he was appointed judge in al-Maḥalla. The residents of that city enacted a special ordinance affirming their loyalty to him as *dayyān*, in response to attempts on the part of the *Rayyis* Abū Zikrī to oust him. He may have settled in Fustat for some time and served there as judge, for we find his signature there on a deed dated 1181, together with those of other members of the court. Nevertheless, he either retained his post as judge in al-Maḥalla or returned there to reclaim his judicial function. Maimonides confirmed the al-Maḥalla ordinance and in 1187 enacted an ordinance of his own, which included a prohibition to transfer the post of judge in al-Maḥalla to anyone other than Peraḥyā. The recipients of a halakhic query included Maimonides and Peraḥyā.⁹⁰ He sometimes contemplated

⁸⁶ See III, 42. On the relationship between the Yijū family and the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family and especially with Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya Ibn al-Amshāṭī, see pages 95–99.

⁸⁷ BT Bava Qamma 92a; III, 57, line 16.

⁸⁸ See III, 55, lines 3–4 and introduction to III, 55a.

⁸⁹ TS 18 J 1, f. 9; ULC Add. 3350.

⁹⁰ For the sources alluded to here and others, see the introduction to III, 55 (on the al-Maḥalla ordinance and related material, see Friedman, "Maimonides and Zūṭā."). Simonsohn and Gil, "Sicily," 29, n. 15 (cf. Simonsohn, *Jews in Sicily*, xliii), state that according to Goitein, "Maimonides' Autograph," 193, Peraḥyā moved to Fustat and was appointed judge in Maimonides' court, but I cannot locate this reference as cited. Goitein, "Sicily," 28, wrote that Peraḥyā's brother Samuel became a judge in the rabbinical court of Fustat (he was rather a teacher; see III, 58), "a position also attained by Peraḥyā at the

leaving Egypt, either because of his difficulty in earning a livelihood there or perhaps because of the dissension in al-Maḥalla.⁹¹ Like most judges, he earned some extra income by delivering public sermons at various places. Thus we find him in Fustat, from which he wrote a letter to his wife, telling her of the favorable reception of his sermon and begging her to join him there, even threatening that he would leave the country if she refused to come.⁹² Due to his reputation as a man of learning and the education that he gave his sons, the Yijū family became known in Egypt as ‘the family of scholars’ (III, 58).

Peraḥyā had at least three sons and a daughter: his firstborn Joseph (named for Peraḥyā’s father), his sister Yumn, and their brothers Moses and Nissīm. Peraḥyā’s wife Sitt al-Dār the daughter of Abraham Ben Yijū was called Umm Yūsuf (‘Joseph’s Mother’); it seems likely that the ‘Peraḥyā b. Joseph’ who confirmed a responsum written by the Nāsī Solomon b. Yishai was this Joseph’s son.⁹³ Moses b. Peraḥyā served as judge in the Egyptian provincial towns of Minyat Ziftā and Minyat Ghamr; we possess documents and letters that he wrote in 1220–34, including some correspondence with Abraham Maimuni. (In one letter that the latter wrote to Moses ‘the Fellow [*ḥāvēr*]’ b. Peraḥyā the judge, he refers to Moses’ uncle, Samuel ‘the teacher,’ so that the identification is certain. That letter also dealt with Samuel’s son al-Muhadhdhab—an epithet often given to physicians—but I do not know whether the person in question was Abū ‘Imrān, Eleazar or another of Samuel’s sons; Abraham Maimuni asks Moses to find employment for his cousin in one of the towns where he was serving as judge. In another letter from Abraham Maimuni to Judge Moses he also

end of his life,” but this presumably refers to the judgeship rather than the locality. A fragmentary letter (TS 8.30) in Peraḥyā’s hand to Abraham ha-Kohen b. Aaron mentions an appeal to the *rabbis* and refers to “Our Rabbi and Master (*sayyidunā*) Moses”—undoubtedly Maimonides.

⁹¹ See pages 778, 792.

⁹² No. III, 56. This letter was addressed to the home of the judge of al-Maḥalla. Perhaps this was the source for the comment in Goitein, “Letters from Spain,” 342, n. 3: “Of another India trader, Abraham Yijū, we positively know that he became a judge, albeit in a provincial town.” However, the letter does not support this (the judge was Peraḥyā), nor am I aware of any other source for that conclusion. When Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:587, n. 75, republished the note in that article, he omitted the reference to Abraham Yijū, though he still assumed that Peraḥyā’s (anonymous) father-in-law preceded him as judge in al-Maḥalla (*ibid.*, 2:238, 3:219; these comments were superseded by the introduction to III, 56).

⁹³ For Umm Yūsuf, Joseph and Yumn, see page 789; for the responsum and more data about Joseph and his son Peraḥyā see *ibid.*, introduction, where the two sons of the grandson Peraḥyā b. Joseph, Moses and Samuel are also mentioned.

mentions his nephew Menaḥem.)⁹⁴ The same ‘Moses b. Peraḥyā *the judge*’ wrote a glossary to Alfasi’s Tractate Berākhōt for his son Joseph.⁹⁵ Joseph b. Moses was praised in his youth as a diligent and discerning student while he was completing his studies in Fustat, and he too later took up a post as a religious functionary—we find him writing a dowry list.⁹⁶

Nissīm is referred to in I, 41, which concerns his son, in the following passage:

al-Sheikh al-Zakī,⁹⁷ *his honor, great and holy master and lord* Peraḥyā, *the esteemed scholar (talmīd)*, son of *his honor, great and holy master and lord*

⁹⁴ For the years, in which Judge Moses was active, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:453, n. 37; VI, 75, Index. I doubt whether Moses b. Peraḥyā, whose signature appears on a deed in the Egyptian village of ‘Little Damīra,’ dated February 26, 1235, was the same person (ENA NS 1, f. 93b). The letter to Moses the Fellow referring to Samuel the teacher and his son Al-Muhadhḥab: Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 3, fol. 15. For the title *muhadhḥab* see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:247 (where it is translated “The Accomplished”), 421, 577, n. 30; Ashtor, *Mamluks*, 2:333. *Muhadhḥab* means ‘upright, honest, urbane, cultured,’ etc.; according to Lane, *Dictionary*, 2878, *muhadhḥib* means ‘quick,’ ‘swift.’ A search of *ET*² reveals that the epithet is sometimes spelled there Muhadhḥab, sometimes Muhadhḥib. It often is an abbreviation of *Muhadhḥab/Muhadhḥib al-Dawla*, ‘The M. of the State,’ etc. Muhadhḥab b. Samuel arranged a marriage for his daughter, a minor, in a document from Bilbays dated to the early thirteenth century (TS 8.112, see Ashur, “Engagement,” 103–4; as mentioned there, see Friedman, “Marital Age,” 164, n. 13). However, this was almost certainly not the same person, for that deed refers to him as “*our master and lord Muhadhḥab the elder, the distinguished, generous and noble, son of [our master] and lord Samuel, the great nobleman,*” and these honorifics—whether his own or his father’s—do not accord with al-Muhadhḥab b. Samuel the Teacher, for whom R. Abraham Maimuni requests his cousin Moses to find part-time employment as a religious functionary in Minyat Ziftā or Minyat Ghamr. Moreover, the epithet *al-muhadhḥab* is undoubtedly to be distinguished from Muhadhḥab, without the definite article *al-*, which serves as a proper name (as in TS 8.112; Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmā’*, 2464, lists both forms of the name: *Muhadhḥab* and *Muhadhḥib*). Menaḥem is mentioned in TS 10 J 18, f. 5v, line 5. Abu ‘Imrān, the “only son” (he was his firstborn) of Samuel, is mentioned in III, 55, line 1, and the young son Eleazar is mentioned in TS 12.322, line 11. A letter from al-Maḥalla from the first part of the thirteenth century mentions Muhadhḥab b. al-Sheikh al-Sadīd, the physician, as well as the judge Menaḥem (TS 10 J 17, f. 25, lines 13–14, 16).

⁹⁵ TS Arabic 48, f. 9. Chwat, “Mishna Study,” 51, n. 3, defined the commentary’s genre.

⁹⁶ A student completing his studies: TS 16.293, see below. For the dowry list see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:453, n. 38.

⁹⁷ Al-Zakī means the ‘pure’ or ‘righteous.’ Ḥasan al-‘Askarī, the eleventh Imām of the Twelver Shī‘a, was known, among other designations, as al-Sāmiṭ, al-Zakī, al-Khālīs, al-Naqī, all of which basically mean ‘pure’ (see Ḓiash, “Ḥasan”). In the Middle Ages many Muslim notables were called al-Zakī, which as shown by a search of *ET*², is evidently an abbreviation of *Zakī al-Dīn*, ‘Pure of the Faith.’ A number of Jewish notables were also called al-Sheikh al-Zakī. Several al-Zakī appear in contemporary Geniza documents, e.g., a list of contributions itemizes those of al-Zakī Abū ‘Azīz and (another) al-Zakī (Bodl. MS.

Nissīm, *the wise and discerning teacher (ba-melammēd)*—*may his Rock protect him!*—*known as Ben Yijū.*⁹⁸

The document does not tell us whether Nissīm's father was Peraḥyā or Samuel (as we know from III, 58, the third brother, Moses, died young), the sons of Joseph Yijū. Since Nissīm named his son Peraḥyā, it is likely that that was his father's name.

Two letters addressed to R. Moses [b. Peraḥyā] further imply this. In one, Maimonides' in-law R. Ḥananel wrote Moses the Fellow (as he is called in Abraham Maimuni's letter) about his 'esteemed brother' Nissīm and the latter's son Peraḥyā.⁹⁹ In the second, Meir Ibn al-Hamadhānī (known from another letter of his, written during the first four decades of the thirteenth century) requests that his son be accepted as a disciple by Judge Moses, called al-Sheikh al-Sadīd, an epithet often given to physicians. Meir had been informed that Moses' nephew (his 'brother's son'), *al-talmīd al-zakī/al-sheikh al-zakī*, had left his uncle's service. Since no other Moses, who was both a judge and physician, was known from this period, Goitein identified the letter's addressee as Maimonides and deduced multiple data pertinent to the biographies of the master and his nephew (his sister's son!) Abu 'l-Riḍā. More probably, the letter was addressed to Judge Moses b. Peraḥyā Yijū, and refers to his nephew, the scholar (*talmīd*), Peraḥyā b. Nissīm, al-Sheikh al-Zakī. The further notation on verso of a collection of funds (*pesiqā*) is dated 1225/6, the period of Judge Moses b. Peraḥyā's activity, and may indeed be written in his hand.¹⁰⁰ Peraḥyā b. Nissīm is certainly intended also in a letter, where al-Zakī b. Nissīm is mentioned among supporters of Abraham Maimuni.¹⁰¹

Heb. c. 28, fol. 47 [= I, 42]); a separate list notes the contributions of Bu 'l-'Izz b. al-Zakī and his son Abraham the teacher (TS K 15, f. 32; on these respective lists see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:248, no. 46; II, 493, no. 56). Al-Zakī appears in a list of revenues from rent of a house belonging to the pious foundations (TS J 1, f. 52, ca. 1230, ed. Gil, *Foundations*, 442).

⁹⁸ No. I, 41, lines 9–10. Since Nissīm is referred to in this document as 'teacher,' he is most probably not the same as Nissīm judge of al-Maḥalla (on whom see Friedman, *Polygyny*, 229–30, in particular the episode concerning him and R. Moses); but the matter merits further consideration.

⁹⁹ TS 16.293v, lines 15–16. Goitein, "R. Ḥananel," 393, considers whether 'brother' is meant literally, as indeed he assumes. On 392, Goitein states that the letter was sent to Alexandria; but this appears to be mere conjecture; as noted above, Moses b. Peraḥyā served as judge elsewhere.

¹⁰⁰ TS 16.291. See, for example, Goitein, "Maimonides' Biography," 163; the letter was published in Kraemer, "Six Letters," 73–80. A fresh analysis is offered in Friedman, "Did Maimonides Teach Medicine?" For *al-sadīd*, see 274, n. 1.

¹⁰¹ TS Ar. 51, f. 111 (ed. Goitein, "Documents," 717), line 23.

Attention is also called to a letter addressed to “*the honorable crown of glory, our master and lord Peraḥyā the excellent judge, the wondrous scholar, the just court [= judge]*—*may his Rock protect him!*” in which the writer complains of one Ibn al-Yamanī who had leveled serious accusations against Abraham Maimuni. The addressee could be Peraḥyā b. Joseph, the judge of al-Maḥalla, who is referred, as we have seen, with almost exactly the same terms—provided we assume that he had a long life and that the letter was sent to him when he was roughly in his early eighties. (The earliest *terminus ad quem* for Peraḥyā’s activity, of which I am aware, is in his son Moses’ signature on a document from 1226, in which he added the blessing for the dead after his father’s name.) The writer inquires about the welfare of Peraḥyā’s ‘two sons,’ not three, as we assumed that Peraḥyā b. Joseph had. Perhaps one of the sons (Joseph?) was no longer alive, but all this remains a matter of speculation.¹⁰²

“R. Peraḥya, the distinguished, wise and discerning scholar” (b. Nissīm [or Joseph]) studied in Fustat together with his paternal cousin Joseph ‘the scholar’ b. Moses in the school of Maimonides’ in-law, Ḥananel b. Samuel.¹⁰³ This same Peraḥyā’s sister married her paternal cousin Joseph b. Moses. Ḥananel was a member of the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family, some of whose members, as we have seen, were the Ben Yijū family’s patrons for several generations; he was also related by marriage to Nissīm and the latter’s son Peraḥyā.¹⁰⁴ Peraḥyā b. Nissīm also wrote a commentary to Alfasi’s

¹⁰² TS 18 J 4, f. 3, ed. Goitein, *Yemenites*, 125–29, where Goitein names Peraḥyā as a member of Abraham Maimuni’s court, perhaps not meaning this literally. Goitein, *Education*, 133 (there is a typographical error in the siglum of the manuscript), assumed that the reference is to Peraḥyā II b. Joseph II b. Peraḥyā b. Joseph, and that the letter was written around the year 1210 (Goitein, “R. Ḥananel,” 393, n. 86, suggests that Peraḥyā b. Nissīm was intended; see the note below). Based on the manner of reference to Abraham Maimuni, I believe that the letter could not have been written before 1213–15 or thereabouts. Since Abraham Ben Yijū wrote in 1153 (III, 41) that he had heard that Peraḥyā b. Joseph was a Torah scholar, we may assume that he was then at least twenty years old. For the document from 1226, see Goitein, “Negidim,” 238. The addressee in ULC Or. 1080 J 19, “*his honor, great and holy master and lord Peraḥyā the Fellow, the wondrous judge, the excellent scholar, the just court,*” written by Solomon b. Elijah (who was a child ca. 1195, according to Goitein, *Palestinian Jewry*, 332, 337), may too have been the same aged Peraḥyā the judge of al-Maḥalla.

¹⁰³ See the above-mentioned letter of Ḥananel, TS 16.293. Goitein, “R. Ḥananel,” 393, remarks that R. Peraḥyā the *talmid* mentioned there in line 22 may not be identical with Peraḥyā b. Nissīm, *ibid.*, verso, line 19. While the information conveyed by I, 41 about Peraḥyā the ‘scholar,’ b. R. Nissīm, appears to support the identification, it is not inconceivable that Peraḥyā b. Joseph was also a ‘scholar.’

¹⁰⁴ For a reconstruction of these marital relationships on the basis of TS 16.293 see Goitein, “R. Ḥananel,” 393–94. Goitein did not associate the members of this family with the

legal code on Tractate Shabbat.¹⁰⁵ The Ben Yijūs' descendants remained loyal to the Maimonidean family for years, and it seems probable that Peraḥyā b. Nissīm b. Peraḥyā Yijū is the same 'Peraḥyā b. Nissīm,' whose signature appears on a writ of excommunication published in Damascus by the *nāsī* Yishay b. Hezekiah in 1286, directed against critics of the sage of Fustat's *The Guide of the Perplexed*.¹⁰⁶

VII. *Genealogy of the Ben Yijū Family*

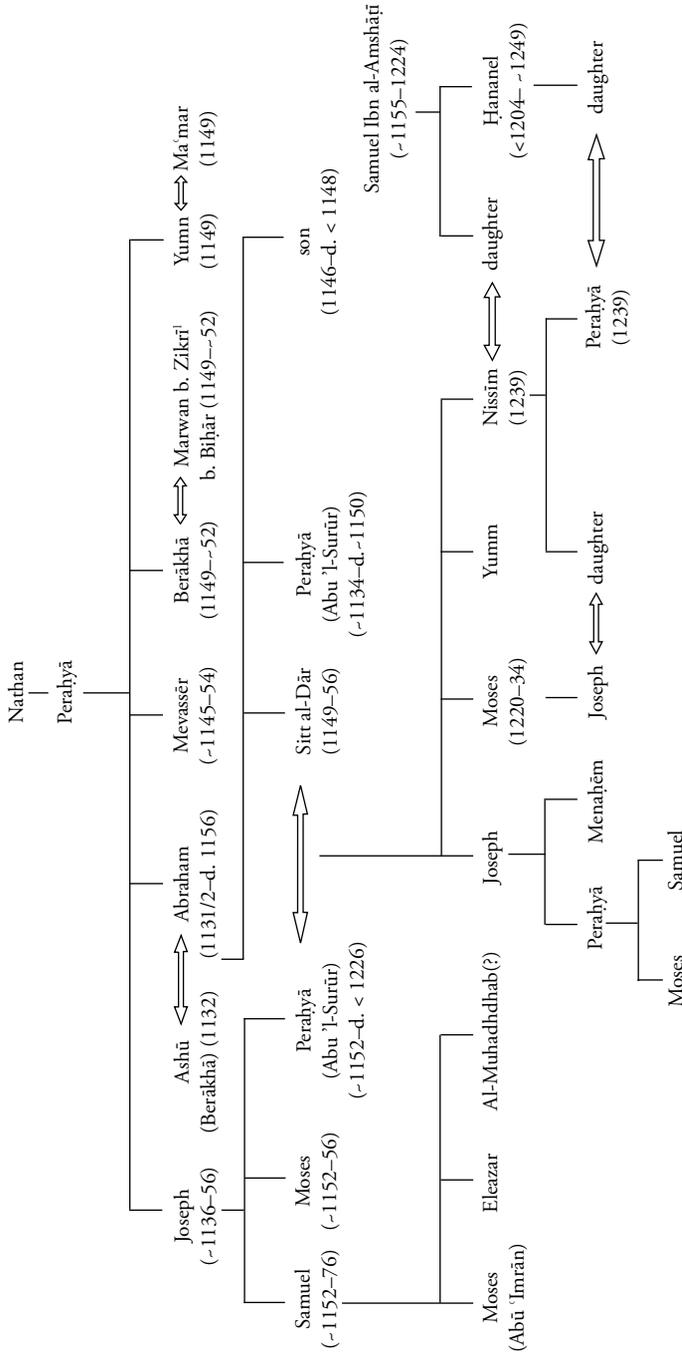
Besides the persons appearing in the genealogy, mention should also be made of Zakkay the Teacher, known from III, 58, lines 9–10, who was probably the son of Samuel the Teacher or of Peraḥyā the *dayyān*.}

Ben Yijūs, since he had not read the word 'Yijū' in I, 41, line 10. See further Goitein, *ibid.*, 393, n. 86, on the possibility that Peraḥyā b. Nissīm is identical with Peraḥyā, the judge of Bilbays, mentioned in other contemporary documents, which also heap praise upon him as being the most knowledgeable judge in Egypt and excelling as a community leader. (See TS 12.654*v*, lines 10–14. This letter is now published in Gil, *Ishmael*, 2:261–64, no. 97, where it is dated ca. 1240. Gil, *ib.*, 1:439–40, cites another contemporary letter, TS 10 J 16, f. 3 [written by someone called 'Allān], where Judge Peraḥyā is referred to as well. However, if Gil's dating is correct, his suggestion, *ib.*, 1:438–39, that in both Peraḥyā b. Joseph [the judge of al-Maḥalla] was intended is untenable, since as already noted, that individual was no longer alive in 1226.) For Ḥananel being a member of the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family, see pages 112–17.

¹⁰⁵ That Peraḥyā was the author of the commentary was conjectured by Mann, *Jews*, 2:297, n. 1 (for his 'Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 3, fol. 6' read '... fol. 16' = I, 41), and Goitein, "R. Ḥananel," 394. See Peraḥyā, *Commentary on Shabbat*, v–vii (cf. *ibid.*, vi, n. 16, the suggestion that Peraḥyā b. Nissīm was a grandson of Peraḥyā b. Joseph the judge; in *ibid.*, vii, it is stated on the basis of the aforementioned letter that Peraḥyā 'taught Torah'—this should be corrected to 'studied Torah').

¹⁰⁶ See Maimonides, *Responsa* (Leipzig), 3:22b. According to Shoshana and Hirschfeld, in Peraḥyā, *Commentary on Shabbat*, 6, the responsum is signed "R. Peraḥyā son of R. Nissīm the *dayyān*." However, the word *dayyān* does not appear there, and the signatories were "the *dayyānīm* and with them the notables (Heb. *sarīm*) and the scholars" (Maimonides, *ibid.*, 22a). While there is no proof from here that R. Nissīm was a judge (see n. 99), it is possible, as we have noted, that Peraḥyā was a judge in Bilbays.}

Ben Yijū Genealogy



< = preceding, - = ca.; <=> = married; d. = deceased; other dates are those found in or reconstructed for the documents, in which an individual is mentioned.

¹ Berākḥā and Marwān had at least two sons and two daughters (III, 29).

{C1. *The Ibn al-Amshāṭī Family**I. *Preliminary Remarks: Maimonides' Epistle*

On October 21, 1191, Maimonides wrote to his disciple Joseph b. Judah in Aleppo, Syria: *wa-idhā waṣala Ibn al-Mashshāṭ min al-Hind wa-aṣḥābunā¹ ḥāsabtuhu 'alā mā dhakarta*, “And when Ibn al-Mashshāṭ arrives from India (with our coreligionists), I shall settle the account with him as you mentioned.”² This implies that even after his brother David had perished in the Indian Ocean, Maimonides continued to invest in the India trade with the help of other merchants, at the very least with the help of Ibn al-Mashshāṭ, with whom Joseph (the addressee) was also acquainted. Although it might be argued that ‘Ibn al-Mashshāṭ’ (= [flax-] hackler, comber)³ and ‘Ibn al-Amshāṭī’ (= one who makes or sells combs)⁴ are distinct names, it is probable—as scholars have assumed—that the India-traveler in question was a member of the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family.⁵ As we shall see, the family’s name takes a variety of forms, such as al-Mashshāṭa.⁶ The distinguished Ibn al-Amshāṭī family was known both for its contacts with the India trade and for its contacts with Maimonides and his family.

{* This chapter is based on Friedman, “Ibn al-Amshāṭī.”

¹ As the editors write (see next note), this word may have been copied by mistake from the next line in the epistle. The word *aṣḥābunā*, literally, ‘our friends,’ is used in Judeo-Arabic to designate Jews; see 202, n. 25.

² Maimonides, *Epistles* (Baneth), 70; Maimonides, *Epistles* (Shailat), 299. The translation is based on Goitein, “Maimonides’ Biography,” 163, who writes there that Baneth accepted it. The epistle was written *fi auwal shahr* (Marheshvan), which I translate: ‘on the New Moon’ (a possibility mentioned by Baneth, 71; he preferred: ‘at the beginning of the month’). See, e.g., Greenburg, *Haggadah*, 23, where the Hebrew *yākhōl mē-rōsh ḥōdesh* is translated: *hal yumkin dhālika min auwal al-shahr*.

³ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:418, n. 32, explains ‘Mashshāṭ’ in this epistle.

⁴ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:416, n. 2; 3:188; 4:225.

⁵ See A. H. Freimann apud Baneth, *ibid.* Goitein, “Maimonides’ Biography,” 163, suggested that *’lms’ṭ* in the text in the epistle was an error for *’lms’ty*, reading ‘al-Amshāṭī’; cf. Friedman, “Maimonides in Documents,” 183. As noted below, the spelling *’lms’ty* occurs elsewhere in manuscripts relating to the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family. Since the word *mushṭ* = ‘comb, hackle’ has two plural forms, *amshāṭ* and *mishāṭ*, it appears that some people called the family ‘al-Mishāṭī.’ However, circumspection is required whenever the original manuscript is inaccessible, as in the case of Maimonides’ epistle. For example, TS 13 J 4, f. 2, line 4, in the website of the Princeton University Geniza Project, in a transcript based on Goitein’s papers, reads: “From our lord and master Isaac son of our lord and master R. Judah the elder, known as *Ibn al-Mashshāṭ*, of blessed memory;” but the manuscript clearly reads ‘al-Mashshāsh,’ as indeed cited by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:428, n. 66 (he explains *mashshāsh* = maker of *mishsh* cheese).

⁶ Accordingly, the above emendation might be unnecessary. For some variants of the name, see Ashtor, *Mamluks*, 1:183, n. 6.

Some years ago, Goitein suggested that Ḥananel b. Samuel *ha-nāḏīv*, ‘the munificent,’ Abraham Maimuni’s father-in-law (see below), was a member of this family.⁷

We possess much information relating to the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family of Egypt, dating from the 12th and 13th centuries (and later as well). Members of the family were manufacturers (makers or sellers of combs and owners of a sugar factory), *‘aṭṭārs* (perfumers and apothecaries), merchants, philanthropists, scholars, judges and pietists.⁸ The sources are highly diverse: Geniza writings consisting of documents and literary works; synagogue inscriptions and other literary sources, including probable references by Arab historians and the above-mentioned epistle of Maimonides. A comprehensive survey of the history of the family has not yet been undertaken, and what follows is a preliminary attempt to fill the gap. The family name Ibn al-Amshāṭī was apparently not rare,⁹ and some people with that name may have been members of a family other than the one under consideration here.

II. *A Genealogical List and the People Mentioned Therein*

We begin with a genealogical list, which was probably prepared for reading during prayer services. The page contains at least seven different lists, the first being that of the family of *al-rayyis*, a title that evidently signifies here the Head of the Jewish community, and it deals with Maimonides. That list, which I have published elsewhere, is of value both in itself and in relation to the other lists, since it enables us to estimate the date of the entire page—the early 1170s, when Maimonides’ brother David, mentioned in the list, was still alive, and probably, when Maimonides was the active Head of the Jewish community (we know that he served in this capacity between 1171 and 1172).¹⁰ The last genealogy is that of the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family, which is reproduced (in translation) here to the best of my knowledge in its entirety for the first time. Evidence will be adduced below to the effect that Saadya b. Abraham, listed as deceased, was still alive September 11–20, 1172. Accordingly, the date of the list may be determined within even narrower limits to the period beginning with the end of 1172.

⁷ See Goitein, “R. Ḥananel,” 395.

⁸ The pietist movement was largely associated with Abraham Maimuni and his circle.

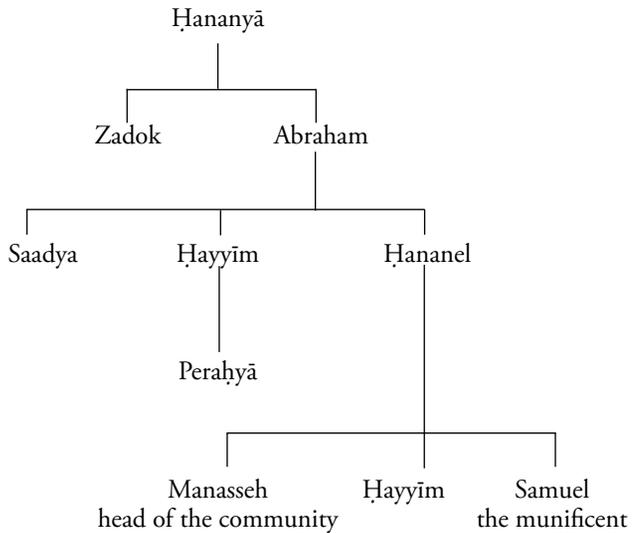
⁹ For the currency of the name, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:416, n. 2; 4:225; Ashtor, *Mamluks*, 3:162, and references *ibid*.

¹⁰ See Friedman, “Maimonidean Letters,” 207, n. 76; for the years in which Maimonides first occupied this post see *idem*, *Yemenite Messiah*, 13, n. 13, and references *ibid*.

ULC Or. 1080 J 149v¹¹

- 1 The house of al-Mashshāṭa:¹²
- 2 Ḥananyā and [his] s[on] Zadok and [his] s[on] Abraham
- 3 and [his] 3 so[ns] [Sa]adya who was cut off (= died suddenly) and Ḥayyīm
- 4 and [his] so[n] Peraḥyā and Ḥananel and [his] 3
- 5 so[ns] Manasseh head of the communit[y]
- 6 and his brother Ḥayyīm and his brother Samuel the munificent.

This genealogy helps to clarify certain data relating to the family. The following diagram illustrates the family tree as presented in this list:



I am not aware of any information concerning the family's progenitor Ḥananyā or his son Zadok.¹³ Evidently, the first member of the family to appear in our sources is "Our master and lord, the esteemed Abraham son

¹¹ Lines 9–15 in the original text. Part of the text was published in Friedman, "Maimonidean Letters," 207, n. 76.

¹² The text reads *'lmš'ṭh*. The shape of *h* at the end of the word is rather unusual; in Friedman, "Maimonidean Letters," 207, n. 76, the letter was copied as *y* (al-Mishḥāṭī). Al-Mashshāṭa would appear to mean: 'female [flax-] hackler, comber'; but perhaps translate: 'woman who combs the bride's hair' (= al-Māshīṭa; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:127, 430, n. 5; 5:315, 316, 593, n. 26.)

¹³ On the sole basis of the wording of the list, one might think that Zadok was not Abraham's brother but his father. I have decided for the former interpretation because of the data concerning Abraham b. Ḥananel (!) Ibn al-Amshāṭī. According to Ashtor, *Mamluks*, 3:23, the name 'Zadok' recurs in the family five generations after Zadok b. Ḥananel (Ḥananyā).

of our master and lord Ḥananel the elder—may he rest in Eden!—known as¹⁴ al-Amshāṭī.”¹⁵ Abraham’s father is named ‘Ḥananel,’ not ‘Ḥananyā,’ as clearly written in the genealogy. It is of course possible that Ḥananel and Ḥananyā are variants of the same name; but this was probably simply a slip on the part of the list’s writer.¹⁶ Abraham b. Ḥananel was already active in Egypt in 1120, at the latest, and in Marḥeshvan (September 25–October 24) of that year he testified in connection with a debt.¹⁷ As Goitein noted, this Abraham was probably the founder of the family in Egypt.¹⁸ He was very probably the person referred to as ‘Sheikh Abū Ishāq b. [. . . al-A]mshāṭī’ (Abū Ishāq = Abraham), whose name appears in a rather disjointed fashion on a copy of a literary composition (by Nathan ha-Bavli) copied by Nathan b. Samuel the *ḥaver* (there are documents in the latter’s hand from 1128–1153). It may be assumed that he was the owner of the copy, in which case it follows that he was a man of some learning.¹⁹ He may be mentioned in other documents as well, such as one from Fustat, dating to the end of the 11th or beginning of the 12th century, dealing with an agreement between Abraham b. Ḥananel and his wife, whom he used to beat.²⁰ However, as with other members of the family, one should be particularly careful in regard to a person not explicitly called al-Amshāṭī, and there may have been in the community at the time two individuals named Abraham b. Ḥananel.²¹

¹⁴ Hebrew *ba-yadua’*. Adler, *Jews*, 30, misunderstood this word (in connection with the synagogue inscription to be discussed below) as ‘famous, well-known.’

¹⁵ So in TS NS J 185 c; see below.

¹⁶ At the time he wrote his comment, Steinschneider (*Arab. Lit.*, 227) could not have known the identity of Samuel, father of Ḥananel b. Samuel and conjectured that it was Samuel the Nagid, son of Ḥananyā (of course, there are no grounds for this conjecture; see already Suna, *Qiddushin*, 5, n. 5). Today we know that it was Samuel ‘the munificent,’ of the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family; see below. However, the similarity between the names Ḥananel and Ḥananyā, which prompted Steinschneider’s suggestion, recalls the present interchange of names.

¹⁷ TS NS J 185 c + d—fragments of a single document, which fit together (in my opinion, only a few letters are missing between the two); Abraham’s name is written in the first fragment (c), and the date, in the second (d). The fragments (but not the date) are mentioned in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:188, 466, n. 136 (numbered 8, 12 instead of c + d).

¹⁸ Goitein, “R. Ḥananel,” 395.

¹⁹ TS Misc. 35, f. 48, published by Ben-Sasson, “The Structure,” 181; see *ibid.*, 167, n. 66. My transcription differs slightly from Ben-Sasson’s reading. The line ending in ‘*ben*’ was written first and continued above, for lack of space. The letters [. . .]h’ before *al-shaykh* should be restored *malakahā*, ‘he acquired it,’ or the like.

²⁰ TS 12.129 (1097–1107); identification proposed by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:188, cited in my own publication of the document in *Polygyny*, 59.

²¹ Indeed, some years earlier we also encounter one “Abraham b. Hananel—may he rest in Eden!—*al-ma’rūf bi-’Iwāḍ*” [= known as ‘Iwāḍ]: TS 12.792 (published by Gil, *Ishmael*, 2:786–89, no. 263); TS 10 J 15, f. 14 (Gil, *ibid.*, 789–92, no. 264). Goitein,

We have no evidence that Abraham b. Ḥananel al-Amshāṭī had any connection with the Indian Ocean trade or the merchants who engaged in this commerce.²² His descendants are known as both Ibn al-Amshāṭī and al-Amshāṭī, without ‘Ibn.’ It is not clear, therefore, whether Abraham was engaged in the occupation that the family name denotes, or one of his forebears. Some members of the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family were known as pietists (sg. *ḥāsīd*). Letters to his son Saadya refer to the late Abraham as ‘the pious (*ḥāsīd*) during his lifetime.’²³ However, this is not a proof of his association with the pietist movement, since it was common in the 11th and 12th centuries to refer to a deceased person as ‘pious during his lifetime.’²⁴ As noted previously, this may indeed be that same Abraham b. Ḥananel who beat his wife; but even if we were convinced that this was the case, it would not contradict his possible ‘pietist’ tendencies. According to the contemporary way of thinking, beating one’s wife did not necessarily mean that one was not a ‘pietist,’ and the designation *ḥāsīd* might well be applied to a ‘a pious fool’ (*ḥāsīd shōṭe*).

Med. Soc., 3:188, conjectured that Abraham b. Ḥananel al-Amshāṭī was the brother of Joshua b. Ḥananel b. Abraham, known from the synagogue inscription discussed below. I commented on another occasion (Friedman, *Polygyny*, 59, n. 55) that this was probably a typographical error, given the large time difference between the dates. We now know that Ḥananel b. Abraham of the inscription was the son of Abraham b. Ḥananel. We shall see later that the ‘Joshua’ in question probably never existed. I suggested in Friedman, “Maimonides in Documents,” 182–83 (where the al-Amshāṭī family is also discussed) that Abraham ‘the scholar,’ son of Ḥananel of Alexandria, mentioned in TS NS J 455, dated 1189, was the same as Abraham b. Ḥananel, signatory of a query addressed to Maimonides, and was also a member of the family; in addition, I suggested that he was a brother of Samuel b. Ḥananel. However, the sources published here do not corroborate this suggestion.

²² According to Goitein, “R. Ḥananel,” 395, the family apparently fled from Tunisia when the Normans occupied part of that country (1146–48), and Abraham b. Ḥananel al-Amshāṭī maintained close contacts with the al-Mahdiyya refugees living in Sicily (that is, the Yijū family). However, the data cited above (based on Goitein’s research) make it clear that the family was living in Egypt long before the Norman occupation; moreover, there is no hint in the other documents cited by Goitein that this Abraham was in contact with the Tunisian refugees. These conjectures were made in an appendix entitled “Rabenu Ḥananel, scion of the famed al-Amshāṭī family” that Goitein added to the article in proof; evidently he wrote from memory and did not check the sources. Goitein, *ibid.*, 388, also conjectured that the family of Ḥananel b. Samuel ‘the munificent’ was of Spanish origin, since his handwriting was “almost Sephardic.” Fenton, “Commentary,” 28, offered the same conjecture. While it is conceivable that the family was indeed of Spanish origin, I do not think it possible to infer this from Ḥananel’s handwriting, since he was at least a fourth-generation descendant of the family in Egypt and may simply have had a Spanish teacher. His son Ḥayyim also had a Sephardic handwriting; see Friedman, *Polygyny*, 96.

²³ No. III, 52*v*, in the address; III, 53, *ibid.*

²⁴ See Goitein, “R. Ḥananel,” 385; *idem*, *Med. Soc.*, 5:183.

It is not clear whether the writer listed Abraham's sons in order of birth. For example, he may have written Ḥananel's name last since he was especially interested in his sons. Perhaps the genealogy was prepared in their honor or in honor of one of them. Indeed, the very fact that Ḥananel was named for his grandfather (here called Ḥananyā) indicates that he was the eldest brother, as the firstborn was customarily named after his paternal grandfather.²⁵ (By the same token, it cannot be determined which of the brothers, Zadok or Abraham was older, as the writer was concerned with the latter's sons.) We shall discuss the members of the family here according to the order of their names in the genealogy.

Saadya b. Abraham is the Ibn al-Amshāṭī whose contacts with the India traders, in particular with the Ben Yijū family, are well attested. He is mentioned in ten documents in chap. 3 of this book.²⁶ His full name, including bynames, was "Abu 'l-Fakhr al-ʿAṭṭār [= the perfumer], known as Ibn al-Amshāṭī our master and lord Saadya the esteemed elder, son of our master and lord Abraham the esteemed elder, may he rest in Eden."²⁷ He is usually referred to by his Arabic byname (*kunya*), Abu 'l-Fakhr, without the Hebrew name Saadya. In the above-mentioned sources (including a document already published by Jacob Mann in 1922) his name and byname appear together. Accordingly, there is no doubt that 'Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāṭī,' and very probably also 'Abu 'l-Fakhr al-ʿAṭṭār,' with no

²⁵ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:6–7, 427 (where, in n. 25, he suggests that Saadya Gaon, in CAJS 332, line 15 [published in Gil, *Ishmael*, 2:17–19, no. 5.], used the word *zeqankhem* in the sense of 'your father' rather than 'your grandfather'; however, this is due not to the use of the Arabic *shaykh*, but to the Hebrew *zāqēn*, which may also mean 'father'; see Lieberman, *Studies*, 198.

²⁶ Nos. III, 42; III, 45–49 (including III, 47a, which I added); III, 52; III, 53; III, 55 (Goitein, in the above-mentioned Appendix to "R. Ḥananel," 395, cites five documents). Other pertinent documents that deal with contacts with the same individuals are mentioned below.

²⁷ E.g., in a deed of purchase for a female slave, TS 8 J 8, f. 4. See, e.g., III, 53v, in the Hebrew and Arabic addresses; BL Or. 5542, f. 34 (formerly f. 3), most of which was published by Mann, *Jews*, 2:293; Mann, however, omitted the def. art. *al-* of the name 'al-Amshāṭī' and the formula for the deceased, 'may he rest in Eden,' after the name of the father, Abraham; for this document see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:498, no. 81; BL Or. 5542, f. 23, a letter to "his honor, great and holy master and lord Saadya, called Sheikh Abu 'l-Fakhr, the esteemed elder" (mentioned by Mann, *ibid.*, see also below). The manuscript ENA NS 1, f. 48 (L44), is a torn, faded letter, probably (according to the handwriting) from Peraḥyā b. Joseph Yijū, to "Abu 'l-Fakhr b. Abraham known as 'l-[Amshāṭī]"; in the letter itself the writer addresses his correspondent as "his honor, great and holy master and lord, pride of the traders," etc. In TS 10 J 26, f. 10, from 1146 (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:582, n. 14): "[Abu 'l-Fakhr] al-ʿAṭṭār b. Sheikh Abū Ishāq our master [and] lord Abraham the elder, known as [...]." The name 'Abu 'l-Fakhr' appears farther on in the document, and the name Saadya may have been written there as well.

further qualification,²⁸ are to be identified with Saadya b. Abraham. Needless to say, speculation that Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāṭī be identified with Ḥananel b. Abraham Ibn al-Amshāṭī (Saadya's brother) or Ḥayyīm b. Ḥananel (Saadya's nephew) is quite pointless.²⁹

When the Tunisian merchant Abraham Ben Yijū came to Egypt around the year 1152, after a long sojourn in the Far East, he deposited money and possessions with Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya for safe keeping.³⁰ We may assume that there had been some contact between the two before that event, since perfumers were used to dealing with goods imported from India. It appears that Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya was a generous contributor to the Palestinian Yeshiva, then based at Cairo, Egypt, and that was why he received the Hebrew honorific *Pe'ēr ha-soḥarīm*, 'pride of the traders.'³¹ This honorific, which also involves an element of wordplay on his byname Abu 'l-Fakhr (*fakhr* means 'pride, magnificence'), is surely indicative of Saadya's firm position in international commerce in both East and West. In a letter he sent to Mazara, Sicily, probably in 1154, Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya advised Joseph b. Peraḥyā Yijū, Abraham's brother, not to go to Egypt.³² In letters Joseph wrote from Sicily to his sons, who had already immigrated

²⁸ Bahā b. Sheikh Abu 'l-Fakhr al-'Aṭṭār is mentioned in a record of testimony given in 1214 (TS 13 J 3, f. 24), but it is doubtful whether he was Saadya's son, for, as noted below, the latter apparently had no sons, who survived him.

²⁹ Goitein ("R. Ḥananel," 395, written, as already indicated, from memory) suggested that Abu 'l-Fakhr might be identical with Ḥananel. Nahoum ("Séfer Mehalla"), after referring to Mann's publication, where the full name—Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya b. Abraham—is given, goes on to identify him hypothetically with Ḥayyīm b. Ḥananel, suggesting that the Jews used one name among themselves and another in their contacts with Arabs (for the Arabic sources see further below); Nahoum's hypothesis is also cited by Toledano, "Synagogues," 713, and the suggestion is taken up by Ben-Zeev, "Documents," 267. Individuals sometimes did have separate Hebrew and Arabic names. See the dedicatory inscription in sec. 3 below and, for example, 333, n. 13 concerning Ḥalfōn b. Shemarya = Abu Sa'īd b. Maḥfūz. But Saadya is used as a Hebrew, not an Arabic name, and the hypothesis is untenable.

³⁰ 'Sheikh Abu 'l-Fakhr' is mentioned in III, 42 at least five times. While he is not referred to there as 'al-'Aṭṭār' or 'Ibn al-Amshāṭī,' we can confidently identify him in light of the other documents concerned with the Ben Yijū family.

³¹ Thus in III, 53, line 2, and verso, in the address ("pride of the traders, full of all praiseworthy virtues"); ENA NS 1, f. 8 (L44): "Saadya, pride of the traders, the esteemed elder, who performs acts of charity and beneficence." The document TS 16.344 is a letter to "our master and lord Joseph ha-Kohen, the esteemed, pride of the traders, most munificent of the munificent," and the writer reminds the addressee: *wa-lā ta'dil fī Miṣr 'an ray' al-shaykh Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāṭī wa-ibn akhūh*, "while in Fustat, do not disregard the advice of Sheikh Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāṭī and his nephew," in connection with trouble caused by the *mutawallī* ('the appointed official'), who was 'an evil man'; the writer also requests assistance to pay the poll tax.

³² See III, 45, lines 3–4 (pages 745–46).

to Egypt, he sent regards to Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya, referring to him in terms of great admiration: *sayyidī wa-tāj ra'sī*, 'my lord and crown of my head.'³³ Joseph was a schoolteacher and could at most have dabbled in commerce. It is questionable whether he had commercial contacts with Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya, or whether the contacts were through his brother Abraham Ben Yijū. In any case, it is clear that his relationship with Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya was that of a dependent on a supporter. Further evidence of Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya's commercial contacts in the West comes from a letter addressed to him by Zechariah b. Ḥayyīm from *al-madīna*—that is, from Palermo. This letter was written September 11–20, 1172, and that date is the latest evidence I have seen that Abu 'l-Fakhr was still alive.³⁴

Abu 'l-Fakhr al-ʿAṭṭār was the patron of Joseph Ben Yijū's sons, Peraḥyā, Moses and Samuel after their arrival in Egypt. Probably shortly after his arrival, Moses wrote from Alexandria to Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya, requesting his advice in connection with lac, a common import from India, which he wanted to sell.³⁵ Letters addressed to Peraḥyā shortly after his arrival in Egypt, and later also to Samuel, were sent to Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya's shop in *murabbaʿat al-ʿaṭṭārīn*, the Square of the Perfumers, in Fustat.³⁶ He lent money to Samuel³⁷ and assisted Peraḥyā for many years. The latter (identifiable by his handwriting) thanked Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya for helping his son Joseph just as he had always helped Peraḥyā himself.³⁸

³³ Nos. III, 48; III, 49, and *ibid.*, lines 34–35.

³⁴ TS 8 J 20, f. 11. Zechariah b. Ḥayyīm was a member of the ʿAmmār family, as established by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:583, n. 7. For this family see Gil, *Ishmael*, 1:582–84. The recipient is Abu 'l-Fakhr b. Abraham, in the perfumers' quarter, Fustat. See Goitein, *ibid.*, for the flowery language in which the writer describes his devotion for his correspondent.

³⁵ No. III, 47a.

³⁶ See the addresses in III, 47; III, 55. For the perfumers' quarter, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:194, 448, n. 10; 2:263–64; 4:15. There were other people who sent letters to their families c/o Abu 'l-Fakhr's shop (*ḥānūt*). Thus, a certain person wrote from Alexandria to his brother in TS 10 J 29, f. 15, and there, verso, lines 2 ff., asked his brother to talk to "Abu 'l-Fakhr // Ibn al-Mishāṭī//" (thus also in the address: "Ibn al-Mishāṭī") about the payment of poll tax, i.e., requesting his assistance. A request for help in paying the poll tax, addressed by someone to Ḥananel b. Samuel 'the munificent,' grandson of Saadya's brother, is mentioned by Goitein, "R. Ḥananel," 378, 380, 381.

³⁷ No. III, 52.

³⁸ BL Or. 5542, f. 23, lines 14 ff. The passage is laconic. As customary, Peraḥyā refers to the recipient with the third-person feminine pronominal suffix—*hadra*, the Arabic for 'excellency' being a feminine noun—*khādīmuhā Yosef*, lit., 'her servant Joseph,' and to himself in the third person masculine, *wāliduhū*, 'his father.' Also worth mentioning here is part of another letter written by Peraḥyā (again identifiable by his handwriting) to Saadya b. Abraham (Ibn al-Amshāṭī), ENA 4011, f. 32.

Some of the letters under consideration here mention Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya's brother and his sons, or his children and his brother's sons. Most of these sources do not name the brother.³⁹ As we have seen in the genealogy, Saadya had two brothers, Ḥayyīm and Ḥananel. Since the dedicatory inscription of Ḥananel's son Ḥayyīm, dated 1182 (see below), does not mention Ḥananel with the blessing for the deceased, there is good reason to believe that he was still alive then, but conclusive proof is lacking.⁴⁰ When Moses b. Joseph Yijū wrote his brother Peraḥyā care of Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya's shop, sending regards "first and foremost" to "the two esteemed brothers, them and their sons," he was undoubtedly referring to Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya and his brother and their sons.⁴¹ Proof to that effect is the fact that Moses, in a letter he wrote at the same time to Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya, addresses the latter and his brother in exactly the same way, calling them "the two esteemed brothers," and moreover also naming the second brother, 'Alī, later also referring to Abū 'Alī—most probably meaning the same.⁴² As we shall see below, Abū 'Alī was Ḥananel's byname.

It may be assumed that Ḥayyīm b. Abraham died young; hence Peraḥyā b. Joseph Yijū, in one of his letters, greets Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya, expressing the wish that the latter would celebrate the Passover many years with his son and his brother's son, not mentioning the brother himself.⁴³ The child referred to was probably Ḥayyīm's son Peraḥyā, named in the above genealogy. Perhaps Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya gave his nephew a home after Ḥayyīm's death. It is likely that Ḥananel b. Abraham named his own son Ḥayyīm for his brother after the latter's death.⁴⁴ However, in another letter, (probably)

³⁹ See, e.g., III, 46, margin, lines 6–7; III, 48*v*, line 33; III, 49*v*, line 34.

⁴⁰ Since the standard abbreviation for the formula for the deceased *n. '.* may stand for either 'may he rest in Eden' or 'may they . . .,' the formula following the name of his father Abraham may also refer to him. Contrarywise, if Ḥananel had still been alive that year, he should have been mentioned together with Ḥayyīm b. Ḥananel's brothers in the good wishes in the continuation of the inscription.

⁴¹ No. III, 47, margin, lines 7–10.

⁴² See III, 47*a*, lines 2–3; margin, line 2; upper margin, line 9.

⁴³ No. III, 53, lines 3–5, where the children are called *pirḥē ha-ḥasīdīm*, "budding pietists," referring to the reputation of the members of the family as pietists, and perhaps also to the child's name, Peraḥyā; see Friedman, "Maimonidean Letters," 207.

⁴⁴ As we know, it was customary to name a son for the grandfather even during the latter's lifetime; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:6–7. However, a boy was named for his uncle only after the latter's death. Below, sec. 4, we shall see that Samuel b. Ḥananel named a son for his brother Solomon, who had died young. We similarly find in the Ben Yijū family that Moses b. Joseph died young (III, 58), and each of his brothers Peraḥyā and Samuel named one of their sons Moses. On naming a baby for his dead uncle, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:231, 235. On 231, Goitein translates a passage from (the bottom of) ENA 2727, f. 4: "I vowed that if it were a boy, I would give as alms at his circumcision [. . .], and I

by Perahyā b. Joseph Yijū to Abu 'l-Fakhr, the writer expresses his wish that the recipient celebrate the festivals of Passover and Shavuot for many years with “his son and his nephews.”⁴⁵ As mentioned, letters explicitly sent to Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya or which can be identified in all likelihood as sent to him refer to his sons, children or son.⁴⁶ Since the genealogy does not specify any of Saadya's descendants, I presume that none survived him.

As we have already seen, Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya maintained ramified commercial contacts. In a letter to the celebrated India trader Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, dated April 22, 1140, his brother Abū 'Alī Ezekiel mentions that he had introduced a certain person to Ibn al-Amshāṭī and that the latter had appointed his brother as his representative to claim a debt. I assume that the reference is to Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya and his brother.⁴⁷ In another letter that Ezekiel wrote to Ḥalfon in the same month, he mentions having paid seventeen dinars to Ibn al-Amshāṭī.⁴⁸

On September 8, 1140, the day Judah ha-Levi arrived in Egypt, Amram b. Isaac wrote a long letter from Alexandria to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, in which he asked him to greet “Sheikh Abu 'l-Makārim and Sheikh Abu 'l-Faḍā'il and Sheikh Abu 'l-Fakhr—may God increase his magnificence [Heb. *yefā'arēhū!*]” and other individuals. My first inclination was to assume that Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya Ibn al-Amshāṭī ‘the magnificent’ (‘pride [Heb. *pe'ēr*] of the traders’) was intended. As we shall see (in secs. 3, 5), the names Abu 'l-Makārim and (Abu 'l-)Faḍā'il are also mentioned in sources

would call him Abū Sa'd after my brother—may God have mercy on him!” (The words “that if it were a boy, I would give as alms at his circumcision” render *an ay waqt jā'anī ben zākhār wa-qaddamtuhu lil-milā šadaqtu* [= *tašaddaqtu*]. A more literal translation would be: ‘that whenever a boy is born to me and I conduct him to the circumcision, I will give as alms,’ etc. The passage is quoted in Arabic (with a slight difference in the transcription) in Gil & Fleischer, *Yehuda ha-Levi*, 41, n. 81, and the translation there is to be corrected, as indicated.) The passage is dated ‘in the middle of Shawwāl, known as Tevet,’ which, since it follows the notation at the top of the page (on which see the discussion below [n. 49]), would fit December 1186 or 1187 or 1283–85, probably in the latter period.

⁴⁵ ENA NS 1, f. 8 (L44), lines 9–10. The Hebrew for ‘nephews’ can be read and translated ‘sons of his brother’ or ‘of his brothers.’ I assume that this letter was written before the one that mentions only one nephew, and the brother's second son had died in the meantime. But the exact reconstruction of the relationships in these sources and their sequence cannot be undertaken for the present.

⁴⁶ Thus, e.g., BL Or. 5542, f. 23, line 4: “your son”; lines 11–12: “your sons, the esteemed noblemen (*sarim*), and your family [= wife]”; TS 8 J 20, f. 11, line 5: “your son”; III, 48*v*, line 34: “his sons, may [God] grant him the merit to witness their Torah and their wedding”; III, 49*v*, line 35: *awlādūhu*, i.e., “his sons [or: his children]”; III, 52, upper margin, line 3: “peace to your sons.”

⁴⁷ No. IV, 59, lines 10–11, published by Gil & Fleischer, *Yehuda ha-Levi*, 416–19, and cf. *ibid.*, 418, n. 6, for the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family.

⁴⁸ No. IV, 60, lines 21–23.

pertaining to the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family. However, in the absence of ‘Ibn al-Amshāṭī in the letter, again caution is called for, as there were different people with the same name at the same time in the same place. Indeed, before the regards sent to those three people, greetings were sent to Abū ‘Alī. Even though one of the members of the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family had this name, here the intention is undoubtedly Ḥalfon’s brother, Abū ‘Alī Ezekiel. He had a number of sons, two of whom were named Abu ‘l-Fakhr and Makārim. It is likely that they were intended here, and Abu ‘l-Faḍā’il might have been the name of a third son.⁴⁹ As proof of the circumspection required in these identifications, we cite the case of a certain Saadya b. Abraham, who was a poor teacher in Fustat, contemporaneous with his wealthy namesake Abu ‘l-Fakhr Saadya b. Abraham.⁵⁰

Evidence of Abu ‘l-Fakhr Saadya Ibn al-Amshāṭī’s prominence in the Fustat Jewish community is his appointment as ‘collector of foodstuffs’ (Heb. *gabbay mezōnōt*) in that city for the days of December 10–19,

⁴⁹ No. IV, 68, sec. a, verso, lines 30–31, published by Gil & Fleischer, *Yehuda ha-Levi*, 420–26, with references to previous publications; on Abū ‘Alī Ezekiel’s sons, see *ibid.*, 40–41. At the top of ENA 2727, f. 4 (see above, n. 44) there is a notation concerning the birth of a son, named Abu ‘l-Fakhr, to Abū ‘Alī al-Dimyāṭī. The time of birth (including the hour) is written with great precision: *qabla al-zuhr ‘alā khams sā’āt* (the transcription of the second and fifth words is to be corrected in Gil & Fleischer, *ibid.*, 41), ‘before noon, in the fifth hour.’ The date is *yawm al-khamīs [...] al-khāmīs ‘ish[r] min ḥōdesh Marheshwān [...] Dhu ‘l-Qa’da*, ‘Thursday [...] the fifteenth of Marheshvan [...] Dhu ‘l-Qa’da.’ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:231 (as indicated by his translation) and Gil & Fleischer, *ibid.*, read and restore *wa-‘ish[rin]*, ‘and twenty’ (the 25th of Marheshvan). However, in my opinion, the word in question is unequivocally *‘ish[r]* (while the first letter has a small break in its right side, it is clearly *‘ayin*; and were the last letter *nūn*, its tail would be visible beneath the hole in the manuscript). Goitein and subsequently Gil and Fleischer identified this Abū ‘Alī al-Dimyāṭī with Abū ‘Alī Ezekiel, the brother of Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel (Ibn) al-Dimyāṭī, and dated the manuscript 1130 (Goitein: “1129 or 1130,” but the days in the week and month, according to their reading-restoration, fits only the latter date). Abu ‘l-Fakhr b. Abū ‘Alī Ezekiel stayed with his uncle Ḥalfon in Alexandria in 1139 (IV, 54, margin, line 2 [see Gil & Fleischer, *ibid.*, 41]; according to the 1130 dating, he would have been nine years old—Gil and Fleischer hypothesize that when the boy was eight years old he already accompanied his uncle on a business trip). If my reading is correct, the only dates in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (the eleventh century can be disregarded purely on paleographical grounds, in my opinion), which would fit the details provided, are October 25, 1162 and October 21, 1260. According to IV, 67, Abū ‘Alī Ezekiel was no longer alive in April, 1146. Unless the combination of names is completely coincidental, the thirteenth century date must be preferred, and at most we can speculate that the later Abū ‘Alī and Abu ‘l-Fakhr were descendants of the earlier ones. Gil & Fleischer, *ibid.*, 41, n. 81, call attention to the similarity between the handwriting of this document and that of Abraham b. Isaac, Abū ‘Alī’s nephew, who wrote IV, 62, and this merits further consideration.

⁵⁰ In 1154, Saadya b. Abraham the teacher received a gift sent to him from Aden (II, 63).

1161.⁵¹ Our genealogical list refers to Saadya as having been ‘cut off,’ that is, as having died suddenly, which probably implies that he died shortly before the genealogy was written.

There is evidence that Abu ’l-Fakhr Saadya b. Abraham was well known among non-Jews during the reign of the Fatimid caliph al-‘Āḍid li-Dīn Allāh (1160–71). It has been reported that ‘Sheikh Abu ’l-Fakhr al-‘Aṭṭār Ibn al-Amshāṭī’ was known to Arab historians as an expert in medications, as expected of a perfumer and was particularly famed as an expert in antidotes to snakebites. He also functioned as an apothecary and was known as *al-ṭabīb*, ‘the physician.’ This Abu ’l-Fakhr, not referred to there as a Jew, earned widespread admiration for having rendered assistance to the entire population, without discriminating between the different ethno-religious communities. Rabbi Haim Nahoum, who cited this information, proposed the logical conjecture that the person in question was the same Abu ’l-Fakhr Saadya al-‘Aṭṭār Ibn al-Amshāṭī known from the Geniza documents.⁵²

I know of no sources, from the Geniza or elsewhere, which deal explicitly with Abu ’l-Fakhr Saadya’s brother Ḥayyīm (and his son Peraḥyā). We do possess some sources relating to his brother Ḥananel’s three sons, Manasseh, Ḥayyīm and Samuel. Goitein discussed the honorific *rōsh ha-qāhāl*, ‘head of the community,’ at length.⁵³ “Manasseh the head of the community” is mentioned in a letter sent to Peraḥyā [b. Joseph Ben Yijū].⁵⁴ Manasseh is also mentioned in the dedicatory inscription of his brother Ḥayyīm discussed below.

III. *A Dedicatory Inscription on a Torah Case in al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā*

The inscription, from the month of Tishri in the year 1494 E.D., that is, September 1182, was found on the case of an ancient Torah scroll in the synagogue of the Egyptian town al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā. This scroll was

⁵¹ BL Or. 5542, f. 34 (formerly f. 3). For the collection of food see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:108.

⁵² Nahoum, “Séfer Mehalla.” Regrettably, all my attempts to locate Nahoum’s unspecified sources have been in vain, nor have I been able to find a reference to Abu ’l-Fakhr al-‘Aṭṭār in the one source to which Nahoum alludes—a book by Ibn Tiḡtaqā [*al-Fakhrī*]. See also Toledano, “Synagogues,” 713, and Ben-Zeev, “Documents,” 267, in Nahoum’s name. Needless to say, until the sources can be identified, we must relate to Nahoum’s information with an element of circumspection.

⁵³ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:75–77, 538.

⁵⁴ TS 12.394. For this letter and the identity of the recipient see the note to III, 43, margin.

considered sacred and pilgrims would come to see it annually, on the New Moon of Iyyar.⁵⁵ I know of two copies of the inscription, one published in 1929 by Alfred Yallouz, who wrote of his difficulties in deciphering it; the other was published, with slight differences in the transcription, by Israel Ben-Zeev, after a visit to al-Maḥalla in 1932.⁵⁶ Here is a translation of the text of the inscription as copied by Ben-Zeev:

Donated by Ḥayyim b. Hananel
 known as (*ba-mūdā'*) Faḏā'il b. Abū 'wy b.
 Ibrāhīm al-Amshāṭī—may he rest in Eden!—
 to the synagogue of the Jerusamites [!]⁵⁷
 May the Merciful One protect it⁵⁸
 for me and for my two brothers⁵⁹
 Samuel and Manasseh
 and for all his family.⁶⁰
 A good sign and a sign of blessing
 'b m⁶¹
 Tishri 1494

⁵⁵ As reported, e.g., by Yallouz, "Voyage," 51; Ben-Zeev, "Documents," 268. Not so Ibn Safir, 21b: "Always, after the festival of Shavuot, many Jews assemble there," etc.; *ibid.*, 22a: "They have a tradition that it [the Torah scroll] is very ancient, and a pure, holy man of God wrote it, and many miracles have been performed with it, healing the sick and redeeming prisoners," etc.

⁵⁶ Yallouz, "Voyage," 50 (difficulties in deciphering), 52 (the transcription); thanks are due to the staff of the Ben-Zvi Institute and especially to Michael Glatzer, who provided me with a copy of the article. Fargeon, *Juifs*, 283–84, writes that he personally examined the scroll; however, the copy published there is identical with that of Yallouz and may in fact be a photograph of it, though there are differences in the translation. Ben-Zeev, "Documents," 267. For a discussion of the inscription see Nahoum, "Séfer Mehalla." The text of the inscription published by Toledano, "Synagogues," 713, is not the original but, as pointed out by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:520, n. 2, based on some European language; Richler, "Inscriptions," 185, n. 19, suggests plausibly that it is based on Nahoum's French translation. Today the synagogue is in ruins, and as far as I know the case has not survived.

⁵⁷ Heb. *hyrušmyn*, obviously, as noted by both Yallouz and Ben-Zeev, an error for *hyrušlmyn*, 'the Jerusalemites.'

⁵⁸ Heb. *šmrh*; Yallouz: *šmbr*—probably a typographical error.

⁵⁹ Yallouz reads the first word 'ly, 'for me,' as 'lw (?), and the last, 'hy, 'my brothers,' as 'ḥw (y?).

⁶⁰ Hebrew in both transcriptions: *mšphtw*. If the reading is correct, one should read in line 6 'lyw, 'for him'; 'hyw, 'his brothers,' but if the reading 'ly... 'hy is correct, one should read in this line *mšphty*, 'my family.'

⁶¹ Three Hebrew letters—thus in both transcriptions. I do not know what this means; the original text probably read (not אנש) but אנש —an abbreviation for the three words *āmēn*, *neṣah*, *selah*, as surmised by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:511, n. 72. Ben-Sasson, "The Medieval Period," 220, has suggested reading אנש that is, *āmēn kēn yehi nāṣōn*, 'Amen, and may it be His will.'

The names of the brothers of Ḥayyīm, who dedicated the scroll, agree with the genealogical list from the Geniza studied above. Despite obvious errors in the transcription, the language of the inscription is consistent with the time and place. As to be expected in an ancient dedicatory inscription in a synagogue observing the Palestinian rite ('the synagogue of the Jerusalemites'), the text begins with the formula *mā she-zākḥā*, meaning in the Eretz Israel dialect 'gave charity, donated.'⁶² The donor, Ḥayyīm b. Ḥananel al-Amshāṭī, conferred his blessing (or others did so in his name): 'May the Merciful One protect it' (= the Torah that he had donated) for him and for his two brothers.⁶³ The Hebrew verb *šmrh*, is to be read, in my opinion, *shemarah*, in the perfect aspect, as, e.g., in the blessing *shemārō šūrō*, 'may his Rock [= God] protect him,' or the Aramaic *netāreh raḥmānā*, 'may the Merciful protect him,' just as the perfect aspect is used in similar Arabic blessings.⁶⁴

As to the byname in line 2, there is clearly no basis for the punctuation 'Ḥayyīm b. Ḥananel—known as Faḍā'il—b. Abū 'wy b. Ibrāhīm,' with an added generation 'Abū 'wy' interposed between Ḥananel and his father Abraham. From the syntax of the original it is not clear whether the person 'known as Faḍā'il b. Abū 'wy' is Ḥayyīm b. Ḥananel or his father, Ḥananel b. Abraham. The question may be settled on the basis of the name Abū 'wy, which is not known and in any case is implausible. Paul Fenton has suggested the most probable emendation 'Abū 'ly': Abū 'Alī.⁶⁵ As we have seen, a letter addressed to Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya refers to his brother 'Alī/Abū 'Alī.⁶⁶ Consequently, we can conclude that Ḥananel, Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya's brother, is called Abū 'Alī, and Ḥananel's son Ḥayyīm is Faḍā'il. Moreover, a letter sent to the shop of 'Abu ['l-Fakhr (?) al-]'Aṭṭār' after the

⁶² See Sokoloff, *Dictionary JPA*, 177, and references cited.

⁶³ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:24.

⁶⁴ Goitein read the Hebrew and Aramaic blessings as perfect aspects. Even-Shoshan, *Dictionary*, art. 'ntr,' vocalizes as imperative.

⁶⁵ Fenton, "Commentary," 30, n. 13. As noted below, Abū 'Alī b. Abu 'l-Makārim may have been a descendant of the family. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:511, n. 72, suggested the reading 'Abū 'wn [= 'Awn]. In his translation of the inscription Ben-Sasson, "The Medieval Period," 220, proposed reading "Awā'id" (probably meaning "Awā'id"). While I am not familiar with this name, the similarity to "Iwād" is interesting because of the above-mentioned 'Abraham b. Ḥananel... known as 'Iwād.' For a decapitated ʾ (I), which resembles ʾ (w), see Friedman, *JMP*, I, 433, and the example in TS 13 J 6, f. 14, line 2, in the word *ltryn*, *ibid.*, II, plate no. 26 and the comment on 256 to line 2 (the number of the line is missing there). I had previously assumed that *ha-mūdā* in line 2 is an error. The mistake was mine, not the writer's. Cf. in a 12th century document from Egypt, VII, 21, lines 3–4: "Jacob the Maghrebi Tripolitan, *mūdā*' (= known as) Ibn al-Suṭūḥ(?)."

⁶⁶ No. III, 47a.

end of the year “fifty-one”—probably the year 551 A.H. (1156 C.E.)—mentions Abū ‘Alī Ibn al-Amshāṭī.⁶⁷ We are presently unable to determine whether Abū ‘Alī b. Faḍā’il al-Ṣā’igh [= ‘the goldsmith’], mentioned in a letter sent from ‘Aydhāb to a person referred to as ‘Aṭṭār’ in Fustat,⁶⁸ was also a member of the family.

Nahoum and, following him, Toledano and Ben-Zeev assumed that the ‘synagogue of the Jerusalemites’ figuring in the inscription is the synagogue known as such in Fustat, the site of the Geniza. Accordingly, they assumed that Ḥayyīm b. Ḥananel left Fustat in the wake of the great fire and sacking of the city in 1168, taking with him the Torah scroll he had donated to that synagogue and bringing it with him to al-Maḥalla, where he then settled.⁶⁹ We have indeed seen that the Ibn al-Amshāṭīs lived in Fustat—we shall have more to say later about their contributions to the Palestinian synagogue there—so the suggestion that Ḥayyīm b. Ḥananel had originally donated his Torah scroll there seems quite plausible. However, the absurd suggestion that he took from there a Torah scroll dedicated in 1182 in the wake of the events of 1168 need hardly detain us. Goitein deduced that there was a Palestinian synagogue in al-Maḥalla as well, and it was the original recipient of Ḥayyīm’s donation of a Torah scroll.⁷⁰ But later Goitein too assumed that the scroll had been given to the famous synagogue in Fustat.⁷¹ Since the inscription names no sons of Ḥayyīm, it may be inferred that he indeed had none at the time of the donation.⁷²

Ḥananel b. Abraham’s third son in the genealogical list is ‘Samuel the munificent,’ while the inscription from the al-Maḥalla Torah scroll mentions ‘Samuel’ with no further appellation. We have some information about Samuel from documents dealing with his son Ḥananel, from an inscription from the Palestinian synagogue in Fustat and probably from another

⁶⁷ TS NS J 3.

⁶⁸ No. VII, 42b, line 6.

⁶⁹ Nahoum, “Séfer Mehalla”; Toledano, “Synagogues,” 713–14; Ben-Zeev, “Documents,” 267. Ben-Sasson, “The Medieval Period,” 220, also assumes that Ḥayyīm al-Amshāṭī gave the scroll to the Palestinian synagogue in Fustat.

⁷⁰ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:6, 519–20, n. 2 (the year ‘1282’ there is a typographical error). See *ib.*, 141, on the events of 1168.

⁷¹ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:24.

⁷² Toledano, *ibid.*, 714, suggests that ‘the rabbi R. Jacob Amāshiṭī’ mentioned in the responsa of R. Jacob Berab, no. 55, as “a disciple *par excellence* of Maimonides” (see Ta-Shma, “Maimonides’ Commentary,” 300–1), may have been a son of the Ḥayyīm al-Amshāṭī of this inscription (or that it was Ḥayyīm himself, “Jacob” being merely a slip!). Rather than being a defective spelling of al-Māshiṭī, the word is probably a metathesis for ʾmšʾty, i.e., Amshāṭī. While there are no limits to speculation, the precise relationship between this Jacob and the al-Amshāṭī family remains an unknown.

inscription there. A few of the documents relating to his son Ḥananel also refer to Samuel as ‘the munificent,’ implying that “he excelled not in scholarship but in contributions to public funds and needy individuals.”⁷³ Thus, for example, we have a letter written to “R. Ḥananel, the wise and the discerning, son of his honor, great and holy master and lord, Samuel the esteemed elder, the munificent and the noble (*ha-nāḏīv weha-shōa*)—may his end surpass his beginning and may his days last until he sees your living male child!”⁷⁴ The writer of that letter stated that he was from a family of India traders and that Samuel was acquainted with his father and brother. Hence, “perhaps we may assume that Samuel also had a hand in the India trade, possibly making his fortune in that way.”⁷⁵ The salutation, “may his days last” implies that Samuel was by then quite old. We indeed know that he enjoyed longevity and was still alive in 1224 as proved by his son’s signature that year: “Ḥananel b. Samuel—may his end be good (*s[ōfēh] t[āv]*)!” a salutation for the living.⁷⁶

IV. *Inscriptions from the Palestinian Synagogue in Fustat*

Ḥayyīm Joseph David Azulai, who visited the Palestinian synagogue in Fustat in 1768, copied a number of ancient inscriptions, carved in wood, that he found there. He had some difficulty in deciphering them (“might I really understand this very ancient writing?”). One inscription, dated 1531 E.D. (1219/20), “in the openings fixed in the panels, in which is written the above-mentioned text, w[r]itten in the opening, as follows”:⁷⁷

⁷³ Goitein, “R. Ḥananel,” 377.

⁷⁴ No. II, 74, lines 2–5.

⁷⁵ Goitein, *ibid.*, 377, and cf. *ibid.*, 382.

⁷⁶ TS 12.62; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:515, no. 31. Fenton’s suggestion (Fenton, “R. Ḥananel,” 78) that Samuel ‘the munificent’ was intended by the designation ‘*al-ḥāsīd*’ in a poem written by Joseph b. Tanḥūm ha-Yerūshalmī in honor of the wedding of a son of “R. Hananel b. *al-ḥāsīd*—may his Rock protect him!” at the end of the 13th century cannot be sustained, however (see Mann, *Texts*, 1:442; the formula ‘may his Rock protect him’ indicates that the ‘pietist’ in question was still alive when the poem was written). The person concerned was probably a grandson of Samuel ‘the munificent’ (as suggested by Ashtor, *Mamluks*, 3:23).

⁷⁷ Richler, “Inscriptions,” 184, line 4 (I copy *hykwł*, not *hywkl*, as in Richler’s article), 13–14 (the reading *lptḥ* in line 14 is uncertain; Richler: “[*lptḥ*]”). (Azulai’s manuscript is in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America Library Mic. 5412; thanks to Dr. Abraham David for his assistance.) I understand Azulai’s wording, “in the openings fixed in the panels, in which is written the above-mentioned text,” as alluding to lines 11–12: “in the panels of the old, ruined *tēvā*, which were fixed in the new *tēvā*.” However, the allusion may also be to line 5: “around the *tēvā* and in the opening of the panels before the *ḥēkhal*.”

Made by⁷⁸ Samuel b. Ḥananel b. Abraham the honored elder, known as al-Māshīṭī,⁷⁹ in the year 1531 E.D.⁸⁰

Known Geniza documents, concerning Ḥananel b. Samuel ‘the munificent’ do not refer to him as ‘Ibn al-Amshāṭī.’ On the other hand, this inscription does not call Samuel, ‘the munificent.’ Goitein’s conjecture that the same person was meant in both⁸¹ can now be confirmed by the text of the genealogical list of the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family quoted above, in which Samuel Ibn al-Amshāṭī is indeed called ‘the munificent.’⁸²

The second inscription is only partially intact and has been discussed repeatedly in the scholarly literature; though in my opinion the published decipherment and interpretation of the inscription still leave much to be desired. That is not surprising—apart from the difficulty involved in deciphering the script, already noted by Azulai, mention should be made of Ibn Safir’s impression from his visit, that the panels “are very old, worn and wormy, so that it is impossible to extract from the writing and the carving any coherent passage.”⁸³ Azulai reported (and copied) only the first two

In the Middle Ages, the *ḥekhal* was built like a corridor in a raised place in the synagogue, in the direction faced during prayer. It was spacious enough for people to enter and sit or prostrate themselves there. See Friedman, “The Sake of Heaven,” 283 ff. The Ark in which the Torah scroll or scrolls were kept (the *tēvā*) was portable in antiquity; see Tosefta, Megilla 3(4):21 (ed. Lieberman, 360, lines 77 ff.). Abraham Maimuni remarked that the *tēvā* was kept permanently in the *ḥekhal*; see Friedman, *ibid.*, 285.

⁷⁸ Hebrew *ue-hāyā be-‘asiyyātām*. That is, through his action the panels or other ritual objects were made, viz., he contributed funds to fashion them. Similar wording may be found in the inscription copied by Richler, “Inscriptions,” 184, lines 7–8: “This *ḥekhal* [...] was made by (*asā’ō*) our master and lord [...] from his wealth.” For the meaning of the verb ‘to do, make’ (Heb. *‘sb*, Aramaic *‘bd*) in dedicatory synagogue inscriptions see Friedman, “He Writes,” 179, and cf. *idem*, *JMP*, I, 90. The translation in Ben-Sasson, “The Medieval Period,” 221 (“and it came about upon their doing”), should be corrected accordingly.

⁷⁹ Elsewhere (Friedman, “Maimonides in Documents,” 182) I remarked that ‘al-Amshāṭī’ should be read here. As a matter of fact, in the second inscription, considered below, Azulai copied *‘l-mšty* though the inscription itself clearly reads *‘l-mšty*. However, that mistake does not necessarily imply an error on Azulai’s part here; we have already seen that the name had several different spellings.

⁸⁰ Richler, “Inscriptions,” 184, lines 15–16.

⁸¹ Goitein, “R. Ḥananel,” 395. Ashtor, *Mamluks*, 3:23, had previously written that Ḥananel b. Samuel was a member of the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family but did not connect this with the synagogue inscription. See also Fenton, “Commentary,” 30, n. 13. Ben-Sasson, “The Medieval Period,” 221, seems to have confused the Ḥananel and Samuel in this inscription with their descendants (his comment about David b. Abraham Maimuni’s serving as Nagid in 1235 is also incorrect); perhaps a typographical error is to blame.

⁸² This also confirms Richler’s conjecture, *idem*, “Inscriptions,” 185, n. 19, that the Samuel al-Amshāṭī mentioned here is the brother of the Ḥayyīm al-Amshāṭī who donated the Torah scroll in al-Maḥalla.

⁸³ Ibn Safir, 20b.

panels, which he found “around the wall inside, alongside the *hēkhal*.”⁸⁴ The three surviving panels with the inscription are now preserved in different museums: one in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, another in the Cairo Museum, and the third in the Louvre, Paris.⁸⁵ Following is a translation of the inscription on the panels as I read it, with the assistance of previous publications:

First panel

[o]ur master and lord⁸⁶ Solomon, who was cut off after a short life—may the Lord’s spirit give him rest⁸⁷ and comfort⁸⁸ a brother’s heart

⁸⁴ Richler, “Inscriptions,” 184, n. 17. It is clear from the description of the location of these two inscriptions—the first in the ‘openings’ and the other ‘around the wall,’ that is, on long panels on the wall, that the four parts of the two inscriptions do not belong to a single, long inscription, as supposed by Ben-Sasson, “The Medieval Period,” 221. This is also implied by the restored text of the second panel (see below).

⁸⁵ I have examined only the first panel, in Jerusalem. Its length is ca. 205 cm and height, including the decorative borders above and below the letters, ca. 20cm; the height of the letters is ca. 7.5 cm. For the third panel see Ben-Sasson, “The Medieval Period,” 221–22, 261, n. 77, and *ibid.*, 222, photographs of the three panels. There is a good photograph of the second in Ben-Zeev, “Documents,” facing 272. Ben-Sasson, *ibid.*, 261, n. 77, writes that searches for the second panel were made at his request in three different museums in Cairo, but it was not found. According to Ben-Zeev, *ibid.*, 267, n. 11, it was kept in the museum in the building of the Arab State Library (*dār al-kutub al-miṣriyya*), and Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:551, n. 14, reported having seen it on exhibit in the museum on his last visit there. (Prof. Ben-Sasson informs me that when he visited the Islamic Museum in Cairo in 1996 he saw the second panel on display in the museum’s first hall, together with many other wood inscriptions, and that after his visit to the Louvre, the third panel was removed from storage and placed on permanent display in the Islamic Art hall.)

⁸⁶ Hebrew [m]rwr. For the reading of this acronym see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:551, n. 14.

⁸⁷ As noted by Goitein *ibid.*, this was a salutation for the deceased, based on Isa. 63:14.

⁸⁸ I read *yenaḥēm*, ‘will comfort’ (as does Mosseri, “The Synagogues,” 40, rather than *yinnāḥēm*, ‘will be comforted,’ as in one of the relevant publications), in parallel to *we-yezakkēbū*, ‘may He grant him the merit,’ in the third panel (to the best of my knowledge, that word has not been deciphered before). This is comparable to the blessing of grace in the house of mourners, according to some sources: *menahēm lēv (ha-)avēlim*, ‘Who comforts the hearts of mourners.’ Similarly, Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel writes in a letter (IV, 34, lines 22–23): “May the King in His mercy comfort (*yenaḥēm*) the heart of our lord with the comfort of Zion and the rebuilding of Jerusalem.” In the panel as well, the subject is of course God, probably mentioned in the part of the inscription preceding the first surviving panel, with a blessing that God would have compassion on the deceased, or the like. It is not absolutely necessary to make this restoration, however, for two reasons: (1) The Lord is already mentioned in the salutation for the deceased based on Isa. 63:14. (2) Sometimes in pious wishes, God was alluded to without explicit mention, e.g., III, 48*v*, lines 34–35, where the writer sends regards to Abu ’l-Fakhr Saadya Ibn al-Amshāṭī and adds: “may He remember him and his sons favorably and grant him the merit to witness their Torah and wedding.” But such a style is exceptional.

Second panel

the munificent, the noble, son of his honor, great and holy master and
 lord Ḥananel the esteemed elder—may he rest in Eden!—son of his
 honor, great and holy master and lord Abraham the elder,
 known as al-Amshāṭī

Third panel

and may He grant him the merit to witness the rebuilding of His Shrine
 and Sanctuary speedily and in the near future, Amen.

Although Azulai copied the inscription from the first two panels as if they were continuous (“heart of a brother, the munificent, *yhšw*^c”),⁸⁹ it is evident to anyone looking at the panels or their photographs, placed side by side, that something is missing between them. While both have similar ornamentation above and below the script, the ornamental motifs carved in mid-line, after every few words, are different. The first panel has floral motifs and ends in the right half of this ornamentation. The motifs appearing in the second panel resemble a flower inside a Star of David, the panel beginning in the left half of such a motif. The two designs do not fit together. In fact, Abraham Firkovitch, who visited the synagogue in 1864 and copied the inscription on the first two panels, described the first as being on the north wall and the second above the Ark.⁹⁰ The third panel has no ornamentation above, below or in the middle of the script. However, the script itself is similar to that of the other two panels, and I agree with Menachem Ben-Sasson’s assumption that the third panel is the continuation of the same inscription.⁹¹

We may now focus our attention on the inscription on the first two panels, which conveys some interesting information about the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family. Jack Mosseri copied the first two words in the second panel as *hndyb yhšw*^c,⁹² as if reading ‘the munificent Joshua [misspelled],’ and several scholars have copied the same reading. This was presumably also Azulai’s reading, but the *y* in the second word, as he transcribed it, is longer than usual and (in the photograph) blurred; he may well have

⁸⁹ See Richler, “Inscriptions,” 184, lines 18–20. Concerning “*yhšw*^c” see below.

⁹⁰ Elkin & Ben-Sasson, “Firkovitch,” 90.

⁹¹ Ben-Sasson, “The Medieval Period,” 221; but my decipherment differs from that implied by the translation that he published. According to Adler, *The Jews*, 30, the inscription was written on three walls; this may be an allusion to the third panel, which he did not copy.

⁹² Mosseri, “The Synagogues,” 40.

written *whšw*^c, that is, ‘and the noble.’⁹³ That is how Firkovitch and E.N. Adler read the word, and I have followed their reading in the above translation. It is not clear from the photograph if the doubtful letter is ך (y) or ן (w), whose leg has fallen victim to the vicissitudes of time, as have the legs of other letters in the inscription. However, the reading *yhšw*^c is difficult, for several reasons. First, while there are indeed several instances in Geniza documents for this misspelled version of the name Joshua, rather than *yhwš*^c, it is most unusual and indicates that the writer was not skilled in the art of writing—hardly a plausible assumption regarding the artisan who carved this handsome inscription. Second, the adjective *nādīv*, ‘munificent,’ which is common in Geniza documents, always comes after and not before the person’s name; hence the word order should have been the reverse (*yhwš*^c *hndyb*). Third, we must ask who was this ‘munificent Joshua,’ who is not mentioned in the above lists of the sons of Ḥananel b. Abraham Ibn al-Amshāṭī? Were there two sons nicknamed ‘the munificent,’ Samuel and ‘Joshua’?!

Possibly, those who read *yhšw*^c were simply unfamiliar with the common phrase *hndyb whšw*^c (*ha-nādīv weha-shōā*^c), meaning ‘the munificent and the noble [or prosperous].’ Adler, for example, copied *whšw*^c, but ‘read’—or rather, emended to—*yhšw*^c,⁹⁴ thus perpetuating the error. There does not, however, seem to be any reason to uphold this rather puzzling reading, and preference should surely be given to *whšw*^c. The name of the ‘munificent and noble’ person would of course have been specified in the missing section before the second panel. Given all the data now in our possession, there is only one possible restoration: ‘Samuel, the munificent and the noble.’ We have already seen that that person is referred to in Geniza documents not only as ‘Samuel the munificent’ but also as ‘Samuel the munificent and the noble.’⁹⁵

We can now consider the first panel. Although there was clearly a gap in the text between the first panel and the second, we accept Azulai’s assumption that the second follows the first, the two constituting a single inscription. It follows, therefore, that Solomon—the reading of the name is quite certain—was a brother of Samuel ‘the munificent.’⁹⁶ While Solomon, who

⁹³ Richler, “Inscriptions,” 184, misprints ‘*yhwš*^c’

⁹⁴ Adler, *Jews*, 30.

⁹⁵ For an example other than the one cited above, see JRL B 4265, a fragment of a letter to “our master and lord Ḥananel [. . . the] great pietist, the outstanding sage, [. . .] son of our master and lord Samuel, [. . . the wise] and discerning and munificent and noble.”

⁹⁶ For the sake of completeness, I mention another theoretic possibility, even though this seems improbable. Namely, that the word *āḥ* does not denote here a biological brother

died at a young age, is mentioned neither in the foregoing genealogical list nor in the dedicatory inscription of 1182, it is quite plausible that he was born after the list had been written and that his brother Samuel ‘the munificent’ made a contribution in his memory to the Palestinian synagogue of Fustat.⁹⁷ Samuel in fact had a son whom he named Solomon, presumably after his deceased young brother, in keeping with the aforementioned custom. The son is mentioned together with Samuel’s other son, Ḥananel, in a letter written in 1211: “May the well-being of the illustrious scholar R. Ḥananel and R. Solomon, his brother, and their sons (or: children) increase forever.”⁹⁸

V. *More on the Ibn al-Amshāṭī Family, especially Ḥananel b. Samuel*

This ends our survey of the members of the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family based on their names in the genealogical list cited at the beginning of this section. Some brief comments are now in order about members of the family and their descendants. Mentioned in a number of letters from the 12th and early 13th centuries is a certain Makārim (or Abu ’l-Makārim) Ibn al-Amshāṭī, but his father does not seem to be named anywhere. A letter from the time of Maimonides (‘our Rabbi Moses’) refers to Makārim Ibn al-Amshāṭī,⁹⁹ he is also mentioned in another letter, written ca. 1220,¹⁰⁰ and a letter from ca. 1200 was sent to Abu ’l-Makārim Ibn al-Amshāṭī in *qaysāriyyat al-‘aṭṭārīn bi-miṣr*, that is, in the bazaar building of the perfumers in Fustat. The writer states that he bought green aromatic wood from Abu ’l-Makārim and brought it to Alexandria but was unable to sell it there. Aromatic wood (‘ūd) was imported from India and other Far Eastern countries, and perfumers

but a close friend, a usage common in the Geniza documents. If so, Solomon was the name of the friend’s father, and his name came in the preceding missing portion of the inscription. Besides the absence of Solomon’s name in the aforementioned lists, this hypothesis may have some advantage because of the word ‘a brother,’ while we would expect ‘his brother’ (*āḥīw*).

⁹⁷ Of course, we cannot be sure that the inscription on the three panels was written in 1219/20 like the other inscription. As we have seen, they are separate inscriptions, and there is no reason to assume that they were written in the same year.

⁹⁸ TS 24.41, lines 29–30, published by Mann, *Texts*, 1:410. See Goitein, *Letters*, 57; idem, “R. Ḥananel,” 372. Goitein assumes there on 377, 384 that Solomon was a trader and supported his brother Ḥananel.

⁹⁹ TS 8.22, lines 7, 8; margin, line 3. For “our Rabbi Moses” see *ibid.*, verso, line 3.

¹⁰⁰ TS NS J 29v, line 9. The letter was recently published by Frenkel, “Alexandria,” 2:314–17. My date for this letter is based on Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:380; Goitein, *ibid.*, 596, n. 33, dates it “shortly before 1227.” Frenkel, *ibid.*, 314, dates the letter to the late 1230s, without referring to the aforementioned comments by Goitein.

also used it.¹⁰¹ A letter sent to the shop of Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya al-'Aṭṭār Ibn al-Amshāṭī, written by Moses b. Joseph Yijū in the mid 1150's, to his brother Peraḥyā, includes greetings to Abu 'l-Makārim.¹⁰² A fragmentary letter sent, I believe, to one of the Ibn al-Amshāṭīs, contains greetings from the writer (who may be identified by his handwriting as Peraḥyā b. Joseph Yijū) to Abu 'l-Makārim and his brothers, and then also to "his two sons, his honor, great and holy master and lord Abraham and his brother his honor, great and holy master and lord Ḥananel"; the letter was written during the lifetime of Maimonides ('our Rabbi Moses').¹⁰³ Given the many years that elapsed between the earliest letter and the latest we have been reviewing here, were they all referring to the same (Abu 'l-)Makārim, one would have to assume that he reached a ripe old age.¹⁰⁴

In my opinion, it is probable that this (Abu 'l-)Makārim be identified as Samuel 'the munificent' b. Ḥananel, since 'Abu 'l-Makārim' also means 'munificent'.¹⁰⁵ This would be a fitting byname for Samuel, whom we know to have enjoyed longevity and to have had a son named Ḥananel (who also dealt in perfumes). If so, Samuel 'the munificent' b. Ḥananel

¹⁰¹ TS 8.72. The *qaysāriyya* served as a bazaar, perhaps even replacing the perfumers' market. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:194 (there the dating of the document is given), 448, n. 11. (Also see al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz*, III, 139, describing the plunder of Cairo in 1129: "The *qaysāriyya* was plundered. It contained most of the possessions of Cairo's population, for it was their warehouse.") Line 6: "green aromatic wood," Arabic *'ūd khaṭab*; the word *khaṭab* may also denote other colors, such as yellow, orange or with black-and-white stripes. (The color of *'ūd* is also mentioned in VII, 35, line 23: *al-'ūd al-ṣibgh al-lawn*, "aromatic wood of a dark brown color"; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:389, n. 219.) Line 7: "could not sell it," Arabic *wa-lā qadartu ab[ī'abu]*, but only part of the top of the letter *b* has survived. Goitein, "R. Ḥananel," 382, writes of Ḥananel b. Samuel 'the munificent': "Like other scholars, he may have had a perfumer's shop"; *ibid.*, 395: "In the perfumer's business R. Ḥananel b. Samuel's continued the vocation of his antecedents."

¹⁰² No. III, 47, upper margin, lines 11–12.

¹⁰³ TS 8 J 27, f. 8, lines 2, 4–5. 'Our Rabbi Moses' occurs in verso, line 5 (see the note to the postscript of III, 55*v*, concerning the letter carrier). On the recto, line 6, the writer pens the following greeting: "...a male son to Shaykh Abū Ishāq soon," possibly following the birth of a daughter (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:226–27) to Abraham (= Abū Ishāq); perhaps that daughter was the woman Sitt al-Naba' d. Shaykh Abū Ishāq [ibn al-A]mshāṭī, mentioned in TS 16.172*v*, dated 1230.

¹⁰⁴ In a letter of 1196, a Jewish court-physician sends greetings to Abu 'l-Makārim, father of "my brother *al-rashīd* Abū 'Alī." While Ḥananel, father of Samuel 'the munificent,' was called Abū 'Alī (above, sec. 3), there is no indication that the father and son named in this letter were members of the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family, and we have already seen (sec. 2) that the same names occur in the family of Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel.

¹⁰⁵ Goitein, *Palestinian Jewry*, 326, n. 25: "[Abu] 'l-Makārim—man of generosity." For the perfumer Abu 'l-Makārim 'the munificent' see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:412, n. 20; 2:422, no. 102.

had three sons: Abraham, Ḥananel and Solomon. However, this identification for the moment remains a matter of speculation.

Ḥananel b. Samuel is the most prominent of the known members of this family. A judge, a pietist and an accomplished scholar, he wrote commentaries to the code of R. Isaac Alfasi and other learned works, in philosophy and mysticism, and made his living, inter alia, from a sugar factory in his possession. As Goitein conjectured and Fenton proved, Ḥananel's daughter married Abraham Maimuni. Their sons and later offspring are therefore known as descendants of Maimonides and were no longer associated with the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family. Since Ḥananel b. Samuel's biography and works have already been discussed,¹⁰⁶ and the topic somewhat exceeds the scope of this account, we need not deal with them here. Nevertheless, I would like to touch on two interesting aspects of his life.

Whose disciple was Ḥananel? Goitein was of the opinion that he was a disciple of Maimonides.¹⁰⁷ While that is a plausible conjecture, I am not aware of any conclusive data to this effect. Goitein seems to have relied on two pieces of evidence. First, Ḥananel refers to Maimonides as "our Rabbi, of blessed memory"; a great scholar was referred to thus (Heb. *rabbenu*) by "his family or the company of his disciples." This phrase could point to Ḥananel b. Samuel's belonging to the circle of Maimonides' associates rather than his being a disciple. Second, a certain Ḥananel wrote a poem appended at the end of the book *Ahāvā* of Maimonides' codex *Mishne Torah* in a book proofread from the Master's personal copy, in the celebrated MS. Huntington (80) in the Bodleian Library (MS. Heb. 577) at Oxford. Indeed, as far back as 1850 H. Edelman suggested that the poem had been written by Ḥananel b. Samuel, and some modern scholars have

¹⁰⁶ See Goitein, "R. Ḥananel"; Fenton, "R. Ḥananel"; idem, "Commentary"; Suna, *Qid-dushin*; Klein, *Erwin*; Friedman, "Maimonidean Letters," 207–8. Goitein, "R. Ḥananel," 383, n. 52, refers to TS 12.483, which mentions "our master and lord Ḥananel the judge *ha-memullā*," and is at a loss to explain the last word, suggesting that it might be an error. However, the paper was torn after that word, though something remains there of the first letter of the next word: it could be *b*. I have no doubt that one should restore *ha-memullā*' *be-khōl middōt ha-shevaḥ*, that is, "filled with all the most praiseworthy virtues," or the like, as we read in III, 53 of Abu 'l-Fakhr al-'Aṭṭār Ibn al-Amshāṭī, Ḥananel's great-uncle. (Golb, "Proselyte," 88 and n. 9, gives additional examples of this phrase.) There have been diverse scholarly conjectures as to the approximate year of Ḥananel's birth—an issue that I treat elsewhere.

¹⁰⁷ See Goitein, "R. Ḥananel," 373. Prof. Fenton has recently informed me that he has found new evidence that Ḥananel was in fact a disciple of Maimonides.

repeated this identification.¹⁰⁸ However, Neubauer's Catalogue (1886) already lists the poet's full name, Ḥananel b. Karātha, and many years ago Alexander Marx published the poem in full, including a line written above it in the same hand: "A song of praise about our Rabbi Moses the *gā'ōn*, of blessed memory, from the words of Ḥananel b. Karātha."¹⁰⁹ Most probably, the poem is not a copy but the original, penned by the poet himself as follows from the deletion and correction in the line and the fact that Ḥananel's name is not accompanied by an epithet.¹¹⁰ However, the handwriting is not similar to that of Ḥananel b. Samuel, whose hand is familiar to us from Geniza documents.¹¹¹ I have no idea who this Karātha was, but there seems to be no real grounds for the proposed identification with Samuel 'the munificent'.¹¹²

Whatever the case may be, it turns out that, some years after Maimonides' death, Ḥananel is referred to as a disciple of Yeḥiel b. Elyakim, who probably came to Egypt some time before 1211.¹¹³ I infer this from a letter written before December 17, 1214, to Yeḥiel by a certain Moses, "who utters song and prayer every single day, morning and evening, to the Guardian of Israel, to grant him (Yeḥiel) and his disciple R. Ḥananel grace and love and good understanding," etc.¹¹⁴ Yeḥiel b. Elyakim is also

¹⁰⁸ Edelman, *Treasure of Oxford*, xxi–xxii. Besides Goitein, *ibid.*, the identification is mentioned by Suna, *Quiddushin*, 7; Fenton, "Commentary," 28, n. 3; Klein, *Erwin*, 12; Havlin, *Authorized Version*, 23, n. 36.

¹⁰⁹ Neubauer, *Catalogue*, col. 113, no. 577; Marx, "Maimonides," 395–96, with references to earlier publications. Marx omits the word *fi*. There are three dots on the letter *t* of the name *kr'th*, indicating the Arabic letter *th*. I have copied the text from the facsimile edition of the manuscript by Havlin, *Authorized Version*, 273. The text was recently published by Rabinovitch, *Mishneh Torah*, 2:956. The poem was already published by Edelman, *ibid.*, without the text of the superscription but with its purported translation by the Orientalist Louis Loewe: "Eulogy on the Prince Rabenu Moshe by Hananel when he saw this work." (The last four words are evidently an effort to translate *kr'th*! Some modern scholars continue to quote this 'translation' and have made deductions from the erroneous concluding words.) It appears, indeed, that Steinschneider, *Arab. Lit.*, 227, believed that Ḥananel b. Karātha and Ḥananel b. Samuel were one and the same. For the name Karātha (spelling?), see Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmā'*, 1527, 2232.

¹¹⁰ The correction is in line 7 of the poem: "and he could not [[tell]] apprehend..." For omission of the epithet as an indication that the 'poet' himself was writing, see already Edelman, *Treasure of Oxford*, xxii.

¹¹¹ See, e.g., TS 16.292 (for this manuscript, see Goitein, "R. Ḥananel," 386–88).

¹¹² See the Appendix for a further discussion on this codex.

¹¹³ See Mann, *Texts*, 1:409–11; Friedman, "Responsum on *Reshut*," 332–33.

¹¹⁴ TS NS J 282; the date appears in the text of the formula of a writ of divorce, which Yeḥiel wrote on the verso. Note the greetings sent in a letter to R. Ḥananel *al-dayyān al-jalīl*, 'the illustrious judge,' and to R. Yeḥiel (TS 13 J 8, f. 28v); see Goitein, "R. Ḥananel," 374. Yeḥiel b. Elyakim's signature appears in a letter of support for Abraham Maimuni, his

known to have been occupied with Midrash *Sifra*; to be precise, he copied Hillel b. Elyakim's commentary on that work.¹¹⁵ Ḥananel b. Samuel wrote a Judeo-Arabic commentary to the halakhic Midrashim,¹¹⁶ and if the letter is indeed referring to him, his writing of that commentary may be an indication of his teacher's influence.

A second aspect of Ḥananel b. Samuel's biography, which, as far as I know, has received no attention in the scholarly literature, is of interest in itself. It seems probable that Ḥananel served for a certain time as Nagid of the Egyptian Jewish community. Of necessity, the present discussion will be very brief. Some letters sent to (or referring to) Ḥananel call him *sayyidunā*, 'our lord,' the conventional form of address for the Nagid, rather than *sayyidī*, 'my lord.' Examples are a letter from Jacob b. Ṭāhōr, dated September 15, 1237,¹¹⁷ and in two letters to Ḥananel, one dated May 15 ('40th day of the Omer'), 1235. The last two items both also allude to Abraham Maimuni as *sayyidunā al-rayyis*, 'our lord the headman' or as *al-muftī*, 'the jurisconsult.'¹¹⁸ Again, Ḥananel is addressed as *sayyidunā* in a letter written to him by Mishael b. Uziel.¹¹⁹ As Goitein explained, in later times the title *sayyidunā* was used rather liberally, being applied also to a

signature following that of Ḥananel b. Samuel 'may his end be good' (i.e., during Samuel's lifetime); see Friedman, "Responsum on *Reshut*," 332, n. 19. While the order of the signatures may perhaps be attributed to the fact that Ḥananel was Abraham Maimuni's father-in-law, it is still rather curious in light of the disciple-master relationship with Yeḥiel—unless we assume that there were two Ḥananel's active at the time.

¹¹⁵ See Friedman, "Responsum on *Reshut*," 338–39.

¹¹⁶ See Fenton, "Commentary," 33.

¹¹⁷ ULC Add. 3415; see Goitein, "R. Ḥananel," 382, n. 44 (where the year "194" in the Hebrew date is a typographical error for '197').

¹¹⁸ Letter dated 1235: TS Ar. 54, f. 66, where only the words "the munificent, may his soul be bound up in the bond of life" are preserved, and Goitein restored '[R. Ḥananel b. Samuel].' In the second letter, TS Ar. 53, f. 67, the recipient is referred to merely as *sayyidunā*, and Goitein identified him as Ḥananel. See Goitein, "R. Ḥananel," 383–84. In TS. Ar. 53, f. 67, the writer refers to Ḥananel as having the attribute of "the tribe of Issachar" (reading there '*yskr*' [that is, '*ysskr*' = Issachar], rather than, as wrongly printed there, '*uskr*,' see discussion *ibid.*). In TS NS 321, f. 101, and in Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 66 (2878), fol. 104, we find the openings of two other letters to "his honor, great and holy master and lord, Ḥananel—may God elevate his name!—son of his honor, great and holy master and lord, Samuel the munificent, may his soul be bound up in the bond of life," written by the same person, from which we learn his name: "Ṭāhōr b. Abraham—may he rest in Eden!" (Note that the last two words of the salutation, 'may God elevate his name,' Heb. *yārūm shemō ēl*, are a play on the name of Ḥananel's father Samuel [*Shemū'ēl*]. The writer ignores accepted grammatical rules by using *yārūm* as a transitive verb.) See Goitein, *ibid.*, 384, on Abraham b. Ṭāhōr, who wrote to Ḥananel.

¹¹⁹ Ms. Frankfurt a/M, published by Goitein, "R. Ḥananel," 379 ff.

scholar who was not the Nagid.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, Mishael refers to Ḥananel not only as *sayyidunā* but also as ‘our lord, our Nagid’ (Hebrew: *adōnēnū negīdēnū*). Even this letter does not provide definite proof that Ḥananel served as Nagid, for the letter itself was lost in the Second World War and is known to us solely from its publication by J. Horovitz in 1900. Although the transcription may contain some errors,¹²¹ it seems fairly reliable, and we may assume that the word *negīdēnū* was read correctly. The address, however, does not refer to Ḥananel as Nagid; perhaps the expression “our master and lord, our Nagid, our magnificence and our splendor,” etc., includes the word merely as one of the expressions of respect with which the writer addressed Ḥananel, rather than the title.¹²²

This explanation is hardly applicable to the wording in another document, concerned with the divorce of a woman (who refused to receive her writ of divorce). The procedure was supervised by “*sayyidunā al-nāgīd* (‘our lord, the Nagid’) R. Ḥananel,” and he is referred repeatedly in the document as *sayyidunā al-nāgīd*, *al-nāgīd*.¹²³ We have here prima facie evidence that Ḥananel was recognized as Nagid for a certain period. This was presumably a short time after the death of his son-in-law Abraham Maimuni. Our knowledge of this period is sparse indeed. It is generally believed that Abraham Maimuni died on December 7, 1237.¹²⁴ The document dealing with the divorce is torn, and the date is missing; however, the pen trials on the verso include the date “Thursday, 20 Shevat.” From the date of Abraham Maimuni’s death up until 1252 (see below), the 20th day of Shevat fell on a Thursday in the years 1239, 1242, 1244, 1245, 1247, 1249, and 1252. Goitein wrote that he had found a *rāshūt* (Hebrew: ‘jurisdiction’)

¹²⁰ Goitein, *ibid.*, 382, n. 42; 384, n. 54. Cf. *ibid.*, 383, n. 53. Note that Abraham Maimuni, too, refers to others as *sayyidunā* in his letter, ENA NS 18, f. 36, published by Fenton, “Commentary,” 49 ff. Klein, *Erwin*, 14 and n. 32, indeed writes that Ḥananel served as Nagid, but incorrectly cites as proof Goitein’s study. *Sayyidunā* in direct address was more common.

¹²¹ In Goitein, “R. Ḥananel,” 380, line 6, I suppose that the word *‘ahadbum* was mis-copied by Horovitz from line 5 (see Goitein, *ibid.*, 381, n. 37); the correct translation of *faraj Allāh wa-farajhu* is ‘God’s deliverance and yours.’ Goitein does not discuss the word *negīdēnū* in the letter.

¹²² For *negīdēnū* as an expression of respect only, see, e.g., TS NS J 282, in the aforementioned letter to Yehiel: “our munificent one, our nobleman, our prince (*nāsi*), our *nāgīd*,” etc. This term was sometimes applied to Maimonides, even though he did not have the official title Nagid; see Friedman, “Maimonidean Letters,” 209, 211.

¹²³ ENA NS 1, f. 83 (recently published in David, “Signatories,” 55–56, where some mishaps have occurred).

¹²⁴ See Freimann, “Genealogy.”

formula, used in reference to the Head of the Jews of Egypt, for David b. Abraham Maimuni on two deeds dated shortly after the death of his father, one from 20 Kislev (November 29), 1238, the other from the end of Tishri (September), 1239. For a few years after, at least up until 1244, one finds no *nāshūt* formula. Goitein summed up what is known of R. David's first years as Head of the Jews, which were rather stormy, as follows: "It would seem, therefore, that R. David received his first official appointment only in the middle of the 1240s... He lost it apparently in 1250, ... and was re-appointed in Nisan 1252. The isolated references from Kislev 1238 and Tishri 1239 may be explained by the assumption that, since the proposal to appoint him had been confirmed by the authorities, people were quick to refer to his jurisdiction." When David was deposed, we are told that his grandfather Ḥananel was forced to go underground.¹²⁵ According to this new evidence, Ḥananel's term as Nagid may be dated somewhere in the aforementioned years. For the moment, we cannot pinpoint the time more precisely.

Ḥananel b. Samuel 'the munificent' had two sons, one named Ḥayyīm, after his father Samuel's brother (and also Samuel's uncle), and another named Samuel.¹²⁶ We also know of two daughters. Ḥayyīm was a close associate of Abraham Maimuni and his son David the Nagid and succeeded his father Ḥananel as judge. He lived for many years, at least until the 1290s.¹²⁷ As with most women in the Geniza society, Ḥananel's daughters are still anonymous. But through their marriages, the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family formed important links with two well-known families. Ḥananel

¹²⁵ See Goitein, "Negidim," 240 ff. The deed dated Kislev 1238 is a marriage contract in Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 65 (Cat. 2877), fol. 34. The *nāshūt* formula is torn there and David's name is missing.

¹²⁶ ENA 2592, f.3 is a letter in which the writer sends regards to "R. Ḥananel, the great rabbi of Israel, and his two sons, the great princes, our master and lord Ḥayyīm, the great scholar, and his brother, R. Samuel, the wise and discerning." This text reinforces Ashtor's suggestion in *Mamluks*, 3:23, that Ḥananel, father of 'R. Samuel b. Ḥananel of blessed memory,' mentioned in a document dating from 1259, is the very same Ḥananel who wrote a commentary on the code of R. Isaac Alfasi. See *ibid.* on Samuel 'the pietist' son of R. Hananel and his sons.

¹²⁷ For Ḥayyīm b. Ḥananel see Friedman, *Polygyny*, 95–96, and references *ibid.*, 95, the second n. 1. As suggested by Fenton, *Doctor*, 18, n. 20, the Ḥayyīm to whom the letter TS 13 J 19, f. 12, published by Ashtor, *Mamluks*, 3:28–32, was addressed, should probably be identified with Ḥayyīm b. Ḥananel. For further details about Ḥananel and his son Ḥayyīm see pages 544–48; these matters are also discussed in Friedman, "The Sake of Heaven," in as yet unpublished parts of that study.

married off one of his daughters to Abraham Maimuni; the other he married off to the scholar Peraḥyā b. Nissīm of the Yijū family.¹²⁸

VI. Conclusion

Other members of the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family were associated with Maimonides or his teachings, but we are ignorant of their precise lineage. We have already mentioned ‘The rabbi, R. Jacob Amāshiṭī (<Amshāṭī),’ referred to in the responsa of R. Jacob Berab (no. 55) as ‘a disciple *par excellence* of Maimonides.’ Daniel b. al-Māshiṭa is mentioned in a note in Abraham Maimuni’s commentary on the book of Genesis—identified by scholars as originally a marginal gloss—as having written a book (*al-Taqwīm*) in which he criticized Maimonides’ philosophical teachings; he may also have been a member of the family.¹²⁹

Who, then, was the Ibn al-Amshāṭī (‘Ibn al-Mashshāṭ’) whose return from India was awaited by Maimonides, to settle an account with him?¹³⁰ One possibility is that he was Samuel ‘the munificent,’ since the time and place and what little we do know about him tally. Goitein already suggested that Samuel was involved in the India trade, and the information adduced above concerning dealings in aromatic wood by Abu ’l-Makārim—with whom we have suggested identifying Samuel—might add support to this suggestion. Were Samuel the India trader in whose ventures Maimonides invested, the cooperation between the two would have reached its ultimate culmination in the marriage of Samuel’s granddaughter to Maimonides’ son. But, while reasonable, the identification remains a matter of conjecture. Even after this survey of the various sources that deal with the illustrious Ibn al-Amshāṭī family, we are still largely in the dark. Hopefully, the discovery of new material, in or out of the Geniza, may help us answer the above question and solve some of the other many puzzles touched on here.

¹²⁸ See Goitein, R. Hananel, 393–94. On Peraḥyā’s connection with the Yijū family, see above, Introduction IIC, sec. 6, subsection “Family of Scholars.”

¹²⁹ For the said gloss see Wiesenber, *Commentary*, 104–5 and nn. 10–11; Fenton, “Taqwīm,” and cf. *ibid.*, 80, n. 32, for the possible connection with the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family.

¹³⁰ In Freimann’s note to Baneth in Maimonides, *Epistles*, 70: “It is hardly plausible to identify him with R. Jacob al-Amshāṭī, Maimonides’ disciple (?)”

VII. *Appendix: A 'Testament' Penned by Maimonides*

MS. Huntington (80) in the Bodleian Library at Oxford (MS. Heb. 577) contains the books *Madda'* and *Abāvā* of Maimonides' composition *Mishne Torah*, and as the Master verified in writing, this manuscript was proofread from his personal copy. This codex had been the possession of a young scholar (*talmīd*) named Eleazar b. Peraḥyā, who died (*nehṭaf*, 'was snatched') after a short life. Before his death Eleazar willed it to the rabbinical court, to serve there perpetually as a master copy, from which individuals could proofread their own copies. As has been recognized by his handwriting, Maimonides wrote an inscription at the beginning of the codex, in which he immortalized Eleazar and verified his testament.¹³¹

Assuming that Ḥananel, who wrote the poem praising Maimonides at the end of the book *Abāvā*, was Ḥananel b. Samuel, Jacob Klein suggested that Peraḥyā, the father of this Eleazar b. Peraḥyā, be identified as the aforementioned Peraḥyā b. Nissīm, Ḥananel b. Samuel's son-in-law and Abraham Maimuni's brother-in-law. Accordingly, Eleazar "received the codex as an inheritance or a gift from his grandfather [Ḥananel b. Samuel]."¹³² If, as I believe to have demonstrated, Ḥananel the 'poet' was not the same as Ḥananel b. Samuel, the connection of the two with the manuscript is spurious, and for the basis of the proposed identification only the names Eleazar and Ḥananel remain. In fact, Peraḥyā b. Nissīm was a student of Ḥananel b. Samuel years after Maimonides' death and active in the thirteenth century.¹³³ Accordingly, it is implausible that already in Maimonides' lifetime, he had a son Eleazar, an advanced student, who studied Torah 'day and night,' who was the owner of this codex and was mentioned in the 'testament' that the Master wrote on it.

The Geniza preserves a curious piece of information concerning Eleazar b. Peraḥyā. A genealogical list of the House of the Scribe (*bayt al-sōfēr*) concludes with the son of Eleazar b. Shelah: "Eleazar and his son Peraḥyā the young scholar (*talmīd*), who died (*nehṭaf*, 'was snatched') after a short life."¹³⁴ Unless we assume that Maimonides erroneously exchanged the names of the father and son in the 'testament' which he penned or that the writer of the genealogy made such a mistake, these documents would appear to attest a fantastic coincidence: two approximately contemporary

¹³¹ This was published and analyzed by Havlin, "Autograph"; idem, *Authorized Version*, 18 ff.

¹³² Klein, *Erwin*, 13.

¹³³ See Goitein, R. Hananel, 389 ff. and above, page 87.

¹³⁴ ENA 2592, f. 14.

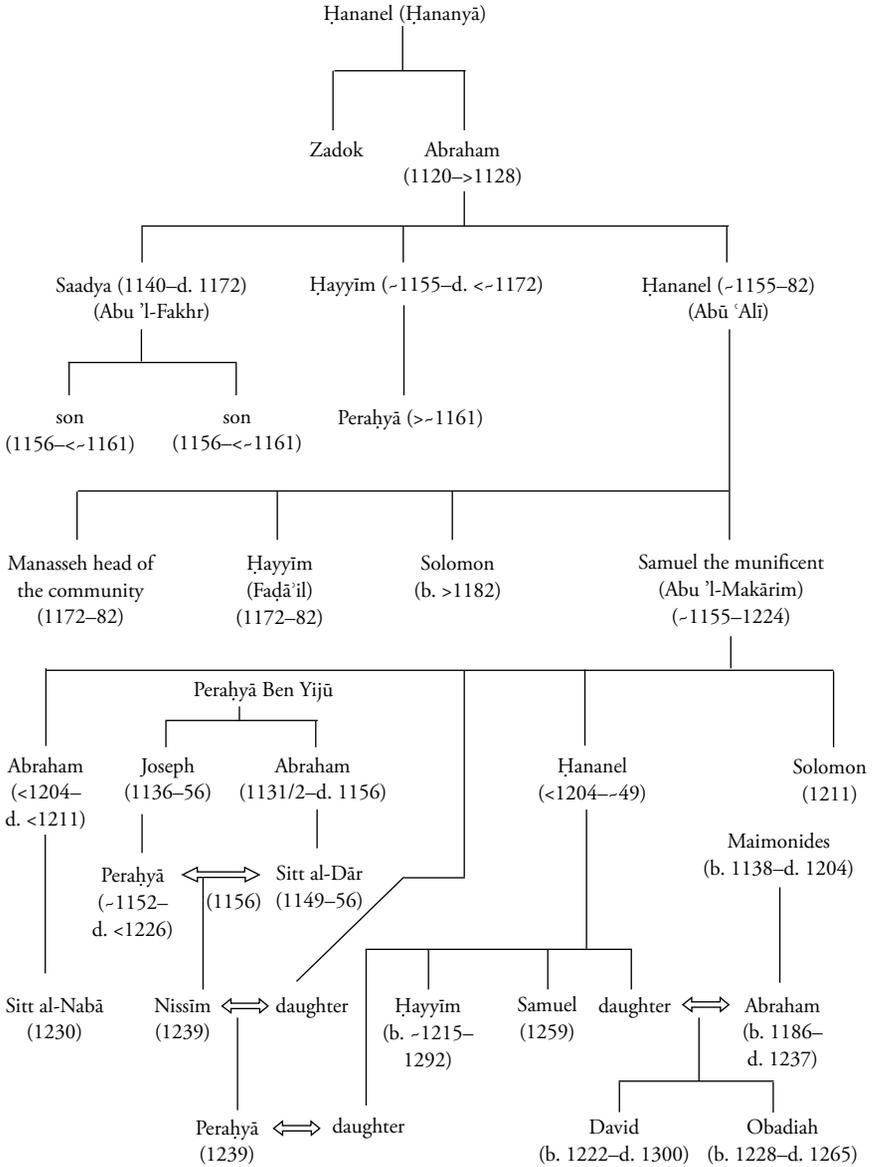
(so I assume) young scholars, who died after a short life: Eleazar b. Peraḥyā and Peraḥyā b. Eleazar!

In conclusion, I call attention to the decipherment of the text at the end of the ‘testament.’ In the published edition, the concluding word was transcribed: *wk*[...]. While the letters are torn, I read and restore: *wkt*[*b*...], viz., *we-khāta*[*v Moshe*...], ‘writte[n by Moses],’ the master’s regular signature formula, known especially from *responsa*, which he wrote.¹³⁵ If so, Maimonides not only wrote the ‘testament’; he also signed it.

The following genealogical diagram supplements the diagram presented in the beginning of the chapter and indicates the marital ties with the Maimonides and Ben Yijū families.}

¹³⁵ For Maimonides’ use of this signature formula, see, e.g., Lutski, “*We-khātav Moshe*,” 679, n. 1. Lutski correctly speculated that the formula indicates that the signatory also wrote the lines preceding his signature. (In my opinion his explanation remains valid, despite doubts raised by Spiegel, *Chapters*, 28.) It should be noted that other people signed this way (in Hebrew or Judeo-Arabic), also before Maimonides. Examples can be found in III, 22*v*, line 4; V, 36*b* (signature on a check); VI, 42*v*, line 10; VII, 22, line 24. It was not a uniquely Jewish formula, however, and is common in Arabic diplomatics (*wa-kataba*). Many examples appear in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, e.g., TS Ar. 51, f. 110 (p. 168), TS Ar. 42, f. 171 (p. 251), TS AS 181, f. 163 (p. 502). Amir Ashur reminds me of its appearance also in TS 13 J 8, f. 31*v*, line 4 (declaration before a qadi, 1042; cf. Friedman, “Marital Age,” 165). Compare the ancient Aramaic signature formula (*anā... katvēr*, “I, PN, wrote”) for a scribe discussed in Friedman, *JMP*, 1:489–91.}

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< = preceding, > = following; - = ca.; b. = born; ⇔ = married; d. = deceased; other dates are those found in or reconstructed for the documents, in which an individual is mentioned.

CHAPTER THREE

SELECT STUDIES ON SHIPPING AND TRAVEL

{A. Nākhudās—*Shipowners and Captains*

I. *Introductory Remarks*

The *nākhudā* was one of the central figures in the Indian Ocean trade during the Middle Ages. *Nākhudās* appear regularly in the Geniza documents in connection with shipping in the Indian Ocean, and they unquestionably played an important role in this commerce. Until the last few years, the *nākhudā* received minimal attention in the scholarly literature. Here we shall attempt to define the meaning or meanings associated with the term, the functions performed by the *nākhudā* in maritime commerce and his standing in society, especially as represented in the Geniza documents. Two recent studies, by Ranabir Chakravarti and Roxani Margariti, have made significant contributions to this research. We briefly review the research and survey the source material, adducing in the process yet unexamined documentation.

The word *nākhudā* is Persian and means ‘captain’ or ‘shipowner’ (from *nāw*, *nāwa*, ‘ship’; *khudā*, ‘master, owner’).¹ As in Persian and Arabic sources, *nākhudā* appears with slight variations of spelling in the Geniza texts. Each of the following is qualified by the number of occurrences in the documents of this collection: *n’kd’* (35), *n’kwdh* (23), *n’kdh* (13), *n’kd’h* (2), *n’kwd’* (1) and the dual form *n’kdtyn* (1). As in Arabic texts, the Geniza writers did not distinguish between the different spellings, and sometimes one appears together with another, even in the same line. In some texts, diacritic marks are written over the letter *k* (to indicate *kh*), but apparently none has diacritic marks over *d* (to indicate *dh*, as found in some texts in Persian and Arabic literature). Because of the vagaries in

¹ {I would like to thank Prof. Shaul Shaked for his communication, which confirms this etymology and the use of the word in Persian literature. Cf., e.g., Ferrand, “L’Élément Persan,” 238–39. (According to Nadvi, “Navigation,” 437, the two elements that comprise the word are Hindi *nāo* and Persian *khudā*. Both etymologies are cited in the same article in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, in sections written by different authors, in reverse order: Christides, “*Milāḥa*,” 42a; Soucek, “*Milāḥa*,” 50b.)

use of diacritic marks, this does not prove that the writers of these Geniza letters did not pronounce *nākhudhā*.

Arabic dictionaries define *nākhudā* as ‘capitaine de navire’ (captain) or ‘patron de la barque’ (shipowner) or ‘Reeder’ (pilot).² G. R. Tibbetts’ brief remarks in his 1971 study, *Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean before the coming of the Portuguese*, seem to have been the most extensive comment on the *nākhudā* at that time. He noted that the word is never defined in the Arab texts.³ Tibbetts’ observations on *nākhudā* and the short notes by previous scholars have dealt primarily with sources from the fifteenth or sixteenth century and later. The sixteenth century writer Abu ’l-Faḍl ‘Allāmī mentioned two *nākhudās* in his list of twelve kinds of crewmen on a ship, the first (also first in the list): The *nākhudā* “or owner of the ship. He fixes the course of the ship”; and the second (fourth in the list): *nākhudā-khashab* (*khashab* = ‘wood’): “He supplies the passengers with firewood and straw and assists in shipping and unloading the cargo.”⁴

II. Buzurg’s “The Wonders of India”

The tenth century Arabic book *Kitāb ‘Ajā’ib al-Hind* (“The Wonders of India”), written by Buzurg b. Shahriyār, a Persian,⁵ is a veritable treasure trove of material concerning Indian Ocean travel and contains much information on its trade. Relatively little attention seems to have been paid to this book in modern studies dealing with the medieval Indian Ocean trade in general and the *nākhudā* in particular. A detailed analysis of his text for socio-economic history remains a definite desideratum. Primary among the men of the sea mentioned in the book are the *nākhudās*, many of

² E.g., Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:648b, captain; Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire*, 1220, adds shipowner; Löfgren, “Glossary,” 58–59, adds pilot, and remarks that captain is a late usage, designated in earlier sources by *na’is* or *rubbān*. Cf. Margariti, “Aden,” 220, n. 11. According to Piamonta, *Dictionary*, 476, also: sailor. Note that in Greek classical sources the commanding officer of a ship in the navy was called *kybernetes*, literally ‘steerer.’ In emergencies, he might handle the tiller himself; otherwise he used quartermasters. In the Roman Imperial navy the *gubernator*, the Latin equivalent of *kybernetes*, was the executive officer and navigating officer. See Casson, *Ships*, 300, 302, 307, 310. Sperber, *Nautica*, 148, defines the Hebrew-Aramaic form (קִיבְרִיט) of Greek *kybernetes*: “(1) steersman, pilot, skipper (2) steering-oar.” Amir Ashur has called to my attention the ambiguity of some of the words with which *nākhudā* has been translated; some of these might not have always been used in their current technical sense.

³ Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 60.

⁴ Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 58. The first *nākhudā* appears to function as captain, and I do not know if the words “owner of the ship” are merely offered in the translation as a rendition of the term in question or are explicitly expressed in the original Persian.

⁵ See Fück, “Buzurg.”

whom tell the tales, which Buzurg reports. Buzurg himself is referred to on the title page as *al-nākhudā*, rendered in the English and French translations ‘captain.’ That translation is used regularly throughout the text in the French; the English prefers ‘shipowner’ but without consistency. As already noted, no definition of the term is to be found in the book, and Tibbetts, for one, remarked that Buzurg used *nākhudā* for ‘pilot.’⁶

It is clear that Buzurg’s *nākhudās* sailed the sea. Most if not all were in charge of the ships’ crewmen and instructed them what to do, e.g., a *nākhudā* ordered a diver to check why dropping the anchor did not stop the boat; another ordered his men to go ashore to examine a strange animal they saw there. The following passage, which describes the perils of the sea, implies that the *nākhudā* was not a shipowner:

One of the traders informed me: “I sailed on a ship from Sīrāf in 306 A.H. (= 918/9 C.E.), heading for Ṣaymūr. With us were the ship of ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Junayd and the ship of Saba’. These three ships were of the greatest size and the best-known ships in the sea. Their *nākhudās* were famous, with power and rank in the sea. In the ships were 1,200 men, including traders and *nākhudās* and Bānyāns and traders,” etc.

From a simple reading of this text, I conclude that the *nākhudās* were not the same individuals identified as shipowners, ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Junayd and Saba’, but rather anonymous experts in handling a ship at sea. Furthermore, the last sentence suggests that the 1,200 passengers may have included *nākhudās* other than those in charge of the navigation.⁷

Since Buzurg tells tales of the sea, he shows little interest in shipowners who may have been sedentary residents of the land. Sometimes he refers to the shipowner as *rabb al-markab* or *ṣāhib al-markab*, ‘lord’ or ‘master’ of the ship.⁸ But he might also use *nākhudā* with this meaning. This is indicated by the use of the particle *li-*, which designates possession, viz., *markab li-ba’d al-nawākhidha*, ‘a ship of one of the *nākhudās*,’ and in this

⁶ Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 60.

⁷ Buzurg, *‘Ajā’ib al-Hind*, 7, 48, 165; id., *Wonders*, 5, 29, 97. The last passage is given above in my own translation. At the time of this writing I do not have the French translation of J. Sauvaget at my disposal. Sīrāf was a major commercial port of the Persian Gulf. Ṣaymūr is the port Chaul, south of Bombay. For Bānyān, see 315, n. 20; in Buzurg, *‘Ajā’ib al-Hind*, 193, it is explained as ‘seaman.’ I do not know why تَجَّار *tujjār*, ‘traders,’ appears twice in the last sentence (in the French the second is not translated; in the English, the first is ‘merchants,’ the second ‘traders’). Perhaps for one of them, read بَحَّارَة *bahḥāra* (which except for the ending *-a*, looks the same without diacritic marks, or perhaps an apparently unattested form, بَحَّار *bahḥār*), ‘sailors.’

⁸ Buzurg, *‘Ajā’ib al-Hind*, 35 (plural *arbāb al-marākib*), 37, 141.

passage the word is translated ‘patron,’ ‘shipowner.’⁹ Some of the others *nākhudās* mentioned in the book may have been shipowners, who traveled on their vessels. Until proven otherwise, it seems logical to assume that Buzurg’s use of the term *nākhudā* was not categorically different from that which appears in the Geniza texts written some two hundred years later.¹⁰

Iṣḥāq the Jew. I briefly summarize one of the longest stories in the book, which is relevant to our study, even though it does not refer explicitly to the word *nākhudā*. Buzurg himself calls it “one of the most curious tales of the traders of the sea and those who have sailed the sea and become wealthy through it.” Iṣḥāq *Ibn al-yahūdī*, that is Isaac, son of the Jew (also referred to in the story as *al-yahūdī*, ‘the Jew,’ rather than son of the Jew) had engaged in business with trade commissioners (*dallālīn*) in ‘Umān. When another Jew sued him for payment of a debt, Iṣḥāq absconded and fled to the lands of India (*bilād al-hind*). He took with him all of his possessions, which then totaled some 200 dinars. Nothing was heard from him for thirty years. Then in 300 A.H. (= 912/3 C.E.), he returned to ‘Umān from China, sailing a ship that belonged to him, as did its entire cargo. The ship’s contents contained fabulous wealth, rumored to value more than a million dinars. Rather than have the governor take inventory of the ship’s cargo, Iṣḥāq agreed to pay some 1,000,000 dirhems in customs. The cargo included superb musk, silk clothing, Chinese porcelain, jewels and precious stones and countless Chinese rarities.

Buzurg’s informants, who included Jews, reported Iṣḥāq’s account of his encounter with the ruler of Lūbīn, a Chinese province. When the potentate asked his visitor if he had ever seen such wealth as that lavished in his court, he addressed the Jew *yā ‘arabī*, Arab!

Iṣḥāq, who had no children, stayed in ‘Umān three years. His merchandise flooded the market, and his wealth aroused jealousy and animosity. Word of his riches reached the caliph in Baghdad. The situation became unbearable for Iṣḥāq in ‘Umān. He built another ship, filled it with all of his possessions, and set out again for China. When he reached Sarīra/Serboza (?) [Sumatra], its ruler demanded a payment of 20,000 dinars to

⁹ Buzurg, *‘Ajā’ib al-Hind*, 67; id., *Wonders*, 40.

¹⁰ Chakravarti (“Nakhudas,” 39, n. 16) refers to Buzurg’s book as “a rare and early instance where the captain was given the epithet *nakhuda*.”

grant safe passage to China. Iṣḥāq refused to pay and was murdered that night. His ship with all its cargo was seized.¹¹

The story of this Jewish shipowner-merchant tycoon deserves a detailed analysis. Not only do the likes of his riches find no parallel in the Geniza letters, the Chinese setting is also unique. Suffice it to say that those documents do not attest the travel of Jewish traders to the Far East beyond Sumatra.¹² The conversation with the Chinese sovereign suggests that in the Far East, Arabic speaking Jews were identified as Arabs.

III. *The Nākhudā in the Geniza and Goitein's Research*

The Geniza material assembled and studied by Goitein has opened new vistas for this research. Unlike Buzurg's narratives, the Geniza letters preserve accounts written at the time of the events by men who engaged in Indian Ocean trade and sailed the seas. The writers were practical businessmen, and they are parsimonious in their descriptions of the sea. Nevertheless, their papers also contain singular information for study of the *nākhudā*. Goitein's major contribution to the research of this subject lies in the identification of the Geniza texts and their publication or, in various stages, their preparation for publication. Neither in his published studies nor in his unpublished papers did he examine in-depth how the *nākhudā* figures in these texts.

In this collection there are at least seventy-five instances of *nākhudā* in the Geniza documents. It is not used in texts relating to Mediterranean shipping, however.¹³ Goitein explained that the few cases where Egyptian Jews were called *nākhudās* were due to their presumed activity in the Indian Ocean; some may have been immigrants from Yemen.¹⁴

Goitein, in almost all of the texts he published or prepared for publication, translated *nākhudā* as 'shipowner' ("this was also a title of respect, because this occupation attested means and prestige and, needless to say, certain expertise"). When another scholar translated 'captain,' Goitein

¹¹ See Buzurg, *'Ajā'ib al-Hind*, 107–13; id., *Wonders*, 62–66. For the place names Lūbīn and Sarīra/Serboza (?), see Buzurg, *'Ajā'ib al-Hind*, 222–23, 247 ff.

¹² See Goitein, *Studies*, 332; above, 6–7. Arabic accounts report that the first Arabs and Jews who came to China came from 'Umān. See Wink, *Al-Hind*, 1:83.

¹³ See Goitein, *Letters*, 177.

¹⁴ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:479, n. 17; 4:296. For references to *nākhudā* (also spelled *nākhodā*) in Goitein's book, see Diem, *Dictionary*, 207.

noted the supposed error and corrected it.¹⁵ In the case of three letters, two of which Goitein published and one that he prepared for publication, different translations appear. In III, 10*v*, lines 1–2, the Adenese trader Khalaf b. Isaac wrote Abraham Ben Yijū, who resided on the Malabar Coast in India: “I also notify you, my master, that the basket with the glassware and the five bottles are with the *nākhudā* Muḥammad, the *nākhudā* of the ship of the Fdyʿr,” etc. Though *nākhudā* “usually designates [the ship’s] owner,” Goitein defined the term here: “the man in command of the finances and other matters related to the passengers, i.e., the purser.”¹⁶ Presumably this was because Muḥammad was *nākhudā* of the ship of someone else, the Fdyʿr.¹⁷ Elsewhere Goitein wrote concerning the same document:

The term used is *nā-khodā*, a Persian word meaning ‘lord of the ship’ (the same root as in English *navy*). It designated the shipowner or ‘manager’ in charge of the passengers and goods, not the captain, who is called in our papers *rayyis*, ‘head.’¹⁸

When Khalaf wrote to Ben Yijū in another letter that gifts were sent “in the ship of Sheikh Maḍmūn, which is going to Mangalore, through the agency of the *nākhudā*,” Goitein, in the translation which he prepared, rendered the last word: ‘purser’ and commented that had Maḍmūn traveled on the ship, Khalaf would have expressed himself differently.¹⁹ The comment concerning *rayyis* requires qualification. That word is used regularly for captain in the documents that deal with the Mediterranean but apparently only once in those that concern the trade with India.²⁰

ʿAllān b. Ḥassūn wrote the third letter (VII, 70) in Aden, after his return from a difficult voyage to the southern coast of India. Goitein learned of the letter late in his scholarly career, and it is numbered as the last item in

¹⁵ The quote in parenthesis is from Goitein, *Yemenites*, 100. For an example where the translation was corrected, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:489, previously translated by Ashtor (“Documents,” 144): ‘captain.’ In most of the translations and notes in this book, I have replaced Goitein’s ‘shipowner’ with *nākhudā*.

¹⁶ Goitein, *Letters*, 191, n. 20.

¹⁷ Attention should be called to the repetition of ‘the *nākhudā*’ in the text, both times in reference to the same person. In the first appearance ‘the *nākhudā*’ evidently functions as a type of title.

¹⁸ Goitein, *Studies*, 350, n. 1.

¹⁹ No. III, 16, lines 19–20; this text too had previously been published by Ashtor (“Documents,” 150), who had translated ‘captain.’ Also see the notes to II, 20, line 27; II, 21–24, line 43.

²⁰ No. II, 71*v*, line 2, where it appears in the plural; see Goitein’s note there (536, n. 32), where he commented that the captain is called *rubbān* in these papers. See below on the use of *raʿs* in VII, 70.

the India Book collection. He edited it in an article that he wrote shortly before his death, which was published posthumously. He described the letter as “pivotal” to the article, “because it deals mainly with happenings in or off the shores of India, and because such detailed reports are not common in the Geniza.”²¹ The letter also provides unique information concerning the *nākhudā*. The word appears three times in the singular and once in the dual form. Goitein’s translations of the relevant passages (including his explanations in parentheses) are given here, with the translation of *nākhudā* (or the dual *nākhudātayn*) printed in italics.

- (1) We intended, on our way home, to travel to Aden, but riots and bloodshed occurred, and [who]ever was in the town fled. The [*shipmas*]ter,²² namely, ‘Alī Nāwak, wan[ted] also to flee, but I discovered this... and I informed [X about it]²³... We loaded the textiles and the iron during the night, for he (Nāwak) had the power to keep us back (by refusing to sail).²⁴ Finally, we all fled to Fāknūr..., where ‘Alī Nāwak disembarked and remained, while we went on in the same ship to Kūlam and stayed there for some time.
- (2) The *captain* had been ill while still in town, but we sailed for ten days... God granted us safety, but the *captain* had a stroke and died. We threw his body overboard into the sea. So the boat remained without a commander²⁵ and a..., and we had no charts.
- (3) After twenty days we arrived in Kūlam... The... and the manager came on board and took the ship from us,²⁶ confirming its rights to its proprietor, being afraid of ‘Alī Nāwak... *Two captains* traveled with us, after they had signed documents (confirming their obligations), towards us, and we set sail.²⁷

Before its second arrival at Kūlam, the ship evidently had two *nākhudās* on board, ‘Alī Nāwak, who disembarked at Fāknūr, and a second *nākhudā*, who subsequently died at sea. The reader will have no difficulty understanding

²¹ Goitein, “Portrait,” 452.

²² In the original: [*n’k*]dh, but part of *k* may be visible.

²³ Goitein, “Portrait,” 459, prints “and informed” in brackets, as a reconstruction of the missing text, and comments (n. 50): “an educated guess.” I, however, read the word *fa-a’lamtu*, or rather the bottoms of its letters, in the photo. Goitein believed that “something, probably less than one line” is missing here between the two fragments comprising the letter, TS AS 156, f. 237 and TS AS 156, f. 238. There is actually a direct continuation between them. The first two words before *fa-a’lamtu* are, as Goitein noted, difficult to decipher; they resemble [...]*šb khabr*.

²⁴ On disputes between a shipowner and the passengers on continuing a voyage after an attack, according to Islamic law, see Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*, 70–71.

²⁵ Arabic *ra’s*, literally ‘head.’

²⁶ Arabic *minnā*. I prefer reading *lanā*, ‘for us.’

²⁷ Goitein, “Portrait,” 459–60.

what induced Goitein to translate *nākhudā*, in the second paragraph, and the dual *nākhudātayn*, in the third, as captains. The *nākhudā* in the second paragraph was evidently in charge of navigating the boat, and after his death, the ship remained without a ‘head’ and with no charts (something else that the ship lacked cannot be read because of a lacuna in the text). Similarly, in the third paragraph, the two *nākhudās* are clearly distinct from the proprietor (*ṣāhib*) of the ship. Also the fact that they signed a list of responsibilities to the passengers suggests that they served as captains or in a similar capacity.

The elusiveness of the first (fragmentary) *nākhudā*, which referred to ‘Alī Nāwak, is evident from Goitein’s article. While he translated ‘shipmaster’ in the text, in his explanatory comment before the paragraph, Goitein referred to ‘the captain.’ As to the confirmation of the ship’s “rights to its proprietor, being afraid of ‘Alī Nāwak,” Goitein remarked: “Nāwak [...] was perhaps not the proprietor of the boat, but his testimony concerning it was accepted, although the passengers might have had some doubts concerning its truth.”

In her dissertation on “maritime trade and urban organization in medieval Aden,” Margariti reexamined this letter as part of her review of the sources dealing with the term *nākhudā*.²⁸ In her opinion, ‘Alī Nāwak was the owner of the ship. While this may have been the case, his attempt to flee the ship, ‘Allān’s informing someone of this (the text is torn here) and his disembarking before it continued its journey appear to be incongruent with his ownership. ‘Alī Nāwak might have been one of two ‘captains’ with which the ship originally set sail, as it did later. Since the officials feared him, when they confirmed the ship’s ownership, he must have been a powerful man; and his status, as Goitein suggested, may have been uncertain to those concerned.

In our way of thinking, a ship cannot have two ‘captains.’ However, two documents in the present collection specifically speak of the Sultan’s ship, in the Mediterranean, in which two men served jointly as *rayyis*, captain. Goitein explains that this was done for large boats and compared the auxiliary captain with the vice-captain in the Rhodian sea law.²⁹

²⁸ Margariti, “Aden,” 225–26.

²⁹ Nos. IV, 19, lines 4–6; IV, 20, lines 3–4. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:313; id., “Portrait,” 461, n. 60. According to Margariti, “Aden,” 226, the two *nākhudās* could “not have been anything but skipper and first mate.”

IV. *Chakravarti's Nākhudās and Nauvittakas*

Ranabir Chakravarti has established the importance of the *nākhudā* for the socio-economic history of the Indian Ocean in his article on the 'Nakhudas and Nauvittakas' on the west coast of India ca. 1000–1500. Having researched disparate collections of sources and researches, he has made use of multifaceted materials, which, besides Geniza texts published by Goitein, include Arabic accounts and epitaphs, copper plates, a bilingual inscription and Jaina biographical texts.³⁰ Chakravarti has convincingly argued for the equivalence of the two terms, *nākhudā* and, in Indian texts, *nauvittaka*. He highlights the figures designated by these terms in establishing the role and position of India and, in particular, the coastal society in its western seaboard in the maritime commerce of the Indian Ocean prior to the arrival of the Portuguese. The paucity of source material for this period is well known, and for this reason the Geniza documents are of such momentous value.

The word *nauvittaka* "can be explained as one whose wealth (*vitta*) lies in his (possessing) ships or *nau*." And the two terms, *nākhudā* and *nauvittaka*, are both taken to mean 'ship-owning merchants.'³¹ The usage of *nākhudā* "in recent times" notwithstanding, in Chakravarti's opinion, "the term was undoubtedly used during the period of our study in the sense of a ship-owning merchant, and almost never in the sense of a captain or navigator of the vessel."³² The *nākhudā* and *nauvittaka* were prominent and influential individuals in society. In India they often combined commercial and administrative roles.³³ Such a combination of roles characterizes Maḍmūn b. Japheth, the main protagonist of chap. 2, who was the representative of the merchants in Aden, a *nākhudā* (shipowner), supervisor of the port and Nagid of Yemenite Jewry.

The spirit of amiable cooperation between a Muslim *nākhudā*—designated *sulṭān al-nawākhidh*, 'Ruler of the *nākhudās*,' and *malik al-tujjār*,

³⁰ Jainism is a dualistic Indian religion.

³¹ Chakravarti, "Nakhudas," 37. Because of his unfamiliarity with Arabic, certain typographical errors and minor mishaps appear in connection with the terms used in these texts. On page 37 he states that *nākhud(h)ā* "also appears as" *nawākhid(h)*, but the latter is merely the plural form of the former.

³² This is based on Goitein's published studies. Though aware of the publication of Goitein, "Portrait," Chakravarti did not deal with that article in context of his study on the *nākhudā*, since the word appears there only in the Arabic text.

³³ Chakravarti, "Nakhudas," 41, 42. Also see his remarks cited below, page 146, concerning the Indian shipowner referred to in III, 10, line 24, as Fatan Swamī.

‘King of the merchants’³⁴—and the local Indian merchants is well exemplified by a bilingual Sanskrit-Arabic inscription from Somnath, dated 1264. The *nākhudā* Nūr al-Dīn, who funded the construction of a mosque in Somnath, and the Indian Chada, who assisted him in acquiring land, are described as “righteous friends.” Chakravarti noted the remarkable parallel with the Geniza letter (II, 55, lines 39–40), which describes the “bonds of inseparable friendship and brotherhood” between the Adenese Jewish *nākhudā* Maḥrūz and the Indian *nākhudā* Tinbū.³⁵

V. Margariti’s Study on the Nākhudā

We have already had occasion to mention Margariti’s study on the *nākhudā*.³⁶ She cites numerous researches and different types of source material but essentially bases her study on an abundance of edited and unedited Geniza documents.³⁷ In this and, of course, in her analysis of these fragments lies the major contribution of her work. She had access not only to Goitein’s published studies but also to the papers and text editions, which he had prepared for the present book. Much of the relevant material, though perhaps not all, was examined by her and used in her analysis.

Margariti observes that the general ambiguity of maritime terminology in the Geniza and in literary sources complicates the effort to identify the shipowners and distinguish them from captains and other officers or crewmen.³⁸ In light of ‘Allān b. Ḥassūn’s letter (VII, 70) and other sources, she draws the logical conclusion that the term *nākhudā* denotes in the Geniza texts either the owner of the ship or its captain. It is clear that many shipowners and certainly the more wealthy ones did not always sail their boats and employed professional captains. As Margariti suggests, however, one can assume that an owner of a single, probably smaller ship might have captained his own vessel.³⁹ But she rejects Goitein’s suggestion that

³⁴ Concerning another *malik al-tujjār*, in fourteenth century Cambay, Digby, “Maritime Trade,” suggests that this was probably an honorific title bestowed by the Delhi sultan, implying preeminence throughout his domains. Abulafia, “Asia,” 443, defines the title in reference to the fifteenth century: “a government official who looked after the Red Sea and Indian Ocean traffic.”

³⁵ Chakravarti, “Nakhudas,” 51–54, 60. Somnath is a city in India’s Gujarat region.

³⁶ Margariti, “Aden,” esp. 219–34.

³⁷ Chakravarti’s article appeared in print when Margariti’s dissertation was obviously near completion, and it is not mentioned there.

³⁸ Margariti, “Aden,” 223–24.

³⁹ Margariti, “Aden,” 223.

nākhudā sometimes designates ‘purser.’ She finds evidence for her conclusion, in the Geniza texts in which the *satmī*, ‘manifest’ or ‘registration fee,’ is specifically identified as *satmī al-rubbān*, ‘the captain’s *satmī*,’⁴⁰ from which it follows that he was in charge of all shipboard finances.⁴¹

In connection with the *satmī*, attention is called to two passages from literary sources. The fifteenth century *Mulakkhkaṣ* describes the arrival of ships at the port of Aden. *Nākhudās*, which would seem to be here ‘captains,’ were first taken to the governor, then to the inspector. “There they would write out their manifests” (*satāmī*, pl. of *satmī*).⁴² A somewhat different account, roughly contemporaneous with the Geniza material, was provided by Ibn al-Mujāwir. Upon arrival, the ship was boarded by a party of Aden port-officials, to whom the ship’s *karrānī* (scribe) delivered a list (*ruq‘a*) of all the goods transported in the ship.⁴³ Margariti calls attention to the similarity of this list to the *satmī* known from the Geniza documents.⁴⁴ Again the vagueness of terminology and the fragmentary nature of our sources complicate matters, however. Some distinction between the terms *ruq‘a* and *satmī* is suggested by a Geniza letter from ca. 1145, in which testimony is given concerning merchandise lost when a ship sank off the coast of western India: “I verified this from the *shatmī* (= *satmī*) of the ship [...], as the *ruq‘as* in the ship had been lost.”⁴⁵

Incidentally, in the same passage Ibn al-Mujāwir described the meeting between the *nākhudā* of a ship that had arrived at its destination and the port officials. A company of officials called *mubashshirūn* (announcers) boarded the ship and greeted the *nākhudā*. They asked him from where *he had set sail, and he enquired about the city of arrival, its governor and the prices of commodities there.*⁴⁶

Margariti calls attention to aspects of ship owning and mercantile shipping in the Indian Ocean, which differ from these activities in the Mediterranean. Goitein had remarked that the largest category of shipowners in the Mediterranean were people connected with the government, while

⁴⁰ Nos. II, 16, lines 50–51; II, 23, line 43. See below on the term *rubbān*.

⁴¹ Margariti, “Aden,” 220 (n. 11), 227, 239–40. She also notes that there is no evidence for a separate officer who served in the capacity of a purser.

⁴² See Smith, *Studies*, chap. 11, 211.

⁴³ Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣir*, 139. See on this passage Smith, *Studies*, chap. 10, 129.

⁴⁴ Margariti, “Aden,” 239.

⁴⁵ No. III, 22, lines 18–20. Prof. Joel Kraemer suggests that the *ruq‘a*, which can mean ‘note,’ registered specific shipments (which explains the plural *ruq‘as*), in contrast to the *satmī*, which was the manifest for the entire cargo.

⁴⁶ Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣir*, 138–39. In connection with this passage Smith, *Studies*, chap. 10, 129, comments that the *nākhudā* was not necessarily a merchant.

merchants were the next largest group.⁴⁷ In the Indian Ocean, in contrast, while government officials did own ships, the Geniza papers suggest that merchants dominated this business.⁴⁸ Moreover, a comparison of collaboration between prominent Jewish businessmen and Muslim government officials in shipping ventures in the two seas indicates that in the Mediterranean, the participation of the Jewish partner, Nahray b. Nissīm, was restricted to exchange of money and merchandise, while in the Indian Ocean, Maḍmūn b. Japheth was also active in purchasing and outfitting the vessels.⁴⁹

VI. *Jewish Shipowners in the Indian Ocean vs. the Mediterranean: Variables in Religious Scruples or Socio-Economic and Geo-Political Factors*

Interfaith cooperation in maritime ventures cannot be separated from the question of the role played by Jews in the ship-owning industry in general. Goitein found that Jewish proprietorship of boats from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries are attested by only sporadic references in the Mediterranean and that Jewish shipowners in the Indian Ocean are better documented in the Geniza.⁵⁰ He noted that many of the Arabic names of shipowners in the Mediterranean were common among Jews, and there is no way of knowing the religious affiliation of these people. Even so, Jews seemed to have had a smaller share in Mediterranean ship owning from the eleventh century onward than they had had in early Islamic times. Goitein opined that this change may have been caused by “ever-stricter interpretation and observation [sic] of Jewish religion” rather than the result of Muslim competition and Italian ascendancy in the industry. Since Sabbath desecration could not be avoided by sailors and “their employers were

⁴⁷ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:310–11. Cf. ‘Aodeh, “Vessels,” 286–96.

⁴⁸ Margariti, “Aden,” 221–22. Chakravarti also identifies the *nākhūdās* in the Indian Ocean as businessmen.

⁴⁹ Margariti, “Aden,” 222–23, 257; see below on Maḍmūn.

⁵⁰ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:311, 479, n. 17 (on TS 18 J 1, f. 10, line 7, . . . *fi ’l-markab alladhī yata’allaq bil-shaykh* . . ., discussed in part there, see also Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:871, where he connects the last two words with an earlier antecedent). The statement on page 311, suggests that the sporadic nature of references to Jewish shipowners applies to the Indian Ocean as well, even if more common there. Whether or not this was intended, the documents in the present collection indicate that Jewish ownership of vessels in the Indian Ocean was not an unusual phenomenon. Some writers have drawn the wrong conclusions from Goitein here, e.g., Arenson, “Seafaring,” 39: “Only one Jew is described as a *nachoda*”; but cf. *ib.*, 41. On the lack of Jews among shipowners in the Mediterranean, cf. ‘Aodeh, “Vessels,” 286.

responsible for all transgressions perpetrated in their service,” shipping became “less attractive for the ‘scrupulous.’”⁵¹

This explanation has found acceptance in some of the modern scholarly literature on Jewish ship owning. Benjamin Arbel accordingly considers the emergence of Jewish shipowners in the early modern period in the Mediterranean as largely the result of a new willingness to overlook religious prohibitions, a certain detachment from rabbinic control and from the application of halakhah to economic activities, in other words, an expression of secularization.⁵²

Margariti emphasizes the Jewish share in ship owning in the Indian Ocean (on which see further below) and questions Goitein’s explanation for the limitations of this phenomenon in the Mediterranean. She notes the difficulty in assuming that the Jewish participants in this industry in the Indian Ocean were less pious than their Mediterranean coreligionists, who were often their relatives. While not discounting other possible factors, Margariti suggests that the small number of Jewish shipowners in the Mediterranean might be only an illusion, because of the difficulty in identifying them because of their use of Arabic names.⁵³

The most outstanding characteristic of ship owning in medieval Jewish legal literature is its almost total absence there. A one-line ruling appears in the *Ma’ase ha-Geonim* compendium, compiled in early medieval Ashkenaz: “If a Jew owns a ship, he may not rent it to Gentiles for sailing it on the Sabbath or Festivals.”⁵⁴

A simple solution, mentioned in Jewish legal literature from medieval Islamic countries, in the context of other business ventures, would seem to present itself: a partnership between a Jew and non-Jew, where it was stipulated in the contract that the Gentile receive all profits earned on the Sabbath.⁵⁵ Partnerships in ship owning were well known in

⁵¹ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:311–12. (Jacoby, “Byzantine Trade,” 70, challenges notions of an Italian monopoly in Mediterranean shipping in the twelfth century.)

⁵² Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 176; id., “Shipping and Toleration,” 56–60.

⁵³ Margariti, “Aden,” 230–31. Also see Ashtor, “Journey to India,” 228.

⁵⁴ *Ma’ase ha-Geonim*, 31, no. 47; see reference there to citation of the same rule by Eleazar of Worms. As noted by Baron, *SRHJ*, IV, 183, this passage is prima facie evidence that there were Jewish shipowners.

⁵⁵ See, e.g., *Otzar ha-Geonim*, 2:11–12, nos. 27–31; Maimonides, *Mishne Torah*, “Shabbat” 6:17; id., *Responsa*, 2:360, no. 204. Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:296–97. Baron, *SRHJ*, 4:331, n. 46, cites Maimonides, *Mishne Torah*, “Sheluhin we-Shutafin” 5:10, as prohibiting any partnership with a Gentile. But Maimonides speaks there not of a Gentile, *goy*, but of an idolater, *’ovēd ’avōdā zārā*, and as noted by R. David b. Zimra in his comment on this passage, Maimonides ruled elsewhere that Muslims were not considered idolaters. In fact,

Islam.⁵⁶ Besides the obvious benefits of enabling one with limited resources to invest in a costly venture and of risk-sharing even for one who had the requisite wealth, for Jews such joint ventures with non-Jews could have also prevented contravention of Sabbath prohibitions. We know that at least some of Maḍmūn's ventures as a shipowner involved partnerships with non-Jews.⁵⁷ Whether this was the case in all his ship-owning ventures and whether other Jews known to have engaged in this industry in the Indian Ocean also entered similar partnerships or found alternate solutions for the problem of Sabbath observance, must remain, for the time being, a matter of speculation. It is evident, however, that in his joint ventures, Maḍmūn was not a junior partner. Ships in which he had ownership were identified as his ships, as are the vessels of other Jewish shipowners.⁵⁸ Geniza documents point to the rarity of ship-owning partnerships in the Mediterranean.⁵⁹

Theoretically, Mediterranean Jews could have followed a stricter ruling on Jewish ship owning because of Sabbath observance than their coreligionists in the Indian Ocean. But a number of factors militate against the possibility that the participants in the Indian Ocean industry acted in contravention of accepted legal opinion. There was the close connection between the Adenese Jews, who were shipowners, and Egyptian Jewry that was expressed not only in familial ties but also in the Adenese Jewish support of the Jewish religious institutions in Egypt (and Iraq, for that matter). The scholars associated with those institutions extended official recognition to these philanthropists, who also engaged in joint business ventures with leading figures in Egyptian Jewry. When Maḍmūn had a question concerning the ritual purity of Chinese porcelain, for example, he

Maimonides changed the language of the ruling prohibiting partnerships found in the Talmudic text (Sanhedrin 63b and Bekhorot 2b) from 'Gentile' to 'idolater.' On partnerships between Jews and non-Jews, see also Gil, "Merchants," 280–81.

⁵⁶ See Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*, 39–42. Joint ownership of vessels appears in the Mediterranean in classical sources and was the rule in the Middle Ages; see Casson, *Ships*, 315, n. 68.

⁵⁷ See II, 14*v*, lines 13–14; II, 32, lines 23–24; III, 11, lines 27–29. Chakravarti, "Nakhodas," 45, assumes that such partnerships were entered by Maḍmūn because the financial investment for building or purchasing a ship on his own was beyond his means. In general with large commercial ventures, partnerships were entered because of risk sharing, and Goitein, *Yemenites*, 100, mentions this purpose in connection with partnerships for outfitting ships.

⁵⁸ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 173, speaks of Jews who served as junior partners in owning ships in the Mediterranean; they were not identified as shipowners. On 174, Arbel notes that partial ownership by Jews could be a solution to Sabbath restrictions.

⁵⁹ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:309.

brought it before Maṣliḥ, the head of the Palestinian Yeshiva in Cairo.⁶⁰ Had the latter ruled that ship owning entailed the much more serious issue of violating Sabbath and festivals, such a ruling would certainly not have been ignored.

I do not believe that the Arabic names of shipowners in the Mediterranean can be expected to have hidden the identity of many Jews for that matter.⁶¹ Since much information has reached us concerning the business activities of numerous wealthy Jewish businessmen in the Mediterranean countries, one would have expected some data concerning their ownership of ships, whether as sole proprietors or partners, had they engaged in this industry.⁶² As we have already seen, the great merchant Nahray b. Nissīm did not participate in this aspect of shipping. Furthermore, had there been strong economic forces, which induced Jews to invest in this industry, this would certainly have found some expression in the responsa literature. This would especially be true, were the situation among Mediterranean Jews both a departure from practice during the earlier Islamic period⁶³ and a result of stricter halakhic rulings. Other questionable business practices found ample expression in the legal literature. Admittedly, this is an argument from silence but I believe, a cogent one.

The high costs incurred in the shipping business tended to limit investments in ship owning to a small group of government officials and wealthy businessmen, according to Hassan Khalilieh. Besides the expense of raw materials, especially wood, ship maintenance and salaries of crewmen, the proprietor of a commercial vessel had to provide combatants to protect it against enemies and pirates.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ See II, 33, side g, lines 5–12 (page 387).

⁶¹ A comprehensive list of shipowners in the Mediterranean appears in Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:924–28. One ship was designated *markab al-yahūdī*, ‘ship of the Jew,’ itself an indication of the rarity of the phenomenon. In only a few cases of private ownership were the names shared by Jews and Arabs. A noteworthy example is *markab* Ibn al-Labdi in TS AS 152, f. 7 (Gil, ib., 3:544, no. 463), line 3 (in the same line the ship of Ibn al-Iskandar is mentioned; see below), the family name of Joseph Lebdi, on whom see Introduction IIA in the present book and the documents in chap. 1.

⁶² This observation was made by Udovitch, “Time,” 519–20.

⁶³ On the question of how prevalent Jewish ship owning in the Mediterranean was in the earlier Islamic period, see Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 170–75; id., “Shipping and Toleration,” 58; Arenson, “Seafaring,” 45, n. 52.

⁶⁴ Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*, 37. Cf. Arbel, “Shipping and Toleration,” 59. On soldiers, who accompanied ships in the Indian Ocean, see II, 55, lines 11–12 (475, n. 6). On the heavily armed character of maritime trade on the western Indian coast in the fourteenth century, see Digby, “Maritime Trade,” 152.

In her recent study of medieval Jewish seafaring, Sarah Arenson, also takes exception to Goitein's suggestion that the small role played by Jews as shipowners in the Mediterranean in the eleventh century was the result of stricter Sabbath observation there during this period. She summarizes the researches that point to socio-economic and military-political factors (already mentioned by Goitein but mainly disregarded by him), which were likely to have been the underlying causes of this decline.⁶⁵ From his studies of Islamic sources, E. Ashtor had concluded that in Muslim society the owning of ships had largely become the prerogative of the ruling classes in the Mediterranean, a finding which complements Goitein's research based on the Geniza documents. The predominance of government officials and their associates by and large excluded the competition of the middle class, especially Jews.⁶⁶ The renewed onslaught of Muslims on the northern shores of the Mediterranean climaxed in the first half of the tenth century. By the second half of that century, northern Italy began to flourish as a maritime power. Mediterranean maritime commerce became a trade in which Jews could not compete successfully.⁶⁷ Moreover, Abraham Udovitch has observed that during the high Middle Ages in the Mediterranean, there was little overlapping between traders and shipowners, and the integration of ship ownership and trade does not characterize Islamic commercial shipping at that time.⁶⁸

Some of the factors mentioned in the last paragraph tally with a comment by Goitein in one of his studies that apparently escaped the notice of scholars, who researched this question. In this remark, which postdates his other writings on the topic, he evidently reconsidered why ship-owning Jews played a larger role in the Indian Ocean than in the Mediterranean.

It seems that in the multinational countries bordering on the Indian Ocean it was easier for a minority group to gain prominence in maritime undertakings than in the Mediterranean area, where Muslims and Christians were poised one against another as powerful hostile camps.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Note the criticism by Abulafia, "Asia," 415, of Ashtor's observation that unremitting warfare between Muslim and Byzantine fleets made the free movement of merchant shipping all but impossible.

⁶⁶ Cf. Arbel, "Shipping and Toleration," 59.

⁶⁷ See Arenson, "Seafaring," 39–40.

⁶⁸ Udovitch, "Time," 519–20. In the discussion of participants to the conference in which Udovitch's paper was presented, and appended to his article, E. Ashtor challenged the conclusion that trading and shipping did not overlap. He argued that the Muslim rulers, who were active as shipowners, were great merchants as well (549). In his response (552), Udovitch commented that Muslim rulers and members of their families involved in commercial shipping did not act in an official capacity.

⁶⁹ Goitein, *Letters*, 177.

Presumably, not only the absence of two great opposing forces but also the multinational ambience by definition fostered greater tolerance.

We have already called attention to the story of the Persian Jew Iṣḥāq, who accumulated fabulous wealth in the Far East as a shipowner-merchant in the late tenth century. According to Margariti, the Geniza shows that most of the prominent Jewish merchants, who were active in trade with India and resided in the western Indian Ocean region, owned ships.⁷⁰ In contrast to the Mediterranean, most of the shipowners in the Indian Ocean were in fact merchants, but I believe that Margariti somewhat overstates the case concerning the relative number of shipowners among the prominent Jewish traders. The two outstanding figures in this category were Maḍmūn and Maḥrūz b. Jacob, who was apparently his cousin. Maḍmūn's son and successor as Nagid of Yemenite Jewry, Ḥalfon, also was a shipowner. To the huge expenses involved in ship owning already mentioned, we should add the ability to absorb immense losses, if a ship sank, a tragedy frequently documented in our papers. Maḍmūn was unquestionably an extremely wealthy trader, perhaps in a category separate from that to which most of the rich Jewish traders of the Mediterranean belonged. In one letter he mentions the loss of 4,000 (Maliki) dinars in a shipping venture. "No one ever suffered such a calamity."⁷¹ Again, many Indian Ocean shipowners have Arabic names, which were common among Jews, but it is only a matter of speculation whether they were Jewish.⁷²

VII. *On the Ambiguity of Nākhudā and Other Terms and on Entrusting Merchandise Shipped Abroad*

Let us return to the two cases in which Goitein identified a *nākhudā* as "the man in command of the finances and other matters related to the passengers, i.e., the purser." Both this definition and Margariti's objection, viz., that this role was filled by the captain, somewhat miss the point concerning the two passages concerned.⁷³ Neither of them speaks of passengers or finances, but rather of *nākhudās* who carried packages for merchants, who were not passengers, to be delivered to merchants at the port of destination.

⁷⁰ Margariti, "Aden," 220–21, 230. Among her examples, Margariti cites the case of the *nākhudā* Joseph, whom Goitein had identified as the well-known Jewish trader of Aden, Joseph b. Abraham. See below on the *nākhudā* Joseph/Yūsuf.

⁷¹ No. II, 20, margin (page 335).

⁷² See Margariti, "Aden," 229.

⁷³ Nos. III, 10v, lines 1–2 and III, 16, lines 19–20 (pages 604–5, 629).

These *nākhudās* could in theory have been captains (or other officers) or shipowners.

The ambiguity in terminology in our sources, especially in connection with the *nākhudā*, which certainly was used in more than one sense, and the difficulty in equating medieval terms with modern concepts present a major obstacle in any attempt to define the word with precision. Some *nākhudās* were clearly shipowners; others evidently served as captains or may have filled other functions on the ship.

As an example of the ambiguity in the use of terms and the complexity of contacts in the shipping business, we refer to a letter (III, 10) written by Khalaf b. Isaac, Aden, to Ben Yijū, Dahbattan, Malabar Coast, India, after 1138. Several passages in the letter can be summarized as follows:

Khalaf took delivery of iron sent by Ben Yijū from the *nākhudā* Ibn Abu 'l-Katā'ib, who traveled in his own ship (lines 14–16).

Khalaf collected some small items from the *nākhudā* Joseph/Yūsuf, who traveled from Dahbattan in the ship of Ibn al-Muqaddam (lines 16–18).

Jawhar, the slave-agent (*ghulam*) of Ḍāfir, who had been entrusted with the delivery of betel nuts, did not arrive that year (lines 21–23).

Ben Yijū had shipped pepper and iron from Fandarayna, India, in the ship of Fatan Swamī, in the care of (*'alā yaday*) Sheikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan b. Ja'far, a Muslim merchant, who did not travel in person but entrusted the commodities to his slave-agent (*ghulam*) Bakhtiyār. Fatan Swamī evidently sent two boats. The smaller arrived safely. With the larger, the *rubbān* ran into trouble, and it crashed against Bāb al-Mandab and sank (lines 23–29, 65).

Khalaf sent some merchandise to Ben Yijū and requested that he sell it and purchase with the proceeds “whatever God, the exalted, apportions” and “send it to me in any ship” (lines 50–53).

The preceding year Khalaf had sent 30 Egyptian *mithqāls* (dinars) to the *rubbān* Ma'sūd, the Abyssinian, to buy “whatever God, the exalted, apportions.” He purchased pepper but suffered some misfortune. He had two *bahars* of pepper with him, but $17\frac{1}{4}$ *mithqāls* were being held by Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ja'far. Ben Yijū was requested to urge Abu 'l-Ḥasan to purchase “whatever God, the exalted, apportions and to send it in any ship” (lines 59–71).

Khalaf sent various gifts and purchases to Ben Yijū in the Fdy'r's ship. The items were divided among three people, who traveled on the ship: “the *nākhudā* Muḥammad, the *nākhudā* of the ship of the Fdy'r;” Sheikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Maḥallī and Sheikh Abū 'Alī b. Ṭayyib. Abū 'Alī was a Jewish

trader, known from other sources; Abu 'l-Ḥasan was probably a Jewish trader as well.

The letter mentions six ships: Ibn Abu 'l-Katā'ib's, Ibn al-Muqaddam's and Fatan Swamī's, which arrived in Aden from India; Fdy'r's ship, which sailed from Aden to India; and twice 'any ship' for sending commodities from India to Aden, from which it is clear that the merchant sometimes gave exact instructions in which ship he wanted his merchandise sent. Three *nākhudās* are spoken of. One, Ibn Abu 'l-Katā'ib, was a shipowner, who traveled in his own ship. "The *nākhudā* Muḥammad, the *nākhudā* of the ship of the Fdy'r" obviously was not a shipowner but the salaried *nākhudā* of the Fdy'r's ship. In all likelihood, the *nākhudā* Joseph/Yūsuf, who traveled in Ibn al-Muqaddam's ship, was not a shipowner either. But theoretically he could have been a shipowner, who for some reason was traveling in someone else's vessel. Two *rubbāns* are mentioned. While it is clear that at least one of them was in charge of navigating the boat in which he traveled, there is no way of knowing from the letter the exact definition of *rubbān* and *nākhudā* (when he was not a shipowner) and the distinction between the two. Both *rubbāns* and *nākhudās* (as frequently mentioned in many letters) were requested to buy and sell merchandise. Sometimes a sedentary merchant entrusted the *nākhudā* with packages for delivery to merchants at the port of destination; sometimes he deposited them with both the *nākhudā* and merchants who were traveling on the same ship. A merchant to whom goods were entrusted for delivery did not necessarily travel on the ship but might have sent his slave-agent, for example. Obviously, the meaning of the term used to describe a man on board a ship can hardly be deduced from the fact that he was entrusted with packages for delivery.

Another letter, which Khalaf b. Isaac wrote to Ben Yijū, apparently from 1139, provides an additional example of the two terms *nākhudā* and *rubbān* used together. For shipping some goods to him, Khalaf requested of Ben Yijū to hire some space in a ship, "either from a *nākhudā* or a *rubbān*" or, should he find a trustworthy merchant (entrust it to him).⁷⁴

Descriptions of the role of the *nākhudā* on board a ship or on shore for that matter are quite rare in the Geniza papers, and we have already discussed the exceptional testimony in VII, 70. *Nākhudās* were entrusted with the sale and purchase of commodities and their delivery. A merchant was assured by "the most illustrious *nākhudā*" that he would assist him in

⁷⁴ No. III, 11, lines 41–42.

collecting a debt from Ben Yijū (“I shall look after you...”); the writer further requested assistance from the letter’s addressee, probably Maḍmūn b. Japheth (himself a *nākhudā*).⁷⁵ The writer of a letter comments that a Muslim *nākhudā* showed more concern than did the Jews about the welfare of a Jewish merchant, from whom he had not heard.⁷⁶ The role of the non-shipowner *nākhudā* calls to mind the description from a somewhat later period in the Indian Ocean trade:

The *nākhudā* on board an Indian vessel... was almost always an eminent merchant in his own right, while it was one of his duties to act as the agent of the shipowner; he would act as commission-agent for other merchants as well.⁷⁷

Nākhudās also collected freight charges. These were usually collected on delivery, but sometimes were prepaid.⁷⁸ In some cases, the merchant who shipped goods would write the recipient and inform him that the freight had not been paid yet. Other times, he wrote that he had paid it in full and warned not to pay the *nākhudā* a second time.⁷⁹ Sometimes merchants mention complaints concerning a *nākhudā*, who demanded unwarranted fees or failed to deliver all of the goods that were supposed to be sent.⁸⁰

VIII. *Identifying the Shipowner*

Nākhudās could be either shipowners or captains or serve in a similar capacity. As we shall see, not all shipowners were called *nākhudā* in our documents, while others known as shipowners from many documents happened to be called *nākhudā* only once. How then, can we identify for certain who was the owner of a ship? The writers of the Geniza letters rarely wrote an independent or dependent clause to indicate ownership, such as that concerning a ship that sank: “[...] the anguish over the ship and its contents, since it and most of its cargo belonged to our Nagid Ḥalfon” or “a ship that belonged to (*markab li-*) my lord Sheikh Maḍmūn

⁷⁵ See III, 37, lines 2–3, 20–24.

⁷⁶ No. VI, 41*v*, lines 34–36.

⁷⁷ Dasgupta, “Indian Merchants,” 418–19.

⁷⁸ On the different positions in Islamic law on the right to stipulate when the freight would be paid, see Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*, 64.

⁷⁹ See II, 29*v*, lines 9–10; III, 8, lines 16–18.

⁸⁰ See below in reference to Abu ’l-Ḥasan b. Abu ’l-Katā’ib (III, 4, lines 19–22) and his son Abū ‘Abd Allah (II, 16, lines 18–25, pages 142, 149).

and Sheikh Bilāl his partner.”⁸¹ A few ships in the Geniza papers that deal with the Indian Ocean are called by names. Maḍmūn, for example, owned a boat named *al-Markab al-Mubārak*, ‘the Blessed Ship.’⁸² Other ships were named for their ports of destination; the ship of Ḥalfon that sank, which we just mentioned, was called ‘the Kūlamī,’ a ship sailing from Aden to Kūlam, that is Quilon, the famous port-city on the Malabar Coast of India.⁸³ But most often, ships were designated by a set formula that uses the construct: *markab* PN, ‘the ship of PN.’ In my opinion, this formula explicitly identifies the individual named in it (PN) as the proprietor of the ship.

This understanding of the formula might appear obvious to the reader, but according to Geniza research, the name of a ship’s captain could be identified thereby, rather than its owner.⁸⁴ This is supposedly the case not only concerning documents in which a ship’s captain was named together with its owner, e.g., *fi markab al-amīr Nāṣir al-Dawla wa-rayyisuhu Ibn al-Q.*, “in the ship of the commander N. al-D., whose captain is Ibn al-Q,”⁸⁵ but also when the *markab* PN formula alone was employed. Furthermore, it has been suggested that this purported rule applies to the Geniza texts that deal with the Indian Ocean shipping.⁸⁶ No documents that might substantiate that contention have been cited, nor am I familiar with any. Moreover, it is not clear that in any documents concerning Mediterranean shipping the captain was ever intended by the *markab* PN formula. Goitein mentions a Nile boat the, “Ibn al-Iskandar (-Alexander) boat, called so after its captain, ‘Alī, son of Alexander,” which was owned by “Ṭāhir and his partner.” The letter in question speaks of a dispute concerning “*markab* Ibn al-Iskandar,” and in the continuation, the writer mentions *aṣḥābuhu Ṭāhir wa-sharikuhu*, ‘his (or: its) *aṣḥāb*, Ṭāhir and his partner.’ In context,

⁸¹ No. II, 71, lines 29–30; III, 11, line 27. Cf. III, 12, line 37: *markab li-Fidyār*.

⁸² No. II, 20, lines 30–31, II, 20*v*, lines 4–5; II, 55, line 45. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:312, writes that ships named ‘the blessed’ (*al-Mubārak*), ‘the auspicious’ (*al-Sā’id*), or ‘favored (by God)’ (*al-Muwaffāq*, lit., ‘given success [by God]’) seem to have been the property of rulers. Margariti, “Aden,” 224, n. 25, notes that in fact *al-Mubārak* was owned not by a ruler but by Maḍmūn. On the names of these ships see further Introduction IIIB (159, n. 18).

⁸³ No. II, 71, lines 49, 53, 56, etc. (page 534).

⁸⁴ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:309, 312.

⁸⁵ TS 13 J 26, f. 8, lines 17–18, ed. Ben-Sasson, *Sicily*, 593, no. 120; Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:842, no. 556. ‘Aodeh, “Vessels,” 292, incorrectly cites this as a case in which the boat is called the ship of Ibn al-Q., its captain. There is one or two letters in the captain’s name after the Q, but the decipherment is unclear. Each of the three publications cited here has a different reading.

⁸⁶ Margariti, “Aden,” 224–25.

the word *aṣḥābuhu* is ambiguous. While, Goitein translated ‘its proprietors,’ Gil, who edited the text, took it to mean ‘his friends.’ (The phrase *aṣḥāb al-markab* meaning ‘sailors’ appears several times in the documents concerning Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean commerce.) It would follow that Ibn al-Iskandar was the owner of the Nile boat. *Markab* Ibn al-Iskandar is mentioned many times in Geniza letters, and in none is there any reason to believe that someone other than him was the proprietor of the ship.⁸⁷ Other examples of *markab* PN or the like, cited in the literature as referring to the captain, do not support that interpretation.⁸⁸

IX. *A Prosopography: Shipowners Identified as Nākhudās*

Anonymous *nākhudās* appear frequently in the Geniza papers. But they are most often identified by name. The following five Indian Ocean shipowners (in alphabetical order) are identified as *nākhudās*:

Abu ʿl-Ḥasan b. Abu ʿl-Katāʾib. The *nākhudā* Abu ʿl-Ḥasan b. Abu ʿl-Katāʾib is mentioned repeatedly in the papers related to Ben Yijū as transporting goods and carrying letters between India (Mangalore) and Aden. He is almost always called *nākhudā*. See II, 16, lines 16–17; verso, lines 20–21; II, 23, lines 7–8; II, 24, lines 1 (there Abu ʿl-Ḥasan, without his father’s name), 31–32; III, 4, lines 20–21; III, 6*v*, line 4; III, 10, lines 14–15 (from which it is clear that he traveled on his boat to Aden and delivered a shipment of iron); III, 11, lines 11–12; III, 21, sec. b, lines 26, 30. He was assisted by his son the *nākhudā* Abū ʿAbd Allah, on whom see further below. In the introduction to III, 21, Goitein concluded from their names that the Ibn Abu ʿl-Katāʾibs were probably Muslims. In a letter, written ca. 1136–39 (III, 4, lines 19–22), we read of a complaint by a Jewish trader, Abu ʿl-Faraj b. Moses al-Baghdādī, that Ibn Abu ʿl-Katāʾib demanded from him payment for the hire of a compartment, even though he did not carry for him anything in his ship.

⁸⁷ TS 10 J 11, f. 23, lines 2–3; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:309, 478, n. 2 (cf. ʿAodeh, “Vessels,” 295–96); Gil, *Ishmael*, 2:339, no. 121. For the documents in which *markab* Ibn al-Iskandar is mentioned, see Gil, *ib.*, IV, 924. *Aṣḥāb al-markab* appears in II, 31, line 9 and several times in II, 71, lines 52–53 ff. For the Mediterranean, see III, 48, line 18, *aṣḥāb al-shawānī*, lit., ‘sailors of the *shinis*’ (= pirates).

⁸⁸ ʿAodeh, “Vessels,” 291 and n. 58, in reference to ENA NS 19, f. 25, line 17, *qārib* Mufarrij. A *qārib* is a seagoing barge (Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:305). ʿAodeh comments that Mufarrij was the captain and refers to Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:312. Goitein does not identify Mufarrij as the captain, however; neither is he identified as the captain by Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:834, no. 552, in his edition of the manuscript.

‘Alī b. Maṣṣūr al-Fawfalī (‘The Betel Nut Trader’). The names ‘Alī and Maṣṣūr were common both among Jews and Arabs, and we do not know his religious/ethnic affiliation.⁸⁹ He was a business associate of Maḍmūn b. Japheth, Joseph b. Abraham and Ben Yijū. Maḍmūn speaks of him with the highest respect: “the most illustrious *nākhudā*, my lord ‘Alī b. Maṣṣūr al-Fawfalī—may God preserve his honored position!”⁹⁰ Letters with multiple instructions for him were sent to India by Maḍmūn in care of Ben Yijū.⁹¹ Al-Fawfalī was empowered to sell for Maḍmūn merchandise of his that had been left in India and to take possession of various commodities that had been ordered, and Maḍmūn requested that Ben Yijū assist al-Fawfalī in this.⁹² Ben Yijū shipped to Aden a consignment of pepper for Maḍmūn with al-Fawfalī.⁹³ Al-Fawfalī’s ship sank, and Maḥrūz b. Jacob, himself a shipowner, suffered the loss of valuable cargo in the ship.⁹⁴ A few years later al-Fawfalī absconded to Zabīd in Yemen, without paying debts, and it was feared that he would flee to Egypt. Maḍmūn attempted to have him apprehended, but we do not know what the outcome was.⁹⁵

Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan/Japheth. Maḍmūn was the most prominent Jewish shipowner represented in these papers. He is called a *nākhudā* only once, in VI, 26, line 3 (there his father’s name is written al-Ḥasan). This is probably because of his being better known for his communal and other commercial activities. “You know, my lord, of all my preoccupations besides (the business of) the ships.”⁹⁶ We have already read of his partnerships in owning ships and of his ship al-Mubārak, ‘the Blessed.’ The ship, which he held in joint ownership with the governor of Aden, Bilāl b. Jarīr, sailed on the Aden-Sri Lanka route.⁹⁷ In outfitting it, the two partners cornered the market, and took first pick of any merchandise they needed.⁹⁸ Maḍmūn

⁸⁹ See Goitein’s note to II, 24, line 29 (348, n. 75).

⁹⁰ No. II, 25, lines 9–10; cf. II, 24, line 29.

⁹¹ No. II, 24*v*, lines 3, 11–12.

⁹² No. II, 24*v*, lines 13–22.

⁹³ No. II, 25, lines 7–10.

⁹⁴ No. II, 55, lines 16–17.

⁹⁵ See III, 9*v*, lines 1–2; V, 9, margin and top. In the introduction to III, 9, Goitein suggested that al-Fawfalī’s absconding might have been the result of the loss, which he suffered when his ship sank.

⁹⁶ No. II, 20, lines 43–44. Margariti, “Aden,” 257, n. 104, failed to read the word *siwā’*, ‘besides,’ and took this as a statement by Maḍmūn of how time consuming the shipping business was for him.

⁹⁷ See II, 32, line 24; III, 11, lines 27–29.

⁹⁸ See III, 11, lines 27–29.

also had a ship that traveled to Mangalore.⁹⁹ He requested of Ben Yijū to assist Maḥrūz b. Jacob, who was new to the India trade.¹⁰⁰

Maḥmūn's involvement in shipping included all stages from the construction, purchase and sailing of ships. In one case he specifically wrote that he had constructed (*ansha'*) a ship.¹⁰¹ But this does not necessarily mean that he invested in or owned a ship-building business, as the expression can be understood in the sense of placing an order for the construction of a ship.¹⁰² He also outfitted three *jāshujjyyas*, military vessels, which were sent to the Yemenite port of Zabīd. This too was done in cooperation with Bilāl.¹⁰³ One or more of Maḥmūn's ships sank, and he lost huge sums in various shipping ventures.¹⁰⁴ Despite his losses he immediately invested in a new ship, so that his enemies not gloat over his misfortune.¹⁰⁵ He was a permanent resident of Aden, but once he mentioned his intention of being in the Red Sea port of 'Aydḥāb.¹⁰⁶ Besides the documents already noted, mention of his ship(s) can be found in III, 9, line 22; III, 16, lines 19–22 (sailing to Mangalore). He often sent merchandise to India in ships belonging to other people.¹⁰⁷

Maḥrūz b. Jacob. Maḥrūz is almost always mentioned as a *nākhudā*, at least eleven times, more often than any other individual in this book involved in the shipping business. A native of Aden, who owned a home in Fustat, he frequently traveled between Aden and India and stayed in that country for some time. It is not clear, whether his permanent residence was Aden or Fustat or if he shared his time between the two. After his death, his family was in Aden, but they might have returned there at that time.¹⁰⁸ He

⁹⁹ No. III, 16, lines 19–20.

¹⁰⁰ No. III, 30, lines 22–23.

¹⁰¹ No. II, 32, line 23; cf. II, 20, margin-verso, line 4.

¹⁰² Margariti, "Aden," 257, does not mention II, 32, line 23 in this context, but referring to II, 20*v*, lines 4–5, suggests that Maḥmūn was in the ship-building business. There Maḥmūn comments *jabbaztu*, 'I outfitted,' the ship Mubārak. In his note to II, 14*v*, line 13 (page 317, n. 29), Goitein remarked that *jabbāz* means "buying or building a ship and fitting it out." But see the reference to Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:228a, which I added there, according to which the term is used for equipping or arming a boat. In the passage cited above from Buzurg, *'Ajā'ib al-Hind*, we read that Iṣḥāq the Persian Jew built (*banā*) a ship. There is no reason to believe in that case either, that he was in the ship-building industry.

¹⁰³ No. V, 9, margin and top. For *jāshujjyyas*, see II, 23, line 12 (342, n. 27).

¹⁰⁴ See V, 6, line 12; II, 20, margin; II, 21, line 8–II, 22, line 18 (in this order).

¹⁰⁵ See II, 20*v*, lines 4–7.

¹⁰⁶ No. II, 32, margin, end.

¹⁰⁷ See, e.g., II, 16, lines 47–49; II, 20, line 24; II, 24, line 1; lines 30–32; II, 29, margin; verso, line 5; II, 32, line 23.

¹⁰⁸ Margariti, "Aden," 233, assumed that Maḥrūz was a permanent resident of Aden.

owned a ship that sailed on the Aden-Mangalore route.¹⁰⁹ While we find him sailing his own ship, his ship also sailed without him.¹¹⁰ On the other hand, he also traveled on other ships, once on Maḍmūn's.¹¹¹ The fact that even after his death he was called in a family letter 'the *nākhudā* Maḥrūz' indicates that that designation was considered a title of honor.¹¹² He had familial bonds with the leading Jewish families involved in the India trade. As already noted he apparently was Maḍmūn's cousin, who looked after him when he was new to the business. His brother-in-law was Abū Zikrī Kohen, the representative of merchants in Fustat. A portrait of him, which includes his shipping activities, is found above, pages 48–51.

Rāmishṭ. The ships of this great merchant are frequently mentioned in these papers. Two inscriptions of Rāmishṭ have been preserved in Mecca, one dated 529 A.H. (1135 C.E.), relating to the founding of a hospice, and the second, his epitaph, states that he died in Sha'bān 534 A.H. (April 1140) and refers to him as 'the *nākhudā*.' One of his agents ('Alī al-Nilī) brought back from Canton in a single voyage merchandise of the fabulous value of 500,000 dinars. In 532 A.H. (1138), he provided for the covering of the Ka'ba with Chinese silk.¹¹³

The ships of Rāmishṭ are mentioned in the following texts: II, 16, lines 2–3 (= II, 17, lines 6–7); II, 20, line 24; II, 23, lines 17–18; II, 24, lines 30–31 (in all of these he is called *nākhudā*); II, 26, line 10; II, 46, line 22; III, 1, lines 7–8. There is no indication that he ever sailed on his ships, and indeed other than his ships no mention is made in our papers of Rāmishṭ. He owned a fleet, which traveled between Aden and India. These are referred to as *marākib* 'the ships' of Rāmishṭ.¹¹⁴ A pair of his ships (*markabayn*) is mentioned repeatedly; one letter reports the two sinking.¹¹⁵ Besides his own ships, both his son and his son-in-law (*ṣibr*)

¹⁰⁹ See III, 2, lines 2–3; II, 55, lines 30–31.

¹¹⁰ I assume that when goods were sent in his ship with the Muslim merchant Maymūn (no. III, 2, lines 2–3), Maḥrūz was not on board.

¹¹¹ No. III, 9, lines 22–23.

¹¹² No. II, 61*v*, line 2.

¹¹³ See Wiet, "Les Marchands," 85; Stern, "Rāmishṭ." This paragraph is based on Goitein's note to II, 16, line 3 (= II, 17, line 7). Perhaps 'Alī al-Nilī the wealthy clerk-agent of Rāmishṭ is the same 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Nilī mentioned in III, 10, line 66; see 603, n. 54.

¹¹⁴ No. III, 1, line 7.

¹¹⁵ No. II, 23, lines 17–18; II, 46, line 22; III, 1, line 8 (sinking).

each owned a ship, which apparently sailed as part of his fleet.¹¹⁶ At least one of Rāmishṭ's ships sailed the Aden-Fandarayna route.¹¹⁷

X. *Shipowners Not Identified as Nākhudās*

The ships of the following thirteen shipowners, not identified as *nākhudās*, seem to have been active in the Indian Ocean trade:

Abū Mḥm[.] This Muslim is referred to as 'my eminent lord, the illustrious Sheikh (Maḥmūd/Muḥammad) al-Ḥalabī.' His family name indicates that he came from Aleppo. Merchandise was sent on his ship in the care of two travelers, a Jew and a Muslim.¹¹⁸

Bdh (Budah). Evidently an Indian, Ben Yijū shipped pepper in his boat to Maḍmūn.¹¹⁹

Bihzāt (= Bihzād). A Persian.¹²⁰

Bilāl b. Jarīr. He was the governor of Aden, who as already noted constructed a ship in partnership with Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan; their ship traveled the Aden-Sri Lanka route.¹²¹

Fatan Swamī. This is not a proper name but Sanskrit paṭṭaṇa-svāmī, 'lord of the mart,' chief of the merchant guild in a port or market town.¹²² Abrahams translates the term 'lord of the town' and remarks that this official was "appointed to take care of specific aspects of administration in urban settlements." According to Chakravarti:

The lord of the port is associated with the names of a number of merchants in several epigraphic records from early medieval southern India. The *pat-tanasvami* was also the representative of the merchant in the port and his position as the 'lord of a port' seems to have rested on his being the representative of merchants.¹²³

¹¹⁶ No. II, 24, line 31; see page 348, n. 76, on the reading of the text and the probable meaning of *ṣibr*.

¹¹⁷ No. II, 20, line 24.

¹¹⁸ No. VI, 13, lines 6–7.

¹¹⁹ No. II, 25, line 11.

¹²⁰ See I, 14, line 9 and the accompanying note (206, n. 6), where the name is explained as meaning 'of noble origin.'

¹²¹ See II, 32, line 24; III, 11, lines 27–29. He is also mentioned in II, 27, lines 4, 7, II, 32, line 32, V, 9, margin, line 4. See Geddes, "Bilāl."

¹²² See Goitein's remarks pages 24, 599, n. 23. For Fatān, who sailed a Nile boat, see I, 6, line 21.

¹²³ Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, viii; Chakravarti, "Nakhudas," 46.

We have already mentioned his two ships, which sailed from Fandarayna, India, to Aden, one of which crashed against Bāb al-Mandeb and sank.¹²⁴

Fdy'r. His ships are mentioned in III, 4, line 13, verso, line 1; III, 10*v*, lines 2 and 5–6; III, 12, line 37 (there 'a ship of Fdy'r,' which implies that he owned more than one ship). A letter to him is referred to in III, 11, line 19. As Fdy'r is preceded by the definite article three times,¹²⁵ the word obviously is the designation for a profession or an office, but not a proper name. In III, 11, line 19, Fdy'r is connected with the trade in cardamom.¹²⁶ Prof. Shaul Shaked has informed me that one could read Fdy'r/Pidyār. Persian *pid-yār* would mean 'helper to (his) father.' Several Persian names end in *-yār*; but, as noted by Goitein, use of the definite article *al-* indicates that it was understood as a title, occupation or office, rather than a name.

Ḥalfon b. Maḍmūn. Nagid of Yemenite Jewry, a new ship of his, 'the Kūlamī,' sank five days after sailing east from Aden. The ship and most of its cargo belonged to him. A detailed document discusses the evidence concerning the sinking, which was investigated for over two years before declaring all on board legally dead.¹²⁷

(Ibn) al-Muqaddam. *Muqaddam* designates an official of some sort. It is not clear, whether Ibn al-Muqaddam was a Jew, a Muslim or an Indian.¹²⁸ His ship sailed the Aden/Zabīd-Malabar Coast (Dahbattan) route and is mentioned in several letters.¹²⁹ Ibn al-Muqaddam's ship sank near Abyan, east of Aden. He replaced it with a new ship, which sank off Ghulayfiqa, the seaport of Zabīd, Yemen.¹³⁰ Goods on Ibn al-Muqaddam's ship were sent with the *nākhudā* Jawhar al-Muqaddamī (see sec. 11) or with the *nākhudā* Joseph/Yūsuf.¹³¹

Ibn Salmūn. From his name, we cannot determine his ethnic/religious affiliation.¹³²

¹²⁴ No. III, 10, lines 23–29.

¹²⁵ No. III, 10*v*, lines 2 and 6, and III, 11, line 19.

¹²⁶ From Goitein's note from III, 4, line 13.

¹²⁷ No. II, 71; five days after sailing; lines 29–30.

¹²⁸ See Goitein's comment, page 324, n. 18. For *muqaddam* in India, see Raychaudhuri, "Inland Trade," 354.

¹²⁹ No. II, 16, line 48 (there: al-Muqaddam); II, 29, margin (al-Muqaddam); verso, line 5 (Ibn al-Muqaddam, from which it is evident that al-Muqaddam and Ibn al-Muqaddam were one and the same); III, 9, line 13 (here and in the following: Ibn al-Muqaddam); III, 10, line 17; III, 11, line 53; III, 25, lines 3, 5.

¹³⁰ No. III, 9, line 13; III, 25, lines 3, 5.

¹³¹ No. II, 29, margin; verso, line 5; III, 10, lines 16–17.

¹³² No. II, 66*v*, line 20.

Ja^ʿfar. His name indicates that he was an Arab. Two Maghrebis perished when his ship sank.¹³³

Nbrdwy/Nbyrwy. He was probably an Indian. His ship is mentioned only once, but his name was crossed out and replaced by Fdy'r. The line, which runs through the name, obscures the reading. Nbyrwy might be taken as a variant of Nmby Rwy, the next entry.¹³⁴

Nmby Rwy. He was probably an Indian. Maḍmūn sent goods to Ben Yijū in his ship. Prof. David Shulman has suggested vocalizing Nambi Raya. Nambi in Tamil means a nobleman. Raya could be derived from Raja (in Telugu and Kannada 'Ravu,' which would explain the *w*). See also the previous entry.¹³⁵

Al-Qummī. As his name indicates, he was a Persian.¹³⁶

Al-Sulṭān. The Sultan's ships are mentioned in two documents, one of which speaks of his 'Jurbattānī ship' (destination Jurbattan), which sank on its way from Aden to India.¹³⁷

The ships of the following two seem to have sailed in the Red Sea and may not have gone east of Aden:

ʿAlī al-Dibājī ('The Brocade Trader'). The name does not allow an identification of his ethnic/religious affiliation.¹³⁸

Al-Sharīf ('The Nobleman'). Probably a Muslim. Once the *jalaba* (small boat) of al-Sharīf is mentioned; another time his two ships, one of which sank.¹³⁹

XI. Nākhudās *Not identified as Shipowners*

The following seventeen *nākhudās* are not specifically identified as shipowners. Some certainly were not shipowners; others may have been. None of the Jews among them can be shown to have been captains rather than shipowners.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ No. II, 32, lines 6–7.

¹³⁴ No. III4v, line 1.

¹³⁵ No. II, 16, lines 48–49 (see the note there for the transcription of the text and Goitein's vocalization). Prof. David Shulman provided the information in a private communication, dated April 2, 2004.

¹³⁶ No. I, 14, line 9.

¹³⁷ No. II, 48, line 24; III, 15, lines 20–21.

¹³⁸ No. V, 5, margin; V, 8, line 12; VI, 38, line 9; VI, 39, lines 6–7.

¹³⁹ No. V, 8, line 16; VI, 32, lines 9 ff. On both see Margariti, "Aden," 246–47. Descendants of Muḥammad are called *sharīf*; see van Arendonk, "*Sharīf*."

¹⁴⁰ There is no evidence for the assertion by Arenson, "Seafaring," 41, that according to Geniza documents several Jews served as captains of ships in the Indian Ocean.

Abū ‘Abd Allah son of the shipowner, *nākhudā* Abu ‘l-Ḥasan b. Abu ‘l-Katā’ib. As already noted, he was a Muslim; see above on his father Abu ‘l-Katā’ib. Abraham Ben Yijū had placed an order for iron with a Bānyān supplier in India and commissioned Abū ‘Abd Allah to collect and deliver it to Maḍmūn in Aden.¹⁴¹ Abū ‘Abd Allah traveled in his father’s ship. Maḍmūn complained that he delivered a smaller quantity than Ben Yijū had promised. Abū ‘Abd Allah claimed that this was all the supplier had given him. Maḍmūn suspected he was trying to swindle him, and held him liable for payment of the balance, should it transpire that he had lied.¹⁴² In that letter, a *rubbān* (captain) is mentioned repeatedly but apparently not in reference to the same ship. No. III, 21 contains detailed business accounts for Ben Yijū’s dealings with him. These dealings involved his father Abu ‘l-Ḥasan b. Abu ‘l-Katā’ib as well. In 1146, Khalaf b. Isaac sent letters and a consignment from Aden to Ben Yijū, who was then residing in Jurbattan, India, with Abū ‘Abd Allah, who traveled on the Sultan’s ‘Jurbatannī ship.’ The ship sank, and Abū ‘Abd Allah perished.¹⁴³

Abu ‘l-Faraj. Ben Yijū shipped some items with him from India to Yemen. He could have been an Arab or Jew.¹⁴⁴

Abū Ma‘ālī. Abū Sa‘īd al-Levi son of the *nākhudā* Abū Ma‘ālī (who was still alive) was asked to purchase a piece of clothing in Yemen, in the early thirteenth century. Abū Ma‘ālī, an investor in a partnership for travel to Yemen, mentioned in a document from 1215/6, could be the same man.¹⁴⁵ Because of the discrepancy in years, it is doubtful that Abū Ma‘ālī is the same as the *nākhudā* Ma‘ālī. As ‘Levi’ indicates, he was a Jew.

Abū Sa‘īd. He is mentioned as a *nākhudā* once, without his father’s name.¹⁴⁶ Goitein identified him as Abū Sa‘īd b. Maḥfūz, whose Hebrew name was Ḥalfon b. Shemaryā ha-Levi, known as Ibn Jamāhir/Jumayhir,

¹⁴¹ No. In II, 16, lines 18–25. For the predominance of Muslims in coastal shipping interests in India and shore-based merchants who supplied the shipping lines, among which Hindus were the majority, in a somewhat later period, see Dasgupta, “Indian Merchants,” 408; Wink, *Al-Hind*, I, 101.

¹⁴² Cf. Chakravarti, “Nakhudas,” 48–49.

¹⁴³ No. III, 15, lines 18–25.

¹⁴⁴ No. III, 24, line 39.

¹⁴⁵ No. VI, 47, lines 15–16; VI, 46.

¹⁴⁶ No. III, 26, line 3. Goitein, “Last Phase,” 23, wrote that Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel (whose documents are collected in chap. 4) is called a *nākhudā* in one document. I am not familiar with any such manuscript. Since he too had the byname Abū Sa‘īd, I assume that in an early stage of research Goitein thought that that Ḥalfon had been intended here; he did not repeat this in later studies.

a prominent Egyptian Jew, active in the India Ocean trade.¹⁴⁷ Maḍmūn wrote to Ben Yijū: *wa-jahhaztu al-markab al-[mubāra]k yaday al-shaykh Abū Saʿīd b. Maḥfūz ilā manjalūr*. Goitein translated: “I fitted out the ship—the [Mubāra]k—which will sail to Mangalore under the supervision of Sheikh Abū Saʿīd b. Maḥfūz.” A more literal translation would be: ‘I outfitted the ship [Mubāra]k—through the agency of Sheikh Abū Saʿīd b. Maḥfūz—to Mangalore.’¹⁴⁸ Accordingly, it is not clear if Abū Saʿīd commanded of the ship or was in charge of Maḍmūn’s cargo and its delivery. Having sailed for India on one of his journeys, Abū Saʿīd was shipwrecked and drowned near Aden ca. 1146.¹⁴⁹

Abu ʾl-Sh[...].Ben Yijū shipped some items with him from India to Yemen.¹⁵⁰

Abū Zikrī Ibn al-Shāmī. He was mentioned as a *nākhudā* once, when a consignment was sent with him in a small ship traveling from Yemen to India.¹⁵¹ Ibn al-Shāmī, son of someone from Eretz Israel or Syria, was a family name. His full name, Abū Zikrī Yaḥyā Zechariah b. Sar Shālōm Ibn al-Shāmī, proves, of course that he was a Jew. Both he and his father were active in the India trade. In 1132, he was in Fustat. He traveled in the Kārim flotilla and was responsible for a consignment Maḍmūn b. Japheth sent through ʿAydhāb to Fustat. He was killed, when a ship in which he traveled to India, sank.¹⁵²

Aḥmad b. Bakhtiyār. Maḍmūn sent merchandise to Ben Yijū with Aḥmad, who traveled in Rāmishṭ’s ship. He was likely the son of the *rubbān* (captain) Bakhtiyār. Goitein commented that Aḥmad had risen economically and socially, “unless *nākhudā* was also used loosely as a synonym for captain,” which (at that stage of his research) he considered unlikely.¹⁵³ Chakravarti also comments on such supposed upward socio-economic mobility in India, in the case of a father who served as ship hand below the commander and his son who became a *nākhudā*.¹⁵⁴ In both cases, *nākhudā*

¹⁴⁷ See the introduction to II, 20 and the note to line 15 (pages 328, 331, n. 13).

¹⁴⁸ No. II, 20*v*, lines 4–5. For the expression *jahhaza markab ilā* in connection with Indian Ocean trade, see also II, 32, line 23. The same expression is used by Buzurg, *ʿAjāʾib al-Hind*, 8, 144 (which refers to a trader who outfitted a ship to ʿUmān and had a *wakīl*, ‘agent’ on board, who was to conduct business for him upon arrival).

¹⁴⁹ No. II, 70.

¹⁵⁰ No. III, 24, line 39.

¹⁵¹ No. III, 28a, lines 13–14.

¹⁵² See details in the note to I, 33*v*, line 28. Also note the *nākhudā* Abū [...] in III, 23, line 3, who could be any of the Abūs mentioned so far or someone else.

¹⁵³ No. II, 20, lines 25, 28; II, 23, line 43 (there Goitein’s note).

¹⁵⁴ Chakravarti, “Nakhudas,” 55.

might mean captain, a definition whose likelihood has become more evident since these scholars wrote their comments. As his name shows, he was a Persian Muslim.

‘Alī Nāwak. It is not clear whether this Indian was a captain or shipowner. See above (126–28) the passages from VII, 70, and discussion.

Bashīr. Maḍmūn sent Ben Yijū, who was in India, a letter for Bashīr, obviously with requests for purchases. His ship *ghazāla* (‘Gazelle’), in which Ben Yijū had sent pepper and ginger, suffered damage off the Indian coast, ca. 1145. It seems that Sheikh Makkī b. Abu ’l-Hawl was the captain, and Bashīr accordingly, was probably the shipowner. Goitein commented that the name Bashīr was next to unknown among Jews; accordingly this *nākhudā* was probably a Muslim (or Christian).¹⁵⁵

Jawhar al-Muqaddamī. He was evidently a slave or freedman of Ibn al-Muqaddam, and perhaps the captain on the latter’s ship.¹⁵⁶ See above on Ibn al-Muqaddam.

Joseph/Yūsuf. He arrived in Aden from Dahbattan on the Malabar Coast in the ship of Ibn al-Muqaddam. Khalaf b. Isaac received from him two basins, two ewers and two basins for candlesticks, which Abraham Ben Yijū had sent from India. While Goitein identified Joseph as the well-known Jewish trader of Aden, Joseph b. Abraham (one of Maḍmūn’s cousins), this identification is inconclusive, and in fact we do not know whether the *nākhudā* Joseph/Yūsuf was Jewish or a shipowner.¹⁵⁷

Ma‘ālī. Ben Yijū wrote from ‘Aydhāb to an associate in Aden ca. 1152, that he could collect his debt from Ma‘ālī.¹⁵⁸ His Arabic name does not reveal his religious/ethnic affiliation. It is doubtful that he is the same as Abū Ma‘ālī, still active in the early thirteenth century.

Muḥammad. Obviously a Muslim, he was the *nākhudā* of the ship of the Fdy’r.¹⁵⁹ See above concerning the latter.

Najīb al-Kharazī (‘Bead Maker’). He transported copper from India to Yemen.¹⁶⁰ Both Jews and Arabs were called Najīb, but the name was uncommon.

¹⁵⁵ No. II, 24*v*, lines 4–5 (Goitein’s comment in 349, n. 81); III, 22 and lines 2, 6, 9, 19 (Makkī).

¹⁵⁶ No. II, 29, margin; verso, line 5. Jawhar (‘Jewel’) was a common name for a slave (or freedman). See III, 10, line 23; Goitein, *Letters*, 61, n. 32; Monés, “Jawhar al-Siqillī.”

¹⁵⁷ See III, 10, lines 16–17 (598, n. 14).

¹⁵⁸ No. III, 39, line 17.

¹⁵⁹ No. III, 10*v*, lines 1–2.

¹⁶⁰ No. III, 28a, line 6.

Rayḥān. Ben Yijū sent merchandise with him from India to Aden, to be delivered to Maḍmūn b. Japheth and Joseph b. Abraham.¹⁶¹ The name is uncommon. Goitein cites it as the name of a slave or freedman.¹⁶²

Saʿd. Ben Yijū, who had business dealings with him, referred to him affectionately as ‘my brother, my lord, the *nākhudā* Saʿd,’ Saʿd was a common name among Jews and Arabs.¹⁶³

Tinbū. Maḥrūz sent letters from Mangalore to Tāna, further north on the western coast of India, to this Indian *nākhudā* and requested him to give money to Maḥrūz’ brother-in-law Abū Zikrī Kohen, whose ship had been attacked by pirates. Maḥrūz then wrote to Abū Zikrī:

If, my lord, you need any gold, please take it on my account from the *nākhudā* Tinbū, for he is staying in Tāna, and between him and me are bonds of inseparable friendship and brotherhood.¹⁶⁴

XII. *The Rubbān*

In contrast to *nākhudā*, the term *rubbān* appears quite infrequently in the Geniza texts that deal with the Indian Ocean trade. The word is defined in the literature both as ‘captain,’ ‘pilot’ or ‘navigator.’¹⁶⁵ The *satmī* of the *rubbān*, already discussed above, suggests that ‘captain’ was intended.¹⁶⁶ So does the request to rent space on a ship from a *rubbān* mentioned above. We have already had occasion to mention the *rubbān* in connection with Khalaf b. Isaac’s letters, (III, 10 and III, 11) and note the ambiguity between that term and the non-shipowner *nākhudā*. These two ship’s officers obviously filled similar roles, and at times the same individual could have performed both functions. One of the tales of the sea told by Buzurg in his “Wonders of India” is reported in the name of Jaʿfar b. Rāshid, “one of the famous *rubbāns* and *nākhudās* of the Land of Gold.”¹⁶⁷ At the port of departure, a *rubbān* was entrusted by a trader with goods for delivery,

¹⁶¹ No. III, 23, margin, lines 4, 5, 7,

¹⁶² See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:47; 2:387.

¹⁶³ No. III, 18, account C, lines 1, 3a.

¹⁶⁴ No. II, 55, lines 37–40.

¹⁶⁵ See Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 525. Cf. Buzurg, *ʿAjāʾib al-Hind*, e.g., 23 (*Wonders*, 12: captain), 173 (navigator; *Wonders*, 102: sea-captain), 196 (pilot); but on 77, it is translated ‘patron de navire’ (*Wonders*, 38: captain, 44: shipmaster)! The latter translation seems unlikely in my opinion; note, for example, 90, where a shipowner is addressed by *rubbān markabibi*, ‘the *rubbān* of his ship.’

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Margariti, “Aden,” 226–27.

¹⁶⁷ Buzurg, *ʿAjāʾib al-Hind*, 173–74. ‘The Land of Gold’ designates Southeast Asia; see ib., 217; Wink, *Al-Hind*, 1:334–42.

and at the port of disembarkation he purchased and sold merchandise for him.

I have found only four *rubbāns*, who are named in the Geniza letters that deal with the Indian Ocean trade:

Abū Ghālib. Maḍmūn b. Japheth sent various commodities with him from Aden to Ben Yijū in India.¹⁶⁸ His name does not enable us to identify his ethnic/religious affiliation.

Aḥmad b. Abu 'l-Faraj. He is referred to as a *shaykh*; his name shows that he was a Muslim. Joseph b. Abraham sent various goods with him from Aden to Ben Yijū in India.¹⁶⁹

Bakhtiyār ('Lucky,' Persian). His *satmī* fee is mentioned.¹⁷⁰ Presumably he was the father of the *nākhudā* Aḥmad b. Bakhtiyār (see above), a Muslim.

Maṣ'ūd, the Abyssinian. Joseph b. Abraham had sent him funds to purchase unspecified merchandise. He was evidently a Muslim.¹⁷¹

A few anonymous *rubbāns* are also mentioned.¹⁷² There is no evidence that there were any Jewish *rubbāns*.

XIII. *Concluding Observations*

Dictionaries define *nākhudā* as shipowner or captain. Any attempt to ascertain the meaning of the term and the role in Indian Ocean trade played by the individuals designated thereby must be based on an analysis of the sources themselves.

In his tenth century *Kitāb 'Ajā'ib al-Hind*, Buzurg b. Shahriyār, recounts many tales told by or about *nākhudās*. Most seem to have been captains of ships and their base was the Persian Gulf. He tells the story of Iṣḥāq the Jew from 'Umān, who after thirty years in the Far East returned in 900 C.E., a fabulously wealthy man. His encounter with a Chinese potentate demonstrates that Arabic speaking Jews were sometimes identified as Arabs in the Far East.

The Persian port of Sīrāf was severely damaged by an earthquake in 977. Suḥār, the capital of 'Umān and Aden became ports of unsurpassed

¹⁶⁸ No. II, 16v, lines 10, 14–15, 29.

¹⁶⁹ No. III, 1v, lines 15–16.

¹⁷⁰ No. II, 23, line 43.

¹⁷¹ No. III, 10, lines 59, 64–65; see above concerning this document. For the role of Abyssinians in Indian Ocean trade and shipping, see Digby, "Maritime Trade," 149–52.

¹⁷² No. II, 16, line 51; III, 10, line 28; III, 11, line 42; V, 38, f. 62, line 4.

importance in the Indian Ocean trade, and Aden emerged as perhaps the most significant base of the shipping industry in the western Indian Ocean.¹⁷³ This development highlights the potential value of the Geniza letters from the late eleventh century and beyond, written by merchants who resided in Aden or who used it as their base for shipping and maritime trade in the Indian Ocean.

Goitein almost always took *nākhudā* to mean ‘shipowner’ in the Geniza documents, but a letter, which he edited and which was published posthumously, has proven that the term also means captain. The parallel with the Sanskrit term *nawittaka*, which Chakravarti identified as also being a ship-owning merchant, illuminates the major contribution of the *nākhudā* in the socio-economic history of the Indian trade. In her study, Margariti too elucidates the role played by the Jewish shipowners from Aden. She emphasizes the ambiguous nature of *nākhudā* and other terms and underscores the differences between shipping in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

Both the multiple meanings of the term *nākhudā* and the possibility, which Margariti raised, that with smaller ships the owner might have captained his own vessel find illuminating parallels in Mediterranean shipping in classical times. Greek *naukeros* has the same semantic range as *nākhudā*: (1) ‘shipowner and merchant’; (2) ‘skipper, sailing master’; (3) ‘captain, commander,’ which is the general usage. *Nau-* in the Greek word is etymologically related to *nā-* in the Persian. In the merchant marine, the *naukeros* (Latin *naucerus* or *navicularius*), headed the hierarchy on a ship; and there could be more than one per vessel. When he carried cargo on his own account, he or his representative was generally on board. He might have served as his own captain, but usually, and especially on larger ships, the captain was a hired professional. In Roman legal terminology, the commanding officer of a merchant vessel was called *magister navis*, ‘shipmaster,’ who fit out the vessel, hired officers and crew, carried out repairs and maintenance, and took care of administration of cargo and passengers. On coastal craft and the like he took care of the operation of the vessel. The term *naukero kybernetes*, ‘owner-captain,’ often appears in business documents from Roman Egypt.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ See Chaudhuri, *Trade*, 48–49; Wink, *Al-Hind*, I, 53, 58; Abulafia, “Asia,” 421; Margariti, “Aden,” 234.

¹⁷⁴ See Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 1161; Casson, *Ships*, 314–18. Prof. Joel Kraemer kindly called these sources to my attention in a personal communication from June 10, 2003.

Goitein explained the small number of Jewish shipowners in the Mediterranean largely as the result of stringency in observing Sabbath and festival prohibitions. The prominent Jewish shipowners in the Indian Ocean were painstaking in their observance of halakhah, and the distinction between the two arenas is more likely to be the result of socio-economic and geo-political factors, as in fact Goitein later commented.

The ambiguity in terminology and the variegated contacts of merchants with people who sailed the seas is demonstrated in many Geniza letters. One letter, for example, mentions several ships on the routes between India and Aden, the shipowners, *nākhudās*, traveling merchants and *rubbāns* and the role played by these individuals in purchasing and selling merchandise for the entrepreneur who resided on land, in caring for his merchandise on board the ship and delivering the goods at the port of destination.

Shipowners were wealthy merchants and included communal leaders who were closely associated with religious institutions and contributed to their upkeep. The *nākhudā* was usually an honored and trusted individual. Bonds of friendship and trust between two *nākhudās* and between a *nākhudā* and merchants crossed ethnic and religious boundaries and are exemplified by the alliance between Maḥrūz b. Jacob and the Indian *nākhudā* Tinbū and by the anonymous *nākhudā* who demonstrated more concern for his Jewish business associate than the latter's coreligionists. Also Abraham Ben Yijū called the *nākhudā* Sa'd 'my brother, my lord.' A *nākhudā* sometimes assisted a Jewish merchant in collecting a debt. The word *nākhudā* was associated with certain individuals as an honorific title. Some *nākhudās* did not always behave in a manner consistent with the trust placed in them; they reneged on debts or were suspected of defrauding their clients.

The phrase *markab* PN can be assumed to be prima facie evidence that the individual named therein was the owner of the ship.

A prosopography of the individuals involved in the shipping aspect of the Indian Ocean trade mentioned by name in the Geniza documents in this collection includes five shipowners identified as *nākhudās*, twelve shipowners not identified as *nākhudās*, and seventeen *nākhudās* not identified as shipowners. Some in the last group were in all likelihood shipowners, though this was not mentioned except by the ambiguous term *nākhudā*; others were apparently captains or filled a similar role. The shipowners and other *nākhudās* were a multiethnic-religious group that included Jews and Arabs, Persians and Hindus. Some of the Arabic names might have belonged to Christians, but none has been identified. Some of the Jewish shipowners were the most prominent members of the community in

Aden; the Nagids of Yemenite Jewry—Maḍmūn b. Japheth and his son Ḥalfon—deserve special mention.¹⁷⁵

Since the Geniza letters deal essentially with the commercial activities of Jews and their correspondence one with another, their number among the groups identified explicitly as shipowners or as *nākbudās* in the Indian Ocean might be assumed to reflect a larger proportion in these categories than they actually filled. But there is also reason to believe that Jewish participation in these activities was not significantly misrepresented. We often read of a Jewish merchant's preference for sending goods in care of a Jew, who was traveling by boat; should one not be found, one would ship goods with a 'trustworthy' non-Jew. No request to ship goods in a boat belonging to a Jew has been found. Such would have been highly impractical. The role of Jews in those industries notwithstanding, Jewish merchants could not restrict themselves to the few boats owned by Jews, even had they wanted to. Contrariwise, Jewish merchants traveling these routes were commonplace.

Four individuals who are called *rubbān* have been identified. The term has been taken to mean captain, navigator or pilot. They probably served a role similar to that of captain, but it is not clear what the distinction was between *rubbān* and the non-shipowner *nākbudā*. There is no proof that Jews served as captains.}

¹⁷⁵ Selbourne, *City of Light*, 61, reports in the name of a medieval Italian Jewish trader ('Jacob D'Ancona') that in the year 1270 there were Jews from Basra, Iraq, who had partnerships with Arabs "in the building of the great ships that voyage to Seilan." This seems to echo II, 32, lines 23–24 (known from Goitein, *Letters*, 181–83), where Maḍmūn, in partnership with Bilāl, constructed a ship that sailed to Ceylon. On 417, Selbourne mentions Jewish shipowners in Aden. In my opinion, formed on the basis of other passages, Selbourne's book is a modern historical novel and not an authentic thirteenth century account.}

{B. *Dangers in Travel and in Shipping Goods by Land and Sea*

The sea voyage was difficult and no doubt caused travelers considerable suffering.¹ Of his journey west from India in the late eleventh century, Joseph Lebdi wrote:

[On sea] I experienced horrors (*ahwāl*), as you know, but you have also heard [that I arrived] in Mirbāt (a port on the southeastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula) safely together with what of my goods was salvaged.²

Abraham Ben Yijū, in his letter to Aden—apparently the first he wrote after reaching India—complained of his “troubles and discomfort on the sea.”³ His nephew, Moses b. Joseph Yijū, wrote of his voyage to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean from Sicily: “However, on the day I disembarked, I was so ill that I did not expect to stay alive,” probably implying that his sickness on land was the aftermath of his sea-sickness.⁴ Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel attributed the incessant, severe illnesses, from which he suffered in the Maghreb and Spain for two years, since he had left Egypt, to the difficulties endured during travel: “horrors (*ahwāl*) and hardships on land and sea.”⁵

Long-distance travel by land was dangerous, all the more so maritime travel. David Maimonides, who later perished in the Indian Ocean, wrote his celebrated brother Moses from the Sudanese port ‘Aydhāb and described the perilous journey through the desert from Qūṣ, in Upper Egypt. He explained his safe arrival as a reward for the suffering he experienced. “God saved us only *due to the merit* of our having endured the frightful experiences (*raw‘āt*.)” Disregarding his brother’s instructions, David decided to sail to India, again putting his trust in God. “He who saved me from the desert and the frightful expe[riences in it] will save me while on sea.”⁶

Travelers setting out received the salutation, “*May you be blessed by the Almighty*, and may He decree your safety on land and on sea!”⁷ One

¹ {These remarks will require supplementing after the completion of Part II of the book. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:313–32, discussed some aspects of this section, without most of the sources provided here. For the difficulties of the journey see *ibid.*, 320 ff.

² No. I, 14, lines 22–23.

³ No. II, 20, lines 5–6.

⁴ No. III, 46, lines 30–31.

⁵ No. IV, 34*v*, lines 15–18 (the text Gil and Fleischer, *Yehuda ha-Levi*, 344, requires emendation).

⁶ No. VI, 4, line 20–21, verso, lines 9–10. See Goitein, *Letters*, 209–11. Compare the contemporary letter II, 64, below, 501–2.

⁷ No. III, 48*v*, address.

embarking on a sea voyage was blessed with the verse, “*When you pass through water, I will be with you*” (Isa. 43:2).⁸ One writer supplicates: “May He save you from those seas, as He saved our ancestors from the Red Sea.”⁹ Relatives and friends prayed for a loved one on perilous travel and often fasted until hearing of his safe arrival. A man writes his brother that the latter’s two near-calamities in the Indian Ocean devastated their mother, and “no food or drink entered her mouth until your esteemed letter arrived.”¹⁰ Travelers often asked their relatives and friends to pray for them. An outstanding example can be cited from the letter of a North African trader, who decided to continue his journey east from Egypt to India. The anticipation of sailing in the Indian Ocean, which was much more hazardous than travel on the Mediterranean, filled him with trepidation, and he implored his family to pray for him.

I adjure you by these lines and by the *love* [= friendship] between us and by the bread we have eaten and the cup from which we have drunk together, that you not omit me from your prayer, neither you, nor your mother, nor your maternal uncle.¹¹

Traveling by oneself exacerbated dangers from natural disasters and from attacks by man. Accordingly, care was always taken to find a suitable traveling-companion (Arabic *rafiq*) before setting out on a journey. After Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel had hastily boarded a Nile boat sailing from Cairo to Alexandria, where he would meet Judah ha-Levi, without having waited to find a traveling-companion, Ḥalfon’s brother Ezekiel wrote to him:

I took leave from you, my master and brother [...], with anxiety. How did I let you travel by ship by yourself, without a fellow-traveler or merchant?! You were in great danger. May *the Holy One Blessed be He* make the end good and (decree your) safe arrival.¹²

The awareness of the dangers of travel was ever present. When informing their correspondents of their safe arrival, travelers would express their

⁸ No. III, 49v, address.

⁹ No. VI, 43v, margin, lines 7–14.

¹⁰ No. VI, 41, margin, lines 12–17.

¹¹ No. VI, 1, lines 24 ff. (cf. verso, lines 4, 7–8); see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:340. On prayers and fasts of relatives and friends for a loved one on perilous travel and on his relying on these prayers, see Goitein, *ibid.*, 1:346, 4:157; and in the present book, III, 43v, lines 12–16, III, 45, lines 9, 12–13, III, 48v, lines 1–4, 26, VI, 38, line 11, margin, lines 6–7, VI, 44, lines 15–19, VII, 38, lines 7–8.

¹² No. IV, 61, lines 1–5. See the discussion in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:296 ff. on the dangers of Nile travel and 347–48, on the importance of a travel-companion, in both of which reference to this document can be added.

heartfelt thanks to the Creator, often citing the appropriate verse from the biblical passage concerning those who “go down to the sea in ships”: “*Let them praise the Lord for His steadfast love, His wondrous deeds for mankind*” (Ps. 107:31). When a well-known India merchant in Aden wished to swear a solemn oath to a colleague, he declared: “By the truth of He who created me and created you and by the truth of He who decreed my safety on sea and land, where I traveled and arrived safely.”¹³

Travelers often suffered from a storm at sea even on a short journey. Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel had such an experience when sailing from Aden to ‘Aydhāb. Upon his safe arrival, he thanked God, citing that verse from Psalms and mentioned the difficult trip in at least two letters, one to his brother in Egypt (“the suffering I endured on this trip”), the other to a business associate and confidant in Aden (“the whirling winds and the rain”).¹⁴

The extraordinary dangers of the Indian Ocean were already referred to above. The aforementioned North African traveler wrote his family:

We set sail in a ship with not a single nail of iron in it, but held together by ropes; may God protect with His shield! [...] I am about to cross the great ocean, not a sea like that of Tripoli [Libya]; and I do not know if we will ever meet again.¹⁵

An Alexandrian writes his brother in India (Hind): “Since you set out for India (Hind) no one reached us (with word) from you, and we remained anxious because of the Indian Ocean.”¹⁶ A man who felt compelled to set out for India to try to recoup losses in Upper Egypt writes his wife that they may never meet again: “We will not be reunited unless God wills.”¹⁷

Names of ships in the Indian Ocean, such as *al-Mubārak* (‘Blessed’ = ‘to be blessed’), *al-Sa‘īd* (‘Auspicious’) or *al-Muwaffāq* (‘Successful’ = ‘to be granted success [by God]’), obviously were intended to express a wish for their safe arrival at their destinations (and the success of the affairs of their owners, passengers and investors, who shipped merchandise).¹⁸ We often

¹³ No. II, 45a, lines 4–6.

¹⁴ Nos. IV, 4, lines 3, 4, 13; IV, 11, line 17.

¹⁵ No. VI, 1, lines 14–15, margin, lines 8–12. For the use of ropes instead of nails in shipbuilding in the Indian Ocean, see above, 11, n. 27.

¹⁶ No. VI, 41, lines 5–6.

¹⁷ No. II, 64v, line 3.

¹⁸ For *al-Mubārak*, see no. II, 20, lines 30–31, II, 20v, lines 4–5; II, 55, line 45; *al-Sa‘īd*, VI, 27, margin, lines 13–14; *al-Muwaffāq*, VII, 63, line 7. Margariti, “Aden,” 224, n. 25, notes these appellations of India Ocean ships “appear to be simply laudatory nicknames”; this somewhat misses the mark.

read of shipwrecks in the straits of Bāb al-Mandab, on the Abyan coast east of Aden, outside the Yemeni port of Ghulayfiqa, or near the coast of India.¹⁹ When there was a shipwreck, both lives and merchandise were lost. A seafarer whose ship sank was doomed to a cruel death—he would either drown or be eaten by sharks, which are abundant in the Indian Ocean. A detailed document from ca. 1146 discusses the identification of the body of a Jewish merchant from Egypt, after it had been washed ashore following a shipwreck in ‘the Yemenite sea,’ in the port of Aden, and the steps taken to salvage his possessions.²⁰

Just as the safety of the traveler was attributed to God’s decree, so was the loss of life and property, as when a ship sank: “But God ordered this, and there is no escape from Him and from His judgment. He who has the power to decree decrees.”²¹ “There was general grief, from every aspect. But there is no stratagem against what God the exalted has decreed. This is what God decreed for them. This was their destiny. *Let it be far from us and the house of Israel!* God save us from an end like this!”²² “God wished that the ship be lost at sea, and everyone who was on board drowned.”²³ Another phrase that expresses the same creed is quoted below.

Since ships often traveled in convoys, the passengers on one boat sometimes witnessed the floundering of another. The Jewish religious authorities of Aden confirmed the death of an Egyptian merchant, whose ship sank a few days after having set sail for India and provided a vivid description of the tragedy:

These are the details of their drowning. The ship they were in, that is the Kūlamī, sailed from Aden together with the other ships that set sail. This ship and the Barībatanī were in the same position. The two of them traveled together for about four days from Aden. On the eve of the fifth day, the sailors of the ship Barībatanī heard the cries of the sailors of the ship Kūlamī and their scream and shrieks in the night as the water inundated them. When morning came, the sailors of the Barībatanī did not encounter any trace or evidence of the Kūlamī ship. [...] Any ship that sinks in the environs of Aden, between the *Maṣabb* and Aden, never surfaces, nor does anyone who

¹⁹ Shipwrecks are frequently mentioned or alluded to in *India Book* documents. In chaps. 1–3, see I, 2, line 6; I, 7, line 9; I, 9, line 15; I, 13, verso, line 4; I, 14, line 35; I, 20, line 16; II, 20, margin, line 10–verso, line 1; II, 21, lines 8 ff.; II, 32, lines 6–7; II, 48, verso, lines 33–37; II, 55, lines 15–18; II, 70; II, 71; III, 1, lines 8 ff.; III, 9, line 13; III, 10, lines 28 ff.; III, 11, lines 5 ff.; III, 12, lines 10–11; III, 15, lines 17–26; III, 22; III, 25.

²⁰ No. II, 70.

²¹ No. II, 22, lines 13–15.

²² No. II, 71, lines 34–37.

²³ No. VI, 28, line 21.

was in it survive at all, because of the turbulence of the sea and the distance from the shore and the abundance of fish (sharks).²⁴

Buzurg b. Shahriyār, in his tenth century *Kitāb ‘Ajā’ib al-Hind* (“The Wonders of India”), tells a story of the shock of a woman from Sīrāf, Persia, who found the ring of her brother, whose ship had been lost in the Indian Ocean, in the inners of a fish she was cutting.²⁵

Khalaf b. Isaac of Aden referred to those lost at sea in a letter to Abraham Ben Yijū and added: “God forbid that we should be forgetful of them.”²⁶ “As to Sheikh Jacob Ibn al-Shamūm,” the same Adenese trader wrote in another letter, “he and a group of our coreligionists were lost at sea. May Exalted God have mercy on them and resurrect them together with *the pious of Israel*.”²⁷ Maḍmūn b. Japheth, the Nagid of Yemen, and his descendants dealt with the estates of merchants lost at sea and provided information concerning their deaths, needed so that their wives would be permitted remarry.²⁸

When a boat was in danger of sinking, the sailors would try to lighten the load by jettisoning much of its cargo, particularly heavier items. They did the same if attacked by pirates, so as to increase the ship’s speed and facilitate flight.²⁹ Piracy was rife, and travelers’ lives were jeopardized whether when a ship was attacked or by captivity (see the continuation).³⁰ Whoever heard of colleagues who were robbed by pirates and escaped with their lives was thankful that lives had been saved and was comforted that the loss was only material:

The soldiers told us that the ship in which your excellency my lord traveled had been taken by pirates, and I was very sad about this. But afterwards I praised God and thanked Him for the safety of (your) life. ‘*Let them praise the Lord for His steadfast love*’ (Ps. 107:31, etc.) Everything can be replaced except life.³¹

Joseph Yijū, upon hearing that the ship in which his son Moses was sailing had fallen into pirates’ hands and that he, too, had been taken captive for a while, wrote him:

²⁴ No. II, 71, lines 48–56; margin, lines 19–26; cf. verso, line 43.

²⁵ Buzurg, *‘Ajā’ib al-Hind*, 17; id., *Wonders*, 11.

²⁶ No. III, 11, lines 6–7.

²⁷ No. II, 48v, lines 33–35. On wishes for resurrection of the dead, see Friedman, “Yemenite Messiah,” 137, and literature cited there.

²⁸ See chap. 2, sec. J.

²⁹ See II, 31, lines 6–10; cf. III, 22. Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:323.

³⁰ See Goitein, *ibid.*, I, 327 ff.; Jacoby, “What We Learn,” 90–91.

³¹ No. II, 55, lines 11–15; see there note to translation (page 475).

Do not think, my son, that I was grieved by what was lost. <The Lord> did for His own Name, and how happy I was that you were saved. For us, my son Moses, your being saved is the whole of this world.³²

Or, in another letter: “Do not take to heart what has happened to you. The Lord will repay <you with favor>. Your welfare—that is life and that is (the greatest) possession”.³³ In a letter that involves similar circumstances, the writer comments: “we consider the safety of your person better than this world and whatever is in it.”³⁴

In 1245, Ganapati, a king in the eastern part of Deccan in southeastern India, promulgated a charter of security to the merchants arriving at the port of Motuppalli, which had been infested by pirates. The merchants would be required to pay only the customs and dues, which the king stipulated. According to him, for the seafaring merchants who arrived from abroad at Motuppalli, “wealth is even greater than life.”³⁵ While these remarks are clearly hyperbolic, they add a fresh perspective to the words of comfort in Geniza letters, quoted in the preceding paragraphs, offered to those who had lost property to pirates: their material loss paled in insignificance as long as life was intact.

Joseph Yijū specifically noted that his son Moses had been seized and held captive (*usira, ukhidha*) by the pirates, when he had traveled East from Sicily.³⁶ The Mediterranean pirates made a practice of seizing passengers and holding them for sale on the slave market or for ransom. There was even a fixed price for ransoming a captive, 331/3 dinars.³⁷ In his edition of the letter that contains the aforementioned soldiers’ report, Goitein assumed that the pirates had taken Abū Zikrī Kohen, the addressee, captive. The letter, to be more precise, states that the pirates had seized the ship in which he had been sailing near Tāna in northern India but says nothing about him having been held captive.

I am unaware of any evidence from the Geniza documents that the Indian Ocean pirates took captives for ransom. Neither is Prof. R. Chakravarti, whom I consulted on this matter, familiar with such sources outside of

³² No. III, 49, lines 29–31.

³³ No. III, 48*v*, lines 21–23.

³⁴ No. VII, 38, lines 12–13, *fa-inna salāmat ruḥik ‘indinā akhyar (!) min al-dunyā wa-ma ‘alayhā*.

³⁵ On this charter see Chakravarti, “Rulers.” I am grateful to Prof. Chakravarti for calling this study to my attention.

³⁶ No. III, 48, lines 7, 13.

³⁷ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:329.

the Geniza.³⁸ Unlike their Mediterranean counterparts, the Indian Ocean pirates may have seized property only and let the travelers continue on their way in peace.

One letter that deals with piracy in the Indian Ocean appears to counter this assumption:

Hārūn *al-saqqāf* (the ‘roofer’) was seized by pirates (*akhadūhu al-surrāq*) while entering the port and while leaving it. He owes me 20 *filī* (an Indian coin); this is besides what belongs to you. May God provide a good replacement!³⁹

In contrast with the letter concerning Moses Yijū’s captivity and other letters describing Mediterranean captives, here the writer relates exclusively to his concern for his and his correspondent’s property and says nothing about Hārūn’s ransom or release. I suggest that “Hārūn [...] was seized” is a figure of speech here and the intention is not that he was taken prisoner but that his cargo was seized. The matter warrants, however, further investigation.

All owners of the ship’s cargo generally shared the loss incurred by jettisoning cargo that belonged to any merchant; the practice was known in Arabic as *taqsīt*. This was in accordance with Islamic maritime law as well as Jewish law.⁴⁰ The danger of shipwreck was especially acute when breaking through the coastal waves in approaching a port or leaving it.⁴¹ When a ship was wrecked just offshore, divers would be hired to bring up goods that had not been spoiled by being under water. After a certain person had drowned in a boat “in the port of Aden . . . , divers salvaged from the sea some of his goods.”⁴² A letter written from Aden to Ben Yijū in India reported a shipwreck in Bāb al-Mandab: “As to the iron, mariners were

³⁸ His letter to me from June 26, 2002.

³⁹ No. VI, 49v, lines 1–2. Also see the note to II, 55, line 13.

⁴⁰ For *taqsīt*, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:348, 489, n. 17. Examples of such sharing of loss are found in II, 31, lines 9–10; III, 12, lines 16, 24; III, 25, line 12; cf. I, 13, fol. 67v, lines 5–7. See also II, 20, lines 11, 55 (*qisṭ*). For Islamic law see Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*, 97–100. For Jewish law see *Tosefta Bava Meš’a* (ed. Lieberman), 7:14, 101 and parallels:

If a boat was sailing on the sea and a gale arose, and they lightened its cargo, the apportionment [of the loss of each passenger] is made according to the weight of the cargo and not according to a head count.

See Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshūtāh*, 9:256, and sources cited *ibid.*; Sperber, *Nautica*, 101–3. (PT Bava Meš’a 6:4 [11a]: “The apportionment is made according to weight and according to value.”)

⁴¹ See above, 23; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:319.

⁴² No. II, 70, lines 9–10.

brought from Aden, with whom it was stipulated that they should dive for it and salvage it. They salvaged about one half of the iron.”⁴³

Import-export merchants had no accident insurance, and losses were high. A person asking another to send him merchandise would explicitly exempt him from responsibility “for any risk on land or sea.”⁴⁴ In order to reduce the risk, large shipments were divided into several smaller batches, each sent on a different vessel. Merchants informing colleagues of a loss by shipwreck would generally declare that they were grieved more by their colleague’s loss than by their own.

We learned, however, that Rāshmit’s (read: Rāmishit’s) two ships were lost completely. *May the Holy one blessed be He, compensate us and you! Do not ask (me), my master, how much I was distressed by the loss of the cargo belonging to you. May the Creator compensate you soon! In any case, there is no stratagem against the decree of God.*⁴⁵

The recipient of the letter from which we have just quoted, whose property had been lost, was Abraham Ben Yijū. His losses at sea are mentioned in other documents as well. Abū Zikrī Kohen wrote to his correspondent:

You mentioned what happened to Ben Yijū. You have no need to hold back the letter, for it will cause only vexation and will bring you no benefit, since every *dirhem* that Ben Yijū had went to the bottom in Sheikh Maḍmūn’s ship, because the ship foundered immediately on entering (the sea). No one survived. Similarly, three Broach ships foundered immediately on entering (the sea). No *man* survived.⁴⁶

Might the frequent shipping and travel between Aden and India be more an indication of the extraordinary profits anticipated from this activity than the relative safety of the route (above, page 23)? In a letter from 1134 (V, 2), we read of novices realizing 200 (dinars) on an investment of 100, while an experienced trader realized 250.}

⁴³ No. III, 10, lines 31–34. On salvaging cargo from shipwrecks in the Indian Ocean, cf. Margariti, “Aden,” 278 ff. For the payment to be received by the salvager according to Islamic law in such cases, see Khalilieh, “Salvage,” 47.

⁴⁴ III, 10, lines 54, 70.

⁴⁵ No. III, 1, lines 8–12. Cf. II, 22, lines 15 ff. The last sentence (“there is no stratagem,” etc.), expressing resignation to divine decree, occurs frequently in letters after reports of various catastrophes; see above.

⁴⁶ V, 6, lines 9–14. ‘Immediately on entering (the sea),’ Arabic *fī ḥāl dukhūlibihā*. For *dukhūl*, see 502, n. 24. On the practice of sending multiple copies of letters by different ships to assure that at least one reach its destination, see page 9.}

SECTION TWO
THE DOCUMENTS

CHAPTER ONE

JOSEPH B. DAVID LEBDI AND HIS FAMILY

A. *Lawsuit of Jekuthiel al-Ḥakīm vs. Joseph Lebdi*

I, 1–2 *Session of the Rabbinical Court of Fustat*

Fustat, November 9, 1097

I, 1. ULC Add. 3418

I, 2. ULC Add. 3421

Two separate sheets, the format usual in record books. Stains and holes. ULC 3421 is the direct continuation of 3418. The two sheets might have been connected and bound together with others related to the same lawsuit. But no holes through which threads might have been fed are visible. ULC 3421^v also contains the beginning of I, 4. The document was written by Hillel b. Eli al-Baghdādī, an experienced court clerk. For information about him and the other signatories, see nn. 32 and 34.

This court record is a model of the proceedings at a session of the Jewish court of Fustat. The exact identification of time, place, and the parties concerned is followed by:

- A. *The claims of the plaintiff* (I, 1, line 6–I, 2, line 8). He enumerates the textiles (I, 1, lines 6–12), silver vessels (lines 13–18), types and weight of copper (lines 18–20), corals (lines 20–21), medical and culinary plants (line 20-verso, line 1) and cash delivered to the defendant (verso, lines 1–3), as well as the instructions given to him for actions to be taken in Aden and India (lines 5–9).
- B. *Explanations by the defendant* about his transactions in Dahlak on the southwestern coast of the Red Sea, in Aden, and India (verso, line 9–I, 2, line 1).
- C. *Questions* addressed by the Court to the defendant and the plaintiff and their answers (I, 2, line 1-verso, line 2).
- D. *Declaration* of the defendant that having delivered to the plaintiff cash and goods of the total value of 200 dinars and forgone claims to certain items due to arrive from Aden, the case, as far as he was concerned, was settled (lines 3–7).

The record is concise and quite vivid, because it was customary for the presiding judge to summarize the statements of the parties, which were then written down by the clerk during the proceedings. Occasionally the parties corrected their statements (or perhaps the summary of the judge); cf. the deletions and corrections in 1*v*, line 14, and I, 2, line 13.

No written contract made before a notary was produced in court and certainly none had existed; cf. page 32. No doubt, a *tadhkira*, or memorandum, like those in II, 33–34 {see the introduction there; II, 43, II, 44, II, 50} or VII, 50, and frequently found in the Geniza, was handed over to Joseph Lebdi and copied in the account book of Jekuthiel, as is proved by the detailed and precise claims submitted by the latter in court. The *tadhkira* specified forwarded goods, their quantities, the persons carrying them {and the recipients}.

The arguments heard in this session are echoed in subsequent meetings of the court and in the two letters sent by Joseph Lebdi to Ḥasan b. Bundār of Aden (I, 13 and 14), where they find additional clarification.

Translation

Re: Abū Ya‘qūb, the Doctor, vs. M. Joseph of Tripoli.

[I, 1] (1) *This happened on Monday, Kīselev 2, (2) 1409 of the era with which we are accustomed (E.D.), (3) in Fustat of Egypt, which is situated on the Nile River.*

(4) Mr. Jekuthiel, son of Mr. Moses, *the Doctor*—(5) *may he rest in Eden!*—sued Mr. Joseph, *known as The Son of the Lebdis* {alt. tr.: Ibn al-Lebdiyya}, for sixty-two pieces¹ (6) of clothing, as follows: eight *fūtas*² of brownish pink {lit., ‘partridge [eye]’} color, (linen) with silk;³ a red silk *fūta*, (7) and another, green one, both manufactured in Miṣr (Old Cairo),

¹ {As with English ‘piece,’ one (whole) item or unit is designated *qit‘a*. This use is common in our papers, e.g., II, 20*v*, lines 8–9, II, 26*v*, lines 11–12, a ‘piece’ of rose water. Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣir*, 140, refers to *qit‘at al-nīl*, a ‘piece’ of indigo. This same usage appears in the thirteenth century documents from the Red Sea Port of Quṣayr for units of wheat, rice and flax; see Guo, *Commerce*, 30–31. Cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:371.

² For this garment, see pages 175–80.

³ The phrase ‘with silk’ is to be understood as meaning ‘linen with silk’ {read: ‘(silk) with silk’ (?)}, cf. II, 44*v*, lines 23–24 ‘two *fūtas*, either silk with silk, or silk with linen,’ ordered in Fustat-Cairo.

made by Burayk;⁴ a Dabīqī (linen)⁵ *mulā'a* wrap⁶ (8) with silk borders and gold threads,⁷ a Sūsī, Rūsī⁸ *fūta*; and a chest (9) with textiles made in Miṣr (Fustat), numbering forty pieces of (10) white, 'raw' {alt. tr.: 'not fulled'} kerchiefs {alt. tr.: *iḥrāms*};⁹ five dotted grayish-blue {lit., 'chick-pea patterned, lead-colored'} *fūtas* and a complete, separately packed (11) goat's hair *fūta*; two matching brocade¹⁰ women's half-mantles¹¹ (12) of high quality with badges {alt. tr.: markings}; a piece of *muthallath* ('triple-thread' fabric);¹² a 'fulled' half-*thawb* (robe);¹³ a loincloth for fastening the textiles.

⁴ The name Burayk was not common among Jews, but was found in Qayrawān (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:258, bottom), Alexandria (below, II, 34, side, e, line 1, side f, line 10) TS 28.19 {see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:210} and Fustat (ULC Add 3336, margin, a letter addressed to Ezekiel b. Nethanel Dimyāfī). It is attested in the Geniza also as the name of a Melchite Christian (TS 8.224, sale of a house by his daughter). It was rare among the ancient Arabs (Ibn al-Kalbī, 2:229). Here it is the name of a well-known manufacturer of textiles in Fustat, whose religion is not indicated.

⁵ {On the common Egyptian Dabīqī linen, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:165–66, 401, n. 113, and references there; cf. al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 419 and references there.

⁶ The *mulā'a* was worn as an outer garment, when going outside, and served as a night cover (both usages appear together in the dowry list in I, 36, fol. 47, lines 30, 49). See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4, esp. 116, 166, 452, n. 33; Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 230 (index).

⁷ Arabic *muḡaṣṣaba*. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:214, 426, n. 465. (According to al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 290, fine linen gauze.)

⁸ Made in Sūsa, Tunisia. {See Diem, *Dictionary*, 108–109, and sources cited there. For Rūsī see the Appendix ('*Fūta*').} This item was so precious that Joseph Lebdi obtained 30 dinars for it in Dahlak, one half of the worth of all the textiles delivered to him by Jekuthiel and sold in that port. See I, 5, line 13.

⁹ {The *iḥrām* is mentioned in I, 5, line 8. Also VI, 16, lines 20–22: "17 white *iḥrāms* manufactured in Alexandria." Maimonides, in his commentary to Shabbat 20, 5, defines *sādīn* as: "a small wrap (*ridā*), which we call *iḥrām*" (see Shailat, Shabbat, 172). Besides the garment worn by a pilgrim, this is defined by Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:279, as a cover for the bath or a cover for the head and shoulders or only for the shoulders. Note the forty pieces of cloth mentioned in I, 4, lines 7–8. Below, 'kerchief' usually translates *mandīl*, for which see page 185, n. 8.

¹⁰ Arabic *mudabbaj* (also in I, 22, line 24; I, 36, fol. 47, line 20), i.e., *dibāj* work. For *dibāj* (I, 36, fol. 47, lines 36, 38–40, 49), see Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 201–202, 245 (index); Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:20 (s.v. brocade); Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 12, 22, 46; Gil, "Silk," 32 (according to whom it is the most frequently used word for silk cloth in the Geniza) does not mention brocade.) 'Matching' translates *miṭā'yya*, derived from *miṭw*, pl. *miṭā*, peer, similar.

¹¹ Arabic *Niṣṣayn ardiya* is the dual of *niṣf ridā*, half-mantle, a piece of female clothing fairly common in the Geniza {cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:397, n. 31}.

¹² 'Three-thread,' twill, a heavy fabric, used for garments, covers of mattresses, and caps worn beneath more sumptuous head covers, common in the Geniza, but seemingly not found in this sense in the dictionaries. Discussed in Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 4:114, 379, n. 44 {where this document is cited. Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 57: "literally 'triangle cloth', perhaps a fabric with three different types of thread"; Gil, "Silk," 33, defines it a 'triple-layered.' According to Lebdi's statement in I, 5, lines 15–16, this piece of *muthallath* was used for wrapping the textiles.

(13) Silver vessels: a ‘burned,’ inlaid¹⁴ sprinkler, weighing 70 dirhems; (14) a gilded inlaid flask, weighing $21\frac{1}{4}$; a censer with a handle {lit., ‘a handle of a censer’}, niello- (15) ornated,¹⁵ ‘burned,’ inlaid, weighing 82 dirhems; a water jug with its lid, (16) niello-ornated and gilded, weighing $78\frac{1}{2}$, a wash basin, niello-ornated (17) and gilded, $52\frac{1}{4}$, a niello-ornated gilded bowl, weighing (18) 55 dirhems.

Copper:¹⁶ hammered yellow copper (brass), and also cast copper, (19) both in a bundle {alt. tr.: bag} weighing 110 Egyptian pounds.¹⁷

Corals: (20) two sales-units less one tenth.¹⁸

¹³ For ‘not fulled’ (line 10) and ‘fulled’ material, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:177–78; and below 426, n. 69. Cf. Gil, “Flax,” 82–83 (some of his linguistic notes merit reconsideration, in my opinion). ‘Half-robe,’ Arabic *nisf thawb*. This item is rare; cf. I, 5, line 15. The *thawb* meant both the standard robe that covered the whole body and a piece of cloth of the size needed to make it or one of twenty *fūtas* or was used as a general term for garment. See page 179, n. 30; 304, n. 8; IV, 1, lines 2–4; and the discussions in Goitein, *ibid.*, 1:229, 2:131, 4:180; Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 12, 78–79.

¹⁴ ‘Burned’ = *muhraq*; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:223, ‘*muhraq*, burnished with gold’; 392, n. 42, “‘burnt silver’ *muhraqa*” (not listed in the Index but in Diem, *Dictionary*, 40). For the confusing use of *muharraq* (so vocalized), see al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 430 (and references there), according to whom, when used for silver, it means ‘blackened or inlaid with niello’ (see the following note) or possibly ‘etched,’ while *muharraq bil-dhabab*: ‘silver etched then inlaid with gold.’ As noted *ib.*, 395, the word is spelled *mukharraq* (i.e., with a diacritical over the letter *h*), ‘perforated,’ in one source. The spelling in Hebrew characters, in the Geniza texts, irrefutably demonstrates the correct reading of the letter (*h* rather than *kh*). ‘Inlaid’ = *mughraq*, which according to al-Qaddūmī, *ib.*: “silver overlaid with gold, profusely ornate.”

¹⁵ Arabic *yad midkhana mujrāh sawād*. For the *midkhana*, ‘censer,’ see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:137–38. For ‘niello-ornated,’ see Goitein, *ib.*, 212–13, 425, nn. 452–55, where the year 1117 for the earliest dated Geniza document, in which this is found, is to be corrected to 1097, as indicated by its use here in I, 1. Goitein, *ib.*, 4:425, n. 454, comments that since *mujrāh*, ‘niello,’ is spelled in Hebrew characters *mgyr*, the letter *g* could represent Arabic *j* or *gh*, and that the correct reading is ascertained by the appearance of the word in two Arabic sources. To these the many citations in al-Qaddūmī, *ib.*, 431 can be added; there the term does not appear with ‘black’ and it is explained as ‘inlaid’ (see here the preceding note). Since here the same item is described *mujrāh sawād* and in the continuation, *muhraqa*, it is obvious that both terms cannot mean niello; see preceding note. For the niello technique in medieval sources, especially in Jewish literature, see Narkiss, “Niello” (thanks to Nurit Reich for this reference). According to him the technique probably was introduced in Europe from the East in the Middle Ages and was known to Spanish Jewry in the 13th century. For the niello technique in Yemen, see Qāfīh, “*Lāz*.”

¹⁶ Arabic *nahās* (also verso, line 15, deleted). For the meaning of this term, see page 555, n. 11.

¹⁷ ‘Pound’ translates *ratl*. For exact values of the Egyptian *ratl*, see Ashtor, “Weights,” 472–74.

¹⁸ Corals, *marjān*, “were sold wholesale (by the thousands) in ‘selling units,’ *bay‘a*” (Goitein, “Portrait,” 457, n. 33). According to al-Dimashqī, corals were put on the market in quantities of 10.5 Egyptian *ratls* (pounds) (Dietrich, “*Marjān*”). This is a common

Scammony:¹⁹ the blue one, (weighing) 20 dirhems.

(21) Storax: the dry, red one, a load weighing 380 *manns*.²⁰

Lichen (22) 400 *manns*, exactly;

Dodder of thyme from Crete: 10 *manns*.

[Verso] (1) A barrel of fluid storax, weighing 50 *manns* exactly. He received it from 'Arūs,²¹ but it is mine.

A purse (2) with 20 fresh dinars²² of excellent mint. (He continued):

I paid also the expenses (3) for the customs in {alt. tr.: I paid also the toll²³ of (3) the customs of} Fustat and the boat's freight for everything to {add:

export item from the Mediterranean to Yemen, India and East Asia (Dietrich, *ib.*; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:47) It is mentioned as such frequently in the documents in this collection; see the Index. Goitein comments (below, 346, n. 64) that corals served both as ornaments (an example in the dowry of the daughter of an India trader, III, 54v, line 2) and for protection of a young child from the evil eye and (188, n. 10) 'for religious (or, as we would say, magical) purposes'. They also served multiple medicinal purposes (Dietrich, *ib.*). Throughout his corpus, Gil, *Ishmael*, defines *marjān* (vocalized *mirjān*) 'small pearls' (see *ib.*, 4:934). Though this definition appears in some dictionaries, it is unlikely that it was intended in our documents, since pearls were bountiful in the Indian Ocean and in India (cf. Ruska, "Durr"; Watt, *Commercial Products*, 557–58; Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, 173–76) and would hardly be imported there from the West. Pearls (*lu'lu'*) were an import item to Egypt from Aden; cf. II, 75; III, 42a, list a, line 1 (there perhaps pearls from India). See further Shy, "Terms," 221–22, 240, who cites additional sources for *marjān*, 'corals,' and rejects Gil's translation (for his response, see Gil, "Merchants," 307, n. 156).

¹⁹ Arabic *mahmūda*, an indigenous Palestinian and Mediterranean plant, still imported today to Egypt from Syria and Greece. The juice extracted from it is used as a strong diuretic drug. The name *mahmūda* (= high quality), which perhaps originated from its strong action, is still used in Egypt and Morocco. For the medicinal faculties of scammony see further Maimonides-Meyerhof, no. 281 and also Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 141–42, who mentions that the name *mahmūda* is used also in Iraq; also see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:584, n. 43; *id. Letters*, 55, n. 11.

²⁰ Storax, "*may'a*, an aromatic resin obtained from trees in Asia Minor, used in perfume and medicine, a common commodity exported via Alexandria, Cairo, and Aden to India, as proved by the Geniza letters" (Goitein, "Portrait," 457, n. 32; cf. *id.*, *Letters*, 243, n. 15). For its medicinal faculties, see Maimonides, *Lexicography*, ed. Muntner, no. 228; Dols, *Islamic Medicine*, 164; Isaacs, *Medical Manuscripts*, 132; Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 140. The *mann* consists "of two pounds slightly lighter than the pound of Fustat" (Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:360). For exact values of the *mann*, see Ashtor, "Weights," 474–75.

²¹ This is Abu 'l-Afrāḥ 'Arūs b. Joseph al-Arjawānī al-Mahdawī. On him see Goitein, "Portrait," 450 ff. and VI, 5–15; VII, 67, 70. Storax and corals were exported together to India by 'Arūs in VI, 11, line 9 (Goitein, *ib.*, 457 and n. 33, where he refers to I, 1–2).

²² 'Fresh' renders *ṭarī*. Elsewhere, Goitein explains this word both in the sense of fresh, full weight dinars, unimpaired by wear, and the Sicilian quarter dinar (*rubā'ī*), the *tarī*. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:115 (Index, the reference there to 264 is a misprint for 265) and especially 1:237. According to Grassi, "Ṭarī," it refers only to the *rubā'ī*, but the word may have been used originally for a fresh 'uncirculated *rubā'ī*.' Also see Gil, *Ishmael*, 1:567–68.

²³ Arabic *mawwān*, *ma'ūna*, often spelled *mwnb*, *mu'na*, *mūna*. The plural is spelled *mwn*, *mwwn*, i.e., *mu'an*, *muwwan*. Dictionary definitions include 'provisions', 'encumbrance.'

the port of}²⁴ Qūs. (4) I sent everything with him to sell and buy for me whatever God would grant {lit., ‘facilitate’}.

(5) I told him: “If God grants you {lit., ‘facilitates your’} safe arrival in Aden, send (6) for me one half of this shipment by the agency of Ḥasan b. Bundār to Manībār {or: Munaybār},²⁵ (7) the pepper country, to buy for me pepper, and the other half should be (8) with you until you come to Nahrwāra, where you will buy lac for me with it, and bring everything back (9) with you.”

The aforementioned Mr. Joseph was asked about this and replied:

I received from him (10) a bundle of textiles and arrived with it at Dahlak. In Dahlak (11) I noticed that textiles sold well there; so I sold the best pieces.²⁶ The proceeds of this (12) were 60 good first-class *mithqāls*, [[and there remained with me]] together with what had remained (13) of it and was sold in Aden.

As for the silver vessels, I received them from him (14) and delivered them to Ḥasan b. Bundār, the agent, as he had ordered me [[for buying]]. (15) The lichen [[and the copper]] was also handed over by me to Ḥasan b. Bundār, who sold it (16) and added its proceeds to the 60 dinars, for which I had sold the textiles and which I had delivered (17) to him. He owes also the proceeds of the storax, of which I had sold in Dahlak a quantity worth (18) 40 dinars in local currency equivalent to ten good *mithqāls*.²⁷

The word appears often in reference to expenses connected with merchandise. Examples in I, 2, line 4 (*ba’d al-mu’na wal-wājib*, “after the *mu’na* and the dues), I, 6, line 7 (“customs, ‘tithes,’ and *mu’an*”), I, 6, line 11 (“for which I was not required to pay *ma’ūna*), I, 33, lines 9, II, 1, line 11, II, 16, line 37 (“‘tithe,’ *mu’na* and [cost of] the porter”), II, 32, lines 10, 34, 35, II, 61, line 43 (“the customs and the *mu’an* and the like”), III, 12, line 19, III, 18, account A, line 9, III, 42, list 3, line 3, IV, 57, line 10, V, 8, margin line 3 (“Please, my lord, give to the porter of the lac, PN, whatever *mu’na* the bag requires, which the man says”), VII, 1, line 10, verso, line 7, VII, 35, margin, line 1, VII, 45, lines 9–10 (“I spent a great deal on customs and *mu’an*”). On page 372, n. 10, Goitein explained: “customs and other dues . . . plus freight” In 637, n. 5: cost of transport on land. Following Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:195, 448, n. 14 (cf. Diem, *Dictionary*, 200), it seems more specifically to denote in these cases a toll. While in the text here, I translated *ma’ūnat maks*, literally ‘the toll of the customs,’ the more idiomatic ‘customs toll’ is preferable. The phrase *mu’nat al-ṭariq* in I, 13 [fol. 67], line 19 and I, 30, line 18, apparently means ‘transport expenses.’

²⁴ Arabic *sāhil*; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:636b.

²⁵ I.e., the Malabar Coast. For the vocalization Munaybār, see Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 450.

²⁶ See page 199, n. 6.}

²⁷ The exchange rate between the Maliki dinar of Yemen and the internationally accepted Egyptian dinar varied in the Geniza papers from 1:2.2 to 1:4. The official exchange rate was 1:4.5 (see Löfgren, “Glossary,” 34 [Ibn al-Mujawir, *Al-Mustabsir*, 89, line 4]). According to a communication of George C. Miles, the American Numismatic Society possesses a Maliki dinar weighing 2.33 grams. This would correspond approxi-

(19) These I handed over to Ḥasan b. Bundār, together with the dodder of thyme, the scammony (20) and the cover²⁸ of the textiles. I took the remainder of the dry storax and the corals (21) to Nahrwāra. As far as the barrel of fluid storax is concerned, (22) I received it from ʿArūs, but settled the account for its price with Mr. Jekuthiel [I, 2] (1) prior to my departure, and he has no claim to it.

We asked Joseph about the proceeds from the remainder (2) of the dry storax and the corals, which, as he said, had gone (3) with him to Nahrwāra. He answered:

(4) The storax, after the deduction of costs for transport {alt. tr.: after the toll} and the dues, brought (5) 120 (local) dirhems. As to the corals, I bartered them (6) for beads.²⁹ A part of these were lost at sea. The remainder (7) is in a bag of *sharāb* (fine linen), which is here. The proceeds from the storax were added (8) by me to the shipment entrusted to me, and I bought for it the {alt. tr.: whatever} goods he wished to have, (9) which I delivered to him in accordance with the accounts made with him.³⁰

Then he was asked (10) with regard to the advance given to him by Ḥasan b. Bundār on account of the pepper. He replied: (11)

The aforementioned Ḥasan lent me, on account of 50 *bahārs* pepper, (12) five dinars for each *bahār*,³¹ of which there were for [[Sheikh]] Mr. Jekuthiel (13) 15 *bahārs*, of which [[three were *bahārs* of {alt. tr.: for} iron {alt. tr.: silk}]] one fourth were for iron {alt. tr.: silk}.³²

mately to the rate 1:2.2, provided it was not excessively debased. {The *mithqāl* is the full weight (according to Miles, “*Dīnār*,” 297b, 4.25 grams) Egyptian dinar; see Friedman, “Dispute,” 140, n. 4, and the literature noted there. The exchange rate between it and the Malīkī dinar varies in our documents. As here (in Dahlak!) it is 1:4 also in II, 1, margin, lines 7–9; II, 21, lines 3–4 (see note there); II, 23, lines 35–36, 1:3.5 (see note there); in the following it is between 1:2.3 and 1:2.5: II, 16*v*, lines 15–16; II, 20, lines 31–32; the note to III, 21, line 3; III, 28a, lines 17–18; IV, 1, line 23.

²⁸ Arabic *liffā*, which is equivalent to *lifāfa* (mentioned in I, 5, line 20, I, 14, line 42). Cf. IV, 78, line 14 *al-liffāt al-ḥarīr*. See now, Blau, *Dictionary*, 635.

²⁹ ‘I bartered’ translates *ʿanadtū bibī*; see III, 12, line 31 and 617, n. 23. Different kinds of beads were common commodities. See the Indexes to Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:17; Goitein, *Letters*, 346; Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:933. These *kharaz* may have been made of glass; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:361a. Rich findings of glass beads from the medieval Islamic world have been identified, and they may have been imported from India; see Meyer, *Glass*, 94–95, 128, 136.

³⁰ Following Goitein’s Hebrew translation, render lines 8–9: “...and I bought for it goods. Whatever he wants from the various types of goods, I shall deliver to him, in accordance with his account.”

³¹ A *bahār* (also spelled *buhār*) is “usually 300 pounds in our papers” (Goitein, *Letters*, 64, n. 13).

³² Iron, a common import item from southern India, is not mentioned elsewhere in the papers dealing with Jekuthiel’s order. In the handwriting of the scribe Hillel b. Eli the

Then Joseph was asked (14) how much the storax sold in Dahlak weighed. He replied:

(15) I sold them two *manns* for one dinar, the total proceeds amounting to 80 *manns*, (16) worth 40 dinars (of the currency) mentioned above. When I arrived (17) here, he argued with me concerning the goods entrusted to me and there was much wrangling (18) between us. As a sign of good will I delivered to him in exchange for that merchandise a load (19) of lac worth 100 dinars and lent {lit., ‘advanced’} him another 100 dinars on account of the pepper to be sent {lit., ‘his assets held’} (20) by Ibn Bundār.

Asked about this, Mr. Jekuthiel (21) replied: “As to his statement about the 200 dinars, I did indeed receive [Verso] (1) from him these 200 dinars in the way (2) he described, but they are due me.” On this Mr. Joseph remarked:

(3) As to those 100 dinars, which I advanced him on account of his assets (4) in Aden; if the shipment arrives safely and will be worth more than 100, the balance belongs to him, (5) and if it is less, he is permitted, as from now, to keep the remainder (of the 100 dinars advanced).

In addition, Mr. Joseph (6) said *during the session*: “I gave him these 200 dinars expressly (7) as a final settlement of all (our accounts).”

The proceedings have been written down and signed to serve as a confirmation of rights and a proof.

*/// Hillel b. R. Eli may his memory be blessed!*³³ *///*

*Abraham b. R. Shema‘ya, Fellow (of the Yeshiva)—may his soul dwell in bliss and his children inherit the land!*³⁴—*descendant of Shema‘ya, the Head of the Yeshiva—may he rest in Eden!*

*Solomon ha-Kohen, son of R. Joseph, ‘Father’ (of the Yeshiva), the memory of the righteous is blessed!*³⁵

Hebrew letters ‘d’ and ‘r’ are often indistinguishable, and instead of *ḥadīd*, ‘iron,’ *ḥarīr*, ‘silk,’ can be read here.}

³³ The scribe who wrote the record. His name is put between two lines each of which represents a stylized final *m* with a long flourish in both Arabic and Hebrew script (for *khatam*, ‘he signed, sealed’). For Hillel b. Eli, a native of Baghdad, dated documents of whose hand have been preserved from the years 1066 through 1108, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:231, and passim. Hillel wrote also I, 4–15 and 16–18b of this dossier.

³⁴ {Ps. 25:13, its first section translated as understood by some commentators as a blessing for the dead.}

³⁵ Abraham b. Shem‘aya (dated documents signed by him: 1092–1132) and Solomon ha-Kohen b. Joseph (dated documents: 1077–98) were both descendants of Gaons, that is, Heads of the Jewish High Council (Yeshiva) of Jerusalem and served as professional judges on the rabbinical court of Fustat. See about them Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:512, secs. 11 and 12. Abraham b. Shem‘aya signed also I, 4–5, 6–7, 8, 11, 12, 18, and Solomon ha-Kohen I, 4, 12, 16.

*Appendix to I, 1–2: Fūṭa**

The *fūṭa*, a garment frequently mentioned in the Geniza, was sent from Egypt to Aden and from there to India. It was an untailed long piece of cloth, worn either around the loins and legs similar to the sari,¹ or covering the shoulders. Two *fūṭas*, one for the upper, and one for the lower part of the body, formed the customary apparel of the Indians, as reported by an early Arab traveler.² Further east, in Malaya, as noted by the same observer, rich and poor left the upper part of the body uncovered, while wrapping a *fūṭa* (known there as *sarong*) around the waist, similar to a skirt.³

When *fūṭas* were ordered, sent, or carried in pairs, they were probably intended to form a complete outfit, although this should not be assumed for all cases.⁴ Only the goat's hair *fūṭa*, which obviously served to protect the entire body from the cold, {almost} always appears in the singular.⁵

At first glance it appears strange that pieces of cloth, which were the national costume of India, should be imported to that country.⁶

* {This is the only specimen I found that Goitein wrote for inclusion in his intended Introduction to the India Book. It is primarily relevant here.

¹ The use of sari, here and Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:131, 448; 4:155, 403, does not appear to conform with its accepted definition.}

² Sauvaget, *Relation*, 9, sec. 16, 45, n. 3. {The report seems to deal here not with the Indian dress, but with that of the inhabitants of Ṣanf, identified as “Champa situated between Cambodia and the delta of the Song Coi in Viet Nam” (Lamant, “Ṣanf”). The reference to the Indian dress is in the note. An English translation of the passage is found in Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 27; cf. *ibid.*, 54: “The dress of each of the inhabitants consists of two *fūṭas*, one is worn and the other is used as a covering.”}

³ Sauvaget, *Relation*, 8, sec. 15, 44, n. 3. {The text describes the dress of the inhabitants of Kalāh (for the attempts to locate this toponym, see Streck, “Kalah”; Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 106 ff.), while the reference to the *sarong*, etc., is in the note. An English translation of the passage is found in Tibbetts, *ibid.*, 26; cf. 52–53: “The dress of the inhabitants is a single *fūṭa*; and is the same for men and women.”}

⁴ For instance, II, 44, lines 23–24, verso, lines 29–30 (seven such orders {four orders totaling twelve *fūṭas*}); II, 16v, line 9; II, 23, lines 49–50; II, 26, lines 4–5 (all sent from Aden to India); VI, 16, line 23 (found in the Red Sea port of Sawākin among the belongings of a dead merchant); P. Heid. 917, C, line 7 (bought in Fustat; the document is translated in Goitein, “Bankers Accounts,” 53).

⁵ No. I, 1, line 10; II, 23, lines 49–50; III, 3, line 16; III, 21b, line 19; VI, 16, line 15. {Goat's hair renders *sharī*, lit., ‘hairy.’ In I, 1, line 11, this item is described as *mufrada tāmma*, ‘separate (Goitein translates there: separately packed) and complete.’ These *fūṭas* in II, 23 and III, 3, are listed as one item, but it is not specified that they were separate units. No. VI, 16, line 15, is an error, however, as forty-three of these *fūṭas* are listed there, as part of an merchant's inventory, which, of course, does not disprove that they were usually worn as a single piece of clothing.}

⁶ The very word *fūṭa*, as was known to the Arabs, is Indian. *Tāj al-Arus*, 19:549, quotes Ibn Durayd (837–933), who describes it as derived from “*pōta* in the language of Sind.” (Since Arabic script has no *ō*, Ibn Durayd says: a *u* not fully articulated.)

However, as the small quantities listed indicate, those *fūtas* were destined for the Westerners living or sojourning in India, who adapted themselves to the clothing habits of their environment, but wished to be distinguished from it by the special types of *fūtas* they wore.⁷

The locally manufactured *fūtas* of India were generally made of cotton.⁸ Those imported, as far as indicated, were of silk, even those for children,⁹ or a weave of silk and linen,¹⁰ or of high quality linen.¹¹ Linen *fūtas* were sent from Aden to a business friend in India to be given as presents for his children.¹² Goat's hair *fūtas* have been noted;¹³ but (sheep's) wool is never mentioned.

Fūtas 'of six' and 'seven' (namely cubits in length) occur in the Geniza. These are the same measurements as those given by Abbé Dubois at the beginning of the nineteenth century, namely the first for the cloth wound around the shoulders and the second for that girded around the waist. But since two orders from Aden list these measurements in pairs, the lengths of the upper and lower *fūtas* were perhaps not always different.¹⁴

The *fūtas* exported to India were made in Miṣr (Fustat), where one manufacturer seems to have enjoyed particular fame; in Sūsa, Tunisia, the most prominent center of the Mediterranean textile industry in Geniza times; in Spain, the country of choice silk; and perhaps in Sicily, also renowned for its silk products.¹⁵

⁷ E.g., sixteen *fūtas* of different makes and limited cost and one of exceptionally high value, sent from Fustat to Aden and India: I, 1, lines 6–11. Thirty-one *fūtas* sold in Aden for 15 dinars and 19 *qirāts*, IV, 1, line 9. See n. 17, below.

⁸ Spies, *Ibn Faḍlallah*, 27. Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5:93 bottom (*quṭn*). See n. 32, below.

⁹ No. VI, 28, line 8: acknowledgment in Aden of receipt of a silk *fūta* from Egypt, II, 44, lines 23–25: two orders for small silk *fūtas* for children.

¹⁰ No. I, 1, line 6, II, 44v, lines 23–24.

¹¹ No. II, 44v, line 30.

¹² No. III, 1v, lines 16–17.

¹³ See page 178.

¹⁴ 'Of six,' *sudāsī*: II, 44v, line 29 (here two of this length are ordered); TS 16.339, line 15 [ed. Ben-Sasson, *Sicily*, no. 101; Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:142–151, no. 348] (one, sent from al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia, to Egypt). 'Of seven,' *subā'ī*; II, 44v, line 23 (also two) [see also line 11]. In Löfgren, *Aden*, 1:60, *subā'ī* does not refer to a *fūta*. Dubois, *Mœurs*, 1:455, quoted by Sauvaget, *Relation*, 45, n. 3. [For *subā'ī*; see further Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:401, n. 119. Below, 427, n. 70: it may denote a cloth with seven stripes. According to Smith, *Studies*, 10, 132, 'loincloth.']

¹⁵ Miṣr *fūtas*, e.g., I, 1, line 7; II, 23, lines 48–49; II, 26, lines 4–5; [II, 30, line 10;] VI, 16, line 23. see the note to I, 1, line 6. Sūsa: see n. 24, below. Spain: II, 16v, line 9; II, 44, lines 24–25 [III, 21b, lines 9, 18]; Sicily: see n. 29, below.

As from the middle of the eleventh century, that is, at a time when the Geniza does not yet have material about the India trade, *fūtas* sent from Tunisia and Sicily to Alexandria and from there to Cairo are repeatedly mentioned in both business and private correspondence. When a Sicilian husband, who divorced his Egyptian wife gets back from her “the *fūta* with which I clothed her,” and when in Fustat in 1139/40, at a distribution of clothing to the poor, fifteen out of a total of fifty-seven persons receive *fūtas*, it is evident that this was a piece of apparel, as it was in India, and not a mere kerchief or towel, as in later Arabic usage.¹⁶

The prices of *fūtas* in the Mediterranean area around 1050 and those in the Arabian-Indian region of the first half of the twelfth century also indicate that the term refers to objects of the same type. An example for the first is a sale of two shipments, each containing forty-five *fūtas*, one sold for 25²³/₂₄ dinars and the second for 24¹/₆ dinars, slightly above half a dinar per piece, as was noted for Aden in note 7, above.¹⁷ This seems to have been the standard price for regular *fūtas*, which was modified by the natural fluctuations of the market. “Seven red *fūtas*” cost 146¹/₂ dirhems in Qayrawān, Tunisia, in July 1048, almost exactly 21 dirhems per piece, or about two thirds of a dinar according to the exchange rates then prevailing.¹⁸ A similar price was charged for shipments from Aden to India around 1140.¹⁹ But when an Alexandrian merchant, on his way to the East, bought a *fūta*, perhaps a secondhand one, in the Red Sea port of ‘Aydhāb, he paid only one third of a dinar.²⁰ Contrariwise, when an Adenese merchant made an order for the very best linen *fūtas* available in Cairo, he added “one *mithqāl* per piece,” and a young Egyptian dealer in precious textiles obtained prices of 1¹/₆ to 1³/₄ Egyptian dinars

¹⁶ TS 8J 5, f. 16 (dated 1095). The story of the divorce is told in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:177. The distribution to the poor: *ibid.*, II, 448, sec. 33. An example of large quantities of *fūtas* sent from Tunisia to Egypt: seventy-eight to one customer and fifty-two to another, TS 8J 19 f 24, lines 4–5 {ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:212–15, no. 667} (ca. 1060). Among his assets in Fustat Joseph Lebdi lists one hundred *fūtas*, I, 22, line 26.

¹⁷ ULC Or 1080 J 79, line 25 {ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:618–23, no. 486} (ca. 1050, when Nahray just started business in Egypt). The same in Nahray’s later years, P. Heid. 917 (see n. 4, above): 1¹/₈ for two *fūtas*.

¹⁸ TS 20.96v, line 25. Exchange rate: Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:377–78, secs. 31–35. This tallies with Goitein, *Letters*, 241, where ten red *fūtas* imported from the Maghreb cost 7–7¹/₂ dinars in Fustat around 1090.

¹⁹ No. II, 23, lines 49–50; II, 26, lines 4–5. In both cases, two Egyptian *fūtas* cost four Malikī dinars. Assuming an average exchange rate of the Egyptian against the Malikī dinar as 1:3 {see page 172, n. 27}, we arrive at an approximate price of two thirds of an Egyptian dinar.

²⁰ No. VI, 39, line 12.

for his *fūtas* in Aden.²¹ A goat's hair *fūta* sent to India cost 3¼ Maliki dinars, about one Egyptian dinar.²²

A particular difficulty is presented by the 'Russian *fūta* made in Sūsa,' which was sold in the Red Sea port Dahlak for 30 dinars.²³ If we disregard female dresses, which were sometimes studded with pearls and jewels, such a price for a single piece of clothing is practically absent from the Geniza.²⁴ Two fourteenth century Muslim antiquarians quote the chief judge of India, Sirāj al-Dīn 'Umar al-Shiblī as saying: "No one is permitted to wear the linen garments imported into this kingdom from the Russians and Alexandria²⁵ except one who has been clothed with them by the Sultan."²⁶ This statement might demonstrate the exceptional value of 'Russian' linen in India, at least during the fourteenth century. Already in the twelfth century *nūsī* seems to have been regularly imported to India from Aden, for Abu Makhrama (1465–1540) the historian {rather: Ibn al-Mujāwir, the twelfth century historian} of that town, notes—(seemingly) referring to the Zuray'ids who ruled Yemen during most of that century: "The *nūsī* is sold measured by an iron rod four cubits long."²⁷ Joseph Lebdi's sale of a *nūsī* in 1095 or so is not the earliest occurrence of the term *nūsī*, however. Ḥayyīm b. 'Ammar of Palermo (dated documents 1051–66) sends, with a business friend, eight costly textiles among them two 'silk' *fūtas*, one *waṣatiyya* (a 'waist' *fūta*) and one *rūṣiyya*.²⁸ If 'silk' means that these *fūtas* were made entirely

²¹ No. II, 44v, line 30, VI, 11, lines 7–8. {The price of 1½ dinars matches the data in a responsum written by Mevōrākh b. Saadya, concerning a trader who shipped 100 silk *fūtas* from Alexandria to his partner in Tyre, Lebanon, where they apparently were sold for a sum of 149 dinars (ENA 3725, f. 9).}

²² II, 23, lines 49–50. {Cf. III, 21b, lines 8–9, 3¼ Malikī dinars.}

²³ No. I, 5, line 12, *nūsiyya sūsiyya*, cf. I, 1, line 8: *sūsiyya nūsiyya*. These 30 dinars represented one half of the total proceeds from sixty-two textiles entrusted to Joseph Lebdi on his trip to India.

²⁴ The price of 60 dinars offered for a *hulla*, or festive costume, sent from Egypt to Tunisia (Goitein, *Letters*, 76, top) is an exception proving the rule. The three senior Tustari brothers who had chosen it were the leading merchants of Fustat. The son of one of them, Abū Sa'd, became 'vizier' of the mother of the baby caliph al-Mustaṣfir. {For the *hulla*, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:154; Stillman, *Dress*, 12, 33, 59; and the introduction to II, 8.}

²⁵ I take this as meaning: from the Russians *via* Alexandria, for 'and from A.' would have to be Arabic *wa-min*.

²⁶ Spies, *Ibn Fadlallah*, 27, lines 12–13; (53, German). Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5:93, bottom.

²⁷ Löfgren, *Aden*, 1:65, line 14 {Ibn al-Mujāwir, *al-Mustabṣir*, 145}.

²⁸ TS NS 323, f. 1. For Ḥayyīm b. 'Ammār see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:374, sec. 22,

of that material, it seems doubtful whether *rūṣiyya* refers to Russia. It might rather mean ‘with silk borders,’ or the like. I prefer to leave this question open.²⁹

We hear little in the Geniza about export of *fūtas* from India. But the occasional way in which they are mentioned among other textiles sent from India to Aden might indicate that in fact such shipments were quite common, at least on the route to Aden.³⁰ Indian garments are conspicuously absent from the trousseau lists of Egyptian brides. One, who had five such pieces, among them two *fūtas*, can be considered an exception. She possessed also many Yemenite items, for instance, a silk *fūta* from Zabīd. Her father seems to have been an India trader.³¹ A silk *fūta* sent from Aden to Cairo together with a small quantity of aromatic wood in 1219 was probably a present; and the same is expressly stated concerning an Indian *fūta* given to a brother.³²

One of the {bride’s} two *fūtas* just mentioned was white, which, as well as green, was found by me only once each.³³ Red was popular, both in the Indian and the Mediterranean regions.³⁴ It is noteworthy, however, that subdued colors, such as grayish-blue (‘lead-colored’), dark gray (‘pepper-colored’), and grayish-brown (‘partridge color’) were also

and 455, n. 56 {and Gil, *Ishmael*, 1:583}. Since the writing of that volume ENA 2805, f. 14, dated 12 April 1051, has been identified {ed. Gil, ib., 2:730–34, no. 248}. In both *waṣaṭiyya* and *rūṣiyya* ṣ stands for s, as often in Maghrebi papers, especially in words containing sounds like ṭ and rū.

²⁹ The term *rūṣī* might stand for *ruṣī*, ‘of heads,’ the *fūta*, with which people could also protect their heads. In this case, one would hardly expect the plural, and since *rūṣī* in India of the fourteenth century undoubtedly meant ‘Russian,’ it is likely that it had that meaning also in the eleventh. {For sources on Rūṣī cloth, see also Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 131; Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 192, where the suggestion that *rūṣ* may be derived from *sūs* can be discarded in light of the documents reviewed above that cite *sūsī* and *rūṣī* together.}

³⁰ No. II, 10, line 3. {From II, 10, lines 5–6, we see that large quantities of *fūtas* were counted in *kawrajas* (units of twenties) and *dasts* (dozens), while each individual *fūta*, was called a *ṭhawb*, for which see above, 170, n. 13.}

³¹ TS K 25, f. 42, lines 2–4. This manuscript forms one document together with TS Ar. 4, f. 4. Besides Indian textiles that bride also possessed an Indian bucket, *saṭl*, worth 1½ dinars, ib. line 8.

³² One silk *fūta* as present: VII, 52, line 14. One Indian *fūta* given to a brother: VII, 34, lines 7–8 (thirteenth century).

³³ Green: I, 1, line 7 (made of silk, sent from Cairo to India).

³⁴ Red: I, 1, 6 (silken, sent from Cairo to India); IV, 16, line 23 (two red *fūtas* made in Egypt, being sent to India); TS 20.69*w*, line 25 (seven; in Qayrawān, Tunisia); TS 8 J 25, f. 19, line 14 {ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:399–402, no. 415} (three, in Alexandria).

favored.³⁵ Checkered ('chess board') and dotted ('chickpeas') patterns enhanced the variety of clothing, which, travelling from East to West and West to East, symbolized the interaction of two different worlds.³⁶

³⁵ No. I, 1, line 10: *raṣāṣī* (five pieces); VI, 16, line 18: *fulfilī*; I, 1, line 6: *hajalī* (eight pieces); VI, 16, line 16, all sent to India. Rudolf Mach drew my attention to French *oeil de perdrix*, 'partridge eye,' which designates the reddish-brown, or pink color of a certain wine; see Goldman, *Great Wines*, 61 (said also of the color of a corn on one's toe). In this case, however, the Arabic would probably be '*ayn al-hajala*. Such composite attributes are common, e.g., *fūta fath al-ward*, a *fūta* (ornamented with) budding roses, TS 8 J 26, f. 5, line 15, sent, it seems, from Alexandria to Fustat. {Also note VI, 35, lines 25–26: a camphor-colored (*kāfūrī*) 'fulled' *fūta*, with cut edges, of exquisite Sūsa manufacture.}

³⁶ TS NS J 414, lines 4–5 (frag. of trousseau): *fūta shatranjī bi-ḥarīr bi-ḥawashī zuwq*, a chessboard *fūta*, (linen) with silk and blue borders. {Cf. II, 43, line 10: two exquisite checkered (*muqaffās*), 'fulled' Sūsi *fūtas*. For checkered patterns in clothing, see Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 59–60.} No. I, 1, line 10; II, 23, line 48 {II, 30, line 10}: *himmiṣī*; sent to India. {For the *fūta*, see also Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 130, n. 63; Nainar, *Arab Geographers*, 96; and especially Stillman, "Female Attire," 214–16. For pictures of a man wearing a waist-cloth (*fūta*) and of weaving *fūtas* in Yemen, see Baldry, *Textiles in Yemen*, plates 8–11.}

I, 3 *Second Session of the Rabbinical Court of Fustat*

Fustat, February 22, 1098

ULC Add. 3420, f. 1

This is the first leaf of what was originally a bifolium that ULC Add. 3420 comprises. The second leaf, ULC Add. 3420, f. 2v (!) contains the text of I, 8, and recto (!), I, 15.

This session dealt with a side issue, indirectly connected with Joseph Lebdi's voyage to India. Jekuthiel, alias Abū Ya'qūb the Doctor, had sold indigo to Joseph twice, once for 40, and once for 100 dinars. The payment of the first sum had to be made by a settlement with the *dār wakāla* (lit., 'agency house,' warehouse serving as bourse) of the Qadi Abu 'l-Ṭāhir,¹ to whom Jekuthiel owed a certain sum; the second had been paid by Joseph in cash. First Joseph claimed that his payment of 100 dinars included also the other sum due, but immediately admitted that he had been mistaken. He would settle the account as follows:

Redeeming a promissory note given by Jekuthiel to another merchant (verso, line 6)	33 ³ / ₂₄ dinars
Owed to Joseph by Jekuthiel for occasional payments made for him (line 10)	4
Balance in cash (line 11)	2 ¹⁹ / ₂₄
Total	40 dinars.

In the interim settlement reached with regard to Joseph's Indian venture (see I, 11), this item is also included.

Translation

Re: The Doctor vs. Abū Ya'qūb Joseph,² the {Prominent} Merchant, concerning the 40 dinars.³

(1-5) Date, place, and parties.

¹ Known from contemporary Geniza documents, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:446, n. 5.

² Written in small letters, not by the recorder of this session, but by Hillel b. Eli, the chief clerk, who wrote I, 1. He must have added this docket when he assembled the entire dossier of the case.

³ Added later with a fine pen in even smaller script, clearly to indicate that the assertions made in this session were not an intrinsic part of the proceedings concerning

Mr. Jekuthiel claimed (6) that he had sold to Joseph indigo from (7) the House of Raisins⁴ against clearing a sum of 40 (8) dinars, which he, Jekuthiel, owed the Agency House of the Qadi Abu 'l-Tāhir. (9). Mr. Joseph had guaranteed that he would settle the account (10) with the House of the Qadi {add: for them, in his name}. Meanwhile some time had passed, and “these days I⁵ was sued by the House of the Qadi (12) for the aforementioned amount. I request him (Joseph) now to clear me from this.”

(13) When asked about this, Joseph replied: “I paid Mr. (14) Jekuthiel these 40 dinars; they were included in the 100 (15) dinars, and no claim remains against me in this matter.”

(16) Against this, Mr. Jekuthiel declared:

I have received from him these 100 dinars, [Verso] (1) but they were the price of indigo which he⁶ had bought from the House of Raisins (2) in addition to [indigo bought for] the aforementioned 40 dinars.

(3) Then Joseph, too, stated:

As to the 40 dinars (4) for which he sues me: The aforementioned 100 dinars (5) I have paid to him. Moreover, he wrote a promissory note (6) for 33¹/₆ dinars and one *qirāṭ* to Sheikh Abū Naṣr (7) Maṣūr b. Azhar,⁷ which he had owed him. (8) I shall clear him from this debt and return to him this note, (9) which he wrote for Sheikh Abū Naṣr. He (Jekuthiel) owes me (10) four dinars for occasional payments⁸ made for him. There remains a

the India venture of the two litigants. {For *tājir*, ‘prominent merchant,’ see above, 27, n. 4.}

⁴ Originally founded for dealings in raisins, this warehouse was used also for storing of, and transactions in, other items, e.g., flax, as in the account of expenses preserved in TS 13 J 7, f. 5, line 3 (Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:448, n. 14), or indigo, as here.

⁵ As in I, 1*v*, line 3, and frequently, the record quotes the plaintiff’s words in the first person when he arrives at the salient point of his argument.

⁶ Joseph Lebdi using ‘the Doctor’ as broker.

⁷ The Arabic name *Maṣūr* (‘Helped by God,’ ‘Victor’) corresponds literally to the biblical Eleazar; Arabic *azhar* (‘Luminous’) has the same meaning as Hebrew *Yā’ir* (spelled *Jair* in English, Num. 32:41). The creditor of Jekuthiel was a scion of an old family. He was probably the son of *Yā’ir* b. Eleazar b. *Yā’ir*, known from many documents, e.g., TS 20.21, dated 1076. {*Maṣūr* b. *Yā’ir ha-Sb[ōfēt]* signed TS 20.7, Fustat 1050, the cantor *Maṣūr* b. *Yā’ir* is mentioned in TS 13 J 10, f. 5 (ed. Gil, *Palestine*, 2:367, no. 202) and Eleazar b. *Yā’ir ha-hazzān* wrote a letter, TS NS 324, f. 41 (some of these might refer to his grandfather.)

⁸ Arabic *ajāl* singular *ju’l*. This term designates a great variety of payments, such as broker’s commissions, tips to lower officials in customs houses or Muslim law courts, taxes for rubbish removal, and even extraordinary impositions on a city during war time: Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:445, n. 6; 1:607, n. 7. {See references to Goitein’s various comments on these payments in Diem, *Dictionary*, 28.}

debt to him (11) of $2\frac{2}{3} + \frac{1}{8}$ dinars. As soon as he demands payment, (12) I will pay in cash.

The proceedings have been written down, etc.

(13) Nethanel b. Japheth—*may he rest in Eden!*⁹

(14) Isaac b. Samuel—*may he rest in Eden!*¹⁰ Nissīm, son of the Rav Nahray—*may the memory of the righteous be blessed!*¹¹

*

I have little doubt that the agreement described in this record had been worked out by the two litigants before they went to court. They, so to speak, replayed it in the presence of the signatories so that it would be put down in a legal document “to serve as a confirmation of rights and a proof.”

⁹ Nethanel b. Japheth wrote this record; he was a prominent merchant and public figure, not a court clerk like Hillel b. Eli; see page 174, n. 33. Nethanel wrote and signed also I, 15, and signed, besides these two, I, 7, 8, and 18b. No. II, 6, is a letter addressed to him. The court record TS 8J 4, f. 14c of November 1098, continued in TS 8J 4, f. 9a (both incomplete), shows him familiar with Indian products, such as *‘abīr* {a perfume; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:420, n. 53}, Kābulī myrobalan, and civet perfume, the latter to be sent to the Maghreb, where it was expected to bring one dinar for an ounce. Here and in I, 15 Nethanel separates his signature from the text by writing his name in characters far smaller than those used in the court record. Contrariwise, the two other signatories sign in bold, oversize letters.

¹⁰ This judge was an important scholar and author. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:513, n. 13 {and Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 46, n. 111, and the literature cited there}.

¹¹ Nissīm was the son of the late Nahray b. Nissīm, the merchant banker, who at the end of his life, became *rav*, or jurisconsult of the Jews of Egypt, a position similar to that of the Muslim *mufī*.

I, 4–5 *Third Session of the Rabbinical Court of Fustat*

Fustat, April 8, 1098

I, 4. ULC Add. 3421

I, 5. Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 64

It is common that parts of a Geniza document are preserved in different libraries (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:8–9; 3:96). I, 4 is written on ULC Add. 3421v, below I, 2. No. I, 5, is written on verso (!) of the manuscript. On recto is I, 6.

Five months had passed since the opening session of this lawsuit. Clearly the parties waited for the arrival of the consignments expected from Yemen (I, 2v, lines 3–4) or, at least, for a messenger sent by Ḥasan b. Bundār, representative of the merchants in Aden (I, 10–11, 13). When neither arrived, the litigation was renewed.

The session was devoted entirely to the textiles carried by Joseph Lebdi for Jekuthiel (I, 1, lines 5–21; verso, lines 10–13), and some new interesting details emerge. In most cases, however, Lebdi did not remember the details. As we learn from I, 9v, lines 10–11 (June 1098), his accounts were buried beneath the heavy baskets of indigo in Jekuthiel's warehouse.¹

Translation

[I, 4] (1–6) Date, place, parties, and reference to the opening session.

(7) Mr. Joseph said:

Of the textiles given to me I sold in Dahlak forty pieces,² (8) each piece for $\frac{7}{8}$ good dinars. I sold the rest (9) for exactly 60 good dinars. Of these I sold five (10) pieces,³ each piece for two Mālīkī⁴ dinars. A sixth (of a dinar) is to be deducted from these for //customs//, and one *qirāt* $\{\frac{1}{24}$ d.} (11) for brokerage.⁵ The exchange rate of the Mālīkī in Aden was 22 for 10 good (Egyptian dinars).

¹ As from here the documents belonging to this lawsuit are not docketed anymore.

² The white, 'raw' (not fulled) kerchiefs mentioned in I, 1, lines 9–10 {there called *iḥrām*, which is mentioned below, I, 5, line 8}.

³ The grayish-blue *fūtas*, I, 1, 10–11.

⁴ More common: Mālīkī (with short *a*), 'royal.' The value of the Adenese dinar noted here is exceptionally high. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:419, n. 366. Lowick, *Coinage*, chaps. 1, 7, "extant *malikī* dinars average 2.38 grammes... of poor quality gold... prolific output of *malikī* dinars at Aden," etc.; 3:262 ff.}

⁵ Referring to the price of each piece. The customs paid amounted to one-twelfth and the brokerage to one-forty-eighth of the price.

(12) Mr. Jekuthiel questioned Mr. Joseph about the number of textiles he had received. He answered: (13) “I remember only the amount of the forty pieces mentioned before.”⁶ Then (14) Jekuthiel inquired about the two (matching) half-mantles, which were among the textiles, and the price obtained for them. Joseph replied: [I, 5] (1) “I do not know for how much I sold those. Anyhow, their price is included in the aforementioned 60 dinars.” Asked also (2) about the *mulāʾa* wrap,⁷ which was among the textiles, he said:

He did not give me a *mulāʾa* wrap, but (3) a Dabīqī kerchief of seven cubits,⁸ which I supplied with borders on my own account and sold; (4) the price is included in the total amount of 60 dinars obtained for the textiles.

[(4–11). Questioned about the *fuṭās* Joseph insisted that their prices were included in the total of 60 dinars.]

(12) When asked about the Sūsī Rūsī *fuṭā*,⁹ he replied: “I know that this (13) was among the textiles. I sold it for 30 //good// dinars, one *qirāṭ* more or less; (14) //included in the 60 (d.)//.” Asked also about a complete broad Maghrebi *fuṭā*,¹⁰ he replied: “I sold it; (15) included in the 60 (d.)” When asked about a *muthallath* (‘triple-thread’ fabric) half-*thawb* (robe),¹¹ he replied:

I know nothing (16) of a *muthallath* (‘triple-thread’ fabric). It was a piece of cloth, in which the textiles were packed, of Farsī material,¹² stained¹³

⁶ The question obviously concerned the pieces sold in Dahlak.

⁷ I, 1, lines 7–8.

⁸ {‘Kerchief,’ Arabic *mandil*. For this common item, see references in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:67 (cf. Diem, *Dictionary*, 209); Jacoby, “What We Learn,” 85; Rosenthal, *Four Essays*, 63–99; id., “*Mandil*.” ‘Of seven cubits,’ Arabic *subāʾi*. See page 176, n. 14.}

⁹ See I, 1, line 8.

¹⁰ No. I, 1, line 11, lacks ‘broad Maghrebi.’

¹¹ See I, 1, line 12. ‘Half-robe,’ Arabic *nisf thawb* {see I, 1, lines 11–12, and page 169, n. 11}.

¹² A material, as the context here shows, inferior in quality to ‘three-thread.’ In ENA 3738, f. 11, lines 10–11, a poor merchant orders “ten Farsī and ten white robes, *thawb*.” In TS 12.335, line 4, the writer received a bale, *ʿidl*, of Farsī, and sold it well “before the arrival of the ships.” Ibid., verso, line 15, he reports, that the ‘Master of the Market’ in Tyre, Lebanon, had sent (to Alexandria) about fifty bundles, *nizma*, of Farsī for the Qadi ʿImād of Tripoli, Lebanon. Thus, Farsī should be understood as a material (originally) manufactured in the province of Fars (‘Persia’) Iran. {Perhaps the Arabic can be translated here: “The only *muthallath* (‘triple-thread’ fabric) of which I know was a piece of cloth, in which the Farsī textiles were packed.”}

¹³ Arabic *muṭabbaʿ*; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:21b.

(17) and torn. I took something from it and lined with it a leather bag.¹⁴

(18) The remainder is in Aden; a turban of mine is wrapped in it.¹⁵ There was also (19) a loincloth, worth about one Egyptian silver dirhem, (20) which was fastened around the wrapping.¹⁶

The proceedings have been written down, etc.

Written between the lines: {add: 'din.' [I, 5, line 6],} 'good' (I, 5, line 13) 'included in the 60' (line 14). All confirmed as being correct.¹⁷ Crossed out words are not to be taken into account.¹⁸

Isaac b. R. Samuel—*may he rest in Eden!* /// Hillel b. R. Eli—*may his memory be blessed!*¹⁹ /// Abraham b. Shema'ya, etc.

¹⁴ Arabic *kinf julūd*, leather bag for utensils; the lining is for their protection.

¹⁵ On his way back from India, Joseph Lebdi did not touch Aden. Together with goods, some personal belongings had remained there.

¹⁶ This sounds to us like a sarcastic anticipation of being 'questioned' about such a trifle. But it may reflect the principle *tahābabū wa-tahāsabū*, "love each other, but make exact accounts"; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:183. {The wrapping, Arabic *liḥāfa*, is also mentioned in I, 14, line 42; also see II, 44v, line 12. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 451, defines it as a type of material. Cf. *liḥā* in I, 1v, line 20.}

¹⁷ And not added after the documents had been signed. The supralinear 'customs' in I, 4, line 10, is not noted, probably because it is written on another sheet {or was accordingly overlooked}.

¹⁸ The crossed out words are found in I, 5, lines 19–20: "He asked him also about half."

¹⁹ See his signature to I, 2, end, and the accompanying note.

I, 6–7 *Fourth Session of the Rabbinical Court of Fustat*

Fustat, April 12, 1098

I, 6. Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 64

I, 7. Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 65

No. I, 6, is written on recto (!) of the manuscript. On verso is I, 5.

This Monday morning session followed immediately that of I, 4–5, which was held on the preceding Thursday. For regular business, the courts convened only on Mondays and Thursdays (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:342–43). In this session the questioning of Joseph Lebdi was concluded. The precision of Lebdi's deposition concerning the use of the 20 dinars given to him for transport expenses stands out against his evasiveness with regard to the sale of the textiles, shown in I, 4–5. No doubt he kept the accounts for those cash expenses with him. They totaled 23 dinars. In view of the many changes made by Joseph in the arrangements envisaged by Jekuthiel, it is noteworthy that a representative of the merchants in Fustat could calculate expenses for transport, customs, and other dues through two Nile ports, two Red Sea ports, Aden, and all the way to India with considerable exactness. He was probably aided in this by Joseph Lebdi, who, when undertaking the voyage described in these pages, was no longer a novice in this type of extended ventures.

The data provided in I, 6–7, fortunately complement the statements made in the opening session, I, 1–2; together, they vividly illustrate the realities a medieval trader had to face while en route to India.¹

Translation

[I, 6] (1) *On Monday, the eighth day of the month of Iyyar, 1409 E.D.*, (2) Mr. Jekuthiel, *who is mentioned* on the reverse side of this sheet, appeared in court and sued Mr. Joseph, (3) who is also mentioned together with him (overleaf), for a bale of [[liche]]² dry storax weighing (4) 380 *manns*,

¹ Yet, if compared with the detailed *written* account of the actual expenses for the transport of a bale of purple cloth from Fustat to Tunisia, described in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:339–43, the oral depositions of Joseph Lebdi reproduced here must be regarded as a highly abbreviated summary. Despite the multitude of items, the calculation of the purple-maker sending that consignment was off the mark by only slightly more than one percent; see *ibid.*, 342, n. 12.

² See I, 1, line 21.

asking where and under which circumstances it was sold. When Mr. Joseph was questioned³ about this, (5) he said:

I sold 80 *manns* of that storax in Dahlak for 40 (6) Dahlak dinars, worth ten Egyptian dinars, and took the remainder (7) with me to India, incurring expenses for customs, tithes⁴ and freight {alt. tr.: tolls}.⁵ The remainder was sold (8) for 120 Nahrwāra dirhems, worth about (9) eight Egyptian dinars.⁶

Then Mr. Jekuthiel said (to the judge): “Ask him whether he carried the storax separately, (10) whether he bought it on his own account,⁷ or carried something in it.” Lebdi said:

I carried in it corals (11) belonging to me from Dahlak to India //approximately one *qintār*,// which did not require additional expenses all the way {alt. tr.: for which I was not required to pay a toll} to India.⁸ I carried it (the storax) to Nahr (12) wāra.⁹ When I arrived there, I took the corals out of it (the storax) and paid there for it (13) the customs and tithes (referred to before, but nothing for the corals,) for they are free of customs there {lit., ‘and tithes, because there are no dues on corals there’}.¹⁰ Nothing happened to the storax (14) until my arrival there and its sale. After efforts on my part,¹¹ its proceeds were 120 (15) dirhems, as mentioned before.

³ By the presiding judge.

⁴ Payments to a government recognized by Muslim law as legal, while ‘customs’ are in principle not regarded as permissible. For ‘tithes’ in Aden see {page 344, n. 45} IV, 1, lines 18–21.

⁵ Arabic *mu’an*, the common word for expenses, often has the special meaning of freight plus the smaller payments to packers, porters, and lower officials. {For the meaning ‘tolls’ here and in line 11, see 171–72, n. 23.}

⁶ While 80 *manns* of dry storax were sold in the Red Sea port of Dahlak for ten Egyptian dinars, the ‘remainder’ brought in India only about eight dinars (instead of about 40, at least). Most of the ‘remaining’ 300 *manns* had been expropriated by rapacious ‘governments’ on the way and in Nahrwāra itself.

⁷ This is a rhetorical question since we already know (I, 21) that the storax belonged to Jekuthiel. His intention was: how could you allow yourself to carry *your* corals in *my* storax? Jekuthiel certainly had heard meanwhile from other merchants of Lebdi’s ruse of how to get his corals to India free of customs.

⁸ The corals were probably packed near the bottom of the huge bale where they escaped the attention of the customs officials, while the overweight of one *qintār* (approximately 50 *manns*) did not change the lump sum paid as customs for a bale of storax.

⁹ {The scribe Hillel b. Eli regularly separates this Indian place name into two words, as if its first element was the Arabic *nahr*, ‘river.’}

¹⁰ Corals were free of customs in India, probably because they were needed for religious (or, as we would say, magical) purposes.

¹¹ In contracts of partnership, the agent usually undertakes to exert himself (*ijihād*) for the investor’s merchandise, as he would do for his own: Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:172, no. 7.

Then Mr. Jekuthiel said: “I gave him 20 (16) excellent Egyptian dinars, for expenses; ask him how they were spent.” Questioned about this, (17) Mr. Joseph replied, providing details on those 20 dinars: “Of these I spent one dinar (18) and a half for freight from here to Qūṣ.” Said Mr. Jekuthiel: “These one and a half dinars (19) are charged to me for what?” Joseph replied:

For the storax, the lichen (20) and the rest of the goods, such as the copper,¹² the textiles, [[the cor(als)]]], the dodder of thyme. This freight was received by (21) Fatān.¹³ Dues in Akhmīm¹⁴ and in Qūṣ amounted to one-eighth dinar each.

When I arrived in (22) Qūṣ, I bought canvas and equipment {alt. tr.: packing materials}¹⁵ for camel transport //and *salabī* ropes¹⁶// for about one-half dinar. (23) Halters and payment to the weigher: one-eighth dinar. Hiring two camels from Qūṣ to ‘Aydhāb:¹⁷ 5 (24) dinars for a weight of about 800 *Laythī*¹⁸ (pounds). Having arrived in ‘Aydhāb, (25) I paid one-quarter dinar for the brushing {lit., ‘combing’} of the {add: bag of} textiles¹⁹ and two *qirāṭs* for the porter, and put down²⁰ (26) in ‘Aydhāb five

¹² {Arabic *naḥās*. For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11.}

¹³ The Indian skipper of a Nile boat commuting between Cairo and Qūṣ, that is, on the India route. He was known to those present in court, wherefore he is not introduced by any designation. {Cf. Fatan Swamī, an Indian Ocean shipowner, on whom see page 146.}

¹⁴ A town in Upper Egypt, where a toll had to be paid for goods carried in Nile boats, cf. V, 6, lines 3–4, VI, 49v, line 14, and where wheat was bought, II, 58, margin, line 3. See Wiet, “Akhmīm.”

¹⁵ {Arabic *ta‘biya*; cf., e.g., I, 33, line 23.}

¹⁶ See Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 228.}

¹⁷ The great port on the Sudanese coast, now extinct, corresponding approximately to Port Sudan of today. {‘Aydhāb played an important role in the Indian trade and is referred to repeatedly in the documents of this book. See the Index and the indexes to Goitein, *Med. Soc.*; id., *Letters*. Also see the discussion by Rabie, “Geniza Documents,” 75–76; Al-Ṭāhir, “Ports,” 56–57.}

¹⁸ For this weight see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:227–361. In addition to the two camels carrying Jekuthiel’s goods, Joseph had to hire others for his own merchandise and that of other merchants; cf. I, 10–11, 17–18b.

¹⁹ Arabic *sq* here and in IV, 1, line 27 {there *srqb*, also in IV, 60v, line 7}, is not the Arabic *sq*, to steal, but a loanword adopted from (Hebrew and) Aramaic, where it is the common term for combing, carding, and hatchling. See Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 2:1029–30. Although Fraenkel, *Aramäischen Fremdwörter*, and Dozy, *Supplément*, do not list this word, there is no doubt that it was in common use at that time among Arabic speaking people and was not confined to Jews. {The word is also in Syriac; see Sokoloff, *Dictionary JPA*, 389. Cf. also Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 221, *masraqa*: ‘bobbin, a spool on which yarn or thread is wound’; *masraqiyya*, ‘mallet.’}

²⁰ Arabic *wadyt* (also in I, 7, line 1) = *wa-waddaytu* = *wa-addaytu*, ‘I paid’; cf. Blau, *Grammar*, 82.}

and a third dinars for the two camels²¹ and two *qirāṭs* for porters.²² [I, 7] (1) In ‘Aydhāb, I put down one-quarter dinar for repacking the stuff in two bales, as it had been before,²³ (2) and one-quarter dinar for mats;²⁴ for porters and the skipper of the boat: one-eighth dinar, paid (3) before the two bales were laded. For the freight (4) from ‘Aydhāb to Dahlak I paid six and a quarter dinars, and in Dahlak customs duties for the two pieces (5) six dinars, after having given bribes²⁵ to the amount of one dinar and two [*qirāṭs*]. For the freight (6) of the piece of //lichen// I paid 1 dinar from Dahlak to Aden.²⁶

He (Jekuthiel) also asked him (Joseph) about the corals, (7) which he had sent with him. He said:

Yes, I received them, traveled with them to Nahr- (8) wāra and exchanged them for 95,000 beads,²⁷ which I put (9) into bales of lac, nine in all. Of these, (10) eight were lost by shipwreck; one bale (of lac) containing one bag (of beads) was saved (11) and is here with me.

²¹ This was the sum of five dinars stipulated in Qūs; see line 23, above. It was paid after safe arrival, together with a bonus of one-third dinar. While summing up the expenses, the five dinars mentioned in line 23 should not be taken into account.

²² ‘Porters’ and ‘the porter’ in the preceding line probably refer to the same payment.

²³ The contents of the two bales on the Nile boat had to be packed into four or more sacks to be loaded on the camels. Before being loaded on a ship in ‘Aydhāb, the goods had to be put again into large bales. {A camel load is called *ḥiml*, a ship’s bale *‘idl*. According to Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:220, both had the nominal capacity of 500 pounds. Ibid., 335 Goitein commented that *‘idl* “originally designated (half) a camel load” and often contained far less than 500 pounds. In I, 9, lines 18, 19, the two terms seem to be used interchangeably. See II, 32, line 33, where 60 *‘idls* weigh 100 *bahārs* (30,000 pounds). See also page 649, n. 3. For the use of *ḥiml* and *‘idl* in the thirteenth century documents from Quşayr, see Guo, *Commerce*, 31–32.}

²⁴ Tightly braided mats spread over shipments for protection against seawater. In the early 1930’s a Yemenite provided a description of such mats to me. Today plastic materials probably have replaced them.

²⁵ Although the text has *bartalt*, ‘I bribed,’ the word should be rather translated as ‘tipped.’ The lower employees {petty officials} received very small salaries, if at all, and lived mainly on considerations given to them by the passengers.

²⁶ For Jekuthiel’s storax, carried by Lebdi to Nahrwāra, freight, customs, and other dues were paid in kind, that is were taken from the goods themselves, and, therefore, do not appear in cash expenses, see page 188, n. 6. The bale with lichen also contained the silver vessels, dodder of thyme, and the scammony mentioned, lines 18–19, below. It was far smaller than the bale with storax.

²⁷ {In the original *kharaz khamsa wa-tis’in alf ḥabba*. *Kharaz* refers to the beads as a whole, *ḥabba* to each one, literally: beads, 95,000 individual beads. Also see Shy, “Terms,” 235.}

He asked him also about the 70 dinars obtained through the sale of (12) textiles and other goods²⁸ in Dahlak, namely, what {add: [[you]]} he bought for them. He replied:

I did not buy (13) him anything for them, but took them with me in specie to Aden, to Ḥasan b. Bundār, (14) //together with my own money// and asked Ḥasan to grant me an advance on 50 *bahārs* of pepper,²⁹ [[//of which// to Mr. Jekuthiel]] of which (15) 15 *bahārs* were for Sheikh Abū Ya‘qūb. I assigned this to him //in my heart.³⁰// I could (16) not specify this expressly for Sheikh Abū Ya‘qūb, lest something (17) happen and the entire shipment would be lost.

Then he asked Joseph also about the lichen, the silver (vessels), the dodder of thyme, (18) and the scammony. He replied:

I carried all these things with me to Aden in my own name³¹ (19) and stored them with {alt. tr.: I unloaded them at the place (warehouse) of}³² the representative (of the merchants) Ḥasan b. Bundār, also in my own name, but told him (20) ‘sell them [[separately]] //apart//³³ (from my goods), for they belong to Sheikh Abū Ya‘qūb.’ As to the copper, I sold a quantity of it (21) which was not suitable for export to India, bought another type {lit., ‘a substitute for it’},³⁴ and sent it [[for him]] to the region of (22) pepper, to be sold there; so that pepper would be bought for its price by the agency of Ḥasan b. Bundār. I do (23) not exactly remember whether I did this in the name of Sheikh Abū Ya‘qūb or in my own name.

Finally, Sheikh (24) Abū Ya‘qūb said to this Mr. Joseph:

On whose orders did you do all these things you mentioned, [Verso] (1) such as shipping some goods (to India) and leaving others in Aden, and other actions, none of which I instructed you (2) to do?

²⁸ For 60 dinars for textiles and 10 for the dry storax, see I, 1*v*, lines 16–18.

²⁹ On this ‘advance’ of five dinars on each of 50 *bahārs* of pepper see I, 2, 11–13, and I, 13, fol. 67, lines 4–6.

³⁰ Arabic *bil-damīr*, the same I, 13*v*, line 5. Possibly, merchants in Aden had had previously unpleasant experiences with Mr. Abū Ya‘qūb the Doctor, who was a tough customer, and would use the opportunity for retorting in kind {if they knew that part of the pepper was for him. But perhaps Joseph feared some intervention of the non-Jewish authorities; see Maimonides, *Responsa*, 2:687, no. 410.}

³¹ Wherefore they do not appear in the list of expenses for customs.

³² {Arabic *wa-anzaltubā ‘inda*. Cf. I, 9, lines 7–8.}

³³ The experienced clerk replaced the second word in Arabic ‘*alā hida*’ by *mufrada*, which means the same. The former is more elegant; the latter is more forceful, and was probably used by Joseph himself.

³⁴ See I, 1, lines 18–19, and I, 14, line 42.

He replied:

When you gave this to me, you said to me, “these goods are yours, do (3) with them [[as you see fit]], as you do with your own merchandise.” Because of this, I did all those things. (4) My handing over of goods {lit., ‘what I handed over’} to Ibn Bundār was done at your suggestion and on your instructions (5) for the purchase of pepper.

The proceedings (6) etc. Hillel b. R. Eli—*may his memory be blessed!* (7) Abraham b. R. Shema‘ya, etc. (8) Nethanel b. Japheth—*may he rest in Eden!*

I, 8 *Fifth Session of the Rabbinical Court of Fustat*

Fustat, April 19, 1098

ULC Add. 3420, f. 2

This is verso (!) of the second leaf of what was evidently a bifolium that ULC Add. 3420 comprises. Goitein has cited this side as ULC Add. 3420d. Below the fifteen lines of I, 8, there is a separate record dealing with a complaint of Karīma known as Wuḥsha (see on her I, 26–I,28), who had been summoned to court. Recto (!) contains the text of I, 15. ULC Add. 3420, f. 1 contains the text of I, 3.

At this meeting of the court, which took place one week after the former session, it was agreed that Joseph Lebdi should settle accounts with Jekuthiel. He would then be entitled to take out of Jekuthiel's warehouse all the goods to which the latter could not make claims.

Both parties undertook also not to apply to a non-Jewish court. This extraordinary measure (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:312) was taken because the judges realized that after the long time, which had elapsed since the start of the lawsuit, matters were beginning to get out of hand.

Joseph b. Isaac (his father's name is followed by the blessing for the dead), who signs first and before the professionals, was an India trader (see below, 292, n. 5), and probably presided over the session because he was familiar with the intricate accounts referred to here. He signed also, together with many others, TS 20.31, line 31, in 1092, when his father was still alive. He should not be confused with his namesake and compatriot Joseph, the son of the judge Isaac b. Samuel (I, 3, and often), who in 1107, is described as "a fine young man" (TS 13J 2, f. 15, where he receives a loan) and who copied, probably for his father, the 'Book of Testimonies and Legal Formularies' of Saadya Gaon, TS K 6 {TS K 6, f. 151}.

I, 9 *Sixth Session of the Rabbinical Court of Fustat*

Fustat, June 10, 1098

TS 10J 27, f. 4

This is a hastily written and badly preserved draft, which, as the manuscript mark indicates, forms a part of the Taylor-Schechter collection, while the other court records belonging to this lawsuit are preserved partly in the Add. Geniza series of the Cambridge University Library and partly at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Presumably this sheet was not included when the dossier of the case was put together.

After almost two months it became clear that the litigants had not succeeded in settling their accounts. They were back to the arguments put forward in the very first session seven months before. Joseph Lebdi complains:

(7) When I arrived from the Land of Yemen, I stored {alt. tr.: unloaded}, (8) my goods,¹ in the {add: *dār*} *wakāla* of Mr. Jekuthiel. (9) Much time has gone by since. I demanded he deliver to me the proceeds from the goods (10) that he had sold for me.² I realized, however, that he put me off, and I was {add: irritated by this and} almost prepared (11) to make a public appeal.³

Instead, Lebdi went again to court, and we hear the familiar arguments, enriched by some new details, for instance, that, as a matter of precaution, the money for Jekuthiel's pepper was sent to the Malabar⁴ coast of India in two different boats (verso, line 8), or that Lebdi's accounts were still buried under the baskets with indigo (*ibid.*, lines 10–11).

¹ Arabic *nazalt bi-mā kān ma' min al-badā'ī*. {Cf. I, 7, line 19, *wa-anzaltubā*...}

² It was the business of a *wakāl al-tujār*, or representative of the merchants, to serve as agent for the customers who had entrusted their goods to his warehouse.

³ It was Jewish (and Islamic) custom that a person who felt he had been wronged and failed to obtain satisfaction by regular court procedures, should interrupt and hold up public prayer until he was promised redress; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:323–25. {On this practice, see now Grossman, “Stopping-the-Service”; Ben-Sasson, “Appeal.” On the Aramaic expression *šōr kenšhtā*, PT Pe'a I, 1 (15d) and parallels, discussed in these studies, see Lieberman, *GJP*, 168. See also III, 49v, line 23 (which refers to writing a letter to the congregation). The term *istighāth* (here: *astaghīth*) is used for appeals other than those involving public prayer, of course, including personal appeals to the government (Sultan) for protection. See, e.g., IV, 61, line 18: *takbruj tastaghīth ilā 'l-sultān*, ‘she will go out and appeal to the Sultan’; TS Ar. 50, f. 197 (ed. Friedman, “Intervention,” 226), line 22: *fa-'staghāth bi-'l-sultān*, ‘he appealed to the Sultan.’ Such an appeal could be intended here as well.}

⁴ Spelled here *Mīnābār* for *Manībār* {*Manībār*}, *Malībār* {*Malībār*; or, *Munaybār*, *Mulaybār*; see I, 1v, line 6 and 172, n. 25}.

There is no room on the sheet for signatures, and none are expected on a draft. It is evident, however, from the content of the next proceedings that this session did not end with the recording of the arguments but with the decision that the litigants had to swear a solemn oath by the {with a} Torah that each of them had acted in good faith.⁵

⁵ Technically, this is the oath that a debtor who conceded part of a debt was obliged to take; cf. Maimonides, “Ṭō‘ēn we-Niṭ‘ān” 1:1. The depositions in court of both Lebdi and Jekuthiel implied that they owed something to each other. {The oath is on *adā’ al-amāna*, which, as Goitein noted, means acting in good faith. This is described in I, 10, line 8, as a *shevū‘ā ba-tōrā*, an oath with a Torah, not an oath prescribed by the Torah. The Rav (apparently R. Judah b. Joseph) explained in a partially preserved responsum (TS Ar. 47, f. 206): “This ‘Arūs is required to take an oath to this Abraham on acting in good faith. Its form is similar to an oath prescribed by the Torah; there is no difference between them. Namely, one who holds a Torah scroll takes an oath; and all the details of this law are applied to him in full.” (The reference is probably to ‘Arūs b. Joseph, concerning whom, see I, 1*v*, line 1 and 171, n. 21.) The above citation from Maimonides deals with a different type of oath. The oath concerned here is probably *shevū‘at ha-shuttāfim*, the partners’ oath, imposed by the sages on a partner against whom even an uncertain claim was made, discussed in M. Shevū‘ot 7:8 and, e.g., Maimonides, “Shelūḥin we-Shuttāfin” 9:6.}

I, 10–11 *Seventh Session of the Rabbinical Court of Fustat*

Fustat, June 14, 1098

I, 10. ULC Add. 3414, f. 1

I, 11. ULC Add. 3414, f. 2

The two sheets were originally not connected, but were (correctly) combined by the librarian.

An oath by the {with a} Torah was a very grave affair—not a mere formality, as oaths are often regarded nowadays (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:340). Consequently, ‘*lovers of peace, upright elders*’ (line 13) intervened, and the two litigants agreed to take no further action until a messenger to be appointed by ‘the Jewish court of the lands of Yemen and India,’¹ to serve as a representative of Ḥasan b. Bundār arrived.

Two side issues were also settled. One Joseph b. Solomon al-Qudsī (native of Jerusalem) had given Jekuthiel $16\frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{48}$ (= $\frac{29}{48}$) dinars (certainly in goods) and the latter had asked Lebdi to buy merchandise for this sum in Aden. Lebdi had done so, but the goods bought (like those of Lebdi and Jekuthiel handled by Ḥasan b. Bundār) had not yet arrived. Now, al-Qudsī undertakes to pay this sum to Lebdi, and Jekuthiel promises to pay it to al-Qudsī immediately after the arrival of the aforementioned messenger.

Secondly, since Joseph Lebdi had made good his promise to redeem (as partial payment for indigo bought through Jekuthiel) the promissory note of $33\frac{5}{24}$ dinars given by the latter to Abū Naṣr Maṣṣūr b. Azhar (see I, 3), the three parties no longer had any claim against each other in this matter.

¹ So in line 17; in verso, line 10: ‘lands of India and Yemen.’ The court had its seat in Aden. {Goitein, “From the Mediterranean,” 191 (n. 14), 195, with reference to this document, calls it the court of ‘Aden and India.’ However, lines 16–17 literally says: “until after the period, during which will arrive the messenger—who it was decided will be appointed by the court—from the lands of Yemen and Hind.” As such, the words ‘the lands of Yemen and Hind’ do not define ‘the court,’ and I am unaware of any source that confirms the existence of one court for the Jews of Yemen and India. See further, below, 200, n. 14, 557, n. 18, and 633–34. In Egypt, ‘India and Yemen’ were sometimes coupled as one large geographical unit. Mūsā b. Ṣadaqa ‘the Jewish trader’ (*al-tājir al-yahūdī*), writes in a petition to the caliph, (VI, 35, line 9) that “he has arrived from *al-Hind wal-Yaman*” with merchandise that was seized. For the geographical area which *diyār al-Hind* designates, see above, 6–7. Margariti, “Aden,” 306, states that Maḍmūn b. Japheth (see chap. 2) bore the title *negīd ‘adan wal-hind* (lit., ‘Nagid of Aden and India’), “that is supreme leader of the broader Jewish community of the Indian Ocean.” This is apparently an error. She quotes no source, nor am I familiar with one.}

I, 12 *Eighth Session of the Rabbinical Court of Fustat*

Fustat, August 18, 1098

Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 66

The text of I, 13 begins on verso of this leaf.

When still nothing was heard from Aden, Jekuthiel, here described with his Hebrew title *peqād ha-sōḥarīm*, representative of the merchants (line 5), and Joseph Lebdi came up with the idea of sending a man to the southern Arabian port to fetch the goods belonging to both. After much squabbling the parties retracted their proposal, which obviously was found to be impracticable. Since nothing had been achieved in this session, no signatures were attached. The session was held on a Wednesday, probably for other, more urgent cases; see I, 6–7.

I, 13 *Letter from Joseph Lebdi to Ḥasan b. Bundār*

Fustat, 1098

Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fols. 66, 67

This text begins on fol. 66*v*. On recto is the text of I, 12. For an abbreviated translation see Goitein, *Letters*, 177–81.

As Lebdi emphasizes, this letter to the representative of merchants in Aden was sent not of his own free will, but on the basis of an agreement reached in court (fol. 67, margin, line 1, verso, lines 13–17). This is a draft and not the original letter. It is in the hand of the court clerk Hillel b. Eli and forms part of the dossier of the case, as the format of the paper proves: book-size, similar to all the preceding records (ca. 18.5 × 13 cm.), and the fact that it starts on the reverse side of I, 12. But this letter was written long before August 18, 1098, for already in I, 10–11 (June), the arrival of a court-approved messenger appointed by Ḥasan b. Bundār was expected. The record of the session mentioned here repeatedly has not been identified. It is likely that it took place immediately after the sad tidings had arrived in Fustat that most of the pepper shipped from India for Jekuthiel and Lebdi had been lost on its way to Aden.¹

In the middle of fol. 66*v*, line 19, a sign sends the reader to two lines written on the right margin, followed by two others written on the top; a similar addition is made on fol. 67, line 10. Otherwise, changes are remarkably sparse. The court clerk was thoroughly familiar with the case.²

¹ Why then, was the record of the session of August 18th written on the reverse side of this draft, which was made months before? Paper was expensive. When Hillel had to write a short note (17 lines) about a session, which anyhow was inconclusive, he used the blank side of the leaf. {The order of other documents in the notebook is also irregular: I, 5, I, 6, I, 8, I, 15.}

² In most of the letter Ḥasan is addressed in the third person; see page 201, n. 21, below. In order to avoid misunderstandings in our translation mostly the second person is used.

Translation

[Fol. 66v] (1) *In Your name, O Merciful.*

(2) Previously, a letter had been sent by me // to your noble excellency //³—may God lengthen the life of my lord, the illustrious Sheikh (3) Abū ‘Alī, *my master and lord Japheth,*⁴ *the esteemed and honored elder,* (4) *the Leader of the Congregations,*⁵ may He always support, elevate, and strengthen you, (5) and crush your enemies!

The content of that letter, after you will have taken cognizance of it, relieves me (6) from repeating its details here. (7) It is difficult for me to describe to you—may God protect your honored position!—(8) the bickering and quarrels I have had to endure from Sheikh Abū Ya‘qūb al-Ḥakīm (9) with regard to the goods I had carried with me for him, the choice part⁶ of which I left (10) with my lord; namely, the small pieces of silver, (11) seven in number, whose weights were indicated by al-Ḥakīm, (12) (as mentioned) in my previous letter;⁷ [[and the bag of copper]] the bale of lichen, (13) weighing 400 *manns*; the bag of copper—(14) 110 pounds; (15) dodder of thyme—(16) 10 *manns*; all according to him, and a small container with scammony.

What took place (17) between him and me your excellency is too illustrious to hear. However (18) those who will arrive from here at your place—may God make your honored position permanent!—will tell you what (19) happened. [Margin] (1) I have granted him an advance of 100 dinars for these goods until their proceeds arrive. But after these

³ Added above line 5. The letter referred to is preserved for us in the cancelled copy I, 14.

⁴ The biblical name Japheth (Genesis 6:10), which was regarded as derived from Hebrew *yāfē*, ‘beautiful,’ is used as the Hebrew equivalent of Ḥasan, which also means beautiful. {The byname of Ḥasan is Abū ‘Alī. Saadya Gaon translates the Hebrew *yaft*... *li-yefet* (“May God enlarge Japheth”) in Genesis 9:27: *yuḥsin... li-yefet* (“May God be charitable to Japheth”), associating *yuḥsin* with *ḥasan*.}

⁵ That is, head of the Jewish communities of Yemen. ‘Leader’ renders here Hebrew *sar*, which has many facets of meaning; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:76–77.

⁶ Arabic *‘ilyathū* (spelled with one *y*). The same word is used in I, 1v, line 11, where two *yy*’s are written. They might express the consonant *y* (as opposed to *ī*, which is written with one *y*), rather than the pronunciation *‘aliyyathū*. In I, 1v, Lebdi speaks of the *bazz*, the textiles, not of the total of goods, as here. {In *Letters*, 179, Goitein translates ‘part.’}

⁷ See I, 14, lines 1–3. The list that follows is identical with the data provided in I, 1.

settlements (2) had been reached between us, we both⁸ turned to arguments and wrangling until [Top] (1) it led to lawsuits. Finally, *upright* (2) *elders* intervened, suggesting several matters {add: details of which will follow} according to which today [[the . . .]]⁹ an agreement was reached ([Fol. 67] (1) to the effect that I should write to your excellency, my lord, the sheikh, as follows: Please list (2) all the proceeds from the aforementioned goods (3) belonging to Sheikh Abū Ya‘qūb the Doctor, including (4) what was salvaged of the 50 *bahārs* (of pepper), on the payment of which (5) my lord had given me respite {alt. tr.: against which you, my lord, had given me an advance}, for I had assigned to him in my heart¹⁰ (6) 15 *bahārs* out of these. My lord, do me a favor. (7) List all this. From the total, (8) deduct all that is mine, namely 100 good (9) Egyptian dinars, in return for the 100 dinars which I advanced him (10) here <<(1); subtract also 11½ dinars (2) from the proceeds of the aforementioned goods¹¹>> and hand over the balance to your representative. (11) Please oblige me in this matter, as is your usual good practice with me (12) at all times. I know well that I am causing (13) your excellency much trouble and feel very bad about this {lit., ‘trouble and am disturbing you with this’}. But (14) it is not my fault. I am forced to do so.¹² (15) The account to be handed over to your representative (16) should be made out as {alt. tr.: When your representative collects, what he is to collect, it should be registered in} a *deposition in court*¹³ in the assembly of the *elders*¹⁴ and signed by (17) them.

⁸ It is remarkable that Lebdi blames here himself together with the ‘Doctor.’ The two probably had been good friends and had been known as such when Lebdi visited Aden.

⁹ Lebdi intended to give the date of the day; but on second thought, preferred not to do so. It was probably added in the clean copy. This first intervention of ‘the upright elders’ anteceded the one mentioned in I, 10–11.

¹⁰ See I, 7, lines 15–17.

¹¹ See n. 16.

¹² Rendering exact accounts appears to us as a minimal requirement in all business relations. But *asking* for an account was regarded in those days almost as an insult, a veiled expression of mistrust; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:204–5. The matter was compounded here by the demand that the account should be confirmed as being correct by the merchants’ court of Aden.

¹³ Hebrew *ma‘ase*, ‘act,’ namely, taken in court. Many records begin with this word. {The basic meaning of *ma‘ase* here is a document testifying to a ruling or agreement (or other legal action) in court. See the literature in Friedman, “*Ma‘ase*,” 193, n. 2.}

¹⁴ The ‘assembly of the elders,’ *mahḍar al-zeqānīm*, is obviously identical with ‘the court of Yemen and India,’ I, 10–11, n. 1 {see the addition to that note on the uncertainties concerning such a court; *mahḍar* also means ‘official report’}. Together with the account, Ḥasan’s representative was expected, of course, to bring with him, in cash or kind, the proceeds from the sales of the Old Cairo merchants.

I wish to inform you also that it was established *in court* (18) that, of the proceeds (from the Doctor's goods) in your hands, my lord, 100 dinars (19) plus the 11½ dinars paid by me for {alt. tr.: if the sum... equals an amount of 100 dinars and the 11½ dinars, the remainder of} the copper,¹⁵ transport expenses (20) of three dinars,¹⁶ and five dinars for each of the 15 *bahārs* of pepper, are {alt. tr.: it is} mine. (21) All that is above that total is his; all that is less is mine {alt. tr.: If it is more, the excess belongs to him; and if it is less, it is mine};¹⁷ he is not responsible for it. [Fol. 67v] (l) Even if everything perishes, it is not his loss, and he is also not obliged to return the 100 (2) advanced to him. //This is stated expressly *in the record of the court.*//

Now, my lord, exercise your usual circumspection (3) in this entire matter—may I never be deprived of you and never miss your favors! (4) May I ask your excellency to examine—with the enlightenment of God, the Exalted—the case of the 50 (5) *bahārs* of pepper and to divide the proceeds from what has remained of them between me (6) and him (Abū Ya'qūb) in accordance with our shares in them, namely, 35 (were bought) for me (7) and 15 for him. What has remained {lit., 'salvaged of them'} should be divided proportionally. (8) Please explain {alt. tr.: describe} everything in detail.¹⁸ Also: (9) the proceeds from the *btrch* (cast)¹⁹ copper belong to Sheikh Abū Ya'qūb, (10) not to me.²⁰ Clarify this²¹ and copy for your representative all (11) the assets noted in your account

¹⁵ See I, 1, lines 18–19, and I, 7, lines 20–21, and I, 14, line 42. The hammered copper was not selling in India. Lebdi sold the hammered copper sent with him by Jekuthiel and bought cast copper and paid the difference in the prices, 11½ dinars. {Arabic *bi-qadr... fadlat al-nahās.*}

¹⁶ The expenses detailed by Lebdi in 6–7, amounted to 23 dinars, while Jekuthiel had given him 20 dinars for that purpose. See I, 6–7.

¹⁷ {I.e., the shortfall will be born by me. The alternative translations in this paragraph follow Goitein's (earlier) Hebrew edition, which in my opinion is preferable here.}

¹⁸ When pepper was salvaged after a shipwreck, the various sacks were sold for very different prices in accordance with the damage done to them. Moreover, proceeds were mostly sent in goods, not in cash, which also required much detail.

¹⁹ See I, 14, n. 1. This Indian word is spelled in III, 18, sec. b, line 3 (which was written in India), *btrw*, without *h*. {For the spelling *btr*, see 260, n. 6. Al-Hassan & Hill, "Ma'din," 971a: "A cheaper quality of alloy was called by al-Bīrūnī *bitrūy* and by some authors *rūy*. This was a kind of bronze alloyed from copper and lead."}

²⁰ Lebdi emphasizes this to preclude confusion. His own expenses for the cast copper have already been noted above, fol. 67, line 19.

²¹ As from here Lebdi dispenses with all the courtesy observed thus far. He addresses Hasan b. Bundār in the second person singular, omits all the honorific titles and phrases, and gives outright orders. He obviously got impatient and felt that such a direct approach was more effective {or that the courteous phrases were superfluous in a draft copy}.

book²² in favor of the aforementioned, and have it certified after (12) deducting the expenses for customs and commissions. And buy me goods for the 100 (13) dinars²³ and send them with whomever you choose, however you deem fit,²⁴ (14) [[for I]], and make an effort that the goods for 100 dinars be (15) either pepper or lac, whatever you regard (as more profitable), and inform about this— (16) I mean, at the time you send them—some of our coreligionists²⁵ and not (17) less than two.²⁶ *And Peace.*

²² {On use of a merchant's account book (*daftar*) as legal evidence (also I, 14, line 5), see the discussion in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:209; Gil, "Merchants," 284 ff. The practice is discussed extensively in Jewish legal literature from the Gaonic period and is already mentioned in M. Shevu'ot 7:1. For additional examples, see I, 39, II, 20, lines 41–42, II, 35, line 24.}

²³ Short for 100 + 11½ + 3 dinars; see fol. 67r, lines 18–20, above.

²⁴ By land or by sea. See I, 14, n. 3.

²⁵ {Arabic *aṣḥābunā*. The word *aṣḥāb* (singular: *ṣāḥib*) has a number of meanings, including 'friends.' The Jews who wrote Judeo-Arabic called fellow Jews: *aṣḥābunā*, lit., 'our friends.' Examples in the documents of this book and elsewhere abound. In most cases, it can be stated unequivocally that coreligionists and not other 'friends' were intended. See, e.g., II, 32, lines 42–44, where the writer requests that gold and silver be sent with merchants who are *aṣḥābunā* or with others (Gentiles), known to be reliable; II, 48v, lines 33–35, a wish that God will resurrect a group of *aṣḥābunā* who drowned "together with *the pious of Israel*." Amir Ashur calls my attention to Bodl. MS. Heb. c. 13 (Cat. 2807, no. 17), fol. 21v, which describes the enacting of a betrothal in the presence of three scholars "and a group of *aṣḥābunā*." I have not found this definition in the dictionaries. However, followers of a certain school (*madhhab*) in Islam are called in Arabic *aṣḥāb* of that school (e.g., Lane, *Dictionary*, 1653, *aṣḥāb al-Shāfi'ī*). Accordingly, we conclude that followers of the same school were designated *aṣḥābunā*. Prof. Paul Fenton calls my attention to the fact that Moses Ibn Ezra refers to Rabbanite Jews as *aṣḥābunā* and to Karaite Jews as *khawārij* (Khārijites, members of the sect of dissenters). Similarly, in RNL Firkovich Jud.-Ar. II A 1119 (ed. Fleischer, "Al-Ḥarīzī Supplements," 218), Judah al-Ḥarīzī refers to the Rabbanites as *aṣḥābunā*, in contrast with the Karaites. Rabbanite Jews did, however, refer to Karaites sometimes as *aṣḥābunā*, e.g., TS 13 J 27, f. 5 + TS 13 J 13, f. 13, line 26, ed. Gil, *Palestine*, 2:573. In II, 71v, line 5, the Hebrew equivalent *ḥavērēnū* was used; see below, 536, n. 34.}

²⁶ Because of the general insecurity it was customary to provide acquaintances traveling to the destination of one's shipments with details about them in order to inform the addressees. In many Geniza letters travelers render such services. Coreligionists were preferred, since they would anyhow meet the prospective recipients in the common house of worship. {Many of the Jewish traders, whose papers found their way to the Geniza, trusted Gentiles less than Jews; see II, 46, line 3. Suspicion was obviously mutual.}

{I, 13a *Letter from Joseph Lebdi to Ḥasan b. Bundār*

Fustat.1098

JRL B 6028

This small fragment, not part of the original India Book collection, contains on recto part of the beginning of a letter, evidently written by Joseph Lebdi to Ḥasan b. Bundār (the two are named on verso) and concerning the court case between Lebdi and Jekuthiel (named on recto). Ḥasan is requested to confirm Joseph Lebdi's claims concerning various commodities, which are mentioned repeatedly in the documents concerning the suit between him and Jekuthiel. The letter is penned for Lebdi by the court scribe Hillel b. Eli, who seems to have written a summary of the contents on verso. Accordingly, the fragment appears to come from a copy or a draft of the original that was kept in the dossier in Fustat. If I have deciphered correctly the text of line 3, *aṣḥabūnī*, 'they sent with me,' this confirms that Lebdi carried goods with him sent by at least one other merchant besides Jekuthiel.¹

¹ {On Joseph b. Solomon al-Qudṣī, for example, see I, 10–11.}

I, 14 *Letter from Joseph Lebdi to Ḥasan b. Bundār*

Fustat {1098}

TS 28.22

This is the original of a letter, written, as usual, on a long sheet of paper. Although the beginning of the letter is lost, the remaining part is 64 cm. long and contains 68 lines (plus two for the signature). The width comprises 18 cm., but in the first 36 lines the ends of the lines are torn away unevenly. This letter, too, was written by Hillel b. Eli, as a scribe paid for his services, not in his capacity as court clerk. In the first half of the letter the dictation went smoothly or a draft had been prepared. From line 39 on, the letter is defaced by deletions, additions, and marginal notes. No doubt another copy was made and sent to Aden, while our copy was finally disposed of in the Geniza.

This letter was written earlier. The address, which was registered on the reverse side, is lost together with the beginning of the letter. But there can be no doubt about the identity of the addressee, for this is the letter referred to in I, 13, lines 2–6. It is particularly valuable, because only here do we get a glimpse of Lebdi's dealings with his Adenese business friend and of Lebdi's misfortunes on the way to and from India. But here, too, his main purpose was settling his accounts with Abū Ya'qūb al-Ḥakīm, of whom he still speaks with greatest respect, never mentioning him without adding a blessing after his name (such as "may God preserve his honored position!," lines 37, 44, 55, 58, and certainly also in l. 30, where the relevant words were torn away).

Another, most important matter emerges from our letter. On his way back from India Lebdi stayed a considerable time in Mirbāt, then an important port on the southeastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. He corresponded from there with Ḥasan b. Bundār and sent him goods imported from India. On his way home, he did not sail to Aden (probably in order to avoid the horrendous customs dues there), but turned directly to Dahlak, where he had sojourned also on his way out. His failure to visit Aden and settle accounts there after his prolonged absence complicated his dealings with Abū Ya'qūb al-Ḥakīm. Matters finally got out of hand when aggravated by the subsequent loss of most of the pepper bought in India, a catastrophe not yet known at the writing of this letter.

Contents of I, 14:

- A. Lines x–7. List of Abu Ya‘qūb al-Ḥakīm’s goods delivered to Ḥasan b. Bundār in Aden and entered in the latter’s account book, including the purchase of cast copper to be sent to India.¹
- B. Lines 8–24. Lebdi’s travel to al-Ṭīz in south-east Iran, his troubles there, his safe arrival in Nahrwāra, India, and his actions there for Ḥasan b. Bundār and his brothers. His return trip, shipwreck, and final arrival in Mirbāṭ on the southeastern tip of Arabia.
- C. Lines 24–35. Correspondence between Lebdi and Ḥasan during his stay in Mirbāṭ and the loss of the steel and other Indian goods sent from Mirbāṭ to Aden.
- D. Lines 35–61. Request that Ḥasan list the accounts of all the transactions made for Abū Ya‘qūb al-Ḥakīm, approval without reservation of all that Ḥasan had done for Lebdi personally (as communicated to him in a letter)² and order to buy goods for the payments due to Lebdi and al-Ḥakīm. The goods might be sent by land or by sea;³ their carrier should have power of attorney certified by the court in Aden and deliver them before a court in Fustat so that the two parties would receive their share without trouble.⁴
- E. Lines 62–69. Elaborate conclusion with greetings to Ḥasan’s brothers and sons and “to all friends who have inquired or will inquire about me.”

¹ The total weight of the silver vessels (see I, 1, lines 15–18) given as 359 dirhems is correct ($70 + 21\frac{1}{4} + 82 + 78\frac{1}{2} + 52\frac{1}{4} + 55$). For the *btrwh* copper, line 6, see above, 201, n. 19. Here, lines 41–42, he writes: “The bundle of copper comprised pieces cast and hammered. We (may mean: I) sold the hammered ones and bought for them cast copper.”

² “(52) As to the accounts for my own goods, (53) contained in the letter of your excellency reaching me, they are accepted and confirmed without any doubts.” This letter might have reached Lebdi in Dahlak on his way back, see lines 29–39, translated below.

³ We are here in pre-Crusader times, when much commercial traffic went with the pilgrim caravans from Yemen to Mecca and from there to Cairo. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:55, 200, 281. This trade route was revived after Saladin’s victories; see II, 67, end.

⁴ This was the regular procedure. When a traveler took with him goods from one business friend to another, he simply received a memorandum, *tadhkira*, containing a list of the goods carried. When the relations between sender and recipient were more formal, as here between Ḥasan b. Bundār of Aden and al-Ḥakīm of Fustat, the carrier acted as the sender’s official representative. He was appointed before a court at the place of dispatch and, at the place of destination, both he and the sender were formally absolved of their responsibilities before a court.

F. Lines 69–70. Signature. Letters are never signed. The sender would write his name or its equivalent (such as ‘your grateful servant’) on the verso in the left section of the address. But Lebdi’s signature, known also from other documents, was so untrained and childish that he certainly was reluctant to mar ‘the face’ of the letter. He signed, therefore, inside.⁵

Because of their importance, sections B and C are translated here despite their fragmentary state.

[B] (8) I asked my lord to grant me an advance on fifty *bahārs* pepper; you agr[eed and divided the amount] (9) between the boat of al-Qummī and the boat of Bihzāt.⁶ We all went out in [...] (10) and you most kindly came down (to the port) and bade me farewell in the boat,⁷ you and my lords, your brothers.⁸ [...] I entered] (11) the land of al-Tīz,⁹ and you have heard what happened to me in al-Tīz and what led [to my arrival in Nahr] (12) wāra in safety, thank God, the Exalted. I received your letter, which was sent to [Nahrwāra together with] (13) an amount

⁵ {When someone who was untrained in writing had a letter penned for him by a scribe, the scribe also wrote the name of the sender on the left side of the address on verso; see, for example, II, 55. Accordingly, Lebdi could hardly have signed the recto in order to avoid exhibiting his script on the address on verso, which was exposed. Since I, 14, was the draft or copy retained in Egypt, Hillel b. Eli, who also served as the court scribe for the case, may have wanted Lebdi’s signature on this paper as proof of his consent to the letter’s contents. On Lebdi’s signature, see further above, 28, n. 8. An expression such as ‘your grateful servant’ often accompanied the sender’s name in the address, but I do not recall seeing any letter where the phrase replaces the name.}

⁶ Two Persian shipowners: al-Qummī, from Qumm, a town south of Tehran, whose name is now familiar to everyone, and Bihzād, ‘of noble origin,’ spelled here with *t*; voiced sounds at the end of the word (*d*) become occasionally unvoiced (*t*), when taken over from a foreign language. {Prof. Shaul Shaked informs me that he would similarly translate Bihzād ‘born well’ or ‘having a good parentage’ and that the final -t is an old (pre-Islamic) pronunciation.}

⁷ Lit., ‘the sea.’ Passengers usually boarded a ship a day or more before sails were set. Friends visited them on board ship to bid them farewell. {We have, for example, information (see IV, 66) about visits with Judah ha-Levi on board a ship in the port of Alexandria, where in May, 1141 he waited a whole week until there was an eastward wind for sailing to Eretz Israel.} Lebdi gratefully remembers this act of courtesy by the members of the leading family in Aden.

⁸ Abraham and Isaac, the fathers of Joseph and Khalaf respectively, so frequently mentioned in this book; see the Index.

⁹ This place was an important international trade center already in antiquity. {Al-Tīz is also mentioned in VI, 28, lines 24, 25; see also Maqbul Ahmad, *India*, 180 (index).}

of dinars. You asked me to buy for you two *ḥaylams*¹⁰ and *bd*[...] (14) of silk, red and black wrappers, Ṭabarī cloth, and pillow cases,¹² and if the dinars sent were not [sufficient, I should] (15) advance the funds needed. I bought all you ordered with my own money. [Your dinars] (16) I gave to Dādā, the salesman,¹³ for an additional quarter per dinar¹⁴ [... He got them back,] (17) after he had sued the vizier,¹⁵ and they are still with him [... I dispatched] (18) the goods for you and your brothers and put into them [bags with beads¹⁶(?). I wrote to you,] (19) saying:

May every one of you take what he desires, and the rest will remain for me [... To me belong] (20) also two bundles of wrappers, which I sent together with [your goods. I hope they arrive] (21) safely.

I informed you, my lord, that I willingly¹⁷ [... On sea] (22) I experienced horrors,¹⁸ as you know, but you have also heard [that I arrived] (23) in Mirbāt safely together with what of my goods was salvaged.¹⁹ I [bought you steel²⁰ and] (24) sent it to you (pl.) from Mirbāt, as a replacement for your (pl.) goods [lost on my voyage.

[C] I wrote] (25) to you (s.), explaining my situation, and asking you to verify //the price of all// goods [...] (26) previously mentioned, also what had been obtained for the copper in Maḥ. [... and the cost of the 50] (27)

¹⁰ Defined in Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 945, as “a sheet of dressed leather used as a table cloth,” mentioned in an inventory from Aden, VII, 12, line 21, between a carpet and a divan or couch. {Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 368.}

¹¹ These two letters can be complemented in many different ways.

¹² Common articles of export from Nahrwāra (also in line 20). {*Mihbas*, pl. *mahābis*, ‘wrapper,’ was a robe or material for a robe or for covering pillows; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:171. In III, 54, line 8, it designates a piece of jewelry, which Goitein defined ‘a collar necklace’; I assume that is a separate term.}

¹³ Arabic *bayyā*‘; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:152, 424, n. 100, 438, n. 14; {439, n. 43; 4:296, and IV, 59, line 12}.

¹⁴ Arabic *‘alā ziyādat rub’ fi l-dīnār*. The dinars sent by Ḥasan were of a lower value than the local ones, and Lebdi had to pay an additional quarter for each dinar.

¹⁵ The vizier—whatever that title meant at that time in Nahrwāra—had laid his hand on the much needed foreign money, but the courts or the local ruler had returned them to the *bayyā*‘.

¹⁶ Cf. I, 7, lines 8–9.

¹⁷ {Perhaps read שׁאִיב (*sā’ib*) for שׁאִי (‘*šā’i*’), and translate: ‘hurry,’ etc.

¹⁸ Arabic *ahwāl*. On the horrors of travel, see Introduction IIIB.}

¹⁹ Part of the goods carried with him, including those bought for Ḥasan b. Bundār and his brothers were lost, probably by jettisoning.

²⁰ See line 34, below. The sieves, also mentioned there, were probably regarded as a minor item.

bahārs and requested you to send the 50 *bahārs* of [pepper . . . together] (28) with all the goods I had left with you²¹ [in your warehouse . . .] (29) to Dahlak, if you could do so;²² and if this is not possible, you should let [me know . . .] (30) whereupon I would come and carry with me my own goods and those belonging to Sheikh Abū Ya‘qūb al-Ḥakīm, [may God preserve his honored position!]. (31) Your precious letters with messages befitting you, reached me, saying: [When your pepper will arrive] (32) *in safety*, then your merchandise will get to Dahlak even before your arrival there. I put my trust in [—God, may His name be exalted!—] (33) and in my lord,²³ and sent with //the son of// the *nākhudā*²⁴ and the first mate²⁵ [Ibn al-Dabbāgh²⁶ . . .] (34) and 60 pieces of steel and less than 70 sieves to my lord, but lea[rned that . . .] (35) Ibn al-Dabbāgh . . . as my lord also knows, and the shipment perished.

²¹ During his stay in Aden, Lebdi had made many purchases since he had already planned not to return to that port on his way home.

²² That is, if travelers were found willing to transport those goods. Line 32 shows that such persons were indeed available in Aden at that time.

²³ {The space of ca. three letters in the manuscript at this point suggests that the writer may have intended to finish a paragraph here.

²⁴ For the meaning of this term, see Introduction IIIA.}

²⁵ Arabic *ashṭiyām*. {Probably vocalize *ishṭiyām*. In his Hebrew edition, Goitein translated: officer of passangers. See *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 12:319; Lane, *Dictionary*, 1503. The word *ishṭiyām* appears in the Talmud, ‘Avoda Zara 41a, and is mentioned in Gaonic literature. See Sokoloff, *Dictionary JBA*, 126. When studying this word, attention should be called to its use in both Arabic and Jewish sources. TS AS 146, f. 26, a narrow strip from a letter, which may deal with the India trade, has on the margin one word: *al-ishṭūm*, which is perhaps another form of *ishṭiyām*.}

²⁶ Ibn al-Dabbāgh (“Tanner”) is mentioned in line 35.

I, 15 *Statements about Collateral Given by and Returned to Lebdi*

Fustat, after February 22, 1098

ULC Add. 3420, f. 2

This is recto (!) of the second leaf of what was evidently a bifolium that ULC Add. 3420 comprises. Goitein has cited this side as ULC Add. 3420c. Verso (!) contains the text of I, 15. ULC Add. 3420, f. 1 contains the text of I, 3.

The first and last of these three entries are written and signed by Nethanel b. Japheth, who had also written I, 3. Omissions and other irregularities¹ prove that the busy merchant had become impatient with this new complication of Lebdi's affairs.

In I, 3*v*, lines 3 and 10, Lebdi, who owed Jekuthiel 40 (= 4 + 36) dinars from a deal in indigo, promised to pay him partly in cash, and mainly by redeeming a promissory note signed by the latter. Until these payments were made, Lebdi had to provide collateral, probably because he was a foreigner, who was expected to leave the town; see I, 16*v*, lines 4–5. He delivered a silver tray to Eli the *Parnās* (social welfare official), one of the two standing 'trustees of the court' at that time.² When another merchant³ laid a claim on that tray, Lebdi deposited,⁴ with the approval of the court, 44 pieces of gold jewelry, large and small, weighing a total of 50 *mithqāls*, with Abū 'Amr⁵ Shela b. Japheth, not known otherwise as a trustee (lines 1–9).⁶

¹ {In association with irregularities in the writing, I call attention to use in lines 4, 6, of *dbal*, a vulgar Egyptian form for *dhālīka*; see Blau, *Grammar*, 63.}

² His full name, with which he signed entry one, was Eli ha-Kohen b. Yaḥyā. About him, the other trustee, 'Ulla ha-Levi (n. 7, below), and the offices of *parnās* and trustee in general see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:78–81. {For the *ṣiniyya*, tray, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:144–45; cf. Sadan, *Mobilier*, 94; id., "Clerks," 43, n. 63.}

³ Abū Sahl Manasseh b. Judah, known from contemporary documents, e.g., TS 10 J 5, f. 6 (written by Hillel b. Eli), TS NS 150, f. 155*v* (in the hand of Hillel's son-in-law Halfon b. Manasseh). The tray probably formed part of the price owed by Lebdi to Manasseh for half of the house purchased for him. See I, 23. {Also see the next note.}

⁴ As the text stands, it would seem that Abū Sahl Manasseh made the alternate deposit. If so, we can assume that for some reason he had deposited the tray with Lebdi but did not want it transferred to others.

⁵ The name could be read 'Umar as well.}

⁶ Shela b. Japheth might have been identical with a merchant of that same name who farmed out the taxes on silk in the Delta town of Sammanūd (TS AS 149, f. 14). {Perhaps he is the late Shela, whose son Japheth and widow Amat al-Qādir invest in the India trade (VI, 5).} He had been asked to act as trustee, probably because Eli was about to leave the city, while the other trustee was momentarily absent. Only two objects, a tiara, *ʿiṣāba*, and a wristband, spelled here *tasdaynaq* (usually *dastaynaq*, from Persian

In the second entry, written in a different hand and unsigned, Abu 'l-'Alā' Ṣā'id,⁷ the other trustee, receives these objects and stands security for 36 dinars due⁸ to the Qadi, until Lebdi would make good his promises (lines 10–12).

After this was done, Lebdi gets his collateral back and releases Ṣā'id in court from any responsibility for it (lines 13–16).

As in I, 3, Isaac b. Samuel, one of the two Jewish chief judges in Fustat, signs the first and third entries together with Nethanel. The handwriting in the second entry is that of Abu 'l-'Alā', who received the collateral, wherefore no signature was needed.

These clumsy procedures were necessitated by the constant scarcity of specie. The merchants tried to keep all their assets in goods in order to be able to avail themselves of the opportunities of an ever-fluctuating market. On a sum of 36 dinars, a family could live for a year and a half. Even a well-to-do merchant did not keep such an amount unused, hence those endless procrastinations of payments. The institution of certified trustees eased the relations between creditor and debtor not only within a religious community but, as we see here, also beyond those boundaries.

dast, hand {see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:219–20}) are mentioned. The number 44 refers to the pieces composing those two ornaments, which probably once formed a part of the trousseau of Mrs. Lebdi; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:180.

⁷ This is the Arabic name of 'Ullā ha-Levi b. Joseph al-Dimashqī (from Damascus), who is mentioned in this corpus also as a partner in a business venture in Yemen; see VII, 4. He appears in many court records as party or signatory, and numerous letters are addressed to him, for instance, II, 1 and VI, 13 {on him see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:119 (index).}

⁸ The text has "[[the]] 36 dinars," with 'the' correctly crossed out, for Jekuthiel owed the Qadi Abu 'l-Ṭāhir 40 dinars for Lebdi's indigo, of which four had already been paid; see I, 3.

B. *Lawsuit of Ibn Sughmār vs. Joseph Lebdi*

The first session of the court in Fustat dealing with this matter took place on 12 November, 1097, three days after the opening session of the case Jekuthiel vs. Joseph Lebdi (I, 1–2). It was preceded, however, by an appearance of Joseph before *ha-Rav* Nahray b. Nissīm, then the highest religious authority of the Jews of Egypt. Nahray had received a letter of complaint against Joseph from Judah b. Moses Ibn Sughmār, a fellow Tunisian, who then lived in Alexandria and who was a prominent merchant, scholar and public figure, second only to Nahray himself.¹ Nahray had summoned Joseph to appear before him, but being involved with Judah Ibn Sughmār in a deal of oil, was afraid of a conflict of interest and left the handling of the case to others (I, 17).

The case itself is interesting in more than one respect. The nephew of Judah Ibn Sughmār, Moses Ibn Labrāt, Jewish judge in al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia, had delivered a considerable quantity of corals to Joseph Lebdi, for him to sell in Alexandria or Fustat; the proceeds were destined to serve as a gift for Judah.² Being unable to sell them in Egypt, probably because of their poor quality,³ he took them with him all the way to Nahrwāra, India, where he sold them and bought three flasks of musk. For these he received 13½ dinars in Alexandria, after his return to Egypt. Meanwhile, however, Lebdi had heard that Judge Moses had sequestered, as security for his corals, 10 Murābiṭī (Almoravid)⁴ dinars belonging to him, as well as silversmith tools and 10 dinars belonging to his brother. No doubt Moses had taken these precautionary measures after having learned that Lebdi had not sold the corals in Egypt but had carried them with him on the long and perilous voyage to India.

¹ Mentioned in countless letters and documents; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:57 (index). {In his various writings Goitein, spelled the name Sighmār, with *i*. Since its plene spelling is Swgm'r (see Hirschberg, "Soghmār"; Gil, "Sughmār," 151, n. 2), I have adopted Gil's spelling: Sughmār.}

² The sum later obtained in this transaction, 13–13½ dinars, and, even more so, that of 100 dinars or so which David Ibn Sughmār claimed in court (see the note to I, 16, line 8) is unusually high for a mere gift. I assume Judah had possessed some share in a family house in Tunisia and had given it up for the benefit of his nephew Moses.

³ See I, 16, line 13.

⁴ The most solvent money available during that period. For its value as compared with the Egyptian dinar and the local issues of al-Mahdiyya, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:235–36. The al-Mahdiyya dinar was worth at that time approximately one third of the Almoravid one.

The first session of the court in that matter, in which Moses was represented by his cousin David, concluded with the agreement that Lebdi would buy goods again for those 13½ dinars, and deposit them with a third party in Alexandria. He intended to travel to Tunisia where he would clarify matters. If Judge Moses had indeed taken the sums mentioned before, and would accept them as a payment for his corals plus profit, the goods deposited in Alexandria and the profit derived from them would belong to Lebdi, otherwise to Judge Moses.

The merchants, or at least, the Jewish merchants, preferred to commute between Egypt and Tunisia by sea, not by land.⁵ In winter, the sea was closed.⁶ When spring 1098 approached, it became doubtful whether ships sailing from Alexandria could get through to Tunisia. In 1087/8 the combined forces of Pisa and Genoa, supported by Amalfitans and Romans, had taken most of al-Mahdiyya by storm and ransacked the city.⁷ Subsequently, as the Muslim historian Ibn al-Athīr reports, the Normans, who had recently conquered Sicily, repeatedly attacked the coasts of Tunisia, and in 1096/7 rumors had it that a new combined Christian assault on Tunisia was in the making.⁸

Whether for this reason, or because he awaited news from Aden (I, 4–14), Joseph Lebdi did not travel to al-Mahdiyya in spring 1098, as he had intended. On the 8th of March a new agreement was made; see I, 18a and b.

⁵ Goitein, *Med Soc.*, 1:278–81.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 316–18.

⁷ Idris, *Ẓīrides*, 286–90; Baldwin, *Crusades*, 52–53.

⁸ Ibn al-Athīr's account is somewhat confused, but contains, according to Amari, *Musulmani di Sicilia*, 3:192–93, a kernel of truth; see Idris, *ibid.*, 290. The remark in I, 18b, lines 13–14, made in the court record dated 8 March 1098, “if the ships [sailing from Alexandria] get through . . . to al-Mahdiyya,” seems to confirm Amari's surmise.

I, 16 *Session of the Rabbinical Court of Fustat*

Fustat, November 12, 1097

ULC Add. 3416

ULC Add. 3416 is a bifolium. This is leaf 1. Leaf 2r contains I, 18a and leaf 2v, I, 18b. Published by Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:71–73, no. 625.

Translation

Re: Joseph, the {Prominent} Merchant¹ from Tripoli, vs. Ibn Sughmār.

(1–3) Date and place. (4) Mr. David b. Mr. Joseph—*may he rest in Eden!*—sued Mr. Joseph b. Mr. David (5) of the Lebdiyya family {alt. tr.: known as Ibn al-Lebdiyya}, after David’s attorneyship had been established in court, for the gift made to Sheikh Abū (6) Zikrī Mr. Judah, *the Chosen of the Yeshiva*,² b. Mr. Moses—*may he rest in Eden!*—*by our lord and master* (7) Moses, *son of his honor, our lord and master Labrāt, the Head of the House of the Masters* {alt tr.: *rabbis*}³—*may he rest in Eden!*—namely fifteen (8) units of corals, ten of the *shākh* (‘branches’) kind and five *diqq* (‘chips’).⁴

(9) When asked about this, Mr. Joseph said: “Concerning what he claimed,⁵ I do not know anything (10) whatsoever.” Then Mr. David, the attorney, produced evidence, namely that (11) persons present in court said that when the letter of *our lord and master Moses, the judge*, had been read to him,⁶ (12) the (president of) *the court* asked him: “What do you have to say about this?” Mr. Joseph then replied:

¹ {For *al-tājir*, ‘the prominent merchant,’ see above, 27, n. 4.

² This title, *beḥir ha-yeshivā*, which also appears in I, 36, was bestowed by the Academy on honorees. See Mann, *Jews*, 1:278, and Bareket, *Leadership*, 299 (index).

³ Aramaic *rēsh bē rabbānān*. For this impressive scholarly title, see Mann, *Texts*, 2:205–6, Ben-Sasson, *Qayrawan*, 222, Ginat, “Rosh Hasseder,” 17 and Gil, *Ishmael*, 1:133.}

⁴ According to Dimashqī, *Maḥāsīn al-Tijāra*, 17, the prices of corals fluctuated widely; the average price for a unit of ‘branch’ corals in Egypt was 20 dinars for first class quality and 12 for the ordinary quality. The ‘chips’ sold for 3–6 dinars. In view of this, the sum demanded by David Ibn Sughmār must have amounted to 100 dinars or so.

⁵ The quantities of ‘branches’ and ‘chips.’

⁶ To Joseph Lebdi. As noted in I, 17v, line 5, the letter was read to Lebdi in a previous court session. {Though Lebdi had difficulty penning his signatures on letters and, as a witness, on legal documents (see above, p. 28, n. 8), this is not proof that he was illiterate. In antiquity (see Giṭṭin 19b) and in the Geniza period we often find that letters or documents were read to people who were also quite learned. Such an example is found in I, 17,

(13) Mr. Moses, *the judge*, sent with me scraps of coral chips in order (14) to sell them in Alexandria and (= or) Fustat. When I did not sell them, (15) I took them with me to Nahrwāra, sold them there and bought (16) for them three flasks of musk,⁷ which I sold in Alexandria for (17) 13½ dinars.

When he said to him: “Will you deliver these 13½ dinars (18) to his (the judge’s) uncle?” he replied:

I have learned that the judge took from Da’ūd (David), the Tripolitanian Kohen,⁸ (19) what I had asked some of my relatives in Tripoli to send me, which they did, (20) but which arrived in al-Mahdiyya after my departure, namely, a sum of 10 (21) Murābiṭīn dinars. Moreover, I had deposited silversmith tools belonging to my brother with the judge.⁹ (22) When my brother arrived in al-Mahdiyya and asked the judge to return them to him, he told him: “These are my collateral for (23) 10 dinars.” He took from him 10 (al-Mahdiyya) dinars, but informed him that the tools [Verso] (1) had been taken when Raqqat¹⁰ al-Mahdiyya was ransacked, and only a hammer remained, which he delivered (2) to him.

line 5, where Ibn Sughmār writes that Nahray’s letter was read to him; also see II, 36, line 8. Sometimes such reading aloud may have been court procedure (reading to the parties; see Friedman, *JMP*, 1:467; 2:184) or a practice in the yeshiva; other times we do not know why this was done. Harkavy, *Responsa*, 108–10, no. 231, rules that, barring evidence to the contrary, it is assumed that signatories to a legal deed had been able to read the deed and restricts reading of a deed to the witnesses to cases where it is read by the court scribes to witnesses such as R. Naḥman (comments by Gil, “Merchants,” 289, concerning this responsum are not precise; also see *Otzar ha-Geonim*, 10:35, no. 81 and Friedman, *ib.*, 1:485 ff.)}

⁷ This perfume is made from a glandular secretion of the male musk deer. Musk was commonly used during the Second Temple period, and played an important role in the Far-East commerce. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 6:79 (index); *id.*, *Letters*, 354. The export of musk from India (for which Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, knew of no convincing evidence) is mentioned many times in our documents, e.g., I, 16, line, 16; I, 17v, line 6; I, 18a, lines 12, 14; I, 18b, line 8; II, 6v, line 3; II, 42–IV, 15, line 17, verso, line 1. For its medicinal uses and references in historical sources, see Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 63–64.}

⁸ A *wakīl tujjār*, representative of merchants, in al-Mahdiyya, who took care of the affairs of the many people from Tripoli who had dealings in the Tunisian capital. The informal way in which he is mentioned here shows that those present knew him.

⁹ Lebdi’s brother Solomon was an overseas trader; see I, 20–21. A silversmith turning merchant was nothing exceptional; cf. the three Maghrebi goldsmiths on their way from Aden to Ceylon: II, 32 {lines 2–26, which does not mention that they became merchants}.

¹⁰ *Raqqā* designates land inundated by water and later reclaimed. Several localities bear this name (among them Raqqā on the Euphrates, once the capital of the caliphate; see II, 8). But neither Yāqūt’s dictionary of synonym {homonymic} place names (Yāqūt, *Mushtariq*, 208), nor Talbi, *L’Émirat aghlabide*, and Idris, *Zirides*, seem to know of such a suburb of al-Mahdiyya. It was probably a Jewish neighborhood, and the Muslim historians had no opportunity to mention it. {Cf. Ben-Sasson, *Qayrawan*, 36, 252.}

Said *the Court*¹¹ to him:

If this report turns out to be false, will you still withhold from (3) the judge what belongs to him? You had better buy him¹² goods for that sum and let him have (4) the profit to be derived from it.

He (Lebdi) replied: "I am prepared to do this and shall take the goods with me, for I am (5) traveling there." When *the Court* remarked to him: "The (Ibn Sughmār's) attorney might not be pleased, (6) if the goods were in your hands," he replied:

I am prepared to do this with {alt. tr.: to have them in the hands of} *a third party*, (7) and if the judge has got what belongs to him, the goods plus profit will be mine, (8) otherwise they will be his.

(9) *The proceedings have been written down, etc.*

(10) Abraham b. Jacob—*may his soul dwell in bliss!*—Der'ā.¹³

///Hillel b. Eli.///

(11) Solomon ha-Kohen b. R. Joseph, 'Father' (of the *Yeshiva*)—*may the memory of the righteous be blessed.*¹⁴

¹¹ Hebrew *bēt dīn*, short for presiding judge. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:314.

¹² {Arabic *fa-tarā tashtarī*, which should probably be translated literally, 'you should consider buying.' 'Him' is not found here in the original, and the presiding judge may have intentionally expressed himself ambiguously. At least the profit from the disputed moneys would temporarily be assigned to Judge Moses.}

¹³ From Der'ā in Morocco. This Moroccan scholar was for some time Jewish chief judge in Alexandria. (Dated documents: 1096, TS 8.142, through 1103, JNUL 3 {the correct manuscript number is now JNUL 4⁰ 577.3/3}, ed. Goitein, "Court Records," 265; see also Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:407, n. 45.) When he happened to be in Fustat, he was asked to join the bench, because he was familiar with both the Maghreb and Alexandria.

¹⁴ Signed also I, 1–2.

I, 17 *Letter from Judah Ibn Sughmār to Nahray b. Nissīm*

Alexandria, 1097

Bodl. MS. Heb. c. 28 (Cat. 2876), fol. 37

Published by Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:67–71, no. 624.

This letter was written to Nahray (at Fustat) after he had reported that Lebdi had appeared before him, but prior to the session of November 12, 1097, or at least, before Judah had received a report about it.¹ For he writes that the witnesses who had been present at Nahray's hearing promised to attend the forthcoming meeting of the court, in which David, Judah's nephew, would formally sue Joseph Lebdi. This was done, as we read in I, 16, lines 11–12.

After 22 +2 long and 38 short (marginal) lines, in which Judah expresses his gratitude to God {prays to God} for Nahray's recovery² and his unselfish exertions for other people's affairs, and after dealing with some minor matters, he goes on to request his continuous participation in the Lebdi case.

This is how Judah wished the matter to be handled: Lebdi should be obligated to deliver the proceeds of the corals immediately; if he had any counterclaims against the judge of al-Mahdiyya, he should sue him; but the main point to be pressed was that Lebdi should be forced to swear an oath, as prescribed by the Torah,³ that he had acted in good faith (summary of verso, lines 3–20).

As we have seen, this was not the way in which things transpired on November 12, 1097 (I, 16). The final settlement on March 8, 1098, too, was not quite in the spirit of Judah's letter.

¹ Among other things, Judah asks Nahray to collect the still outstanding rents of two houses in Fustat belonging to him "to the end of the year 490 [A.H.]," which terminated on December 8, 1097. This also is a clue for dating the letter, since rents were paid at the end of the period covered by the agreement, rather than in advance.

² The recovery did not last long. The court record of March 8, 1098 refers to the earlier session with Nahray presiding as 'the court of the deceased,' *al-muntaqil*, I, 18a, line 10; and his son Nissīm, while signing the record of February 22, 1098, adds the blessing for the dead to the name of his father; see the note to I, 3v, line 14.

³ About the nature of this oath see 195, n. 5.

I, 18 *Two Additional Sessions of the Rabbinical Court of Fustat*

Fustat, March 8, 1098

ULC Add. 3416

ULC Add. 3416 is a bifolium. This is leaf 2. Leaf 1 consists of I, 16. Leaf 2*r* contains I, 18a, the text of which was not completed and is deleted by three vertical strokes. Leaf 2*v*, contains I, 18b. Published by Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:73–76, no. 625, where the deletion is not noted.

After an abortive session, in which it was decided that the case should be acted upon in al-Mahdiyya and then be returned to the court in Fustat (I, 18a),¹ the two parties finally agreed upon this settlement:

- (a) Lebdi, or his representative,² will deliver to David Ibn Sughmār in Alexandria two flasks of musk worth no less than 13 dinars;
- (b) David Ibn Sughmār will release Lebdi from further payments for the price of the corals.
- (c) Lebdi's representative³ will travel to al-Mahdiyya, "if the ships get through,"⁴ and will clarify, by legal action, whether Judge Moses had sequestered 10 Murābiṭī and 10 al-Mahdiyya dinars.⁵ A certified document about the outcome of the action will be sent back to Egypt. If none arrives, David is entitled to impose on Lebdi the oath mentioned above or to accept from him another settlement agreeable to him.

The main point in the final settlement is paragraph (b), from which it is evident that the court believed that the amount of 13 (not 13½!) dinars was under the circumstances, a reasonable price for the corals transported to India, and that Judge Moses had indeed acted as alleged by Lebdi. On his way out, Lebdi had certainly shown those corals to several

¹ In I, 18a, line 11, the scribe Hillel b. Eli states that after Lebdi did not sell the corals in Egypt, he carried them *to Yemen*. This statement does not conflict with those made in I, 16 and I, 17. As others did with corals of inferior quality, Lebdi certainly intended to get rid of them in Aden. There, he was also unsuccessful and took them to India.

² His name was Jacob b. Amram al-Qalaṭī {or: al-Qal'ī}, of Qal'at Banī Hammād, Algeria, today a heap of ruins, but at that time the flourishing capital of a small principedom. See Golvin, "Qal'at Banī Hammād." We see the Maghrebis stuck together everywhere.

³ The aforementioned Jacob al-Qalaṭī {or: al-Qal'ī}.

⁴ Arabic *in 'adat al-marākib*. A similar phrase is used in III, 47, line 8.} See page 212, n. 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 4. If the al-Mahdiyya dinar was approximately one third of a Murābiṭī, the judge had received about 13 good dinars.

business friends, and meanwhile, tidings had come through about what had happened in al-Mahdiyya. Clearly, in his zeal as attorney, David Ibn Sughmār had grossly exaggerated while describing the size and the quality of the corals sent with Lebdi.

In order to give weight to this agreement, whose text would certainly be forwarded to al-Mahdiyya, it is signed by five: Isaac b. Samuel (who immigrated from Spain) and Abraham b. Shema'ya (from Eretz Israel), then the two official Jewish judges of Fustat, Abraham b. Nathan (also from Eretz Israel), Jewish judge in Cairo,⁶ the notable Nethanel b. Japheth (see the note to I, 3*v*, line 13), and Hillel b. Eli, who wrote the document.

⁶ About these three, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:512, secs. 12–14.

C. *Additional Geniza Papers on Joseph Lebdi*

With two exceptions (I, 14 and I, 17) the documents in secs. A and B have been preserved together, though not in the correct sequence, in two collections, one in Cambridge, and the other in Oxford. Such a convenient state of affairs is absolutely exceptional. The Geniza papers discussed in this section (as in the other parts of this book) come from many different sources. Fortunately, however, they center on a few characteristic aspects of Joseph Lebdi's activities and, therefore, shed light on one another.

The first item, I, 19 (dated 1095) relates to Joseph's travel to Nahrwāra, India, which formed the background of the lawsuits in secs. A and B; I, 20–22 concern Joseph's family partnership with his brother Solomon, who perished on his way from Tunisia to Spain, and the latter's son David (1099–1101); I, 23–24 show us Joseph Lebdi, the merchant from Tripoli, Libya, as the proprietor of valuable real estate in Fustat (1102). The next five items, I, 25–29, focus on another voyage of Lebdi's to India, a business venture of impressive magnitude. It was undertaken in partnership with two others, who were, however, murdered in the Red Sea port 'Aydhāb. No wonder that this trip, too, led to protracted lawsuits. In I, 30, Lebdi acts as a sedentary merchant concluding a partnership of considerable size with an itinerant agent. Joseph Lebdi died an overseas trader's death: I, 31 is the beginning of a will which he made before the journey from which he did not return.

I, 19 *Testimony on the Date of a Bill of Divorce*

Aden, April 5, 1095

ULC Or. 1080 J 58

Described by Goitein, *Palestinian Jewry*, 258, n. 22.

Because of its extreme brevity the text is translated in full.

- (1) Date of *the bill of divorce*: (2) [*Thurs*]day, the 27th (3) day of the month of *Nisan*, (4) 1406 E.D. (5) We, the undersigned witnesses, have checked (3) this date and found that it was correct, (7) when we scrutinized it {alt. tr.: have compared . . . upon comparison}. *Established and approved*.
 (8) Jacob b. R. Abraham, *may his memory be blessed!*
 (9) Joseph b. David.

The first signatory wrote the document. His Maghrebi script is of exquisite beauty, similar to that of his contemporary Nahray b. Nissīm, and almost indistinguishable from that of his compatriot Abraham Ben Yijū, who lived about half a century later (chap. 3). Tunisia, a country of Jewish learning, excelled also in its high standards of penmanship.

Lebdi's signature, known from his letter I, 14 {and TS NS 320, f. 24},¹ is bold, but untrained, so much so that he misspelled here the name of his father David as *dywd* instead of *dwyd*.

What does this small piece of paper tell us? In addition to their business, the overseas traders had to exert themselves for the public weal, for instance, as here, to help the rabbinical court back home clarify the affairs of a divorced woman living abroad.² Since we find Lebdi back in Fustat no later than the autumn of 1097, and since he made prolonged halts in Aden, Nahrwāra, and Mirbāṭ, he and his fellow traveler must have been charged with this errand while setting out from Fustat in 1095 at the latest. The record of their testimony was brought back to Fustat by another traveler and finally was disposed of in the Geniza.

¹ {See page 28, n. 8.}

² Cf. VII, 21, instructions to a community official to bring to court two North-African merchants on their way to Yemen, one of whom carried a bill of repudiation. {That official was a *parnās* and trustee; see I, 15. Lebdi and his traveling companion were presumably requested to verify that the date of the original bill of divorce was the same as that in an ancillary document that had been presented in Egypt.}

The city where the divorced woman lived could hardly have been any other than Aden, for Qūs, which also contained a considerable Jewish community, was connected with Cairo by a regular weekly commercial mail service, so that there was no need for the authorities to burden busy traders with such a task. For broken marriages in Aden, concluded between local and foreign spouses, see II, 64, and VI, 55.

No other document emanating from Lebdi's fellow traveler Jacob b. Abraham has been found thus far. He might have been as prominent an India trader as his Maghrebi compatriot Ben Yījū. However, we know only what the Geniza has stored for us.

I, 20 *Testimony of 'Arūs b. Joseph on Lebdi's Partnership with His Brother*

Fustat, June 10, 1099

Mosseri V,374.1 (A 3)

On August 18, 1098 Joseph Lebdi was still in Fustat (see I, 12). In the spring of 1099 he was back there after having passed the winter in al-Mahdiyya. One 'wintered' in Tunisia, that hub of the (Muslim) Mediterranean trade, when one had much business to do there. Lebdi clearly tried to sell there what he had salvaged from his eventful trip to India and made preparations for another such voyage. In al-Mahdiyya he concluded, or confirmed, the partnership with his brother Solomon. The latter turned west, to Spain, and Joseph joined 'Arūs al-Mahdawī al-Arjawānī ('The Purple-maker from al-Mahdiyya') on his way back to Egypt.¹

God, however, ordained otherwise. When Solomon set out from Tunisia to Spain in the spring of 1099, he drowned. His son David, who happened to be in Egypt,² had now to secure his rights as heir. A first step was the court session recorded below. At that time, Joseph was absent. He probably had set out on his voyage to India without knowing what had happened to his brother (see I, 21).³

Translation

(1–3) Date and place. (4) Mr. David (5) b. Mr. Solomon Lebdi—*may he rest in Eden!*—appeared in court and made this deposition: (6) "Mr. 'Arūs b. Mr. Joseph—*may he rest in Eden!*—has testimony on my behalf. I wish that it should be heard (7) and recorded." He presented to us Mr. 'Arūs, who made this declaration:

(8) I remember having been together with Mr. Solomon and his brother Joseph, the sons of Mr. (9) David Lebdi, in al-Mahdiyya. (10) They were {add: both} in one room {alt. tr.: apartment}, and all their (11) mer-

¹ On 'Arūs, see page 171, n. 21. For 'wintering' in al-Mahdiyya, see page 238.

² {David b. Solomon Lebdi might have settled in Egypt. In any event, he presumably is the Dā'ūd Ibn al-Labdi who contributed a quarter dinar according to a list written there ca. 1100 (Bodl. MS. Heb. e. 94, fol. 21; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:476, no. 15, 3:432, n. 66).

³ This statement is not clear, since in line 17, 'Arūs says that he met with Joseph Lebdi after having heard of his brother's drowning.}

chandise was in both their hands.⁴ I asked each of them (12) separately about their relationship.⁵ Each of them answered: (13) "We gave each other full power over all we have."⁶ Then they packed {add: some of} (14) the goods they had there. Mr. Solomon traveled with some of them (15) to Spain, and Mr. Joseph took the remainder and joined (16) me. [God] ordained that Mr. Solomon drowned with all that he carried with him. (17) When I {alt. tr. : we} heard this, I met with Mr. Joseph and asked him (18) what he was going to do. He said: "What shall I do? We have given each other full power (19) over everything we possess. It belongs to us jointly //as a partnership between us, even if it were only one dirhem//."⁷

The proceedings have been written down, etc.

Written and signed by Hillel b. Eli. The other signatories were Isaac b. Samuel and Abraham b. Shema'ya, the two chief justices.

⁴ They dealt with it as if it was their common property.

⁵ Arabic *halhumā*, lit., 'their state.'

⁶ Arabic *mutafāwīdān fī jamī' mā ma'anā*; the same in line 18. *Tafāwāda* commonly means 'negotiate,' but here it is a precise legal term. {For the different legal definitions of *mufāwāda*, see Udovitch, *Partnership*, 274 and the references in the index, 280.}

⁷ As required, these words, written above the line, are repeated at the end of the document.

I, 21 *Session of the Court: Joseph Lebdi vs. His Nephew David*

Fustat, August 19, 1101

ENA 2594, f. 8

Solomon's death was a tremendous blow for Joseph Lebdi. Not only did he lose a brother and all he carried with him from their joint possessions, but one half of his own belongings—depending on what type of partnership the courts would finally recognize (see I, 22)—were now doomed to go to his brother's heirs. Uncles and nephews, like brothers, as in this case, would sometimes cooperate without any formal agreements.¹ It is natural, however, that in the face of such a disaster, Joseph took a harder look at his earlier dealings with his late brother and his son. “When a Jew goes bankrupt,” says a (Judeo-)Arabic proverb, “he searches the account books of his father.”²

Our fragment is a first step in this direction. As in I, 20, the court was approached, this time by Joseph, with the request to record a testimony in his favor. Unlike I, 20, however, the other party, David, was present and was interrogated. Because of the smallness of the fragment and its mutilated state only the barest outlines of the case are recognizable.

Ṣedāqā ha-Kohen b. David (line 10, and verso, line 3), an Andalusian India trader mentioned repeatedly in this book, testifies that, some years back, he was entrusted by Joseph Lebdi with a shipment to be delivered in Tripoli, Libya, to his brother (Solomon) or the latter's son (David). The shipment must have been of considerable size, since a sum of “about 400 dinars” is mentioned (verso, line 5), as well as two bales of cowry shells (recto, line 7), Indian popular ornaments, which were as avidly sought after in the Mediterranean area, especially in Spain, as corals were in India. The recipient of the shipment was also instructed to provide Joseph's family, at that time, still in Tripoli, with all they needed (verso, lines 1, 8, 9). David testified that he had indeed delivered a certain sum to his uncle's wife in accordance with the instructions of the Jewish court of Tripoli.³

The document is dated Monday, the 23rd of [...], 1412. In 1412 E.D. (September 6, 1100–August 25, 1101) this combination occurred only on 23 Kislev = November 26, 1100 and 23 Elul = August 19, 1101.

¹ Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:40–43; India Book VII, 7.

² {See page 9, n. 22.}

³ For the importance of this court, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:395–96.

But only the second choice can be sustained, for in January 1102, at the latest, we find Lebdi in Fustat (see I, 22), while in April 1103 he had been away from the city for a year and ten months (I, 24, side a, lines 14–15). Thus, as far as our present knowledge goes, Lebdi's prolonged absence must have occurred between the summers of 1099 and 1101 (I, 20 and 21). After his return from India, the lawsuits between him and his nephew David were renewed.

I, 22 *Text of Oath with Inventory of Joseph Lebdi's Assets*

Fustat, early twelfth century

TS 13J 6, f. 32

Uncle and nephew did not reach a mutual agreement, and Joseph was forced to take a threefold oath: that he had never cheated his late brother Solomon and that he had fulfilled all his obligations emanating from both his partnership with him and the one concluded with David, which is described as ‘renewed,’ probably meaning after the death of his father.

Taking such an oath was a disgrace for a respectable merchant and, moreover, religiously blameworthy. As was usual in such cases, ‘upright elders’ {must have} intervened; our document was not completed, and some other settlement was made.

In defense of his claims, Joseph had to enumerate all his assets. This previously had been done in part in a court session whose record, repeatedly referred to, is summarized here in a note at the bottom of the page. However, the list of assets, it seems, is complete, for it ends with ‘the two houses’ owned by Joseph. Real estate is always the last item in such lists.¹

The document is written by Hillel b. Eli in large, clear script with next to no deletions and corrections. While reading an oath no faltering was permitted. Naturally, a list of the assets of an India trader sheds light on his commercial activities. Before discussing them a full translation of the document seems advisable.

Translation

(1) Joseph b. David—*may he rest in Eden!*—will swear, on behalf of David, the son of his brother Solomon—*may he rest in Eden!*—(2) that he never cheated his father Solomon in any transaction, partnership, commenda,²

¹ As proved {suggested} by the numerous trousseau lists, where the bride’s share, or shares, in houses are regularly noted at the end.

² {These three terms translate Arabic *mu‘āmala wa-sharika wa-khulṭa*. *Mu‘āmala* is defined by Goitein (*Med. Soc.*, 1:169, 441, n. 20, 442–43, n. 35) both as ‘cooperation’ and as a word used loosely for partnership; cf. Gil, “Merchants,” 276. According to Goitein (*ib.*, 170), *sharika* and *khulṭa* are synonyms for the same type of partnership. Izzi Dien (“*Sharika*”) writes: “According to Al-Azhari, it (*sharika*) signifies the mixing (*khalt*) of two

inheritance, or (3) other dealings from the time when any such comenda or transaction had been concluded between them (4) until now; also, that not *one gold piece or more* from the capital of: the partnership between the two brothers, (5) which was effective at the time when R. David sued him, was still owed, as Joseph asserted; (6) also, that from the newly concluded partnership between him and (7) his nephew R. David there did not remain with him anything concealed, deposited, (8) or delivered to someone else, nor was anything removed by ruses common among *people*, (9) such as a gift made to a wife, child, relative or foreigner,³ *Jew or* (10) *Gentile*; and that he did not possess and had not retained *anywhere in the world* anything except what is stated in the *court record* (11) detailed *above*;⁴ and the large sums that the other litigant agreed (12) in that *record* belonged to merchants—Muslim, Indian (13) and Egyptian, and that they had been delivered by him to them completely in a legally approved manner;⁵ (14) and that he did not possess *anywhere* gold or silver, in the form of jewelry and vessels (15) or bullion,⁶ dinars, dirhems, or copper, goods (16) or merchandise,⁷ furniture or textiles, or promissory notes, (17) except:

the 2,000 dinars mentioned by him in the (previous) *court record*; the (sums listed in) the agreement (18) with the sons of Bundār;⁸ the sums mentioned in the (previous) *record*, namely:

or more assets [...].” Gil, *ib.*, writes that *khulta* may, at times, refer to a regular partnership but that it principally designates the sharing of shipping costs; he does not cite evidence for this, however.

³ Arabic *li-qarīb aw li-ba‘īd*. This is a calque of the Aramaic *rēhīq u-q’riv*, which appears in defension clauses in ancient documents. As noted by Yadin, *Cave of Letters*, 104–5, these terms “are ambiguous and may designate ‘unrelated and related’ or may connote merely physical distance or proximity.” Arabic *ba‘īd* does not connote ‘unrelated,’ according to the dictionaries, but ‘distant’ only.

⁴ A circle with a tail above the line sends the reader to the summary at the end of the page.

⁵ Arabic *bi-wajh haqq wa-wājib*.

⁶ Arabic *maṣāgha, ghayr maṣāgha*, lit., ‘shaped by a goldsmith or not shaped by a goldsmith.’ {For *maṣāgh*, ‘jewelry,’ see Shy, “Terms,” 230, where *dhabab* also is listed with that meaning.}

⁷ The terms *biḏā‘a*, ‘goods,’ and *tijāra*, ‘merchandise,’ are probably used here pleonastically, not with an exact legal connotation. {For the legal definition of *biḏā‘a* in partnership, see Udovitch, *Partnership*, 101 ff.}

⁸ Besides Ḥasan b. Bundār, the representative of the merchants in Aden, Joseph Lebdi had dealings with Ḥasan’s brothers Abraham and Isaac already during his previous trip to Nahrwāra; see I, 14, lines 10, 18.

- (19) copper worth 100 dinars and seven qinṭars (= 700 pounds) mercury; smaller items⁹ in his possession, (20) including gold, silver, copper [[worth]]; 50 dinars [[and the...]];
 (21) ten gala costumes stored with Hudhayfa;¹⁰ also 50 dinars in the hand of (22) Abu 'l-Barakāt al-Ḥalabī (of Aleppo);¹¹
 and the cinnabar and the mercury stored with Khulayf b. (23) Hārūn (= Aaron);¹²
 and the two houses in the Maṣṣāsa [quarter].¹³

The addition from line 11:

- (24) The 500 dinars from Abu 'l-Ṭā[hir¹⁴ for] 30 brocade *thawbs* (robes); and the 10 (25) units of corals, as well as the 59 gala costumes, the price of which (26) he owes {alt. tr.: is x dinars}; 100 silken *fūtas*; 200 dinars owed to Abū Sahl,¹⁵ which (27) the aforementioned Dā'cū>d [= David] claimed {alt. tr.: and the 200 dinars designated for Abū Sahl,

⁹ Arabic *dabash*. Cf. {III, 24, lines 3, 10} III, 39, lines 11 and 14, and Fagnan, *Additions*, 52b: 'objets sans valeur' {which, as proven by our list, is imprecise}; Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:423b: 'dubūsh, bagatelles.' See also Löfgren, "Glossary," 33 where German, 'Mobilien, Gepäck' is slightly misleading; Löfgren, *Aden*, 58, line 7, says that the travelers arriving in Aden left their boats on the first day with their hand luggage, *dabash*, while their goods were unloaded only on the third day after their arrival. {In his Introduction to the *Guide of the Perplexed*, Maimonides compares the search for the esoteric meaning of the Torah to looking for a pearl that dropped in a house that was "dark and full of *dabash*." *Guide* (Pines), 11, translates 'furniture'; *Guide* (Schwarz), 16 'junk'; *Guide* (Qāfīḥ), 10 'packages' (*ḥafāṣīm*), which is preferable. Maimonides (*Responsa*, 2:380, no. 215) rules that it is reprehensible (*makrūh*) for one to stand in prayer with *a'dāl* or *dabash* separating him from the wall before him. In contrast to *a'dāl* ('bales,' 'large bags'), here *dabash* obviously means 'small packages' (rather than furniture, as translated).}

¹⁰ Probably the proprietor of a *dār wakāla*. Only one example of a Jew bearing that typically Arab name is known to me from the Geniza: "Abū Sa'd, the former tax farmer of (the town of) Benhā, Saadya b. Ephraim, known as Ibn Ḥudhayfa," TS 13.J 3, f. 12, dated 1165. Chronologically, that Ḥudhayfa could be identical with the one mentioned here, who would then have been the grandfather of the tax farmer.

¹¹ Repeatedly mentioned as traveling to Yemen, see VII, 4 (a release to him after return from there) {written in 1098, from which we learn that his full name was Abu 'l-Barakāt Mevorākḥ al-Ḥalabī b. Solomon, to be distinguished from Barakāt b. Mūsa al-Ḥalabī, mentioned in VI, 26 (in 1133) and VI, 27}, and VII, 5, lines 9–11 (goods entrusted to him).

¹² Might have been the grandson of his namesake who signed Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 28, ed. Cowley, "Bodleian Fragments," 251–54; in Alexandria (1028).

¹³ More commonly known as Mamṣūša {see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:3}; see the comments following here.

¹⁴ The Qadi and owner of a *dār wakāla*, mentioned in I, 3.

¹⁵ Abū Sahl Manasseh, from whom Joseph Lebdi bought one half of a house, for which he had to pay 300 dinars; see I, 23. {'Two hundred' is designated by the Hebrew letters פפ (פ having the numerical value of 100) rather than כ (whose numerical value is 200). As explained by Gil, "Merchants," 288, this was done in accounts, since כ could often be misread as ט (whose numerical value is 4).}

and [he gave/offered (?)] the house of the aforementioned as collateral for them}.¹⁶

Comments

This document was written some time after Joseph Lebdi had returned from a voyage to India. Muslim, Indian and Egyptian merchants, had entrusted him with (shipments amounting to) large sums, and the accounts with them or their representatives had already been settled (lines 11–13). While in Aden, Joseph had some disputes with the three sons of Bundār, but an agreement, *muṣālaḥa*, was reached, and his assets, goods or cash, were left by him in the South-Arabian port city, in expectation of further business to be done in those parts (lines 17–18). The 2,000 dinars mentioned as the first item of his assets in the Egyptian capital were undoubtedly not kept by him in specie, but mostly represented promissory notes given to him by the customers who had purchased the merchandise he brought from his Indian voyage. The notes had to be redeemed in cash or kind, some months later, as agreed upon. A round sum is given because the proceeds from the various deals could only be assessed approximately. Joseph had provided details in the previous court session (line 17).

All the goods enumerated: copper,¹⁷ mercury, cinnabar, corals, and costly textiles (lines 19, 21, 22, 25, 26), were articles of export to India. Naturally, when Joseph had occasion to make a good deal in Fustat, as selling 30 brocade robes for 500 dinars to the Qadi Abu ʿI-Tāhir, he would not miss the opportunity (line 24). Why carry such precious stuff to India when one could profitably get rid of it nearer home? At the time of the writing of the document, the Qadi had not yet paid, just

¹⁶ The ends of lines 24–26 are torn off. I restore: (24) *wal-ʿash[ara]*; (25) *ʿa[layh]*; (26) *wa-ʿa[rʿar]* (Hebrew). In line 27 *dʿd* is written for *dʿwd*. Hillel, the experienced clerk, became impatient because it had become already clear that the oath would not be taken. {The restoration *wa-ʿa[rʿar]* (Hebrew in the middle of the Arabic) is questionable; perhaps restore *wa-ʿa[tā]*, ‘he gave,’ or *wa-ʿa[rʿada]*, ‘he offered.’ The last word in the text, though corrected, seems to be, as indeed transcribed by Goitein, *rahm*, ‘collateral.’ In any event, I suggest reading not דאד but דאר , *dār*, ‘house,’ and the alternative translation given above is an attempt to render this expression. On Abū Sahl’s collateral, see I, 15, lines 2–7. See the description of I, 23, according to which Abū Sahl in effect put up half of his house as collateral for a loan of 300 dinars from Lebdi.}

¹⁷ The copper comprising part of the hand luggage (line 20, and the note to line 19, above) consisted of table and kitchenware.

as Lebdi himself still owed the price for 59 *hullas*, or gala costumes and the corals (line 25). Even cash sums, such as the 50 dinars given to Abu 'l-Barakāt al-Ḥalabī (line 9), must be regarded as export articles on the India route. Abu 'l-Barakāt is repeatedly found in 'Yemen'; see the note to line 21, above.

As to the two Houses of Joseph Lebdi (line 23), we do indeed have documents about them, I, 23 and 24. In the first, written a short time before January 22, 1102, Lebdi is prepared to sell one half of a house acquired by him in Fustat, for 300 dinars. Three other records, the last of which is dated April 20, 1103 (I, 24), deal with a house that Lebdi had purchased for 500 dinars, and of which his family occupied the ground floor. Since Lebdi had sold the first house some time before January 22, 1102, the declaration about his assets must have been scheduled for some date at the end of the year 1101, in any case after August of that year; see I, 21.

I, 23 *Responsum on Sale of Half a House by Joseph Lebdi*

Fustat, shortly before January 22, 1102

AIU VII D 7

Published by Chapira, "Documents," 223-37; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:371, n. 8.

This is the lower part of a preliminary draft, or, rather, notes, written on both sides of a 40 cm. long strip of parchment of diminishing width.¹ The extensive, but hastily written piece is marred by deletions and especially by additions squeezed in between the lines, and has suffered much by effacement and holes. Notwithstanding, the main points emerge clearly.

Abū Sahl Manasseh b. Judah² had sold one half of a house inherited from his mother to Abu 'l-Faraj Amram b. Joseph.³ The other half he had sold to Joseph Lebdi, probably in 1097,⁴ for 300 dinars,⁵ retaining the right to buy it back at the same price for a certain period, during which he would live in that part of the house, or sublet it, and pay rent to the buyer. This was a common form of a loan with veiled interest when either the price {was low} or the rent to be paid was unreasonably high, as certainly was the case here, for both Manasseh and Lebdi conceded that they had "deviated from the path of the law." Taking interest is forbidden by biblical injunction and in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic laws. As long as the two parties got along well, nothing happened, since the courts were not informed about the arrangements agreed upon

¹ When a piece of parchment was cut to the size required for the document, there remained irregularly formed margins, which were used by the scribes for notes and drafts. Cf. the description in Goitein, "Transfer of Houses," 406, and the Arabic texts there, 410-12. {It is not clear that anything is missing from the top of the document. A legal opinion concerning its validity seems to be appended at the end.}

² About him see 209, n. 3 {and I, 22, line 26}.

³ It is not certain if he is identical with his namesake, 'the son of the brother of the Nagid,' writer of the letters II, 2-7, and represented in several other Geniza documents. In 1095, an Abū Sa'īd Amram b. Joseph invested 300 dinars in a partnership in a 'perfumer's' store with favorable conditions; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:173-74. The discrepancy in the honorific by-name (Abu 'l-Faraj vs. Abū Sa'īd) is not decisive. Amram might have changed his by-name to Abu 'l-Faraj 'Salvation,' during an illness, as was done by others. The condition described in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:174, top {"When Mr. Amram is in town," etc.}, seems to show that Amram did not live permanently in Fustat. His share in a house in Fustat might have been an investment, as it was for Joseph Lebdi.

⁴ See note 2, above. {This reference not clear.}

⁵ For the value of this house in comparison to other properties, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:288.}

between them. As soon as they began to quarrel and to apply to a court, the illegality of their actions and consequently, their invalidity, became evident.⁶

In this dire situation Amram b. Joseph, Manasseh's partner, went to his aid, bought Lebdi's share for 300 dinars (see above) and permitted Manasseh to stay there or to sublet it, beginning January 22, 1102, for a period of four lunar years.

From the circumstances described, it is evident that for both Manasseh and Lebdi the share in the house concerned was a form of investment.⁷ Manasseh stipulated that he might sublet his part (he most likely had lived in his own house before he inherited this one from his mother), and Lebdi did not plan to live there at all, since he had already purchased another one, a part of which was occupied by his family.

Merchants generally preferred to invest their money in business rather than in real estate. But Lebdi had a daughter, Sitt al-Ahl, and a house, or a share in it, was an almost obligatory component of a respectable dowry. This explains why he bought that share. When he had trouble with it, he sold it. No. I, 34a (dated 1118) shows that his daughter was unmarried after his death; in 1102 she was certainly still a small child and there was no particular urgency in providing for her dowry.

{Manasseh had already borrowed money from Lebdi and put up household goods for collateral in one instance (I, 15, lines 2–7) and his property (or rather, half of it) for a 200 dinar loan (I, 22, lines 26–27) in another. The agreement between Manasseh and Amram was evidently intended to correct some irregularity, which involved a breach of the prohibition of usury, in the latter arrangement. This document actually consists of a responsum of sorts. In the query, the scribe Hillel b. Eli copied a rough draft of the agreement between Manasseh and Amram, and before writing the final version, submitted it to some authority for approval or for instructions for revisions. The juriconsult's comments, which he wrote at the bottom of verso, are almost illegible, but they include instructions to

⁶ For details of a similar story, where an energetic woman took matters in hand, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:329. Another version (TS 12.482) of that story is described by Weiss, "Mortgage." {For veiled interest through rent, cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:87.

⁷ Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:83, 371, n. 8, where this document is cited.

clarify the condition concerning the right to repurchase the property and to explicitly mention the payments for *ḥikr* and *ḥirāsa*, ground rent and monthly security.⁸

⁸ On the payment for ground rent (*ḥikr*), see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:37–38; Gil, *Foundations*, 87–88; Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 162. On the security payment (*ḥirāsa*), see Goitein, *ibid.*, 35, 37; Gil, *ibid.*, 88, 241, n. 3. These payments were usually made by the proprietor, but for a sale with the right to repurchase they were imposed sometimes on the seller-borrower, who continued to live on the premises; see Goitein, *ibid.*, 88. For long-term rentals, there was a preference to have the tenant pay the *ḥikr*, and someone complained to Maimonides concerning the details of such an agreement made by the pious foundation (TS 8 J 15, f. 17).}

I, 24 *Three Court Records on Purchase of House by Joseph Lebdi*

Fustat, the last record dated April 20, 1103¹

(Sides a–b) TS 8 J 9, f. 2

(Sides c–d) TS 8 J 9, f. 3

These two pages (four sides) represent copies of court records. This is expressly stated in the caption, and is further proved by the fact that the names of the signatories are written by the scribe² and not by themselves.

Joseph Lebdi had purchased a house from Nājiya, the wife of the notable Japheth b. Abraham, ‘The Pride of the Community,’³ for 500 dinars.⁴ The purchase was ‘conditional,’⁵ although Lebdi had already moved his family into the ground floor(s)⁶ and sublet the upper stories. Lebdi still owed 80 dinars from the price and had to pay rent for the house as long as the sale was conditional. After a prolonged absence of about a year and ten months, no doubt another voyage to India (see I, 25–29), he paid that sum and received a *kitāb intiqāl*, an official deed

¹ The dating of these three records presents some difficulty. The first one bears no date at all. The second has “in the month of Iyyar, 141[.]” with the last digit effaced. The third notes only “Monday, the 10th of Iyyar.” In the decade of 1410–19 E.D. this corresponded to April 20, 1103 and April, 1106 C.E. For considerations detailed in the Introduction IIA, 1103 is preferable. {The last letter after ‘141’ is faintly visible. It appears to resemble ‘g’ (= 3) more than ‘d’ (=4). Iyyar 10, 1413 E.D. corresponds to April 30, 1102, but that was a Wednesday. The date is indeed given as 1102 in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:327; 4:371, n. 8.}

² The scribe was Halfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh (dated documents from his hand: 1100–38, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:231), the son-in-law of Hillel b. Eli.

³ In Hebrew, *tīferet ha-qāhāl*; he was a prominent member of the community. Dated documents: 1076–1108; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:485, n. 74. A lawsuit between him and Jekuthiel, the representative of merchants (I, 1–14) in August 1097 about half a load of alum, *shabb*, sold in al-Mahdiyya for ‘Rūm dinars,’ ENA 4010, f. 17, was included in the original version of the ‘India Book’ as no. 197.

⁴ {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:287, for a comparison of this price to that of other houses; *ibid.*, 268 (449, n. 35): an “exceptionally high price.” *Ibid.*, 96, 374, n. 76, Goitein cites this document as evidence for a yearly rental of six percent of the value of the house, since the house sold for 500 dinars and the rent claimed for it was 30 dinars.}

⁵ I, 24, side a, line 7, *tny*’ is a slip for *tn’*), I, {also in} 24b, line 5, Hebrew *tenay*. {The word appears in slightly different spellings in other documents. It might be the Aramaic form of the same word or from the Arabic *thny*, meaning ‘double.’}

⁶ In I, 24, side b, line 9, ‘the two ground floors,’ in side d, lines 3, 7, ‘the ground floor.’ There is no contradiction here. The term *qā’a* designates both the entire ground floor and the inner courts surrounded by buildings. Many houses had two and some even three inner courts. The subject is treated in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:63–64.

of transfer.⁷ The three court sessions were concerned with the rents due Nājiya, an issue compounded by Lebdi's claim that the rent for the ground floor was included in the 80 dinars, which he had paid after his return, and the fact that the subtenants had used part of their rents for repairs and upkeep.⁸ After the threat of still another oath,⁹ and the testimony of a representative of the subtenants that their rents had been paid in part directly to Nājiya¹⁰ and in part used for expenses for the house, a settlement was reached: Nājiya's husband would make accounts with the subtenants and Lebdi would pay whatever they might still owe her. His claim that the rent of 18 dinars for the ground floor was included in his payment of 80 dinars was apparently recognized. Otherwise he would have hardly received the deed of transfer prior to this court action.¹¹

We see that 'the merchant from Tripoli,' once he became involved in the India trade, could no longer retain his main headquarters in that Libyan port. He had to move to Fustat, the terminal for both the India and the Mediterranean trades.

In a list of persons entitled to communal assistance, written around 1105, 'the woman from Akko (Acre) in the house of al-Lebdi' is noted.¹² In another list from that time, 'a relative of al-Lebdi' received a *jūkāniyya* robe at a public distribution of clothing to the poor. Akko fell into the hands of the Crusaders in 1104. She was probably a refugee, to whom Lebdi had given shelter in his house. Whether she was really a relative of his, or whether her characterization as such was an inaccuracy on the part of the scribe, is difficult to say.¹³

⁷ {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:373, n. 33: "The 'deed of transfer' preceding the registration was called *kitāb al-intiqāl*," with reference to this document (the mention there of 'the original deed,' *kitāb al-aṣl*, is apparently a misplaced citation from another document).

⁸ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:101 (375, n. 112): "A tenant in a house worth 500 dinars spent the equivalent of ten months' rent on supports costing 280 dirhems with the subsequent approval of the proprietor, who had been abroad during the period."

⁹ No. I, 24, side b, line 17; cf. I, 22.

¹⁰ Prudishly referred to as "the house of Sheikh Abū 'Alī (Japheth)" I, 24, side c, line 15. {For the familiar metaphor *bayt*, or the Hebrew *bayit*, 'house,' for one's wife, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:161, 164, 461, nn. 2, 3, 462, n. 23; and the sources noted in Friedman, "Exegesis of R. Meir," 80–81, n. 8.

¹¹ The 'settlement' is actually Lebdi's suggestion, registered in I, 24, side d, lines 7–17. The documents do not specify whether the 'deed of transfer' was given Lebdi only after this 'settlement,' or after the 80 dinars had been paid, while the rent for the interim period remained an outstanding claim.}

¹² Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:446, no. 31, TS K 15, f. 101, col. IV b, line 11.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 444, no. 25, TS K 15, f. 48, col. I, line 20 (allocation); col. IV, line 16 (receipt). Akko: see Buhl, "Akkā." For *jūkāniyya* see Goitein, "Islamic Textiles." {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:154, 155.

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 Mamṣūṣa-Maṣṣāṣa 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.}¹⁴ 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.

¹⁴ No. I, 34b, where he is called Abu 'l-Surūr Peraḥyā 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’},¹ 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.² However, the two men were murdered in ‘Aydhāb,³ 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.

¹ {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 *wḥṣ*, 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.

² No. I, 27, line 16, suggests that sending the lac in small installments was Farah’s initiative.

³ As noted in VII, 69, line 4.

I, 25 *Letter from a Merchant in Egypt to the Maghreb on Lebdi's Arrival in Aydḥāb*

Egypt, probably 1101

ENA 2730, f. 7

This tiny fragment is a typical example of the vagaries of Geniza research. At first sight it appears to be completely useless. The middle part of a letter, torn from all sides, measuring, as far as measurements are possible, only some 9×10.5 cm., and defaced by countless holes—what information may be culled from such a piece? Yet, it is not devoid of interest.

The writer sends this letter from Egypt to a merchant whose family lived there and who had traveled to the Maghreb. Peace and prosperity had been restored to the country after a period of anarchy, and agriculture benefited from a satisfactory rise of the Nile. Dinars had been sent with Dā'ūd (David) Ibn Sughmār (I, 16–18) and the recipient was asked to buy for them corals of the very best quality, for the writer was about to travel to far places to recoup losses suffered during four years, in which, for reasons known to the addressee, he was *battāl*, unable to earn money.¹ The 'far places' where corals were in demand were Aden and India; in contrast to I, 16–18, we see here that merchants did not expect to do serious business with inferior materials even in the 'Orient.' The writer also requests in urgent terms that the recipient, or one al-Qurṭubī (a man from Cordova, Spain), "who had passed the winter in al-Mahdiyya," form a partnership with him.² I try now to translate verso, lines 4–16.

¹ {Or unable to conduct business.}

² Verso, lines 1–4: ... *al-Qurṭubī kān shatā fi 'l-Mahdiyya*. This man of Cordova can hardly be identical with the Jacob of Cordova mentioned in IV, 75, line 11, which was written in 1140, when he traveled from Alexandria to Cairo. Because of the hopeless state of the manuscript and the habit of the letter writers to address the recipient alternately in the second or third person, it is impossible to decide with whom the partnership was requested. Abū Sa'īd Makhlūf in lines 10 ff. is not necessarily identical with Makhlūf b. Mūsa, VI, 21–25. {For Makhlūf b. Mūsa, see II, 21, line 1; II, 24, line 13; II, 26, margin; II, 58, margin, line 5.} Several merchants with this name are known from that period.

Translation

Your family (5) is well and safe, as you wish and desire. Of late, (6) all the population of the land of Egypt is enjoying justice and safety.³ (7) The... (harvest?) this year was indescribable. The Nile had been perfectly beautiful. (8) The people⁴ had remained in Qūṣ as from that time.⁵ They say now (9) that the roads, God willing, have been opened, for the merchants (10) who had been in ‘Aydhāb have arrived after having received governmental prescripts⁶ and got through. (11) There had been 3,000 bales in ‘Aydhāb,⁷ and now an additional (12) 10,000 {or read: 6,000} bales have arrived. Among the very first arrivals was Joseph Ibn al-Leb[di],⁸ (13) who had with him 80 bales of lac, packed in Nahrwāra,⁹ and 50 bales of pepper (14) [...] 600 [...] Faraj arrived [...] (15) [...] and those who arrived among those latecomers reported that [...] (16) [...] was lost,¹⁰ and now the goods are....

Comments

For the dates of this journey of Joseph Lebdi (1099–1101) see the Introduction IIA, sec. 6. Because of recurrent plagues and the threat of an invasion by the Crusaders (1100 C.E. {Jerusalem was conquered in July,

³ {Compare, for example, the good news about the land in II, 65, lines 48 ff.}

⁴ That is, the travelers. {Arabic *al-nās*. This term is used regularly in the documents of this book for ‘merchants’ or ‘traveling merchants.’ See, e.g., II, 20, line 19, II, 22, line 16, II, 23, line 27, II, 29, line 12.}

⁵ When there was a breakdown of public authority.

⁶ Guaranteeing their safety. Arabic *wa-akhadhū sijillāt al-sultān*. {Cf. II, 28, line 19, which concerns Ben Yijū’s intended travel from India to Yemen: *wa-akhadhā minhu dhimma*, ‘he took from him a pledge of protection.’ A written grant of safe conduct to a foreign, non-Muslim merchant enabled him to stay in the lands of Islam for as much as a year in a protected state, without paying the poll tax. See Khalilieh, “*Amān*.” These grants may have also been intended to free foreign traders from special taxes imposed on them; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:344–5.

⁷ Note that approximately in the 1130’s, Maḥrūz b. Jacob reported from the Red Sea port of Sawākin, that the Kārim contained 3,000 bales (V, 4, lines 6–8; cf. Goitein, *Studies*, 354). Evidently there was certain consistency in the bulk of imports transported by the Kārim over a period of decades.}

⁸ The restoration ‘al-Lebdi’ {written a-Lebdi, with one *l*} is certain, since the 80 bales of lac form the subject of the lawsuits discussed in I, 26–28. The bales arrived in ‘Aydhāb with Lebdi’s partners, when he had already left the town. See I, 27, lines 14–15.

⁹ The fact that the lac had been bought and packed in Nahrwāra, its country of origin, and had not been purchased somewhere else, increased of course its value.

¹⁰ {As I read the text of the beginning of the line, translate: ‘I would like to inform you of this.’}

1099}) Egypt found itself in a dire situation, which the always-unruly Beja tribes might have used for making the desert roads between ‘Aydhāb and Qūṣ even less safe than usual.¹¹ During the period of anarchy only a few goods were dispatched from Aden and other places to Egypt. As soon as the situation improved, the imports more than tripled. It is interesting that the shipments of Joseph Lebdi and his partners amounted approximately to one percent of the total arrivals (130 + out of 13,000 bales).¹² Lebdi was not only one of the first to arrive in ‘Aydhāb, but left his partners there while traveling to Fustat; see I, 27.¹³

¹¹ See Holt, “Beja.”

¹² Or 4.33 percent of the 3,000 bales that comprised the cargo of the first flotilla.

¹³ The writer of the letter knew only of Lebdi, who probably was the leading spirit in the partnership of three involved in this business venture. {According to I, 28a^v, line 3, I, 28b, line 12, Lebdi seems to have invested twenty-nine thirtieths of the capital}. The murder of Lebdi’s partners and traveling companions had either not yet occurred, or the bad news had not yet reached Cairo.

I, 26 *Session of the Rabbinical Court of Fustat: al-Wuḥsha vs. Joseph Lebdi*

Fustat, June 30, 1104

TS 8J 5, f. 5

The manuscript is much effaced. But the handwriting of the scribe (Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh) is so excellent and his style so well known that the text is completely legible. On the other hand, the record refers to a previous session, which undoubtedly was preceded by several others. The content of the document can be fully understood only in the context of I, 25 and 27–28.

The colorful story of ‘al-Wuḥsha, the Broker’ is known from a number of Geniza documents.¹ Here, her attorney sued Lebdi for her share of 300 dinars (‘more or less’) already realized from the investment by her dead brother Abu Naṣr in a partnership with him worth 800 dinars and for the goods not yet sold. Lebdi argued that the 300 dinars had nothing to do with that partnership. He was, however, prepared to include them, if al-Wuḥsha, on her side, would do the same with “the 22 bales of lac,”² claimed by her representative to represent a separate venture, unconnected with that partnership.³

Besides Isaac b. Samuel, one of the two chief judges in Fustat, and the clerk, the document is signed by Eli ha-Levi b. Nethanel (the brother of Ḥalfon, chap. 4), who was judge in Cairo, wherefore next to no documents signed by him have been preserved in the Geniza (which, we remember, was situated in Fustat).⁴

¹ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:346–52.

² See I, 27–28.

³ {On I, 26, see further Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:348, where it is explained that al-Wuḥsha was represented by an agent in this suit, not because she was a woman, but because the checking and sale of such large quantities of wares required handling by an expert.}

⁴ For a document signed by him in January 1133 in Cairo see Goitein, “Court Records,” 268–71. At the time of the writing of our document his father was still alive. {See concerning him, Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:513, no. 16; Gil & Fleischer, *Yehuda ha-Levi* (index).}

I, 27–28 *Legal Opinions on the Case al-Wuḥsha vs. Joseph Lebdi*

{Egypt, ca. 1104 or 1105}

27. TS Arabic 43, f. 272, two pages

28. TS Arabic 47, f. 245, four pages

{27a. ENA 2855, fs. 16, 15 (in this order), four pages

28a. TS G 2, f. 60, sixteen pages

28b. TS Arabic 49, f. 33, two pages}

{As elucidated by their contents, handwriting and codicological characteristics, all these items belong to the same manuscript. They presently contain six bifolia and two leaves, equivalent to fourteen leaves or twenty-eight pages. The Oriental quire consisted of five bifolia.¹ No. I, 28a preserves the four inner bifolia of one quire and makes it possible to define the manuscript's main codicological features, specifically its catchwords. (When the librarian separated these bifolia, he numbered their leaves in sequence: 1–8. The library's microfilm was prepared at an earlier date and shows the arrangement before the bifolia were detached.) The five bifolia were lain one on top of the other, then folded in the middle to form ten leaves (twenty pages). To ensure the correct sequence of bifolia in the quire, the writer added on the verso of leaves 1–4 (pages 2, 4, 6, 8), the first word of the next bifolium as a catchword (written horizontally below the end of the last line). The fifth, inner bifolium contained no catchword, since its second page came directly after its first. This method of preserving the order of bifolia in a quire in Oriental Hebrew manuscripts has been documented as of the thirteenth century.² The manuscript described here is not dated, but was almost certainly executed at the beginning of the twelfth century (see below). Accordingly, it has some significance for the research of Hebrew codicology.

The first bifolium in a quire contained an additional catchword on the verso of its second leaf (10; page 20), to ensure the correct sequence of the following quire. The first, outer bifolium of the quire comprised by I, 28a, is still missing, and as confirmed by their contents and catchwords, is not to be found among the other items, which have been identified. There is, however, a direct sequence between I, 27a, leaf 2v, and I, 27, as proven by their contents. These items consist of the second leaf of the first bifolium (I, 27) of a quire and its second bifolium (I, 27a), viz., pages 3, 4 and 17–20 of the quire. (Having failed to recognize the proper location of the bifolium catchword in I, 27a, the librarian numbered its two leaves in the wrong sequence [older numbers, “13, 14,” are written respectively on folios 15, 16]. These two leaves are now separate, and Dr. Jay Rovner has informed me of a note in the album, in which they are bound, that states that they were detached

¹ {See Beit-Arié, *Codicology*, 44–45.

² Beit-Arié, *ib.*, 54 ff.

in 1965.) There is no direct sequence between I, 28 and the other items. On the basis of its codicological features, viz., the location of its catchword, I, 28 could be the second, third or fourth bifolium of a quire. Its contents indicate that in all likelihood, rather than part of a third quire, it was the fourth bifolium in the same quire that contained I, 27a–I, 27. The same considerations of content make it highly probable that this quire came before the quire that contained I, 28a.

In sum, there is a high degree of probability that these four items constitute the larger portion of two quires of one large manuscript, half of the first and four fifths of the second. The Geniza may yet produce the missing leaves, and these can be identified not only by their content and appearance but also by their first words and/or bifolium catchwords, which we can reconstruct with precision. While it is likely that the entire work consisted of these two quires, there is no way to presently ascertain this; and it could have contained three or more.

At a late stage in this research I identified I, 28b, as belonging to the same work. While the top of the leaf is intact, it is very fragmentary; the beginnings of all lines on recto (and the ends on verso), as well as those at the bottom of the page, are missing. For the present, it is impossible to reconstruct its position vis-à-vis the other items.

The following tables identify the items in the two quires as we have reconstructed them.

First quire

Bifolio	Page	MS.	No.	First word in missing page	Catchword on missing page
A	1				Naṣr
B	2	ENA 2855, f. 16	I, 27a, p. 1		
C	3			<i>laysa</i>	<i>alladhī</i>
D	4	TS Ar. 47, f. 245	I, 28, p. 1		
E	5			<i>falyufiq</i>	
E	6				
D	7	TS Ar. 47, f. 245	I, 28, p. 2		
C	8				
B	9	ENA 2855, f. 15	I, 27a, p. 2		
A	10	TS Ar. 43, f. 272	I, 27		

Second quire

Bifolio	Page	MS.	No.	First word in missing page	Catchword on missing page
A	1			<i>wadī'a</i>	<i>fayaṣiḥh</i>
B	2	TS G 2.60	I, 28a, p. 1		
C	3	TS G 2.60	I, 28a, p. 2		
D	4	TS G 2.60	I, 28a, p. 3		
E	5	TS G 2.60	I, 28a, p. 4		
E	6	TS G 2.60	I, 28a, p. 5		
D	7	TS G 2.60	I, 28a, p. 6		
C	8	TS G 2.60	I, 28a, p. 7		
B	9	TS G 2.60	I, 28a, p. 8		
A	10				

The manuscript is not the author's draft but a (fairly) clean copy, made by him or by a professional copyist. The handwriting resembles but is not identical with Hillel b. Eli's. There is every reason to believe that the copy was made in or shortly after 1104, when the work was composed. Its handwriting corresponds to that period, and its contents do not suggest that one would have been interested in copying it at a later time.}

These fragments, which have neither a beginning nor an end, and which are partly damaged, represent copies of a rather heated and controversial correspondence on the case. No. I, 27, which is a retort to an answer of another jurisconsult to a former opinion, contains some substantial information.

{As explained above, after having added I, 27a I, 28a and I, 28b, we presently have six bifolios and two leaves, one of which is only a fragment (fourteen leaves, twenty-eight pages), of two quires of this composition, or (almost) 70% of their contents. This treatise clearly deals with the trial of Lebdi vs. al-Wuḥsha, Abū Naṣr's sister, who, however, is not referred to by name but rather as 'Abū Naṣr's heir (f).'³ The contest, as already noted

³ So in I, 27a, leaf 1, line 3; verso, line 3, I, 28b, lines 1, 3, 4. She appears alone as 'Abū Naṣr's sister' in I, 26, line 5, as well. This is most curious, since al-Wuḥsha had another brother and two sisters, who survived her and were mentioned in her will (TS Ar. 4, f. 5; see Goitein, "Business Woman"; id., *Med. Soc.*, 3:349). Furthermore, according to Jewish inheritance law, her brother would have exclusive rights to Abū Naṣr's estate, to the exclusion of the sisters (though not explicit in the Talmud, this is accepted law; see Maimonides, "Nahaḥalot" 1:3). One might imagine that because of her forceful personality, al-Wuḥsha took the initiative in representing her siblings. But in our sources, there is no suggestion of this or of a will that named her as the sole heir, and the matter requires further consideration. Perhaps the case involved half-siblings.

in I, 26, concerns the disposition of 22 bales (of lac), sent to Fustat from 'Aydhāb by Faraḥ and Abū Naṣr, both of whom were later murdered there. Lebdi claimed that these bales belonged to his partnership with the two dead men, while al-Wuḥsha claimed that this merchandise was unrelated to it and, presumably, that it emanated from Faraḥ's and Abū Naṣr's business association with other, unnamed investors.

The treatise consists of three distinct literary strata, which contain the writings of two disputant jurisconsults. The writer of the treatise refers to his counterpart as *al-dayyān*, the Judge, while the Judge refers to his as *al-rayyis*, literally, the headman. The Judge clearly sided with Lebdi in the dispute, the *Rayyis* with al-Wuḥsha. The Judge presumably adjudicated the case and found in Lebdi's favor. The *Rayyis* sent his critique of this ruling to the Judge, who sent back his rebuttal, criticizing in turn his disputant's arguments. In the present treatise, the *Rayyis* quotes long passages from the Judge's rebuttal, which, in turn, begins with quotes from the *Rayyis*' first critique. What we have, accordingly, are these three tiers: passages from the *Rayyis*' first critique, the Judge's rebuttal and the *Rayyis*' refutation of the latter.

This extensive and complicated literary activity, which centers around a dispute concerning import goods from India and their disposition after two of three partners had been murdered on their way back to Egypt, is unique among Geniza papers in many ways. The disputants' verbosity (the pages at our disposal contain more than four thousand words), for which they too criticized one another, is one of the treatise's characteristic features. Another is the disputants' acrimony, laced with transparent, personal insults. The *Rayyis* criticizes the Judge's bad manners but contributes his own share of caustic remarks. The two jurisconsults base their arguments on their knowledge of the trade and the merchants' practices, and quote the letter written by Faraḥ from 'Aydhāb or argue what Abū Naṣr should have written from there, were al-Wuḥsha's claim correct. They further reinforce their positions with ample quotes of Talmudic sources and the writings of Hai Gaon.

Neither Lebdi nor al-Wuḥsha were able to produce any concrete evidence to substantiate their claims. Faraḥ's heirs had already taken their share of the partnership, without having raised the issue of special rights to these 22 bales. The jurisconsults' arguments can be summarized, with certain simplification, basically as follows: The Judge reasoned that the partnership agreement was inclusive of all profits that the partners realized. The *Rayyis* reasoned that, since Lebdi could not prove that the 22 bales belonged to his partnership with the dead men, Jewish civil law mandated that their heirs be given every benefit of the doubt. Conceivable arguments,

even though the dead men and their heirs did not mention them, should be presented on their behalf by the court itself, in this case that Farah and Abū Naṣr, who had had possession of the disputed bales, had received them from some other source, such as a gift or a find (or inheritance). Essentially, it was a question of with whom lay the burden of proof.

While the treatise contains little information concerning the business venture, a few new details do emerge. The partnership agreement specified that losses (and gains) would be proportionate to the money invested.⁴ The two dead men made only a small investment in the partnership. Two separate passages mention that al-Wuḥsha's share was one-sixtieth. Accordingly, Lebdi evidently contributed twenty-nine thirtieths of the capital, and the other two partners one-sixtieth each. The *Rayyis* also wrote how the agreement should have been worded, had it substantiated Lebdi's claim. Goitein (above, page 30) expressed his surprise that the trial (I, 26) took place three years after Lebdi's return to Egypt in 1101. We now see (I, 27a, leaf 1v, line 14) that the Judge intentionally delayed the proceedings for three years, purportedly in order to fulfill the Talmudic injunction to be "deliberate in judgment (Avot 1:1)," but I assume also to give Lebdi an opportunity to produce supporting evidence for his claim. The *Rayyis* criticized this as an unreasonable postponement. Since I, 26 is dated June 30, 1104, at which time the fate of the disputed bales had not yet been decided, Lebdi demanding that they be considered proceeds of the partnership, and since the Judge presumably later ruled in Lebdi's favor, I assume that the subsequent dispute between the jurisconsults followed in the second part of that year or in 1105.

Unfortunately, there is no way to identify with certainty either the Judge or the *Rayyis*. It seems reasonable to speculate that the Judge might have been the well-known savant and chief judge of Fustat, Isaac b. Samuel the Spaniard, who was the first signatory to the court record I, 26, which also deals with this case. Any number of notables (or members of their families, as we learn from Abraham Maimuni)⁵ were called *rayyis*, including judges, doctors and the Head of the Jews, among others (such as ship captains). From the content and tone of his dispute with the learned judge, I assume that the *Rayyis* was in fact a rather impressive personage. I am tempted to suggest that he may have been the learned Head of the Jews Mevōrākh b. Saadya, though the caustic nature of the dispute and some of

⁴ In I, 26v, lines 12–15, the partnership is called *khulṭa* and *sharika*; see page 226, n. 2.

⁵ Abraham Maimuni, *Responsa*, 19, no. 4.

the disputants' arguments do not depict either of them in a very positive light. Mevōrākh had appointed Isaac as chief judge, and we have no reason to suspect that the relationship between the two had soured.⁶ It is not clear to what extent this factor would exclude the suggested identification. Whoever the disputants may have been, the fact that two distinguished juriconsults so vigorously supported the conflicting claims of Lebdi and al-Wuḥsha attests not only the seriousness with which the religious judges and officials took their roles as protectors of justice but also the prestige of both the old India trader and the colorful lady broker.

The recently identified piece I, 28b indicates what valuable information can be provided by even a small fragment, where not one line is intact. The case had also been adjudicated before a Muslim Qadi. Subsequently, a query had been sent to "his eminence, *our lord, may his majesty be elevated!*" This further suggests identifying the *Rayyis* as Mevōrākh b. Saadya. And the odd figure of one-sixtieth as al-Wuḥsha's share in the partnership's capital is repeated.

Students of the India trade, of community affairs in Fustat, of partnerships and their adjudication, of the history of disputation, of codicology and more, will all find interest in a more detailed examination of this treatise.}

Selected passages in translation

[A. Quote from the *Rayyis*' first critique]

[I, 27] (12) You refer {alt. tr.: He refers} to the letter (13) of [Fara]ḥ and... {read: Faraḥ, which was sent}⁷ from 'Aydhāb to Mr. Joseph, in which he⁸ says: (14) "There arrived with us about 80 bales, (15) all of

⁶ See Cohen, *Self-Government*, 120, 233, 244.}

⁷ In the effaced space there is no room for 'Abū Naṣr,' the *kunya*, or honorific by-name of al-Wuḥsha's brother. I assume his personal name was written here. No. I, 28 mentions Faraḥ and Abū Naṣr side by side. {Their names appear together in other pages of the treatise as well, always with Abū (or Bū) Naṣr rather than a personal name. Here I suggest reading after Faraḥ, *wjḥ* (*wujjīha*). We learn that Faraḥ alone wrote the letter, without Abū Naṣr, in I, 27a, leaf 1, (where in line 5 the same root is used: *al-muwajjab*).}

⁸ The letter was written by Faraḥ in the name of the two partners, wherefore the juriconsult changes repeatedly from plural to singular and vice versa. This was probably done so in Faraḥ's letter itself; cf. TS 12.175, ed. Goitein, "Three Letters," 169–74, a letter written in the name of two brothers, but the writer uses the first person singular. {The reader will find such an example in II, 61.

{or: the best of it}⁹ lac. We¹⁰ shall send this in installments, (16) so that it may reach the market.”¹¹ To this I¹² have to remark that this letter (17) is of no avail for Mr. Joseph at all. For although [Verso] (1) we concede¹³ that these 80 bales belong to (2) the partnership, we still need someone to prove to us (3) that those 22 bales were included in the 80 (4) mentioned by them and were not part of something else. The proof (5) for the fact that they were not part of the partnership is that the letter (6) to him (to Joseph) says: “I shall send them in installments,” which proves (7) that the bales, which he did not send to him, (8) did not belong to the partnership. Had they sent them (the 22 bales) to him or to (9) the agent and instructed him to deliver them to (10) Lebdi,¹⁴ as they did with regard to the aforementioned (11) (80) bales, they would have belonged to the partnership. (12) However, since they wrote to the agent letters in which they requested “Leave them {alt. tr.: Sell and leave their proceeds}¹⁵ (13) with you until we arrive, and there is no hand (14) above your hand,”¹⁶ they (the 22 bales) are excluded from the partnership with Mr. Joseph.

⁹ In his copy of the text Goitein first restored (*k*)*lyth*³, then corrected this to (*ʿ*)*lyth*³, which I have translated in brackets; cf. I, line 11; I, 13, line 7.}

¹⁰ Occasionally the juriconsult refers to the senders of the letter in the third person. Since these changes are confusing, the form of his citations has been unified in my translation.

¹¹ {Arabic *yulḥaḡu fihī sūq*, approximately, ‘to augment a market with it.’ As explained by Goitein in the introductory remarks to I, 25–29, the attention was to send small installments so as to get a better market price, rather than flooding the market with the whole quantity at once.

¹² The *Rayyis*.

¹³ Arabic *qaḍaynā*. The word can also be translated ‘we adjudicated.’ It is more likely, however, that the Judge, not the *Rayyis*, had served as judge in the case.}

¹⁴ In the lost beginning of the legal opinion, Joseph Lebdi’s full name must have been mentioned. Later on, for variety’s sake, he is referred to sometimes as Joseph and occasionally as Lebdi. Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:236–37. {His name Joseph appears only in II, 27; in all the other pages of the treatise, which have been identified, he is referred to as Lebdi.}

¹⁵ ‘Leave them,’ Arabic *khallīhim*, erroneously omitted, as sometimes happens when one passes from one line to another. {The reference is to the 22 bales. I read: *bi^c yuqarr* (rather than *waqad*) *al-thamn* (see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:319), making the assumption of an omission unnecessary.}

¹⁶ That is, no one has the right of giving you any orders (except us, of course).

{B. A passage from the Judge's rebuttal

[I, 28a, leaf 1v] (2) First it is necessary to say to him: Who is it (3) who spoke of this or *ever* mentioned it? What necessity (4) requires mentioning this? When was it proven to us that (5) those people had a *find or inheritance*? Who mentioned it (6) or spread such a rumor about them *in any way whatsoever*, (7) so that we should say in their name (8) something that neither they said nor was said in their name? Nor did the heirs of (9) Farah, who took their true share and (10) one of whom had been present with Farah and this Abū Naṣr,¹⁷ (11) mention this in their name or consider it their right at all. (12) They rather took their share, acknowledged the truth (13) and went on their way. It is forbidden to mention this, because it has not been proven to us (14) and it was not said in their names and no rumor was spread of it by them or by anyone else. (15) It therefore becomes like nonsensical talk.

C. A passage from the *Rayyis'* refutation

I read the (16) passage from my words and from the words of the *Judge—may the Merciful One protect him!*—and I saw (17) the wickedness and evil his words contained and their lack of learning. (18) I adhere to my practice. But I clearly note (19) that should he attack me after this epistle, [leaf 2] (1) I will not follow in his footsteps with words like his, because there is (2) no profit in this. It would be preferable for him to guard his tongue. Should he have (3) information, he should cite it and refute with good manners and abandon (4) bad manners and disparagement. That is a sign of fools. (5) For the present, I say no more... [Leaf 3] (11) As to his challenge to me (12) that I tell him who said this, my response is: those—(13) *may their memory be for a blessing!*—who said “*He takes an oath and collects half,*” *namely the Judges of Eretz* (14) *Israel*,¹⁸ whose words you should heed [...]

¹⁷ {The demonstrative pronoun ‘this’ is used because the suit involves his heir al-Wuhsha.

¹⁸ BT Bava Batra 70b, according to which we should always give the benefit of the doubt to the heirs, even if neither the dead man (“whom the Angel of Death may have taken by surprise”) nor they raised a claim.}

I, 29 *Testimony that Joseph Lebdi Renounced Claims to Faraḥ's Assets*

Fustat, 1106/7

TS NS 324, f. 46¹

As VII, 69 shows, Faraḥ and Abū Naṣr, the two merchants murdered in ʿAydḥāb, carried with them a lot of goods not mentioned in I, 25–28. No wonder that their sad end entailed lawsuits involving persons other than their main partner Joseph Lebdi.

No. I, 29, a court record, is a short document of 12 lines, of which most of lines 1–5 and much of lines 8–12 are lost, including mention of the day and the month, in which it was written. The year 1418 E.D.—a year of 13 months—began on September 1, 1106 and ended on September 18, 1107.

The brothers Abu ʿl-Faḍl and Maʿālī, sons of ʿAyyāsh, claimed certain assets of the late Faraḥ from one Abū ʿAlī. In connection with this they ask the court to register that Lebdi had acknowledged in court a long time ago that he had had no claims whatsoever to those assets and that he had given the brothers free hand to claim them from Abū ʿAlī.² The latter had obviously claimed that he owed the money to Lebdi, not to them. Lebdi was not present, either again on some voyage or dead.³ Signed only by Isaac b. Samuel, the chief judge.

¹ {Shivtiel and Niessen, *Arabic Manuscripts*, 526, inexplicably identify this document: *Ketubbah!*}

² The *aliph*, the first letter of the name Abū ʿAlī, is visible at the end of line 7.

³ Line 5: “With Abū Yaʿqūb (= Joseph) Lebdi and his partner Faraḥ—*may he rest in Eden!*” The blessing upon the dead might refer to both, as often in such connections {in which case the blessing, written as an abbreviation, should be rendered: *‘may they,’* etc.}.

I, 30 *Contract of a Commenda-Partnership*

{Fustat, late eleventh–early twelfth century}

ENA NS 21, f. 4

In this incompletely preserved contract Joseph Lebdi provided merchandise worth 460 dinars with which the working partner Khallūf¹ would trade “in the countries of [Yemen, India, Maghreb?]”² and others.” Lebdi receives three-quarters, and Khallūf one quarter of the profits. The contract is described as *muḍārabat al-tujjār*, a merchants’ commenda, which normally provides for a division of two-thirds and one third of the profit.³ Here the working partner did not make an investment on his side, as was common practice, and so his share in the profits was less than usual. {The document is in the hand of the Fustat scribe Hillel b. Eli, which makes it possible to define the place and approximate time.}

¹ Khallūf (“Substitute” for a lost child) is a common Maghrebi name, found frequently in the Geniza, especially in documents from the eleventh century. The name is preserved here in line 26; the other details about the man are lost in the damaged upper part of the contract. He might be identical with Khallūf al-Nafūsī (from the Nafūsa mountains west of Tripoli, Lebdi’s native city). “The bearer of this letter is Khallūf al-Nafūsī, who says that he has a shipment of gold threads, *quṣaybāt*, in {Old} Cairo,” which he wishes to sell (Bodl. MS. Heb. e. 108, fol. 68). {The fold in I, 30 at line 26 has now been straightened out, and the man’s name is Khallūf b. Elijah. For the Nafūsa mountains, see McLachlan, “Jabal Nafūsa.”}

² The relevant detail is lost.

³ {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:171.}

I, 31a *Testimony on Joseph Lebdi's Last Will*

Fustat, early twelfth century

TS 6J 2, f. 11

The manuscript is a tiny fragment that represents the upper right corner of a document written by Hillel b. Eli. Since the last document we have from the hand of this prolific scribe is from 1108, Lebdi must have died in the course of the first decade of the twelfth century, possibly before 1106/7; see I, 29, n. 3.¹ He died while on a journey, as befitting a seasoned India trader.

For reasons that I can only describe as sentimental, I translate the fragment in full.

Translation

(1) *Testimony given before us, the undersigned* [...] that] (2) Joseph Lebdi—may God be pleased with him!²—*son of R. David* [before he set out on the voyage], (3) from which he did not return to Miṣr [made in our] (4) presence a last will which we have taken down in his name. [He did so while being in full command of his mental faculties,] (5) without being coerced. We performed with him the symbolic act of obligation³ [...]

¹ {While Hillel's handwriting is similar to that of his son-in-law, Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh (dated documents 1100–38), I believe that this document is written by the latter. Joseph Lebdi's daughter Sitt al-Ahl was engaged in November 1118, apparently not long after the death of his sister (I, 34a). His demise preceded hers, but it is not clear by how much time.}

² This Muslim blessing upon the dead, originally reserved for persons of Muhammad's family, entourage and saints, is next to absent from the Geniza. It was probably used here because Lebdi's friends were shocked by his death. {The blessing, *raḍīya 'llāhu 'anhu*, while not very common in the Geniza papers, does appear in numerous documents (in the India Book also in: I, 23, lines 6–7; I, 34b, line 9, written in 1124, also referring to Joseph Lebdi; IV, 18, line 17; IV, 68, f. 20, line 4; IV, 70v, line 11; a search of the Princeton Geniza Project data base identifies seven other documents, in some of which the phrase appears more than once). Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:557, n. 308, states that the blessing “may God be pleased with him, was easily taken up by Jews,” etc. I suspect that further Geniza research will demonstrate that this and other blessings for the dead known from Islamic literary sources as especially used with reference to saints were in more common use.}

³ According to Jewish law any legal action had to be validated by a symbolic act of acquisition (*qinyān*); see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:329. This and other legal formalities mentioned in line 6 mean to say that the will produced by the witnesses represented a valid legal document.

I, 31b *Power of Attorney by Barakāt Lebdi to Joseph's Widow*

Fustat, early twelfth century

TS AS 165, f. 190

Remnants of eight lines in the hand of the court clerk Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh (dated documents 1100–38) consisting mainly of legal phraseology.

I assume that this document was written soon after the tidings of Joseph Lebdi's death had reached Fustat. His only known son and legal heir, (Abū 'l-) Barakāt,¹ {in all likelihood} set out to retrieve the goods and other assets his father had left anywhere on the India route. Barakāt appointed Joseph's widow, probably his own mother, as caretaker to look after the estate until he returned from his voyage. {Joseph's female relative given power of attorney was identified in the missing part of line 3; however, the only logical assumption is that she was his widow.} No other female relative except Joseph's widow could have been given such a task. His daughter was still an unmarried young girl (see I, 34a).

In the translation the legal verbiage is abbreviated.

Translation

(1) *This is what happened:* [Barakāt, the son of Mr. Joseph] (2) *known as al-Lebdi—may he rest in Eden!*—[appeared in court] and said to us:

Be witness to my declaration, write it down (3) [and hand it over to Mrs. X,² the widow of] (4) *the elder Mr. Joseph—may he rest in Eden!*, so that it should be in her hand as a legal proof (5–7) that I have made this declaration while in good health, etc. (8) I have given her a power of attorney over all [...]³

¹ {Barakāt had a young brother named Zayn, mentioned in I, 34b, lines 6 and 10 (and referred to in I, 34a, line 22).}

² Joseph Lebdi's wife's name was Jamī'; see I, 34a, line 11.}

³ Unfortunately, at this point the fragment is torn, and the exact description of the attorneyship is missing.

D. *The Lebdi Family*

Besides I, 32, which shows us David, Joseph's nephew, active on the India route, I, 33 is of particular interest: Joseph's son (Abu 'l-) Barakāt ('Blessings') traveled as far as northwest India, like his father, and had dealings everywhere on the way back from there to Old Cairo. He was closely connected with three prominent India traders, Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel (chap. 4), Abū Zikrī Kohen (chap. 5)¹ and Isaac b. Makhlūf al-Nafūsī (VI, 26–29).² About Barakāt's sister, widow, and daughter we learn from I, 34–36. His son Abu 'l-Riḍā ('Pleasing God') Joseph II b. Barakāt Ibn al-Lebdi, known from documents dated 1156 and 1178, was a 'perfumer' (I, 37, I, 38),³ and his grandson Abu 'l- Barakāt II b. Joseph II, who made his will in 1227, was the proprietor of a sugar factory and the father of at least four sons and a daughter (I, 39–42). A contract between his firstborn Joseph III, {also} by-named Abu 'l-Riḍā, another son of his, and two investors in that sugar factory is one of the largest documents on partnership preserved in the Geniza (I, 41).

Thus the history of Joseph Lebdi's family can be traced from the end of the eleventh century to the middle of the thirteenth. However, the family name Ibn al-Lebdi occurs already around the year 1000, when a Samuel bearing that name was praised by the Spanish Hebrew poet Isaac b. Khalfūn and he himself issued a power of attorney (I, 43). In an extensive document from the year 1066, one Solomon Ibn al-Lebdi and his brother try to retrieve objects and money left for them in Sicily. This Solomon might well have been the father of David, whose firstborn Solomon was the elder brother of Joseph Lebdi (I, 44).

Anyhow, it seems that the family had left their native town of Lebda by the end of the tenth century and settled in Tripoli, where they became well established in the course of the eleventh century. The India trade of Joseph entailed moving of his household to the capital of Egypt.

¹ {According to V, 14, line 5, Barakāt al-Lebdi carried dinars for Abū Zikrī Kohen, and in V, 15, line 17, a letter to Abū Zikrī Kohen, regards were sent Barakāt.

² Barakāt appears in a list of contributors for the 'bread for the poor,' giving a sum of one half dinar (per week); TS NS J 422 (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:479–80, no. 24): "Sheikh Abu 'l-Barakāt Ibn al-Lebdi: one half." His great-grandson made the same contribution; see I, 42.

³ No. I, 38, from 1178, refers to the latter's son.}

I, 32 *Letter from Nahray b. Nathan to Abū Saʿīd: Oriental Goods Ordered by David Lebdi*

{Alexandria, late eleventh century}

ULC Or. 1080 J 92

Only the upper part is preserved. Published in Gil, *Ishmael*, 2:797–98, no. 267.¹

The writer of this letter, Nahray b. Nathan, like his late father, Nathan b. Nahray, lived in Alexandria.² He had received a letter from Abū Sulaymān³ Dāʿūd (David) Ibn al-Lebdi, as well as a detailed list of Oriental products forwarded by him to {Old} Cairo from somewhere on the India route.⁴ Nahray now sends 200 dinars, entrusted to two friends in equal shares, to his business representative in the capital, asking him to buy, as soon as possible specified items from David's list. Since the manuscript breaks off after line 13, only seven orders are preserved. With the exception of costus (see the note to line 10), the quantities noted seem to indicate that the goods were destined for the local market in Alexandria rather than for overseas export. It seems that David had received a list of the items desired by Nahray before he set out on his voyage to Upper Egypt or Aden.

¹ {Gil mistakenly identified the writer as Nehoray (= Nahray) b. Nissīm.}

² Numerous letters of Nathan b. Nahray to his famous cousin Nahray b. Nissīm, sent from Alexandria to Fustat, have been preserved, e.g., *Nahray* 29–40 {cf. Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:389, nos. 411 ff.}. Of Nahray b. Nathan himself we have, e.g., TS 13 J 36, f. 8 and TS 8 J 25, f. 13 {Gil, ib. 3:453, no. 436}; TS 12.314, *Nahray* 234; 235 {cf. Gil, ib., 4:880, index}. In 1094/5, Nathan was still alive, for in his letter Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 79v, lines 1–5, *Nahray* 31 {Gil, ib., 3:441, no. 431}, he expresses his joy over the reinstatement of Mevōrākh b. Saadya as head of the Jewish community, which occurred in that time; cf. *Goitein, Med. Soc.*, 2:30, and passim {see Cohen, *Self-Government*, 213 ff.}. In our letter, Nathan's name seems to be {rather: clearly is} followed by the blessing upon the dead.

³ 'Father of Solomon.' Solomon was the name of Joseph b. David Lebdi's elder brother; see I, 20–22. Since grandsons were named after their grandfathers, David, Solomon's son and Joseph's nephew (see above), had the same honorific by-name 'Father of Solomon.' It should be noted that in April 1095 (I, 19) Joseph, in his signature, does not add the blessing upon the dead to the name of his father, David, while in 1098 (I, 14) he does. But it is very unlikely, that he is meant here, since an old man near his death would hardly undertake a journey even to Upper Egypt. {But see below, page 525, on travel on the India route undertaken by older men.}

⁴ Aden, 'Aydhāb, or Qūs are the most likely places from which such shipments could have been made.

Translation

(1–4) [Introductory phrases.] I have received a letter from Sheikh (5) Abū Sulaymān Dāʿūd Ibn al-Lebdī, who has also sent a memorandum.⁵ (6) I have now asked God for guidance⁶ and sent with *Sīdī* ‘Ayyāsh⁷ (7) a purse containing 100 new dinars, and with *Sīdī* Iṣḥāq⁸ (8) a purse containing another 100 dinars //also of {Old} Cairo {Egyptian} currency⁹// . Please, my lord, buy (9) at your earliest convenience, first

1 *bahār* of (10) pepper

2 *bahārs* of lac

1 *bahār* of costus.¹⁰ Buy me also (11)

30 ounces of good civet perfume,¹¹ the best to be had;

4 *manns* (12) of *ashbāh* wood for 12 dinars;

4 *manns* (13) of *ashbāh* wood for 16 dinars;

40 *manns* of *bān* [. . .]¹²

⁵ Arabic *tadhkīra*. See page 168.

⁶ Arabic *istakḥart*. {For the *istkhāra*, see Goitein, “Religion,” 13–14; idem, *Med. Soc.*, 1:346, 5:331, 597, and references cited there.}

⁷ ‘Long-lived,’ a common Maghrebi name. Whether in those days *sydy* (‘my lord’) was pronounced *sayyidī* or *sīdī* is difficult to say. Where a writer spells the word *syd* with one *y*, as here, probably he intended *sīdī*. {*Syd*, the classic spelling, is much more common than *syyd*. Nevertheless, there are many hundreds, if not thousands, of examples of the form with double *yy* in the Geniza, and this suggests, in my opinion, that the word was pronounced *sayyid* even when spelled with one *y*.}

⁸ Iṣḥāq is for Arabic Iṣḥāq (*ṣ* for *s*). Same change of *ṣ* to *s* in *istadaf*, line 9, e.g., and the opposite in *qst*, line 10.

⁹ Arabic *jawāz Miṣr*; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:234 (where ‘around 1070’ is to be changed to ‘around 1095,’ see n. 2, above), 373, 459.

¹⁰ Costus (the Greek, Arabic and English names are derived from Sanskrit), a fragrant root, native to Kashmir, was used in medicine and for fumigation; see the detailed discussion in Maimonides-Meyerhof, 169, no. 338; Watt, *Commercial Products*, 980. It was a common item of export from India. {Cf. page 561, n. 51.} However, while pepper and lac were regularly traded in *bahārs* (ca. 300 pounds), costus appears in the Geniza papers mostly in smaller quantities (at most 100 pounds, but often far less). For the spelling *qst* see page 331, n. 9.

¹¹ {For civet (here *zabada*) as an import item from India and the Far East, see Goitein, *Letters*, 49–50; Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, 161.}

¹² For *ashbāh* and *bān* see Index. {*Ashbāh* is the plural of *shabab*, the aromatic wood *Paliurus australis*; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:725a. It appears also in II, 33–34, side b, line 17; II, 48, line 16. *Bān* is aromatic wood of the ben tree (Moringa); see al-Qazwīnī, *Ajāʾib*, 284–85; Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:929 (index). For its medicinal uses, see Dols, *Islamic Medicine*, 155; Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 150.}

[Verso]

Of the name of the addressee only the *kunya* Abū Saʿīd is clearly readable.¹³

¹³ Hebrew *emūnā ōmen*, ‘steadfast faithfulness’ (as in Isa. 25:1), at the end of the address, here, as in many other letters, corresponds to Arabic *amāna muʿaddāh* (written and probably pronounced *muwaddā*, and means that the letter was entrusted to the bearer, and no payment was expected for delivery. Both the Arabic and Hebrew expressions together, e.g. in Bodl. MS. Heb. c. 28 (Cat. 2876), fol. 56. {In III, 55v, address, the Hebrew *emūnā ōmen* is followed by the Arabic *balligh tūjar* (or *tuʿjar*), literally, ‘convey and get remuneration,’ which Goitein similarly explained: be rewarded by God (see the note to III, 29v, address, line 4). A postscript there requests the recipient of the letter to grant the bearer an ‘honorarium.’ On *amāna muʿaddāh*, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:304, 476, n. 15; id., “Mamluk,” 69. Diem, *Dictionary*, 7, translates: ‘as a trust to be delivered.’ See Friedman in ‘Aodeh, “Letters,” 130, n. 30; Friedman, “Quṣayr.”}

I, 33 *Accounts for Dealings by Barakāt Lebdi*

Fustat, January 26, 1132

Bodl. MS. Heb. b. 11 (Cat. 2874, no. 20), fol. 21

Only the lower part (31 cm. long, 18 cm. wide) of the document is preserved. It has the form of a letter: the script on the reverse side is in the opposite direction of that on the recto. This form was probably chosen because the record was intended to be sent to Ishāq al-Nafūsī. He was the most important India trader of Mediterranean Jewish origin represented in the Geniza, although only a few documents related to him have been preserved {II, 44; IV, 15–II, 42} (VI, 26–29).¹

The various sections of the record are separated from one another by a line or a blank space, as was occasionally done in accounts.

The upper, lost part, had reported how Barakāt sold in India the goods entrusted to him by al-Nafūsī and/or how he changed the specie given to him. The text preserved starts exactly where Barakāt's purchases and actions connected with them are detailed. The goods and currency mentioned in the first section preserved are Indian (lines 1–6).

On his way back, Barakāt passed some time in Aden, as can be deduced from the report of his living expenses and rent for a storeroom and a bungalow there. He sold, purchased and repacked merchandise and paid customs and other dues, as well as freight. In Aden and the three southernmost ports of the Red Sea the currency was the Yemenite Malikī dinar (lines 7–26).

From the Red Sea port Sawākin (still in existence)² the accounts were made in Egyptian dinars. In 'Aydhāb, Barakāt delivered all the goods purchased for Ishāq al-Nafūsī to the representative of Ibn al-Ṭuwayr

¹ {Goitein, *Letters*, 247, n. 12: "I have the impression that three different Isaac Nafūsīs appear in the Geniza papers of this period." As here we are dealing with the India trader, undoubtedly Isaac b. Makh'lūf al-Nafūsī (as his name appears in VI, 26) is intended. TS NS 224, f. 20 (brought to my attention by Amir Ashur), a fragment not included in Goitein's 'India Book' collection, concerns a business deal between Isaac al-Nafūsī, the India trader, and Adenese associates for 700 dinars worth of lac stored in a local warehouse. The fragment was written and signed by Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh and also signed by the Gaon '[Maṣliāḥ ha-Kohen] b. Solomon (?).'

² Sawākin is in northeastern Sudan, south of 'Aydhāb. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica it was founded in the twelfth century as a rival port to 'Aydhāb, where dues were levied on trade. From the Geniza documents we can conclude that Sawākin was founded by the eleventh century. See the discussion in Al-Ṭāhir, "Ports," 57–58. In 1103, the writer of VI, 1 (lines 16–17), states: "We arrived at a city called Sawākin, which is really the most excellent of dwelling places (*sawākin*)."

(‘Little Bird’), who brought them to the latter’s ‘house’ in Fustat and paid all the expenses for transport and customs (verso, lines 1–11).

The last section, which contains a proper court record, is written by the same scribe (Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh) as the accounts, but in far smaller script. It occupies only the left side of the page, leaving about two fifths of it blank, probably for additional notes.³ Berākḥōt (= Abu ʿl-Barakāt) b. Joseph Lebdi declares that whatever money had remained in his hands was spent on a house in Fustat recently acquired for al-Nafūsī and that the associated actions, which he took, were on the instructions of Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel (chap. 4), al-Nafūsī’s representative (lines 12–29).

The background of this document can easily be reconstructed. While on his way out to India, Barakāt met al-Nafūsī in Aden, where the latter had his temporary headquarters (VI, 26, VI, 28). At al-Nafūsī’s request, Barakāt made purchases for him in India, but on his way back, like his father Joseph, he had not intended to visit Aden and all the Red Sea ports. Because the goods carried for al-Nafūsī required Barakāt to change his plans, he charged him with the expenses (or part of them) for his sojourn there.

At the top of the fragment, the word ‘dirhem’ (the Indian specie), written at the end of the part torn away, is visible.

Translation

[A. Account]

-
- | | |
|---|----------------|
| (1) Purchased with this: | |
| (2) lac sent in four pieces {alt. tr.: units}, price: | 1,000 dirhems; |
| (3) a small bale of spikenard: ⁴ | 300 dirhems; |
| (4) three bales and two <i>kawrajas</i> ⁵ of ‘fulled’
textiles: | 1,200 dirhems |

³ Such as details about the upkeep of al-Nafūsī’s house. See the following.

⁴ {Arabic *sanbal*. On this spice (also in II, 10, line 3 and II, 48, line 4), see al-Qazwīnī, *Ajāʾib*, 333; Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 162.}

⁵ A *kawraja* is a score, parcel of 20 units. {Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:545, n. 86, vocalizes *kūrāja* and states that it is common in Yemen and the documents concerning the India trade. Cf. Pimenta, *Dictionary*, 438.}

(5) 'light goods': ⁶	100 dirhems
(6) Total:	2,600 dirhems
(7) The 'fulled' were sold in Aden; the proceeds after deduction of the customs paid for them:	330 Malikī dinars
(8) Customs for the lac:	80 Malikī dinars
(9) Living expenses {alt. tr.: tolls} ⁷ in Aden, rent for a storage room, an additional one, a bungalow, ⁸ etc.:	30 dinars
(10) Balance:	220 Malikī dinars
(11) Add to this the proceeds for 'light goods' sold in Aden:	50 dinars
(12) Total:	270 dinars
(13) The lac was packed in Aden in 8 bales ⁹	
(14) Bought six <i>bahārs</i> of brazilwood: ¹⁰	100 dinars

⁶ Arabic *khiff* (voweled thus). This must have been a very important group of imports from India, as may be seen from the following passage in Löfgren, *Aden*, 63, lines 17–19, which describes the eclipse of the town owing to the rapacity of the Rasūlid ruler Nūr al-Dīn 'Umar b. 'Alī: "In 625 A.H. (1227/8 C.E.) he bought all the pepper of the merchants, all the *hiff* (for *khiff*), the copper, and the *btr* (= *bitrū*, cast copper {see 201, n. 19}). In this way, he bought, for instance, a *bahār* of pepper for 40 dinars; and forced the Kārim merchants to buy it for 60 dinars; or he bought bronze from the Kārim for 60 dinars and forced the *khiff* merchants to buy it for 80 dinars." From this it appears that *khiff* comprised the spices of small volume and light weight, as opposed to pepper and ginger, which were traded in large sacks of heavy weight. This *khiff* of the India trade corresponded to *saqat* in the Mediterranean area, which comprised spices like spikenard, nutmeg, costus (see below) and similar products. Löfgren, "Glossary," 32, read *khuff*, and translated 'shoes.' But *khuff* is a single shoe, not a collective, and although shoes were imported from India (see II, 10, line 9, where they are called *madāsāt* {Yemenite shoes, called *aqdām*, were sent to Egypt according to II, 61, lines 54–55}), they certainly did not rank with items like pepper and copperware. {For *khiff*, see also III, 48, line 19.

⁷ Arabic *mu'na*. See 171–72, n. 23.

⁸ Arabic *bilāj* (vocalized here *balāj*) is a Malayan word designating a cabin or a place parceled off by mats, etc. in a ship {see 577, n. 28}, or a bungalow. Aden is hot, and a bungalow probably was cheaper than a room in a house.

⁹ The boats sailing along the Red Sea coast were not as strong as the ships commuting between India and the West. Therefore, in the former the cargo had to be distributed more evenly; perhaps the danger of the need of jettisoning was also greater. {Accordingly, the four 'units' (*qit'as*) mentioned in line 2 were repacked in twice as many 'bales' (*idls*).}

¹⁰ *Baqqam*, brazilwood, bois de campèche, a dyeing material and major item in the international trade between India, Egypt, North Africa, and Spain; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:532, and Ashtor, *Prix*, 145, nn. 3–10 (where the dinars mentioned were of different values). {The preceding is quoted from Goitein, "Portrait," 462, n. 67, with

(15) Two <i>bahārs</i> of cinnamon: ¹¹	29 dinars
(16) and five <i>manns</i> of rhubarb: ¹²	15 dinars
(17) Total sent from Aden;	
(18) Eight bales of lac, two bags ¹³ of cinnamon	
(19) Six bags of brazilwood and five <i>manns</i> of rhubarb.	
(20) Balance of the Malikī dinars [[after the packing of the bal...]] after the aforementioned purchases:	
(21) 126 Malikī dinars.	
(22) Spent from this in Aden for	
(23) packing materials, ¹⁴ hides, baskets of palm leaves, ¹⁵ ropes, and the packer:	12 dinars
(24) Exit toll at the Furḍa: ¹⁶	16 dinars
(25) Ship's freight:	28 dinars
(26) Customs in Bāḍe', Dahlak, and Nizāla: ¹⁷	38 dinars

bibliographical abbreviations changed; see continuation there. For the medicinal uses of brazilwood, see Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 207.

¹¹ Arabic *qirfa*, a common import item from the East in our papers; see Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 206.

¹² Arabic *rāwand*, also in line 19. See page 380, n. 9.

¹³ Arabic *ṣurra*, here, lines 18 and 19, replacing *bahār*, lines 14–15.

¹⁴ {'Spent (line 22)...packing materials,' Arabic *kharaj*...*ta'biya*; for *ta'biya* = 'packing materials', cf. I, 6, line 22. Cf. TS 12.632, line 10, *wa-kharaj lahu ta'biyat al-matā'...yudhakkir fihi 'imāma* (ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, III, 384, no. 409, where instead of "he produced for him the list of the shipment of clothing...in which he mentioned a turban," translate: 'an expenditure was made for him for packing the textiles...in which he mentioned was a turban').}

¹⁵ The baskets (*qaf'a*, pl. *qifā'*) are mentioned elsewhere, for example in II, 16, line 13 and II, 20, line 18 and II, 23, line 39. It seems that pepper and similar commodities required ventilation; and were transferred from the containers in which they had been brought from India to the baskets.

¹⁶ The customhouse of Aden; cf. Löfgren, "Glossary," 50. {Cf. Pimenta, *Dictionary*, 371; Margariti, *Aden*, 142 ff.

¹⁷ Bāḍe' (Bāḍi') is mentioned a few times in the Geniza. It is spelled with short *a* (Baḍi') in Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 413. According to VI, 1, it is located between Sawākin and Dahlak. No. VI, 1 (lines 17–18): "We arrived at a city called Bāḍi' ('cutter'), it is just what its name says (cf. I Sam. 25:25), the most bitter, frightening, miserable place." See the discussion in Al-Ṭāhir, "Ports," 57. Dahlak, a great harbor in those days, is mentioned frequently in our papers. It is an archipelago, opposite Massawa, Eritrea; see Goitein, *Letters*, 210, n. 14. No. VI, 1 (lines 19–20): "We then arrived at a city (*balad*) called Dahlak. Concerning it, the adage, 'But you surpass them all (Prov. 31:29)' can be recited. It is a perilous place (*balad muhlik*)." 'Dahlak' is thus associated with *ahlak*, 'ruin, destroy.' A shipwreck at Dahlak is mentioned in VII, 54, line 12; a murder of a traveler upon leaving Dahlak in VI, 17, line 15. Nizāla, lit., 'a station on a journey,' has not been documented elsewhere, as far as I know.}

[Verso] (1) In Sawākin:

1 Egyptian *mithqāl*.¹⁸

(2) The remaining 20 of the *thawbs* (robes) (3) that had been bought were used for the payment of customs. (4) They were sold {alt. tr.: There remained 20 *thawbs* (robes, or: *thawb* units) from all the clothing, which had been purchased, and they were used for the payment of customs; they were sold} in Sawākin¹⁹ for 10 dinars which sum was spent for the payment of customs in ‘Aydhāb.

(5) The man who received (the goods of) Ibn al-Ṭuwayr paid in ‘Aydhāb the remainder of the second customs in Bāḍe²⁰ and (6) the balance of the customs in ‘Aydhāb.²¹ The hiring of the camels {alt. tr.: the camel driver.} and the customs in Qūṣ and Fustat were also paid by him. (7) The goods were brought to the house of Ibn al-Ṭuwayr. He sold of them what was due him (from al-Nafūsī) {alt. tr.: due him for his expenditures}, (8) and the rest remained with him. Not one single dirhem worth of this accrued to me, (9) nor have I received {add: from him} of its proceeds any goods or anything else.

(10) A small sum {alt. tr.: a little/some merchandise}²² remained in my hands, (11) which was spent on the house bought {lit., ‘collected’} for him (al-Nafūsī).

[B. Court record]

(12) Mr. Berākhōt,²³ *son of the elder R. Joseph* (13) Lebdi—*may he rest in Eden!*—appeared before us and declared that he had dictated this entire (14) account, and that all that remained with him, besides (15) what

¹⁸ The term *mithqāl* is used here for dinar, in order to differentiate the Egyptian currency from the Yemenite. The flat sum of one dinar suggests that the boat did not enter the port. Water and victuals were brought on board, and one or more merchants came up to buy the Indian clothes, the proceeds of which were used later for the payment of customs in ‘Aydhāb.

¹⁹ {Robes were sold for payment of customs in Sawākin also according to II, 32, line 36.}

²⁰ ‘Second customs’ means perhaps ‘exit toll,’ as in line 24. Barakāt might have paid them out of his own pocket and was refunded by Ibn al-Ṭuwayr’s agent.

²¹ The customs in ‘Aydhāb amounted to more than 10 Egyptian dinars.

²² {Arabic *shuway*. *Shay* can mean ‘merchandise’; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:452, n. 1.}

²³ ‘Blessings.’ For variety’s sake, the Hebrew form of the name (Abu ʾl-) Barakāt appears here. {The Hebrew form of a name was often preferred in a court record.}

went into²⁴ the house of Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, was spent on the house (16) belonging to Sheikh Iṣḥāq al-Nafūsī—*may his Rock preserve him!*—which is registered in his name, (17) after it was bought by ‘Allūsh {lit., ‘which is part of what ‘Allūsh bought’} in the name of his brother Iṣḥāq—*may his Rock preserve him!*²⁵ In this are included (18) 10 dinars, which he (Nafūsī) had promised to the beadle Barakāt, the Kohen, b. (19) ‘Ammār.²⁶ After all this, *nothing worth even a penny* has remained with him (Barakāt Lebdi) (20) from all that had been delivered to him. *We wrote this as* (21) *a confirmation of rights and a proof.* This happened on Tuesday, the seventh of Shevat 1443 (22) *E.D.*²⁷

He said that these expenses were made on the instructions of Sheikh (23) Abū Sa‘īd, *his honor, great and holy master and lord Ḥalfon ha-Levi—may his Rock preserve him!—son of our lord Nethanel ha-Levi—* (24) *may his memory be blessed!*²⁸—the representative of the aforementioned Sheikh Iṣḥāq.²⁹ Sheikh Abū Sa‘īd (25) confirmed that he had ordered these actions, because he had regarded them (26) as beneficial. *We wrote* this too, etc.

²⁴ Arabic *maḏā fi*, which might mean ‘was lost in,’ and should perhaps be translated thus. But we have no record about the dealings between Ibn al-Ṭuwayr and al-Nafūsī. {In verso, line 11, *maḏa ‘alā*, lit., ‘went for.’}

²⁵ In VI, 29, we find Barakāt Lebdi in charge of a house in Fustat belonging to Iṣḥāq al-Nafūsī during the years 1124–26. {‘Barakāt’ is not mentioned in that fragment, but because of the date, ‘al-Lebdi’ (line 4) can be identified as him.} But since the house referred to here is described (in 1132!) as bought for him by his brother ‘Allūsh (‘Lamb,’ a common Maghrebi name), probably another building is meant. But Barakāt clearly took interest in this one, too.

²⁶ This is a gift to a synagogue, in which this person served as a beadle. He is known from a fragmentary court record, TS 12.607, also written by Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh, with his Hebrew name Berākhōt b. Amram.

²⁷ January 26, 1132. {In earlier publications, Goitein (“Last Phase,” 22) read the year 1446 E.D. (= 1135 C.E.; when 7 Shevat falls on a Wednesday), and drew some unwarranted conclusions concerning the biography of Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, mentioned in the continuation here.}

²⁸ Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel was a V.I.P., wherefore he is introduced with honorific epithets. He is the subject of chap. 4. {Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel served as agent for the Adenese grandees who sent financial assistance to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Mannaseh; see II, 33–34, II, 53.}

²⁹ The close association between Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel and Iṣḥāq al-Nafūsī is alluded to in IV, 15–II, 42, lines 11, margin, line 6, VI, 26.}

[Signatures]

- (27) Judah ha-Kohen b. Joseph ha-Kohen—*may his end be good!—offspring of Yehōsēf Kohen Sedeq—the memory of the righteous is blessed!*³⁰
- (28) Zechariah b. Sar Shālōm—*may he rest in Eden!*³¹
- (29) ///Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh—*may he rest in Eden!///*

³⁰ This is Abū Zikrī Kohen, to whom chap. 5 is devoted.

³¹ An India trader; see V, 4, margin, line 2, where he travels home in the Kārim flotilla, and VI, 39, lines 19–20, where he is on his way from ‘Aydhāb to Fustat; see also the fragmentary VI, 22, line 2. He drowned on a voyage between Aden and India, III, 15, lines 22–25. His father Sar Shālōm Ibn al-Shāmī writes from Aden to Fustat, II, 1, lines 6–7 {see 285, n. 7 on Shāmī}, margin, line 6. The full name of this signatory: Zechariah (Arabic [Abū] Zikrī [Yaḥyā]) b. Sar Shālōm Ibn al-Shāmī. {Abū Zikrī b. al-Shāmī is identified in III, 28a, lines 14, 18, as a *nākbudā*, traveling from Aden to India. For the Kārim flotilla, see 483, n. 28.}

I, 34a *Betrothal between Sitt al-Ahl d. Joseph Lebdi and Her Cousin*

Fustat, November 1118

TS NS 184, fs. 58, 62, 50, 71, 70, 74, 72, 98 (in this order)¹

A lengthy court record in Halfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh's hand, of which thus far eight fragments have been identified.

Joseph Lebdi had taken his sister and her son, Abraham b. Isaac, into his house, where the latter, while visiting his mother, had frequent opportunity to see his cousin Sitt al-Ahl ('Mistress of the family'). After both Joseph and his sister had died, such visits were no longer good etiquette, but Abraham wished "to remain connected with the house of his uncle."² He and two friends, with a notable as spokesman, came to see Joseph's widow and proposed to her daughter Sitt al-Ahl. The widow {Jamī' '[Mistress of] All,' line 11} was reluctant and wished to wait until her son (Abu 'l-Barakāt) would return from a protracted voyage. But the notable was insistent. After having gone so far as to propose, he could not leave without having achieved something; a betrothal should be arranged, while the wedding would take place after Barakāt's return. At this impasse, the mother {agreed, and it was then} suggested that they take up the matter with the girl herself. After {presumably} having heard many laudatory words, Sitt al-Ahl agreed. Abraham, in the presence of his friends and Sitt al-Ahl's mother {and another (young) brother of Sitt al-Ahl (line 22)}, produced two rings of gold and one of silver, as well as five dinars. She accepted the gift and declared: 'I betroth myself to him.'³ Fourteen months then passed before our document was written. Abraham's friends testify in court that Sitt al-Ahl had accepted his gifts

¹ {See on this document Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:31 (no. 11), 73–74, 434, n. 80, 442, no. 20; 4:268, 449, n. 35. I have repositioned some of the fragments, and contrary to what is written there, the document, except for a few words and the signatures, is complete. Subsequently, a few minor adjustments have been made in the following description. Shvitiel and Niessen, *Arabic Manuscripts*, 182, lists TS NS 184, f. 78, as an additional fragment of this contract. That item, however, is a fragment of another document, written by the same scribe, Halfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh, and has no connection to this one.

² While Abraham is quoted as having wanted 'to be with them' (line 10), he first said (lines 9–10): 'I desire to be joined with (*ittiṣāl bi-*, often used for marriage) the daughter of my maternal uncle.'

³ According to Jewish (unlike Islamic) law a girl who comes of age may marry 'whom she likes.' In reality, of course, matters were different. {The bride's recital of this formula, *qad qaddastuhu nafṣī*, is quote exceptional and merits further attention.}

and betrothed herself to him, which meant (as is expressly said) that she was legally married to him.⁴

I leave it to the imagination of the reader to fancy what was behind that court record. Sitt al-Ahl probably knew that Barakāt was not eager to have Abraham as his brother-in-law. She might have had another opinion about the man. The end of the story is revealed in the next document.

The date is in TS NS 184, fs. 98, 72 (line 31 of the court record), which states that the betrothal had taken place in the beginning of Kislev (mid. Nov.) 1118. The document was drawn up Sunday, January 12, 1120.

{The testimony to Sitt al-Ahl's betrothal was probably heard in court after it became known that she did not want to consummate the marriage with her cousin. The court record confirms that her betrothal was legally binding and she had the status of a married woman, that is, she could not be released from the betrothal without a bill of divorce.}

⁴ A girl betrothed could get free only by a formal bill of divorce, which was not always easy to get; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:69, 73–74, and passim.

I, 34b *Another Betrothal, This Time between Sitt al-Ahl and an India Trader*

Fustat, June 10, 1124

TS NS J 460 {+ TS NS J 112 + TS NS 211, f. 8 + TS NS 323, f. 11 + TS 8.138 + TS AS 152, f. 19}

See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:449–50, n. 35, according to which Goitein identified the first fragment on July 2, 1981. For TS 8.138, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3: 382, no. 25.

Four and a half years passed. Sitt al-Ahl, daughter of Joseph Lebdi, was ‘divorced,’ i.e., freed from her betrothal to her cousin, Abraham b. Isaac, and betrothed to Abu ’l-Surūr Peraḥyā ha-Levi.¹ She received part of her father’s large house,² and her brother promised to give her a house in the al-Fiḍḍī (‘Mr. Silverman’) Lane in the Castle of the Candles.³

{After I added TS NS 211, f. 8 and (upon the suggestion of Amir Ashur) four additional fragments, the entire original document has been restored. The full name of Sitt al-Ahl’s new groom was Abu ’l-Surūr Peraḥyā ha-Levi b. Benjamin. In I, 36 (where his father’s name is given as Binyām),⁴ he is mentioned as part owner of the Lebdi house and identified as a perfumer (‘*aṭṭār*). Perfumers often were involved in the India trade, and from II, 11a, we learn that he was traveling from Aden to Fustat, probably in connection with that commerce. We thus have an example of the daughter of an India trader marrying another India trader.

Sometime between May 26 and June 4, 1124, the dowry of the couple was publicly displayed and assessed. It was so lavish that Abu ’l-Surūr feared that the bride’s family might rescind part of it. He asked the witnesses to stay and insisted that Sitt al-Ahl’s young brother, Zayn, declare

¹ The name Peraḥyā is not found in the Bible and is rare in post-biblical, pre-Islamic Hebrew literature, one example being Joshua b. Peraḥyā in *M. Avot* 1:6. It is fairly common in Geniza times, because the Arabic-speaking Jews identified Hebrew Peraḥ (‘flower’) with Arabic Farah (‘joy’), and Peraḥyā was understood to mean ‘Joy in God.’ Accordingly, the by-name used with Peraḥyā was Abu ’l-Surūr, Joyful. {The *kunya* Abu ’l-Surūr is also used with the Arabic name Farah, e.g., Abu ’l-Surūr Farah. b. Yeshū’ā ha-Kohen, II, 33–34, side e, lines 14–15. Also see Goitein, *Letters*, 317, n. 1; Friedman, “Ransom-Divorce,” 307, n. 69.

² The house formerly belonged to the Ibn Zaffān family, concerning which see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:460, n. 74. It is mentioned as the place where the dowry was assessed, but it is not stated explicitly that this house was a gift to the bride.

³ The Castle of the Candles, *qaṣr al-sham*, is the ancient center of Fustat, for which see, e.g., Gil, *Foundations*, 579 (index); Lambert, *Fortifications*, 274 (index).}

⁴ This abridged form of the name Benjamin, Binyām—BENIAMĒS is already found in a Greek inscription from Attica in the second or third century C.E.; see Schwabe, “Schools,” 113. It is common in the Geniza.

before them that he accepted responsibility for his sister's dowry gift, both in his name and in that of his absent older brother, which he did. The older brother, Abu 'l-Barakāt, must have been away on another journey to India. Perhaps Abu 'l-Surūr was concerned that after Abu 'l-Barakāt's return from the East, he might not agree to the generous dowry or to the match itself. Mention of the house in the al-Fiḍḍī Lane, which was promised the bride, was added a number of times between the lines in the document. On June 10, the *ketubba* was written and the betrothal formalized. At Abu 'l-Surūr's request, this document too was written, but for some reason another eight months passed until its signing in January–February 1125. This is what the text states, but below it there is no trace of a signature.

Abu 'l-Surūr explained his demand that Zayn make a formal declaration of his and Abu 'l-Barakāt's commitment to give the entire dowry to their sister, in that 'I am apprehensive of the consequences of the time' (Arabic *anā khā'if min 'awāqib al-zamān*). The (almost) identical phrase (*khawf min 'awāqib al-zamān*) appears in a number of contemporary dowry documents. In one such formula, written—like our text—by Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh (dated documents from 1100–38) the phrase clarifies why a bride's father, who wanted to hide his wealth, requested that her dowry be registered in a separate document and omitted in her *ketubba*.⁵ While our text is also a special document concerning dowry, its circumstances are entirely different, since it includes neither an itemized list of dowry articles nor their total value, which were explicitly registered in her *ketubba*. The phrase under consideration evidently explained why an irregular procedure was followed but did not indicate any particular type of commitment concerning the dowry.

This betrothal may not have worked out either. Two fragments of a contract of remarriage (as indicated by the payment of 12½ *zuz*) of our bride's namesake, Sitt al-Ahl d. Joseph, to a certain Is[aac], also written by Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh, have been identified.⁶ Two additional fragmentary

⁵ {ENA 3755, f. 6. See Friedman, *JMP*, 1:293–94. The phrase was translated there: 'out of fear of contemporary penalties (by the government).' The words in parentheses correspond to Goitein's remarks noted in the continuation. The translation itself was imprecise; it treated *'awāqib* as if it were a plural form of *'aqūba*, rather than *'āqiba*, and *al-zamān* as referring to the present time. See further Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:126 (where the phrase is translated 'apprehension of the vicissitudes of the time') and 3:453, n. 44 (where reference is made to TS NS J 112). For Time as a personification of fate, see Goitein, *ib.*, 5:294, 329; Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 174–75, n. 157, and the literature and sources cited there; cf. III, 57, line 16.

⁶ TS 12.595 and TS 12.604.

texts, dated 1139 and 1146, attest Peraḥyā ha-Levi b. Benjamin's marriages to two other women, the first fragment to Sitt al-Nās the second to Sitt al-Ḥasab.⁷ These fragments illustrate the frequency of divorce and remarriage in the Geniza society, in the best of families.}

⁷ ULC Or. 1080 J 49 (1139); Bodl. MS. Heb. e. 98, fol. 63 (1146).}

I, 35 *Abu 'l-Barakāt's Widow Purchases a Share in Two Stores*

Fustat, June 1143

TS 16.146 + TS 12.176

The upper-right side of the document is in TS 16.146, the lower-left side in TS 12.176. Between these two pieces, most of text has been preserved.

A physician had bought from his two nephews one sixth of two adjacent stores, *dakākān*, belonging to them, one of which served one of them, also a physician, as *sukn* (office, or domicile, or both).¹ The price for this sixth was 53 3/4 dinars. The uncle had volunteered to give his nephews the right to buy this sixth back at the same price during a certain period (how long is not spelled out in the very large document). Naturally (but not mentioned), rent had to be paid for the share sold.

Now Abu 'l-Barakāt's widow, Sitt al-Sāda ('Mistress over the lords'), daughter of Abū Naṣr al-Tinnīsī,² also a physician, purchases that sixth for the same price and under the same conditions granted by the seller. This clearly was a form of investment.³ Whether also veiled interest was involved, no one can tell.⁴

¹ {As suggested in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:286, it is likely that the physician is not the same as one of the nephews, though both are called Abu 'l-Barakāt. A doctor's office was also called *dukkān*, 'store'; see Goitein, *ibid.*, 2:253.}

² Family name, derived from the port-city and great center of linen industry Tinnīs on the northeastern corner of the Nile Delta.

³ {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:83, 372, n. 8, referring to this document.}

⁴ See I, 23, especially page 232, n. 6.

I, 36 *The Engagement of Sitt al-Khāṣṣa d. Abu 'l-Barakāt*

Fustat, November 7, 1146

Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fols. 48 and 47 (in this order)

Ed. Goitein, "Three Trousseaux," 86–92, 97–103, 104–6.¹ See discussion in *Goitein, Med. Soc.*, 3:84–85; revised translation *ib.*, 4:317–21.

Although her father was dead, the position of Sitt al-Khāṣṣa ('Mistress of the Elite') was very strong, as evidenced by the conditions detailed in this long engagement contract. The wedding was fixed for a full year later, but the future husband, the son of a 'perfumer,' had to deposit 40 dinars, the first installment of the nuptial gift, with a third party, although it was usual to present it at the wedding. The later installment, due in the event of a divorce or the demise of the husband, was 100 dinars, a large sum rarely promised for that purpose. Sitt al-Khāṣṣa was given five of twenty-four shares of the house of her grandfather Joseph Lebdi² and one half of her father's house, but "the rent of her properties is hers, she may spend it for whatever purpose she prefers; he (the groom) has no say in this matter." Moreover "she may choose the place and the domicile where she wishes to live." Her dowry, worth 500 (exactly: 496) dinars—real ones; the number was not doubled in her honor—consisted of 25 pieces of jewelry, headed by a gold tiara inlaid with pearls, worth 70 dinars, 44 items of clothing, and numerous pieces of bedding, copper, utensils, and toiletries.

The contract shows that Sitt al-Khāṣṣa's family belonged to the Jewish upper middle class, but in her trousseau I looked in vain for Indian silks, ornaments or bronze lamps that one would expect in the outfit of the daughter of an Indian trader.

¹ On page 106, first line, read *ṣdr* for *ṣrr* (*d* and *r* are hardly distinguishable in Hebrew script) and translate on page 91, line (36) 'a front (*ṣadr*) and two side curtains.'

² The house was known as that of Ibn al-Lebdi, but was shared with Abu 'l-Surūr b. Binyām (Arabic form of the name Benjamin), known as having traveled from Aden to Fustat, see II, 11a, line 37, and verso, line 6. I assume that Lebdi had sold fourteen shares to this fellow trader. {As noted in I, 34b, n. 1, he married—or at least betrothed—Joseph Lebdi's daughter, Sitt al-Ahl.} The remaining ten shares were equally divided between brother and sister, as was the house of their father.

I, 37 *Testimony by Abu 'l- Riḍā Joseph b. Abu 'l-Barakāt Lebdi*

Fustat, spring 1156

RNL Yevr.-Arab. I (Firkovitch II) 1700, f. 6

In spring 1156, 'Abu 'l-Riḍā, the perfumer, known as Ibn al-Lebdi,' together with three other persons, made a deposition in court with regard to a brawl which he had witnessed. Since a man living in Fustat about eighty years later was named Abu 'l- Riḍā Joseph b. Abu 'l-Barakāt Ibn al-Lebdi (I, 41), it is rather safe to assume that that one was a grandson of our Abu 'l-Riḍā. As Sitt al-Khāṣṣa had been willed by her father one half of his house, she and Joseph Abu 'l-Riḍā were probably the only surviving children of Abu 'l-Barakāt.¹

{This perfumer Joseph Abu 'l-Riḍā is likely intended in the address of an interesting letter sent from Alexandria by a mother to her son, Abu 'l-'Izz b. Bishr, staying in Fustat at the 'store of Sheikh Abu 'l-Riḍā Ibn al-Lebdi.' Regards are sent to 'Sheikh Abu 'l-Riḍā the son of your paternal uncle and his son,' but it is not clear whether or not this was the same Abu 'l-Riḍā Ibn al-Lebdi.}²

¹ This one half of the house was *willed* to her by her father {see I, 36, fol. 47v, lines 16–17}, not inherited by her from him. According to Jewish law she would not have inherited anything. Muslim law would have given her one third, and to Joseph two thirds. But Jewish law provided for freedom in dispositions in face of death and, as the Geniza shows, many made use of this opportunity. {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:141–42; Rivlin, *Inheritance*.}

² CAJS 400. On this letter, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:141 (Index for Dropsie 400).

I, 38 *A Contribution to the Poor by Ibn al-Lebdi*

Fustat, July 1178

TS K 15, f. 6

The entries cited are from sec. b, col. 2, line 15, and sec. d, col. 2, line 4.

In a collection of 'wheat' for the poor in connection with a fast day in July 1178, one Ibn al-Lebdi, like some others, contributed twice and fair shares.¹ He might or might not have been identical with the perfumer of I, 37.²

¹ Details in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:483–84, no 33.

² {Since in the second notation, he is called 'Ibn Bu 'l-Riḍā Ibn al-Lebdi,' he is evidently the latter's son.}

I, 39 *Last Will of Abu 'l-Barakāt b. Abu 'l-Riḍā Lebdi*

Fustat, August 9, 1227

ENA 2558, f. 14

Deathbed declaration of 'Abu 'l-Barakāt b. Joseph, known as Ibn al-Lebdi,' entitled *al-shaykh al-sadīd*, the sound, reliable elder,¹ made in the presence of two {or three} of his sons and of the partner in his sugar factory. This large document is damaged to such an extent that no consecutive story can be reconstructed. But several interesting points do emerge. For instance, when reminded that according to Jewish law the firstborn was entitled to a double share (Deuteronomy 21:17), the dying man replied: "I do not prefer one child over another." He and his partner declared that they trusted each other completely; Abu 'l-Barakāt's account books would speak for him after his death.² At the end, a large bag with *ūd*, aromatic wood, was brought in, a purse with gold was put into it;³ the bag was laid into a Rūmī, or European,⁴ chest, which was locked, and the key was put into the hand of the dying man.

¹ Common in that period, but mostly given to physicians and government officials; see, e.g., Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:355 (lower officials); 508, sec. 139; 577, n. 30 (physicians); 605, n. 3; 609, n. 11, bottom (officials). {See the further discussion of this honorific, *al-sadīd*, *ibid.*, 5:270–71, 582, nn. 77–80 (on pages 271, 582, n. 79, it is suggested that Maimonides was also called *al-sadīd*, but as shown in Friedman, "Did Maimonides Teach Medicine?," the intended party was evidently Moses b. Perahyā Yijū). Among the India Book documents, it also appears in II, 66, line 5 (a physician); II, 73, line 9 (a Qadi); III, 37, line 2. Also Bilāl b. Jarīr, the governor of Aden, was given this honorific; see the note to II, 28, line 19. A search of *ET*² demonstrates that many Muslim notables were called al-Sadīd, an abbreviation of Sadīd al-Dawla, the *Sadīd* of the State, Sadīd al-Mulk, S. of the Kingdom, or Sadīd al-Dīn, S. of the Faith.

² "Whatever my account books (*daftars*), in my handwriting, contain, in his credit or his debit, will be calculated and acted upon accordingly, and he should be paid whatever the accounting indicates" (lines 23–24). On use of the merchant's account book as legal evidence, see 202, n. 22.}

³ Various sums had been mentioned before, but cannot be safely identified with 'the aforementioned gold' noted here.

⁴ {Arabic Rūm, adj. Rūmī, is defined by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:43: "originally designating Byzantium, but used regularly for Christian Europe and its peoples in general well into the twelfth century." Elsewhere, Goitein translates Rūmī: 'European,' 'Byzantine,' 'Greek' and 'Italian'; see Diem, *Dictionary*, 87–88. Jacoby, "Byzantine Trade," 27–29, documents the continued use, at least through the second half of the thirteenth century, of Rūm for Byzantium or the (Christian) West; sometimes the exact intention can be determined by context.}

Ud is a precious Oriental product, but there is no reason to assume that Abu 'l-Barakāt II brought it himself from the countries of the Indian Ocean. No. I, 40 shows, however, that he traded also in goods other than sugar and sugar products.

I, 40–42 *The Sons of Abu 'l-Barakāt II b. Joseph II*I, 40 *Power of Attorney by Naba' b. Abu 'l-Barakāt II re Claims on his Inheritance*

{Fustat, before 1237}

TS AS 148, f. 4

Naba', one of the younger sons of Abu 'l-Barakāt II who were present at their father's deathbed declaration (I, 39), appoints two attorneys for settling his claims on "sugar, sugar molasses,¹ and goods," left to him by his father. This item is a draft of an incomplete contract. {It appears to be an autograph of Abraham Maimonides. This is of interest both for his biography and for the legal phraseology he used in the contract.}

¹ A tentative translation of *qaṭāra*, an important and often mentioned by-product of the sugar industry. Details in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:463, n. 134. Ordered for a household, e.g., V, 40a.

I, 41 *Deed of Partnership in the Late Abu 'l-Barakāt II's Sugar Factory*

Fustat, September 1239

Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 16

Joseph III, by-named Abu 'l-Riḍā, b. Abu 'l-Barakāt II, and his brother Faḍl Allāh ('God's Bounty') receive loans in the amounts of 400 and 200 dinars from two investors and form a partnership with them for the operation of the sugar factory inherited from their father. They had bought part of it from their younger brothers. Unlike their ancestor Joseph Lebdi I, the two brothers must have possessed an inkling of Jewish learning, for both are honored with the Hebrew epithet *ha-talmīd*, 'scholar.' (This extensive and complicated document has been translated and commented upon for *Mediterranean People* {not preserved}.)¹

{One of the investors is Sheikh al-Zakī Perahyā *ha-talmīd* b. Nissim, known as Ibn Yijū.² As we have already seen, descendants of India traders often no longer engaged in that commerce. Here the learned great-grandson of Abraham Ben Yijū, to whom chap. 3 is devoted, makes a loan to the learned great-grandsons of Joseph Lebdi I. Perahyā b. Nissim was a well-known Egyptian Jewish scholar, on whom see further pages 86–88.}

¹ {On this document, cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:89, 367 (no. 26), 412, n. 32; on the sugar factory see further *ibid.*, 1:89, 412, n. 32; 4:37, 358, n. 184; 5:543, n. 40. Goitein's file for preparation of his book *Mediterranean People* contains only a transcript of the text with brief notes. I have supplied an edition of this document in the Hebrew version of the present book. For *talmīd*, an abbreviation of *talmīd ḥakhāmim*, see Friedman, *JMP*, 2:234, and literature cited there; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:267, 580, n. 62.

² 'Yijū' is most faint and was not read by Goitein.}

I, 42 *A Contribution to the Poor by Abu 'l-Riḍā*

{Fustat, ca. 1230–40}

Bodl. MS. Heb. c. 28 (Cat. 2876), fol. 47

Ed. Ashtor “Documents,” 140–45.

Abu 'l-Riḍā { Joseph III } Ibn al-Lebdi pledged one-half a dirhem (per week, for ‘bread for the poor’), as most middle-class people did; see the discussion in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:488–90, especially 488 bottom. {According to TS NS J 422, Abu 'l-Riḍā's great-grandfather, Abu 'l-Barakāt I, made the exact same contribution; see above, 254, n. 2.}

I, 43–44 *Lebdis Preceding the Time of Joseph I*

I, 43a *Poem in Honor of Samuel Ibn al-Lebdi*

Ca. 1000

Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 36 (Cat. 2776, no. 3), fol. 9

Ed. Mann, *The Jews*, 2:14–15 {Mirsky, *Ibn Khalfūn*, 80–82}.

A poem of fifteen lines in honor of Samuel Ibn al-Lebdi by the Spanish Hebrew poet Isaac b. Khalfūn (active around 1000). The warm, personal poem makes the impression that its writer had visited the man praised, but now was separated from him ‘by deserts and seas.’ The identification of the poet was made by Schirmann, “Ibn Khalfūn,” 298.¹

¹ {On Isaac b. Khalfūn, see Schirmann-Fleischer, *Poetry in Muslim Spain*, 173–76; Fleischer, “Secular Poetry,” 87–88 and the literature cited there.}

I, 43b *Power of Attorney by Samuel Ibn al-Lebdi*

{Fustat, late tenth–early eleventh century}

ENA 4010, f. 3

Left upper corner of a piece of parchment (part of 22 lines preserved);
monumental quadrangular script.

Samuel (line 21) Ibn al-Lebdi (line 5) appointed an attorney to sue one
[Ni]ssī b. Jacob (line 12).¹

¹ A Karaite known from two documents referring to the betrothal and the wedding {ca. 1065}, respectively, of his daughter Ni'ma to Barakāt b. Dā'ūd (David), also a Karaite, TS 16.109 {+ TS AS 153, f. 489}, TS 20.47v {see Olszowy-Schlanger, *Karaite Marriage Documents*, 275 ff.}; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:441, n. 2, where, by mistake, the names of another couple are given.

I, 44 *Power of Attorney by Solomon and Moses b. Abraham Ibn al-Lebdi*

Fustat, March 21, 1066

TS 20.38

Published in Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:663–67, no. 823.

Solomon and Moses, the sons of Abraham, ‘known as Ibn al-Lebdi,’ appoint an attorney to sue a merchant to whom a maternal uncle of their father had entrusted money, books, and other items destined for them in Sicily, but who had meanwhile traveled to Egypt. The complicated document, signed by five, shows that the brothers lived somewhere in the Maghreb and the problem was how to preserve for them the items concerned until they had them in hand.

CHAPTER TWO

MADMŪN B. ḤASAN-JAPHETH, PRINCE OF YEMENITE JEWRY, AND HIS FAMILY

II, A. *Ḥasan b. Bundār, his Brothers Abraham and Isaac, and Elder Son Bundār II*

II, 1 *Letter from Mukhtār b. Jacob to Šā'id b. Najā' Describing Ḥasan b. Bundār's Assistance*

Aden, ca. 1100

TS 8J 15, f. 24

The sheet follows the format used (18 × 13 cm.) for books and is shorter than typical letters. The beautiful and very orderly script is that of a copyist rather than that of a merchant, unless the sender was himself learned, or dictated his message to a scholarly fellow traveler. The script is Mediterranean, not Adenese. It is very similar to, if not identical with, that of Makhlūf b. Mūsā, from whose exquisite hand we have several letters and who often visited Aden; see page 338, n. 4.

The name of the sender, Mukhtār ('The Chosen'), was common among Syro-Palestinian Jews. He or his family might well have originated in Syria-Eretz Israel, for the addressee, the 'Trustee' Abu 'l-'Alā Šā'id-'Ullā, or his father, was a native of Damascus;¹ and Mukhtār's partner and probably his business associate, Ibn Sha'yā were also from Syria-Eretz Israel.² The 'Trustee' held a powerful position in both the business world and the community. He was the confidant of the court physician Mevōrākh b. Saadya, whom the government recognized as *Rayyis al-Yahūd*, 'the Head of the Jews' of the Fatimid Empire. Ḥasan b. Bundār, representative of the merchants in Aden, is also referred to here as *rayyis* (lines 5 and 15), an Arabic title corresponding to the Hebrew, 'Leader of the Congregations,' mentioned in the letter addressed to him, I, 13, line 4. The representative of merchants in Fustat, Abū Ya'qūb al-Ḥakīm was

¹ See pages 209–10.

² See the notes to lines 7 and 16.

the writer's agent (as he had acted for Joseph Lebdi). Wherever he was and in all his dealings, a merchant needed the protection of people of consequence. But such people were always busy and needed a watchdog to remind them of their duties. The 'Trustee' addressed in our letter performed such a service. Being a busy man, he included his messages for Mukhtār in his letters to Ḥasan b. Bundār.

Translation

[A. Opening of letter]

(1) I am writing to you—may God prolong the life of my lord, the illustrious Sheikh, and make (2) his honored position and well-being permanent and crush his enemies!—to tell you how much I long (3) and yearn for you. I ask God to grant that we be reunited, (4) in the best of circumstances through His grace and bounty.³

[B. Business affairs mentioned in correspondence between addressee and Ibn Bundār]

Your letter to (5) my lord, the illustrious *Rayyis*⁴—may God make his honored position permanent!—has arrived. You mentioned there that Tamīm⁵ (6) had arrived with the cloves⁶ and the aromatic wood. Sar

³ Mukhtār was a permanent resident of Fustat, but, as the following shows, had been away on the India route for a considerable time. The phrases used are absolutely stereotype.

⁴ Ḥasan b. Bundār; see the introduction to this letter.

⁵ Mentioned here and in line 13 without an honorific epithet or the name of his father or family. The same in VII, 36, line 26 (a suit against him in Aden). In VII, 46*v*, line 4, he is called 'Sheikh' (carrying, like here, cloves from Aden to Fustat), and in VI, 37, line 12, he is mentioned as dead after transporting goods from Aden to Egypt (ca. 1137). Most probably he was a freedman, but a person of good social standing (cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:132–33). This Tamīm should be differentiated from his namesake, probably also a freedman, commuting between Alexandria and Cairo in 1140 (IV, 68, line 7). [I assume that Goitein associated the name with a freedman before he identified documents (VI, 19, VI, 20, VI, 20a), concerning Tamīm ha-Kohen b. Jacob (since he was a Kohen, he could not have been a former slave). Tamīm ha-Kohen b. Samuel signs a document, TS K 25, f. 66, apparently in the late tenth century. Another example can be found in TS NS 143, f. 5, a poem eulogizing Abu 'l-Wafā' Tamīm b. Sham'a, who died 1123, apparently in Damascus (ed. Fleischer, "*Dīwān*," 179; see *ib.*, 170, where there is a misprint in his byname).

⁶ For the medicinal faculties and other information concerning cloves (Arabic *qaranful*)

Shālōm (7) Ibn al-Shāmī⁷ previously wrote to you to deliver my share to my lord, Sheikh (8) Abū Ya‘qūb⁸ al-Ḥakīm, for he is my agent, empowered to collect this, namely (9) 17 *manns* of cloves, of which he (Sar Shālōm) noted that seven were exclusively his⁹ (10) and that of the 10 *manns* and the 7 *manns* of aromatic wood, two thirds were mine and one (11) third his. Also carried with him (Tamīm)¹⁰ 12 Malikī dinars¹¹ for expenses {alt. tr.: tolls}¹² for the (12) 10 *manns* of cloves and 7 *manns* of aromatic wood. Please¹³ check (13) the letter of Ibn Bundār, which arrived with Tamīm, examine (14) the shipment and take out for me what belongs to me.¹⁴

You wrote (15) to my lord, the illustrious *Rayyis*, concerning the silk,¹⁵ (16) which we (= I) had sent to Sheikh Abū Naṣr Ibn Sha‘yā,¹⁶ namely

see Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 96. Maimonides mentions its use to increase sexual potency in his autograph manuscript TS Ar. 44, f. 79.}

⁷ ‘The Prince of Peace, the son of the *Shāmī*.’ *Shām* means Eretz Israel or Syria (or Damascus); see Bacher, “Schām”; Strauss, “Review” and Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:589, n. 8. He and his son Zechariah were India traders; see above 264, n. 31.

⁸ {Written Abū Ya‘qōv (Jacob), with the Hebrew spelling. According to Goitein, *Letters*, 231, n. 3, the use of the Hebrew form in a byname is a Maghrebi practice.

⁹ Arabic *li-khāṣṣatihi*. *Khāṣṣa* expresses exclusive ownership. See Maimonides, *Responsa*, 1:135, no. 87: *wal-fā’ida li-Reuven khāṣṣa*, “and the profit belongs to Reuben exclusively.” See, e.g., *li-khāṣṣat ‘abdih*, ‘exclusively for me, your servant,’ in II, 32, lines 52, 56. For *khāṣṣa* for a ‘separate account,’ see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:183–84, and cf. Gil, “Merchants,” 276. Also see below, 380, n. 8.

¹⁰ Arabic *wa-ma‘ahā*, lit., ‘with them,’ i.e., together with the cloves and aromatic wood.}

¹¹ The expenses were mainly for Mukhtār’s shipment. In the contemporary letter VII, 36 (see above note 5), lines 18–19, (a *mann* of) *qaranful*, cloves, was sold (in Fustat) for 4½ dinars; *ibid.*, verso, lines 12–13, *ūd*, aromatic wood, according to quality and type, brought 4–10 dinars.

¹² {Arabic *mu’na*. See 171–72, n. 23.}

¹³ Until here, the writer addressed the recipient in the third person and referred to Ḥasan b. Bundār as the illustrious *Rayyis*. When it comes to actions requested, formalities are dropped for the sake of clarity. Cf. 201, n. 21.

¹⁴ Arabic *ta’khudh-hu li ḥiṣṣatī* {lit., ‘take it as my portion’}. When the writer added: “what belongs to me,” he forgot to cross out *hu*, ‘it.’

¹⁵ Hebrew *shēsh*. In the Mediterranean (not India) trade, this biblical word serves as a general designation for silk, a kind of code word, and is therefore not mentioned among the twelve types of silk discussed in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:454–55, n. 53. Cf. TS 13 J 19, f. 27, lines 7–8, *Nahray* 14: *shēsh... a’nī al-khazz* (like here); Bodl. MS. Heb. b. 3 (Cat. 2806, no. 19), fol. 21, where 10 pounds of *shēsh* are sold for 21 dinars, and DK 22, line 9, *Nahray* 194, where the same quantity cost 30 dinars. Here silk brought from India must have been meant. {Cf. Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:940, Index; *id.*, ‘Silk,’ 37, who vocalizes *shish* and takes the expression *shish khazz* as “probably meaning a type of *khazz* with a linen warp.” For *khazz*, see line 17.}

¹⁶ Abbreviated Arabic form of the name of the biblical prophet Isaiah. The Sha‘yās were a great and ramified family, possibly also originating in Syria (Goitein, *Med. Soc.*,

40 pounds (17) of good *khazz*.¹⁷ I ask you to attend to this and to its sale, on two months' credit, (18) for whatever price God, the Exalted, apportions.¹⁸

[C. Request that the Nagid assist in settling the estate of a trader]

[Margin] I wrote to you about Abū Sa'd b. Rashīd—may God have mercy upon him!—and what he had deposited with Sar Shālōm, namely 75 Egyptian dinars, his investment, making 300 (Malikī) dinars. You know that the orphans, two girls, are poor. Please tell his excellency, the illustrious [Top of page] *Rayyis*—may his glory be enhanced and his esteem wax!—to do in matters of this calamity what will bring him near to God.¹⁹

[D. Closing remarks and greetings]

Please do not withhold from me your letter, (in which you charge me) with any service or errand, [Verso] (1) for this will be a pleasure to me, and write in detail in it about all that I asked you.

3:9–10). The person meant here is probably identical with Abū Naṣr (Abraham) b. Isaiah (b. David) b. Isaiah, who made a deposition in the Fustat Jewish court in 1084, ULC Or. 1080.5, f. 16. {Abū Naṣr b. Sha'yā is mentioned in DK 231 g–k, line 19, also written to the same recipient as our letter (Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:419, no. 740); cf. TS AS 149, f. 12, line 25 (ib., 4:421, no. 741).}

¹⁷ *Khazz* is superior-quality silk. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:454, n. 53, and frequently; Gil, "Silk," 37.

¹⁸ The addressee is asked to supervise the sale by Ibn Sha'yā, not to do it himself. In most sales, a deferment of payment was granted (Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:197 ff. {cf. Gil, "Merchants," 296}). Frequently the sender instructed his agent at what price or price range he wished his shipment to be sold. Mukhtār, who clearly had been abroad for a considerable time, preferred not to do so. {For the 'whatever...apportions' formula, see the discussion above, 63–65.}

¹⁹ Abū Sa'd b. Rashīd, an India trader seemingly not known from elsewhere, had a partnership with Sar Shālōm (see the note to line 7, above), in which he had invested 75 Egyptian dinars, which had been exchanged for 300 Adenese specie (1:4, a common exchange rate {see above, 172 n. 27}). Abu Sa'd had died, probably on a voyage from Aden eastward, and Sar Shālōm was on his way back to Egypt. Mukhtār writes here a second letter in this matter, exhorting the 'Trustee'—and the {Egyptian} Head of the Jews himself {the *Rayyis*}—to exert themselves for the orphan girls.

Accept (2) my most cordial personal regards and please greet Sheikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Dihqān,²⁰ (3) and tell him how much I yearn for him. And to your (paternal) uncle best greetings.²¹

[E. Address]²²

(1) (To) My lord, the illustrious Sheikh Abu 'l-'Alā (2) Ṣā'id b. Munajjā {read: Na[j]ā'},²³—*may he rest in Eden!*—the Trustee. (3) May God prolong his life and make his prominent position permanent!

(1) (From) He who is grateful for your kindnesses, Mukhtār b. Jacob—

(2) *may he rest in Eden!*

²⁰ This Persian word, originally meaning chief of a place, designated later in Arabic an astute and learned man; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:467. Common in the Geniza as a (family) name, it was originally a nickname, sometimes (for instance, TS Misc. 8, f. 102) in the diminutive form *al-Duhayqīn* (which, however, a century earlier, still was used as a title; see Cahen, *Mouvements populaires*, 236 {12}). Our Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Dihqān appears in a list of contributors to a communal collection, headed by Abū Ya'qūb al-Ḥakīm (here, line 8, above) and Japheth b. Abraham, 'the Pride of the Community,' see 234, n. 3, and Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:477, sec. 16. {A government edict issued in 532 A.H., which began on September 19, 1137, forbade the use of the byname Abu 'l-Ḥasan by Jews and Christians in Egypt; see al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz*, 3:165. Numerous examples of Jews called Abu 'l-Ḥasan appear in this book.}

²¹ Arabic *wa'ammoh afḍal al-sal(ām)*. The word translated as 'greetings' means 'peace.' I believe the addressee's uncle, not that of al-Dihqān, is meant.

²² As usual, the address is written upside down on the opposite end of verso. The name of the addressee is written on the right side, that of the writer on the left. {Mention will not be made of this below, unless called for by special circumstances.}

²³ Ṣā'id-'Ullā's father was called Joseph; see I, 15. The name al-Munajjā ('Saved') either stands for Joseph, since the biblical Joseph was miraculously saved, or refers to an event in the life of 'Ullā's father. The names are partly effaced, but well known from other manuscripts. {Apparently read here Na[j]ā' (Najā' = 'Deliverance'). Also in TS 10 J 14, f. 7, address, written to Ṣā'id-'Ullā, ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:742, no. 521, he is called Najā'; but Munajjā in Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 43; TS NS J 344; VI, 13 (b. al-Munajjā).}

II, 2–9 *On Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm, who Disappeared in India, with His Camphor*

This affair, represented in the Geniza by eight items, in which reference is made to many other letters written about it, demonstrates the precarious lot of India traders, who assumed they would be able to care for their families back home while far away in *diyār al-Hind*. Yet, Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm's case must have been somewhat exceptional, for, although numerous other Jews were on the India route at his time, he is always mentioned in this abbreviated way (without his father's name); his story was notorious and he was known to everyone.¹ It is almost certain that he is identical with Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm b. Solomon al-Raqqī, who was sought after in India (II, 8) and to whom a letter was addressed, while he lived in Alexandria. The content of that letter betrays him as a Maghrebi, and his family name was common in Tunisia.²

Ḥasan b. Bundār, the representative of the merchants in Aden, as in II, 1, is again in the center of things. While Nissīm was on his way home after incredible sufferings—he might have tried to reach Sumatra, Indonesia, the land of the camphor³—he sent, it seems from Mirbāt (II, 4), 1¼ *manns* of 'old' camphor to Ḥasan, with the request to sell it in Aden and to send the proceeds to his wife in Alexandria. This was a very valuable shipment, worth approximately between 100 and 125 dinars.⁴ Nissīm informed his family of this arrangement and also that he had received word that his shipment had reached its destination. Two years had passed since that communication, but nothing was heard in Alexandria from Ḥasan (II, 2, line 32). At this point our correspondence starts.

¹ The combination of the Arabic honorific by-name Abu 'l-Faraj ('Salvation, Deliverance') and Hebrew Nissīm ('Miracles') was common in those days and could be used for designating a specific person only if everyone knew who was meant.

² DK 3, translated in Goitein, *Letters*, 239–43. {His father's name Solomon appears there but not in II, 8. Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm b. al-Raqqī also appears in TS 10 J 17, f. 21, lines 9–10, 12–13 (Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:880, no. 568), and in TS 16.339v, line 29 (Ben-Sasson, *Sicily*, 491, no. 101, where his father's name is given as Judah; Gil, *ib.*, 3:151, no. 348, where it is his brother's name, but, as the translation there suggests, this is a misprint for 'father.')} For al-Raqqī, see the note to I, 16v, line 1 {cf. Gil, *Ishmael*, 1:512–14; Goitein, *Letters*, 240 {and 243}, must be corrected accordingly.

³ {Arabic *kāfur*. Camphor was used in medicine, as a perfume and a spice; see Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 235–36. On the export of camphor from India and the Far East, see Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, 160–61.}

⁴ A *mann* of old camphor cost 100 dinars in Fustat around 1130 (VII, 36v, line 16) and 80 in Aden late in the twelfth century (II, 65, margin).

The family was represented by the brother of Nissīm's wife, who called himself 'Amram b. Joseph of blessed memory, the son of the brother of the late Nagid,' and is referred to thus in letters of others.⁵ Nagid (pronounced Nagheed) was the Hebrew title of Judah b. Saadya, Head of the Jews during the 1060's, who was succeeded by his more distinguished brother Mevōrākh. Whether this Amram b. Joseph is identical with his namesake and contemporary, who possessed a share worth 300 dinars in a house in Fustat (see 231, n. 3), and how exactly he was related to the Nagid Judah, is not clear. Anyhow, he was closely connected with the then leading Jewish family in Egypt, although clearly of somewhat minor status, and both facts are evident in his letters.⁶

In three letters to Nahray b. Nissīm, then the highest Jewish religious authority in Egypt,⁷ and one to a fellow Alexandrian of Tunisian extraction, who sojourned in Fustat, Amram describes his own ceaseless efforts to get tidings from, or about, his brother-in-law Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm and information from Ḥasan b. Bundār and asks the addressees to act in this matter (II, 2–5). Finally, Mevōrākh b. Saadya, "despite his preoccupation with the affairs of the government and the Jewish community" (II, 6*v*, lines 6–7), interfered, after which Ḥasan b. Bundār sent the proceeds from the sale of the camphor, partly in cash, partly in goods, to Fustat

⁵ He signs thus II, 3 (to Nahray b. Nissīm) and II, 6 (to Nethanel b. Japheth) and is referred to in an abbreviated fashion as "Imrān (the Arabic equivalent of Amram), son of the Nagid's brother" in TS Misc. 28, f. 155*v*, line 2, *Nahray* 116 {Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:884, no. 569}, and even as 'Amram, son of the late Nagid' in TS 8 J 25, f. 19, line 4, *Nahray* 40 {Gil, *ib.*, 3:399, no. 415}, which might be a simple slip.

⁶ 'Son of the brother' could refer to Amram's father Joseph or to himself. I prefer the latter, for his letters give the impression of an older man {though he had a son one year old, II, 2, line 25}. But no Joseph appears in the genealogy of Saadya (b. Mevōrākh), Judah's father; see Mann, *Jews*, 2:249–50 {cf. Cohen, *Self-Government*, 155}. Joseph might have been a half-brother of Judah (from another father), wherefore he was not included in Saadya's genealogy. Amram's script is markedly Maghrebi. {In TS Misc. 28, f. 155*v*, line 2 (Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:884, no. 569), 'Iwād b. Ḥananel writes Nahray b. Nissīm that "our fathers' brother" (*ammunā*), "the son of the brother of the Nagid," had arrived. Gil (*Ishmael*, 1:707) reconstructs the family relationship as follows: The designated Nagid was the North African early eleventh century Nagid Abraham b. Nathan, whose brothers were Nissīm's father Nahray, Ḥananel's unnamed father, and 'the brother of the Nagid.' (Accordingly, 'our fathers' brother' is imprecise, and the intention was: our fathers' cousin. Were *ammunā* taken literally, it would seem that the relationship could be reconstructed as follows: the elder Nahray, also called 'the brother of the Nagid,' had three sons, Ḥananel, Nissīm and 'the son of the brother of the Nagid.') Were we to assume that 'the son of the brother of the Nagid' is the same individual referred to in connection with Amram b. Joseph, this would both explain Amram's failure to appeal directly to the Nagid Mevōrākh and his closeness to Nahray, his cousin.}

⁷ As such, Nahray was in contact with the Jewish 'court of Yemen and India,' see 196, n. 1. {See the added comment there on the doubt surrounding such a court.}

(II, 6). This is the end of the story of the camphor. What happened to Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm himself we do not yet know.

Ḥasan b. Bundār retained the proceeds of the camphor certainly because Nissīm carried with him to India merchandise belonging to other merchants (II, 8), possibly belonging also to Ḥasan himself. That he kept the family in the dark for several years might be explained by the assumption that he expected to hear from or about Nissīm at any time. However, since, after such a long absence, Nissīm's wife had to be regarded as 'a woman the whereabouts of whose husband are unknown,'⁸ Ḥasan's silence was religiously blameworthy. A veiled reproach on this score was certainly contained in the letters to him by his Egyptian peers and prompted him to act.

⁸ This long phrase translates one Hebrew word, *'agūnā*, used by Amram in connection with Ḥasan b. Bundār's answer to the Head of the Jews Mevōrākh (II, 6, lines 19–20).

II, 2 *Letter from Amram b. Joseph to Nahray b. Nissīm: Request to Intervene with Ḥasan b. Bundār*

{Alexandria, 1094–96/7}

TS 13 J 23, f. 10

This is the opening letter of the correspondence; Amram b. Joseph recapitulates what had been done thus far and asks Nahray b. Nissīm to intervene with Ḥasan b. Bundār through the merchants returning to Aden.

Lines 1–13. Excuses for the writer's long silence: he always inquired after Nahray's well-being, but refrained from writing so as not to obligate a response.¹

Lines 13–29. A letter of Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm, containing the story of his horrible experiences, had been forwarded by Nahray ten months earlier. It caused the family great distress, which was exacerbated by the illness of both the writer's sister (Nissīm's wife) and his own wife, an orphan whom he had recently married after the death of his former wife, and who had borne him a sickly boy. Economic difficulties did the rest. "Man's road is not his [to choose]."²

Line 30–verso, line 13. In that letter Nissīm had mentioned that he had shipped to Abū 'Alī³ Ḥasan b. Bundār 1¼ *manns* camphor with the request to sell them in Aden and to send the proceeds to Nissīm's family; the camphor had arrived in Aden, but Nissīm did not know whether Ḥasan had forwarded anything.

That letter had been written exactly two years before.

Recently a number of acquaintances, all mentioned by name, had arrived from Aden, some with letters and receipts⁴ from Adenese

¹ {This excuse for not writing more often is often found in letters. Cf. below, page 308.}

² Jer. 10:23. Continuous pain in the joints of the hands and the feet (II, 2, lines 18–19) rendered Nissīm's wife incapable of work (II, 6, line 20), and her treatment was expensive (II, 2, line 19). These and similar details in this and other letters of Amram to Nahray show that, despite Amram's minor status, the relations were intimate. These details are also intended to emphasize the impropriety of Ḥasan b. Bundār's behavior.

³ Persons were addressed with their honorific by-name. Amram rarely forgets to add Ḥasan's *kunya*, although he only mentions him. Also, in II, 6, lines 12–14, he enumerates nine titles of Mevōrākh b. Saadya, while speaking of him.

⁴ 'Receipt' translates *barā'a*, literally, an acquittal given to a person in court testifying that he had delivered a shipment entrusted to him. Without a *barā'a* proving that Ḥasan had received the camphor he could not be sued.

merchants. One receipt seemed to be connected with Nissīm's shipment, and Nahray is asked to inquire into this and similar matters.⁵

Verso, lines 14–24. Having learned that the merchants who had arrived from Aden were returning there, Amram wrote to them letters and now asks Nahray to meet 'all of them' and to give them his letters. They should explain to Ḥasan b. Bundār that his "taking temporary possession of the camphor's proceeds as security against possible claims"⁶ was a great sin.

⁵ These were the travelers mentioned:

- (a) Yahyā ('May he live!') Ibn Khalīla, from the ramified Tunisian Khalīla ('female friend') family, members of which were found in Egypt as from the beginning of the eleventh century (e.g., Moses b. Abraham Ibn Khalīla {in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:463, n. 144; Ben Kalīla} in Fustat 1017, TS 16.124). The most prominent representative of this clan was Mūsa (Moses) b. Abu 'l-Ḥayy, see II, 5, n. 1, below.
- (b) Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf (or: Joseph) b. Abū Kathīr ('with numerous descendents') Ephraim (same meaning according to Genesis 41:52) Ibn Yahboy (margin, and verso, line 8, see II, 5, n. 3). Whether this family with a Persian name emigrated from Iran to Egypt directly, or, as happened with others, via Tunisia, is not yet known.
- (c) Of Joseph b. Isaac it had been rumored that he brought letters and receipts from Aden, but as Amram was told after the autumn holidays by another traveler—
- (d) Joseph b. {al-Fitūrī} (not yet identified)—nothing for him was among them. Nahray had already informed his cousin Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Allāl (b. Nahray; see Bodl. MS. Heb. c. 28 [Cat. 2876] fol. 34, line 23) about this before the holidays, but 'Allāl did not want to spoil Amram's holidays. {According to the Princeton University Geniza cite, Ibn al-Fitūrī appears in two other documents both of which have some connection with Alexandria: ENA 2805, f. 18Av, line 2 (according to Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:176, this is ENA 2805, f. 18B); ENA NS 16, f. 19, line 7, Amram known as Ibn al-Fitūrī.}
- (e) Of Ibn Elḥanan (verso, line 12, later called Abū 'Imrān, that is, Moses b. Elḥanan, lines 34–35) it had been reported that he was on his way home, carrying important messages from Yemen, but, at the writing of the letter, he had not yet arrived. Since the name Elḥanan is as rare in the Geniza as in the Bible, it is highly likely that this man's father was identical with Elḥanan b. Isma'īl al-Andalusī, one of three Spanish brothers (TS 20.76, Goitein, *Letters*, 114–16) who was prominent in Egypt both as a merchant and as a communal figure (see Goitein, "Daniel b. Azarya," 63, n. 57). Our Ibn Elḥanan was head of a congregation in (New) Cairo; *anā rayyis kanīṣatī be-minnuy* (the last word is Hebrew), "I am the head of my synagogue by official appointment," TS 10 J 13, f. 11, lines 3 and 18, a letter, in which Abraham b. Nathan (Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:512, sec. 14) asks Nahray b. Nissīm to secure the excommunication of this man and his own appointment by the government. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:614, n. 8. (The reference there is not to a *shohet* or ritual slaughterer, but to the communal leader, who is responsible for the proper conduct of the employees of the congregation). Abraham b. Nathan accuses Ibn Elḥanan of having squandered 4,000 dinars on a life of depravity, *shurūr*.

⁶ Arabic *'aql*, sequestration, is used twice (verso, lines 21, 23). {For use of this term, see below, 761, n. 18.}

Verso, lines 24–31. On his way to the East, Nissīm had met in Dahlak Sheikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan Salāma al-Ma'arrī, the brother of Sheikh Abu 'l-Ghanā'im.⁷ In the aforementioned letter (lines 13, 29 ff.) Nissīm had written that he had met that man again and asked him to carry with him the proceeds from the camphor from Aden, if they had not been sent before. Nahray is requested to find out whether this man had arrived in Fustat and whether he had brought any helpful message.

Verso, lines 31–38. In the concluding part, Nahray is reminded to enquire about another traveler⁸ who was reported to have some news on the matter.

One or two lines are missing at the end. {See the introduction to II, 3, for the dating.}

⁷ Ma'arra is a city in Northern Syria. Salāma ('Well-being')'s brother Abu 'l-Ghanā'im ('Spoils') must have been well known in Egypt. He lived in Damascus, but (Chinese) rhubarb belonging to him and forming the subject of a lawsuit in Fustat probably was brought there by or for him from Aden. Abu 'l-Barakāt b. Khulayf ('Dear Little Substitute') or Caleb (Num. 13:30 ff.) al-Ḥalabī (from Aleppo), while traveling to Fustat, was asked by Abu 'l-Ghanā'im to fetch the proceeds (TS 8J 26, f. 6). {On *rāwand* (rhubarb), including *rāwand shāmī*, see 380, n. 9.}

⁸ Ibn Elḥanan; see n. 5(e), above.

II, 3 *Letter from Amram b. Joseph to Nahray b. Nissīm Inquiring about a Letter Sent to Aden*

{Alexandria, 1094–96/7}

Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 75, fol. 19

Much torn and effaced. Published in Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:242–45, no. 675.

After twenty-seven lines of expressions of friendship and admiration for Nahray and Mevōrākh, the *Rayyis*, Amram asks again whether any news had arrived concerning his brother-in-law Nissīm. Amram had given a letter to the merchant Joseph b. Abū Kathīr Ibn Yahboy (see II, 2, n. 5[b]), who was on his way back to Aden, and waited for the outcome.

{The dating of the document is based on the following considerations. In lines 17–18, the writer seems to allude to Mevōrākh's second appointment as Nagid, which occurred in 1094. Nahray b. Nissīm died in 1096 or 1097. The dating of the related letters in this file follows consequently.}

II, 4 *Letter from Amram b. Joseph to Nahray b. Nissīm: Request to Forward a Letter to Ḥasan b. Bundār*

{Alexandria, 1094–96/7}

ENA 2805, f. 22

Ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:251–53, no. 677.

The ends of the lines are torn away, but they can be restored almost entirely.

Lines 1–12. Congratulations on the recovery of Nissīm, Nahray's son, from a grave illness.

Lines 12–23. Amram had learned that his brother-in-law Abu 'l-Faraj had arrived from India in Mirbāṭ on the southeastern tip of the Arabian peninsula, and intended to sail directly to the Red Sea port of 'Aydhāb, which meant that he would not touch Aden.¹ Under these circumstances, Amram found it appropriate to address Ḥasan b. Bundār in person and asks Nahray to forward his letter, either with one of the Jewish merchants, or, if they all had already left, with a trustworthy Muslim.

Lines 24–33. Nahray is strongly cautioned to take good care of his son; a relapse after illness was more dangerous than the illness itself.²

{See the introduction to II, 3, for the dating.}

¹ Similarly, Joseph Lebdi traveled from Mirbāṭ directly to the Red Sea port of Dahlak; see I, 14, lines 22–32.

² {Arabic *al-naksa ashadd min al-marad*; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:110, 536, n. 349, quoting another document.}

II, 5 *Letter from Amram b. Joseph to Moses B. Abu 'l-Hayy*

{Alexandria, 1094–96/7}

CAJS 394

The addressee Moses, mostly referred to as Mūsā, was active in communal affairs and was honored, because of his generosity, with the title *Segullat* (*ha-Yeshiva*), ‘Treasure’ (of the Academy).¹ He was a native of Tunisia, who had settled in Alexandria and was temporarily in Fustat.

Lines 1–32, and margin. Expressions of friendship, complaints about the bad times, personal misfortune, and an eye disease, which made it impossible for Amram to come to Fustat in person.²

Verso, lines 1–7. Letters from Joseph b. Abū Kathīr Ibn Yahboy,³ sent, it seems, from ‘Aydhāb,⁴ contained, according to hearsay, news about Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm and the camphor. The addressee is advised to question the Jewish merchants arriving from there.

Lines 7–20. In his dire circumstances Amram had given some of his books to the schoolteacher Isaac al-Nafūsī (also a Maghrebi) to sell, but this man had moved to Fustat and nothing was heard from him. Moses is asked to remind him of his duties as a pious person and gentleman.⁵

{See the introduction to II, 3, for the dating.}

¹ Although this title had been borne by other persons, Mūsā is repeatedly referred to in our letters simply as *al-Segullat*, II, 3, line 28, II, 7, line 25. He was a member of the Tunisian Khalila family. {See II, 2, n. 5(a); Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:877 (Index).

² See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:508, n. 36; 512, n. 81.}

³ See II, 2, n. 5(b), and II, 3.

⁴ {Perhaps read: Aden.}

⁵ Arabic *mā lā yajib fi 'l-dīn wa-lā fil-muruwwa*. {A literal translation of the entire clause in the original is: ‘He behaved with me in a manner not befitting piety or virtue.’ On this Isaac al-Nafūsī, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:560, n. 27; Goitein, *Education*, 119; I, 33, n. 1.}

II, 6 *Letter from Amram b. Joseph to Nethanel b. Japheth re Goods Sent by Ḥasan b. Bundār*

{Alexandria, 1094–96/7}

DK 230, f. 3

Formerly DK 230 h–j; DK XIX.

Nethanel b. Japheth¹ had informed his business friend Khiyār (b. Jacob)² in Alexandria that Ḥasan b. Bundār had responded to the *Rayyis* Mevōrākh and sent the proceeds from the sale of Nissīm’s camphor. The joy over these good tidings resulted in an extremely verbose letter by Amram.

Lines 1-verso, line 2. Thanks and praise for the Nagid Mevōrākh, whose letter to Ḥasan b. Bundār had achieved what numerous letters of Amram failed to accomplish. Congratulations on the birth of Mevōrākh’s younger son. It was proper to deliver such good wishes in person, but because of his financial troubles and sore eyes Amram should be excused for not traveling from Alexandria to Fustat. A girl born to Nethanel had died (it seems, at birth). As usual in such cases, the wish is expressed (twice) that she should be replaced by ‘male children,’ and concern is expressed for the health of the mother.³ The long passage concludes with a real encomium on Mevōrākh, who is extolled as a *mōshī’a*, or savior.

¹ See about him 183, n. 9. In Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:478, top, I characterized him as a nephew of the two Nagids Judah and Mevōrākh b. Saadya. This surmise was based on the facts that Judah and Mevōrākh had a brother named Japheth (see Mann, *Jews*, 2:250), and Mevōrākh had a son Nethanel; moreover, our Nethanel was regarded as influential with the viceroy al-Malik al-Afḍal (see Goitein, *ibid.*). Here we see that Mevōrākh asks him to act in his stead on behalf of Amram, and Amram mentions Mevōrākh and Nethanel as belonging together: “I pray for you (both) day and night and ask God to accept my prayer for you” (lines 31–32). {Also see Cohen, *Government*, 127. Goitein, *ibid.*, referred to our document but did not explain the identification of Nethanel as nephew of the two Nagids. The explanation provided here leads me to speculate whether at a preliminary stage of research the words ‘son of the brother of the late Nagid,’ which come below and to the right of Amram’s name in line 3 of the address in our letter, had been read as the continuation of the blessings after Nethanel’s name, which precede them on the same line.}

² For his full name see II, 9.

³ All this shows that Nethanel b. Japheth, Amram, and Mevōrākh were close relatives. See n. 1, above. {As I read the passage, it speaks of the birth and death of the Nagid’s child, who should be replaced with sons, and the birth of Nethanel’s daughter, which too should be followed by the birth of sons.}

Verso, lines 2–26. Quoting Nethanel’s letter, Amram writes:

He (Ḥasan b. Bundār) sold part of it (the camphor), as far as he saw necessary,⁴ bought for the remainder musk and ambergris,⁵ and sent this with the messengers⁶ bent (for Fustat). At its arrival you will forward it to me.

Should Abraham b. Jacob⁷ be in Fustat, he would take care of the forwarding of the expected shipment to Alexandria. Otherwise Nethanel is requested to inform Khiyār⁸ whether its sale in Fustat was preferable.

Reiterated praise of Mevōrākh and regards to everyone.

{See the introduction to II, 3, for the dating.}

⁴ Arabic *bā‘ ba‘dah yarāh wājib washtarā bil-baqīyya misk wa-‘anbar wa-annuh anfadhah ma‘ al-rusul al-wāsilīn*. I am not sure how the first four words, whose literal meaning is simple, should be interpreted. The term *wājib* is used for dues to the government. Ḥasan seems to say that a large part of the camphor’s price was expended on customs dues.

⁵ The perfume. {Ambergris was imported from India; see Watt, *Commercial Products*, 64, 555. It was also found in the part of the Indian Ocean along the east coast of Africa; see Ruska & Plessner, “*Anbar*”; Goitein, *Letters*, 223, n. 8. Its fragrance is similar to that of musk. For its medicinal uses, see Lev & Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 266.}

⁶ Not with Jewish or Muslim acquaintances, but with a (Muslim) transport service similar to the *fuyūj* in the Mediterranean area. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:283–84.}

⁷ No doubt, Abraham b. Jacob al-Der‘ī of Alexandria, whom we found in Fustat (see 215, n. 13), is meant.

⁸ See n. 2, above. It is interesting to observe that Amram did not expect to get an answer to his long letter with all the good wishes. He belonged to the family, but was of lower rank.

II, 7 *Letter from Amram b. Joseph to Nahray b. Nissīm*

{Alexandria, 1094–96/7}

TS 10 J 16, f. 2

Although this letter (28 lines; margin, top, 11 lines) was sent by Amram b. Joseph, Alexandria, to Nahray b. Nissīm, Fustat, it has nothing to do with Amram's brother-in-law and the camphor sent by him to Ḥasan b. Bundār. The letter is brought here because of a short passage (lines 23–25), in which Amram confirms to have delivered a quarter *mann* of camphor for Khiyār {ʿAllāl},¹ which the latter will give to the *Segullat*² to help him after he had suffered grave losses. Such a shipment was worth about 25 dinars.³

This shows that camphor could be easily sold in Alexandria;⁴ it was almost like cash. When Abu ʿl-Faraj Nissīm asked Ḥasan b. Bundār to sell his camphor in Aden and to send (goods bought for) its proceeds to Alexandria, he must have had special reasons, for instance, that the transport of such a high priced substance of small volume over the long route from Aden to Alexandria was hazardous.

{See the introduction to II, 3, for the dating.}

¹ See II, 6, n. 2, and II, 9. {Goitein's reference to Khiyār seems to be a slip. I find no mention of him in this document. In line 24, Amram writes that he gave the camphor to ʿAllāl, that is Nahray's cousin Abu ʿl-Ḥasan ʿAllāl b. Nahray.}

² Mūsā (Moses) b. Abu ʿl-Ḥayy, see II, 5, n. 1.

³ See 288, n. 4.

⁴ {The *Segullat* must have been in Fustat at this time.}

II, 8 *Power of Attorney to Peraḥyā ha-Kohen to Recover in India Goods
Entrusted to Abu 'l-Faraj Niṣṣīm al-Raqqī*

{Fustat, early 1090's}

TS 12.19

Since the beginning of the document is lost, the full names of the parties have not been preserved. Abu 'l-Faraj Niṣṣīm al-Raqqī is no doubt identical with his namesake, whose connection with Ḥasan b. Bundār of Aden forms the topic of II, 2–6.¹ A Kohen family with the name Peraḥyā is known to me only from the Egyptian town Malīj, where a Peraḥyā I b. Ṭarfōn (which is Greek Tryphon) was the head of the Jewish congregation there in 1104,² and one, Peraḥyā II b. Aaron, most likely his grandson, held the same position in Dec. 1148/Jan. 1149.³

A court record, written and signed by Peraḥyā I, shows him expert in drawing up legal documents and possessed of a beautiful hand.⁴ Such a man was needed in foreign parts, where merchants all the time had to make out bills of lading, acquittances, and contracts of great variety. On Italian merchant ships, a learned cleric was available for such purposes. The small companies of Jewish traders who traveled together could not afford such a luxury. One or several of them had to be trained in law and able to draw up the documents required. Our Peraḥyā I certainly dabbled also in business (and continued to do so after his appointment in Malīj). When our document says (line 2) “I have appointed him for me as attorney that he should travel to *diyār al-Hind* and sue Mr. Niṣṣīm, etc.,” this should not be understood that this was Peraḥyā’s sole mission. He had other errands to do, both for others and for himself.

This is proven also by the limited number of goods concerned, headed by a dozen *ḥullas*, gala costumes, described as *farsh* (or *furush*) *al-khalīfā*, ‘textiles (fit) for a caliph.’ The highest price for a *ḥulla* mentioned in the Geniza (as from hearsay) was 60 dinars, and one was actually

¹ See 288, n. 2.

² TS 24.74, a huge document in the hand of the Cairo judge Abraham b. Nathan Āv about a brawl in Malīj; see Shaked, *Bibliography*, 78 (where 1044 is a misprint for 1104).

³ SPIOs D 55, f. 11. He had advanced to the rare title ‘Distinguished Fellow (of the Yeshiva).’ In Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 5, he seems to head the congregation in Minyat Ashnā (Jan. 1151). About the inheritance of office in Islamic and Jewish societies, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:319–20.

⁴ TS 8J 11, f. 15, a complicated case; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:113–14. However, TS C 7, f. 1a: *ne’etaq* (Hebrew) does not mean that Peraḥyā I copied that volume of Hebrew poetry, but that he acquired it. Mann, *Jews*, 2:169, n. 1, is to be changed accordingly.

ordered for 20 dinars.⁵ As an item in the outfit of a bride we find one worth 50 dinars, one for 20, and several others for 15 dinars.⁶ Joseph Lebdi sold 30 *hullas* for 500 dinars in Fustat, which would presuppose a retail price of 17–18 dinars.⁷ Among the goods entrusted to Nissīm there were also two *hullas sha'ri*, of goat's hair, and an undefined amount of *zaybaq*, or mercury, a common item of export to India. Only the first name, Ḥasan, of the appointer is preserved, which is, of course, not helpful for identifying him.

Besides the details just provided, the lengthy document consists solely of legal verbiage in the usual mixture of Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic. One detail deserves attention. In numerous such powers of attorney, the appointee receives the right to bring the party sued before a non-Jewish court. This permit is missing here, probably because the rabbinical court in Fustat had insufficient experience with the judiciary in India. The document was written and signed by the banker and judge, Abraham son of Isaac the Scholar, one of the most experienced Jewish men of affairs at that time.⁸

⁵ See page 178, n. 24.

⁶ Fifty dinars: TS J 1, f. 29, col. II, lines 2–3, ed. Goitein, “Three Trousseaux,” 94 {*id.*, *Med. Soc.*, 4:323}; 20 d.: Bodl. MS Heb. d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 48, col. I, line 20, ed. *ibid.*, col. I, line 20 {I, 36; *id.*, *Med. Soc.*, 4:320}; 15 d.: *ibid.*, col. I, line 21 {the last two deal not with a *hulla* but with a *khil'a*}; TS 20.7, line 8; TS 24.9, line 23, Brides from less well-to-do families had to be content with a *hulla* worth 3–6 dinars.

⁷ No. I, 22, line 25.

⁸ See about him Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:238–39, and Index; 2:512, sec. 10. {See also the indexes *ibid.*, 6:2, and Friedman, *Polygyny*, 357.} Abraham distances his signature from the text by four small circles, each with a diameter of about 2 mm. For such symbols that separate the signature from the text, see the notes to the end of I, 1–2; I, 3*v*, line 13. None of the other three signatories has a distinguished handwriting. One, Moses b. Mordecai ha-Kohen, entered a partnership to which he contributed 50 dinars and his partner 80, TS NS 320, f. 22 + ULC Or. 1080 J 121 (two fragments belonging together).

II, 9 *Letter from Khīyār b. Jacob to Nethanel b. Japheth re Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm*

{Alexandria, late eleventh century}

Mosseri II, 160 (L 161)

In a postscript to a letter addressed to his business friend Nethanel b. Japheth,¹ called here by his Arabic name Abu 'l-Mufaḍḍal [Hiba]t Allah b. Ḥusayn, Khīyār b. Jacob² writes:

My lord, kindly let me know what you have heard from Faraj ('Relief') about Sheikh Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm; he (Faraj) is coming back after having been with him {alt. tr.: ... from Faraj, //(that is) about Sheikh Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm// he is coming back from him}³ (Nissīm) and others in India. Perhaps from him or others arriving [you might hear].⁴ Inform me about this in your letter.⁵ *And peace.*

Khīyār's quest clearly was general, and not confined to Amram b. Joseph and his camphor. No. II, 8 has shown that besides him there were others troubled by Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm's disappearance in India.

¹ See about him 297, n. 1.

² Khīyār was Nethanel's regular correspondent in Alexandria; see II, 6.

³ Faraj was probably a freedman, cf. Goitein, *Letters*, 82–84. For a man born free with this name I have only one example: Saadya b. Isaac, known as Faraj b. Abu 'Amr, a poor man, who wished to marry an equally poor orphan, for which he needed help—hardly an India traveler. {For the alternative translation, note that the honorific Abu 'l-X is often shortened to X, e.g., Abu 'l-Surūr is called Surūr in II, 14, line 36; II, 24, line 11; II26v, line 8; III, 41, lines 23, 32.}

⁴ Here the manuscript is torn and about three words are missing. I guess: *la'alla minhu [aw min wāsilim] ghayrih.*

⁵ Unlike Amram (see II, 6, n. 8, above), Khīyār expected to receive letters from Nethanel regularly (possibly with the weekly Cairo-Alexandria mail service; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:287).

II, 10 *Memorandum to Traveler Carrying Indian Goods to Isaac b. Bundār*

India, ca. 1110

TS 8.27

A piece of cloth,¹ truncated on top, bottom, and the left side. The ends of the lines are lost (approximately three words in each line), but the upper section, as the first partially visible line shows, contained only the salutation with the usual good wishes, and the last line, of which only the tops of a few letters are recognizable, introduces a topic different from the list of goods, which forms the object of this memorandum.² The script is exceptionally handsome and regular. Verso contains the address, first Arabic in Hebrew letters (only one line preserved), then in Arabic letters. Here, of course, the *beginnings* of the lines are lost.

I prefer to comment on this interesting piece after its translation.

Translation

(1) [...] {add: after your departure.}³ May God bring us together soon in well-being and h[ealth!...] (2) Take notice—may God keep you alive!—that I sent with you nine items, namely [lac, ...] (3) textiles,⁴ *fūtas*, and a bale of spikenard.⁵ Of the lac, one and a half bales are for ‘Alī [and the...] (4) for Fahd.⁶ Of the textiles, one bale for Yaḥyā, and one for Ibrahīm and Ishāq⁷ [... In the bale of] (5) *fūtas* are nine *thawbs* (robes) for Fahd and ‘Alī. One fourth of this is for Fahd. Of the textiles [... so-and-so

¹ {Paper was scarce in India, and sometimes cloth was used there for writing material. See above, page 61.

² Since nothing is legible from this line, I am not sure on what basis Goitein decided that it dealt with another topic.

³ Arabic *ba‘da khurūjika* (not copied by Goitein). For *khurūj* (*kharaj*) for leaving India and setting out for the homeward journey to the West, see page 372, n. 4.

⁴ Arabic *bazz*.

⁵ Arabic *sunbul*.

⁶ The name Fahd (cheetah, ‘hunting leopard’) was not unknown among Jews. The fledgling cantor in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:220, n. 3 (1040), was called thus (see Goitein, *Education*, 140–42), and so was a *wakīl tujjār* in 1103 (id., *Med. Soc.*, 1:446, n. 14) and an emigrant from the Delta town Ṣahrajt to Byzantium in 1137 (id., Goitein, “Letter from Seleucia,” 301). Several other examples could be provided. Our Fahd here (see also lines 5 and 7) is probably identical with the one found in India in VII, 56v, lines 2–4, who is described there in less than laudatory terms.

⁷ Abraham and Isaac, the brothers of Ḥasan b. Bundār; see line 7 and the address on verso.

many] (6) *thawbs* (robes) are for Yaḥyā, out of the *thawbs* (robes) {alt. tr.: of average apparel}.⁸ There are five *kawrajas* (twenties) and two *dasts* (dozens)⁹ of *fūṭas*. [Of these such-and-such are] (7) for you, one *kawraja* for Fahd, and two *kawrajas* and two *dasts* for Ishāq and Ibrāhim [and one-half of . . .] (8) too. The other half is for you and Yaḥyā, namely // for Yaḥyā// one-sixth. I sent with you also [. . .] (9) 3¼ *kawrajas* of shoes, one *kawraja* and three pairs [for . . . and . . .] (10) for Ya'qūb,¹⁰ one-quarter *kawraja* for the boy of Ib[rāhīm]¹¹ and one pair¹² for Abū [. . .] (11) and of the two pairs of small size one is for Abu 'l-Faḥ and the other for [. . .]

[Address]

[In Hebrew letters] (1) (To) [. . . May God lengthen] his life! To Aden, God willing.

[In Arabic letters] (1) [(To) . . . Mub]ārak b. Sahl, the Israelite. (2) [May God lengthen his life] and make his honored position permanent!

⁸ {Arabic *thawb* can designate, among other things, the standard 'robe' or one of twenty *fūṭas*. Here the latter is intended; see above, 170, n. 13; 179, n. 30. 'Out of the *thawbs* (robes)' translates *min wasaṭ al-thiyāb*. *Wasaṭ* can mean here 'average'; cf., e.g., II, 46, line 41; II, 48*v*, line 9. The documents in this book suggest that the two plurals of *thawb* were not used interchangeably. *Athwāb* refers to specific items, and *thiyāb* is more a general term for clothing or apparel (but see 422, n. 28); cf. Wehr, *Dictionary*, 108. I have attempted to indicate this in the translation.}

⁹ Arabic *dast* designates a number of objects of the same description. The word is once specified in these papers, II, 34, side c, line 6 (in connection with Chinese cups), as a set of six, and once, III, 9, line 24 (referring to paper) as a set of twelve. Paper was also sent in single sheets, as in III, 5, line 15, where fifteen sheets of large Ṭalhī paper are mentioned. In contemporary Egyptian and Yemenite Arabic, *dasta* is 'a dozen,' which in Yemen, when connected to a following word, is shortened to *dast*, e.g., *dast shama* 'a dozen candles.' The same word in Modern Egyptian designates 'a quire of paper'; cf. Spiro, *Dictionary*, 173a, and Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:441a; according to Barthélemy, *Dialectes*, 239, *dast* is "a set of 400 leaves of paper," which does not, of course, apply here. {*Dast* is derived from Persian; cf. Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 519: "anything complete; (in India) the actual collections (as opposed to *sist*, the assessment)." The wording in II, 34 and III, 9, 'numbering . . .,' suggests that the quantity that made up a *dast* of particular items was not always fixed or universally known. The Yemenite usage is not listed in Pimenta, *Dictionary*, 150.}

¹⁰ Although the name Ya'qūb (Jacob) is, of course, common, it is very likely that here the brother-in-law of Abraham and Isaac b. Bundār, the father of Maḥrūz b. Jacob (see page 48) is meant.

¹¹ This is Joseph b. Abraham (II, sec. F), who, as a teenager, was initiated into business by handling {the sale of} five pairs of shoes.

¹² This and the following were gifts or special orders.

(1) (From) His friend Yūsuf (Joseph) b. Masʿūd, the Israelite. (2) To be delivered to Aden—may God keep it prosperous!—to the store of Sheikh Ishāq b. Bundār.

Comments

In addition to the memorandum given to the carrier of the goods himself, as a matter of precaution, one or more lists of the goods were sent from India to Aden, his destination. Ḥasan b. Bundār probably was dead at the writing of this letter, which was therefore addressed to the store of his brother Isaac. Ḥasan's sons, Bundār and Maḍmūn, must have been too young at that time for the role of a representative of the merchants. The memorandum was sent around 1110.

It is remarkable that in the body of the memorandum all persons are mentioned by their first name only. This seems to have been an Iraqi custom, and the writer might well have originated in the Land of the Two Rivers.¹³ The very detailed assignment of the goods to eight different persons is also somewhat uncommon. Usually, because of the fluctuation of the prices and other circumstances, the overseas traders were granted more latitude. Specified orders must have been sent to Ibn Masʿūd while already in India (and reporting from there prices, etc.), similar to those received by Joseph Lebdi from the Ibn Bundār brothers, while in Gujarāt (I, 14, lines 12–21). Since besides spikenard and shoes, lac and textiles formed the bulk of the shipments, this letter, too, probably was sent from that Indian country.

¹³ See VI, 48 {a letter by Iraqis in which first names only are used}. Since the name Masʿūd was not common, the sender Joseph b. Masʿūd might be identical with Ibn Masʿūd, mentioned as traveling from Fustat to *diyār al-Yemen* in VII, 12, line 7, and decried as a hard customer in a letter from Alexandria, Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 23, line 13. The name of the recipient, [Mub]ārak b. Sahl—if the reading is correct—has not yet been found elsewhere.

II, 11a *Letter of Thanks from Ḥalfon b. Manasseh to Abraham b. Bundār*

Fustat, early twelfth century

TS 13 J 25, f. 6

This letter of seventy long lines, introduced by a Hebrew poem of ten stanzas,¹ a Hebrew rhymed address, lines 12–18, and then continued in choice Arabic, interspersed with rare biblical quotations, is not without historical interest.

We learn that already Bundār and his wife had been renowned (in Fustat, of course) for their generosity (lines 20–23), which means that close relations between the Adenese and Fustat Jewish communities had already existed in Bundār's time, although we know nothing about his commercial activities. Both Abraham and his elder brother Ḥasan b. Bundār bore Hebrew honorific titles common in Egypt, certainly conferred upon them by Mevōrākh, the Head of the Jews of the Fatimid Empire, or his son and successor Moses.² It seems that Abraham had received an honorary title also from an Iraqi Jewish divine. His nephew Maḡmūn b. Ḥasan was later honored in the same way by the two competing Jewish authorities.³

At the writing of this letter Abraham b. Bundār was already the father of several sons (lines 16, 26, verso, line 21), of whom Joseph b. Abraham (chap. 2, sec. F) was the most prominent. It is noteworthy that Abraham is praised, not only for his generosity, but also as being adorned with three crowns: that of communal leader,⁴ calligrapher,⁵ and learned

¹ Lines 2–11. The poem has the form known by the Arabic term *muwashshah* (aaaa bbba ccca).

² Abraham bore the title *zeqan ha-qehillōt*, 'Senior of the Congregations,' line 16, which is also found in the note on the top of the reverse side: "Copy of my second letter of thanks sent to Sheikh Abraham, *Senior of the Congregations—may [the Merciful] protect him!*" The first letter was an acknowledgment of the gift, this one thanks for the learned reply of Abraham, written in his own hand. Our manuscript, as the many corrections show, was the draft of the letter, or, because of the careful script, a first attempt to write it.

³ Hebrew *rōsh ha-allūfīm*, 'Head of the Fellows' (line 16), namely of the yeshivas of Baghdad; the biblical *allūf*, 'companion, confidant,' was a common 'Babylonian' (Iraqi) title. Cf. Mann, *Jews*, 1:278. (In modern Hebrew *allūf* means brigadier general.) {Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:22, 199, renders *allūf* 'distinguished member of the Babylonian yeshiva'; cf. Gil, *Ishmael*, 1:127.}

⁴ Hebrew *zīqnā*, 'seniority'; see n. 2, above.

⁵ Hebrew *lawlar(ūt)*, the 'Babylonian' (Iraqi) form of Palestinian *livlar*, which is Latin *libellarius*, see Krauss, *Lehnwörter*, 2:303. The term comprises not only the beauty of the script, but also the refinement of the style.

man, not only in religious lore,⁶ but also in the ‘preparatory sciences,’ meaning arithmetic and cognate subjects, and ‘philosophic topics.’⁷ We are here in Fatimid times and territory; the prosperous Adenese merchant might well have had a copy of the Isma‘īlī encyclopaedia *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’*, ‘The Sincere Brothers,’ or some volumes of it, in his library.⁸

Presents to religious scholars (and the writer of our letter, Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh, certainly was one) were common practice, as is richly attested to also in this book.⁹ Such gifts, as is emphasized here, verso, line 5, and in numerous other letters, replaced the offerings to God in the Temple of Jerusalem, obligatory for every believer. The gift referred to here was due to special circumstances. Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh was afflicted by a dangerous and protracted illness, and hopes for his recovery had already been lost. He did recover, but despite the helpfulness of the community and the devoted care of the physicians, he was forced to sell everything in the house, including his Sabbath clothing, and to incur debts to the amount of 12 dinars. Then there arrived the gift of Abraham b. Bundār and of the ‘Leader of the Congregations’ {*Sar ha-Qehillōt*}, which could refer to Ḥasan b. Bundār or his son Bundār II, who inherited his father’s title (II, 11b) {or Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan (II, 36, lines 13–14, 21)}. Each had sent three bolts of Indian red silk (which were sold in Fustat for 6 dinars),¹⁰ on which something over

⁶ Hebrew *tōrā*, which does not mean here Pentateuch, but all aspects of Jewish law and learning.

⁷ Arabic *al-‘ulūm al-riyāḍiyya wal-ma‘ānī al-falsafiyya*.

⁸ The twelfth century Yemenite Jewish theologian Nethanel b. Fayyūmī (without the article, not: *al-Fayyūmī*; see page 349, n. 78), as Solomon Pines has shown, used *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* (see Marquet, “*Ikhwān*”) and cognate Isma‘īlī literature copiously; see Talmage, “Nethanel,” and Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, 145. A Geniza booklist notes *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* as present in a Jewish library. {See Allony, *Library*, 22, 353. On Isma‘īlī influence on Yemenite Jewry, see also Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 94 ff., and the literature cited there.

⁹ See the discussion in pages 43–46.

¹⁰ Arabic *shuqaq lānas*. The words here placed in parenthesis are crossed out (line 39). Ḥalfon deleted them because he was sure that Abraham knew at which price those textiles were sold in Fustat at that time. The silk was brought to Fustat by Abu ‘l-Surūr b. Binyām, the co-proprietor of the Lebdi house (see 271, n. 2) [and Sitt al-Ahl d. Joseph Lebdi’s betrothed (I, 34b)]. The bearer of Abraham’s letter was one Abū ‘Amr, verso, line 6. The abbreviated way in which this man is mentioned indicates that he was a regular traveler on the Aden-Fustat route. This silk material is also sent from Aden to Egyptian Jewish religious dignitaries in II, 34, side c, lines 4 [there ‘made in Kūlam’ India], 9, side d, line 6, where it is called *lālas*, a spelling found in other documents. The form *lānas* occurs here and in II, 56, line 16 [and II, 61, line 54]. The original is undoubtedly *lālas*, since *lāl* means ‘red’ in Sanskrit, and *lālas* is defined by Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 1113: ‘a kind of red silken stuff of a delicate texture.’ {These remarks are taken from the

1 dinar *wājīb*, or customs duties, had to be paid. This enabled Ḥalfon to pay off his most pressing debts. Naturally, he refrained from making any requests. But when, before the next holidays, Abraham b. Bundār would draw up his list of beneficiaries, he would certainly pay attention to the circumstances to which Ḥalfon had alluded.

At the end of his long letter Ḥalfon apologizes for writing so little. As one of his excuses he notes that in view of “the incessant flood”¹¹ of letters reaching the Adenese notables from Fustat he refrained from imposing on Abraham.¹²

Hebrew edition of the India Book. For *lālas/lānas* silk, see further Goitein, *Letters*, 68–70; id., *Med. Soc.*, 1:454, n. 53. Diem, *Dictionary*, 194, n. 208, wonders whether *lālas* and *lānas* might be variants of the same word, as noted by Goitein here.}

¹¹ Arabic *al-lajaj al-mutawātir*. Verso, lines 16–17.

¹² {A gift to Ḥalfon is mentioned in II, 43, line 17, and II, 53 is a letter of thanks by him for another gift. I have translated a large section of II, 11a above, pages 44–45.}

II, 11b *The Honorary Titles in the Bundār Family of Aden*

Fustat, ca. 1120

ENA 2728, f. 2

This is the second item on verso. Recto is a fragment of an agreement between a Rabbanite man and his Karaite wife.

In the left upper corner of an only partially preserved piece of waste paper (12 × 16 cm.), Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh jotted down the titles of the members of the Bundār family in Aden (ca. 1120). VIPs were much offended when they were not addressed by their proper titles.¹

Translation

- (1) Bundār [II], Leader of the Congregations, son of Japheth,²
L[eaders, etc....]
- (2) and [[his father-in-law {alt. tr.: sons}]] //his uncles, // Abraham,
Leader of the Congregations [...]
- (3) and his brother Isaac, Benefactor of the Congregations, [...]
- (4) and his son Khalaf, Delight of the Congrega[tions....]

Bundār II, as occurred elsewhere, was honored with his father's title. He was married, as was usual practice, to a cousin, the daughter of his uncle Abraham b. Bundār. But Ḥalfon deleted this detail, since there was no need for such an intimate matter to be referred or alluded to in his correspondence.³

In II, 11a, Abraham is called twice Senior. He advanced to the title *sar*, Leader, Prince, on a special occasion (e.g., when his daughter married his nephew who bore that title).⁴ For Isaac's son Khalaf, see chap. 2, sec. G. In the space lost in line 2, probably Joseph b. Abraham (chap. 2, sec. F) was noted.

¹ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:623, s.v. Honorific titles. {Jewish authorities awarded the titles listed here. The Jews followed the practice common among the Arabs concerning honorific titles. For these, see Bosworth, "Alqāb."}

² = Ḥasan.

³ This case should have been noted in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:27–29. {In my opinion, the last sentence and accompanying note result from an erroneous reading. For *המאור* (*ḥamāhū*, an irregular form for *ḥamūhū*), 'his father-in-law,' the deleted word in line 2, reads *המורדי* (*ḥamūdāw*), 'his sons,' which usually appears in genealogies, but was an error here. It was crossed out and corrected with the supralinear addition of 'his paternal uncles,' in both Arabic and Hebrew.

⁴ See the clarification added to the previous note.}

II, 12 *Letter from Bundār II b. Ḥasan to ‘Allān b. Ḥassūn*

Aden, ca. 1100

AIU VII E 35

This unusually short letter shows that Bundār was as slow in making payments as his father or, for that matter, his contemporaries in general.¹ To be reminded of a debt was almost an insult; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:204–5, 258–59, and *passim*. For the recipient, ‘Allān b. Ḥassūn, see VI, 11–15.² At the time of the writing of this letter Bundār II’s father was still alive.

After eight lines of extremely polite verbiage, the writer continues:

Translation

(9) Take notice that I have paid the 90 dinars (10), which I had owed, to their owner, and witnesses have signed the (11) receipt. Take notice of this. There was no (12) need to alert me to expedite (13) making this payment. {Alt. tr.: Inform me of any need you have, so that I can take care of it expeditiously.}³ (13–14) Regards.

[Address]

(1) (To) his excellency, my lord, the illustrious Sheikh Abu ‘l-Ḥasan (2) ‘Allān b. Ḥassūn—*may he rest in Eden!*—(3) may God make his honored position permanent!

(1) (From) His servant, (2) Bundār b. al-Ḥasan b. (3) Bundār, *may he rest in Eden!*

The blank space on both sides of this and countless other letters of the Geniza is covered with carelessly written notes and accounts, which have no relation to the content of the letter.

¹ {But see the alternative translation below.

² Cf. VII, 70; Goitein, “Portrait.” See on this document, above, 126–28.

³ Arabic *wa-mā kāna labu min ḥāja yu‘limuni bihā li-usāri‘ ilā qadā‘ihā*. For the translation that I have suggested, see, e.g., II, 16*v*, lines 33–34.}

II, B. *Business Letters Sent by Maḏmūn b. Ḥasan to India*II, 13–15 *Letter from Maḏmūn b. Ḥasan to Abraham Ben Yījū:
Three Fragments of Two Copies*

Aden, ca. 1130's

13. TS 6J 4, f. 14
14. TS 18J 2, f. 7
15. TS 12.416

Ed. Goitein, "From Aden," 43–56; Goitein, *Yemenites*, 93–99.

Together, II, 13 and 14 form one complete letter. Line 5 of II, 13 is identical with the first line of II, 14, but the paper was torn in such a way that the first five words of line 5 are in II, 14, while the last word in the line is on the lower left hand corner of II, 13. The length of the page is 7.8 + 36 cm. = 43.8 cm., its width 10.3 cm. The paper is light gray and of medium thickness. It is well preserved, except that the ink on the opposite side can be seen through the paper in places.

No. II, 15 is written on paper of exactly the same type and dimensions. Only the lower half of this copy has been preserved, approximately 22 cm., corresponding to II, 14, lines 18–37, and verso, lines 1–18 (to the word *kt'by*, 'my letter,' i.e. only two words are missing here).

Nos. II, 13–14 recto were written by the clerk who also wrote II, 15, i.e., he made at least two copies of this letter.¹ This same scribe also wrote II, 16, 24, 25, and 26, and the postscripts in the margins of II, 32. However, the postscript on the verso of II, 14 was written by another hand, the same hand that wrote the postscript to II, 24 in a very cursive style. It stands to reason, therefore, that this was the hand of the sender, Maḏmūn, himself. The same handwriting is found in II, 17, 23, 32, 33–34.

The recto of II, 13–14 is written in a very ornate style in such a way that the sheet is filled exactly. It is thus clear that it was copied from an original which Maḏmūn himself had written. The question then arises, why Maḏmūn added the postscript on the verso of his scribe's copy, and not on the original itself. The answer is that the calligraphic copy served as the official text of the letter, while the draft was sent in another boat as a replacement in the case that the official text was lost.

The recipient of the letter, Abraham Ben Yījū, was residing on the Malabar Coast of India. It is surprising that he kept two copies of it during all the years he lived in India and did not dispose of them until he came to Cairo.²

¹ {For sending multiple copies of letters or accounts, see page 9, n. 23.

² For Goitein's remarks on this question, see further page 61.}

{Etiquette often required expressing in the beginning of such a letter longing for the recipient and wishes for reuniting with him, and Maḍmūn's letter to Ben Yijū (with hopes for reuniting) is no exception. The expression of longing to other business associates to whom the recipient was requested to send regards or instructions for transactions was not commonplace, however. The longing for his Hindu business associates, which Maḍmūn includes in his postscript (II, 14*v*, lines 1–3) is especially noteworthy and reflects the close relationship of mutual trust and friendship with them.}

Translation

[A. Acknowledgment of Ben Yijū's letter and shipment]

[II, 13] (1) *Your hands shall prevail over your foes, and all your enemies shall be cut down.*³ (2) *To our esteemed master and lord Abraham—may God remember him favorably!* {alt. tr.: *may he be remembered for a blessing*}⁴—*the son of his honor, great and holy master and lord* (3) *Yijū—may he rest in Eden!*—(from) *your friend*⁵ *Maḍmūn, the son of Hasan*⁶—*may he rest in Eden!*

(4) The letter of my lord, the most illustrious elder, arrived; I read [II, 14 (1)] and understood it, and I was happy to learn that you were well [II, 13 (5)] and your affairs [II, 14 (2)] in order, for which I thanked God very much (3) and asked Him to give you more of every good thing. May God unite (4) us under the most joyful circumstances, and in the best of (5) spirits, for he controls this and is able to accomplish it, (6) God willing!

³ Mic. 5:8; where the Massoretic text reads 'your hand' in the singular. This biblical verse and similar ones, are found at the beginning of other letters from that period. This replaces Arabic *wa-kabata a'dāhu*, 'may He crush your enemies!,' usually said at the beginning of letters.

⁴ The abbreviation *z'l* is generally known as a blessing for the dead. In Yemenite usage, however, these letters stand for *zākhūr letōv[ā]* and are {also} used as a blessing for the living. {Where the blessing appears without the abbreviation in this book, its form is *zākhūr li-vrākḥā*, literally, 'may he be remembered/mentioned for a blessing!' So in II, 63, line 19; II, 71*v*, line 31. For *z'l* as a blessing for the living in Yemenite usage and elsewhere, see Friedman, "Dispute," 168–69, n. 139, and the literature cited there. For the blessing *yizzākhēr be-tōvā*, see below, 682, n. 15.}

⁵ *ḥbk* spelled, both here and in the Hebrew address, without *w* [similarly in other documents, e.g., in II, 25], as often in the Bible, for example, 1 Kings 5:15, Isa. 41:8, Prov. 18:24, Esther 5:10, 14.

⁶ In the Arabic address with the article (al-Ḥasan), but *without* the article again in the address in Hebrew script, II, 14*v*.

From what you mentioned, (7) my lord, I learned that you had sent the two locks⁷ and the two thousand (8) white and red betel nuts.⁸ I have already (9) received this, and I thank you for attending (10) to it.

[B. List of gifts sent to Ben Yijū with ‘Abd al-Masḥ, the deacon]

I have sent you (11) with ‘Abd al-Masḥ, the deacon,⁹ a bundle of (12) Berbera mats,¹⁰ six in number. (13) We wrapped them in canvas and your name is written (14) on it in Arabic and Hebrew.¹¹ (15) With him, I have also sent you (a gift) from (16) me: a new, first-rate, raw Dabīqī

⁷ Arabic *quflayn*. Similarly, in II, 16*v*, line 28, Maḍmūn thanks Ben Yijū for four locks that he sent from India. These were either made of bronze, as is still the case in southwest India (see *Census of India* [28], 446) or of iron and most probably of the same particular type still in use in Yemen (see the picture in *Hadramout*, opposite page 85; Rathjens, *Architecture*, 26 and plate x, photo. 17; and Brauer, *Ethnologie*, 68). From many letters in this book, we learn that iron was imported from India. Here, we have a product of the Indian iron industry going westward. {Locks (*qufl*, pl. *aqfal*) in Egypt and in Yemen used to be made of wood—they still are in Yemen. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:109, 421, n. 61, 4:61 (for wooden locks from Yemen in a museum collection, see Tobi, “Šubayrī Collection,” 269). For tying doors shut in Yemen, see III, 33, line 18. The locks from India, presumably made of iron (or bronze), were obviously considered a specialty item in Yemen at that time. Additional examples for importing them there are given in the next note. According to III, 24, line 11, when Ben Yijū left India for Yemen his baggage included a basket of locks.}

⁸ Arabic *fawfal*, a common Indian export commodity. See II, 16*v*, lines 23–27, and the note to II, 24, line 29. {For *fawfal*, one can also spell *fūfal*, *fūful*. For the export of Indian areca nuts, see Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, 157–59. For a description of the benefits of the *fawfal* leaf, which also served as an aphrodisiac, see Major, *India* (“Narrative of the Journey of Abd-er-Razzak”), 32: “Thus they take as many as four leaves of betel at a time, and chew them. Sometimes they add camphor... This substance gives a colour to and brightens the countenance, causes an intoxication similar to that produced by wine, appeases hunger, and excites appetite in those who are satiated; it removes the disagreeable smell from the mouth, and strengthens the teeth. It is impossible to express how strengthening it is, and how much it excites pleasure...” Cf. Linschoten, *Voyage*, 2:62–68; Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 100. In III, 18C, lines 9, 11, Ben Yijū credits a supplier for the purchase of locks and two thousand betel nuts, the same two items, which appear here; perhaps they were purchased for shipment to Maḍmūn. But Ben Yijū also sent two locks and betel nuts to Khalaf b. Isaac; see III, 16, line 15.}

⁹ Arabic *shammās*. Just as Jewish rabbis and Muslim qadis dabbled in trade, so did ecclesiastical officers of the Christian Church—here probably the Syrian Church of India. While traveling from Aden to India, he acted as an agent for two Jews. {He could have been from Egypt or elsewhere in the Mediterranean, like most of the Jewish traders.}

¹⁰ Mats that were brought to Aden from the African port of Berbera. The same gift was also sent in II, 21, line 46 {cf. II, 16*v*, line 6}.

¹¹ As the two addresses in this letter demonstrate, the terms ‘Arabic’ and ‘Hebrew’ refer not only to the script, but to the language as well.

scarf, (17) which has a pretty band¹² on each side (18) and is fit to be worn by prominent men. Also (sent) with him (19) are two *dasts* of fine, large paper¹³ (20) government paper, the like of which (21) no one has. In addition, (I sent) with him two *rubā'yyas*¹⁴ of (22) sugar and raisins. See that you receive from him (23) all this.

[C. Acknowledgment of receipt of a shipment sent by Ben Yijū to the merchant Abu 'l-Khayr and business dealings of the latter]

Everything you had sent (24) to Abu 'l-Khayr¹⁵ has arrived, and he has taken delivery of all of it. (25) He bought Egyptian linen and went up into the (26) highlands.¹⁶ He requested me to ask you to look after his interests (27) by sending his remaining (28) iron and cardamom and the entire balance to his credit. (29) Send him all this on the first boat (30) which sails from India.

¹² Arabic *silsila*. This word, which usually means 'chain,' also has the sense of 'collar'; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:673 b, and it seems that it refers here to some kind of decorated fringes.

¹³ A *dast* was a certain quantity that made a set of a particular item; cf. page 304, n. 9. The sending of paper as gifts or merchandise to India is mentioned very frequently in our documents {since it was not to be found there; see page 61}.

¹⁴ According to Grohmann, *Südarabien*, 2:98, who relies on E. Glaser and other 19th-century travelers in South Arabia, the *rubā'ī* has four *tumānī* of 2.387 kg., which would make 9.448 kg. In San'ā, the capital of Yemen, I was informed that the *rubā'ī* is one-eighth of a *qadah*. The Yemenite *qadah*. (cf. al-Wāsi'ī, *Tārīkh*, 200, 1. 4) is the equivalent of two modern oil tins. {Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, I, 173 (a dry measure).} This too would give the *rubā'ī* a weight of about 10 kg. {In the India Book papers it is clear that the form *rubā'īyya* is used exclusively as a measure of weight or a dry measure, as here for sugar and raisins (similarly in II, 24, lines 8–9; II, 26*v*, line 11; III, 1, line 10; III, 2, margin, line 2), almonds (III, 2, margin, line 2; III, 9, line 25) and soap (II, 20*v*, line 13; III, 2, margin, line 2; III, 9, line 25 [in III, 1, 2, 9, spelled *rubā'īyya*, with short *a*]) and *rubā'ī* for the Sicilian quarter dinar (III, 30*a*, lines 5, 7, 11, 12; III, 43, line 7; III, 49, line 42; III, 57, line 15). Elsewhere, *rubā'īyya* is used also for the Sicilian quarter dinar; see, e.g., Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:865, lines 12–14.}

¹⁵ This name occurs frequently in our documents. Perhaps he is to be identified with Abu 'l-Khayr al-Barqī, II, 24, line 6; II, 32, margin, lines 7–8. {In II, 24, lines 6–8, also written by Maḍmūn to Ben Yijū, Abu 'l-Khayr is mentioned without 'al-Barqī.' Maḍmūn wrote II, 32, to Abū Zikrī Kohen in Fustat; and Abu 'l-Khayr al-Barqī mentioned there is likely to have been another individual. The only other Abu 'l-Khayr mentioned in Ben Yijū's India papers is his cousin, Abu 'l-Khayr Ibn al-Mīnqār (III, 18, sec. E, lines 3–4, 7, not fully deciphered by Goitein), and he may have been intended here in II, 14 and in II, 24. Abu 'l-Khayr Ṣedaqā was a member of Ben Yijū's synagogue in Egypt in 1156, after his return from the East: III, 51, line 6. See further page 69.}

¹⁶ To the highlands of central Yemen.

[D. The market for iron in Aden]

As for iron, this (31) year it sold (well) in Aden—all (32) kinds of iron¹⁷—and in the coming year (33) there will also be a good market, because (34) there is none at all left in the city. (35) Please take notice of this.

[E. Greetings]

Please accept for yourself best (36) wishes, and for your son Surūr and for Bama,¹⁸ (37) the most profuse greetings. *And peace.*

[F. Postscript: (1) Request to ask three Indian acquaintances, two Hindus and one Muslim or Jew, to send pepper and iron from Mangalore, and coconuts, etc., from Diū (Maldives)]

[Verso (in MaḌmūn's hand)] (1) Please give Sūs Sītī and Kinbātī {read: Kinābtī}¹⁹ [[and Ishā...]] (2) and Ishāq the Bānyān²⁰ my best regards,

¹⁷ Five different types of iron are mentioned in these documents. {In a later note in his files, Goitein listed six types of iron mentioned in the corpus, given here with a reference to the first appearance: *bayḍ*, 'eggs' (ingots: II, 16*v*, line 20), *muhḍath*, 'refurbished' (II, 14*v*, line 5), *rasmī*, 'regular,' 'standard' (II, 31, line 7), *raqṣ*, 'shiny' (II, 14*v*, line 7), *Kūfi* (III, 9, line 12), *amlas*, 'smooth' (III, 10, line 27).}

¹⁸ The Arabic name Surūr corresponds to the Hebrew name Peraḥyā {see 267, n. 1}. Peraḥyā was the name of this Surūr's grandfather. Bama was the slave and house-steward of Ben Yijū. {On the slave's name, see 604, n. 59.}

¹⁹ Sūs Sītī and Kinābtī are Indian names. {According to a suggestion cited by Ghosh, *Antique*, 384, note to page 278, Sūs Sītī might represent 'Sesu Shetty.' *Setṭī*, means 'merchant' (Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, viii). Two *Setṭīs* are mentioned in MaḌmūn's letters to Ben Yijū, Sws *Setṭī*, here in II, 14*v*, line 1, and Bnk *Setṭī*, II, 24*v*, line 19; see 350, n. 88.}

²⁰ Ishāq can be the name of a Jew or a Muslim. Bānyān is the usual designation for an Indian merchant; also mentioned in II, 24*v*, lines 2, 12. {In page 349, n. 79, Goitein commented that the Bānyāns were 'Hindu merchants.' Banyan is the name of an Indian merchant caste. It is remarkable that a Jew or Muslim, as indicated by his name, was considered a Bānyān. MaḌmūn began writing the name 'Ishā' at the end of II, 114*v*, line 1, and deleted it. But that was evidently because there was insufficient room there, and he wrote the name again in line 2. Crooke, "Baniā," 345: "a generic name for the great merchant caste of Northern and Western India." Sweetman, *Banlian Religion*, xxii–xxiii: "The word 'Banian' refers to the Vāñiā mercantile caste, the Gujarati *vāñiyoā* being derived from the Sanskrit *vāñijā*, meaning merchant... The Baniāns were brokers, shopkeepers, money-changers and bankers, and members of this caste were active in ports all around the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. The caste had both Hindu and Jain members..." For cooperation between the Banyans and Muslim merchants in Malabar, see Wink, *Al-Hind*, 2:279. According to Serjeant, *Portuguese*, 32, in *fatwā* literature (legal rulings) the Indian residents in the larger ports of South Arabia "are always known as Bānyān." Cf. Serjeant, *Society*, 1:71–74 ("The Bānyāns and the Trade with India"). A painting of a Banyan at al-Mukhā', Yemen, from the late eighteenth century, is reproduced in Baldry, *Textiles*, pl. 4.

and tell them (3) of my longing for them. Inform them in my name that as for pepper, in (4) this coming year its value, (that is) the price per *bahār*, will be (5) 30 dinars, and more, and as for refurbished^{21a} iron, (6) a *bahār* will be (worth) not less than 20 dinars, (7) and that the (supply of) *raqs* (shining, glittering iron), which was in the city, is completely exhausted. (8) And if they can they should dispatch²¹ a ship from Mangalore, (9) and send in it any available pepper, iron, (10) cubeb, and ginger;²² it should set out at the first opportunity {alt. tr.: at the beginning of the season}²³ for (11) *al-Dyyb* (Diū) {alt. tr.: Maldives}²⁴ taking {alt. tr.:

²¹ Arabic *yujahbizū*. See below, line 13.

^{21a} Arabic *muhḍath*. Al-Kindī (fl. 850), describes *muhḍath* iron as being of inferior quality. See the passage quoted by al-Hassan, "Iron," 33, who translates 'modern.'

²² Cubeb and ginger served various medicinal purposes (see Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 217, 139, respectively), and the latter was a frequent import item from the East. Maimonides mentions ginger's use to increase sexual potency in his autograph manuscript TS Ar. 44, f. 79. Also see *Orzar ha-Geonim*, 2:63, no. 201 (according to which ginger is imported from China); Perahyā, *Commentary on Shabbat*, 174.

²³ Arabic *awwal al-zamān*. The same expression appears in context of sailing or departure in II, 55, lines 29, 33, 36; III, 12, line 26. The equivalent *awwal al-waqt* appears in II, 23, line 9. There it clearly means the beginning of the sailing season and was translated so ('at the beginning of seafaring time') by Goitein. A fuller expression is *waqt infitāḥ al-baḥr*, 'the time of the opening of the sea'; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:316, 481, n. 24. Cf. II, 23, line 17: *awwal jihāz*, 'the beginning of the fleet'; III, 8, line 30, *matā yakbruḥ awwal al-jihāz*, 'when the first of the fleet sets out.' TS 8 J 22, f. 10, top, *awwal al-zamān yusāfirū*, is correctly translated by Gil, *Ishmael*, 2:760: "the beginning of the time of their departure"; correct Diem, *Dictionary*, 6, accordingly. Cf. *ākhīr al-zamān*, in TS 12.124, line 24, translated by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:482, n. 32: 'end of business season'; a more literal translation would be, 'the end of the season' (so translated by Gil, *ib.*, 2:523), i.e., the end of the sailing season (I translate there, lines 23–24: 'I waited for him until the month of Elul, but he did not come. I did not see a letter from him until the end of the season, in which he wrote,' etc.). No. IV, 2, line 9, explicitly states: *hādha 'l-waqt alladhī huwa awān al-safr*, 'this time (season), which is the season of travel (by sea).'

²⁴ The name has the article because it means 'island' (*dīpa*), a meaning certainly known to the Arabic-speaking Middle Easterners. It refers to hundreds of islets southwest of the southern tip of India, which today make up the independent state of Maldives. The name is a compound of *dīve* 'island' and Male, the name of the capital. The fact that it is written *Dyyb* in Hebrew (with double *y*) indicates, perhaps, that Arabic-speaking traders pronounced the name *Dīyab*, as an Arabic plural form. Coir yarn and coconuts are still an important source of income in these islands. The suggestion in Goitein, "From Aden," 56 is hereby rejected in light of Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 460–61 (on the modern Maldives, see, e.g., *The 1979 Hammond Almanac*, 618). {This note is based on Goitein, *Yemenites*, 98–99, n. 26. For *qīnbār*, 'coir (coconut fiber),' see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:408. On the coir yarn and coconuts of Maldives, cf. Linschoten, *Voyage*, 1:75 (in Old English): "There is no merchandize to be had in them, but only coquen, which are Indian nuttes, and cayro . . . that is the Indian hemp . . . they serve the whole country of India, and al the orientall coast," etc. For current information on the Maldives, see <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mv.html>.

to take} some coir (coconut fiber),²⁵ fine aloes wood,²⁶ (12) mango (?),²⁷ and coconuts,²⁸ because all these are selling well.

[G. (2) Maḍmūn prepared to fit out a ship to sail from Aden in partnership with the aforementioned]

(13) If they are equipping²⁹ a ship in Aden, and they want me (14) to take part, I will share (in it) with them. If there were (15) a ship sailing for Mangalore this year, I would send them {alt. tr.: Had there been a ship...I would have sent them} (16) gold, sugar, raisins and (other) goods.³⁰ Be sure to inform them (17) of all this, and do not be remiss, for you take the place of (18) a letter of mine to them. *And peace.*

²⁵ In connection with this order, Margariti, "Aden," 259, notes that this twine was used for boat building, one of the industries of Aden. Cf. Chakravarti, "Seafarings," 47.}

²⁶ Arabic *ḵrbh*, clearly spelled thus in both copies, has not been found by me elsewhere. I take it as Persian *agar bih*, see Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 90, as derived from Sanskrit *aguru* (modern *agar*, suggested by Professor A. L. Basham). {Persian *bih* means 'fine,' but one would not expect it to be joined with *agar* to make one word or even as a fixed expression; thanks to Prof. Shaul Shaked for this clarification. On the Indian export commodity *agar* aloes wood, see Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, 157; note there the sources concerning the quality of the aloes wood from the Indonesian islands and northern Malaysia.}

²⁷ The item *nw'shk* has not been traced thus far. Professor Basham suggested *navāṃśuka* pronounced something like *nūāshuk*, a compound of *nava*, new, and *amśuka*, fine cloth, muslin. I doubt, however, whether textiles would be mentioned between coir and coconuts and wonder whether *nw'shk* could not stand for *nagzak* {*nāgzak*, *naghzak*} mango; see Spies, *Ibn Faḍlallah*, 33. Mango would be traded pickled or as a preserve. {For 'ambā, 'mango,' in our papers, see 569, n. 7.}

²⁸ Arabic *nārjīl* (with long *ā*), served also for medicinal purposes; see Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 200.}

²⁹ Arabic *jahāz*; cf. line 8, i.e., buying or building a ship and fitting it out. {See Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:228a, who defines *jabbaz markab* equip or arm a boat, but not build or buy a boat. From the reference he cites, I believe that Chakravarti, "Coastal Trade," 116, intended this passage when he erroneously wrote that a large ship carrying passengers and cargo is designated in Arabic in a Geniza letter *jahaj!*}

³⁰ Arabic *al-dhahab* seems to refer to gold coins. Sugar and raisins generally appear in small quantities sent as gifts for children, as in II, 26v, lines 10–11, but here they are export commodities. (Other) goods, *al-ḥawā'ij*, refer to goods ordered by Indian merchants.

[H. Address]

(Arabic script, written in the same direction as postscript) (1) (To) The most illustrious elder, Ibrāhīm b. (2) Īshū,³¹ the Israelite—may God preserve his high position!

(1) (From) His servant (2) Maḍmūn b. al-Ḥa[san].

(II, 13^v, Hebrew, opposite the beginning of the letter) (1) *To our esteemed master and lord Abraham!*—(2) *may God remember him favorably!*—*the son of our master and lord Yijū—may he rest in Eden!*

(2) (From) *Your friend Maḍmūn the son of Ḥasan—may he rest in Eden!*

³¹ The address is the same as that of II, 17, with slight variations. The name Yijū was also pronounced and written as Yīshū; see II, 17, in the Hebrew address, and III, 22, line 1, or as Ish‘ū, as here. {Cf. page 53.}

II, 16–19 *Letter from Maḏmūn b. Ḥasan to Abraham Ben Yījū:*
Four Fragments of Two Copies

{Aden, 1133–40}

II, 16. TS 24.66

II, 17. TS NS J 5

II, 18. TS 13 J 7, f. 13

II, 19. TS K 25, f. 252

Ed. Goitein, "From Aden," 47–50 (text transcribed in Arabic characters), 57–66 (translation and notes).

No. II, 16 is a copy, written by the same clerk who wrote II, 13–14, of the original, II, 17–19, which was written by Maḏmūn.¹ The fifth line of II, 17 matches the first line of II, 16. No. II, 18 begins with the last word in line 5 of II, 16. It concludes with the second word of line 35 of II, 16. The address has been preserved only in II, 17, since the custom was to write the address on the reverse side of the sheet, opposite the beginning; and the beginning, usually containing only polite phrases, was often torn away as not needed, while paper always was in demand for all kinds of purposes; see introduction to II, 13–15.

The clerk worked with great exactitude. There is no deviation from the original. He did, however, use many more diacritical marks than his master, though without any consistency.

The original was carefully written by Maḏmūn in a more pleasant hand than was usual for him. Deletions, involving the beginning of words, are found in two places only. The writer undoubtedly had accounts before him, from which he copied. We may assume that these were entered in Maḏmūn's account book, which is mentioned several times in these documents.

No. II, 16 is written on the same kind of grayish paper as II, 13–15, but differs in width (11.3 cm.). This would seem to imply that they cut their paper to different sizes, and that it was not bought already cut in sheets suitable for writing purposes. Of the length of the sheet, 52.4 cm. are preserved.

The paper is different in II, 17–19. It appears more brownish, lighter, and smoother than the paper of the other fragments originating from Maḏmūn's office, which have been identified. Its width is 10 cm. at the top and 9.5 cm. at the bottom. Its length is 11 cm. plus 25.5 cm. plus 29.5 cm., a total of 66 cm. A space of 12 cm. was left blank on the verso of II, 19. Thus Maḏmūn was not forced to cut short, as he sometimes did for lack of space.

¹ {For sending multiple copies of letters or accounts, see page 9, n. 23.

On the lower edge of the verso of II, 16 the receiver of the letter, Abraham b. Yijū, wrote, in his own hand, a calendar for the years 1458–60 Sel. (= 1146–49 C.E.). He wrote a calendar for 1461 (= 1149/50) on the edge of III, 1, and we possess others from his hand.

All the accounts contained in this letter have been reduced to a table for easier access to the data. The details will be explained in the commentary. It should be kept in mind that a *bahār* contains 300 *ratls*, or pounds, and that the dinar, or gold piece, is divided into 24 *qārāts*, which are combined to an eighth, sixth, fourth, third, or half of a dinar, as circumstances require. The dinars used in commerce in Aden during this period were Malikī dinars which were worth somewhat more than two thirds of the Fatimid dinars, as is evident from various references in the India papers, but here had a different value.²

Sale of goods sent by Ben Yijū and prices obtained, after deduction of expenses:

- I. Pepper—12 *bahārs*, from which 45 pounds were deducted, leaving 11 *bahārs*, 255 pounds. The price: per *bahār*—34 dinars, per pound— $\frac{34}{300}$ dinar.

Total: 374 dinars + $\frac{(34 \times 255)}{300}$ [= $28\frac{9}{10}$, rounded out to $28\frac{5}{6}$] = $402\frac{5}{6}$ dinars (Malikī)

The expenditures on this shipment:

‘Tithes’ (i.e., customs)	82 $\frac{1}{4}$ dinars
Expenses in receiving the goods	4 $\frac{1}{6}$ dinars
Baskets and porters	$\frac{1}{6} + 1\frac{1}{4}$ dinars
	<hr/> 87 $\frac{5}{66}$ dinars

Balance in favor of Ben Yijū from the pepper shipment: 315 dinars

- II. Iron—20 *bahārs*, 120 pounds

Amount given to the merchant Joseph	3 <i>bahārs</i> , 180 pounds
Amount given to the merchant Khalaf	<u>2 <i>bahārs</i>, 75 pounds</u>
Total:	<u>5 <i>bahārs</i>, 255 pounds</u>

Amount left for sale: 14 *bahārs*,
165 pounds

² On the exchange rate of the Malikī dinar, see 172, n. 27.

Price: per <i>bahār</i>	17 dinars
per pound:	$\frac{17}{300}$ dinars
Total received: $238 + \frac{(165 \times 17)}{300}$ [= 9.35 rounded out to $9\frac{1}{4}$] =	247 $\frac{1}{4}$ dinars
Various expenditures on this shipment	27 $\frac{1}{4}$ dinars
Balance in favor of Ben Yijū from the iron shipment:	220 dinars
Total balance in favor of Ben Yijū = 220 + 315 dinars =	535 dinars

Shipments to Ben Yijū of goods and items ordered for the aforementioned sum:

I. 5 <i>bahārs</i> of copper, and their expenditures	415 dinars (Malikī)
Hides for packing them, and their cost of packing	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ dinars
Exit tolls in Aden	4 $\frac{1}{8}$ dinars
II. Other purchases and expenses:	
Freight charges for the copper	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ dinars
Registration fee to the captain for the shipments of iron and pepper	2 dinars
Copper bars	8 dinars
Dates	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ + $\frac{1}{4}$ dinars
An Abyssinian hide	2 dinars
Mats	1 dinar
A carpet	5 dinars
Various items of clothing	6 dinars
Lead	28 $\frac{1}{2}$ + $\frac{1}{12}$ dinars
Freight charges for the lead	1 dinar
20 Egyptian <i>mithqāls</i> , which equal 7 Malikī dinars	47 dinars
	<u>7 dinars</u>
$\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{12} = \frac{11}{24}$	535 $\frac{11}{24}$ rounded out to
	535 $\frac{1}{3}$ dinars (Malikī)

However, the one-third dinar is not considered by Maḍmūn, who states that with these shipments his account with Ben Yijū for that year is settled.

{The letter was clearly written before 1146, the first year in the calendar written on verso. It was almost certainly written before April 1140, when Rāmishṭ, whose ship is mentioned here in II, 17, lines 7, 47, died; see pages 145–46. Ben Yijū seems to have arrived in India in 1132; see III, 17. This letter was presumably written after II, 20, which probably dates from 1133, see 330, n. 7.}

Translation

[Aa. Receipt of letter and pepper in the ship of Rāmishṭ; detailed account of proceeds, after deduction of expenses]

[II, 17] (1) The letter of my lord, the most illustrious elder, has arrived—may God make permanent (2) your well-being, may He guard your life and humble those who envy you! It was (3) a most gladdening letter and a most delightful message. I was happy to learn of your well-being (4) and your prosperous circumstances, and I have entreated God (to grant you) more of every good thing, (5) [II, 16 (1)] in His mercy. I noted that you mentioned [II, 16 (2)] in your esteemed letter (6) that you had sent [II, 16 (3)] some pepper in the ship of the *nākhudā* (7) Rāmishṭ³ [II, 16 (4)]—twelve *bahārs* of small measure.⁴ (8) This has arrived [II, 16 (5)] and (I) your servant went to collect it.

From this is to be deducted [II, 16 (6)]—as you mention in your letter—forty (7)–five pounds,⁵ leaving you eleven (8) *bahārs* and two hundred and fifty-five pounds, the price being (9) 34 dinars (per *bahār*). The (total) value: (10) 403 dinars, minus one-sixth.

(11) From this (sum) is to be deducted the ‘tithe,’⁶ 82¼ (12) dinars; the

³ Goitein’s note on Rāmishṭ has been transferred from here to pages 145–46.}

⁴ The relationship between the small and the large measure is clarified by this document, both here and in lines 20, 27–28. According to these references, 17 *bahārs* (5100 pounds), of large measure = 20 *bahārs* and 120 pounds (= 6,120 pounds) of small measure. The ratio is about 1.2:1; also in II, 20, line 17, and III, 12, line 23. Hinz, *Islamische Masse*, 8–10, deals mainly with later periods.

⁵ There is no explanation for the deduction of 45 pounds from 12 *bahārs*, or any indication as to who received them. It seems, however, that this is a polite way of referring to the fee of the representative of the merchants, namely, Maḍmūn, the writer. This payment, about 1.33%, is not much different from that mentioned in I, 4, line 10, where Maḍmūn’s father received one *qirāṭ* out of every two dinars of the price of each piece, that is ¼.

⁶ I.e., the customs duty, Arabic *‘ushūr*, also below, line 37, and elsewhere, a term for taxes legalized by the religious codes, while customs dues, *maks*, pl. *mukūs*, were of doubtful legality. {Forand, “*Uṣr*,” demonstrates the ambiguities of these terms. The word *‘šwr* appears frequently in the documents of this book. Goitein’s vocalization *‘ushūr* is a plural form of the Arabic *‘ušbr*. Smith, *Studies*, chap. 10, 131, vocalizes *‘ashūr* and points out that Ibn al-Mujāwir uses the term in the singular. In some Judeo-Arabic Geniza documents from Mediterranean countries, the word was written *‘šwr*. This spelling obviously designates the Hebrew form *‘iššūr*. Examples can be found in TS 12.435, line 12 (ed. Goitein, “Letters from Spain,” 346); TS 20.152, line 19 (ed. Gil, *Palestine*, 2:726, no. 395); Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 9, line 9 (ed. Gil, *ib.*, 2:729, no. 396. From the translation of TS 10 J 12, f. 26, lines 19–20, in Gil, “Institutions,” 161: “the abolition of the *ma‘asēr* (tith; Arabic *‘ušbr*) in Sicily,” one might conclude that the Hebrew *ma‘asēr* is found in the text, but only the Arabic *‘ušbr* is there.}

cost for taking delivery of the goods, $4\frac{1}{6}$ dinars;⁷ (13) the cost of baskets of palm leaves and a porter, one and one-quarter and one-sixth dinars; (14) a total of 88 dinars minus one-sixth, (15) leaving 315 dinars (in your favor).

[Ab. Receipt of shipment of iron through the agency of the shipowner Ibn Abu 'l-Katā'ib; detailed accounting of proceeds, after transfer of part of the shipment to whomever had been designated and deduction of expenses]

(16) You mentioned that you sent in the ship of the *nākhudā* (17) Abu 'l-Ḥasan b. Abu 'l-Katā'ib some refurbished (18) iron—twenty-one *bahārs*. But (19) the *nākhudā* Abū 'Abd Allah, his son,⁸ gave me only (20) seventeen *bahārs* of large measure; he stated that (21) the Bānyān (the Indian merchant), whom you asked to take charge of {alt. tr.: to whom you referred him for collection of} the iron,⁹ (22) had delivered no more than this to him, saying that the rest of (23) the iron was in the highlands¹⁰ and had not yet arrived. In reply, I held him (Abū 'Abd Allah) to be under obligation {alt. tr.: I bound him by a stipulation} (24), if this were not true, (25) to pay the price (of it), according to the sale value in Aden. (26) He is to pay this to you, my lord, in India.¹¹

(27) The iron I received from you in Aden is twenty (28) *bahārs* and one hundred and twenty pounds of small measure. (29) From this is to be deducted: for the elder Joseph b. (30) Abraham,¹² three *bahārs* and

⁷ The cost for taking delivery of goods worth $402\frac{2}{6}$ dinars was $4\frac{1}{6}$ dinars, approximately one percent; apparently a government tax. {"The cost," etc., Arabic *ḥaqq al-qabḍ*; is explained by Margariti, "Aden," 205: "a payment made to customs in addition to the import tax on pepper."}

⁸ {The *nākhudā* Abu 'l-Ḥasan b. Abu 'l-Katā'ib and his son Abū 'Abd Allah are mentioned repeatedly in the papers related to Ben Yijū. See pages 142 and 149.

⁹ Arabic *ahaltahu 'alayhi bil-ḥadīd*. For such phrases in Geniza documents, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:460, n. 63; cf. Diem, *Dictionary*, 51. The meaning is that Ben Yijū gave an order of payment to Abū 'Abd Allah for presentation to a dealer in iron. (The statement in Goitein's note, *ib.*, that the noun *ḥawāla* is not found in Geniza documents, is to be corrected. See, e.g., TS 24.24, line 5; three examples in the texts cited in Gil, *Foundation*, 555; two in Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:952, both in Index, s.v., *ḥawāla*—the other items being verbal forms.)}

¹⁰ This, of course, refers to the highlands of India, and not, as in II, 14, line 26, of Yemen.

¹¹ {Arabic *bilād al-Hind*. For the geographical area that this term designates, see pages 6–7.}

¹² Joseph b. Abraham, a cousin of Maḍmūn and prominent merchant {the subject of chap. 2, sec. F}.

one hundred and eighty (31) pounds; for Khalaf b. Ishāq,¹³ two *bahārs* (32) and one-quarter—a total of five *bahārs* and two hundred (33) and fifty-five pounds, leaving you four- (34) teen *bahārs* and one hundred and sixty-five pounds, (35) the price being 17 dinars (per *bahār*). The (total) value: (36) 247¼ dinars.

From this is to be deducted (37) the ‘tithe,’ the expenses {alt. tr.: toll},¹⁴ and the (cost of) the porter, (38) 27¼ dinars, leaving 220 (39) dinars.

[Ac. The balance in favor of Ben Yij‘ū]

Therefore, the sum total owed you is (approximately) (40) 535 dinars.

[Ba. Purchase of copper for Ben Yijū, the price and freight charges in three different ships]

I (your servant) bought you (41) three bags of copper,¹⁵ weighing (42) five *bahārs*, at a cost of 83 (dinars per *bahār*). (43) The (total) value: 415 dinars. (44) The number of pieces¹⁶ in each bag is twenty-three. (45) The cost of hides and packing: 1½ dinars. Exit tolls (46) from the Furḍa, 4⅙ dinars. I sent you (47) this in the ship of the *nākhudā* Rāmisht,¹⁷ (48) one bag; in the ship of al-Muqaddam,¹⁸ one bag; and in the ship of (49) Nambiyar (ani?) {Read: Nmby Rwy},¹⁹ one bag—a total of three bags. Freight charges for (50) this (were) 4½ dinars.

¹³ Khalaf b. Ishāq, another cousin of Maḍmūn, a philanthropic notable {the subject of chap. 2, sec. G.

¹⁴ Arabic *mu'na*. See 171–72, n. 23.

¹⁵ Arabic *ṣufr* (also verso, line 1). For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11.

¹⁶ Arabic *qit'a*, which according to Shy, “Terms,” 207, designates here ingot, piece of metal. Similarly, verso, lines 2, 11, 14; 24, line 2, etc.}

¹⁷ See 145–46. Either the ship, which brought merchandise from India, took merchandise on the return trip, or another ship belonging to Rāmisht was intended.

¹⁸ A general term designating a person wielding power; Muqaddam was also the official title of the heads of the Eastern Jewish communities; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:68–75. It is not impossible that the reference here is to a Jewish {or Arab} shipowner, but since the owners of the other two boats bear Indian names, the word Muqaddam may refer to the holder of an Indian office. {See above, 147.

¹⁹ In the text, which he transcribed in Arabic characters, Goitein published Nmbyrn. In his draft of the Judeo-Arabic text, he copied Nmbyrwy (the w was marked as uncertain and the y was added). While the y is faint, the text seems, in fact, to read Nmby Rwy (in two words). For the probable vocalization and meaning, see page 148.}

[Bb. Details of various expenditures on behalf of Ben Yijū and of purchases of copper, lead, and other commodities]

(Also) charged to you, the registration fee²⁰ from {alt. tr.: of} the (51) ship's captain for the pepper and the iron, two dinars.²¹ [II, 16 (Verso)] (1) Also, there are charged to you copper bars, twenty-five (2) pounds, twenty-eight pieces in number, (3) worth eight dinars; a basket²² of dates, (4) one hundred and fifteen pounds, worth $2\frac{3}{4}$ dinars; (5) the cost of an Abyssinian hide, two dinars; the price of ten (6) Berbera mats, which are in²³ a package (7) marked in Hebrew and Arabic,²⁴ one dinar; (8) a zodiac carpet,²⁵ worth five dinars, a *maqṭa*^c cloth,²⁶ (9) and two Manārī kerchiefs {alt. tr.: *fūtas*},²⁷ worth six dinars—(10) all this with Abū Ghālib, the ship's captain.²⁸ (11) He also has with him a

²⁰ Arabic *satmī*. All merchandise carried in a ship was registered, and after the arrival of the ship the captain received a set fee for the manifest. The term designated both the manifest {cf. III, 22, line 18, where it is spelled *shatmī*} and the fee. {See also below, II, 23, line 43; III, 28a, line 9; IV, 1, line 28 (x2)}. According to Serjeant, "Aden and Shihr," 212, *satmī*, 'a bill of lading,' is a Gujerati word. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 215, vocalizes *satamī*.)

²¹ From the fact that the value of the pepper and the iron together, before the various deductions, was approximately 800 dinars, we see that the registration fee was about one-half {read: one-quarter} percent of the value of the merchandise. {In III, 28a, line 9, it was approximately 0.35%. Margariti, "Aden," 240, suggests that the *satmī* was fixed at a set rate of one dinar or slightly less per consignment, rather than a percentage of the value of the merchandise.}

²² Arabic *qawṣara*, a word found in Aden to this day; see Stace, *Vocabulary*, 17, 'basket for dates.' {Also see Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 417. According to Bonnenfant, "Zabid," n. 30, the *qawṣara* is approximately 1.2 m. in diameter and 50–60 cm. deep.}

²³ Arabic *wa-hīya bi-* (*why b*), in Hebrew characters והי ב. The scribe, who was unable to make sense of Maḏmūn's handwriting, copied והיב (*nhyb*, with final *n*), which, of course, is meaningless. Such errors are found in other letters. See 449, n. 69.}

²⁴ See II, 14, lines 12–14.

²⁵ The zodiac, Arabic *burīj*, a common ornament on the floors of churches and synagogues in Byzantine times, decorated this costly carpet. {According to Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 25, *burīj* is a kind of embroidered fabric.}

²⁶ A piece of a kind of cloth with this name or a robe made of it; see Diem, *Dictionary*, 176, for references in Goitein, *Med. Soc.* (listings in the Index, *ibid.*, 6:68, are incomplete), and esp. *ibid.*, 4:409, n. 222 (*ibid.*, 454, n. 82, '206' is a misprint for '222').}

²⁷ Manārah is the name of a locality in southwest Muslim Spain, near the city of Sidūnah (Yāqūt, *Geographical Dictionary*, 4:648). These woven goods were named after that district or perhaps brought from there. A city near Saragossa, Spain, also bears this name (Yāqūt, *ibid.*). A kerchief of the same type was sent from Aden to India according to III, 21b, lines 9, 18–19. {Constable, *Trade*, 177, n. 42, comments that this item may have been an Eastern imitation of an Andalusian textile. For the *fūta*, see pages 175–80.}

²⁸ Also mentioned below, lines 15, 29. It is not specified whether this captain commanded one of the three ships mentioned above, recto, lines 47–49, or another ship.

piece of lead,²⁹ weighing (12) two hundred and forty-five pounds, worth (13) $28\frac{1}{2}$ dinars and two *q̄wāṭs*, the price (per *bahār*) being 35 dinars; (14) freight charges for the piece of lead, one dinar. Abū (15) Ghālib, the ship's captain, has with him also a purse, in which there are 20 Egyptian *mithqāls*,³⁰ (16) worth 47 dinars (Malikī). (17) That purse contains (also) seven Malikī dinars.

[Bc. The completion of Ben Yijū's account]

(18) The total sum: $535\frac{1}{3}$ dinars.³¹ (19) This settles my lord's account.

[C. Acknowledgment of receipt of various shipments, and, finally, of gifts from Ben Yijū]

There also arrived (20) the 'eggs',³² which you sent in the ship of (21) Ibn Abu 'l-Katā'ib, and this was received by the elders Joseph (22) and Khalaf, according to the distribution which you indicated (23) in your letter.

The betel nuts, which (24) you sent to your servant, also arrived, and this is on {alt. tr.: against} the balance of (25) my account with your excellency {alt. tr.: which you owed me} from last (26) year. But the betel nuts were extremely mediocre, both the white (27) and the red ones. There also arrived what you were kind enough (to send), namely four (28) locks and two *qaṣ'a*-bowls.³³

²⁹ Arabic *raṣās*, needed in the manufacture of copper vessels, with which Ben Yijū dealt. {See Shy, "Terms," 209.}

³⁰ The Egyptian *mithqāl* (or dinar) is here worth 2.35 Malikī dinars, just as in II, 20, line 32.

³¹ Maḍmūn discounts the one-third dinar; see recto, lines 39–40. As was shown, however, in the analysis of the account above, he rounded off small amounts also to the disadvantage of Ben Yijū.

³² Arabic *al-bayḍ*, either a type of cardamom, or a form in which iron was shipped, III, 21, sec. a, line 6; III, 21, sec b, line 29. This merchandise was delivered to the representative of the merchants, who distributed it to those who had ordered it. {According to a note written by Goitein on April 24, 1984, *bayḍ* may be pieces of iron packed in *bārbazāt* (on which see III, 11, line 38). See further II, 31, line 8, and pages 369–70, where evidence is adduced for a meaning related to iron.}

³³ The large *qaṣ'a*-bowls are frequently mentioned as a present sent from India, cf. III, 3, line 3; III, 12, lines 36–38; III, 15, line 35; III, 16, line 16 {where they are also sent together with locks}. It is most likely that they were manufactured from an Indian timber of a particularly good quality. No. VI, 16v, line 7, mentions two *qaṣ'as* made of wood of the walnut tree in the possession of a merchant who died in Sawākin on the east coast of Africa. Today in Yemen the word designates the large flat wooden bowl in which fodder

[D. Gifts sent and greetings]

Your servant has sent to you (29) with Abū Ghālib, the ship's captain, two large brazilwood boxes³⁴ with (30) sugar, and two brazilwood boxes with raisins, and a package with (31) three *dasts*³⁵ of Egyptian Ṭalḥī paper³⁶ of the best (32) obtainable quality. Please accept this, my lord, (33) and may you think well of me!³⁷ If you have any (34) need or service (to be done), I would be happy {lit., 'give me the pleasure'} to take care of them. (35) May you have abundant well-being! *And peace.*

[E. Address]

[II, 17] (Hebrew) (1) (To) The most illustrious elder, my lord Abraham (2) Ben Yishū—May God preserve your well-being!

(1) (From) Your servant Maḍmūn (2) b. al-Ḥasan b. Bundār.

The Arabic address, written in the direction of the message, contains exactly the same words with the addition of 'the Israelite,' and in place of 'Yishū' in line 2: 'Ishū.'

is put before the cows (cf. Goitein, *Jemenica*, 179, No. 1401); and this was, perhaps, the original meaning of the word, as *magāsi* in Yemen designates bunches of fodder (usually *gadb*, lucerne, for horses). {See Lane, *Dictionary*, 2989: 'a bowl [...] that satisfies ten [...] a wooden bowl.' Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 402: 'case, small box.'}

³⁴ Brazilwood boxes *baqqamiyya*, i.e., made from *baqqam*, or sappanwood. This wood was one of the main sources for dyeing, but, as we see here, served also as material for {packing} implements.

³⁵ A *dast* was a certain quantity that made a set of a particular item; cf. page 304, n. 9.

³⁶ Named after Ṭalḥa b. Ṭāhir, ruler of Khūrasān in northeast Persia, who died in 828; see Huart and Grohmann, "Kāghad." It is interesting that the name of a commodity remained constant for over three hundred years.

³⁷ Arabic *wa-yakhba'nī bi-ḥasbīh* {lit., 'preserve me in your thoughts,' with minor variations also in II, 20*v*, line 10}, a polite excuse for the small size of the gift. The giver feels he must make an understatement—a rule not always followed by Maḍmūn.

II, 20 *Letter from Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan to Abraham Ben Yijū*

Aden, 1133

TS 20.130

Only the first two or three lines are missing, but the letter is badly mutilated by holes, water damage, and smudging. The width is 12.3 cm., that is, wider than the previous letters. Of the length, 45 cm. are preserved; the paper is woolly, and light gray. The script is that of Maḍmūn's clerk, as in II, 13–15, but smaller and slightly more cursive.

The beginning of the letter is lost; consequently the address is missing, since it was customary to write the address on the verso, opposite the beginning of the letter. The assumption that it was sent by Maḍmūn to Ben Yijū is based on the following considerations:

- (1) The script. This is not absolute proof; Maḍmūn's clerk might have served another merchant, although that is unlikely.
- (2) The two ports on the west coast of India where Ben Yijū used to live, Mangalore (lines 23, 31, verso, line 5) and Pandarā'inā (line 25 [see note there]), are repeatedly referred to.
- (3) In line 29, a shipment is to be delivered to Abraham b. Fayyūmī, as Ben Yijū does in II, 24*v*, line 1; cf. III, 22*v*, lines 1–5.
- (4) There is no doubt that the *nākhudā* Abū Sa'īd to whom Ben Yijū gave a detailed account when both were in India (see II, 26, lines 3–10), is none other than Abū Sa'īd b. Maḥfūz, who is mentioned here, too, without his patronymic, lines 23, 39, and verso, line 13 (together with the patronymic, lines 15, 30, and verso, lines 5, 8).
- (5) We have here precisely the same dealings, order of matters, and tone, which we find in Maḍmūn's other letters to Ben Yijū. Various details recur, e.g., the ships of the *nākhudā* Rāmīshṭ (see II, 16, lines 3, 47, and II, 26, line 10), or, e.g., the commodity *drky*, only mentioned here, line 13, in II, 21, line 5, in II, 24, line 25, in II, 27, line 5 {and in II, 30, lines 13–14}, which are also letters from Maḍmūn to Ben Yijū.
- (6) As regards Maḍmūn, we hear from other sources that he used to fit out ships, see II, 14*v*, line 13 ff, II, 32, lines 22–23, as here, verso, line 4.
- (7) Most or all letters by Maḍmūn sent to India, which have been identified thus far, are addressed to Ben Yijū.¹

¹ {Note that some of the expressions, which appear here, occur elsewhere in Khalaf b. Isaac's correspondence with Ben Yijū, but not Maḍmūn's; see notes to lines 1, 2 and 4. For a phrase peculiar to Maḍmūn's letters, see verso, line 10 and 336, n. 45.}

Summary of the Accounts in sections [B] and [C]

To Ben Yijū's credit:

Pepper bought with his money	30	<i>bahārs</i>
Less cash received by him	-4	<i>bahārs</i>
Less Maḍmūn's commission	<u>-1</u>	<u><i>bahār</i></u>
Balance	25	<i>bahārs</i>
Plus the value of the <i>drky</i>	+1	<i>bahār</i> , 250 pounds
Less the share of Sheikh Abū Sa'īd	<u>-9</u>	<u><i>bahārs</i></u>
Balance	17	<i>bahārs</i> , 250 pounds, large measure
which is equal to	21	<i>bahārs</i> , 70 pounds, small measure
Sold after deduction of auctioneer's fee for	783	Malikī dinars
Less cost of customs, baskets, porters	<u>-159¹/₂</u>	<u>Malikī dinars</u>
Balance	623 ³ / ₄	Malikī dinars
Debit:		
Sugar	5	Malikī dinars
Copper/brass	102	Malikī dinars
100 Egyptian mithqāls (dinars), worth	235	Malikī dinars
260 Zabīdi dinars, worth	260	Malikī dinars
Dhū Jibla dinars, worth	21 ³ / ₄	Malikī dinars
Total:	623 ³ / ₄	Malikī dinars

{For the dating of the letter, see the note to line 9.}

Translation

[A. Receipt of a letter and expression of regret about Ben Yijū's sufferings during his voyage]

[The letter of my lord, the most illustrious sheikh, arrived—may God make permanent your honored position, etc. . . . and bestow upon you] (1) all the gifts [He has destined for you.] {alt. tr.: [May He protect for your sake] (1) that which is most suitable of all He has conferred upon

you.}² [... and may He] crush [those who en]vy [you]! (2) It was a most gladdening letter and a most delightful message; your servant read it and was made happy³ by reading it. (3) I (humbly) ask Him whose power is exalted to grant us in His mercy a reunion quickly, in (4) the near future, under joyful circumstances, when things are going well {alt. tr.: and excellent, pleasant conditions}.⁴

(5) From what you mentioned—may God preserve your honored position!—your servant learned about your troubles (6) and discomfort on the sea⁵ and otherwise; I ask God—may He be exalted!—to make the outcome (7) good.

[B. Accounts for Ben Yijū's pepper and *drky*]

The pepper that had been bought for you,⁶ which you mentioned (in your letter), amounts to (8) thirty *bahārs*; of this you received by your own hand here in Aden—may God preserve it!—(9) in the year 526,⁷ 56 dinars (10) for four *bahārs*,⁸ leaving you 26 *bahārs*. (11) (From this) one

² Complemented according to III, 10, lines 2–5, to which the remnants visible here fit. {Line 1 begins with the words *ṣāliḥ mā aw[lāhu]*. Goitein restored here the preceding words as *wa-manna 'alayhi*; similarly in III, 10, line 4 (see 596, n. 7), he restored *wa-manna*. However, from III, 15, line 8 and IV, 13, line 5, it is clear that the first word is to be restored *wa-ḥarasa*. This phrase has not been found in any of the letters written by Maḍmūn. In the India Book papers I have found it only in these three other letters, all written by Khalaf b. Isaac (III, 10 and III, 15 are both addressed to Ben Yijū).

³ Arabic *masrūr*. This particular expression of joy at reading a letter received appears also in III, 3 (fgt. A), line 3; III, 10, 7; III, 15, line 10; IV, 13, line 8 (all from Khalaf b. Isaac); II, 42–IV, 15, line 2 (from Joseph b. Abraham); IV, 64, line 5; IV, 65, line 3.

⁴ Arabic *muwājaha... 'alā 'l-ahwāl al-sārra wal-umūr al-ḥasana al-qārra*. *Muwājaha*, 'meeting,' is used by Khalaf b. Isaac in IV, 19 (and by a later Adenese merchant in II, 65, line 8). *Al-sārra* also means 'calm.' The same rhymed parallel with the former expression, *al-sārra... al-qārra*, also appears in II, 56, line 9, written for Mahrūz b. Jacob by Ben Yijū.

⁵ On the journey from Aden to India. {This presumably refers to Ben Yijū's first journey to India.}

⁶ Maḍmūn had agents and business friends on the west coast of India, who bought pepper for his Mediterranean customers, just as had been done for his father Ḥasan b. Bundār before him; see I, 1*v*, lines 6–7; I, 2, lines 10–13, and *passim* in chap. 1.

⁷ The year 526 A.H. = Nov. 23, 1131–Nov. 11, 1132 C.E. Since Maḍmūn closes here the account for the preceding seafaring season, our letter was written in 1133. For 'closing the account,' see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:451, n. 81. {Ben Yijū was established already in India sometime before Oct. 17, 1132; see III, 17.}

⁸ Ben Yijū received 14 dinars per *bahār*; a year later (in 1133) the price was 37 dinars (see line 20). The excessively low price of 14 dinars in 1132 is to be explained by the assumption that the pepper arrived in Aden when the Egyptian merchants had already sailed home. No one would offer pepper (or anything else) for sale at such a time. {Cf. II, 23, lines 23–28.} But Ben Yijū needed that money for his trip to India.

bahār is to be deducted for ‘the share,⁹ as is the case with all merchants who have pepper bought for them, (12) leaving you after the discount¹⁰ 25 *bahārs*; (13) for the value of the *drky*¹¹ a *bahār* and 250 (pounds), of large measure. Total: (14) 26 *bahārs* 250 pounds.

From this the following deductions had to be made: (15) nine *bahārs* of large measure¹² for Sheikh Abū Sa‘īd b. Maḥfūz,¹³ (16) leaving 17 *bahārs* and two hundred and fifty pounds, (17) that is, twenty-one *bahārs* and seventy pounds of small measure. The ‘tithes,¹⁴ (18) the baskets of palm leaves, and the porter—159¼ dinars.

⁹ Arabic *qist*, the commission taken by Maḍmūn for pepper bought for other merchants in India. It amounted to 5%, see margin, below. The words *qist*, share, and *qust*, costus (see page 256, n. 10), are spelled in the Geniza either with *s* (which is correct), or, for phonetic reasons, with *ṣ*. Here, in line 11, *ṣ* was changed into *s* {or vice versa}, but in line 55 the clerk forgot to make the correction. {The reference to loss (below, page 335) associated with pepper seems to be related to the shipwrecks mentioned there. Accordingly, perhaps *qist* here is to be understood as *taqsīt*, the sharing of loss from shipwrecked or jettisoned cargo; see page 163, n. 40.}

¹⁰ Arabic *musāmaha*. Ben Yijū, as a new customer, received a considerable discount; he was charged for thirty *bahārs* only one *bahār* (instead of one-and-a-half, which would have been 5%). Moreover, Maḍmūn certainly recognized that Ben Yijū was a capable and reliable person and, as their correspondence shows, entrusted him with many errands. {For the *samāha* (!), see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:196 ff.}

¹¹ When we learn here that Ben Yijū had imported *drky* to Aden and when Maḍmūn reports in II, 24, line 25, below (a letter sent from Aden to India) that “no *drky* has arrived this year,” it is evident that this was a commodity traveling from west to east. The *Mulakhkhaṣ al-Fitan* (see List of Works Cited) notes indeed, *al-drky al-qrby al-Dahlakī*, imported from Dahlak on the southwestern coast of the Red Sea (communication by R. B. Serjeant). In II, 21, lines 4–5, Maḍmūn sends to Ben Yijū (from Aden to India) “one-and-a-half *bahārs* of *drky*, costing 24½ (Malikī) dinars, inclusive of the cost of the wickerwork basket and the exit toll.” In the fragmentary letter II, 27, lines 5–7, the mighty general and businessman Bilāl b. Jarīr, repeatedly Maḍmūn’s partner in commercial ventures, buys all the *drky* for himself, and it seems that the merchandise had been sent by the ruler of Dahlak, mentioned *ib.*, line 3. Price and quantity (ca. 450 pounds) show that the *drky* was an important item of the India trade. The manner of packing in a wickerwork basket and the notation of weight (not of the number of pieces) suggest that this was a coarse natural product, not a shipment of textiles.

¹² For the two types of the standard weight *bahār* see 322, n. 4.

¹³ Abū Sa‘īd b. Maḥfūz (in Hebrew Ḥalfōn b. Shemaryā) Ibn Jamāhir (or, rather: Jumayhir), mentioned in this letter seven times (lines 15, 23, 30, 39, verso, lines 5, 8, 13) was a prominent Egyptian India trader and public figure. See Goitein, *Letters*, 336. {For this Ibn Jamāhir, see further *id.*, *Yemenites*, 366 (Index), and esp. 69, n. 15, where the Arabic and Hebrew names are identified as referring to the same person; *id.*, *Med. Soc.*, 6:48; II, 7*v*, line 4, II, 24*v*, line 17; IV, 15–II, 42, lines 23–24; II, 70, above, pages 149–50.} Since no explanation is given here, the delivery to him of a part of Ben Yijū’s pepper (instead of cash) had been prearranged. Abū Sa‘īd probably had ordered the pepper sent on to Egypt at the beginning of the next seafaring season.

¹⁴ {Arabic *‘ushūr*; see II, 16, line 11 and page 322, n. 6.}

(19) I sold the pepper for you at the highest price obtained by anyone, namely, for (20) 37 (dinars) per *bahār*.¹⁵ The total {alt. tr.: proceeds}, after (the fee of) the auctioneer, (21) is 783 dinars, leaving you (22) 623³/₄ dinars.

[C. Shipments to him of sugar, copper/brass, Egyptian dinars, and Yemenite gold coins from various mints]

You owe (23) the price of the sugar, which is to be delivered (to you) by Sheikh Abū Sa'īd in Mangalore, (24) five dinars. In the ship of the *nākhudā* Rāmishṭ, I sent for you (25) to Pandarā'inā (Fandarayna)¹⁶ with the *nākhudā* Aḥmad b. Bakhtiyār a bag of (26) red copper;¹⁷ the number: ten pieces; the weight: a *bahār* and a half; (27) the price: 102 dinars. Also, they exempted me from freight charges.¹⁸ (28) Please take delivery of this from the *nākhudā* Aḥmad b. Bakhtiyār.¹⁹ He also has (29) a bag of copper for Sheikh Abraham b. Fayyūmī.²⁰

¹⁵ Other prices at approximately the same time: 34 dinars (II, 16, line 9); 30 dinars (II, 14v, lines 3–5); 23 dinars (II, 23, line 28) {38 dinars (IV, 15–II, 42, line 27); [3]7 dinars (in II, 65, margin, line 4, where it is described as a high price, about 1180); later in 1199, 45 dinars (II, 66v, line 6)}.

¹⁶ Spelled *fnḍrynh*, present day Pantalāyini, south of Cannanore, often mentioned since pepper was exported from there. See Maqbul Ahmad, *India*, 83. {Also identified as Pantalāyini Kollam and Panderani; see Nainar, *Arab Geographers*, 34–35; Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 199, 201, 457, 458; Maqbul Ahmad, “Hind,”⁵ 406b. Goitein's transcription Pandarā'inā shows the similarity with the modern toponyms (see below). The usual spelling in the Arabic sources is *fnḍrynh* (in Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's account, however, it is spelled with final *h*; see below). Exactly this spelling, *fnḍrynh*, is used elsewhere in the India Book papers (III, 10, line 24; III, 18, sec. A, lines 4, 7; but in sec. E, line 5, it is *fnḍryn*—Abraham Ben Yijū, the writer of that text often spells *tā marbūṭa* with *alif*; for spelling *alif*, i.e., *alif maqṣūra*, for *tā marbūṭa* in Judeo-Arabic texts, see Blau, *Grammar*, 44). Both Nainar and Tibbetts transcribe Fandarīna, rather than Fandrayna. This is not only dissimilar to the assumed modern identifications but is disproved by the spelling here (II, 20, line 25), which suggests that *a* follows *r*.

¹⁷ Arabic *ṣufr*. For the meaning of this term, see page 555, n. 11.}

¹⁸ Since Maḍmūn was also a shipowner, the freight for the comparatively small shipment was waived, in the expectation that this favor would be reciprocated occasionally. Ben Yijū is reminded that he owes this saving to Maḍmūn.

¹⁹ Rāmishṭ was the proprietor of the ship and Aḥmad b. Bakhtiyār ('Lucky,' Persian) its captain or overseer-bursar. For other Persians connected with seafaring, see page 206, n. 6. {On Goitein's interpretation that *nākhudā* means here 'overseer-brusar' (purser), see the discussion in page 126. For Bakhtiyār the ship's captain see II, 23, line 43.}

²⁰ See II, 24v, lines 1–2 {and III, 22v, lines 4–5} and accompanying notes, where he is also mentioned.

I sent (30) to you with Sheikh Abū Saʿīd b. Maḥfūz, in the ship (31) al-Mubārak,²¹ to Mangalore—may God ordain his {alt. tr.: its} safe arrival!—100 Egyptian (32) *mithqāls*,²² worth 253 dinars, and also with him (33) 260 Zabīdī dinars, matching Malikī (dinars) in weight.²³ (34) I have also sent you some fine Jiblī *niṣāfi* (half-dinars)²⁴ [...] (35) a weight of 2¼ dinars, a total of [...] (36) [[3]] 62¾ dinars [...] (37) My lord, please take delivery of this from the two aforementioned (people) [...]

[D. Business from Ben Yijū's previous letters; Maḍmūn regrets that he was unable to fill some orders]

(38) You had mentioned that I would get the legal document signed {alt. tr.: written} by you²⁵ fr[om] (39) Abū Saʿīd. I have already received this. As for what you had mentioned ab[out] (40) [... that you did not r]eceive it from me in Aden for the value of the pepper, (41) my lord's account is wrong—you only imagine it. I have the list. (42) [What is (written) in the a]ccount book {alt. tr.: ... imagine it. What is written with me [in the a]ccount book} is more exact.²⁶

Concerning your orders to purchase (43) various items,²⁷ you know, my lord, of all the responsibilities I have {alt. tr.: of all my preoccupations}²⁸

²¹ {Maḍmūn's new ship, which sailed the Aden-Mangalore route. See verso, lines 4–6; II, 55, line 45 (see there for the translation in the continuation here 'its'). For the names of this and other Indian Ocean ships, see page 141 (n. 82), 159 (n. 18).}

²² Used here, as in II, 16*v*, line 15–16, in the sense of (Egyptian) dinars.

²³ On the turbulent history of Zabīd, the capital city of the flat land on the west coast of Yemen, at the time of the writing of this letter, see Chelhod, "Zabīd," 59–63. Matching in weight: Arabic *murāṭala bil-malikiyya*; see Lane, *Dictionary*, s.v., *ṛḷ*.

²⁴ For Dhū Jibla, then the capital of southern Yemen, see II, 35, III, 31–33, and 38, VII, 64.

²⁵ Arabic *al-ḥujja ʿllatī bi-khattih*, which could also mean 'written by you.' {In my opinion the latter translation is preferable; for 'signed by,' one would expect... *alayhā khattuh*.} Ben Yijū was an accomplished scholar and calligrapher.

²⁶ Arabic *daftar*. Reading uncertain. Account books were admitted in Jewish (and Muslim) courts of that period as supporting evidence. Cf. I, 13, fol. 67*v*, line 11. {See 202, n. 22. 'I have the list' translates *wal-thabi ʿindī*. Goitein restored *wa-ʿinna mā* at the beginning of line 42, but the lacuna seems too small to have accommodated this phrase. For the alternative translation, which I have suggested, cf. VI, 26 line 3, *wa-huwa mathbūt fī daftaribi*, 'it is written in his (Maḍmūn's) account book.'}

²⁷ Arabic *tafāriq*. {According to Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 373, *tafāriq* is plural of *tafriqa*, meaning retail business, which suggests here: retail items. The term also appears in II, 23, line 50; II, 24, line 23, verso, line 20; II, 46, line 31; III, 10, margin; III, 21a, lines 4, 8.

²⁸ Arabic *ashghāl*. Maḍmūn was also the representative of merchants and Nagid. Cf. II, 26*v*, line 5, where he also comments on his preoccupation with *ashghāl*. In II, 6*v*, line 6, we read of the Egyptian Nagid Mevōrākhī's preoccupation with the affairs (*ashghāl*) of state.

besides (44) (the business of) the ships, and this is something which takes time. Especially in this (45) year, no imports²⁹ arrived from Zabīd until the ships had sailed (from here), (46) since they had remained in their city to celebrate the holiday, and then {alt. tr.: and will} set sail from (47) Zabīd after the holiday.³⁰ Gl[ass] also is n[ot to be found] in Aden.³¹ (48–50) [...] ³² (51) [...] this [...], God willing. As for what you mentioned (52) [...] to buy] silver for the value of the pepper, but nothing has been heard (53) [...] {alt. tr.: (52) [...] about buying] silver from the proceeds of the pepper, nothing prevented me³³ (53) [from buying]} the silver, except that it was expensive—five dirhems (weight) (54) [of silver, costing—x] dinar(s), but {alt. tr.: and} I didn't dare to buy you this at that (55) [price.³⁴ As for] the 'share,' which I charged you for the pepper (56) [..., I reduced] it a great deal, since the sum of all amounted to [Margin] [...] ³⁵ of the merchants.../There is an agreement between me and them that of every one hundred *bahārs* of large measure (they receive) 95 *bahārs*.³⁶

²⁹ Arabic *jilāb* also means 'small boats'; see the note to II, 29, line 12. Likewise, the word could be vocalized *jallāb*, which means 'wholesale merchant'; see Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 70.}

³⁰ Zabīd is situated inland. For its port city of Ghulayfiqa see III, 25. By 'holiday' (Arabic *ʿīd*) certainly a Muslim holiday is intended, namely the festival of the breaking of the fast of Ramaḍān, which, in 1133, fell on July 26. Normally, our letter presumes, the merchants of Zabīd did business in Aden, before sailing to India. That year, because of the delay caused by Ramaḍān, they sailed directly to India. Hence goods manufactured in Zabīd and ordered by Ben Yījū, were not available in Aden that year.

³¹ Glass vessels were sent regularly from Aden to India, either as merchandise or as presents.

³² {The text of these lines is too fragmentary to translate. Perhaps the word *ʾlkbhbh* in line 48 is connected with al-Lakhaba, a place not far from Aden where glass was produced; see II, 26, line 7.

³³ For Goitein's *fa-lam yusmaʿ*, I read: *fa-lam yamnaʿni*.)

³⁴ About the scarcity and hence the high price of silver, see V, 14, line 8. However, in another letter of Maḍmūn to Ben Yījū, he noted that he did send to him silver bars worth about one dinar per five dirhem weights, II, 26, lines 15–16.

³⁵ Approximately 20 words are missing.

³⁶ See the notes to lines 11–12, above. The Mediterranean merchants buying pepper through Maḍmūn paid him for 100 *bahārs*, but received only 95, that is, granted him a commission of 5%.

[E. Losses suffered by Maḍmūn and associates; fitting out of a new ship, *al-Mubārak* (the Blessed), to sail from Aden to Mangalore in southern India]

I incurred losses on ships in this business of pepper belonging to the merchants and on expenses for the ship's equipment, for which I paid {alt. tr.: and for the loss of the tolls³⁷ for the ship that we paid}, approximately 4,000 dinars.³⁸ There has not occurred to anyone such a thing. {alt. tr.: No one ever suffered such a calamity.} And all [...] [Verso] (1) [...] May God], the Exalted, recompense and replace what has been lost! And after this (2) [so-and-so] paid me 2,100 dinars for the ship, a price (3) {alt. tr.: the highest bid}³⁹ absolutely [unheard of]. He did not accept this, but charged me with (4) [...] I asked God], the Exalted, [for guidance and] fitted out the ship (5)—the [Mubāra]k—which will sail to Mangalore under the supervision of Sheikh Abū Sa'īd b. Maḥfūz [lit., 'I outfitted the ship ... through the agency of Sheikh ... to Mangalore'].⁴¹ (6)—may God ordain his {alt. tr.: its} safe arrival! I have done so dreading that [enemies] (7) and whoever has no good in him would gloat over my misfortune.⁴²

[F. Gifts and greetings]

I sent you with Sheikh (8) Abū Sa'īd b. Maḥfūz half a basket of dates⁴³ and a piece {alt. tr.: unit} of (9) ros[e water]⁴⁴ and two [*rubā*] *ḥyās* of

³⁷ {Arabic *mu'an*. See pages 171–72, n. 23.

³⁸ Malikī dinars.

³⁹ I read *thaman* [...] *raqi[ya]* (the latter word was not deciphered by Goitein), for which, cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:550, *rqy* IV: *irqā' al-thaman*, "prix mis par un acheteur."

⁴⁰ It is unfortunate that the beginnings of the first four lines of verso are destroyed. One would like to know who paid 2,100 dinars for the ship; perhaps it was Bilāl b. Jarīr the business partner of Maḍmūn and later ruler of Aden (see the Index).

⁴¹ {Arabic *wa-jahhaztu al-markab... yaday al-shaykh... ilā manjalūr*. It is not clear, whether Abū Sa'īd supervised the sailing, as indicated in Goitein's translation, or was in charge of the merchandise shipped by Maḍmūn and its delivery, as above, lines 29–31, and in the continuation here. On the meaning of *jahbaz*, see 317, n. 29.}

⁴² Maḍmūn wished to show that he was not broken by the great losses incurred. {On gloating over a rival's misfortunes in the Geniza papers, cf. III, 32, lines 23–26, and see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:303–5.}

⁴³ As in II, 16*v*, line 3. No weight or price, of course is indicated here, since these were presents.

⁴⁴ {Cf. II, 26*v*, line 12, the same item. Rosewater was imported to India from West Asia; cf. Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, 178. For its uses, see Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 102; Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 276. For *qiṭ'a*, lit., 'piece' = 'unit,' see page 168, n. 1.}

sugar and raisins. Please be sure to collect this, my lord, (10) and may you think well of your servant!⁴⁵ I shall be glad {alt. tr.: please honor me} to do any errand for you. (11) May you be granted complete well-being and the mercy of (12) [God, and His blessings]! *And peace.*

(13) I sent you with Sheikh Abū Sa‘īd a *rubā‘iyya* of soap.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ The same phrase in II, 16*v*, line 33 {written by Maḍmūn; it has not been found elsewhere in the India Book papers.

⁴⁶ This line is a postscript.} Good soap was precious because it was used for washing clothes, which could easily lose their color if exposed to inferior cleaning agents. Soap was an important article of export from Tunisia to Egypt; it is likely that the soap sent here and in II, 23, line 48; III, 2, margin, line 2, III, 3, line 17; III, 9, line 25, to a Tunisian merchant living in India {Ben Yijū} was made in his native country. {Soap is mentioned by Ben Yijū also in III, 24, line 21; III, 27*a*, line 12}. The washing of the human body was done with *ushmān* soda ash. See below, 425.

II, 21–24 *Letter from Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan to Abraham Ben Yījū:*
Four Fragments of Three Copies

Aden, {ca.} 1135

II, 21. TS NS J 241

II, 22. TS NS J 240

II, 23. TS 20.137

II, 24. TS NS J 1

No. II, 23, lines 9–22, was published by Goitein, “Kīsh,” with the text transcribed in Arabic characters and translated in English.

The four fragments are connected with one another in the following way:

II, 21, written by Maḍmūn’s clerk (see the introduction to II, 13–15), contains 15½ lines on recto and 10 on verso. The section II, 21, lines 5–16, is identical with II, 22, lines 1–15, which is in the hand of Maḍmūn. No. II, 21v, lines 1–10, the end of the letter, overlaps with II, 24v, lines 12–23, a postscript by Maḍmūn, added to the clean copy II, 24, written by the clerk.¹

II, 23, written by Maḍmūn (50 lines, but missing at the beginning and end), is continued almost immediately in the preserved part of the scribe’s copy II, 24, for the sum of 685 dinars owed by Ben Yījū in II, 23, line 37, is matched by the sums of 653 +32 dinars owed to him in II, 24, lines 5–6.

Altogether, parts of three copies of the letter have been identified, as follows:

(a1) II, 22. This is a small section of the original written by Maḍmūn that belongs to the opening part of the letter. Although a tiny and much tattered fragment, it is not without value, for the lines 12–18 do not occur in any of the other copies.

Ben Yījū used the blank verso for making notes. Because of the poor state of the manuscript, I did not attempt to decipher them. {These are the same kind of orderly written accounts, only very poorly preserved, as those written on II, 23v, which are presented below as III, 18. One of those written here begins *Ḥisāb ibn khālatī lahu bi-wazn ‘adan khamsīn (?) mithqāl [...]btubu minhā fī fāknūr*, “the account of the son of my maternal aunt: To his credit in Adenese weight fifty *mithqāls*, from which I [...] him in Fāknūr (place on the Malabar Coast north of Mangalore; see II, 55, line 36) [...].” The son of Ben Yījū’s maternal aunt is also referred to in III, 18 [E], lines 3–4, 7, where we learn his name: Abu ’l-Khayr Ibn al-Minqār.}

(a2) II, 23. The main part of the original written by Maḍmūn. Its width is 12.2 cm., almost identical with the width of II, 20. Of its length, 47 cm., comprising 50 lines, have been preserved. There is a gap, perhaps a large

¹ {For sending multiple copies of letters or accounts, see page 9 (n. 23) and below, verso, line 1.

one, between (a1) and (a2), and a small one between (a2) and (b). The complete letter must have contained approximately 130 lines.

Fragment (a2) is well preserved. It was carefully cut out with scissors on both ends.² Ben Yijū used the blank verso for orderly written accounts; see III, 18.

(b) II, 24. The clean copy of the clerk. The word *and peace* at the beginning of line 32 concluded the letter, to which Maḍmūn added two postscripts (II, 24, line 32—verso, lines 10–22).

(c) II, 21. Another clean copy made by the clerk, on whose reverse side he included the postscripts of the master. The recto is the part nearest to the opening of the letter.

Maḍmūn's postscripts were added to the first copy made by the clerk because this was no doubt regarded as the final and, so to say, official version. All copies were carefully executed. I assume that Maḍmūn himself wrote a draft in his account book.

Despite the loss of the beginning and two gaps in the middle, this letter, II, 21–24, rich in variegated information, is one of the most important pieces of the entire collection. The manuscript TS NS J 1 occupies a place of honor in the history of Geniza research. Its discovery on October 7, 1955, described in Goitein, "Geniza Research," 145–46, led to the creation of the New Series of the Taylor-Schechter Collection in the Cambridge University Library. The New Series opened a new era of research in this field. {The date is based on sec. D of the letter.}

Translation

[A. Ben Yijū's expenditures for the preceding year: settlement with Makhluḥ and other items; see sec. I]

[II, 21] (1) The settlement³ with Makhluḥ, the son (of the man) 'with the gladdening eyes,' The Orphan,⁴ (2) with regard to what you owed him,

² The tops of letters at the beginning of line 1 are missing, even though there is a blank space above them. Accordingly, I think it may be the entire length of one sheet of paper, which was pasted to other sheets when the long letter was written. The tops of those letters were written on the overlap of the preceding sheet.

³ The preceding section, which is lost, began detailing the sums owed by Ben Yijū from the preceding year.

⁴ The full name of this strange and interesting man and great traveler was Makhluḥ ('Replacement'—for a child that had died) b. Mūsā (Moses), son (of the man) with gladdening eyes (a nickname), The Orphan (*Yātīm*, family name), al-Nafūsī. Besides this letter (see sec. I), his affairs with Ben Yijū are treated in II, 25–26, and VI, 21. 'Glad-

cost, after much discord⁵ and troubles, (3) 300 dinars.⁶ Saydān⁷ carried for you 100 Egyptian *mithqāls*, (4) worth 424 dinars.⁸ The price of one-and-a-half (5) *bahārs* of *drky*,⁹ together with the price of the basket¹⁰ and the exit toll¹¹ was 24½ (6) the price of a bowl¹² 96 dinars. Total owed by you (7) 880½ dinars. This is your detailed account (8) for last year.¹³

dening? *sāra*, *s'rh* complemented here from II, 25, line 12. {That spelling occurs there; II, 21, clearly reads *srh*; II, 58, margin, line 5, calls him Ibn 'Ayn *Shrh*. On Makhluḥ, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:246 ff.}

⁵ Arabic *fitna*, which has a religious undertone. {For the different usages of this term, see Gardet, "*Fitna*"; Lewis, *Language*, 95–96 (96: 'any serious challenge').} Makhluḥ had threatened to apply to a Muslim, that is, government court {cf. II, 25, lines 12–14}, wherefore documents about the settlement were made out both by a Jewish court and a Muslim notary; see sec. I.

⁶ As the continuation proves, Malīkī (Adenese) dinars are intended here; lines 3–4 show that the exchange rate of the Egyptian *mithqāl*, or dinar, as against the Malīkī was at the time concerned, about 1:4, which was the official rate {see n. 8}. Thus, Makhluḥ would have invested 75 Egyptian dinars in the partnership with Ben Yijū, an investment in an India business venture found also in II, 1, margin. But the matter might have been far more complicated.

⁷ Saydān (or Sīdān) b. Abu 'l-Faḥ, a passenger of the boat, who perished together with everything he carried for Ben Yijū; see II, 26, lines 14–16, and verso, lines 2–4, and in this letter, sec. J. The name Sīdūn (Sidoun) was common in North Africa, see Eisenbeth, *Juifs*, 174, and is mentioned in 1486; see Hacker, "Nagidate," 120. Sīdān might designate a slightly different pronunciation. {The name appears to be a dual form of *sayyid*. Sayyidān, lit. 'Two Lords' parallels the woman's name Sittān, 'Two Ladies,' concerning which see Friedman, *JMP*, 2:457. Cf. id., *Polygyny*, 195, n. 11, where Sittāna and Sittūna are compared.}

⁸ Written (in Hebrew letters serving as numerals) כרל, $d = 4/t = 400/k = 20$. I have never seen such a sequence, but the reading and correctness of the number is confirmed by II, 26, line 16 {there the order is hundreds, units, tens}. Madmūn had to pay 424 Malīkī dinars, because some of them were deficient in weight and value. {See n. 6. From the continuation in II, 23, lines 25–26, the exchange rate appears to have been 1:3.5. See 344, n. 43 and 172, n. 27.}

⁹ For this *drky*, see 331, n. 11.

¹⁰ {Arabic *qafas*, a basket made of palm leaves. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 131–32: 'cage, a basket with a cover made of palm fronds, in which were kept dishes, plates, cups, and other tableware made of brass or earthenware, glass of various descriptions and food.' See Goitein, ib., 6:16 (index) for the different kinds of baskets mentioned in the Geniza papers. According to Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 408, *qafas* is a box, or a metal box. In the other documents in this book the *qafas* is used regularly for breakables.}

¹¹ Arabic *kharj*, see II, 16, line 45.

¹² Arabic *zabādiyya*. I do not believe that this form could be used instead of the plural *zabādī*; see II, 32, line 49. A bowl costing 96 Malīkī, or 24 Egyptian, dinars must have been incrustated with figures and inscriptions in silver or another costly metal. Ben Yijū had probably ordered it for a high-standing personage in India.

¹³ The debit of Ben Yijū, as far as preserved, amounts to (300 + 424 + 24½ + 96 =) 844½. Thus only (880½ – 844½ =) 36 Malīkī dinars are unaccounted for.

[B. Losses from the sinking of a boat on its way to Mangalore, India]

By God, the Almighty, last year (9) I sent on my own account,¹⁴ in the boat in which (10) Saydān traveled, (goods) the like of which I have never sent by sea. What (11) belonged to me would have taken care of all the packed wares kept back¹⁵ (12) in Mangalore, so that all the cargo (of the returning ship) would have been mine, (13) with no one else having a share in it. But He decreed upon one (Saydān) for whom I am sorry.¹⁶ Most (14) of the cargo of the (outgoing) ship's space¹⁷ was exclusively mine, and (15) [II, 22 (11)] there was in the ship an unlimited amount (16) [II, 22 (12)] of diversified goods. Never has a ship like this sailed [II, 22] (13) to India. But God ordered this, and there is (14) no escape from Him and from His judgment. He, who has the power to decree, (15) decrees.¹⁸ God, the Exalted, may recompense me and you (16) and everyone! God is my witness that (17) my anguish over the losses of o[thers is greater than that] (18) over my own. For it is hard¹⁹ [...]

¹⁴ Arabic *li-rūhī* {Pimenta, *Dictionary*, 191: "by myself"}.

¹⁵ Arabic *ʾl-shdʿh al-mutawwaha*. The verb *tawwaha*, in the sense of 'to keep back,' and *tatawwaha*, to tarry, to stay put, not to sail, not to travel, is common in the India papers {cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:155}. The noun *shadda* as the general term for anything packed, ready to be sent, is equally frequent. See, e.g., Ibn Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabsir*, 139, line 14, and I, 1*v*, line 10 (textiles), II, 14, line 11 (mats). The plural is written *shdʿh*, that is *h* for *t* (*tāʾ marbūta* for *shaddāt*, *tāʾ tawīla*), a spelling not uncommon after a long *ā*. {This spelling does not seem to be listed in Blau, *Grammar*.} After the great losses suffered in 1132 (see II, 20, sec. E), Maḍmūn was unable to get all the wares ordered by him in Mangalore. In 1134 he hoped to reclaim all the old orders together with the new ones, Arabic *wal-ladhī* (11) *kān li-rūhī mā yuʿammar bihi ʾl-shaddāt al-mutawwaha*. See page 350, n. 84.

¹⁶ Arabic *sabbab li-man yaʿizz ʿalayya*. One regrets the death of a business friend before complaining about one's own losses. {See II, 48*v*, lines 10 ff, where the opposite order appears.}

¹⁷ I read *rabʿ*, area, space, not *rubʿ*, quarter.

¹⁸ {Arabic *al-amr li-ṣāhib al-amr*, could also be translated 'authority belongs to the Commander' or the like. For these terms, see Lewis, *Language*, 34.}

¹⁹ Arabic *yaṣʿub* {the vowel over *y* may be *u* rather than *a*; *yusʿaʿib*, 'it makes it difficult'}. Ben Yijū's losses, 880½ dinars (see the note to II, 21, line 8), were indeed colossal for a novice in the India trade {that figure includes the 300 dinars, which Ben Yijū owed from the settlement with Makhlūf, above, lines 1–3, which was not, of course due to the shipwreck}. Ben Yijū's long sojourn in that country (eighteen years, 1131/2–49) was certainly caused by his bad start with two shipwrecks. {Ben Yijū suffered losses from the sinking of Rāmishī's two ships (III, 1, lines 8–11) and total loss from the sinking of Maḍmūn's ship (V, 6, lines 11–13, which seems to refer to a ship other than the one described here).}

[C. Bad conduct of Bama in Aden; arrival of a shipment of pepper]

[II, 23] (1) And after this he [Bama]²⁰ went and rented himself a place and said, (2) “Provide me with sufficient living expenses.” So he took from me (3) eight dinars for living expenses during four months. Most of the (4) time he came to me under the influence of drink, not hearing (5) a word I said. I don’t know what purpose you had, my lord, (6) in sending him.

Your (load of) pepper arrived, (7) that is the one in the ship of the *nākhudā* Abu ’l-Ḥasan b. Abu (8) ’l-Katā’ib. The weight: twenty-two *bahārs* and sixty pounds.

[D. The raid on Aden by the ships of the ruler of the island of
Kīs (Qays)]²¹

(9) This year, at the beginning of seafaring time,²² the son of al-‘Amīd, (10) the ruler of Kīs,²³ sent an expedition against Aden. He had demanded part of Aden,²⁴ which (11) was refused, whereupon he sent this expedition. His fleet consisted of two *burmas* {read: *nrmbs*},²⁵ (12) three *shaffāras*,²⁶

²⁰ Bama, Ben Yijū’s Indian servant and agent (referred to below, II, 23, lines 42, 45 and II, 24, lines 4, 8), was evidently mentioned in the preceding gap in the manuscript.

²¹ The complicated story of this event as well as its date (1135) are discussed in II, 46. See also Goitein, “Kīsh,” 247–57. {See also Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:67, 523.

²² Arabic *awwal al-waqt*; see 316, n. 23.}

²³ The dot above the (Hebrew) letter *sh* is on its left side, indicating that it was to be pronounced *s*. In Streck, “Qays,” the first of the various Persian forms of the name of that island is noted as *Kīs*. See also Lassner, “Qays,” 832. {Also see Whitehouse, “Kish.”

²⁴ Arabic *quṭ’a min ‘Adan*; see the introduction to II, 46. *Quṭ’a* is vocalized with *u* (*ḍamma*) in the original and means ‘plot of land.’ Note that *qit’a*, means ‘a share in port revenues.’ For this meaning and the use of the term in connection with Kīs (Qays), see Serjeant, *Portuguese*, 178.}

²⁵ The *burma*, lit., ‘pot,’ was a large, roundish ship. {The original clearly has *nrmty*n (cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:523, n. 97). The *nrmh* may be intended in the corrupt name of the type of ship that participated in the attack; cf. Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabsir*, 124, line 6 (from Goitein’s Hebrew version).}

²⁶ The *shaffāra*, a smaller boat escorting a bigger one, was capable of carrying a sizable cargo. {The *shaffāra* is also mentioned in III, 12, lines 11, 16, 23, 45; III, 22, lines 11, 13, 15, 20, 21; verso, line 3. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:523, n. 97: “oar-propelled galleys, *shaffāra*, ‘cutting the waves,’ like a *shafia*, a large sharp knife.” Goitein, *ib.*, 1:312 probably intended this, when he cited as the name of a ship “‘butcher’s knife’ (cutting the waves wonderfully?).” Note that *shaffār* means ‘plunderer’; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:770a. In the introduction to III, 22, Goitein commented that the *shaffāra* was “intended to protect the larger ship against pirates but also carried a certain amount of freight.” Margariti, “Aden,” 207–8, explains that this was done for risk-management. Smaller and larger ships are also mentioned in II, 55, lines 10–11 (where a smaller vessel called a *jalba* carried soldiers), III, 10,

and ten *jāshujjīyyas*,²⁷ altogether manned with (13) about 700 men. They anchored in the harbor (*makalla'*) of Aden,²⁸ lying in wait for (14) (the incoming) ships, but did not enter the town. The people of the town were very much (15) afraid of them, but God did not give them victory and success. (16) Many of their men were killed, their ships were pierced (with spears), and they died of thirst (17) and hunger.

The first of the merchants' fleet²⁹ to arrive were the two vessels of the *nākhudā* (18) Rāmish. ³⁰ They (the enemy) attacked them, but God did not give them victory. As soon as the two ships (19) entered the port (*bandar*),³¹ they were boarded by a large number of regular troops,³² (20) whereupon they (the enemy) were driven from the port and began to disperse {alt. tr.: go in circles} on the open sea. (21) Thus, God did not give them victory. They made off in the most ignominious way, having suffered great losses (22) and humiliation {alt. tr.: having suffered many killed and great losses}.³³

[E. Poor market in Egypt caused a considerable decline in the price of pepper in Aden]

The news from Egypt was mediocre. (23) (As a result) goods sold poorly, and there was no demand for even a dirhem's worth of pepper (24) or (other) merchandise, except a week before sailing. (25) Had I asked the

lines 25, 28 (where we read that the smaller ship arrived safely in Aden but the larger one foundered); III, 23, lines 5 ff.; III, 28a, lines 13, 17. For small boats carried on larger ships to trade with small ports or small escorting boats that served as lifeboats and for the soldiers that accompanied merchant vessels, see Lewis, "Maritime Skills," 241, n. 1; Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*, 33–36, 46. Smith, *Studies*, chap. 4, 111, quotes the translation of a passage from Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣir*, 143, line 5, on commodities for which customs were not collected in the port of Aden: "... Abyssinian traders (*saffārah*) arrived, bringing sheep and goats," etc. Perhaps read *shaffāra*.)

²⁷ The *jāshujjīyya*, derived from Persian *jāshū*, mariner, probably was a launch used in warfare, especially for landing operations. {Maḍmūn outfitted four *jāshujjīyyas*, which were sent to the Yemenite port of Zabīd for a battle there: V, 9, margin and top.}

²⁸ For the two harbors of Aden, see II, 46.

²⁹ Arabic *jihāz*.

³⁰ See page 145.

³¹ {For *bandar*, cf. Pimenta, *Dictionary*, 41.}

³² Arabic *al-dīwān*, fighting men registered with the government; see II, 46, line 25. {The word *askar* is used there. Pimenta, *Dictionary*, 163, does not list this meaning for *dīwān*, but note the passage from an apocalypse quoted there with the phrase *al-dīwāyīn wa-l-muqāṭila* 'the *dīwāns* and the combatants'; the first word is not translated there. Cf. 444, n. 27.

³³ Cf. II, 46, line 28.

owners of the pepper for the 'tithe,'³⁴ they would have sold it (26) for less than 20.³⁵ So I was patient with them for the 'tithe' (27) up to the day of sailing, until people³⁶ came from all over (28) and the price of pepper was fixed at 23 dinars per *bahār*.³⁷

[F. Ben Yijū's credits]

The proceeds (29) of the pepper listed above³⁸ amounted to 510½ dinars (30) and two *qirāṣ* (1/12).

The sack³⁹ of cardamom, delivered by Yāqūt al-Tanjī⁴⁰ (31) at the sale in the 'house,'⁴¹ turned out to weigh one *bahār* and 222 (32) pounds, price (per *bahār*) 48 (dinars); total {alt. tr.: proceeds} 83½ dinars. The weight of the other (33) sack was two *bahārs* less seven pounds,⁴² at a price of 45 (dinars); (34) total {alt. tr.: proceeds} 89 dinars.

Also your credit: Yāqūt delivered, (35) in exchange for half an (Egyptian) *mithqāl*, which you {alt. tr.: he} still owed, two (Malikī) dinars

³⁴ Arabic *'ushūr*, also in the next line, see II, 16, line 11 and 322, n. 6.}

³⁵ For less than 20 dinars per *bahār*. {Instead of *bi-dūna*, 'for less than,' Margariti, "Aden," 185, n. 43, must have mistakenly read *bi-dīn.*, as she transcribes *bi-dinār*.}

³⁶ Arabic *al-nās*, used for traveling merchants; see 239, n. 4.}

³⁷ Maḍmūn was in charge of the customs house of Aden. About the fixing of the prices, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:218. {For the effect of the ships' sailing on the price of pepper, cf. 330, n. 8.}

³⁸ No. II, 23, line 8.

³⁹ {Arabic *jūniya*, also lines 32, 40. Goitein, *Letters*, 286, n. 46: "[Used] especially for the transport of corals. Known to me only from the Geniza." For *jūniya*, pl. *jawānī*, see also Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 79, where sources other than the Geniza are cited and where its use for grain, sugar and rice is noted. Here it is used for transporting cardamom. Its use for transporting corals is mentioned in VI, 26, line 6, VII, 22, 5; for iron in III, 18, account A, lines 8, 9, and for rice, in III, 24, lines 2–5.}

⁴⁰ From Tangier, Morocco, situated on the Strait of Gibraltar. As his name Yāqūt ('Sapphire') indicates, the man was a slave or a freedman.

⁴¹ {Arabic *al-dār*.} I.e., 'the House of Prosperity,' *al-dār al-sa'āda*, mentioned in VI, 27, lines 20–21 (a letter addressed to Maḍmūn), a warehouse and bourse in Aden, almost certainly identical with the *dār al-sa'āda*, which was situated opposite the Furḍa, the customs house, mentioned by Abū Makhrama in his description of the town. See Löfgren, *Aden*, 10–13, especially, 10–11. Our letters corroborate Abū Makhrama's surmise that 'The House of Prosperity' existed before Tuḡhtekīn, the Ayyubid ruler of Yemen (1182 {1183}–97) renovated the building. As Abū Makhrama reports, originally, it was a creation of Muslim merchants from Egypt. {Also cf. II, 48, line 21; III, 28a, line 20.}

⁴² For the weights of the two sacks, see below line 40.}

(36) less one-quarter.⁴³ Total of your assets: (37) 685 dinars, less one-sixth.⁴⁴

[G. Ben Yijū's debits]

(38) You owe: the 'tithe'⁴⁵ on the pepper, $155\frac{1}{3}$ dinars and two *qīrāts* ($\frac{1}{12}$); (39) the cost of baskets of palm leaves and the porter, $2\frac{1}{2}$ dinars and two *qīrāts* ($\frac{1}{12}$); (40) for two sacks of cardamom, (whose) weight in the Furḍa was three *bahārs* and 109 {read: 110} pounds,⁴⁶ (41) the 'tithe' was $19\frac{1}{2}$ dinars.

You owe (also): the living expenses (42) of your servant for four months, from Iyyar to the end of Ab: 8 (43) dinars;⁴⁷ the registration

⁴³ For half a *mīthqāl*, Yāqūt received only 1.75 Adenese dinars (instead of 2, see 339, n. 6), certainly because that Egyptian coin was not of full weight. {Alternatively, this could have been the exchange rate. A literal translation of this passage would be 'And to his (i.e., your) credit, from Yāqūt's delivery, exchange for half an (Egyptian) *mīthqāl*, remaining with him,' etc. 'With him' renders '*indahu*, which in accounting means 'he owes.' In the context of Ben Yijū's credits, 'you owe(d)' seems incongruous. I assume that the pronominal suffix in question here refers to Yāqūt. He may have been settling his own accounts with Ben Yijū with Maḡmūn's assistance.

⁴⁴ $510\frac{1}{2} + \frac{2}{24} + 83\frac{1}{2} + 89 + 1\frac{3}{4} = 684\frac{5}{6}$.

⁴⁵ Arabic '*ushūr*, also below, line 41; see II, 16, line 11, and 322, n. 6. The custom dues were levied in accordance with the weight, not the price of the pepper. Here (in the year 1135) $155\frac{1}{2}$ dinars were paid for these dues for 22 *bahārs* and 60 pounds (see II, 23, line 8), that is, seven dinars per bale, but ca. 30% of the price of $510\frac{1}{2}$ dinars—outright robbery. The tariff of seven dinars for one bale of pepper occurs also in II, 16, lines 7–8, 11 {and in III, 28a, lines 7–8}. However, according to Abū Makhrama (Löfgren, *Aden*, 58–59) {or rather, Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣīr*, 140}, a new rate of eight dinars per *bahār* was introduced under the Zuray'īd dynasty by a Jew named Khalaf al-Nihāwandī (from Nihāwand in Persia, south of Ḥamadhān). In IV, 1, lines 5–6, 18, a letter written about five years after ours, the dues were indeed eight dinars per *bahār*.

⁴⁶ In the 'House of Prosperity' the weight of the cardamom (1 *bahār*, 222 pounds, plus one *bahār*, 293 pounds) amounted to three *bahārs*, 215 pounds; see lines 30–33, above. Here, after arrival in Aden, in the customs house, the total was three *bahārs*, 109 {read: 110} pounds. The weight did not increase while the cardamom was carried from the customs house to the 'House of Prosperity' situated in front of it. Perhaps, at customs, some favors were granted to a dedicated business friend like Ben Yijū. {Cf. Margariti, "Aden," 187–88, who makes a similar suggestion. In II, 49v, line 7 (cf. IV, 1, line 6), we read of a 'reduction' or 'shortage' in weight at the sale (Arabic '*inda al-bay' naqṣ nd raṭl min wazn al-ful[ful]*', 'at the sale, a reduction/shortage of 54 pounds from the weight of the pep[per]'). The difference in weight between the customs house and the sale described in II, 23, can hardly be explained in terms of a special reduction given in the customs house, as the opposite could not have been the case in the second document. No. III, 28, lines 7–8, also seems to speak of a decrease when the commodity was weighed. As shown by Guo, *Commerce*, 46, such discrepancies in weight were frequently noted in the thirteenth century documents from the Red Sea port of Quṣayr.}

⁴⁷ In 1135, the Jewish month of Iyyar began on the 16th of April and the month of Ab ended on the 11th of August. Bama's ship, then, had arrived from India about the

fee⁴⁸ for the captain⁴⁹ Bakhtiyār, one dinar; the sum of (44) five *niṣāfi*⁵⁰ (for) glass and five cups {alt. tr.: jars},⁵¹ firmly set {alt. tr.: of *muḥkam* glass} in baskets,⁵² a dinar; (45) given to Bama, a quarter-dinar for purchasing glass tumblers;⁵³ (46) four Berbera mats and {alt. tr.: for} one *niṣāfi*; a hide—one dinar; (47) an iron pan—two-thirds d.; a sieve one-third d.; (48) for a *niṣāfi*, twelve pounds of soap; two chickpea-patterned (dotted) (49) Egyptian *fūṭas*, worth four dinars; a woolen fulled *fūṭa*, (50) 3½ dinars. The total of all these {add: retail} items [(51) . . . five *bahārs* of yellow copper . . . the tax for the yellow copper]⁵⁴ [II, 24] (1) 4⅓ dinars. And also, in the ship of the *nākhudā* Abu 'l-Ḥasan,⁵⁵ (2) a piece of lead; the weight: two hundred and sixty pounds; the price: (3) 17⅓ dinars; the

beginning of April and set sail on the way back in the middle of August. At the time of the writing of our letter, four Adenese dinars were worth one Egyptian *mithqāl*; see 339, n. 6 and 344, n. 43. Bama received the equivalent of half a *mithqāl* per month, about 20 silver pieces (dirhems), a sum often given to a wife, when the husband traveled away, or to a widow or divorcee; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:191, and *passim*. Thus Bama did not fare badly and had money enough for *'araqī* (brandy made of dates).

⁴⁸ Arabic *satmī*; see II, 16, line 30.

⁴⁹ Arabic *rubbān*. Bakhtiyār's son, Aḥmad b. Bakhtiyār, was a shipowner, *nākhudā*; see II, 20, lines 1, 25, 28. He had risen economically and socially, unless *nākhudā* was used also loosely as a synonym for 'captain,' which does not seem likely. {See page 150, for the possibility that *nākhudā* means captain in that passage.}

⁵⁰ For *niṣāfi*, see 333, line 34. {There it is defined as half dinar, and it is not clear that that fits here.}

⁵¹ Glass tumblers for household use. Cups, Arabic *niṭāl*, for the more common *arṭāl*. {The manuscript reads *raṭ'ly*, which also appears in III, 24, line 18 (there 'four jars filled with [19] oil and sour juice'). While I have not seen this word in the dictionaries, it is evidently plural (*raṭālī* [= *raṭālī*^m] or *raṭālā*) of *raṭliya*, a pint flask, for which see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:535, *raṭliyat zajāj*. Cf. *arṭāl* in II, 44, line 19 (see 423, n. 34); III, 10, lines 42, 43.}

⁵² Baskets: Arabic *shutūt*; the plural of *shatt*, a small woven basket that holds a cup firmly. Such little baskets, with their cups, are still widely used in Yemen today and bear the same name with the same plural; see Goitein, *Jemenica*, 90, no. 604 {cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 245}. 'Firmly set,' Arabic *muḥkam*. The same usage in identical circumstances is found in II, 26, line 9; III, 1v, line 10. The word is in the masculine because it is used adverbially. {In all three instances, *muḥkam* follows *bi-shatt* or *bi-shutūt*, 'in basket(s),' and accordingly was translated 'firmly set.' However, according to al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 314–15, *muḥkam*, literally, 'compact' or 'tight,' is a type of glass, perhaps that known in art history as 'Hedwig glass.' If so, we would translate here: 'jars—in baskets—of *muḥkam* glass.'} The following household items recur in several accounts.

⁵³ {Arabic *aqdāḥ*. For the *qadāḥ* (sg.), see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:148, 394, n. 76; cf. 423, n. 33.}

⁵⁴ The restoration is based on a reconstruction of the account reflected in the letter.

⁵⁵ Abu 'l-Ḥasan b. Abu 'l-Katā'ib, whose ship had brought the pepper from India, II, 23, lines 7–8. A ship of Rāmīsh that arrived in Aden returned from there to India without continuing to Red Sea ports such as Dahlak and 'Aydhāb; cf. II, 16, lines 3, 47.

export tax from the Furḍa, $\frac{1}{3}$ d.;⁵⁶ Bama (4) has one dinar for buying water and cabin⁵⁷ equipment.

Your total (5) debt: 653 dinars. Balance in your favor: (6) 32 dinars.⁵⁸ {Add: Your debit:}⁵⁹ Sent to you with Abu 'l-Khayr,⁶⁰ (7) 32 dinars.

[H. A shipment of gifts]

I have sent to you with Sheikh Abu (8) 'l-Khayr and Bama a gift from me to you: 10 (?) *rubā'yyas*⁶¹ of (9) sugar and raisins, as well as a *dast*⁶² of white paper. As for the paper, for two years now (10) it has been impossible to get any (in the market), and I have given you this from (the stock) (11) I keep for myself.⁶³ I have sent you a piece (made) of corals for your son Surūr⁶⁴ (12) and a quarter {add: *mikyāl*} of seeds.⁶⁵ Please be sure to take delivery of all this.

[I. Note about the settlement with Makhlūf]

(13) Together with my letter, a letter from Makhlūf 'The Orphan'⁶⁶ was dispatched to you, (14) which he had sent from 'Aydhāb. I have more

⁵⁶ In II, 16*v*, line 11 there was no mention of an exit toll on lead, although the shipment there was larger and costlier than the one here (28 $\frac{7}{12}$ dinars there, 17 $\frac{1}{3}$ here). An exit toll on *dky* is found at the beginning of our letter, II, 21, line 5, and, according to our surmise, on copper, here, II, 24, line 1.

⁵⁷ Arabic *balīj* or *bilīj*, see 260, n. 8. {Margariti, "Aden," 74, notes that this is apparently the only place in the India Book papers where purchase of water before sailing on a ship was mentioned.}

⁵⁸ See in our letter II, 23, line 37, where Ben Yijū's assets amounted to 684 $\frac{2}{3}$ dinars. {The exact figure of the credit was 31 $\frac{1}{6}$, which Maḍm'un rounded out in Ben Yijū's favor.

⁵⁹ I.e., the balance of credit is transferred to the debit list, with the cash sent to Ben Yijū, to cancel the account.}

⁶⁰ See about him 314, n. 15 and the continuation here. {In that note, it is suggested that he might have been Abu 'l-Khayr, Ben Yijū's cousin.}

⁶¹ {For this measure, see 314, n. 14.}

⁶² A *dast* was a certain quantity that made up a set of a particular item; cf. 304, n. 9.

⁶³ Arabic *maḥfū'*, lit., 'kept on a high place,' see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:540 a: *Conserver, garder, mettre en réserve* {cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 185}. For the scarcity of paper, see II, 14, line 20; II, 16*v*, line 32.

⁶⁴ Corals served both as an ornament and as a protection of a child against the 'evil eye.' {I assume that Goitein added 'made' as a matter of style rather than substance.}

⁶⁵ Arabic *bizr baql*, probably seeds for nibbling, not seeds for planting herbs {see Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 36}. Not found elsewhere as sent as a gift. *Mikyāl* is a small measure for dry goods or liquids (Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 1302). {Cf. 465, n. 15.}

⁶⁶ See sec. A.

than twenty of his (15) letters, all of them worthless {alt. tr. utterly confused}—he is an old man in his dotage, and has become senile (16) in his old age {alt. tr.: utterly confused at the end of his life} and doesn't know what he is doing. As for the documents, (17) which I had made out in Muslim and Jewish (courts), wherein he releases (18) you from any claim, demand, responsibility or oath, they are in my (19) safekeeping and are certified by reliable witnesses.⁶⁷

[J. Receipt of betel nuts, teak wood and other Indian commodities sent by Ben Yijū in the preceding year; goods sent in exchange but lost in the shipwreck mentioned in sec. B]

(20) You mentioned the betel nuts, which you had sent to me with (21) Sheikh 'Abd al-Malik⁶⁸ last year, and the two boards (of teak wood),⁶⁹ I took delivery of (22) this and sent you last year in exchange, with Saydān, (23) sugar, raisins, and other {add: retail} items, but God ordained what He ordained.⁷⁰

As for the remaining (24) boards, Sheikh Joseph and Sheikh Khalaf⁷¹ took delivery (of them)—they were (25) owed them from the year (before).

[K. Minor affairs and greetings]

As for the *dky*,⁷² none has come this year (26) at all. And I was not able to get any indigo.⁷³

⁶⁷ {Arabic *al-shuhūd al-'ādila*. For the requirement of 'upright witnesses' in Islamic law (and their recognition by Jewish courts), see 528, n. 17.

⁶⁸ Evidently a Muslim merchant not mentioned elsewhere in the India Book papers. Mukhayyir b. 'Abd al-Malik, perhaps his son, carries merchandise for a Jewish trader according to VII, 51*v*, line 8.}

⁶⁹ As the small number of teak wood boards shows, these were required for repairs of, or additions to, buildings. As far as we know, Jews did not trade in Indian timber. The shipbuilders in Egypt certainly had their own vessels for transporting building materials. {Among its other uses, Indian teak was used for shipbuilding. See al-Hijji, "Shipbuilding," 14. The boards, which Ben Yijū took with him from India, in III, 24, lines 33, 34, were intended for furnishings of sorts.}

⁷⁰ On the shipwreck alluded to, see sec. B.

⁷¹ {Joseph b. Abraham and Khalaf b. Isaac, Maḍmūn's cousins and Ben Yijū's business associates.}

⁷² See 331, n. 11.

⁷³ Arabic *nīl*. 'Indian Indigo' was exported from India to the West. I do not believe that here indigo grown in Egypt or Palestine is referred to. It seems rather that Ben Yijū had inquired about the price of Indian indigo in Aden. Since none was on the market

Concerning what you mentioned about (27) Musallam al-Ka'kī,⁷⁴ he has not sent you a thing this year, nor have I (28) seen a letter of his.

Please accept for yourself and your son the best of greetings from me, (29) and convey my best regards to the illustrious *nākhudā* 'Alī al-Fawfalī.⁷⁵ (30) *And peace!*

[L. Postscripts in Maḍmūn's hand: (1) Request to deliver letters, sent in four boats, to addressees in Ben Yijū's place of sojourn and in Mangalore]

Know, my lord, that in the ship of the *nākhudā* (31) Rāmishṭ and in the ship of his two sons and two brothers-in-law {alt. tr.: and in the ship of his son and (the ship) of his son-in-law},⁷⁶ and in the ship of (32) the *nākhudā*

at that time, Maḍmūn was unable to report prices. Arabic *nīl* stands also for woad, *isatis tinctoria* (see Maimonides-Meyerhof, 122–23, sec. 249), just as Hebrew *isatis* (derived from the Greek) designates both woad and indigo. But by the twelfth century woad had long been replaced by the superior dye indigo; see Weibel, *Textiles*, 9. Woad was a common dyeing plant grown in Palestine in Mishnaic times (M. Kil'ayim 2:5, M. Shevi'it 7:1). {For indigo in the Islamic world, see Dietrich, "Nil" and especially Balfour-Paul, *Indigo*; and for exporting indigo from India to the West, see Chakravarti, "Indigo." For the sale of 'Indian indigo' in Aden, see II, 66v, lines 9, 27. In VI, 4, David wrote his brother Moses Maimonides that the only Eastern commodity on sale in 'Aydhāb was indigo; accordingly, he decided to continue his journey on to India (see Goitein, *Letters*, 210). In our letter, the words 'and I was not able to get any indigo' translate the Arabic *wal-nīl mā qadartu 'alaybi*. There is no word for 'get' in the original. But while *qadara*, lit. 'was able,' is used in many different contexts, the expression '*qadara 'alā* a commodity' appears repeatedly in the letters of this book in the sense 'was able to acquire X' (to ship to PN). Examples can be found in II, 14, line 20, II, 43, line 13, III, 5, line 3, III, 10, line 46, III, 15, line 40. This is implied by the context here as well, as the preceding and following sentences deal with goods to be sent to Ben Yijū. Accordingly, it would appear that this source attests the export of indigo from Yemen to India, and the matter requires further investigation.}

⁷⁴ Musallam = Hebrew *Meshullam*, a messianic name; see Goitein, "Meeting in Jerusalem," 51 {Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:613, n. 95}. Musallam is described in V, 2v, line 7 (written Jan.–Feb. 1134), as a young, inexperienced India trader, and is greeted in a letter from Aden, V, 8, margin, while staying in Fustat-Cairo {cf. II, 52, line 3}. Ka'kī, maker of 'bagels,' a family name. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:254, 2:297. The translation 'bagels' or 'pretzels' is approximate, since we know neither the composition of the dough nor the form that the *ka'k* had in those days and places.

⁷⁵ For 'Alī b. Maṣṣūr al-Fawfalī ("The Betel Nut Trader") see verso, lines 3, 11, 13. Both 'Alī and *Maṣṣūr* ("Helped by God," "Victor") were names common among Jews as among Muslims. Fawfalī did not only bear the title *nākhudā*, but was actually a ship-owner; see II, 55, line 17. But the fact that Maḍmūn entrusted him with all his affairs in Mangalore, big and small {as noted on verso}, proves that he specialized in business rather than in shipping {See further, page 143.}

⁷⁶ {Arabic *waladīh wa-ṣibrīh*. Goitein read both words with *y*, as duals: *waladayh wa-ṣibrayh*. (Maḍmūn's letters are made up here of small lines, one of which somewhat resembles *y*.) As four ships are mentioned in the continuation, Rāmishṭ's son and *ṣibr* obviously each owned his own ship. Besides brother-in-law, *ṣibr* also means father-in-

Abu 'l-Ḥasan b. Abu 'l-Katā'ib, four ships...⁷⁷ [Verso] (1) In each ship there is a bundle of letters for you and for Abraham (2) b. [[Yishū]] //Fayyūmī//,⁷⁸ for all the Bānyāns⁷⁹ of Mangalore, for the *nākhudā* (3) al-Fawfalī, and for 'Imrān and Sa'īd.⁸⁰ Please be sure to take delivery of (4) them all and take good care of them. Give the *nākhudā* (5) Bashīr⁸¹ his letter, and 'Imrān and Sa'īd their letters. (6) The letters for the people of Mangalore [[when Sheikh (7) Abraham b. Yishū arrives...him {read: soothe him with kind words}]]⁸² //take delivery of them and take good care// for me of the letters for the people in (8) Mangalore, since there

law and son-in-law, and in the present context, I prefer the latter. (According to Goitein, "R. Hananel," 376, in the Geniza, as in classical Arabic, writers differentiated between *shbr*, which refers to the sister's husband or the daughter's husband or the wife's brother or father, and *silf*, which refers to the wife's sister's husband.)

⁷⁷ It is not clear that anything is missing here. Apparently read with the continuation: "In the ships of Rāmishṭ, in the ship of his son, (in the ship of) his son-in-law and the ship of Abu 'l-Ḥasan, four ships, in each of which..." Multiple copies of letters were sent in several ships to ensure that despite the perils of sea travel at least one arrived safely. See page 9, n. 23.}

⁷⁸ See II, 20, line 29 {and III, 22v, lines 4–5, for this person} and III, 34, lines 24 and 32 {for another *Fayyūmī*}. *Al-Fayyūmī* (with the article {as the name appears several times in III, 35.}) would have denoted a man from the Fayyūm district in Egypt, but *Fayyūmī* is a given name chosen by the Jews of Yemen out of veneration for the great theologian and translator of the Bible into Arabic, Saadya al-Fayyūmī (882–942). The father of the Yemenite philosopher, Nethanel b. Fayyūmī, bore this name; see Talmage, "Nethanel" (where *al* is to be deleted). Likewise in Maimonides *Epistle to Yemen* (Halkin) (addressed to Jacob, Nethanel b. Fayyūmī's son), the correct reading, namely ben Fayyūmī, is in the manuscript quoted there on p. 1, n. 1. {Apparently the same individual is called *Fayyūmī* in III, 34 and *al-Fayyūmī* in III, 35; see Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 41, n. 85. Maḏmūn wrote here Yishū then tried to correct the letters to spell Fayyūmī. The correction was not successful, so he crossed out the name and wrote the correct name above the line (Goitein did not copy the deleted word); see below, n. 82.}

⁷⁹ The Hindu merchants. {See 315, n. 20.}

⁸⁰ Since these persons are mentioned without any honorific epithet, such as sheikh, *nākhudā*, Abū (father of), Ibn (son of), they were probably of low standing, but acted as business agents.

⁸¹ 'Harbinger of good tidings.' This Muslim (or Christian?) *nākhudā* shipowner was in close contact with Ben Yijū and the Adenese Jewish merchants; see III, 22, lines 2, 6, 9. While the name Bishr or Bushr, 'Good Tidings,' was common among Jews, Bashīr was next to unknown. Abraham b. Fayyūmī, the *nākhudā* al-Fawfalī, 'Imrān, Sa'īd, and the *nākhudā* Bashīr lived in the same place as Ben Yijū; probably in Fandarayna.

⁸² The crossed-out words had been written in a letter addressed to one of the merchants of Mangalore ("When Abraham b. Yishū [= Ben Yijū] arrives make sure that..."), and Maḏmūn's pen erroneously put these words here. {Goitein did not read the last word in the deleted phrase. To the extent that the consonantal decipherment I suggest (*kntb*) is correct, probably read *akhnithbu*, imperative (with suffix) of the fourth form of *khnith*. Goshen, *Dictionary*, 635–36, defines the second form *khannath*, 'soften (his voice).' Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:407, defines *khanith*, "doux, suave," and brings the expression *khanith al-kalām* ('having a sweet voice'). Also note the correction in line 2, where the deleted word was also not read by Goitein.}

are many matters {alt. tr.: I have many orders} in all of them (9) that have to be attended to {alt. tr.: so take good care of them}. Hand over to every one his letter (10) personally. By God! Take good care of all the letters {alt. tr.: Take this matter seriously!}⁸³ *And peace.*

[M. (2) Request to assist Abū ‘Alī al-Fawfalī, Maḍmūn’s representative, in all his errands, large and small]

(11) Especially in the letter to the *nākhudā* ‘Alī al-Fawfalī (12) I have many orders, and likewise (in the letters to) the Bānyāns of (13) Mangalore.

I have empowered the *nākhudā* ‘Alī al-Fawfalī (14) to sell the goods packed⁸⁴ and all the items {alt. tr.: their gear} (15) and to take possession of the shallow dish kept by Budah, (16) the son of Slslyty,⁸⁵ which had been left with him (17) by Abū Sa‘īd,⁸⁶ and to take possession of the large copper kettle (18) for cooking dates⁸⁷ which (19) Bnk Syty⁸⁸ has,

⁸³ This manner of repeating urgent matters again and again was common in the correspondence of both the Mediterranean and the Indian region {though the present case is somewhat excessive}. See in this letter, lines 22–23. {In the preceding lines, the urgency of taking care of the letters is repeatedly expressed by *taḥtifaḥ b-* or the like. In the last phrase by *Allāh Allah b-*. Below, line 22, *wa-llāh allāh fi ḥafḥ.*}

⁸⁴ See 340, n. 15. Since the goods held up in Mangalore could not be sent to Aden in the preceding year because the boat sailing there had sunk, Maḍmūn ordered them to be sold now where they were, perhaps because he had learned that the prices in Mangalore were good.

⁸⁵ An Indian (Sanskrit, Hindu or Dravidian) word (or words), whose pronunciation and meaning are problematic. For ‘shallow dish,’ *anjār*, see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:642a (taken from a 19th-century dictionary; but see Fraenkel, *Fremdwörter*, 68).

⁸⁶ This is Abū Sa‘īd b. Maḥfūz Ibn Jamāhir. See 331, n. 13.

⁸⁷ For making date wine or brandy? Cf. 345, n. 47. {‘Copper,’ Arabic *ṣufr*. For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11. The transfer of such a kettle is noted in III, 20, lines 6–7, accounts written in India.}

⁸⁸ *Banik* (pronounced *vanik*) *śreṣṭhin*, ‘Head of the merchants’ guild’ (Basham, *India*, 222). These vessels had been either ordered by Maḍmūn or sent to India for repair. {See Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, ix, *vanikēsan*, ‘a merchant,’ viii, *setṭi*, ‘merchant.’ Two *Setṭis* are mentioned in Maḍmūn’s letters to Ben Yijū, Sws *Setṭi*, II, 14v, line 1, and Bnk *Setṭi*, here II, 24v, line 19. Basham, *India*, 222: “There were many professional bankers and moneylenders [...], the *śreṣṭhins* (in Pāli, *setṭhi*). The *śreṣṭhin* was (...) usually a merchant as well.” Chakravarti, “Merchants of Konkan,” 209–10, discusses what appears to be a parallel to the term in the Geniza: “The term *śreṣṭhi* usually denotes a rich merchant, while *vanik* means a trader in general... But the combined epithet *śreṣṭhi-vanik*, figuring in the Bhādāna grant is rather unusual... may therefore point to a type of merchant who dealt in money matters... a money-merchant.” Our letter’s *Vanik-Setṭi* evidently did not restrict his dealings only to money.}

and to get the sandarac⁸⁹ (20) and all the {add: retail} items which are in the storeroom;⁹⁰ (21) he is empowered⁹¹ to take possession of everything which belongs to me there. (22) Please help him in this, and, by God, take care of (23) the letters—all of them! *And peace.*⁹²

⁸⁹ A resin from a tree with the same name, used in varnishes. Spelled here *ṣandarūs* for the more common *sandarūs* (as in VII, 36, line 17, where it is reported that none was to be had in Cairo).

⁹⁰ Maḍmūn kept a storeroom (or house) in the Indian port, as the prominent Cairene merchants had in Alexandria.

⁹¹ {Arabic *qad huwa wakilī*, lit., 'he is already my representative.' For *qad* used in nominal clauses in Yemenite texts, see Blau, "Dialects," 90 (two examples there from Goitein's India Book); Blau, *Grammar*, 182. *Qad* is used here for emphasis.

⁹² Goitein intended to discuss here the accounts in secs. A, F and G.}

II, 25–26 *Letter from Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan to Abraham Ben Yijū:
Two Fragments*

Aden, ca. 1134

II, 25. ENA 3616, f. 19

II, 26. ULC Or. 1081 J 3

The two fragments are written by Maḍmūn's clerk, repeatedly met before. Even though II, 26 suffered more water damage than II, 25, it is clear that the same paper is used in both fragments. The sheet is about 9 cm. wide, almost white, quite thin, with the fibers still clearly visible.

On the margin of the recto of both fragments a single line is added, the beginning of which in II, 25 is the direct continuation of the last line on II, 26. Much has been lost between the two fragments.

No. II, 25 is the beginning of the letter. Similar to II, 13, it contains within the body of the letter the full names of both the recipient and the sender, in addition to the 'address,' which has been preserved on the reverse of the page, opposite the beginning of the letter. {This also contains the names of the sender and recipient but not their localities. The recipient's address was unnecessary, since the letter was to be delivered by the bearer, who was acquainted with him.} The letter was sent from Aden, Maḍmūn's permanent residence, to India, as seen from his acknowledgment of the receipt of pepper shipments, one of which was transported by 'Alī b. Maṣṣūr al-Fawfalī (see page 143) and the other by Budah (see 350, lines 15–16). That II, 26 was sent to Ben Yijū, is proved by the blessings invoked upon his son Surūr and his slave Bama, verso, lines 8–9.

As its contents show, this letter was sent a year before II, 21–24. The settlement with Makhlūf, '{son of} the man with the gladdening eye' (II, 25, lines 12–13, II, 26, margin), the dispatch of 100 Egyptian *mithqāls* (II, 25, margin = II, 21, lines 4–5), the total of 881 or 880½ dinars owed by Ben Yijū 'for last year' (1134; II, 21, line 7 = II, 26v, line 1), and, above all, the many errands imposed on Saydān (Sīdān) b. Abu 'l-Faṭḥ (II, 26, lines 14–15, verso, lines 2–3) are reported here as actions just taken. In II, 21–24, it is reported that Saydān had perished with all he carried for Maḍmūn and Ben Yijū, and the sums mentioned are debts to be paid by the unhappy customer, who never received the goods ordered.

Although II, 21–24 is thus later than II, 25–26, it has been discussed first, for without the fuller story preserved in the former letter, the mutilated fragments II, 25–26, would have remained only partially

intelligible. On the other hand, II, 25–26 has contributed to a better understanding of II, 21–24, and contains some new and interesting information.

Translation

[A. Salutations; receipt of the addressee's letter]

[II, 25] (1) *Peace without limit¹ and blessings without (2) number, to my esteemed lord, our master and teacher Abraham (3) the son of his honor, great and holy master and lord Yījū—may he rest in Eden! From your friend Maḍmūn (4), b. Ḥasan—may he rest in Eden!* Your letter arrived, my lord; (5) I read and understood it, and was happy to learn that you were well (6) and your affairs successful, and thanked God² for this (7) very much.

[B. Receipt of shipments; Makhlūf's suit; Ben Yījū's credits]

Your servant took notice of what (8) you mentioned regarding the shipment of pepper (9) with the most illustrious *nākhudā*, my lord 'Alī (10) b. Maṣṣūr al-Fawfalī—may God preserve his honored position!—(11) and of the one in Budah's ship. [E]verything has arrived. (12) {add:

¹ Based on Isa. 9:6; the following phrase is added as a parallel. Not common in the opening of letters.

² {Writers of Judeo-Arabic usually wrote God's name in Arabic, Allāh, with the regular Hebrew characters, 'llh. In several manuscripts, however, we find that they used special symbols, similar to or identical with those used in writing God's name in Hebrew, with or without various abbreviations of 'llh. (Scheidlin, "Merchants," 327, who states that Allāh is always spelled in full in Judeo-Arabic is to be corrected.) A few examples of this are found already in papyri (thanks to Prof. Moshe Gil for calling this to my attention); see Blau, *Studies*, 464–65 (in a study written together with S. Hopkins). For such abbreviations and symbols in Geniza documents, see Goitein, "Additional Material," 26 (cited by Blau); Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 144, n. 249, where I called attention to the similarity of one such symbol to those used in writing God's name in Hebrew. This practice was followed to avoid desecration of the divine name. Known authorities in Jewish law did not require such precautions when writing God's name in any language other than Hebrew. (Late authorities call attention to Maimonides, "Yesode ha-Torah" 6:5, as proof that such writings did not require preserving through *genizā*. Thanks to the Cairo Geniza and other manuscript collections, we can now examine many of Maimonides' writings in which he wrote Allāh with no symbols or abbreviations.) Here the writer writes 'l followed by a symbol, which resembles the Hebrew letter *tet*. The same appears in several other manuscripts in this book. In some, the symbol follows the letters 'll. In others, the symbol appears alone and sometimes takes other shapes. Students of these manuscripts have not always recognized the symbols. The writer of IV, 53c, spells 'lh.}

[I in]f[orm]} my lord that [Makhlūf], {add: son of the man} with the gladdening eye³ (13) [...has arrived in Aden...] to sue you (14) [asking for] a (Muslim) document⁴ [...] [II, 26 (remnants of a line before the first)] [Total to your credit: eight]t h[undred] (1) [and eighty] dinars and a half.

[C. Ben Yijū's debits]

You owe: the price of the nougat,⁵ (2) [a product of] the highlands,⁶ three dinars less one-fourth; on account of {lit., 'and for'} (3) the *nākhudā* Abū Sa'īd,⁷ the price of wheat (sent) from Mangalore,⁸ (4) three dinars; the price of durra (millet), 1 $\frac{1}{6}$ dinars; the price of (5) two Egyptian *fūṭas*, four dinars; the price of a *sharābiyya*,⁹ (6) 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ dinars; the cost of a *maqta*,¹⁰ 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ dinars; (7) the cost of Lakhabi¹¹ glass, three-quarters of a dinar; the price of (8) a *dast*¹² of Egyptian tumblers, six *qirāts*; the price of (9) four

³ In the singular. In II, 21, line 1, and VI, 1, line 7, the dual: *'aynayn*.

⁴ See II, 24, lines 16–17. Arabic *hujja*, if mentioned together with legal actions made both before Muslim and Jewish authorities, refers to the former. {But since the text is fragmentary here, it cannot be ascertained that a Muslim document is intended. Cf., e.g., II, 20, line 38, where Maḍmūn acknowledges receipt of a *hujja* written by Ben Yijū.}

⁵ Arabic *jawziya*, a confection made from nuts, abbreviated from *ḥalāwa jawziyya* (see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:234).

⁶ That is, the highlands of Yemen. Arabic *al-jabal*; cf. II, 14, line 26.

⁷ Abū Sa'īd b. Maḥfūz; see II, 20, lines 15, 23, 30, 39, and *passim*.

⁸ Wheat was not grown in Mangalore but was brought there from Aden (see III, 10, line 46), and sent from there to Abu Sa'īd, who probably stayed at that time in the place of residence of Ben Yijū.

⁹ For *sharābiyya*, see Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 55 (made in Fasā, south-east of Shirāz) and 78 (in Tabaristan, northern Iran). However, here and in {II, 49, line 0 (!); IV, 1, line 11, a piece of clothing manufactured in Egypt is intended. Serjeant's explanation, 'a garment made of a special type of linen,' seems to derive the word from *sharb*. But *sharāb* means wine, drinking bout. Possibly, this was a material of vivid colors, as worn at revelry. {Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 54, mentions, without reference, *sharāb* linen. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:147–48, discusses another type of *sharābiyya*, a table vessel; cf. Diem, *Dictionary*, 113.}

¹⁰ See 325, n. 26.

¹¹ Lakhaba was a place 'two farsakh (parasangs), less one-quarter (about 10 km.) from Aden,' from which bricks and glass were brought to Aden; see Löfgren, *Aden*, 22, line 2. {Cf. Margariti, "Aden," 88 ff.}

¹² A *dast* was a certain quantity that made up a set of a particular item; cf. 304, n. 9.

bottles, firmly set in baskets {alt. tr.: in baskets, of *muhkam* glass},¹³ carried by Ibn Qaṭṭūs,¹⁴ (10) one *niṣāfi*.¹⁵

You also owe (for what) is in the ship of Rāmishṭ, (11) transported by ʿUmar al-Bundārī:¹⁶ a bag of red copper,¹⁷ (12) the number: fifteen pieces, the weight: a *bahār* (13) and a half; the price, including the export tax from the Furḍa of Aden: (14) 90 dinars.

You also owe (for what) is transported by Saydān b. (15) Abu ʿl-Faṭḥ: two stones of silver, the weight: six hundred (16) and five dirhems; the price, 124¹⁸ dinars [II, 25 (Margin)] and one-third, and a purse in which there are 100 Egyptian *mithqāls*;¹⁹ the price: [... You owe a total of 581] [II, 26] (Margin) dinars and a half, plus settlement payment to Sheikh Makhlūf, 300 dinars. The total of what [II, 26] (Verso) (1) you owe: 881 dinars.

(2) The gold and the silver and the clothes (were sent to you) with Saydān (3) b. Abu ʿl-Faṭḥ and the glass with Ibn Qaṭṭūs.

¹³ {See 345, n. 52.}

¹⁴ This Latin form (*catūs*) of the word *cat* seems to have been rather common among Jews. TS 13J1, f. 15, line 4, ed. Assaf, *Texts*, 62 {Gil, *Palestine*, 3:534–35, no. 608}. Ḥusayn b. Hillel, known as Qaṭṭūs, appears in court in Bāniyās, Palestine, in 1059 {1056}. In TS AS 145, f. 9 an Ibn Qaṭṭūs and his brother contribute to a public appeal. An Abū Saʿīd Ibn Qaṭṭūs, who refused to comply with a summons to court, Bodl. MS. Heb. e. 94, fol. 28; might have been identical with our Ibn Qaṭṭūs, for that document is in the hand of Abū Zikrī Kohen, on whom see chap. 5. In the Geniza documents the word is spelled with a *shadda* (*tt*), as in Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:366 a–b. {An Ibn Qaṭṭūs is mentioned in JRL Gaster Add. 23-6, a fragmentary letter apparently dealing with the India trade.}

¹⁵ For this coin see 333, line 34.

¹⁶ A Muslim. A mosque in Aden bore the name of Ibn Bundār; see Löfgren, *op. cit.*, 257, line 3. I do not think that the writer, whose grandfather was called ʿBundār; would mention a member of his family in this way. Moreover, ʿUmar is not a Jewish name, but in Hebrew spelling the word could be read also as ʿAmr. {See Goitein, “Three Trousseaux,” 96, n. 47: “typical Arabic names such as ʿOmar or ʿAmr... were common among Syro-Palestinian Jews.” A search of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, produces six different Bundārs, one Madmūn’s grandfather and the other five Muslims, one of them Abū ʿAmr/ʿUmar Bundār al-Isbahānī an Arab philologist; see on him Fleisch, “Ibn Lizza.” Al-Faṭḥ b. ʿAlī al-Bundārī was a thirteenth century historian; cf. Houtsma, “al-Bundārī.”}

¹⁷ Arabic *ṣufr* (also verso, line 1). For the meaning of this term, see page 555, n. 11.

¹⁸ Written (in Hebrew letters serving as numerals) קכq = 100/ d = 4/k = 20. See 339, n. 8.}

¹⁹ Written here *mithqāla(n)*. The clerk knew that classical Arabic grammar requires sometimes the addition of *a(n)* after a number; but wrote it here in the wrong place. {For vestiges of the *tanwin an*, see the discussion and references in 751–52.}

[D. Personal note; greetings and gifts]

(4) By God, this year I have had (5) such burdens²⁰ that I cannot recount (them). (6) I am writing this letter of mine in a state (7) that only God, the Exalted, knows.

Please accept, my lord, (8) wishes for the most consummate well-being for yourself; your son Surūr (9) and Bama are especially greeted.

(10) (Your servant) has sent a gift to your son—(11) six *rubā'īyyas* of su[gar] and raisins, and a flask (lit., 'piece' {alt. tr.: unit}) (12) of rose water.²¹

[E. Address]

[In Arabic letters, on II, 25*v*] (1) To his excellency, the most illustrious elder, my lord Ibrāhīm (2) b. Īshū, the Maghrebi, the Israelite.

(1) (From) His servant (2) Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan b. Bundār.

[In Hebrew letters, on II, 25*v*] (1) *To my esteemed lord, light of my eyes, (2) our master and teacher Abraham, the son of his honor, great and holy (3) Yījū—may he rest in Eden!*

(1) (From) *Your friend Maḍmūn, (2) the son of Hasan—may he rest in Eden!*

²⁰ The *ashghāl* alluded to here are, of course, not identical with the losses described in II, 20, margin and verso, which refer to the year 1133. Maḍmūn means he was occupied with many affairs, commercial and public. {Cf. II, 20, line 43, and 333, n. 28. *Ashghāl* can be translated 'preoccupations.'

²¹ Cf. II, 20*v*, lines 8–9.}

II, 27 *Letter from Maḏmūn b. Ḥasan to Abraham Ben Yijū: First Pick of Merchandise for Bilāl b. Jarīr*

{Aden, between 1136–38 and 1139 or 1145–49}

ENA NS 48, f. 2¹

A note written by Maḏmūn, penned by one of his clerks, in which he describes the highhanded tactics of Bilāl b. Jarīr,² the governor of Aden and Maḏmūn's occasional business partner, who took first pick of merchandise in the city.

{The fragment comes from the bottom of a (copy of a) letter and contains two sections, both truncated, with only the end of the first and the beginning of the second preserved. The larger section [A] describes Bilāl's habit of demanding the first pick of goods in the port and specifically of *drky*, a commodity exported from Aden to India, which was sometimes not available (see 347, line 25; 366). Elsewhere, another Adenese merchant accuses the partners Bilāl and Maḏmūn of the same high-handed behavior (611, lines 27 ff.). As the Geniza demonstrates, governments of different countries demanded this prerogative.³ Maimonides points to a parallel practice within the Jewish community.⁴ Maḏmūn apologizes for not being able to send any *drky* to Ben Yijū. The second section [B] speaks of the general poor market conditions that year. Abraham Ben Yijū used the blank paper on verso to write business accounts for dealings in India (III, 28). It follows from these considerations that he was in India, when the letter on recto, translated below, was sent to him. Bilāl was appointed governor sometime between 1136–38. Ben Yijū visited Yemen ca. 1140 and was back in India from ca. 1145–49 (see page 648), and this letter is to be dated accordingly.

¹ {The manuscript was formerly listed 'JTS Geniza Misc. 2,' which number alone appears in Goitein's writings. I would like to thank Prof. M. Schmelzer for his help in identifying the current shelf marks of this and other items in ENA NS 48.

² On him, see the introductions to II, 28–29, II, 32, etc.

³ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:268.

⁴ According to Maimonides (in his Commentary to Avot 4:6; see Shailat, *Avot*, 154), merchants customarily allowed an important trader to have his merchandise sold first and have the first pick of commodities offered on the market taken for him.}

Translation

[A] (1) two days [before] the ships sailed [...] (2) foreigner by him and b[y...., some of it] (3) for (or belonging to) the ruler of Dahlak and some of it for Sheikh [...] (4) Bilāl Ibn Jarīr against the man w[ho sold (?)] (5) the *drky*.⁵ He bought it from him for [him]self. (6) And no one can ask for anything claimed by (7) the lord⁶ Bilāl. Were the *maṭiyya* boats⁷ of I[bn] (8) al-Sudā[n]i⁸ to bring some of it,⁹ I would send it to him (i.e., to you). (9) You should not believe that I have neglected your need (10) and that which would produce something beneficial to you.

[B] By God, (11) this year there was in the city a great fall¹⁰ (in the market). (12) The Egyptian *mithqāls* reached [...]

⁵ For this commodity, see 331, n. 11. The *drky*, spoken of here, was probably shipped by the ruler of Dahlak, mentioned in line 3.

⁶ {Arabic *mālik*, a common term of respect in the Yemenite letters. See 362, n. 13.

⁷ Arabic *maṭāyā*. For this type of vessel, see 476, n. 18.

⁸ The reading and restoration of Ibn al-Sudānī (the Sudanese) are uncertain.

⁹ Arabic *bi-shay minhu*, presumably referring to the *drky*.

¹⁰ Arabic *labṭa* means a kick by an animal or a gallop (*talabbata*, according to Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:513, means to limp). I assume this was part of the merchants' jargon ('market crash, runaway market?'), but I have not found it elsewhere in the India Book papers.}

II, 28–29 *Letter from Maḏmūn b. Ḥasan to Abraham Ben Yījū: Safe Conduct and Assistance for Brother*

{Aden, ca. 1145}

II, 28. ULC Or. 1080 J 263

II, 29. TS NSJ 285

Goitein described II, 28:

Letter of Maḏmūn assuring Ben Yījū that he had obtained safe conduct for him from ‘The Auspicious King’¹ (a title bestowed on Bilāl b. Jarīr by the Fatimid caliph), when Ben Yījū would come to Aden.

and II, 29:

A short note: Actions on behalf of Ben Yījū’s brother Mevassēr had been delayed because of a prolonged interruption of communications with Egypt in the wake of epidemics raging there.²

{When arranging the India Book items according to the ‘New List,’ Goitein indicated the affinity of nos. II, 28 (245 in the ‘Old List’) and II, 29 (297) by placing them one after the other. A closer examination shows that they are two contiguous pieces of the same letter. No. II, 28, contains the first 22 lines of the letter. The first line of II, 29 is line 23 of the original. The top of the letter 𐤀 in the last word of that line, *y‘il*, is preserved in II, 28, its lower portion in II, 29. Furthermore, in the blank space at the bottom of II, 29 recto and the verso of II, 28–29, Ben Yījū copied a liturgical poem for the evening service of (Yom) Kippur, and here too there is a direct continuation between the writing on II, 29 and II, 28 (in this order).³ No. II, 29, has suffered more damage than II, 28; this makes the match between the two somewhat difficult to identify. Several lines, the extent of which cannot be ascertained, are missing at the end of II, 29, so there is no direct continuation between the text there and the margin (where as usual the writing begins at the bottom of the letter and precedes to the top). The body of the margin has also suffered damage, and some words are missing between the writing there in II, 29, and the continuation in II, 28. As a result of these lacunae, much of the details concerning

¹ {Read, ‘the auspicious lord’; see below, the note to II, 28, line 19.

² Other than this description, the draft transcriptions and a few notes in his papers and publications, nothing else remains in Goitein’s writings on these items.

³ On the liturgical poetry, which Ben Yījū copied on the reverse sides of his documents, see pages 67–68.

business dealings between Maḍmūn and Ben Yijū have been lost. As noted in II, 28, lines 14–15, a complete account accompanied the letter, but this has not been identified. The address on verso is also missing. The scribe, who penned the letter for Maḍmūn, wrote the master's name at the top of the letter. Ben Yijū's identity is a matter of certainty, both because of the contents of the letter, especially, the passage dealing with his brother Mevassēr, and the liturgical poem written in his hand on verso.

The most interesting sections of II, 28–29 are the two passages cited in Goitein's Summary, secs. C and D in our translation. First, Maḍmūn's urging Ben Yijū to leave India and return to Aden and the guarantee of protection for him, which Maḍmūn obtained from Bilāl b. Jarīr, the governor of Aden. Maḍmūn alludes to Ben Yijū's hesitation about making the trip, but the exact translation of the expression used there (lines 17–18, which I have rendered: 'fear that people would say that something had made you act in haste') and its import are not entirely clear. The second passage describes the difficulties in sending goods valued at 40 dinars to Ben Yijū's brother, Mevassēr, of whose bad reputation Maḍmūn had heard. Egypt is reported to have undergone a two-year period of epidemics and governmental instability, which prevented the travel of merchants from there to Aden and vice versa. As we know from two other letters (III, 15 and III, 29), Maḍmūn eventually succeeded in shipping the goods to Mevassēr. From III, 15, we can ascertain that this took place approximately in 1145, which in all likelihood is the year in which our letter was written (see below, the note to II, 29, line 9).⁴ The information concerning the epidemics in Egypt may suggest that it was written a year earlier, however (see the note to II, 29, line 11). Bilāl's guarantee evidently did not have the desired effect. Ben Yijū remained in India for a few more years, and only in September 1149 informed his family that he had left India for good and returned to Aden (III, 29).

⁴ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:537, n. 363, notes that II, 29 was written ca. 1145.

Translation

[A. Opening remarks]

[II, 28] (1) Your servant⁵ Maḍmūn b. al-Ḥasan⁶ b. Bundār—*may he rest in Eden!*⁷

In Your name, O Merciful.

(2) Your letter has arrived, my lord, the eminent, most illustrious elder. May God lengthen your life, (3) make permanent your honored position and well-being, protect your soul from the vicissitudes of fate, (4) crush with disdainful humiliation those envious of you and your enemies! May He not deny you His superior (5) gift of success!⁸ [[May He crush with disdainful humiliation those en]] May He be (6) for you a supporter and a guardian! I read it and comprehended its contents. (7) As to the longing, which you mentioned, my lord, I (your servant) have twice (8) as much (for you). May God grant a reunion with you!

[B. Receipt and distribution of betel nuts and pepper shipped from India]

I (your servant) took note of (9) what you wrote concerning your shipment of red and white betel nuts. (10) It arrived and I (your servant)

⁵ Maḍmūn, the Nagid of the Land of Yemen, refers to himself as 'his servant' in this and other letters, even where he addresses a person of much lesser standing, like Ben Yijū. (The third person used in the letter for both the writer and addressee has been changed to first and second persons in the translation.) Goitein, *Yemenites*, 85 (in Hebrew): "The fact that Maḍmūn refers to himself always as 'your servant' is, of course, only a matter of convention. It has two explanations: (a) The Yemenites say *man qāl anā dhāq al-'anā*, 'he who says "I", tastes poverty.' (b) This ancient usage is based on the fact that a detailed letter was usually a petition to a higher authority."

⁶ Al-Ḥasan rather than Hasan also in II, 12*v* (address); II, 17*v* (address); II, 33, line 1.

⁷ The clerk who penned this letter used the style of a petition to a higher authority, in which the name of the petitioner is written on the upper left-hand side of the page. This style is exceptional in the letters in this collection and is found in an actual petition for assistance (II, 74), in letters in which the writer showed special deference to the addressee (IV, 62) or in other special circumstances (II, 64). Evidently, other writers used this style more liberally. See also II, 67a.

⁸ The expression *wa-min ḥusni tawfiqihi lā akhlāhā* is common at the beginning of letters. Goitein, "Portrait," 457, translates "may he never leave him without full success," and in n. 28, comments "success, mainly in the fulfillment of God's commandments." Our letters do contain such blessings as *wa-yu'inubhu 'alā tā'atibi*, 'and may He assist you to obey Him' (IV, 32, line 15). But the request for success from God is not limited, in the Geniza and in Islamic sources, to religious acts. Success from God in commerce, e.g., II, 7, lines 7–8, *fa-in waffaq allāh fihī bay'*, 'if God facilitates its sale'; also cf. Ed., "Tawfiq."

took delivery of it. Similarly the pepper. (11) All that you mentioned in your letter arrived, and I (your servant) delivered to Sheikh (12) Yūsuf b. Ibrāhīm and Sheikh Khalaf⁹ all that you had written (13) should be delivered to them, and they received it.¹⁰ The details of the sale of pepper (14) and what was exchanged for it, I (your servant), include in the copy of your account,¹¹ which is (15) attached to my letter. Familiarize yourself with it, your eminence, God willing.

[C. Maḍmūn urges Ben Yijū to leave India]

(16) You wrote about your decision to (17) come to Aden, and that the only thing that prevented you was your fear that people would say that (18) something had made you act in haste.¹² I (your servant) spoke with the ‘auspicious (19) lord’¹³ concerning you, and I took from him a pledge of protection.¹⁴ So you should resolve to come, (20) God willing. You have nothing to fear. This is better than your staying (21) in the land of India,¹⁵ for if, God forbid, your appointed time¹⁶ overtakes you, (22) all that you

⁹ Khalaf b. Isaac.

¹⁰ Maḍmūn often mentions in his letters to Ben Yijū deliveries of goods that he made for him to Joseph b. Abraham (here referred to with the Arabic forms of these names, Yūsuf b. Ibrāhīm) and Khalaf b. Isaac (Maḍmūn’s cousins and Ben Yijū’s business partners, concerning whom, see chap. 2, sec. F and chap. 2, sec. G respectively). Cf., e.g., II, 16, lines 29–31 (iron); II, 16*v*, lines 21–22 (‘eggs’); II, 24, line 24 (boards); II, 30, lines 7–8 (betel nuts).

¹¹ Arabic *nuskhat ḥisāb*. The phrase is common in our papers. An account was written in two copies, one for each of the partners. But in this expression the word *nuskha* perhaps connotes not ‘copy’ but rather ‘register.’ See 460, n. 1; III, 10, line 26 (‘as had been stated in your *nuskha*’); cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:666b.

¹² Arabic *kharat lahu shay*, the exact meaning of which is not clear. *Kharat* also means cheat, lie, etc. Cf. 592, n. 32.

¹³ After the year 1139/40 Bilāl b. Jarīr was granted the honorary titles *al-shaykh al-sā‘id al-muwaffaq al-sadīd*, ‘the auspicious, successful, sound’ (see Geddes, “Bilāl”). *Mālik*, ‘lord,’ is a common term of deference in addressing or referring to honored people in the Yemenite letters, e.g., II, 33, side b, line 14 (where Maḍmūn refers to Maṣliḥ the Head of the Academy as *mālikī*, ‘my lord’); II, 75, line 4, referring to Abraham Maimuni. It is also used in referring to people of lesser stature, as in II, 43*v*, line 8, addressing the merchant Abū Naṣr.

¹⁴ Cf. I, 25*v*, l. 10 (239, n. 6), *wa-akhabdhū sijillāt al-sultān*.

¹⁵ Arabic *bilād al-Hind*. For the geographical area that this term designates, see pages 6–7.

¹⁶ Arabic *ajal*, a euphemism for death in Judeo-Arabic literature. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:130–31; Friedman, “Notes by a Disciple,” 538 ff.

have will be lost, and your children will join¹⁷ [II, 29] (1) the wards of the state. This is my advice to you. Do not offer justifications (2) of any sort.

[D. On Ben Yijū's request to send 40 Malikī dinars to his brother Mevassēr; epidemics in Egypt]

You wrote about shipping (3) goods, purchased with forty Malikī dinars of (4) your money, to Egypt, to your brother Mevassēr. I (your servant) (5) had decided not to burden anyone with the shipment, (6) because of the talk that had reached me, namely that he was a good-for-nothing. [However,] (7) because of the high regard in which I (your servant) hold your eminence, I shall undertake to send [it]. (8) [I shall take care of] sending it, if someone departs this [year for] (9) Egypt,¹⁸ since no one arrived last year or [so far this year] (10) from Egypt, because of the [death (?)] (11) and epidemic¹⁹ prevailing there, for two years in a row.²⁰ Recently [of the] (12) people,²¹ a small boat²² arrived with four merchants on board

¹⁷ Much of this section [C] of II, 28, is translated in Ghosh, *Antique*, 160, but with many errors, e.g., for lines 20 ff. ("this is better," etc.) Ghosh renders: "[the king] will resolve everything in his court in the country of India. And if, God forbid, he were to lose . . . what he has and his children were part of that [loss] . . ."

¹⁸ Mevassēr's travels and irresponsible behavior are mentioned in a number of documents; see page 73. Eventually, Maḏmūn was able to send Mevassēr the 40 dinars. In July 30–August 27, 1147 (III, 15, lines 31–32), Khalaf b. Isaac wrote from Aden to Ben Yijū in India, that he did not have information as to whether that sum, sent to Egypt with Abū Naṣr b. Elisha, had been delivered to Mevassēr. This statement evidently was in response to Ben Yijū's inquiry concerning the success of Abū Naṣr's mission. It follows that Maḏmūn sent the merchandise approximately in 1145, which would probably be the time our letter was written. In September 1149 (III, 29, lines 7–11), Ben Yijū wrote from Aden to Mevassēr in Sicily and informed him that the civet perfume worth 40 dinars, which had been sent with Abū Naṣr had not been delivered to Mevassēr, since he had returned to Sicily, where the perfume was then forwarded. I assume that all three documents refer to the same 40-dinar shipment. However, II, 29, line 3, speaks of Malikī dinars, III, 15, line 31, of dinars without specification, as does III, 29, line 8. But in the latter text, Goitein notes that the quantity of civet perfume shipped indicates that Egyptian dinars were intended; and the matter requires further investigation.

¹⁹ Arabic *wabā'*. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:113; Dols, *The Black Death*, 315–16. There was a 'tremendous epidemic' (*wabā' 'aẓīm*) in Egypt in 1142–43 (Dols, *ibid.*, 32–33).

²⁰ Cf. II, 30, lines 18–21, where Maḏmūn writes Ben Yijū that he was unable to fulfill the latter's request to forward 20 dinars to his other brother, Joseph, since no Jews had arrived that year from Egypt.

²¹ Arabic [*al-*]*nās*. This term is used regularly in the documents of this book for 'merchants' or 'traveling merchants.' See 239, n. 4. The restoration at the end of line 11 is uncertain.

²² Arabic *jalaba*. For the type of boat represented by this word (plural *jilāb*), which appears several times in the India Book, see Serjeant, *Portuguese*, 134, 137.

who reported (13) that the situation in the country (Egypt) had improved. Prices had fallen, and the government [was in control].²³ (14) May God—may He be praised and exalted!—grant relief (15) to all people!²⁴

[E. Various business affairs and closing account]

As to the dinar, which you mentioned, which was yours (16) for the piece of copper,²⁵ I (your servant) added it to your account. (17) Sheikh A... b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān²⁶ was delayed (18) [...] looking for [...] (19) [...] finding [...] [Margin, II, 29] [...] and seven [...] and three quarters [...] which you wrote to send to [your] br[other] Mevassēr, forty dinars.²⁷ I sent to you²⁸ in the ship of //al-Muqaddam²⁹// with the *nākhudā* [Ja]whar al-Muqaddamī³⁰—may God decree its safe arrival!—a purse, in which were [...] less [...] [Margin, II, 28] [...] the price [...] and thirty dinars. And in the purse, were fifteen Malikī dinars. The total that you owe is 260^{3/4} dinars. The balance of your debt is three quarters, hereby waived. It will be collected from you when you arrive, God willing.³¹ [II, 29v] (1) [...] ninety

²³ I believe a more literal translation (see the next note) of the preceding sentence would be: ‘Prices and the government have been stabilized and (14) well-being [restored (?)].’ (Arabic *wa-tabbā al-si‘r wa-ṣultān* [...] *al-salāma*. I read *tb*’ as *tabbā*, a dual, with the first form, *tabba*, being equivalent here to the tenth, *istatabba*.) For the political instability in Egypt in the late 1140’s, see Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 169; Lev, *State and Society*, 61. On political upheavals in Egypt preceding and during the Nagidate of Samuel b. Ḥananya (1140–59), see Friedman, “Maimonides and Zūṭā”, 475 ff., and literature cited there.

²⁴ The translation of the last lines (10–15) is based on Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:50, with slight changes (see the preceding note).

²⁵ Arabic *ṣuff*. For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11. For this piece, see below II, 29v, line 10.

²⁶ Evidently, a Muslim merchant. A Sheikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān is mentioned in VII, 47, line 4.

²⁷ The forty dinars to be sent to Mevassēr are added to Ben Yijū’s debit.

²⁸ Arabic *lahu* in the original literally means ‘to him,’ but Maḍmūn uses the third person in addressing Ben Yijū throughout most of the letter. I initially assumed that the pronoun refers to Mevassēr. That understanding is untenable for a number of reasons. The ship and what was sent in it (coins) obviously point to India as the destination. See the following note.

²⁹ The continuation, II, 29v, line 5, refers to the ship of Ibn al-Muqaddam. Since in both instances Jawhar carried goods, obviously the same ship was intended, and al-Muqaddam and Ibn al-Muqaddam were one and the same. On (Ibn) al-Muqaddam and his ships, which traveled between Yemen and India, see II, 16, line 48 and 324, n. 18.

³⁰ Jawhar Al-Muqaddamī was the slave or freedman of al-Muqaddam. See page 151.

³¹ I assume there was a credit of 260 dinars mentioned in the missing portion of the document (and the accompanying account), so that only three-quarters of a dinar remained in his debt. There appears to be a contradiction between the last two sentences. Perhaps Maḍmūn wrote that he waived the three-quarters of a dinar owed by Ben Yijū but then added that after his arrival in Aden he could pay it.

[...] they took it [...] (2) [...] there was no opportunity for unpacking and repacking.³² Its total weight is (3) one *bahār* and ninety pounds. The price is one hundred and (4) twenty-six dinars and one dinar exit tolls from the port (of Aden).³³ It was transported in the ship of Ibn al-Muqaddam (6) with Jawhar. With him there is also a purse [in which are] (7) eighteen Malikī dinars [and another in which are (?)] (8) one hundred and forty-five [Malikī] dinars. (9) [And no]thing remains in your credit. I did not pay³⁴ the *nākhudā* [of the ship] (10) freightage for the piece of copper.³⁵ This is for your information. [*Peace.*]

³² Cf. Margariti, "Aden," 314.

³³ The *furda*.

³⁴ Arabic *wa-lam yazin*, lit., 'he did not pay.' The writer seems to be referring to himself.

³⁵ See recto, line 16.}

II, 30 *Letter from Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan to Abraham Ben Yijū: Mutual Assistance*

{Aden, ca. 1136}

ENA 1822A, f. 43

Business letter of Maḍmūn, written in his hand, to Ben Yijū, concluding with the remark that it had been impossible to send 20 dinars to the latter's brother, Joseph, because no Jew had arrived from Egypt that year. Maḍmūn also asks the recipient to assist Maḥrūz, his cousin's husband, who was proceeding to India.¹

{The fragment is the end of a letter from Maḍmūn to Ben Yijū in India. The latter's identity is verified by mention of the money that he had asked be sent to his brother Joseph and by the raw materials of copper and lead, which were sent him for use in his bronze factory in India. It is typical of the India Book papers that this letter mentions the mutual requests of partners to come to the aid of relatives, here to send money to one's brother and to assist the other's cousin's husband.

The contents of the fragment can be summarized:

- [A] Shipments to Ben Yijū to India, including two bags of lead, bars of copper weighing 25 pounds,² 40 Egyptian *mithqāl* coins and 70 Malikī dinars in old coins (lines 1–5).
- [B] Receipt of white and red betel nuts (*faḥḥal*) and the spice cardamom; delivery of goods to Joseph b. Abraham and Khalaf b. Isaac (lines 5–9).
- [C] Goods sent to Ben Yijū: dates, 2 *fūṭa* robes, paper, raisins and sugar and a leather table cover (lines 9–12).
- [D] No *drky* available on the market. Maḍmūn sent some of his own stock from the previous year (lines 13–18).
- [E] “You mentioned in your letter sending twenty dinars to your brother Joseph. Not one Jew arrived this year from Egypt. So I did not send him anything” (lines 18–21).³

¹ {Based on Goitein's Summaries, which other than the draft of the text transcription is all that remains in his papers on this document. Maḥrūz was apparently Maḍmūn's cousin, not his cousin's husband. See page 48.

² Arabic *ṣufr*. For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11.

³ Joseph Ben Yijū had settled in Sicily (see page 72). Cf. II, 29, lines 2 ff., where Maḍmūn wrote that he was unable to send forty Malikī dinars to Ben Yijū's brother Mevassēr, in Egypt, because of the epidemics and political instability there for two years.

[F] Closing account and final note: “By God, by God, act for the sake of esprit de corps⁴ with Sheikh Maḥrūz in all his affairs” (lines 21–24).

No. II, 30 was written after Ben Yijū had already been in India for at least a year, if not more. The request to assist Maḥrūz b. Jacob (for whom, see Introduction IIB1) suggests that this was his first trip to India. He is not called here *nākhudā*, and it is likely that he was not yet a shipowner. His ship, which sailed the Aden-India route, is mentioned already in III, 2, sent to Ben Yijū ca. 1134–37. In any event, III, 3, written ca. 1135–38, mentions Maḥrūz’s trip to India, during which he delivered items to Ben Yijū. Maḥrūz traveled back and forth between Aden and Egypt in 1133 and 1134 (V, 1 and V, 2), and in 1135 he was in Fustat. Accordingly, it is likely that II, 30 was written ca. 1136.}

⁴ Arabic *‘aṣabiyya*. For the use of this term (which also means a relationship on the father’s side) in Geniza papers, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:64.}

II, 31 *Letter from Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan to Abraham Ben Yijū: Freight Jettisoned*

Aden {ca. 1137–39, 1145–49}

ENA NS 48, f. 9¹

Letter in Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan's hand, almost certainly to Abraham Ben Yijū, about Maḥrūz's arrival back from India with loads of iron and cardamom and about equal distribution of losses between the owners of freight on a boat, from which consignments had to be jettisoned.²

{The fragment comes from the beginning of a letter, where one or two lines are missing. It was undoubtedly sent to India, as proven by mention of the receipt of goods imported from there and the attack of pirates off the coast of India. This fragment resembles II, 30, which comes from the end of a letter and which has been identified as sent to Ben Yijū. Since of Maḍmūn's correspondence with India only his letters to Ben Yijū have been preserved, we can assume that also II, 31 was sent to him. Further evidence can be found in the notice concerning the arrival in Aden of some of the raw materials that were needed by Ben Yijū for his bronze factory (lines 16 ff.). This section is of interest, as it illustrates how the Adenese merchants imported from the West (here from 'Aydḥāb the Sudanese port) copper, which they in turn exported to India. The remark concerning Maḥrūz's return from India and the information available on the years Ben Yijū was there (see pages 367 and 648) make it possible to fix the boundaries for dating the letter.

Of special interest is the section (lines 8 ff.) describing how freight from the boat had been jettisoned when pirates arrived to attack it '*alā fam al-khawr* (line 10), 'in the Fam al-Khawr, the entrance to the gulf of Broach and Cambay,' on the way out of India.³ Ben Yijū presumably did not know of the attack, and Maḍmūn, who must have heard the story from the captain when the ship arrived in Aden, informs him of it. Communications concerning events off the northern coast of India thus arrive in Malabar to the south via Aden! This exact state of affairs is evidenced also in III, 11, line 5, where Khalaf b. Isaac writes from Aden and informs Ben Yijū of the foundering of a ship 'in the gulf' (*al-khawr*), when it sailed to Broach.

¹ {The manuscript was formerly listed 'JTS Geniza Misc. 10,' which number alone appears in Goitein's writings.

² Besides this description, the draft of the text transcription and a few scattered notes (see next note here), this is all that remains in Goitein's papers on this document.

³ So identified by Goitein in his introduction to III, 22. See the discussion below. Also cf. Barbosa, *Description*, 64: "the navigation of these places is very dangerous."

The words in quotation marks above concerning II, 31, appear in Goitein's introductory remarks to III, 22, which also describes the loss of freight jettisoned off the Indian coast.

The identification of *'alā fam al-khawr* in II, 31, as the entrance to the gulf of Broach and Cambay, made in the preliminary edition of III, 22 (written in the 1950's), can be seen as a provisional suggestion. It is evidently based on the unequivocal use of *al-khawr* for that particular gulf in III, 11.⁴ But it is not obvious that any *al-khawr*, with the definite article, in the India Book, is a toponym for the same gulf.⁵ Arab geographers and navigators described numerous gulfs (*akhwār*) approaching India or for that matter on the way out of Aden. In II, 31, *'alā fam al-khawr*, literally, 'on the mouth of the gulf,'⁶ may just as likely, if not more so, refer to the gulf of Aden.⁷

In his capacity as representative of the merchants in Aden,⁸ Maḏmūn distributed the loss from jettisoning Ben Yijū's consignment and applied it to owners of all of the ship's freight. The same procedure is followed in other cases of which we read in the India Book papers.⁹ As mentioned above, it is not certain what Indian export commodity, a kind of cardamom or a form in which iron was shipped, the word *bayd*, 'eggs,' denotes.¹⁰ Since II, 31, mentions only the jettisoning of 'eggs,' this suggests that iron was intended. Further corroboration can be found in Meera Abraham's identification of the iron and steel, which, as she learned from Goitein's publications, were exported by the Jewish traders in India:

The steel he refers to is in all probability *wootz* which George Pearson described [in the eighteenth century] as being marketed in the shape of cakes one inch thick and five inches in diameter.¹¹

⁴ No. III, 11, line 5: *sāfarū ilā barūj fa-uṣīb al-markab fi 'l-khawr*, 'they journeyed to Broach but the ship was struck in the gulf.'

⁵ In his geographical card index, for *al-khawr*, Goitein quotes Yaqut, 1:506, line 1: . . . *kanbāya khawr tadkhal minhu ilā barūs*, literally, '(from) Cambay a gulf (*khawr*) from which one enters Broach.' In my opinion *khawr* is not intended as a toponym in this passage.

⁶ Note that besides 'gulf,' among other things, *khawr* can mean 'canal' (Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 139); cf. Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 523; Maqbul Ahmad, *India*, 112.

⁷ See Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 423 (where he notes that the whole Gulf of Aden was sometimes referred to as the Gulf of Barbara). For the abbreviation of *al-khawr al-sa'īd*, literally, 'the auspicious gulf' (see Tibbetts there), to *al-khawr*, compare the abbreviation of *al-dar al-sa'īda* to *al-dar* in II, 23, line 31, also written by Maḏmūn to Ben Yijū.

⁸ Maḏmūn was also *nāẓir*, 'superintendent of the port' (see 343, n. 37; 372, n. 10).

⁹ See page 163.

¹⁰ See 326, n. 32.

¹¹ Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, 171 (Abraham consistently misspells 'Gotein').

Al-Kindī (ninth century) in fact referred to a type of iron called *byḍ*. Al-Hassan, read *bīd* (pl.) white,' but since al-Kindī wrote repeatedly *byḍ* and this spelling is found frequently in the Geniza documents, rather than *abyaḍ* (sg.), 'white,' Goitein's vocalization, *bayḍ*, 'eggs,' is preferable. This can be substantiated by passages from al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048), who described shaping crucible steel in the form of *bayḍāt*, 'eggs,' and al-Jildakī (fourteenth century), who described caste steel in the shape of ostrich eggs.¹²

The contents of the fragment can be summarized as follows:

[A] Conventional opening of letter (lines 1–5).

[B] Arrival of imports from India and jettisoning of freight when attacked by pirates (lines 5–15), hereby translated:

I, your servant, took notice (6) of what you—may God preserve your well-being!—wrote (7) concerning the shipment of 15 *bahārs* of 'standard'¹³ iron (8) and seven bahars of belts (?) of 'eggs.'¹⁴ This is to inform you that the sailors (9) jettisoned some of the 'eggs' when the pirates (*al-surrāq*) [approached] (10) the gulf Fam al-Khawr (alt. tr.: on the mouth of the gulf). But I, your servant, already distributed it (the loss) (11) according to the freight of the ship, and I collected this for you. (12) And I, your servant, already sold for you the 'standard' iron, the 'eggs' and the cardamom, (13) which arrived with Sheikh Maḥrūz¹⁵ All of this (14) is detailed in the copy of the account,¹⁶ accompanying this letter, (15) that you are reading, God willing.

[C] Arrival of copper¹⁷ from 'Aydḥāb in two small *maṭīyya* boats¹⁸ to be followed by other commodities in four ships (lines 15–20).}

¹² For these sources, see Al-Hassan, "Iron."

¹³ Arabic *naṣmī*, also in III, 11, lines 36, 39. It is not certain what kind of iron the word denotes. According to Goitein's notes it is probably a mediocre type (in III, 11 Goitein translated 'ordinary'), but the word can also be translated 'legal,' 'official,' etc.

¹⁴ Arabic *bayḍ maḥājīm*. According to the dictionaries, *maḥājīm* (sing. *maḥjam*, *mīḥjam*) are cupping-glasses (Hava, *Dictionary*, 113) or belts (Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 85). I assume the 'eggs' (cakes of iron) were joined together in strips.

¹⁵ Maḥrūz b. Jacob, for whom Maḍmūn had asked Ben Yijū's assistance in India, in II, 30, lines 22–23.

¹⁶ Arabic *nuskhat al-ḥisāb*. See 362, n. 11.

¹⁷ Arabic *ṣufr*. For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11.

¹⁸ For this type of vessel, see 476, n. 18.}

II, C. *Letters and Memoranda Sent by Maḏmūn to Egypt (Cairo-Fustat)*II, 32 *Letter from Maḏmūn b. Ḥasan to Abū Zikrī Kohen*

Aden, ca. 1130{–40}

Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 19

Ed. Goitein, *Yemenites*, 84–92. English translation in Goitein, *Letters*, 181–85, on which the following is based.

This important and large fragment (69 lines preserved) lacks both the beginning and the end, and {because the beginning is torn away} consequently the address {opposite it on verso} is also missing. But it is in the unmistakable, characteristic handwriting of Maḏmūn b. Ḥasan. The evidence from penmanship is confirmed by many details, which also indicate that the letter was addressed to Maḏmūn's counterpart as representative of the merchants in Fustat, Abū Zikrī Kohen, who also happened to be his brother-in-law.¹

This letter presents an excellent illustration of the activities of a Jewish representative of merchants in a port city. He takes care of the estate of foreign traders who perished in a shipwreck (sec. A of the letter) and collaborates closely with the most prominent Muslim merchant in town (secs. B, C). This man, Bilāl b. Jarīr, later became a general and ruler of Aden, a transition natural in medieval mercantile nations, such as the Arabs and Italians. Maḏmūn {and his partner Bilāl} constructed a ship, presumably an especially strong one, for the of 2,100 mile route to Ceylon {Sri Lanka}, the island near the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent, from which cinnamon and other Oriental products were imported.² It is remarkable and perhaps not without interest for the

¹ {They are identified as brothers-in-law in III, 29, line 9. The many details which indicate that the letter was addressed to Abū Zikrī were enumerated by Goitein in his book *Yemenites*, 85: the size of the letter and its handsome execution; the large number of business dealings imposed on the recipient; requests to handle various affairs connected with different merchants, including legal matters and charitable donations; and the information concerning other merchants, both those dealing in the India trade and others. All of these are suggestive but not conclusive. Corroborating evidence for Goitein's identification of Abū Zikrī as the recipient can be adduced from the liturgical selections written on verso of III, 32. In the same yet-unidentified handwriting and evidently from the same prayer book are the liturgical selections written on the blank spaces on verso of V, 11, a letter sent to Abū Zikrī, II, 61, whose recipient Goitein identified as Sulaymān b. Abū Zikrī, and II, 45a (presumably also sent to him); see the introductions to these documents.

² No. III, 11, lines 27–28, speaks of a partnership between Maḏmūn and Bilāl to outfit a ship—probably the same one—which belonged to them, to Ceylon. That document has been dated ca. 1140.}

history of minor arts that, besides merchants, three Jewish gold- (or silver-) smiths, one of them a Maghrebi, traveled in this new ship to Ceylon.

Translation

[A. About the estates of two shipwrecked traders and a large gift to the family of one of them]

(1) [...] will come with him [...] (2) My lord inquired about Zikrī b. Abu 'l-Faraj of Tripoli.³ (3) He arrived in complete safety, sold, bought, finished his affairs, (4) and returned home⁴ in the same year.

Sheikh Nahray b. 'Allān⁵ arrived with him, carrying (5) a power of attorney from the son of Nissīm b. Benāyā.⁶ Zikrī of Tripoli, (6) too, had a power of attorney from the families of the two Maghrebis, who perished (7) in the boat of Ja'far.⁷ I took notice of the two writs. (8) The two dead men had deposited with me 140 Malikī dinars.⁸ (9) With this sum they⁹ bought two bales of lac, containing 1,000 pounds, (10) for 113 dinars, the expenses {alt. tr.: toll}¹⁰ for these two bales being 13 dinars.

³ One of the two traders who had a power of attorney to deal with the estates (see below). He is mentioned as being engaged in the India trade about ten years later in a letter written by Abū Zikrī Kohēn, the surmised recipient of our letter (V, 5, lines 3–4).

⁴ Arabic *kharaj*. Normally, merchants who made this long voyage remained on the India route for more than one year. {Goitein, *Studies*, 354, n. 4: "In the language of the India traders *kharaj* means 'coming out from the sea,' travelling *homewards*. The same usage prevails in the Arabic spoken in Yemen up to the present day." Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 123 ('to return to [by sea]'). See also II, 55, line 29, II, 56–57, line 21, II, 66, line 21. Goitein might have understood that Zikrī b. Abu 'l-Faraj arrived in Aden from India and returned West that same year. Perhaps the intention is that he arrived in Aden from Egypt, which was not such a long voyage, did his business, then returned to the West.}

⁵ A seasoned India traveler repeatedly mentioned {see line 30 for his return trip and II, 56, line 7}. An interesting letter of his appears in VI, 39.

⁶ ENA 4011, f. 57v, dated June 24, 1129, shows him still active in Egypt.

⁷ It would seem as though there were powers of attorney for the estates of three dead merchants, Nissīm and the two Maghrebis. More probably, Maḍmūn's description of the affair is not precise here. There were altogether two Maghrebi merchants, Nissīm and al-Nafūsī (see line 20), who had perished. The two can be assumed to have been partners, but the terms of the partnership were not known (see the continuation). Accordingly, the family of each dead man appointed an attorney, who claimed the whole deposit. The shipowner Ja'far was evidently an Arab; nothing else is known of him.}

⁸ For the exchange rate, see 172, n. 27. The dead men's merchandise, the bulk of their possessions, was naturally with them in the shipwrecked boat.

⁹ The attorneys.

¹⁰ Customs and other dues in Aden plus freight Aden-ʿAydhab. {Arabic *mu'na*. The term is used for tolls. See below, lines 34, 35, and 171–72, n. 23.} Our Maḍmūn was also *nāzīr*, or superintendent, of the port and as such able to know such things exactly.

They bought Qaṣṣī¹¹ fabrics for 14 dinars (11) to cover the expenses of the customs in 'Aydhāb¹² and the freight for the way through the desert. This makes a total of (12) 140 dinars.

The two attorneys agreed to put (13) this shipment into the hand of Abraham, son of the *Reliable* Claimant,¹³ in order, (14) God willing, to carry it to Fustat together with my merchandise. (15) When all of them are in Fustat, the two attorneys will go to court, (16) and each one's right on this shipment will be established and he then will take it. {Alt. tr.: the two attorneys will litigate the case, and whoever's claim is established will take it.} (17) Here in Aden there is no one who could decide this matter or (even) who knows the situation. (18) I took a writ of release from each of them and no longer have any responsibility with regard to this.

(19) I also gave two *bahārs* (sacks) of lac (20) to Zikrī of Tripoli, as a gift to the family of al-Nafūsī¹⁴ in Tripoli, (21) for I have heard that they are very poor. I believe this (22) was the right thing to do.¹⁵

[B. A partnership with the Muslim merchant prince Bilāl for trade
with Ceylon]

After asking God, (23) the Exalted, for guidance,¹⁶ I, your servant, constructed¹⁷ a boat in Aden and sent goods in {alt. tr.: and outfitted} it (24) to Ceylon in partnership with the most illustrious Sheikh Bilāl.¹⁸ Of our coreligionists these traveled in it: (25) Sālīm, the son of the cantor,¹⁹ Ibn Ḥidāda ('of the art of smithing'), and al-Baṭṭī ('maker of slippers'),²⁰ and the goldsmith, (26) who had arrived here in his company, and the

¹¹ An Indian textile, which was one of the staple goods going west, mostly spelled with *ṣṣ* (not *ss*). See Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, {161–62; from al-Qaṣṣ on the northwest coast of India}.

¹² See I, 6, line 23, and the accompanying note.

¹³ A nickname probably given because of an incident during a lawsuit. The name is found elsewhere. {It appears to be a strange combination of Hebrew or Aramaic and Arabic. Semākh al-Da'wa is mentioned below, lines 30–31 (where his father's name, Abu 'l-Ḥasan, is supplied), 44–45; II, 58, margin, lines 12–13; VI, 21*v*, line 8.}

¹⁴ Several merchants with this family name were active in the India trade.

¹⁵ Two *bahārs*, averaging 600 pounds (see the note to line 54, below) were an exceptionally great gift, the like of which would never be sent even to the highest religious dignity. We find gifts to the bereaved families of traders elsewhere, too, a kind of mutual insurance of merchants engaged in perilous undertakings.

¹⁶ {For the *istikhāra*, see 256, n. 6.}

¹⁷ Arabic *anṣa'*.

¹⁸ {As proven by III, 11, lines 27–28, the partnership was both for construction of the ship and for outfitting it (*jahbazahu*).}

¹⁹ Back in Aden in 1134 (ca. 1131) IV, 5).

²⁰ These two merchants appear together in a letter to Judah Kohen (the surmised recipient of our letter) as commuting between al-Mahdiyya and Sicily (V, 13). See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:332, n. 27.

two goldsmiths, who came this (27) year, Abū ‘Alī and the Maghrebi. All these traveled (28) in the boat. May God ordain their safe arrival!

[C. A partnership with Bilāl for trade with Egypt]

Again I, your servant, (29) asked God, the Exalted, for guidance and sent with the most illustrious Sheikh (30) Nahray b. ‘Allān²¹ and with Sheikh²² Abraham b. (31) Abu ‘l-Ḥasan, known as son of the *Reliable* Claimant, and through (32) both,²³ in partnership with the most illustrious Sheikh Bilāl b. Jarīr (33) al-Awḥadī²⁴ sixty bales of lac, weighing 100 *bahārs*, and {add: for (34) the tolls in ‘Aydḥāb, customs and freight},²⁵ eight bales of pepper, to be sold (35) in ‘Aydḥāb for customs expenses {alt. tr.: tolls} and freight, and also 100 Qaṣṣī (36) *thawbs* (robes)²⁶ for customs in Sawākin²⁷ and other places. All this (37) belongs to the partnership.

I, your servant, am asking you now, relying on (38) your acts of kindness, when this shipment arrives safely, God willing, (39) to kindly take delivery of one-half of the aforementioned bales and sell them (40) for me for whatever price God apportions as livelihood.²⁸ After (41) the price is agreed upon {lit., ‘it becomes a specific amount of money’}, turn everything into gold (42) and silver—nothing else²⁹—and distribute it

²¹ {His arrival was announced in line 4. Here he travels back to the west after what was obviously a brief stay in Yemen.}

²² He is not ‘illustrious.’ He was one of the many minor luminaries of the India trade. See {above line 13, where his father’s name was not mentioned and} also below.

²³ They were in charge of the actual transport [i.e., the merchandise was sent with them].

²⁴ See the introduction to this document and Strothmann, “Karam.” For al-Awḥadī, Löfgren, *Aden*, passim, always has al-Muḥammadī. {Also ‘Umāra (Kay, *Yaman*, 79, 80) calls Bilāl: al-Muḥammadī. Note that Bilāl governed Aden on behalf of his master Saba’ b. Abū Su‘ūd (see introduction to II, 51), who was called al-Awḥad, ‘The Unique’ (Kay, ib., 50 [Arabic Text]), and whose son and heir was named Muḥammad. The latter married Bilāl’s daughter and inherited his wealth (Kay, ib., 160). Perhaps this connection led to the change in Bilāl’s by-name.

²⁵ In the continuation these words are repeated, and evidently because of the redundancy, Goitein, *Letters*, 184, omitted them.

²⁶ For these robes, see above, line 10.}

²⁷ Another Sudanese port, still operating. {On Sawākin, see 258, n. 2. Robes were sold for payment of customs in Sawākin also according to I, 33*v*, line 4.}

²⁸ A Muslim representative of the merchants would do the same service for Bilāl’s share. But the final profits would be pooled together, as proper in a partnership. {For the ‘whatever...apportions’ formula, also in line 55, see the discussion in pages 63–65.}

²⁹ No merchandise, such as Lebdi carried with him on his way to Aden and India. See I, 13. {‘Specific,’ Arabic *ma‘lūm*.}

among {alt. tr.: divide it between} (43) various merchants,³⁰ coreligionists, or others, if they are known (44) as reliable,³¹ and send it on.

[D. Instructions to the recipient and an order for household goods]

Leave some money in the hand of Abraham, son of the *Reliable* Claimant, (45) and if he {add: the aforementioned Abraham} has need for it, give him a loan of (46) 100 *mithqāls*,³² from which he might derive profit. (47) Buy for him what he wishes,³³ and let me know (48) in your letter what you have bought for him. (49) I also ordered him to buy for me a wickerwork basket with china:³⁴ bowls, dishes, (50) and cups {alt. tr.: copper vessels for wine},³⁵ also for four *mithqāls* good rose marmalade,³⁶ such as one prepares (51) for the household. I gave him {alt. tr.: I wrote and sent with him}³⁷ a memorandum. Please have him act (52) accordingly.

Also sent with them, exclusively for me, your servant, (53) sixty bags of Sēlī (Ceylon) cinnamon,³⁸ each bag weighing 100 pounds, which

³⁰ For risk management, money was often divided between several couriers. See 742, n. 2. This was done, for example, with the funds sent to Judah ha-Levi, according to IV, 22, line 12 (pace the published translations.)

³¹ This does not mean that non-Jews were regarded as generally unreliable, but the Jewish merchants between Spain and India, as far as they were of consequence, formed a kind of closed club, known to each other, certainly at least to the representative of the merchants. {But see II, 46, line 3: “*Never trust Gentiles.*”}

³² In partnership with me. *Mithqāls* are Egyptian dinars.

³³ The Maghrebi merchant was not familiar with the Cairene market.

³⁴ Arabic *ghadār*, which could also mean fine pottery. Real china naturally came from the East and was sent by Maḥmūn to Cairo (II, 33).

³⁵ {Arabic *kizān*. Cf. 422, n. 32; 601, n. 40.

³⁶ Arabic *ward marbā*. On the uses of rose marmalade, see Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 136–37.

³⁷ Arabic *katabtu ma’abu*. In our letters, *kataba ma’a fulān* means ‘he wrote (something and sent) with PN.’ Additional examples in II2v, lines 14, 26, III, 4v, line 1. A similar expression, where the word for sending is omitted (‘buy... in one of the ships’) occurs in III, 12, line 46.

³⁸ Arabic *qirfa silī*. Cf. VII, 36v, addition, line 2, *al-’ūd al-silī*, Silī aromatic wood VII, 70 (TS AS 156, f. 238v, line 12): *qilāda kharaz silī*, ‘a necklace made of Silī (Ceylon?) beads’ (Goitein, “Portrait,” 462). According to Watt, *Commercial Products*, 313–14, “it is in comparatively modern times only that Ceylon cinnamon appeared in the markets of the world.” In his Hebrew edition of II, 32, Goitein noted that even though according to al-Sam’ānī, *Kitāb al-Ansāb*, 324, the adjectival form of Silān (Ceylon) is Silānī, not Silī, in all likelihood the intention here is to Ceylon, since that island is known for its cinnamon. Attention should be called, however, to another toponym in southern India, Sael; see Barbosa, *Description*, 173. For *qirfa*, see Lev & Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 206 (note there the scientific name: *cinnamomum zelanicum*).}

makes a total of (54) twenty *bahārs*.³⁹ Kindly take delivery of one-half of this, too, (55) and sell it for your servant for whatever price God, the Exalted, apportions. (56) Please keep the account for this apart,⁴⁰ since it is exclusively for me, your servant.⁴¹

(Here the manuscript breaks off. A short marginal note is incomplete and not connected with the text translated above.)⁴²

³⁹ Here the *bahār* is taken as weighing 300 pounds, which was indeed the standard at that time and place. But see 597, n. 13.

⁴⁰ {Arabic *nāḥiya*. Cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:647, *min/ḥi nāḥiya*, 'à quelque distance.'}

⁴¹ And not in partnership with Bilāl. The other half of the cinnamon probably went farther west, e.g., to Palermo or al-Mahdiyya.

⁴² {In it Maḍmūn expressed his hope that Abu 'l-Khayr al-Barqī, who was delayed somewhere in the Far East, would return that year and that they would meet in 'Aydḥāb. This is the only evidence we have for Maḍmūn's traveling away from Aden.}

II, 33–34 *Memorandum from Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel*

Aden {ca. 1135}

II, 33. TS 8J 37, f. 1

II, 34. TS Arabic 5, f. 2

Two bifolia, each containing two leaves or four pages, sown together to form a booklet, so that II, 33 contains sides a, b, g, h, and II, 34 sides c, d, e, f. Since the two bifolio were in different collections [i.e., in different locations in the Taylor-Schechter Collection at Cambridge], their real nature was totally unknown and they were wrongly folded. However, the page order as presented below is undoubtedly correct, as is borne out by the content.

Each page is 15 cm long and 10.5 cm wide. Tiny holes for a cord are discernible at the fifth and tenth centimeter from the top. The paper, once light brown in color, is now mostly dark brown, even gray. The paper is torn in several places, especially on sides g–h.

The memorandum is written in the hand of Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan of Aden. Side a contains the heading only, in the form of a book's title page. Side h is empty.

Unlike a letter, in which the text is usually continuous and uninterrupted in any way from beginning to end, this list is divided into paragraphs, sometimes with headings (e.g., side b, lines 3, 15), and quite far apart, sometimes by several empty lines (side c, line 7; side d, line 3).

This document is a typical memorandum. The famed Old Cairo India merchant, Abū Sa'īd Ḥalfon b. Nethanel al-Dimyāṭī, while in Aden, received detailed instructions from the local representative of the merchants, requiring him to take various actions upon returning to Old Cairo. The purpose of the present list was to remind him of the details. We have already seen (II, 32, line 51) how Maḍmūn gave a similar memorandum to another merchant traveling from Aden to Cairo. Other merchants also refer to such memoranda, e.g., in V, 6, line 7; and VII, 50 is a document of the same type, although the word *tadhkira* ('memorandum') does not appear at the top as it does here {similarly, for example, III, 2}.

Maḍmūn calls his memorandum *mubāraka*, 'blessed,' both on the title page and in the opening line of the text; cf. below, 385, n. 45. Perhaps this was because its first concern is with gifts sent to various religious functionaries in Old Cairo. Alternatively, the appellation might have been considered auspicious, like Maḍmūn's 'blessed' ship {al-Mubarak}, see above, II, 20, line 31; the 'blessing' in question would then be that the

memorandum should safely reach its destination and have the desired effect. Since the same adjective is used of IV, 3, where no gifts or meritorious deeds are mentioned, the second explanation seems the more plausible. {The phrase *tadhkira mubāraka* also appears in II, 43 and II, 50, the latter in Arabic script, and in memorandums for trade in the Mediterranean (e.g., TS 13 J 36, f. 7: *tadhkira mubāraka munjaḥa*, ‘a blessed, successful memorandum,’¹ as well as in Arabic documents from thirteenth century Quṣayr.² According to Buzurg, *‘Ajā’ib al-Hind*,³ when a trader gives merchandise to a traveler and asks him to buy goods for him, he says, “Bring me a blessing (*baraka*).” Consequently, there is no doubt that a memorandum was called *mubāraka*, in hope that God would bless the venture. See also page 520, concerning ‘the blessed Kārim.’}

The memorandum was written in the thirties of the 12th century. {See the continuation.}

In secs. B–D of the memorandum, gifts to be delivered to the Palestinian Gaon at Cairo and to other scholars are listed. The Head of the Yeshiva was to receive costly aromatic wood and oriental spices, then worth approximately 31 dinars, as well as three additional gifts whose monetary value I cannot for the moment determine, although they appear to be quite rare and important: a basket with a set of six tumblers made of transparent Chinese porcelain; two garments made of *lālas*—a red silk from India, made in (or exported from) the city of Kūlam (Quilon) in southern India—and one hundred cubes of an as yet unidentified Chinese material. The instructions are accompanied by a halakhic question (sec. G) as to whether transparent Chinese porcelain falls into the same category as glass or as pottery.

Besides the Gaon, there was a gift for Nathan the Fellow (of the Yeshiva), that is Nathan, ‘Diadem of the Fellows (of the Yeshiva),’ son of Samuel, Fellow (of the Yeshiva), a well-known friend of the poet Judah ha-Levi: three *mithqāls* (gold dinars), a satchel containing two *ratls* of the oriental spice *jawza*, worth that year approximately two dinars, as well as Indian cloth of the *lālas* type (see above). The cantor and court scribe, Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh Ibn al-Qaṭā’if, was to receive two *mithqāls* and two *ratls* of *jawza*. The large gift for the Gaon was undoubtedly

¹ {Gil, *Ishmael*, 2:640, no. 219.

² See Guo, *Commerce*, 103. The text on page 260 reads *tadhkira mubāraka in shā ’llāh*, ‘a blessed memorandum, God willing.’

³ Buzurg, *‘Ajā’ib al-Hind*, 96 (= Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 47–48).

intended, among other things, for the sustenance of poor Yeshiva students. This was also common practice in Muslim religious academies: The principal of the institution would receive a stipend from which he was also supposed to feed his students.

The term of office of Maṣliāḥ Gaon in Egypt lasted from 1127 to 1139, while Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel was in Aden in 1134. It seems likely, therefore, that the above gifts were sent in the course of that year. Most probably, Ḥalfon did not return to Yemen before 1139.⁴

{There is some difficulty in establishing the date with precision. The last known year of Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh's activity, 1138, can be taken as a *terminus ad quem*. In all likelihood, Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel was on his way to the East before November–December 1130 (see IV, 2). In January 1132 he was in Fustat, Egypt (I, 33). Abū Zikrī Kohen wrote from Fustat to Ḥalfon in Aden in January 1133 (V, 1). In his letter from January–February 1134, Abū Zikrī wrote Ḥalfon and urged him not to tarry in Aden or return to India, but leave Aden for Egypt with Maḥrūz (V, 2); but it is not certain that Ḥalfon followed this advice. In January 1136 Ḥalfon was in Egypt after having recently returned from India (V, 3). From that time until 1139 he seems to have been in Egypt, North Africa and Spain. His travels will also be discussed in II, 42 and further in the Introduction to chap. 4. Here, in II, 33–34, Ḥalfon carries from Aden to Egypt gifts and letters for Maḥrūz. Maḥrūz was in Egypt in 1131/2 (II, 60). In the aforementioned letter from January 1133 (V, 1), it is noted that he had just arrived there from Aden. In January–February 1134, he was probably on his way from Aden to Egypt again (V, 2). He was in Fustat in March 1135 (II, 59). As we shall in chap. 4, relations between Maḍmūn and Maṣliāḥ were probably somewhat strained in 1131. Accordingly, I tentatively suggest that our letter was written (ca.) 1135.}

Translation

[A. Heading and opening]

[Side a, II, 33] (1) Blessed memorandum⁵ (2) by {alt. tr.: for} Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan.

⁴ I have added the last three paragraphs on the basis of Goitein, *Yemenites*, 26.}

⁵ For the meaning of these words see introductory comment.

[Side b] (1) A blessed memorandum by {alt. tr.: for} Maḍmūn b. al-Ḥasan,⁶ borne by the most illustrious Sheikh, (2) my lord Abū Saʿīd al-Dimyāṭī⁷—may God decree that he arrive safely!

[B. Instruction to sell medicinal herbs, to make a gift of part of the proceeds to two members of the Old Cairo rabbinical court, and with the balance to buy pure white silver]

(3) What was sent separately:⁸

(4) Eight *manns* of rhubarb⁹ and half a *mann* of *māmīrān*.¹⁰ (5) Upon safe arrival, everything is to be sold, and when (6) cash is received for it all, there should be delivered from it to the most illustrious Sheikh, my lord (7) Nathan, *Fellow* (of the Yeshiva),¹¹ *Diadem of the Fellows* (of the

⁶ Note the apparent inconsistency: the writer himself gives his father's name once (II, 33, side a, line 2) without the definite article *al*, but immediately thereafter with *al*. This was because at that time the patronymic was always written in Arabic as 'al-Ḥasan' (cf. the Arabic addresses preserved above: II, 14; II, 17, II, 25), whereas the preferred spelling in Hebrew transcription was 'Ḥasan.' Nevertheless, in the address in Hebrew script of II, 17 Maḍmūn writes, as here, 'al-Ḥasan.' {Al-Ḥasan is used in Hebrew script elsewhere; see the address of II, 12, II, 28, line 1, II, 44v, line 19.}

⁷ Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel.

⁸ Arabic *al-munfadh* [.]*khāṣṣa*, with traces of *l* or *al* discernible where we have inserted brackets. The writer obviously means items that were sent in small packages, separate from the main shipment, which was packed in large sacks for camel loads. {*Khāṣṣa* apparently designates merchandise belonging exclusively to one merchant rather than shared by partners; here it may have been packed separately as well. See 285, n. 9 and II, 32, line 56; for *al-khāṣṣa* see III, 28a, line 11.}

⁹ Arabic *rāwand*, Chinese rhubarb. According to VII, 36v, lines 13–14, the price in Cairo of one *mann* of good, old *rāwand* was five dinars. {Goitein, "R. Ḥananel," 382: "*Rāwand*—Chinese rhubarb—was an important medicinal plant, which Yemenite notables in Aden used to send as a gift to Cairo grandees and scholars. . . ." On the cultivation of Chinese rhubarb, its medicinal uses and trade in it, see Akira, "Rhubarb." Cf. Serry & Amar, "Medicinal Materials" (the translation of the passage quoted there on page 74, *rāwand shāmī*, *mā yuʿalu badalan minbu idbā ʿadīma al-rāwand al-ṣīnī*, should be corrected: 'there is no substitute for Syrian rhubarb, when the Chinese rhubarb is not to be had'). See Lev & Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 218. For trade in the Geniza papers in *rāwand*, cf. Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:932 (Index).}

¹⁰ A medicinal herb with potent tonic properties, see Maimonides-Meyerhof, no. 241 {cf. Maimonides, *Lexicography*, ed. Muntner, 72}. In VII, 60v, margin, line 58, two and one half *manns* of *māmīrān* are sent to Cairo from Maʿbar on the eastern coast of southern India.

¹¹ Nathan (b. Samuel), Fellow of the Yeshiva, was a member of the Old Cairo Rabbinical court and scribe of the Fustat Yeshiva, who signed his name together with Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh—mentioned below, who was also a scribe—e.g., in TS 10J 26, f. 11; see Mann, *Jews*, 2:275. He was still living in 1151, see *ibid.*, 366. From the present document we learn that he was already in office under Maṣṣīḥ Gaon, that is, before 1139 {as already mentioned above, this list may have been written in 1135}. R. Judah ha-Levi,

Yeshiva),¹² three Egyptian *mithqāls*, (8) and to the most illustrious Sheikh, my Lord Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh¹³ (9) the *cantor*, Ibn al-Qaṭāʾif,¹⁴ two Egyptian *mithqāls*, for a total of five.¹⁵

(10) The balance shall be used to buy pure white bar silver.¹⁶ (11) Also sent with him {lit., 'Also appended'} are five and a half *manns* of *ṣūlī*¹⁷ threads.¹⁸ The proceeds (12) for everything are to be collected in a single place.¹⁹

when in Egypt, dedicated poems to him (Brody, *Dīwān*, 1:112, no. 78; 2:280, no. 56), and also sent him a rhymed letter (ibid., 2:214–216). For further details concerning this person see Mann, *Jews*, 1:225. However, the letter attributed to him by Mann, ibid., 2:277–279 [= IV, 80], was not written by him. {For Nathan b. Samuel *Nēzer ha-Ḥavērim*, see Fleischer, “*Dīwān*.”}

¹² An honorary title, meaning: the most excellent among the fellows of the Yeshiva.

¹³ Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh is already familiar to us as the writer of several documents in this book. More legal documents penned by this man than anyone else have been preserved in the Geniza. For further details on him see the description of II, 11a, which he wrote.

¹⁴ Most probably a family name. *Qaṭāʾif* was a condiment made of sugar, almonds and dough; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:376b. The form of this name is rather strange. If the intended meaning were ‘a person who makes *qaṭāʾif*,’ one would expect the name *qaṭāʾifī*. ‘Son of *al-qaṭāʾif*’ may mean: a person whose words are sweet as *qaṭāʾif* {cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:246, 441 n. 151}.

¹⁵ Gifts in the very same amounts are sent from Aden to Old Cairo in II, 44, lines 28–30, that is: three *mithqāls* to Nathan the Fellow and two to Ibn al-Qaṭāʾif. See below, side c, lines 8–12; side d, lines 1–3.

¹⁶ Most likely for the manufacture of ornaments and vessels; see above, II, 26, line 15. Below, in II, 44, line 27, the recipient of a memorandum in Old Cairo is similarly requested to buy silver with the remaining money. The literal meaning of the phrase here translated as ‘bar metal’ is ‘stone metal,’ for which usage see above, II, 26, line 15, and below, VI, 49, margin, line 1, in relation to gold. {See Piamenta, *Dictionary*, I, 83, s.v. *ḥajar* in the sense of a silver coin. For *ḥajar*, ‘jewel,’ see Shy, “Terms,” 234, and see III, 21, sec. b, lines 7, 16. The adjective *naḍīf* translated here ‘pure’ can also mean ‘impure.’ See Hava, *Dictionary*, 777; Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:682.}

¹⁷ According to Yāqūt, *Geographical Dictionary*, 3:435 (see also 1:439), *Ṣūl* was a Khazar city, not far from Darband, between the coast of the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus Mountains. Dunlop, *Khazars*, 18, 23, 165, in fact identifies it with Darband, the famous gateway from the southern European plains to the Middle East. Some types of thread and textile may have been named for this *Ṣūl*, as may in fact be indicated by a passage by al-Washā (fl. ca. 900), in his book *al-Muwashshā*, referring to *ṣalūlī* headgear made in the Persian town of Qumis; see Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles* {214}. That text is corrupt, and one should apparently read *ṣūlī* for *ṣalūlī*. {While it indeed seems more probable that our text reads *ṣūlī*, one might also read here *ṣīlī*, for which cf. II, 32, line 53, and 375, n. 38.}

¹⁸ Arabic *ghazl*. Maḍmūn {as was his practice} places a dot on *g* to represent the Arabic *ghayin*. Judging from the material assembled by Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles* (as specified in the Index), thread was not a routine export commodity. {For *ghazl* for flax in the Geniza see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:208, 408. For trade in *ghazl*, see Ben-Sasson, *Sicily*, 699, Index, s.v. spinning thread; Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:935 (Index). See also below, II, 47, line 13.}

¹⁹ The last sentence is an addition to the original text.}

[C. List of gifts of Oriental spices, perfumes and textiles, as well as Chinese porcelain, for the Palestinian Gaon, the highest religious functionary in Egyptian Jewry]

(13) And the shipment that is for our lord, the most illustrious *Rayyīs*,²⁰ my master (14) and lord Maṣṣliḥ ha-Kohen, *Head of the Pride of Jacob Yeshiva*,²¹ (15) is as follows:

(16) A satchel containing one *mann* of {alt. tr.: of one *mann* of processed} heavy aromatic wood²² made of: (17) *ashbāh*, *kalatūn* and *[qā]qullī*.²³ And a satchel containing [side c, II, 34] (1) one *mann* cloves.²⁴ And a satchel containing one *mann* (2) mace.²⁵ And a satchel containing five *manns* nutmeg.²⁶ (3) And a satchel containing one hundred Chinese *k'b sh'i*,²⁷ (4) and a satchel containing two kerchiefs of *lālas* silk²⁸ made in Kūlam,²⁹

²⁰ *Rayyīs* is used here as the title of the Head of the Palestinian Yeshiva, whose regular seat was in Eretz Israel; the institution, however, had moved to Egypt after the Syro-Palestine region had been ravaged by the Crusaders and others. Maṣṣliḥ b. Solomon Gaon fled from the seat of the Yeshiva, then in Ḥadrak, near Damascus, to Egypt, where we find him active in the years 1127–1139; see Mann, *Studies*, 1:255 and references cited there {Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:260, etc.}. The material being published in this volume considerably enhances our information about this major office of Jewish leadership. {See Goitein, *ibid.*, 2:5ff.}

²¹ The Palestinian Academy.

²² {Arabic *'ūd thaqīl ma'mūl*. According to Jāhīz, *al-Tabaṣṣur*, 16, “it is claimed that the best Indian aromatic wood is that of heavy weight that sinks in water.”}

²³ These species of aromatic wood appear elsewhere in these documents. {For *ashbāh*, see 256, n. 12. For *'ūd qāqullī* see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:296a; Maimonides, *Lexicography*, ed. Muntner, 92, no. 325.}

²⁴ See above, II, 1, line 6.

²⁵ Arabic *bisbāsa*. See Maimonides-Meyerhof, no. 38 {Maimonides, *Lexicography*, ed. Muntner, 25; Lev & Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 148}.

²⁶ Arabic *jawza*, probably identical with *jawzat al-ṭīb*; see Maimonides-Meyerhoff, no. 71 {Maimonides, *Lexicography*, ed. Muntner, 32; Lev & Amar, *ib.*; al-Qazwānī, *'Ajā'ib*, 288}. *Jawza* is found elsewhere in our documents. Since *bisbāsa* and *jawza* came from the same tree, they were sent together. {They also are mentioned together in II, 53. Maimonides mentions together the use of both to increase sexual potency in his autograph manuscript TS Ar. 44, f. 79.}

²⁷ Not identified.

²⁸ Frequently mentioned in our documents; also below, line 9 and side d, line 6 {see 307, n. 10}.

²⁹ As already noted, this is the southern Indian town known to the Portuguese as Quilon. {Kūlam is the southernmost port city on the Malabar Coast; see Bosworth, “Kūlam” and Goitein, “Portrait,” 459, n. 46, and the literature cited there. As far as I have seen, the literature on Kūlam does not mention that textiles manufactured there were exported to Islamic countries, and the information in our document may be unique.}

one (5) with red edges and another with green edges. (6) And a small basket³⁰ containing a *dast*³¹ of Chinese porcelain tumblers, numbering six (7) tumblers.³²

[D. Details of gifts of spices and textiles for the abovementioned two scholars]

(8) And what is set aside for the most illustrious Sheikh, my lord Nathan, *Fellow* (of the Yeshiva),³³ (9) *Diadem of the Fellows* (of the Yeshiva): a piece of fine *lālas* silk, wrapped (10) in a piece of cloth; and a satchel containing one *mann* nutmeg; (11) and that is besides the three gold *mithqāls*. Deliver to him (12) of all this. [Side d] (1) And what is set aside for the most illustrious Sheikh, Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh (2) *the cantor*.³⁴ A satchel containing one *mann* nutmeg; and that is besides (3) the two gold *mithqāls*. Deliver all this, when God brings you there safely.³⁵

[E. Details of a shipment of gifts and letters to Maḥrūz b. Jacob of Aden and to his sister, who was married to the local representative of merchants]

(4) And a shipment to Maḥrūz b. Ya'qūb,³⁶ of Aden, from his mother: (5) A satchel containing aromatic wood and a satchel containing a kerchief made of (6) *lālas* silk and two letters, one to him and the other to his sister, (7) the wife of Abū Zikrī ha-Kohen. And on the aromatic wood and the kerchief is (8) written the name 'Maḥrūz b. Ya'qūb.' (9) These two things should be delivered to him, when God the Exalted, Sublime and Glorified brings you there in safety.

³⁰ Arabic *shat*, pronounced in modern Yemen *shatt*; see above, II, 23, line 44.

³¹ A *dast* was a certain quantity that made a set of a particular item; cf. 304, n. 9.

³² {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:146, 393, n. 52, citing this document.} At this point there is a space of three and a half lines before the next paragraph.

³³ See above, side b, line 7.

³⁴ See above, side b, line 8.

³⁵ At this point there is a space of three and a half lines before the next paragraph.

³⁶ On Maḥrūz b. Jacob, see pages 48–51.

[F. Power of attorney to collect from Ḍāfir b. Burayk of Alexandria a debt owed to Maḏmūn's late brother; request to persuade the Gaon to intervene if necessary]

[Side e] (1) Please be so kind as to act as my (your servant's) representative³⁷ against Ḍāfir b. Burayk of Alexandria³⁸ (2) and collect from him fifty-five and a half Egyptian *mithqāls*, (3) for the principal that Ḍāfir owed was one hundred and fifty (4) *mithqāls*, which he had received from Barakāt b. Mukhtār, servant of (5) the *Rayyis*.³⁹ Now Ḍāfir claimed that the deceased,⁴⁰ my brother Bundār—*may he find mercy!*—(6) told him to pay from that sum to a certain merchant 92 (7) *mithqāls*. So says Ḍāfir. And Ḍāfir further claimed (8) that he is owed for Muḥammad the weigher⁴¹ two and a half *mithqāls*. The total to his credit is 94½.⁴² (9) Ḍāfir's remaining debt is 55½ *mithqāls*. Please be so kind, my lord, as (10) to act as my (your servant's) representative to receive this (sum) and

³⁷ Maḏmūn is here representing the heirs of his brother, Bundār b. Ḥasan b. Bundār, as below, II, 35, lines 22, 24. His deceased brother had entrusted Ḍāfir with the sum of 150 *mithqāls*, through the agency of Barakāt b. Mukhtār; of this sum, 94½ *mithqāls* had been spent, with the deceased's consent, leaving the sum of 55½. First and foremost, Maḏmūn wanted Ḍāfir to *admit* the debt (lines 12–13). The demand to collect the debt of 55½ *mithqāls* was made in a 'note' (Arabic *ruq'ā* {see n. 44}) delivered previously by Abu 'l-Surūr Faraḥ ha-Kohen (lines 14 ff.). Maḏmūn requests Abū Sa'īd Ḥalfōn ha-Levi b. Nethanel to take the note from Faraḥ ha-Kohen and provide the latter with a receipt for it, if he so demands (line 18—side f, line 5). Ḍāfir, too, was to be given a receipt and a guarantee that once the above sum had been paid he would be released of all obligations.

³⁸ Probably a son of Burayk b. Sāsōn of Alexandria, who is mentioned in TS 28.19. {For the name 'Burayk' see 169, n. 4.}

³⁹ Because of the general use of the honorific *rayyis*, we cannot identify this dignity with certainty. Nevertheless, as the present document refers three times to Maḥlīaḥ Gaon by that title, he is probably being referred to here as well. According to the available information, Maḥlīaḥ ha-Kohen was a nephew of the Palestinian Gaon Evyatar; see Mann, *Jews*, 1:196, line 9. This Evyatar had a slave, who acted as his agent, named Mukhtār—a rare name, actually unique to Eretz Israel and Syria; see above, page 283, and Mann, *ibid.*, 2:363. It is quite possible that the son of Evyatar's agent was in the service of his father's master's nephew Maḥlīaḥ, who succeeded Evyatar (although not immediately) as Palestinian Gaon.

⁴⁰ {Arabic *ḥayāt*, an Arabic cognate of the Hebrew *ḥay*, used by Yemenite Jews in referring to a deceased person. See below 394, n. 31.}

⁴¹ He is owed as payment for what he has paid out to Muḥammad the weigher. {Lit., 'he is owed by M., the weigher' (that is, the official of the customs house charged with weighing goods).}

⁴² The text reads here <צׁׁ (= 4 + 90 + ½), with the Hebrew letters in the reverse of the usual order; similarly, the next line reads ׁׁ (5 + 90) instead of ׁׁ. See above, II, 26, line 16, and 355, n. 18.}

to be surety to him (to Ḍāfir) (11) for the responsibility of {alt. tr.: after} delivering this (sum) to you.⁴³

This Ḍāfir's only excuse (12) concerning delivery of this gold is that he says (13) that there is against him a wr[itten] promissory note⁴⁴ [with] witnesses who attested (14) that he had received it.⁴⁵ And the promissory note is in the hands of Sheikh Abu 'l-Surūr (15) Faraḥ b. Yeshū'ā ha-Kohen. So if Sheikh Abu 'l-Surūr should happen to be (16) in Fustat, please, my lord, be so kind as to take the promissory note from him (17) and deliver it to Ḍāfir, so that he pay the gold, and thereby (18) the claim against him {alt. tr.: his claim} will be annulled.

And if Sheikh Abu 'l-Surūr should demand that there be drawn up for him [side f] (1) a promissory note in exchange for that one (that he had delivered), with witnesses and the account of the facts, that is, (attesting) that he had delivered (2) the promissory note⁴⁶ and the release (= receipt) to the person who had paid the gold, as is written (3) in the promissory notes, let him draw up a promissory note and have (witnesses) testify (4) to that effect. And it is not such a large sum that one might be concerned (5) here for such a serious matter.⁴⁷

Furthermore, if (6) Sheikh Abu 'l-Surūr should be present (in Old Cairo) and (you) my lord (are willing to) be surety in my stead to Sheikh

⁴³ That is, to guarantee that the heirs or other plaintiffs would not demand the above sum, or part thereof, from Ḍāfir. {Arabic *wa-yatakaffal labu al-darak ba'd vaslim*. Cf. below, side f., line 8. Arabic *darak* (also there) has a range of meanings, including ('claim' and) 'responsibility for a claim.' *Darak* and *ḍamān darak*, 'responsibility for a claim,' appear frequently in various forms in Judeo-Arabic legal sources (including the documents in this book). For its use in Jewish sources and in Islamic law and for the influence of the latter on the former, see Bloomberg, "Terms," 78–81; Libson, "*Ḍamān darak*." For these terms in Islamic law and the likelihood that the Arabic *darak* reflects influence of the Talmudic *adrakhta*, see further Khan, "Background," 214–23 (cf. Sokoloff, *Dictionary JBA*, 82–83). I believe (see Friedman, *Polygyny*, 199, n. 11a) that a similar meaning could be reflected in the Hebrew *drk* in the Massada scroll to Ben-Sira 42:3: *ʾl ḥšbw n šwtp wdrk* (for a discussion of this passage with references to earlier literature see Kister, "Contribution," 351–52).

⁴⁴ Arabic *ruq'a*, literally, 'note,' 'piece of paper.' For this use see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:242.

⁴⁵ The translation given above is mine. Goitein translated lines 11–14: "And Ḍāfir is under no obligation (necessarily) to deliver (thi)s gol(d), but he is required to admit his debt on the grounds of a bl(essed [?]) writ (and to bring) witnesses who will attest concerning him that he had received that sum." His translation depends on reading *'lh* in line 11, *'alā* (cf. Blau, *Grammar*, 28, 45), 'under obligation.' In my translation I read *'illa*, 'excuse.'

⁴⁶ Here and in the next line (the first appearance) the Arabic *rq'* (vocalization is uncertain) is used apparently as a singular form. This form for the singular is found in several other documents, all from Yemen.}

⁴⁷ That is, concern that the debt might be denied, after Abū Sa'īd Ḥalfon gives Abu 'l-Surūr Faraḥ ha-Kohen a writ in which he releases him from his obligation to serve as agent for recovery of the debt.

Ḍāfir (7) in the matter of payment of the sum that he still owes, please be surety in my stead (8) and at my expense for responsibility for anything that might happen to him (to Ḍāfir) (9) in any conceivable manner. And this writ of mine attests for me in every respect that (you) my lord (10) will be surety in my stead to Sheikh Ḍāfir b. Burayk and that (you) my lord will take from him (11) the aforementioned sum that he owes and deliver it to (12) me, your servant, Maḍmūn [b. Ḥasa]n.⁴⁸

Please be so kind as to try (13) to recover thi[s money] in any possible way (14) and to be surety in my stead in this matter. And request *his excellency*, our lord, (15) *our Gaon*, the illustrious *Rayyis*, my lord and master Maṣlīḥ ha-Kohen, (16) *Head of Pride of Jacob Yeshiva*, to help in this matter (17) and in recovering the money in any possible way. And the [explanatio]n of the matter (18) may be found with you together with the account of the *rāwand*⁴⁹ {alt. tr: And it should be with you together with the proceeds of the *rāwand*},⁵⁰ and it is of you, my lord, [side g, II, 33] (1) a favor.⁵¹ And I [... have sent] another writ (2) and in the hand of [...] ⁵² to Ḍāfir t[wo] le[tters], one in (3) condemnatory terms, and

⁴⁸ Here, where this memorandum is supposed to serve as a legal document, Maḍmūn once again specifies the debtor's full name, as well as his own. {In his memorandum, II, 44v, line 15, Joseph b. Abraham *signs* his name in a similar context. Here, lines 5–12, the writer's indiscriminate use of the third person to refer to four different persons—himself, the recipient Ḥalfon, the debtor Ḍāfir, and the bearer of the writ, Abu 'l-Surūr—makes it quite difficult to understand his intention. In order to clarify his meaning, Goitein added the phrase 'my lord' four times; and he apparently read the last four words of line 9, *'alayya 'an kull man*, as *'alayya 'an kull mā*, translating accordingly. Perhaps the passage may be translated otherwise: "Furthermore, if (6) Sheikh Abu 'l-Surūr should be present (in Fustat) and will be surety on your servant's (= my) behalf to Sheikh Ḍāfir, (7) in the matter of payment of the sum that he still owes, please be surety (to Abu 'l-Surūr) on your servant's (= my) behalf, (8) and your servant (= I) will take responsibility for anything that might happen to you, (9) in any conceivable manner. And this document, written in my hand, attests for me on behalf of anyone (10) who will assume responsibility in my name to Sheikh Ḍāfir b. Burayk and will take from him," etc.}

⁴⁹ For 'account,' Arabic *qīma*; perhaps we might better read *qā'ima* {or *qayyima*}. In other words, Maḍmūn wrote all the details of the abovementioned debt on a separate piece of paper, which he put together with the account that contained the details of the *rāwand* shipment. {See next note.}

⁵⁰ The reading of the original at the end of the line 17 and the subsequent translation are uncertain. Goitein read there *wa[bayā]n*, 'explanation.' I suggest *waya[kū]n*. According to the alternate translation, which I have offered, Maḍmūn asks Ḥalfon to hold the money to be recovered from Ḍāfir together with the proceeds (*qīma*) remaining from the sale of the *rāwand* (see above, side b, line 10), and perhaps carry them with him on a return trip to Aden.}

⁵¹ I shall consider this on your part as a favor. {Arabic *li-mawlāya al-faḍl*. For this phrase, see page 426, n. 67.}

⁵² Here we see that a third person, besides Abu 'l-Surūr Faraḥ ha-Kohen and Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, was involved, and that two further letters were sent to the debtor.

another in mild terms,⁵³ [that he] deliver what he owes (4) to you. *And* [*peace*].

[G. A request to Maṣṭīah Gaon for a halakhic opinion concerning the use of Chinese porcelain vessels by a menstruating woman and the susceptibility of such vessels to impurity]

(5) Please be so kind, my lord and master, to a[sk our l]ord—may God protect him and keep him alive!—(6) concerning the Chinese vessels, the transparent porcelain China, and all (7) the transparent Chinese tableware ('bowls'), whether it is permissible (8) for a *menstruating* woman to use them and wash them, [or] whether they will then be ritually unclean. (9) Furthermore, a Chinese bowl which is [glazed]⁵⁴ without and within, (10) if some (unclean) thing should fall into it, whether that will render it unfit or if it is permissible to wash it (11) and it will (then) be fit for use.⁵⁵

Please be so kind as to obtain for me (12) fro[*m our lord an answer*] in this matter, so that we may act accordingly. *And peace*.

In addition, the Head of the Yeshiva was asked to intervene in the suit. Perhaps Ḍāfir was a particularly difficult person; alternatively, some doubt may have been involved.

⁵³ Arabic *waḥī* is an adjective describing soft, low ground; see Wahrmund, *Wörterbuch*, 2:1198: 'gut dressiert.' {Cf. Wehr, *Dictionary*, 1080, *waḥī*: 'low, muffled, subdued, soft (voice)'; Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 526: 'humble, modest, meek.' I assume the intention is that the letter to be delivered to Ḍāfir depended on his behavior.}

⁵⁴ Arabic *al-mukallasa*, as restored on the basis of the context by Prof. P. Kahle in his letter to the author (October 5, 1955), based on al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-Jawāhir*, 226, where the following account of Chinaware is given: "After they have been dried in the air, one suffuses them outside and inside with that lime (Arabic: *kils*) and then places them in the kiln." The technique of glazing has long been known in the Near East and is mentioned several times in the Talmud, where glazed vessels are called *mane de-qonya*; see Krauss, *Archeology*, 2:284, no. 8; Brand, *Ceramics*, 512. (The Aramaic word *qonya* is a loanword from the Greek *κόψα*, which also has the meaning of lime and plaster.) Glazed vessels fall into the same Halakhic category as metalware. Some Geonim, that is, the heads of the Babylonian (= Iraqi) Talmudic academies of the 8th and 9th centuries, dealt with such vessels in their responsa; see *Otzar ha-Geonim*, 3:29–31, nos. 60 ff. Their comments are undoubtedly of interest for scholars studying Iranian pottery but are surely irrelevant for Chinese porcelain.

On the other hand, the celebrated R. David b. Zimra, in a manuscript responsum, no. 401, cited in the commentary *Peṛi Ḥādāsh* to *Orah Ḥayyim*, *Hilkhot Pesah*, para. 451, reports seeing a responsum of the Geonim concerning porcelain, in which it was ruled that such vessels are categorized as pottery (I owe this information to Prof. E. E. Urbach). However, given the vagueness of the source, no conclusions can be drawn.

⁵⁵ See the comment below. {On this query, cf. Goitein, "Chief Justice," 192; idem, *Med. Soc.*, 1:421, n. 67.

Comment

For a proper appreciation of these two halakhic questions in sec. G concerning the everyday use of Chinese porcelain ware, one should note the previous reference (side c, lines 6–7) of a set of Chinese porcelain tumblers sent from Aden to the Palestinian Gaon in Cairo, in terms indicating that such gifts were by no means unusual. We have already seen that Maḍmūn makes special mention of particularly rare or hard-to-get gifts (see II, 14, line 20; II, 16*v*, line 32; II, 24, lines 9–11).

The history of imports of Chinese porcelain into Muslim countries was thoroughly studied by Paul Kahle, particularly in his articles: (1) “Islamische Quellen”; (2) idem, “Chinese Porcelain”; (3) idem, “Chinese Porcelain” (1953). {Cf. Carswell, “*Ṣīmī*” and the sources and literature cited there.}

It emerges from these studies that expensive chinaware was being sent as gifts to Muslim rulers at a very early stage of history. According to a relatively late Persian source, Harūn al-Rashīd (ruled 786–809) already received a gift of twenty pieces of imperial porcelain and 2,000 pieces of ordinary Chinese porcelain from the ruler of Khurāsān in northeast Iran; see Kahle (3), 6. Pottery from the Tang period has been discovered at Sāmarrā’, Iraq (the capital of the Islamic kingdom in 838–83 {836–92}), at Nishapur in Khurāsān, and elsewhere; see Kahle (3), 6. Ca. 1000, however, the famed Muslim scholar al-Bīrūnī (973–1048) describes staying at the home of a friend, a rich merchant from Isfahan who lived in the town of Rayy (south of present-day Teheran), where he was amazed to see that the domestic utensils, ranging from bowls and plates to lamps and candlesticks, were all made of Chinese porcelain; Kahle (3), 7. In all these cases the porcelain had been brought from China by land. However, if we find the palaces of the Fatimid caliphs of Egypt in the 11th century full of porcelain (Kahle [3], 10), we may assume that they had been imported via the sea route.⁵⁶ It is not surprising, therefore, that Maḍmūn, representative of merchants, in the 12th century, used that route to send gifts to the Palestinian Gaon in Cairo {see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:146}. It may perhaps be inferred,

⁵⁶ Buzurg, *‘Ajā’ib al-Hind*, 108, describes a ship from China that arrived in ‘Umān in 900 C.E. with a cargo of riches that included Chinese porcelain. For a report of a Chinese source from the twelfth century that describes seagoing vessels leaving with their decks crowded with glazed ceramics, see Digby, “Maritime Trade,” 141.}

however, from the halakhic queries at the end of the letter, that *everyday* use of porcelain was only then becoming common.

As to Maḏmūn's first question, whether porcelain would be defiled if used by a menstruating woman, the following remark is in order: According to normative Jewish law as formulated in the Babylonian Talmud and later halakhic literature, there is no place for such a question, since no utensil is rendered unclean by a menstruating woman's touch. Only in Eretz Israel, where attempts were still made to observe the laws of purity and impurity as in the time of the Temple, were menstruating women forbidden to touch household utensils. See Margulies, *The Differences*, 79. In the Muslim period, however, perhaps under external influence (see below), one finds the stringent Eretz-Israel practice being observed in other Eastern countries as well, such as Iraq and Egypt (see Margulies, *ibid.*, 114–17), and—as we see here—Yemen, whereas in the Muslim West, in Europe, and even in Eretz Israel itself, the more liberal mainstream Jewish law was practiced (see Maimonides, *Responsa* [Freimann], no. 99, 95–96 [ed. J. Blau, no. 320, 588–89], and Margulies, *ibid.*). {See also Friedman, “Menstrual Impurity,” 20, where the manuscript under discussion here is cited.}

Muslim authors who rebuked the Jews for their harsh treatment of menstruating women (see Goitein, “The Stern Religion,” 156) were perhaps thinking of the aforementioned practices in Iraq and Egypt. They may well have been correct in attributing these practices to Persian influence (possibly reaching Judaism through Karaism, which had developed largely on Iranian soil).

Maḏmūn's question is based on the halakhic distinction between pottery and glassware, to which the transparent Chinese porcelain was compared; see Maimonides, *Mishne Torah*, “*Hilkhot Kelim*” 1:5, and sources and commentators, *ibid.*

Thus the present document provides interesting evidence for the everyday use of Chinese porcelain ware in the homes of India merchants, and for the halakhic questions arising against that background.

II, D. *Internal Yemenite Affairs*II, 35 *Letter of Apology for a Complaint that Maḍmūn had Mismanged a Trust*

Dhū Jibla, Yemen {ca. 1135}

Mosseri Ia,26.2 (L 296/2)

This letter is published here on the basis of a copy made in 1926 by Prof. S. L. Skoss, now in the library of Dropsie (CAJS), Philadelphia, copies of items from the Jacob Mosseri Collection, notebooks 3, 37, 38. {This copy was not located there in a recent search. I have checked and corrected the transcription by comparing the photograph of the manuscript in the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem.}

Lines 1–15, 17–19 were published by Mann, “Supplement,” 302–3 {= Mann, *Jews*, 2:476–77; see Mosseri Catalogue, 14.} A charm is written on verso.

Here is the description of the manuscript as recorded by Skoss in his own words:

Written on thick brown parchment, very old and much worn out and torn, a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch at its longest and $6\frac{7}{8}$ inch at its widest. Both beginning and end torn off more towards the left side. Its whole tissue is very weak, full of holes and hardly holes {held (?) } together. Yet the writing, old orient square, carefully done and quite legible—is surprisingly well preserved considering the poor condition of the parchment leaf. In fact it is read, whenever preserved, without much difficulty. It is distinct and clear and without ligatures. Size of letters $\frac{1}{8}$ inch. Right side margin . . . about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch.

The manuscript probably ended up in the Cairo Geniza because of the charm written on the blank verso. The charm having been in the possession of an India traveler, the leaf reached Cairo.¹

The letter was sent by the Jewish community in the town of Dhū Jibla, some ten miles southwest of the city of Ibb, on the main highway from Aden to Ṣan‘a. Dhū Jibla was founded by ‘Abdallah b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulaiḥī in the mid 11th century, and named, according to the testimony of the famed Yemenite author, ‘Umāra al-Yamanī (1121–74) in his *Ta’rīkh al-Yaman*, for a Jewish pottery merchant.² The Ṣulaiḥid queen

¹ {See the introduction to II, 36, on a possible connection with Abraham Ben Yijū, who might have brought this item to Egypt with his papers.}

² See Yāqūt, *Geographical Dictionary*, 2:27. {Cf. Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣir*, 2:168–69.}

al-Sayyida al-Ḥurra transferred the capital of Yemen to that city before the death of her husband al-Mukarram (1091).³

Hence it is evident that the Jewish community of the city was also composed mostly of Jews who had moved there from the former capital, Ṣan‘a, or from other Jewish communities. Al-Thāri, today a tiny site in the province of Dhū Sufāl in the Ibb district, had a Jewish community until the mass exodus from Yemen. The present writer heard independently from several new immigrants of different origins that it was considered *rōsh gālūt*, ‘head of the Diaspora,’ that is to say, an ancient city, inhabited by Jews since their arrival in Yemen. Our letter provides evidence that this tradition has a solid basis.⁴

Dhū Jibla itself, which was also inhabited by Jews until their departure from Yemen in 1949/50, was also known as *rōsh gālūt*, and the above-mentioned testimony of ‘Umāra probably implies that it had been a Jewish settlement before it became a city and later the capital.⁵

Shab‘ān cannot be identified with the city of Shibām, as suggested by J. Mann.⁶ {Y. Ratzaby has reported, in the name of ‘Magic Carpet’ immigrants, that there is a village named Shab‘ān in the district of al-Sirr. In recent times there were about thirty Jews living there.}⁷

In this letter, the Jews of the new community of Dhū Jibla appeal to their brethren in another community, undoubtedly that of Aden, in what appears at first blush to be a private matter—a suit concerning a deposit entrusted with Bundār, brother of Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan b. Bundār. However, since Maḍmūn was representative of the merchants and ‘Head of the Congregations’ (see line 18), any criticism of him was of public interest, and the Jews of Dhū Jibla seem to be apologizing in this letter for the wording of the suit that had been brought by three brothers before the Aden rabbinic court. The letter, written in response to a letter from the Aden community (see lines 15–16), is also related to II, 36.

It is worth noting that while Maḍmūn is called here ‘Prince of Princes and Head of the Congregations,’ he is not termed Nagid, nor is he addressed with such honorifics as ‘may his glory increase and his splendor increase.’

³ See Krenkow, “Ṣulaiḥī.” {See Smith, “Ṣulayḥids”.

⁴ For *rōsh gālūt* see further Goitein, *Yemenites*, 200–1 and n. 8, 203 and n. 16.}

⁵ See Goitein, “Communal Life,” 45, and esp. 48, n. 16 [= Goitein, *Yemenites*, 201, 203 n. 16; and see *ibid.*, Index, 365].

⁶ Mann, *Jews*, 2:471 (incidentally, Shibām lies west of San‘a, not east, as per Mann).

⁷ {Goitein, *Yemenites*, 81, n. 22.}

{The date, ca. 1135, is based on II, 33–34, which also deals with the estate of Bundār b. Ḥasan. Though there was some opposition to designating Maḍmūn ‘Nagid’ (see II, 38–39 and II, 41), the absence of that honorific in II, 35, where he is referred to so deferentially, suggests that it had not yet been awarded to him. But this same consideration with reference to II, 70 and the attempt to establish the approximate date of that award, celebrated especially in II, 40, involve other difficulties discussed there.

An echo of Maḍmūn’s outrage at the insulting behavior of the three brothers can almost be heard in the letter of one of them, Yeshū‘ā b. Jacob ha-Kohen (III, 38), in which he writes—more than sixteen years later—that Maḍmūn’s sons would not communicate directly with him.}

Translation

(1)...⁸ (2) *May He show them (?)*⁹ [...] (3) [*M*]ay our masters, most distinguished of our community, be granted much [blessing and well-being from Him Who makes]¹⁰ (4) *peace in His high places*¹¹ and from those who go up and down on [the stairway...Beth-]El¹² (5) and from the holy Torah, which is the Torah of Jekuthiel¹³ and from the Torah (!)¹⁴ and afte[r] (6) that from your brothers and friends

⁸ The missing lines surely specified the name of the recipient, as below in II, 71, lines 1–15, or IV, 80. {The photograph shows no trace of script here. Probably Goitein’s intention in numbering line 1 was to indicate that at least one line is missing at the beginning of the letter.}

⁹ Hebrew *yr̄m*. Mann (*Jews*, 2:476 n. 160) suggested the reading *yr̄s*, as an abbreviation, and deciphered the acronym as *yērahāmēnū ēlohēnū selā*, ‘May our God have mercy upon us, Selah!’ However, Skoss also reads the last letter as *mem* and not *samekh* {as is moreover clear from the photograph}, and there are no dots on the letters. In addition, as surmised above, this would be the place for the salutation of the recipients, not the writers, who refer to themselves only later, in lines 6–9. The reading should not, therefore, be altered, but read *yar’ēm*, ‘may He show them (the building of His city and the reconstruction of His Sanctuary)!’ as was common in the style of the times.

¹⁰ As completed—rightly, we believe—by Mann, *ibid*.

¹¹ As per Mann. As usual the writer prays that the addressee be blessed with peace from God, the angels and the Torah before offering his own wishes; for an example, see below, II, 71, line 17.

¹² Or something similar, according to Gen. 28:12, and supported by the rhyme with ‘Jekuthiel’ in line 5. {Goitein completed the whole phrase, but the photograph shows only ל, as I have indicated here.}

¹³ The Torah of Moses. Jekuthiel is one of Moses’ seven names; see Ginzberg, *Legends*, 2:269.

¹⁴ {Two Hebrew words erroneously repeated. There is no sign of erasure.

and servants!¹⁵ And you are the pride¹⁶ of the whole community (7) who are from the city of Ṣan'a who live in the city of Dhū Jibla,¹⁷ and of the whole community (8) who are from the town of Shab'ān // and al-Thāri // who live in Dhū Jibla, large and small, (9) old and young, distinguished¹⁸ and lowly.

(10) Know, our masters—may our God protect you!—that your servants and friends are well in al[l] (11) our limbs/and from all our sides/thanks to the benevolent care/of our God for us¹⁹/and His mercy, which (12) has helped us/and has not left us./We will therefore give thanks and magnify His name, as it is written, “I will thank You, Lord, in the congregation,”²⁰ (13) etc., and it is written, “May His name be exalted above every blessing and praise!”²¹

We have received the excellent letter (14) of our masters, and we rejoiced in it as one rejoices at reaping time and as one exults when dividing (15) spoils,²² and as one who obtains great spoils.²³ That letter was the most gladdening letter (16) that arrived, and the most pleasing epistle²⁴ that came.²⁵ We, your servants,²⁶ understood what you, our masters, mentioned (17) concerning the letters that had been received by his great and holy excellency, our lord and master,

¹⁵ The Hebrew word used here is *shammāsh* (cf. below, line 10), translating the Arabic *khādīm*, commonly used when the writer wants to say that he is the recipient's servant. Yemenite writers more commonly use the Hebrew word *mēshārēt*; cf. below, II, 71, line 18; IV, 13*v*, address, *mēshārētō*; II, 33, line 11; *ibid.*, verso, address; III, 38 (from Dhū Jibla), line 12, *mēshārētkhā*.

¹⁶ Such expressions are common in letters from Yemen. See the note to III, 1*v*, address, line 2.}

¹⁷ On Dhū Jibla {the original has here and in line 8 Dhī for Dhū, because of the Arabic case ending}, Ṣan'a and later al-Thāri and Shab'ān, see above in our opening comments.

¹⁸ {Hebrew *kabbīrēhem*, probably inspired by Arabic *kabīr*, which can mean ‘large, old, important’; similarly the next word, *ṣe'irēhem*, cognate of Arabic *ṣaghir* = ‘small, young, unimportant’.

¹⁹ Ezra 8:18.}

²⁰ Ps. 35:18. The original biblical verse does not include the Tetragrammaton.

²¹ Mann omits the word *kol*, ‘every.’ The verse in Neh. 9:5 reads as follows: “May Your glorious name be blessed, exalted though it is above every blessing and praise!” It is puzzling that the verse is referred to by the word *wēne*[*emār*], which generally precedes an exact quotation. {Presumably the writers' memory failed them when they wrote the verse.}

²² Based on Isa. 9:2.

²³ The last phrase is from Ps. 119:162. The combination is not too felicitous, since one does not find ‘spoils’ after they have been divided up. The writer was clearly using an idiom without considering its literal meaning.

²⁴ Arabic *abḥaj khūtāb*, a common phrase, e.g., II, 17, line 3.

²⁵ Arabic *wafāda*. Skoss copies *wafara*, but the reading is upheld by the rhyme {with *warada*} and the frequency of the phrase; see below, II, 71, lines 19–20.

²⁶ Arabic *al-mamālīk*; I have translated in accordance with the writers' Hebrew style, see above, lines 6, 10. {As I suggested there, *shammāsh* may be a cognate of the Arabic *khādīm*, so that perhaps ‘your slaves’ would be a more suitable translation here.

our lord Maḏmūn, Prince of (18) Princ[es, H]ead of the Congregations,²⁷ son of his honor, great and holy master and lord Japheth—may his soul be bound up in the bond of life!²⁸—from R. (19) ʿIwāḏ²⁹ and R. Ab[u ʿl-]Faraj³⁰ and R. Ḥasan ha-Kōhanim, children of [his honor, great and holy] master and lord, the late³¹ (20) Jacob ha-Kōhen, may he r[est in] P[aradise]!

It was said in their letters (approximately)³² that their late father had [entrusted] with the deceased, (21) our lord and master Bundār, may he be resurrected,³³ a deposit, such as for a business deal,³⁴ and it was recorded in [his books].³⁵ (22) And you, our lords, mentioned that their father had come down³⁶ after the passing of our lord, the late Bundār—may the Lord have mercy on (23) him!—to his excellency, our lord his brother Maḏmūn, and that the late Sheikh Jacob ha-Kōhen, had searched (24) the account books³⁷ that had belonged to our lord, the late Bundār, as stated by the sons of the late Jacob, // our master //, and he found (25) what he had mentioned, and that our lord Maḏmūn had written him a writ (in his own hand) concerning that, and that witnesses had testified to him, (26) and that the writ and the testimony had been left with them by their late father.

²⁷ Hebrew *sar ha-sarim we-rōsh ha-qehillōt*. In II, 36, line 13–14, 21, he is called *sar ha-qehillōt*, ‘Prince of the Congregations.’ He is entitled *rōsh ha-qehillōt* also in II, 37, vs. 17.

²⁸ Cf. 1 Sam. 25:29.}

²⁹ Skoss copies ‘Adman, but remarks that he is not confident as to the reading. This writer corrected to ʿIwāḏ even before seeing II, 36, line 20, where the name occurs explicitly. {On the name ʿIwāḏ, ʿAwāḏ see Goitein, *Yemenites*, 121; idem, *Med. Soc.*, 5:520, n. 36. See also Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 179, n. 195; Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmāʾ*, 2057: ʿAwwāḏ.}

³⁰ II, 36, line 20: Yeshūʿā, the Hebrew cognate of the Arabic byname Abu ʿl-Faraj = ‘who has brought (or will bring) salvation.’

³¹ The Yemenites place this word, *ḥayy* (or *ḥay*, with one *yod*) {lit., ‘live’; also below, lines 20, 22–24, 26}, before the name of a person recently deceased, and it is common in the India Book papers. It should therefore be translated ‘the late’ or the like. In the colloquial Arabic of the Yemenites we have *ḥayāt abūy*, ‘my late father.’ {So above, 384, n. 40; cf. for both forms Goitein, *Yemenites*, 208, n. 28, 277.} Perhaps the expression originates in the BT Berakhot 18a: “‘The son of a living man’ (2 Sam. 23:2 [according to the *ketiv*]) means that even in his death he was called living.” {Cf. Ratzaby, *Dictionary*, 91.}

³² The original text reads [*gad*] *yakūn*. The persons who sent this letter had not seen the letters sent to Maḏmūn and therefore report the content as it had been reported to them.

³³ {I believe the text reads *z[ḵbrw] l[ḥyb]*, ‘may he be remembered for resurrection.’}

³⁴ Arabic *muʿāmala*, an investment in a partnership for profit, veiled interest in a legal fashion. {For the *muʿāmala*, see page 226, n. 2.}

³⁵ Restored according to line 24.

³⁶ From Dhū Jibla in the Yemenite highlands, to Aden.

³⁷ {On use of the merchant’s account book as legal evidence, see page 202, n.22.

And we also understood (27) that our lord Maḍmūn had read their letters³⁸ to him concerning this, and sent them an answer, (28) saying: If they have //a writ// and testimony against him,³⁹ let one of them bring that writ (29) and that testimony and sue him (Maḍmūn) according to the laws of *Israel*, and he will give them what is owed them. And you, our lords, mentioned that they⁴⁰ (30) had sent him an answer, in which there were many things that had distressed our lord Maḍmūn (31) and annoyed and angered him. Afterwards, we your servants, were overwhelmed by (32) intense [regret] concerning that correspondence and the [affront...] (33) on the lord Maḍ[mūn [...]]

³⁸ Arabic *kitbathum*, not *kutubhum* as Goitein copied from Skoss; this may be translated as, 'their writing, what they wrote.'

³⁹ Either two documents—Maḍmūn's handwritten statement, and the protocol of a testimony—or his handwritten statement signed by witnesses. See below, II, 36, line 6.

⁴⁰ The three sons of Jacob ha-Kohen.}

II, 36 *Letter from the Court to the Community of Dhū Jibla in Defense of Maḍmūn*

Aden. {ca. 1135}

JNUL 4° 577.2/15

A badly torn page, with both beginning and end missing, the paper is woolly and very brittle. It is written in a fine square script, like that of a Torah scroll scribe.¹ The writer left a broad margin, more than 2 cm wide, on the right. He used a colon to indicate switches from Arabic to Hebrew (line 7) and also left a blank space at the end of the line (26) from Hebrew to Arabic. Nevertheless, even this meticulous scribe is inconsistent in his orthography. [...] In line 30 he seems to have omitted a whole line; see comments.

Copied on the verso are two liturgical poems, written in different styles but apparently by the same person, Abraham Ben Yijū—one rather hurried, the other more careful. Written above the second is the incipit in Arabic, “and his too is (this) *ma‘ārw* for Sukkā.” Since ‘Sukkā’ (rather than ‘Sukkōt’) as the name of the festival is typically Yemenite, the poems were presumably written in Yemen.² {It is not clear why and how the page came into the hands of Ben Yijū, who was undoubtedly, to my mind, the writer of the poems on the verso. Perhaps the *recto* is a copy of the original letter, sent to Dhū Jibla; and the copy was left in Aden and filed among the court’s records or kept by Maḍmūn, who later gave it to his confidant Ben Yijū, but the question needs further study. This suggests that Ben Yijū might have brought II, 35 to Egypt as well.}

This fragment is undoubtedly connected with II, 35 {see the introduction to that document for the date}, since the same people are involved: ʿIwād, Yeshū‘ā and Ḥasan, the sons of Jacob ha-Kohen (line 20; see II, 35, lines 19–20), who were suing Maḍmūn on the basis of their father’s will (lines 5–7).

The letter was written at a later stage of the negotiations between the brothers and Maḍmūn than the letter from the Jews of Dhū Jibla, II, 35; indeed, we find here that the brothers had already appeared before the Adenese rabbinical court (line 8). The first part of the letter, most of which has been lost, was an account in Arabic of the deliberations before the court (lines 1–7). In the second part, written almost entirely in Hebrew, the writers denounce the brothers in the sharpest terms, citing various sources, and declaring that they should be fined heavily

¹ {The writing resembles that of Samuel b. Moses b. Eleazar, who signed II, 71 and wrote III, 11 below.

² The poems are continuations of the poems in II, 28–29v.

for having insulted such an important person as Maḍmūn. However, it is clear from this letter that the Adenese court had no authority to fine the brothers and that it could at most recommend that the Dhū Jibla community leaders draw the appropriate conclusions from the deliberations in Aden.

As to Maḍmūn, this letter yields some interesting information. He was ‘appointed’ by the *rāshē gālūyōt* (line 10), that is, the exilarchs in Baghdad—in the plural, for there is no doubt that Maḍmūn sent gifts when a new exilarch took office, being rewarded with a renewal of his commission. The phrase *rāshē gālūyōt* may also indicate that, besides the exilarch in Baghdad, there was an exilarch in Yemen, namely, the ‘Persian’ cousin of the Baghdadi exilarch whose appearance in Yemen is the subject of IV, 4–5; see also II, 71*v*, margin, line 4 (see 539, n. 51).

The phrase *rāshē ha-yeshīvōt* in lines 10–11 is undoubtedly referring to the Heads of the yeshivas in both Baghdad and Egypt.³ We have already learned of Maḍmūn’s relations with Maṣṭīḥ, the Head of the ‘Palestinian Academy,’ in II, 33, line 14; II, 34, side f, lines 15–16; and also II, 33, side g, lines 5–12. Based on these sources, it would seem that the Jews of Yemen looked for spiritual leadership mainly to the yeshiva in Egypt, which was the successor to the Yeshiva of Eretz Israel; however, they certainly had not broken off their ancient contacts with the Babylonian yeshivas.⁴

What kind of ‘appointment’ had Maḍmūn received from the above authorities?⁵ In addition to Maḍmūn’s position in the Jewish community, the writer(s) of our letter stress, in lines 11–12, that he was invested with the trust of the ‘rulers who are overseas and those who are in the desert,’ doubtless referring to the agreements of the representative of merchants in Aden with the various rulers controlling the trade routes, both on the way to India and on land, along the southern Arabian coast, perhaps also the Ḥijāz route.⁶

³ See Goitein, *Yemenites*, 40 (an error occurred there in naming the Heads of the Babylonian Yeshiva), 79–80.)

⁴ See Assaf, “Contacts,” 390. {See also Goitein, “Jews of Yemen” (= Goitein, *Yemenites*, 53–74).

⁵ On this point, see Goitein, *Yemenites*, 39–40.

⁶ Cf. Goitein, *ibid.*, 79: “That is to say, Maḍmūn concluded agreements with the rulers and pirates in whose domains the merchant ships for which he was responsible had to pass; he also negotiated with the tribal chiefs in Southern Arabia, in whose territory the caravans in which Jews rode had to travel.” For the use of the Ḥijāz route, see above, 205, n. 3.}

Our letter is also of interest as evidence of the scholarship of the Yemenite Jews one generation before they were to receive Maimonides' *Epistle to Yemen*. One must remember, however, that since Aden was on an important trade route, Jews from all lands were found there.

Translation

[...] ⁷ (3) [...] that you had a document or (4) [...] (5) [...] they did not say, we (are acting) in accordance with our father's will and demanding {alt. tr.: [This is] what they said: in accordance with our father's will, we demand} ⁸ our right, [and indeed they did not] (6) produce a handwritten statement ⁹ testifying to what was [due] them, nor a document with witnesses, ¹⁰ and they did not have a w[ill] ¹¹ (7) proper, as wills should be. *And it came to pass, when we saw all that was written in your letter* ¹² (8) *and read it to them* ¹³ [and h]eard all their words, we were amazed and much distressed, (9) *and we said, How has such evil been don[e], to spread slander [and] idle, evil words* (10) *and abuse with their li[ps] one who is appointed by the exilarchs and the heads of* (11) *the yeshivas over all* ¹⁴ *of Israel and invested with the trust of the rulers who are overseas* (12) *and those who are in the desert.*

It is hereby our opinion and we state, in truth, ¹⁵ *that these men* (13) *must be fined, each and every one of them, a fine to be paid to our lord Maḏmūn, Prince of* (14) *the Congregations,* ¹⁶ *because he is a distinguished person. The penalty imposed for embarrassing another depends entirely on the offender and the person affronted,* ¹⁷ *and*

⁷ Because of their fragmentary nature lines 1, 2 and 4 have not been translated.

⁸ {Arabic [...] *mā qālū nahñā 'alā waṣīyat abūnā muṭālibīn*.

⁹ Arabic *khatt*. That is, a statement in Maḏmūn's hand.

¹⁰ I.e., signed by witnesses.}

¹¹ The arguments that the brothers presented to the Jewish community in Dhū Jibla (see above, II, 35, lines 23–26) had, accordingly, not been proved before the Adenese court.

¹² Possibly II, 35.

¹³ The above-mentioned brothers. [For reading the letter aloud in court, see page 213, n. 6.}

¹⁴ Arabic *jamī'hum*. This sole Arabic word, in a text written entirely in Hebrew, presents an interesting problem for the psychology of language. {The word 'alā (= 'over') is also Arabic. The whole expression 'over all of Israel' is thus written in Judeo-Arabic.}

¹⁵ The unusual Hebrew expression used here, *bē'omnām* {cf. the more common *be'emet*}, does not appear in Ben-Yehuda, *Dictionary*, 268.

¹⁶ {Hebrew *sar ha-qehillōt*, In II, 35, lines 17–18, he is called *sar ha-sarīm we-rōsh ha-qehillōt*, 'Prince of Princes, Head of the Congregations.'}

¹⁷ M. Bāvā Qāmā 8:1.

everything (15) is defined in terms of his dignity,¹⁸ taking the most stringent view.¹⁹ Since our sages have said²⁰ that for distinguished persons one increases the limits of compensation for humiliation. (16) And this is what they said—may their memory be for a blessing! A certain person insulted R. Judah b. Hanīnā; the case was brought before (17) R. Simeon b. Lakish, and he fined him a pound of gold.²¹ Now, had they paid him²² many times that amount, (18) it would have been to no avail, until they appeased him, for thus said our sages—may their memory be for a blessing! ‘Our Rabbis taught: Even if he were to give (19) him all the riches in the world, he would not be forgiven until he asked him (for pardon), for Scripture says: “Therefore, restore (20) the man’s wife, since he is a prophet,” etc.’²³ And (this is) to inform you // that// there is an obligation upon ‘Iwād, Yeshū‘ā and Ḥasan (21) ha-Kohanim, sons of the late²⁴ Jacob ha-Kohen—may he rest in Eden!—(to pay) our lord Maḏmūn, Prince of the Congregations, upon each (22) and every o[n]e of them, one pound²⁵ of gold, for what they have done and opened their mouths wide (23) and written in their letters indecent things, suspicion and complaints and slander and things (24) that are not proper, and behaved brazenly. For that reason they are liable to fines. And they (the sages) have further said: (25) ‘Whoever is liable to a fine is also liable to excommunication,²⁶ and whoever is liable to excommunication

¹⁸ Ibid., Mishnah 6.

¹⁹ See BT Bāvā Qāmā 91a. The writer is referring to the fact that while the first opinion given in the Mishnah is relatively lenient, the law was finally ruled in accordance with the more stringent view of R. Akiva.

²⁰ The Aramaic phrase used here (*dekā-āmrē rabbānān*) is standard when introducing a quotation from Talmudic literature, but the sentence that follows is cited from medieval Halakhic literature. {The text referred to, is the quotation in the next line; Goitein, however, missed the connection, since he had not deciphered the first phrase in that line. But cf. the text of the Palestinian Talmud that introduces the quotation below: “One who offends an elder must compensate him fully for humiliation.”}

²¹ PT Bāvā Qāmā 8:8 {6c}. However, Prof. Saul Lieberman pointed out that the writer was most probably quoting not directly from that source but from the code of R. Isaac Alfasi, who quotes the text in his elaboration of M. Bāvā Qāmā 8:6. Some support for that conjecture may be derived from the fact that our text seems to lean toward Babylonian rather than Palestinian Aramaic (*qāmē* = ‘before’ rather than *qōmē*). Around the same time, a Yemenite author wrote a commentary on Alfasi’s code for Tractate Hullin; see Assaf, “Contacts,” 391. {This has been published: Alfasi Hullin (Qafih).

²² ‘Him’ = Maḏmūn.}

²³ M. Bāvā Qāmā 8:7, quoting Genesis 20:7. {As the introductory phrase *tenō rabbānān* suggests, the writer may have intended the parallel *baraita* in BT Bāvā Qāmā 92a, which in some versions is similarly worded.}

²⁴ Hebrew *ḥayy*; see above 394, n. 31.

²⁵ *Ratlā*, instead of the Aramaic *litra* of the Jerusalem Talmud (line 17 above). This is not Arabic, but Aramaic {the writer intended to write Aramaic, even though he used the Arabic form *ratl*}.

²⁶ There is no such text in Talmudic literature, nor is a similar ruling stated in halakhah. Prof. Lieberman, however, directs my attention to Alfasi ad M. Bāvā Qāmā 8:1:

is liable to flogging.²⁷ (26) *And whoever has been excommunicated and dies under excommunication—his coffin shall be stoned.*²⁸

(27) See, gentlemen, what an *evil tongue* has caused, for there is no sin more grievous (28) than that. And slander is the cause of *affliction*, as they said:²⁹ *It was taught: R. Eliezer [!] b. Parta* (29) *says: Come and see how great is the power of an evil tongue! Whence do we know (its power)? From the spies, for if one who* (30) *slanders*³⁰ *his fellow man, all t[he more so . . .] [. . .] upon him* (31) [. . .]

“It is the custom of the two Academies (i.e., of Sura and Pumbeditha in Babylon) that, although fines cannot be collected in Babylon, the offender is excommunicated until he appeases the complainant.” That is to say, whoever fails to appease the complainant and does not pay the appropriate fine is excommunicated. {See next note.}

²⁷ This ruling is also not to be found in Talmudic literature. {See Hai Gaon’s response concerning a person who insults a Torah scholar, cited in *Kaḥfior wa-Ferah*, 44: “For he is liable to excommunication and flogging and a fine, to the extent that he can endure.”}

²⁸ Based on M. ‘Eduyot 5:6, worded slightly differently.

²⁹ Arabic *k.g.* = *ka-qawlihim* {better: *kamā qālū*}. The quote is from Tosefta, ‘Arākhin 2:11 (ed. Zuckerman, 545), but with a different opening phrase. Prof. Saul Lieberman believes that the writer was not quoting directly from the Tosefta, since quotations from the Tosefta are quite rare even in *Midrash ha-Gadol*, the comprehensive Yemenite anthology, which was completed long after the date of the present document; it must have been quoted from some Midrash that used the Tosefta. {See Lieberman, *Tosefet Rishonim*, 2:172. As it turns out, Goitein and Lieberman believed that a whole line was missing in our text; see next note. However, as Goitein indeed observed, the opening phrase in the Tosefta is different, as is the continuation. The text cited here seems much closer to that of the parallel *baraita* in the BT ‘Arākhin 15a (my thanks to the translator, David Louvish, who drew this to my attention), and the writer may well have omitted a few words here by way of *homoeoteleuton*; the missing text of the Talmud does not amount to a full line: “. . . slander of trees and stones is punished,” etc.}

³⁰ One line has obviously been omitted here, and the text should be completed as follows: “one who slanders [trees and stones is punished, moreover severely and not lightly, all the more so one who slanders],” etc. The reason for the omission is easily discerned: the missing line began with the same words, *shēn ra* ‘, literally ‘an evil report,’ as line 30 and ended with the same word, *mōsī* ‘, literally, ‘brings,’ as line 29. {This is a *homoeoteleuton*. Goitein’s restoration is not the missing text of the Tosefta as we have it, but (see previous note) the conjectured text, with sufficient words to make up a whole missing line in the writer’s hand.}

II, E. *Hebrew Poems by Abraham Ben Yijū in Honor of Maḏmūn*II, 37 *Praise of Maḏmūn, Defender of the Faithful and Especially of Ben Yijū*

{Aden, ca. 1141}

TS 8J 31, f. 1

This poem was published by Marmorstein, "Geschichte und Literatur," 603. As already noted by Bacher (*MGWJ*, 52 [1908], 245–47) {rather, Brody, "Notizen"} and Mann (*Jews*, 2:477), Marmorstein erred in identifying the time of composition of the poem and the personalities to whom it refers. Moreover, his edition is full of corrupt readings to a degree that renders it completely valueless.

Abraham b. Yijū, the subject of chap. 3, wrote this on a bifolium, folded so as to yield two leaves (four sides). He took greater care in penning this than he did in writing his letters. In the body of the poem he gives his full name as Abraham b. Peraḥya b. Natan b. Yijū *ha-ma'aravī* (= the Maghrebi). An accomplished exporter and industrialist, a respected elder and scholar of sorts, Ben Yijū was not a particularly gifted poet. Nevertheless, he wrote many poems, several of which have been preserved (II, 37–41, III, 29a), one of them in two copies (II, 38–39 {we also have additional manuscripts for the poem in III, 29a and for part of II, 40}). He obviously intended these verses to form a collection, or *dūwān*, of his poems, as can be seen by the way he folded the paper to form a booklet and by his writing *walahu ayd^{an}* (= also his) over II, 37, 38, 40, 41. He signs his name in an acrostic: ABRHM ḤZQ YJW: Abraham *ḥazaq* {'may he be strong!,' common in poets' signatures} Yijū.

No. II, 37 provides the official titles granted Maḏmūn: 'Head of the Congregations' (*rōsh ha-qehillōt*, vs. 17)¹ and 'Nagid of the Lord's People' (*negīd 'am yy*, line 6),² as well as the names of his three sons: Ḥalfon, Bundār and Japheth (vs. 49–52).

The most important information concerns the previously unknown presence of the Jewish Karaite sect in Yemen during this period (vs. 25–32).³ It seems that members of the local Jewish community did not actively participate in the dispute with the Karaites and left that task to

¹ {He is called *sar ha-sarīm we-rōsh ha-qehillōt* in II, 35, lines 17–18.

² For this title, see 2 Sam. 6:21, 2 Kings 20:5.

³ For evidence of Karaites in Yemen during this period, see page 76, n. 75.

Ben Yijū, who of course had contacts with them in his native country and in Egypt.⁴

Ben Yijū describes his sadness when he had previously been separated from Maḏmūn, obviously referring to the time the writer spent in India (vs. 21). When his adversaries attacked Ben Yijū, Maḏmūn protected him and ‘dressed him in his royal garb’ (vs. 31, 54).⁵ Maḏmūn’s fame was comparable to that of the great rabbi Joseph Ibn Migash (vs. 34).⁶ (Unlike the latter, Maḏmūn was hardly a great scholar, however, as shown by the questions, which he addressed to the Gaon Maṣlīah in no. II, 34.)

Maḏmūn is further praised as a defender of the faith from *mishtaggēa* (literally, ‘one who acts like a madman’)⁷ and ‘he who lies in ambush’ (vs. 37).⁸

{This poem was presumably written after II, 40 (dated ca. 1140), which celebrates the recognition of Maḏmūn as Nagid. Furthermore, the third ‘son,’ whose birth was anticipated there (vs. 19), is likely to have been the same ‘delightful child Japheth’ named here (vs. 52) along with his two brothers Ḥalfon and Bundār. Japheth is not mentioned in later documents and may have died in his youth. It is logical to assume that those two were relatively young children as well, and while the way they are described further suggests this (Ḥalfon ‘the Prince [*sar*], a pleasant flower’ [vs. 49; but *perah* can be used poetically for older children]), this is not definite proof. Goitein’s assumption that Ibn Migash (d. 1141) was still alive undoubtedly was based on the way Ben Yijū praised Maḏmūn as ‘famous as Ibn Migash’ (vs. 34), without any indication that the Spanish rabbi was dead. But in II, 40, Ben Yijū compared Maḏmūn’s piety to that of R. Nissim [b. Jacob], who died in 1062, also without any hint that he was not alive. While there is thus no proof, it is nevertheless likely that II, 37 was written ca. 1141; see further II, 40 and II, 70.}

⁴ Ben Yijū reviles his assailants as heretics and fornicators. Goitein notes in his Hebrew comments to the text that their identification as Karaites is largely based on vs. 30: “They reviled me with Mar Zuta, Rav Zuti and Zuti.” These names of Talmudic sages all denote ‘Mr. Small.’ As seen elsewhere, such appellations served the Karaites to denigrate the Rabbanites. In pages 75–76, I suggest a purely personal background for Ben Yijū’s vilification by his assailants, not associated with the Karaite schism.

⁵ For the bestowal of robes of honor by officials, see page 428, n. 80. Valuable pieces of clothing that Maḏmūn sent to Ben Yijū as a gift are mentioned in II, 14, lines 15–18.

⁶ The great Spanish rabbi died in 1141, and this verse seems to have been written while he was alive.

⁷ {A circumlocution for an apostate; see Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 99, n. 71.}

⁸ These remarks are based on Goitein’s introduction to the text and some of the comments in the Hebrew edition.

II, 38–39 *Encomium Betraying Strong Opposition Met by Maḏmūn*

{Apparently Aden, ca. 1140–44}

II, 38. TS 8J 16, f. 23

II, 39. AIU IV, C, 486

These manuscripts preserve two copies of a poem by Abraham b. Yijū praising Maḏmūn and cursing his enemies. No. II, 38, is clearly written by Ben Yijū, while II, 39, is written in the calligraphic square hand of a scribe. As in II, 37, here too the poet signs his name in an acrostic: ABRHM ḤZQ YJW.

It is noteworthy that the Geniza has preserved two copies of a poem in honor of Maḏmūn. This poem is devoted entirely to one subject: Maḏmūn's enemies, who requited his kindness with treachery (line 8). The opposition is described in general terms, and it is impossible to ascertain whether its background was personal (as in II, 35–36 {III, 11, III, 32}), communal or religious.¹ Nevertheless, the poet emphasizes that Maḏmūn's opponents were compelled to acknowledge his titles *Sar* and *Nagid* (vs. 14).² {See the introduction to II, 40, for the probable date of composition of this poem.}

¹ {The key to understanding the nature of the opposition may be held in the enigmatic line 6: "All they have is magic (*kishshūf*) and bewilderment," etc.

² These remarks are based on Goitein's introduction to the text in the Hebrew edition.}

II, 40 *Three Poems Written by Ben Yijū in Honor of Maḍmūn*

{Apparently Aden, ca. 1140}

SPIOS D 55.10

{These three poems are written on the verso of a copy of the deed of manumission for Ben Yijū's slave girl in India in 1132, which is III, 17. All three have the acrostic ABRHM (Abraham). He labels them: poems nos. 2–4 in praise of Maḍmūn. No. II, 40 may have been intended to follow II, 38–39 or some other encomium to Maḍmūn, which has not been identified. The first and second of these poems ('nos. 2–3') speak of Maḍmūn's two sons, Ḥalfon and Bundār, and the first mentions specifically that Maḍmūn was anticipating the birth of a third 'son.' (Vs. 18–19: 'Keep alive the two children for their father/Ḥalfon and Bundār; and the third, their brother/will quickly and speedily join them.') Ben Yijū speaks of Maḍmūn as his protector, and in all likelihood he composed these poems when in Yemen.

The first poem emphasizes Maḍmūn's position as Nagid, both in the refrain ("My lord Maḍmūn, Nagid of the Lord of Hosts' people") and in the body of the poem. Vs. 3 reads "brothers renew the kingship." I assume that this refers to the time when Maḍmūn was first awarded the title Nagid. Unfortunately, we do not know when this event—met by some opposition (see II, 38–39 and II, 41)—took place. In II, 35 and II, 36 (ca. 1135), he was spoken of most deferentially but not (yet) called Nagid. No. II, 37 addresses Maḍmūn as Nagid and names his third son, Japheth; presumably it postdates II, 40. As we have seen, Goitein's assumption that II, 37 was written before 1141 cannot be firmly established.

But that year approximately corresponds to other information concerning both Ben Yijū and Maḍmūn. There is evidence for Ben Yijū being in India between 1132–39 and 1145–49, and he probably visited Yemen for an extended visit that began ca. 1140 (see page 648). Maḍmūn's sons Ḥalfon and Bundār—seemingly described in both II, 37 and II, 40 as youths—were respected merchants by ca. 1150 and Ḥalfon was appointed Nagid after his father's death in 1151 (see II, 61 and II, 71). Ben Yijū's arrival in Yemen presumable coincided with Maḍmūn's appointment as Nagid. A confusing factor, however, is introduced by II, 70, written in all likelihood in 1146. There the rabbinical court of Fustat writes Maḍmūn—again in most deferential terms—but does not address him as Nagid. See the discussion there (pages 525–26).

With poetic license, Ben Yijū calls Maḍmūn: Naṭronai b. R. Yose ha-Gelilī. (Maḍmūn is Arabic for Protected by God, in Hebrew Shemaryā;

the Aramaic Naṭronai means the same. Yose stands for the biblical Joseph, who was handsome [Gen. 39:6], since Ḥasan, Maḏmūn's father's name, also means handsome, and its Hebrew equivalent Japheth (Yefet) was interpreted to mean the same [Hebrew *yāfe*].)

In the refrain of the second poem Ben Yijū likens Maḏmūn's sons to myrtle branches. In III, 41, line 14, Ben Yijū compares his own sons to twigs of an aromatic tree, a commodity frequently exported from India. A slightly different version of the last two stanzas of this poem is preserved in another manuscript, TS G 2, f. 59v (added as III, 29a). In both versions Ben Yijū compares Maḏmūn to the famous R. Nissīm [b. Jacob] of Qayrawān (d. 1062), in the one for the heavenly reward he deserves and in the other for his piety (but not for his scholarship, of course). R. Nissīm was much revered by Maghrebi Jewry, including Ben Yijū.

As Ben Yijū notes in the caption above the third poem, he attempted to fashion it after a poem by the poet laureate Solomon Ibn Gabirol. But he was rather inept at this. Besides the words 'Nagid of my people,' which appears in both, Ben Yijū's poem bears little similarity to Ibn Gabirol's.¹ In the continuation of the manuscript and on the blank spaces on recto Ben Yijū wrote two liturgical poems (*s^eliḥōt*).²

¹ {As Prof. Ezra Fleischer called to my attention, Ben Yijū made some attempt to copy the meter of Ibn Gabirol's poem and probably intended that it be sung with the same tune.

² Goitein prepared only a most brief description of II, 40.}

II, 41 *Dirge on Maḏmūn's Death*

{Yemen, 1151}

Mosseri VIII,119.2 (P 474)

{In this *muwashshah*-type poem, with the acrostic ABRHM (Abraham), Ben Yijū eulogizes Maḏmūn, who died in 1151. Maḏmūn is spoken of as having been awarded seven titles by the Exilarch. These were probably bestowed on the occasion of gifts sent by Maḏmūn. They include *allūf* (Distinguished Member of the Academy), Nagid (son of Nagid), *yedīd ha-yeshīvā* (Friend of the Academy), *segullat (ha-yeshīvā*, Chosen of the Academy), *segan ha-hamullā* (Chief of the Multitude, a poetic equivalent of *rosh ha-qehillōt*, Head of the Congregations). Ben Yejū's emphasis that the entire congregation called Maḏmūn 'Nagid son of Nagid' probably indicates that this appointment was met by opposition (see II, 38–39). Maḏmūn was also called *meyudda* (friend), but this may be a poetic addition to *allūf*, following Ps. 55:14. In II, 35, lines 17–18, he is called Prince of Princes and Head of the Congregations and in II, 36, lines 13–14, Prince of the Congregations. And in II, 38, lines 14–16, 'the Mordecai of our time, the eminent pillar, the Nagid of the land of Yemen, the leader of the congregations, the Pride of the Communities.' Since Ben Yijū labeled the poem 'A Similar Dirge,' he must have written at least another such eulogy to Maḏmūn.}¹

¹ {Based in part on Goitein's remarks in the Hebrew edition of the poem. Since II, 36, lines 10–11, speaks of Maḏmūn as having been appointed by exilarchs and heads of academies, Ben Yijū's identifying the awardee of the seven titles as 'the Exilarch' may be an oversimplification.}

II, F. *Joseph b. Abraham b. Bundār, Maḏmūn's Cousin**II, 42 *Letter from Joseph b. Abraham to Ḥalfōn ha-Levi b. Nethanel*

Aden, ca. 1134

TS NSJ 402

No. 42 is written to India and concerns textiles, musk and pepper imported from there to Aden and cinnabar, which was shipped in the opposite direction. The letter is fragmentary. The upper portion, which on verso contained the address with the names of the writer and recipient, is missing. Six merchants are mentioned by name.¹

{The following comments summarize some of the stages of research of this fragment. Goitein, who noted that he checked the document on December 10, 1978, had identified the writer as Joseph b. Abraham solely on the basis of his handwriting. He did not identify the recipient, however.

Of the six merchants mentioned in the letter, the first three—Abū Sa'īd b. Maḥfūz,² Khalaf b. Isaac³ and Barakāt al-Ḥalabī⁴—also figure in II, 49. In II, 42, Joseph commented that Abū Sa'īd had arrived from India and had delivered to Khalaf goods, apparently pepper, on behalf of the letter's recipient. Joseph had sold the pepper that he had received for 38 dinars per *bahār* ('the best thing!,' *aṣlah shuway*) but did not know for what price Khalaf had sold his consignment of pepper. Barakāt al-Ḥalabī too had arrived from India and delivered textiles to Khalaf. A detailed letter from Khalaf to the addressee would follow.

The same goods mentioned here, pepper, wrappers and other textiles and musk, also appear in II, 49. Joseph notes (in II, 42) with regret the addressee's delay in India; similar disappointment with his failure to return that year to Aden is expressed in II, 49. Khalaf wrote the now fragmentary

* Besides nos. II, 42–45a, see also Joseph b. Abraham b. Bundār's letters to Abraham Ben Yijū (chap. 3, sec. B = III, 1–9), Ḥalfōn b. Nethanel (IV, 15–16), Abū Zikrī Kohan (V, 9–12 {also TS 8 J 20, f. 19, no. 243a in the 'Old' India Book list}, Abū 'Imrān b. Nufay' (VI, 36); and his letter containing a report on Isaac al-Nafūsī's losses (VI, 28).

¹ {The above, brief comments are based on Goitein's notes. Other than a draft of the transcription of the Judeo-Arabic text, no translation or other notes are preserved in his papers.

² = Ḥalfōn ha-Levi b. Shemaryā Ibn Jamāhir; see 331, n. 13.

³ Joseph's cousin, whose papers are dealt with in chap. 2, sec. G and chap. 3, sec. C.

⁴ This is Barakāt b. Mūsa al-Ḥalabī, mentioned in VI, 26–28.

II, 49 to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel (see *ibid.* for this identification), India. Khalaf remarked there that Abū Saʿīd had arrived from India and made a delivery to him. Part of the pepper he had received he sold for 37 dinars per *bahār*, part for 36. (Abū) Barakāt al-Ḥalabī also delivered textiles to Khalaf. These and other data lead to the almost certain conclusion that like II, 49, also II, 42, was sent to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel. A fragment of Khalaf's letter (which would follow), which Joseph mentioned here (II, 42) in the margin, in all likelihood is II, 49. Ḥalfon was in the practice of shipping consignments from India with different merchants to Aden, to be delivered to a number of his associates there, including Joseph, Khalaf and Maḍmūn. As I shall attempt to demonstrate elsewhere, Ḥalfon's instructions concerning the disposition of goods mentioned in II, 42 and II, 49, are apparently to be found in VI, 27, whose most distinguished, anonymous recipient, was identified by Goitein as Maḍmūn. A similar letter was probably sent to Joseph at the same time, to which he replies in II, 42 and to which he alludes several times. No. IV, 1, also concerns some of these same transactions; see further II, 49.

After I had translated and annotated II, 42 and after I had subsequently concluded that it had been sent to Ḥalfon, as explained above, I then reviewed again various fragments written by Joseph and identified the upper portion of this letter in IV, 15. It contains on verso the names of the addressee Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel and the sender, Joseph b. Abraham. The match is indisputable. The translation of the almost complete text from the two combined fragments, IV, 15 and II, 42, will appear with the former piece in chap. 4.

I tentatively suggest that IV, 15–II, 42 was written in 1134, although any date is approximate and speculative. In November 29–December 8, 1133, Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel and Barakāt al-Ḥalabī were together in one place, and in my opinion VI, 26, which attests this, was written in (Broach) India. Ḥalfon evidently ignored Abū Zikrī Kohen's advice from January–February 1134 (V, 2), not to (stay in Aden or) return to India. I have already suggested that in 1135, Ḥalfon was probably in Yemen, finally on his way back from India to Egypt (see the introduction to II, 33–34). If so, IV, 15–II, 42, in which delivery of goods that he sent from India with Barakāt al-Ḥalabī is acknowledged in Aden, was likely to have been written in 1134.}

II, 43 *Memorandum from Joseph b. Abraham to Abū Naṣr al-Ḥalabī*

Aden, ca. 1130–50

TS 12.355

{This is a memorandum written by Joseph b. Abraham of Aden and handed to a merchant, Abū Naṣr b. Mūsā (?) al-Ḥalabī (from Aleppo, Syria), who was traveling to Egypt, undoubtedly to Fustat, and was requested to fulfill the writer's instructions for sale of pepper (imported from India), purchases and other errands. The memorandum is essentially equivalent to a business letter, except that it lacks the introductory and closing blessing and personal remarks, etc., all of which were unnecessary, since it was personally delivered by the writer to the recipient. As in II, 33–34, 50 and IV, 3, the memorandum is called 'blessed,' a pious wish for success in the ventures detailed therein; see the introduction to II, 33–34. As in that memorandum, also here (lines 16–21) the writer's associate is requested to deliver a gift to religious dignitaries in Fustat. A more elaborate memorandum written by Joseph b. Abraham is found in II, 44, which also contains more generous gifts to the religious dignitaries of Egypt and to the holy sanctuary of Dammūh. See Goitein's discussion there on the commodities sold and ordered.

The manuscript is almost complete, but the paper has suffered much damage, and the reading is often uncertain. This is unfortunate, since, as with other papers, this document contains some information not identified elsewhere, such as descriptions of certain garments to be purchased.¹

Translation

[A. Heading]

(1) *In Your name, O Merciful.* (2) A Blessed Memorandum carried by Sheikh Abū Naṣr b. Mūsā (?) al-Ḥalab[i].² (3) May God decree his (= your) safe arrival! For his servant Joseph b. Abraham.

¹ {All that remains in Goitein's papers for this document is his draft copy of the Judeo-Arabic text and the description 'Orders Entrusted to a Merchant Leaving Aden for Egypt.'

² Abū Naṣr is a very common name in the India Book. What follows his proper name is extremely difficult to decipher. In his draft copy, Goitein copied: 'b. Sitt al-Minna.' I do not remember having encountered this name ('Mistress of Graciousness') elsewhere in

[B. Instructions for sale of pepper and purchase of clothing and a basin]

(4) I sent with you (my lord) a bag of pepper, weighing one *bab[ār]* and forty pounds. (5) [... God] the Exalted [...] (6) Kindly sell this for whatever God, the Exalted, apportions,³ and buy [for me (your servant)] (7) an exquisite Anatolian (?)⁴ *thawb* (robe), fifty cubits long;⁵ a *ma'tiqa* (?)⁶ [...] (8) ...exquisite, with a fine silken or golden decoration⁷ and [...] (9) cubits (?), golden; a 'fulled' *Sūsī*⁸ robe, forty cubits (10) long; two exquisite checkered,⁹ 'fulled' *Sūsī fūtas*; two kerchiefs, (11) raw (not 'fulled'), exquisite. The two sides of each kerchief should be decorated with [...] marks.¹⁰ (12) By my instructions,¹¹ my lord, buy for me (your servant) only exquisite clothing, (13) the most exquisite you can buy!¹² Also purchase a washing basin¹³ (14) [...]. It should be an attractive basin, the diameter one and a half handbreadths¹⁴ or a little more. (15) [On] its upper [...], engraving¹⁵ or writing. It should be without an ewer. (16) [But] if it is easy for you to acquire an attractive ewer, buy it for me.¹⁶

the Geniza, and it is unusual that a matronymic is used rather than a patronymic, though there is some precedent for this. An examination of an ultraviolet photograph and of the original manuscript shows the uncertainty of this reading, and instead of it, one could read 'b. *Mūsā* (?) al-Ḥalab[ī].' An Abū Naṣr al-Ḥalabī sends regards in VI, 40*v*, line 5, a letter written from Dahlak. Barakāt b. *Mūsā* al-Ḥalabī was a well-known India trader and, as we have seen, was mentioned in II, 42.

³ For this formula, see the discussion in pages 63–65.

⁴ Arabic *anaṭālī*. The reading, though not the vocalization, is almost certain.

⁵ As with most fabrics today, the width was standard (Goitein's note from II, 44*v*, line 22).

⁶ The letters *m'tqh* are clear, but the vocalization is uncertain, as is the garment, which the word denotes.

⁷ Arabic *'alam*. See page 427, n. 72.

⁸ Made in *Sūsa*, Tunisia, mentioned frequently (see 169, n. 8).

⁹ Arabic *muqaffas*; see Hava, *Dictionary*, 620.

¹⁰ Arabic *a'lām*. See above for *'alam*.

¹¹ Arabic *wa'l-waṣiyya*, an exhortation.

¹² On Joseph b. Abraham's insistence on buying for him only the best, see the introduction to II, 44.

¹³ The reading of the original, *ṭast gh[ā]sil*, is uncertain. A washing basin is usually called *maghsal*; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:139.

¹⁴ Arabic *fushā* (perhaps: **fashuhu*) *shibr wa-nisf*. Joseph b. Abraham also orders from India a vessel whose mouth was one and a half handbreadths in III, 2, line 13.)

¹⁵ Arabic *naqsh*. See Shy, "Terms," 218.

¹⁶ Or: for it (*lahu*). For the basin and its ewer, *ṭast wa-ibriq*, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:139; Baer, "*Ma'din*," 989.

[C. Gifts for Egyptian religious dignitaries]

Also please (17) deliver in my (his servant's) name to my lord Sheikh //Rabbi// Isaac and Rabbi Ḥalfon *sons of*(?) (18) the *scholar* (?), *the cantors of the synagogue*,¹⁷ five Egyptian *mithqāls*.¹⁸ (19) Greet them in my name and apologize for me (your servant) to them concerning the (small) (20) gifts of honor.¹⁹ I had wanted to write to them a letter in the days of (21) Sukkot²⁰ [...] to them.

[D. Final orders]

Buy for me (his servant) (22) with the balance whatever your su[cc]e[ss]ful opinion²¹ decides [...] (23) Maghrebi [kohl] and raw (?)²² kohl²³... the eye [...] (24) gold and silver embroidery²⁴ and whatever merchandise you decide to purchase, which is easy to acquire. If you (my lord) (25) are able to arrive here this year, fine. If not, please [send these purchases] [Margin] with one of our coreligionists who are traveling [here...] My lord [...] through Sheikh Abū Sa'īd b. Banāyā²⁵ merchandise [Verso] (1) [...] a pair

¹⁷ Hebrew *shelūḥē šibbūr shellakkeneset*. Perhaps to be identified with the brothers, both cantors, Isaac and Ḥalfon, sons of Ghālib the cantor mentioned in TS 8.111 (see Friedman, "Marital Age," 172; this Ḥalfon the cantor might be Abū Sa'īd the cantor mentioned in II, 47, line 8), even though I am not aware that Ghālib bore the title *ḥāvēr*, 'Fellow (of the Yeshiva)'. A gift of three dinars to 'the Fellow' is given in II, 44, line 29. (The reading in the original of the words expressing 'sons of the Fellow' is somewhat doubtful, however. Were we to assume that brothers are not involved here, we could identify Ḥalfon as Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh the court scribe in Fustat, 1100–38. Many letters mention gifts sent to him: II, 33b, lines 8–9, 34c, lines 1–2, where he is called cantor; II, 44, line 28; II, 47, line 7. Letters of thanks from him are found in II, 11a and II, 53. An Isaac the cantor was Isaac ha-Levi *ba-ḥazzān* b. Abraham: DK 165.)

¹⁸ Full weight dinars.

¹⁹ Arabic *makārim*. For the singular *makruma*, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:608, n. 32. Alternatively, translate: acts of deference.

²⁰ The (intermediary) days of the Feast of Tabernacles. For writing letters at the time of the holidays, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:17. A request that the recipient of a letter apologize to the cantors for the letters sent them is found in II, 47v, line 4.

²¹ Arabic *ra'yubu al-[muwaffā]q*. Your opinion, whose correctness is a gift from God. The same expression appears in IV, 79, line 5. But perhaps read and restore *al-[yaqī]n*, 'correct,' 'certain.' For other *ra'y* expressions, see 592, n. 36; 695, n. 8.

²² Arabic *musabbaq*, perhaps 'unfinished.' The translation is uncertain and was suggested by Amir Ashur.

²³ For kohl (*kuhl*) in the Geniza papers, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:61 (index).

²⁴ Arabic *qaṣab*. See page 169, n. 7.

²⁵ For the Banāyā family see 372, n. 6, where the son of Nissim b. Banāyā is mentioned.

of mats of attractive workmanship, as much as possible [...] which (2) [...] for the house... (3) nine cubits, in breadth nine cu[bits...] (4) one of them nine cubits, in breadth four and a half cubits [...] (5) [If] you (my lord) will have had something made already, fine. And if not, my lord, have both made for me short, the pair.²⁶

And tell Sheikh Abū [...] not (?) (7) to have something else made. This is through your kindness—may I [never] lack for it! Please add, (8) my lord and master,²⁷ an exquisite [...] together with the aforementioned (9) that is debited to me, your servant. *And Peace.*}

²⁶ Arabic *al-qaṣīrayn al-zawj*. If Abū Naṣr were unable to purchase mats to fit the size of the rooms in the house, he should get two small ones that would go in any room.

²⁷ Arabic *mālik*; cf. 362, n. 13.}

II, 44 *Memorandum from Joseph b. Abraham to Ishāq Nafūsī*

Aden, 1130's

Westminster Misc. 9

Ed. Goitein, *Yemenites*, 106–19, on which the following is based.

The preceding documents have acquainted us with the grandees of Yemen in the commercial and public contexts. The next section—an order sent to the Egyptian capital for a variety of miscellaneous items—brings us right into their homes, showing us the everyday life of a wealthy Adenese family in the twelfth century. The significance of this list becomes clear if one remembers that only some of the household goods used by such families were manufactured in Egypt. Delicate tableware of thin porcelain was imported from China (and sent from Aden as a gift to Maṣṣāḥ Gaon, the Head of Egyptian Jewry);¹ India supplied the copperware (most utensils used at the time, whether in the kitchen, the dining-room or the bathroom, were made of copper). Textiles produced from cotton, such as bedding and bed-covers, were also imported from India as well as costly fabrics, such as *lālas* (red silk; this was also presented to Egyptian notables as a token of respect).² To the extent that furniture was used in those times, it was another import from India (this is still the case today) because good wood, not common in Egypt, was abundant in India. Both India and North Africa 'exported' maid-servants for Egyptian matrons. In addition, hides, leather goods, ivory, ivory goods and gold were brought from East Africa. However, since the travelers who left us their documents in the Geniza were not involved in trade with Africa, we hear little of those matters. Yemen itself also supplied a variety of commodities; besides comestibles, such as flour, fowl and livestock and also exported textiles, in particular, *būrdas*, that is, striped coats, which were used as outer clothing and nightgowns.

An important feature of the orders in this document is that the writer repeats, again and again, that he is interested exclusively in choice, exquisite (*rafiʿ*) wares; indeed, a letter written by the same individual, preserved in the Geniza, confirms receipt of some of the clothing and expresses appreciation of its quality. While the acquaintance, who dealt with the purchases had apologized for the high prices, the person who

¹ See above, II, 34.

² {See 307, n. 10.}

ordered them reassures him that the prices were not at all exaggerated for such high quality. Such comments attest to some wealth, and also to a level of good taste and etiquette.³

Another characteristic feature of the goods ordered here is the geographical range represented by their names: from Jurjān, southeast of the Caspian Sea, to Spain. The Yemenite merchant was a citizen of the world—from China to Spain, from East Africa to the northern limit of the civilized world in Central Asia.

The list represents wealth indeed, but not extravagant purchase of luxury items. Compared with the costume of a contemporary rich Egyptian bride,⁴ or that of an eleventh-century Tunisian merchant and scholar,⁵ the items listed are modest. The list contains no jewelry, undoubtedly because local Jewish gold- and silversmiths supplied the needs. One indication of this is the fact that Maghrebi Jewish smiths coming to Aden found that they could not make a living in Yemen, and embarked on the long, dangerous journey to Ceylon to try their luck there.⁶

This is a typical memorandum (*tadhkira*): a page folded into two long, very narrow columns, only one of which was filled out (recto and verso). The page was damaged, with half of the first eight lines torn out and numerous holes, erasures and many letters covered with some dark-colored material. Nevertheless, thanks to the clear script, almost the entire document is legible.

Written in Arabic letters in the blank column, probably by another hand: “Notes (instructions) from Aden (probably about two bales) and other matters.” As usual, the Arabic is written without vowel signs.

Since the document is not a letter but a memorandum, handed to the person to whom it was addressed, it does not end with greetings that might have enabled us to identify the recipient. Judging from the content of the list, he was clearly highly placed and familiar with the leaders of the Cairo community. Moreover, he was a relative or at least a close friend of the writer and a frequent visitor to the latter’s home; this is indicated by the sentence “*fūtas* [...] like those worn by Joseph’s

³ No. VI, 28. {The writer also insists on the best quality in the memorandum in II, 43. For a complaint by grandees of Aden that the goods sent them from Egypt did not meet the standards of exquisiteness, which they had asked for in their order, see II, 61, lines 44 ff.}

⁴ See Goitein, “Three Trousseaux,” 93–97, 107–10, doc. 3 (the document is TS J I, f. 29) {Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:322–25}.

⁵ Goitein, *Letters*, 76.

⁶ See II, 32, lines 25 ff.

children” (lines 24–26). One Aden merchant who is known to have been in Cairo at that time was Maḥrūz b. Jacob;⁷ but the person to whom the requests in the memorandum were addressed could obviously have been any traveler from and to Egypt. {The person’s name, Iṣḥāq Nafū[sī], can be deciphered on recto, line 2. This is Isaac (Iṣḥāq) b. Makhlūf al-Nafūsī, concerning whom see below here and page 258 and n. 1 there.}

The name of the writer is also not specified.⁸ However, on the verso, lines 17–19, he orders a costly *shāshiya*⁹ and requests that the name ‘Abraham b. Joseph b. Abraham b. Bundār b. {al-}Ḥasan’ be ‘written’—that is, embroidered—on it. This Abraham was surely Joseph b. Abraham’s eldest son, as the eldest son is customarily named for his grandfather (even during the latter’s lifetime), and it seems likely that this expensive prayer shawl was being ordered for a special occasion. It could not have been a ‘Bar Mitzvah’ celebration, which was not customary in Yemen; and it would have been pointless to buy a child a prayer shawl, embroidered with his name, that he would soon have outgrown. Most probably, therefore, the occasion in question was the son’s wedding.¹⁰ Some support for this conjecture comes from the fact that the bearer was also asked to buy a good *shofar* {ram’s horn}, indicating that the order was made shortly before the month of Tishri; and the autumn months, when merchants usually returned from their voyages, were a popular season for weddings.

{In his studies on Yemenite Jewry in the twentieth century, Goitein clarified that this community had no Bar Mitzvah ceremony, and elsewhere he commented that there is no evidence in the Geniza documents for this rite of passage, which marked the changed status of thirteen-year old boys and their obligation to fulfill the commandments. As already noted, however,

⁷ He is the subject of Introduction IIB1.

⁸ {The next paragraph, which states that the original list ended with the name of the sender, seems to contradict what was written here. The order of the paragraphs perhaps reflects the sequence of research.}

⁹ A *shāshiya* (see line 11, verso, lines 17–19, 31–32) was a long piece of silk, or silk mixed with some other thin material, which was wound around a turban or used as to cover the upper body. When provided with fringes {cf. Num. 15:38} it could be used as a prayer shawl (*tallit*). {According to Busul, “Clothing,” 45–46, a *shāsh* could be used both for winding around a turban and as a head cover, whose ends were allowed to descend on the shoulders, but a *shāshiya* was used only as a turban; cf. al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 438; Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 235.

¹⁰ Through a technical mishap, in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:403, n. 143, Joseph b. Abraham became: “the father of the Adenese bride.”

it is uncertain that the *shāshiya* served as a prayer shawl that a youth might outgrow. Moreover, I am unaware of any evidence of a custom for embroidering the groom's name on a festive garment. A recently published study by Haggai Ben-Shammai describes what appears to be a rite of passage celebrating the first time a (Karaites) youth read a portion from the Torah and Prophets (*haftārā*) in the synagogue in Egypt, in 1163. The event was commemorated in poems, which praised the youth and his father, who dedicated a Torah scroll to the synagogue. One of the passages in these poems mentions: "Valuable and attractive clothing, which contain the names of the lord and his son." As explained by Ben-Shammai, this refers to the wrappings of the Torah scroll, on which the names were embroidered. The two passages—one describing the valuable clothing, on which were embroidered the name of the (Karaites) boy who read the Torah and Prophets in Egypt; the other the order from Egypt of a gilded *shāshiya*, on which the name of the son of a wealthy Adenese merchant would be embroidered—might be mutually illuminating. The *shāshiya* too could have been intended to celebrate the boy's first reading of the Torah (and Prophets) in the synagogue (and theoretically could have also been a wrapping for the Torah). This hypothetical rite of passage in Aden does not imply that the twelfth century Yemenites had a Bar Mitzvah celebration, since Goitein has already demonstrated that in Yemen a boy often read from the Torah years before he reached adolescence.¹¹

The original list ended on the verso, line 15, with the name of the sender, Joseph b. Ibrahīm. In the meantime, further proposals to order goods came up in the family, and Joseph was obliged to add further quantities of oriental spices in order to finance the additional purchases.¹² For such purposes it was customary to send goods abroad rather than hard currency.

The first part of the list (A, lines 1–7) are instructions for the sale of the goods that the bearer was taking along. The few surviving words indicate that the shipment included pepper and other spices, and that the bearer had instructions as to the payment of travel expenses.

¹¹ See Goitein, *Yemenites*, 244–45; id., *Med. Soc.*, 5:28, 512, n. 83; Ben-Shammai, "Celebration" (Prof. Ben-Shammai has informed me that the Karaite affiliation of the boy and his father is implied by the identity of the poet). Hypothetically, such a rite of passage could be alluded to in the good wishes offered the father of a boy after his circumcision, according to Tosefta Berakhot 6:12 (ed. Lieberman, 37, following Codex Erfurt and parallels): "Just as you brought him into the covenant, so may you bring him into Torah and the wedding chamber." I hope to deal with this elsewhere; see 776, n. 5.

¹² Cf. the penultimate paragraph in the introductory remarks ("The total value," etc.) and the note to verso, line 14.

Most of the fragment as we have it, sec. B, lines 8–25, and sec. E, line 30-end, consists of orders from Cairo. The list is indeed extremely interesting. Although everything was ordered from Cairo, the provenance of the items ranges from Jurjān in northern Iran (lines 10 [see note there], 13), Qurqūb in southwestern Iran (verso, line 17), Āmid in Kūrdistān (line 17), and Iraq (line 20), to Beirut (verso, line 17), Ashmūn in Upper Egypt (line 16), Tūna on the Mediterranean coast of Egypt (verso, line 14), Tunisia (verso, line 6) and Spain (line 25). Needless to say, it is quite possible that what is meant in each case is an item manufactured in the style of the place specified; but one gets the impression that for the most part the goods were actually brought from there, such as the glass from Beirut, the fabrics from Spain or the city of Ashmūn, and so on; see comments on the document.

The orders may be divided into the following types:

- (i) Clothing and headgear—some fifty orders, for the writer and for the women, men and children of his household. Of particular interest is the order of the expensive *shāshiya*, with embroidered inscriptions of (a) five generations of the writer's son's lineage (lines 18–19) and (b) biblical verses, such as the Priestly Blessing. Since the writer comments “verses such as . . .,” it was clearly customary in Yemen as well to embroider such verses on a garment used as a prayer shawl; see below in our comments.
- (ii) Household utensils and other everyday items, such as a table (line 30), different kinds of porcelain and glassware (lines 17–19; verso, line 28), tubes and brushes for treating the eyes (line 9).
- (iii) Medicines, cosmetics and cleansing agents, such as *Salsola kali*—plant ashes used as soap {and for medicinal purposes} (line 33), antimony (line 20), ammoniac salt (line 21) and white lead (line 22).
- (iv) Wine, oil for lighting, nuts, pistachios, broad beans, etc. (line 31—verso, line 1).
- (v) A good *shofar* (verso, line 32). Since the *shāshiya* (above, [i]) was to be embroidered with biblical verses, it, too, should be reckoned among items of a religious category.

One part of the document (C, lines 26–30) is devoted to gifts and donations to be distributed from the proceeds for the goods sent by the writer. The recipients are of three kinds: (a) six religious or community functionaries; (b) the endowed synagogue of Dammūh; (c) the poor.

The gifts and donations total 54 dinars. Lacking most of lines 1–7, we cannot evaluate the main shipment of goods. However, a reasonable

estimate of the value of the additional goods (verso, lines 15–17) may be made. Since cardamom and *khawlān* were common items, their prices are frequently indicated, though primarily in trade between India and Aden.

As far as Egypt is concerned, the following figures have been recorded, for the present:

Hayl: According to VII, 38v, line 14 ({there: *bāl*}) written in Fustat, Egypt), five dinars bought approximately five *manns* (= 10 pounds) of cardamom. According to VII, 37 line 16, ten (dinars) bought ten (*manns*) (approximately 20 pounds) in Alexandria. Hence, 100 pounds of cardamom would cost approximately 50 dinars.

As to *khawlān*, in one of those incredible coincidences so common in the Geniza, we possess a large, though badly damaged, fragment of a letter written by Joseph b. Abraham b. Bundār (or by his permanent secretary), referring in the first nineteen lines to a letter from the bearer of the memorandum translated here. The cardamom and the *khawlān* are mentioned in lines 2, 16.¹³ When I copied this fragment (VI, 28) at The Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem, on August 8, 1961, from the collection of Jacob Mann and Isaiah Sonne, I paid little attention to these very defective lines. I was mainly interested at the time in the report, following those lines, of the vast commercial activities of another Maghrebi, Isaac {b. Makhluḥ} al-Nafūṣī. However, while I was preparing the present document for my book *Yemenites* (April 1981), the combination ‘the cardamom and the *khawlān*’ in my card index caught my eye, and this is what I found: “after considerable effort” {VI, 28, line 2} these items had sold for a very good price: the *khawlān* (ib., lines 3–7) brought $24\frac{3}{4}$ dinars, but there were only 85 *ratls* (not $90 = 30 \times 3$ *ratls*, as follows from Joseph b. Abraham’s memorandum, verso, line 16; Joseph comments that the discrepancy in weight was surely due to the payment of customs duty and agents’ fees).

{There are several additional similarities between the two documents. In the letter (VI, 28), Joseph b. Abraham mentioned items that the addressee had purchased for him, and some of these were obviously included in the orders in the memorandum—though not necessarily in the same quantities. The addressee had purchased a *dabīqī* garment of silk and a *fūṭa* of silk; the memorandum (lines 23–24) lists at least eight silk *fūṭas*. In the memorandum (line 15), Joseph ordered four pieces of clothing of exquisite

¹³ In Goitein’s publication there is a typographical error: ‘lines 12, 16.’}

Ṭalī cloth; in the letter (line 11) he mentioned the purchase of one piece of clothing of exquisite *Ṭalī* cloth. Moreover, with reference the *shāshiya* discussed above, Joseph wrote in the letter (VI, 28, line 14: “[You mentioned that] you had not found an artisan to make the [*sh*]āshiya in these days.” As we have seen, the name of Iṣḥāq Nafūsī, is written at the top of our memorandum, and it was evidently intended for him. Nafūsī is also mentioned, as noted by Goitein, in Joseph’s letter (VI, 28), but he was clearly not its addressee. We thus conclude that for some reason Joseph b. Abraham wrote two similar—but not necessarily identical or concurrent—memorandums for sales and purchases in Egypt, one which was given to Iṣḥāq Nafūsī, the other to the anonymous addressee of VI, 28.}

The total value of the additional shipment would therefore have been some 75 dinars. It is quite possible, however, that after the reckoning of the main shipment and the orders had been completed, it became clear that the estimated value of the goods exceeded that of the ordered items by some amount, small or large. A family consultation was held, and, as usual on such occasions, the cost of the additional orders turned out to be more than the surplus value of the first shipment, so further items had to be added; the extra shipment, however, does not reflect the entire estimated cost of the new orders. The names of the various functionaries to whom donations were sent according to this document, taken together, imply that it was written in the 1130s or the late 1120s. Maṣḥāḥ Gaon ‘reigned’ in Egypt from 1127 to 1139, and each of the other persons mentioned is known to have been active during that time.¹⁴

In sum, even this torn, smudged memorandum tells us much of the socio-economic situation of Jewish merchants of Aden in its Golden Age.

¹⁴ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:26, 512–13. {Since one of the gifts was intended for Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh, 1138, the last year of his activity, can be taken as a *terminus ad quem* for writing the memorandum. For various reasons I assume that it was written ca. 1134–35.}

Translation

[A. Opening; merchandise shipped to Egypt]

(1*) *In Your name, O Merciful*.¹⁵ (2*) M[emorandum] for {add: Ishāq Nafū[sī]}.

(1) Five hundred {add: and t[en...]} (2) *manns*¹⁶ and also {add: a bale} [...] (3) and he should take what it (the merchandise) owes [for shipping expenses] (4) from the gate of ‘Aydhāb¹⁷ to [the Egyptian capital...] (5) {add: *manns* less} a quarter {add: of ‘ūd (aromatic wood)} [...] (6) emblic¹⁸ and a satchel of pepper¹⁹ [...] (7) *Kābulī* {or read: *Kābīlī*} myrobalan,²⁰ thirty *manns* [...]

¹⁵ Upon reexamination of the photograph of the manuscript, I realized that the first two lines, of which only fragmentary letters have survived, constitute a heading. After the invocation, ‘In Your name, O Merciful’ {in Aramaic}, the second line contains the word, *t[adhkīra]*, ‘memorandum,’ followed by the name of the sender or of the bearer. This discovery proves that we possess the document from beginning to end. Nevertheless, I have not altered the line numbers, since I have quoted copiously from this document. {The second line contains the name of the bearer, Isaac al-Nafūsi; see above. His name was covered by tape pasted to the document, which made it difficult to read. Compare the heading of II, 43.}

¹⁶ Weighing approximately two pounds.

¹⁷ Customs were paid in Aden by Joseph b. Abraham himself. But from the vessel’s docking at the port of ‘Aydhāb till the bearer’s arrival in the Egyptian capital, the latter had to defray the cost of shipment with part of the proceeds from the goods in his charge.

¹⁸ Arabic *amlaj*. A species of myrobalan (see line 7), similar to small blackish plums, used as a remedy for stomach ailments. This oriental medication was unknown to the Greeks (according to Maimonides-Meyerhof, no. 374). {See Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 151–52.}

¹⁹ Pepper was generally sold in large sacks, *bahārs*, weighing 300 pounds. In this case, the bearer had been given a small quantity in a satchel, presumably to cover expenses.

²⁰ Arabic *halīlaj*; the dictionaries and Geniza documents usually read *ihlīlaj* or *ihlīlij*. Myrobalan, as it is called in English and French, is a medicinal plant common all over India and Burma. The green fruit constipates, but when ripe acts as a purgative. It first reached the West through Afghanistan, whence its name, *halīlaj kābulī*, for the Afghan city of Kabul. Myrobalan may still be found in Cairo markets; it is used today mainly as a constipating agent and in tanning (according to Maimonides-Meyerhof, no. 112). According to VII, 36b, line 18, one *mann* of preserved (*murabbā*, in the plural) *halīlaj kābulī* cost one dinar in Cairo. {I read *kābīlī* for *kābulī*. The word usually appears without a vowel letter (here *y*, not *w*, pace Goitein) after the *b*; cf. Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:929, who vocalizes *kābīlī*. Presumably this product is to be identified with the Chebulic Myrobalan (*Terminalia Chebula* Retz), for which see Watt, *Commercial Products*, 1073–74. For additional medicinal and other uses, see Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, 172–73; Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 151–52.}

[B. Orders from Egypt]

(8) To be purchased:²¹ a large tray²² [...] (9) a good one, and two silver kohl tubes with their brushes and cases,²³ (10) and four *Jurjānī* tunics²⁴ with their wimples,²⁵ (11) and two gil[ded] *shāshiyas* [...], and two exquisite scarves²⁶ (12) or two gilded *mukhlafs*²⁷ suitable for children. And if (13) there are no *Jurjānī* tunics, there should be instead (14) exquisite silk dresses

²¹ Arabic *al-mushtarā*. There is no need to add *wa-yakūn*, 'will be,' or the like {even though there is room for such a restoration in the lacuna at the end of the previous line}, since what follows is a list, written very concisely, in telegraphic style. See below, verso, line 17.

²² Arabic *ṣimīyya*—a large, circular, silver or copper tray, over which one ate. {See 209, n. 2. For the continuation of the line, see the note to line 30, 'the table.'}

²³ Thin sticks for the application of kohl to the eyes. The *ketubba* (trousseau list) of the daughter of Berakhōt Lebḏī ([I, 36] see Goitein, "Three Trousseaux," 89–90 [Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:319], lines 15–16) mentions, besides two silver brushes, two brushes made of crystal. {For these ornamental makeup accessories, the *mukḥala* and *mirwad*, see Goitein, *ib.*, 4:223–24.}

²⁴ Arabic *ghalā'il*. The *ghilāla* (sing.) is a woman's garment, mentioned in many *ketubbot* among items brought by the bride from her parental home. Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 78, mentions Ṭabaristān, south of the Caspian Sea, as one source of this piece of clothing. Jurjān, referred to here and below, line 13, lies slightly farther to the east, at the southeastern corner of the Caspian Sea. These data may perhaps imply that the tunics ordered did in fact come from far-off Jurjān; and see below, line 13. However, it is more plausible that they were brought to Egypt from the Spanish town of Almería, where *Jurjānī* tunics were manufactured; see Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 170. {Cf. Constable, *Trade*, 145. For the *ghilāla*, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:40 (Index). Maimonides, in his commentary, *Shabbat* 16:4, lists the *ghilāla* (to be read so there) as an item of clothing worn, not exclusively by women, over two *thawbs* (Shailat, *Shabbat*, 145); cf. Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 44.}

²⁵ Arabic *ma'ājirhā*. The *mi'jar* was a cap with which women adorned their heads—at home, of course—just as men showed off their turbans. It might cost as much as 15 gold dinars (see Goitein, "Three Trousseaux," 94, and *ibid.*, 83, n. 24). As far as I have been able to ascertain, it was made of a costly fabric, sometimes woven with gold thread, but not decorated with silver ornaments, as was the Yemenite *qarqūsh*. Just as the *jilāla* was used as a housecoat, the *mi'jar* was the cap seen on a woman's head at home. This detail—the listing of a piece of women's clothing together with the accompanying headgear—is also common in *ketubbot* (e.g., Goitein, "Three Trousseaux," 90, line 20, 21; 95, line 23; 96, line 3). The fact that the writer repeatedly orders four items of each kind (here and in lines 15, 23, 24) does not necessarily imply that his household consisted of four women (say, wife, mother, and two adult daughters) and four infants (line 23); most probably, this was how such items were ordered—one, two or four of a kind. {The *mi'jar* was a turban-like garment worn by women, large enough to be wrapped around the body. See Stillman, "Female Attire," 142–44; *id.*, *Arab Dress*, 229; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:122.}

²⁶ Arabic *radda*, a very common word in the Geniza. See, e.g., Goitein, "Three Trousseaux," 105, lines 22, 23, 27. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:103, s.v. 'Scarf'; Stillman, "Female Attire," 179–88, and below the note to verso, line 19.}

²⁷ A piece of clothing made of different pieces of cloth, very common in the Geniza. {See Goitein, *ibid.*, 24, s.v. 'Cloak.'}

{alt. tr.: clothing} suitable for women, (15) and they should be tailored,²⁸ and four dresses {alt. tr.: pieces of clothing} of exquisite *Ṭalī* cloth²⁹ (16) made in Ashmūn.³⁰ And for two thirds of a *mithqāl* [...] (17) and a basket of good earthenware made in Āmid or Fustat³¹ (18) and a case of fine glasses {alt. tr.: fine copper vessels for wine},³² and for two *mithqāls*

²⁸ This stipulation was necessary because the word *ṥawb* also denotes an ordinary piece of cloth {cf. page 170, n. 13. For the plural *ṥiyāb*, which appears here, see 304, n. 8; here it might be used for *ṥawbs* (robes)}. (But perhaps this word, *makhayyāṥa* {*mukhayyāṥa*}, means ‘embroidered,’ as it does in modern Yemenite colloquial Arabic [see Pimenta, *Dictionary*, 141]. That is to say, embroidered for ornamental purposes, not with inscribed names and verses, which would be referred to as *ṥirāz*; see below, verso, lines 5, 18–19, 20. However, the term usually used for embroidery in the Geniza is derived from the root *r-q-m*.)

²⁹ Also below, verso, line 22, *Ṭalā* {*tl[y]*}. Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 72, cites al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, 2:45–46, referring to the Katchaks, who lived between the Caucasus and the Black Sea: “In their country there are various kinds of cloth made of linen of a kind called Talā, finer than *Dabīqī* (Egyptian cotton), and more lasting in wear. A garment of this stuff fetches as much as ten dinars. They were carried to the adjoining Islamic countries. {These cloths are brought from the nearby countries, but cannot be compared with those (of the Katchaks).}” This fabric also receives frequent mention in Geniza *ketubbot*. For example, a *farajīyya* (overcoat) made of *ṥalī* is mentioned in TS 20.6 (from the year 1037), ed. Assaf, “Old Deeds,” 31, line 15; in Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 43 (from 1059), line 10, we read: *wathalāṥa ḡhalā‘l ṥalī*, ‘three *ṥalī* tunics.’ Since the word is spelled with a *yod* wherever found in Geniza documents, never with an *alef*, it follows that the Jews referred to the material as *ṥalī* and not as *ṥalā*. {For *ṥalī*, see further Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:188; 409, n. 222; 414, n. 289, where II, 44 is cited. The spelling *ṥalī* is taken by Serjeant from the French edition of al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, loc. cit. However, al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj* (Beirut), 1:218, which I have checked, also has *ṥly* and so does al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 109 (where it is transliterated *ṥalī*), 296 (citing the aforementioned Beirut edition). Evidently, *ṥalī* is the correct pronunciation in the Arabic sources as well, and the editors mistakenly took the *y* in *ṥly* as *alif maqṥūra*.}

³⁰ Today a tiny town; in the first centuries of Islam, however, as in previous periods, it was one of the major cities in Upper Egypt. It is better known as al-Ashmūnayn; see Becker, “Al-Ashmūnain.” As to the name, see Yāqūt, *Geographical Dictionary*, 1:283: Ashmūn, and the inhabitants of Egypt call it al-Ashmūnayn. The city was famous for the production of textiles, including “upholstery similar to Armenian upholstery” (see Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 141 and esp. 156). The present reference informs us that this city, in the far south of Egypt, was also involved in the manufacture of fabric in imitation of that manufactured north of the Caucasus. The incentive for such activity was of course the popularity of the aforementioned *Ṭalī* material. It is interesting that the produce of Ashmūn was to be purchased in the markets of Cairo, not in the city of Qūṥ, near Ashmūn, which was on the way back to Aden.

³¹ Arabic *ḡhadār*, a delicate porcelain. The town of Āmid, north of Mūṥul—better known as Diyār Bekr—is still known for its pottery; see Huart, “Diyār Bakr.” {This line is cited by Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 4:146, 393, n. 50. For this type of pottery, see further al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 267, who vocalizes *ḡhudār*.}

³² Arabic *kīzān*. See the next note and 601, n. 40. Sadan, “*Mashrūbāt*,” 712: “The long and narrow vessels which, among their other functions, were used for the preparation or storage of this ‘beer’ [*fuṥḡā*], were the *kīzān* (sing. *kūz*).” According to al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 425: “a long-spouted ewer.”

tumblers³³ (19) and goblets {alt. tr.: jars}³⁴ manufactured in the house of al-Jawhar.³⁵ And a bottle³⁶ of (20) Iraqi rose water, and a dinar's worth of antimony.³⁷ (21) And a dinar's worth of ammoniac salt. And a half dinar's worth of gallnuts.³⁸ (22) And a dinar's worth of rose jam. And a dinar's worth of white lead.³⁹ (23) And four silk *fūtas*,⁴⁰ small ones for children, (24) and four large *fūtas* of twisted silk.⁴¹ And two *fūtas* (25) of Andalusian manufacture, exquisite and fine, like those (26) worn by Joseph's children. And what remains⁴² (27) should be in silver vessels.⁴³

³³ Arabic *aqdāḥ*. Y. Ratzaby writes (*Ma'ariv*, December 9, 1983, Cultural supplement): "This is an order for vessels for wine and goblets for feasting. Jews from Ṣan'a have told me that for a bridegroom's festive meal the celebrants would borrow vessels with spouts, made of fine copper, which were known as *kizān*. The bridegroom would pour wine from these vessels into goblets and distribute them among the guests. *Aqdāḥ* are wine goblets. On the basis of this Arabic term, R. Samuel ha-Nagid, in his poetry, coined a new (Hebrew) word for a wine goblet: *eqdāḥ*." Drinking wine from a *qadāḥ* was also part of the betrothal ceremony; see, e.g., Friedman, *Polygyny*, 110, line 8. According to al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 433, a *qadāḥ* is "a beaker, a drinking glass with no handles, large enough to satisfy the thirst of two people."

³⁴ Arabic *arṭāl*, plural of *raṭl*, which served not only as a weight (pound), but a jar (pint measure). See Lane, *Dictionary*, 1102; Pimenta, *Dictionary*, 183. *Arṭāl* is used this way also in III, 10, lines 42, 43. Cf. 345, n. 51, for *raṭālī* (or *raṭālā*).

³⁵ A place previously known for the sale of gems {*jawhar*}, which had in the meantime become a wholesale market and factory for other goods.

³⁶ Arabic *qumqum*, a sprinkler-bottle still in use today throughout the Arab world. Such bottles were also used in the rose-water trade (see also VII, 41). {For a description of a *qumqum*, see also Baer, "*Ma'din*," 988a; see also below, 565, n. 8.} Though Iraq was famed for its rose water, one doubts whether the rose water in question here indeed originated there.

³⁷ Arabic *rāsukht*, a Persian word. Used as an emetic.

³⁸ {For the medicinal faculties of gallnuts (*afṣ*), see Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 70.}

³⁹ Arabic *isfidāj*. Though the paper is torn along the whole word, the reading is quite positive. The word is derived from the Persian *saped*, 'white,' and denotes, as indicated, white lead, or *céruse* in French—an ointment for cosmetic and medicinal purposes. It is already mentioned in BT Gittin 69b: אֶסְפִּדָּאִי (printed there with various errors; see Krauss, *Archeology*, 299, n. 244. {See Maimonides, *Lexicography*, ed. Muntner, no. 29; Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 56–57. In V, 24v, line 4, *isbidāj*; cf. Hirschberg, "Persecutions," 149, comment to line 4.; Blau, *Dictionary*, 11.}

⁴⁰ Piece of cloth shaped like the India *sārī* {see pages 175–80}.

⁴¹ Cf. Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 199: "turbans of twisted silk," *ʿamāim maḥṭūla*.

⁴² {From the proceeds of the goods shipped to Egypt} after these purchases.

⁴³ {Arabic *yakun fida*, lit., 'should be silver.' Cf. VI, 11, line 11: "he collected from me 65 dinars for silver," on which Goitein ("Portrait," 457, n. 35) comments: "most probably silver vessels of Egyptian manufacture, such as were sent to India according to other Geniza sources." See, for example, I, 1, lines 13 ff.}

[C. Gifts to religious functionaries and to the Dammūh sanctuary]

And ten *mithqāls* for our lord.⁴⁴ And for Dammūh,⁴⁵ ten. (28) *And for the poor*,⁴⁶ twenty. And four for the ‘*Diadem*.’⁴⁷ For the *Rabbi* {read: *The Rabbi*, 6.}⁴⁸ (29) *The Fellow*, 3.⁴⁹ Al-Qaṣabī,⁵⁰ two *mithqāls*. Al-Qaṭā’if,⁵¹ two *mithqāls*. (30) The scribe of the *Rayyis*,⁵² three.

⁴⁴ I.e., the Gaon Maṣliḥ b. Solomon ha-Kohen, as follows from the names of the other persons mentioned here.

⁴⁵ For a sacred synagogue in the village of Dammūh, near Giza in western Cairo. A detailed account of the traditions associated with this synagogue was rendered as far back as the fifteenth century by the celebrated Muslim geographer al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2:464–65. For bibliography and details see Ashtor, *Mamluks*, 1:245–46, 385; cf. also Golb, “Topography,” 124–25. It is frequently mentioned in the Geniza. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:27 (Index) and Kraemer, “Cult of the Saints.”}

⁴⁶ *Wēla-‘aniyyīm* and not *walīl-‘aniyyīm*. The Hebrew word *‘aniyyīm* is treated here as a proper noun {and therefore does not need the Judeo-Arabic definite article, *al-*, which would be represented by a second *l*.} Interestingly, the sacred synagogue was to receive the same sum as the Gaon, while the poor were to receive twice as much.

⁴⁷ Hebrew *nēzer*. Various personages earned the honorific ‘Diadem of . . .,’ such as ‘Diadem of the *ḥavērim* (Fellows of the Yeshiva),’ ‘Diadem of the *maskīlīm* (Discerning),’ and the like (see Goitein, *Yemenites*, 26). A gift of three *mithqāls* was sent to Nathan the Fellow, ‘Diadem of the Fellows’ {b. Samuel}; however, he was the scribe of the Yeshiva (above, II, 33b, line 7), and he is probably the person referred to in line 30 as ‘scribe of the *rayyis*.’ Here, therefore, the title more probably refers to the ‘Diadem of the *maskīlīm*,’ the judge Eli ha-Levi b. Nethanel—brother of Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel—who was generally referred to as the ‘Diadem,’ unqualified, as he is here (see Goitein, “Judah ha-Levi,” 148). A similar sequence may be found in a letter from Aden to Cairo (II, 46, lines 57–60), where greetings are sent to the *rayyis*, that is, the Gaon; to Eli Ibn al-Dimyāṭī, that is, the ‘Diadem of the discerning’; and last to ‘the Diadem, scribe of our lord,’ that is, Nathan b. Samuel.

⁴⁸ {For the identification of this person see next note.}

⁴⁹ Of all persons then in Cairo {Fustat}, only R. Isaac b. Samuel the Spaniard was titled ‘Rabbi,’ in the sense of a person authorized to issue Ḥalakhic rulings in responsa, with the exception of R. Eleazar b. al-Qaṣabī (also a Spaniard, see next line), who was apparently his deputy. {As I read the previous line, ‘the Fellow’ was a different person; see, II, 43, line 18. On Isaac b. Samuel the Spaniard, see page 183, n. 10.}

⁵⁰ Undoubtedly “the venerated judge R. Eleazar b. al-Qaṣabī,” mentioned in IV, 19, line 3, and IV, 20, line 2, as having sent a gift to his brother in Spain with Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel.

⁵¹ Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh ibn al-Qaṭā’if, for whom see above, introduction to II, 11a, which is a letter of thanks he addressed to Khalaf b. Isaac. {Correct: ‘Abraham b. Bundār’; see above, II, 43, line 17, and references cited there.}

⁵² Probably referring to Nathan the Fellow (of the Yeshiva), ‘Diadem of the Fellows’; see above, line 28 {and see introduction to II, 45}.

[D. Additional orders]

And the table⁵³—whatever the price. (31) And a *mann* [...] wine. And two *marīnas*⁵⁴ of oil, (32) ‘hot.’⁵⁵ And a dinar’s worth of hazel nuts.⁵⁶ A dinar’s worth of pistachios.⁵⁷ A *wayba*⁵⁸ (33) of *ushnān*.⁵⁹ Two *waybas* of garden beans⁶⁰ [Verso] (1) [...] for a din]ar. Two bags of almonds,⁶¹ weighing (2) [...] {add: pound}, and three wrappers⁶² (3) [...] *da*] *bīq*,⁶³

⁵³ Arabic *mā’ida*. A low circular table, on which to place the large tray (*ṣiniyya*; see above, line 8) or a large dish (*ṣahn*) when dining (III, 2, line 20). {The table was probably ordered in the missing continuation of line 8. See the description of the *mā’ida* in Sadan, *Mobilier*, 67–85.}

⁵⁴ Arabic *marīnatayn*, a word I have found nowhere else. However, in VI, 37, line 19, an order sent to Cairo by a resident of Aden, it appears in the very same context: *marīnatayn zayt hār*. Consequently, it must have been a vessel holding a certain quantity of ‘hot’ oil. {The plural form appears in a list of packing equipment, III, 24, line 10, ‘five *marānī*.’ Goitein’s conclusion as to the meaning of *marīna* is confirmed by a thirteenth century document from Quṣayr. The edition (Guo, *Commerce*, 168, line 3) reads المرتين للزيت المرينتين عليهم سابق ابن اياس الذي مكتوب عليهم سابق ابن اياس, which was translated: “the *murattabayn*-dues of oil, which are for *Sābiq* ibn Iyās.” The manuscript obviously does not have diacritics, and the first word should be read المرينتين and the phrase translated: ‘the two *marīnas* of oil, on which is written “*Sābiq*,” etc.’}

⁵⁵ That is, oil for lighting lamps. See Gil, *Foundations*, 97–99, 178–79, and the article cited *ibid.*, 99, n. 1.

⁵⁶ {For the medicinal faculties of hazel nuts (Arabic *bunduq*), see Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 74.

⁵⁷ For the medicinal faculties of pistachios (Arabic *fustuq*), see Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 72.}

⁵⁸ A measure of 10 *manns*, weighing 12.618 kg; see Hinz, *Islamische Masse*, 52 {cf. Gil, “Masse,” 169}.

⁵⁹ A plant whose ashes were used as soap for washing hands; for details see Maimonides-Meyerhof, no. 24. Vessels for *ushnān*, known as *tawr*, were among the objects that a Jewish bride regularly brought with her from her parental home; see Goitein, “Three Trousseaux,” 92, line 3 [= I, 36]. At the beginning of the Abbāsīd period, Arab guests of the Persian nobleman Ibn al-Muqaffā’ were surprised when, after the meal, he offered them *ushnān* with a towel; see Goitein, *Studies*, 152. {For *ushnān*, see further Goitein., *Med. Soc.*, 4:140–141, 183, 390, n. 14; Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 273–74 (see there medicinal uses and additional literature); Epstein, *Gaonic Commentary*, 114–15; Peraḥyā, *Commentary on Shabbat*, 106; al-Qazwīnī, *Ajā’ib*, 308.

⁶⁰ For the medicinal faculties of garden beans (Arabic *fūl*), see Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 176.

⁶¹ For the medicinal faculties of almonds (Arabic *lūz*), see Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 242.}

⁶² Arabic *maḥābis*. In I, 14, lines 14 {see 207, n. 12 on *mihbas*}, 20, and VI, 27, lines 12, 14, 16, such *maḥābis* were bought in India to be sent to Aden; in IV, 1, line 3, they were sold in Aden, probably also after having been brought there from India. However, though most of the line is torn here, our text is undoubtedly concerned with the purchase of a few *maḥābis* in Cairo.

⁶³ This fine Egyptian cotton fabric, mentioned five times in this document alone (lines 3, 4, 20, 21, 25), was named for the town of *Dabīq*, which was no longer in existence

‘*ardī* material,⁶⁴ (4) [...]ine. And a piece of *dabīqī*. (5) Exquisite [*būr*]*das*⁶⁵ with embroidery. (6) Exquisite *Sūsī*⁶⁶ [...] (7) of exquisite workmanship (8) [...] By your kindness {alt. tr.: His grace upon you}.⁶⁷ And five (9) [...] and please⁶⁸ purchase a dress, (10) [...] fulfilled,⁶⁹

in the Geniza period (and today); even its location is unknown today. {See page 169, n. 5.}

⁶⁴ A kind of material wound around the head as a turban. Like the *shāshīya* (above, recto, line 11), the ‘*ardī* could also be used as a prayer shawl. {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:152, 196.}

⁶⁵ The text here reads [*bur*]*ūd*, that is, striped coats or cloth. The restoration is tentative. The *burda* was worn chiefly in Yemen.

⁶⁶ From (or: in the style of) the town of Sūsa. {See 169, n. 8.}

⁶⁷ “In His kindness to you and His grace.” Arabic *faḍluhu laka wabimannihi*. The reading [*bi*-]*faḍlihi* is impossible, given the blank space before the first letter. The phrase is probably an expression of courtesy, referring to God. {Arabic *faḍluhu laka wabimannihi*, word for word, means something like, ‘His grace upon you, and by His goodness.’ However, the word *wabimannihi* (وَبِمَنَّيْهِ) is not found in the text; perhaps this was how Goitein copied the word *wakhamsa* (وַخْمَسَا, ‘and five’) after *laka* in a preliminary stage of his research. Subsequently, he corrected the reading and the translation, as printed above; but the note remained unchanged. Nevertheless, the phrase is probably an expression of courtesy, and the pronominal suffix in *faḍluhu laka*, ‘His grace upon you,’ refers to God. One who performed an act of kindness was thought to be the recipient of God’s grace. In the Quran 11:3: *wa-yu’ti kulla dhi faḍl faḍlahu*, ‘He gives His grace to everyone gracious.’ Al-Zajjāj interpreted this (according to *Lisān al-Arab*, 11:252): “God grants him merit and advances his station in religious matters in this world.” *Faḍluhu laka* is both a statement of gratitude and a prayer for more divine grace to the benefactor. At the beginning of line 8, perhaps restore [*yaj’alja’al*] *allāhu faḍlahu laka*, ‘[May God grant] His grace to you!’ Cf., e.g., VI, 28, line 4, *fa-abā ’llāhu an yaj’al al-faḍl illā li-ab[lihi] fa-huwa fa-qad ja’alahu ’llāhu fī-mā yakhtaṣṣubu bihi*, ‘God has refused to give grace other than to he who deserves it, and to you God has given it by what you have been granted.’ We need not presume that anything is missing from the beginning of the phrase here, however, since we find the expression *li-mawlāya al-faḍl*, ‘it is of my lord a favor’; *al-faḍl laka*, ‘kindness is yours’ (= ‘grace upon you’), in III, 37, line 7. Similarly, IV, 35, line 11, and IV, 42, margin, lines 1, 3 (*jalwa-lahu al-faḍl*), both written by the same man in Spain; in two other Spanish letters, IV, 52, margin, line 2; IV, 53b, line 16, *fa-lak al-faḍl* (and in IV, 63v, margin, written by Halfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel after returning from Spain, *wa-lak al-faḍl*) and at the end of two legal queries, sent, so it seems to R. Isaac Alfasi (as suggested by Akiva Sylvetsky), TS NS 308, f. 79: *wa-lahu al-faḍl al-jazil*, ‘for him (= you) abundant grace.’

⁶⁸ Arabic [*wa*-]*asā* expresses a request; see Baneth, “Autographs,” 301; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:579, n. 69, where it is found in a letter from Egypt. Our document provides documentation from Aden. The word is used similarly in III, 47v, line 7 (see 754, n. 30); III, 48, line 39, verso, line 15; III, 49v, line 15, all letters from the Tunisian Ben Yijū family, writing from Sicily. As noted by Yahalom & Blau, *Wanderings of Alharizi*, 271, this usage is common in Spanish-Arabic (there are several examples in the letters from Spain in chap. 4 of our corpus); it is nevertheless attested in other places. See further III, 43, line 24, *wa-asa’a* used this way.}

⁶⁹ Arabic *maqṣūr*. The classification of fabrics as *maqṣūr*, ‘fulled’ and *kām*, ‘not fulled,’ lit., ‘raw,’ is also to be found in the next line, in line 13, and in particular, in line 21 in contrast to line 25. After being woven, material was placed in a barrel full of water and

of silk, in three (11) parts. And a fulled, gilded, *subāī*⁷⁰ kerchief, (12) and a fulled wrap⁷¹ with four frills,⁷² (13) yellow ones, and an exquisite 'raw' (not fulled) [...] (14) in *Tūmī* style.⁷³ And if anything remains,⁷⁴ please give me an advance from your (money). (15) Joseph b. Ibrahīm.⁷⁵

[E. Addition: yet more items shipped and orders]

Qāqūlī cardamom,⁷⁶ one hundred (16) pounds, and three containers of *khawlān*,⁷⁷ weighing thirty (17) [poun]ds.

fuller's earth; it was then trampled until the weave had become compact and strong. The biblical verb for this operation is *kbs* in the *gal* conjugation (related to the roots *kbš*, *kws*; see *sedē kōvēs*, 'fuller's field,' Isa. 7:3; 36:2; etc.). The corresponding Aramaic root is *qsr*: the material, in shrinking, also becomes shorter {denoted by this word}. The Arabs borrowed the term from the Aramaic. Merchants frequently also dealt in *khām*, 'raw,' material, in its original, non-fulled condition, when it was easier to change its color or to dye it. {See also 170, n. 13.}

⁷⁰ Line 23 below specifies an order for two *fūtas* of the same material—probably adorned with seven stripes or seven cubits wide; cf. below, line 29: *sudāsī*, see Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 130, n. 65 {and above, 176, n. 14}.

⁷¹ Arabic *lifāfa*, undoubtedly some kind of clothing. {See page 186, n. 16.}

⁷² Stripes of another material or other materials, see below, line 25. This kind of decoration is still popular among Yemenites. The *pārōkhet* (curtain) of the Torah Ark (the *hekhal*) in the synagogue is made of some material of uniform color, such as green, bordered, say, by two red and two blue stripes, each corner of the curtain being left in the basic color. Sometimes the two border stripes are of a single color, such as light blue, with the main part of the *pārōkhet*—and the four corners—in a yellowish hue.

⁷³ Produced in an Egyptian town on the Island of Tūna, near Dimyāt (Damietta), on the Mediterranean coast, famed for its textiles; see Yāqūt, *Geographical Dictionary*, 1:901, and Grohmann, "Tirāz," 788. The site of a royal workshop for woven and embroidered goods, whose produce was also sold to the public, it is mentioned in the Geniza a few times, in different periods: TS 20.2, line 19, a Karaite marriage contract: *thawb* (robe) *tūmī* {for this marriage contract see Olszowy-Schlanger, *Karaite Marriage Documents*, 354–58}; ENA 3030, f. 7v: *radda* (scarf) *tūmī*—both marriage contracts probably date to the eleventh century.

⁷⁴ {If there is a balance in your favor.

⁷⁵ I assume that Joseph signed his name here to ensure it would be a legally binding commitment to repay the loan requested in the previous line. In his memorandum, II, 33–34, side f, line 12, Maḍmūn writes his name in a similar context.}

⁷⁶ Arabic *hayl*. This medicinal herb and spice is still in use today (in modern Israel as well) and is very common in these documents. It is discussed in Maimonides-Meyerhof, 58 {Maimonides, *Lexicography*, ed. Muntner, 42}, no. 116, s.v. 'qāqūla,' a kind of Indian cardamom which was easily marketable both in the Indian Ocean and in the Mediterranean. *Qāqūla* is already mentioned in Assyrian cuneiform lists.

⁷⁷ A medicinal plant, *Succus lycii*; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:413b. It was used, e.g., in the treatment of eye diseases (see ULC Or. 1080 J 5v, margin, a physician's letter), and was a very common commodity.

Please buy⁷⁸ a *Qurqūbī*⁷⁹ *shāshiya*, (18) gilded, and ‘write’ upon it: *Abraham b.* (19) *Joseph b. Abraham b. Bundār b. Ḥasan* {read: al-Ḥasan}.⁸⁰ (20) An exquisite *dabīqī nisfiyya*,⁸¹ embroidered in gold (21) or in silk, a fine one. A fulled *dabīqī* kerchief, (22) five cubits long.⁸² And a most exquisite *Ṭalī*⁸³ dress {alt. tr.: piece of clothing}, (23) and two [*fū*]*tas* [...*su*]*bā*⁸⁴ made either of silk (24) with silk or of silk with cotton, provided only

⁷⁸ Unconnected to the previous items, as above, recto, line 8, since this is the beginning of a new paragraph.

⁷⁹ Qurqūb, a well-known industrial city in Khūzistan, southwestern Iran, on the road from Wāsīt, southern Iraq, to Tustar, the capital of Khūzistan. Qurqūb was the source of the celebrated *sūsanjird* fabric, exported to countries all over the world (see Iṣṭakhrī, 93), and of “the fabrics intended for royalty” (Idrīsī, *Géographie*, 1:383); see Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles* {45}. By the time of our document, *Qurqūbī* may well have denoted a type of material, which was not necessarily brought to Cairo from far-off Qurqūb. In any event, it was a costly material, as follows from the present special order, and from the trousseau that the bride Khalīfā d. Abraham, brought with her to her husband, Ḥalfon b. Solomon, according to the list in TS 12.12 (ca. 1020). That list, lines 17, 18, includes two items, probably not pieces of clothing but bedding (the two words before the adjective *Qurqūbī* are missing), one valued at fifteen (dinars) and the other at forty.

⁸⁰ This does not mean that the name should be written on the package containing the *shāshiya* {as was often done with packages shipped abroad}, but that it should be embroidered on the material itself. This follows from lines 31–32, where the writer orders the *shāshiya* to be done in red gold, that is, embroidered in red gold thread, including also verses from the Torah. Moreover, the very instruction to write such a long name, spanning five generations, proves that this was a private *tirāz*. That is, just as kings and viziers would embroider their names on elaborate garments, sometimes giving them as gifts to persons they wished to honor, we see here that private individuals did the same. For the Islamic *tirāz* see Grohmann, “Tirāz.” The custom was known in the Jewish community before the rise of Islam: scholars in the court of the Babylonian exilarch had ‘signatures’ (Aramaic *ḥatīmei*) on their clothes, with the exilarch’s name (BT Shabbat 58a). Maimonides prohibited the adornment of clothes with fringes with biblical verses in square script, since it was forbidden to make secular use of the letters in which the two Tablets of the Law had been given, and a piece of clothing, even with fringes, was a secular item. See Maimonides, *Responsa* (Blau), 2:510 ff., and in particular *ibid.* {Freimann’s note}, the extensive rabbinic literature on this question. Maimonides was not immediately able to enforce this stringent injunction, as we possess a responsum on the question addressed by his in-law, R. Ḥananel the *dayyān* b. Samuel, to the Alexandria community; see Goitein, “R. Ḥananel,” 386–88. {Cf. VII, 59, where a man in Aden orders a scarf (*radda*) with his son’s name (Jacob b. Moses b. Benjamin) to be embroidered on it. This proves that such orders were not exceptional. For the bestowal of robes of honor by officials, see 402, n. 5; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:351, 4:11, 184. For *tirāz*, see now Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 120–37.}

⁸¹ A kind of cape for the upper part of the body, worn by both men and women. {See also Goitein, *Letters*, 54 n. 6, where this document is referred to; *id.*, *Med. Soc.*, 4:182, 412, nn. 250, 251, where it is also called a ‘half garment.’}

⁸² See 410, n. 5.

⁸³ See above, recto, line 15.

⁸⁴ See above, line 11.

that there be no adulteration.⁸⁵ (25) And a 'raw' (not fulled) *dab̄qī* kerchief, decorated⁸⁶ with fine stripes (26) of silk, two stripes on each side, in such a way that (27) the kerchief should have four fine stripes. (28) And a case of glasses,⁸⁷ the red Beirut⁸⁸ glasses, (29) and if there are none, white ones. And two *sudāsī*⁸⁹ *fūtas*, of cotton, (30) of the best available, each one worth a *mithqāl*. (31) And the *shāshiya* should be in red gold,⁹⁰ and the verses (32) such as "*The Lord bless you!*"⁹¹ and the like. And a good *shofar*.⁹² (33) *And peace.*⁹³

⁸⁵ Is the writer referring to two kinds of silk, so that the stripes should stand out? {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:403, n. 143: "he wishes to say that the ornament should be made either with silk, probably of another color, or with linen."} The warning against 'forgery' was motivated by the fear that the weaver, as might be expected when two kinds were being mixed, would intentionally use more of the cheaper kind.

⁸⁶ Arabic *muzannar*, a term derived from *zunnār*, 'belt' (particularly worn by a non-Muslim) and occurring very frequently in the Geniza; probably referring to striped ornamentation across the width of the dress (not lengthwise).

⁸⁷ {See above, recto, line 18.}

⁸⁸ At the time these documents were written, Beirut was still in Crusader hands. It was then a small town, inhabited by only thirty-five Jewish families when conquered by the Crusaders. See Goitein, *Palestinian Jewry*, 295. The Jews of Tyre were actively involved in this industry, both as merchants and as workers; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:109–10, 421–22, nn. 65–70; 2:456, no. 65a.

⁸⁹ Probably meaning six handbreadths wide; see above, line 11.

⁹⁰ {According to al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 420, *dhabab aḥmar*, red gold, "is the best kind of gold; its redness resembles that of fire."}

⁹¹ The Priestly Blessing, Num. 6:24–27. One should remember that *ṭirāz* inscriptions generally begin, after the words 'In the name of Allah,' etc., with *baraka min Allāh*, 'Blessing from God.' See the examples in Grohmann, "Ṭirāz." It is hard to say whether the present case was an imitation of the Muslim custom or, conversely, maintained a Jewish tradition dating to pre-Islamic times; see above, note to verso, line 19.

⁹² It is interesting that the writer is ordering a *shofar* from Egypt. If three *shofars* were found in the legacy of a traveling merchant (probably from the west) in Aden (VII, 22, line 20), we may assume that it was indeed customary to import *shofars* to Yemen, or at least to Aden, from the Mediterranean countries. In more recent times, however, Yemen itself became famous for its *shofars*, made from the long horns of an African antelope. {See Gaimani "Shofar," 25–26, according to whom the identity of the animal whose horns serve for these *shofars* has not yet been firmly established.}

⁹³ The closing blessing indicates that this is the end of the memorandum.

II, 45 *Letter from the Scribe of the Yeshiva to Joseph b. Abraham*

{Cairo, ca. 1128–39}

ULC Or. 1080 J 182

Draft of the first two pages of a letter to Joseph b. Abraham entered into the record book of the Jewish High Council of Jerusalem (then domiciled in Cairo). See II, 54.¹

{The letter is written by the ‘Scribe of the Yeshiva,’ in Hebrew, mostly in rhymed prose. Its arcane florid style, with veiled allusions to biblical (and other literary) passages, renders much of the text unintelligible to the uninitiated. The writer’s predilection for poetry is reflected in his style. He was not Nathan b. Samuel, judge and scribe of the Palestinian Yeshiva relocated in Cairo (dated documents 1128–53), who was also a poet,² since the handwriting hardly resembles his.³ In these two pages elaborate blessings are showered on Joseph. Both he and his father bore the titles *hemdat ha-yeshivā* and *zeqan ha-qehillōt*, ‘delight of the Academy’ and ‘elder of the congregations,’ titles undoubtedly conveyed upon them on the occasion of the receipt of generous gifts, which they sent the Yeshiva in Egypt.⁴ The writer apologizes profusely for not having written to ‘the beloved elder’ sooner. It is likely that this letter itself was occasioned by a gift sent by Joseph.}

¹ {Only this description and a draft of the transcription remain for this document in Goitein’s papers.

² See Fleischer, *Dīwān*.

³ See the note to II, 44, line 30, where ‘the Scribe of the *Rayyis*,’ mentioned there as recipient of a gift sent by Joseph b. Abraham, is identified as probably being Nathan b. Samuel. Under Maṣliāḥ Gaon there were a number of scribes attached to the Yeshiva at the same time. ‘The Scribes’ of the Yeshiva are mentioned twice in the letters of thanks in II, 54. Similarly, in DK 192* Maṣliāḥ sends greetings from the ‘the Scribes’ of the Yeshiva. In a letter of consolation to a Rosh Yeshiva, probably Maṣliāḥ, over the death of his mother, the writer sends greetings to the “Head of the Yeshiva of the Pride of Jacob [...] and its scribes,” etc. (ENA 3130, f. 5, ed., Fleischer, *Dīwān*, 194).

⁴ For Abraham’s gifts to religious dignitaries in Egypt, see II, 11a. For Joseph’s, see the introduction to II, 43, 44. Abraham is referred to as ‘Elder of the Congregations’ in the postscript to II, 11a.}

{II, 45a *Letter from Joseph b. Abraham to Sulaymān b. Abū Zikrī Kohēn Denying Misappropriation of a Deposit*

Aden, Oct. 31, 1152

ENA 4045, f. 9

This interesting document, which I have identified and added to Goitein's collection, provides supplemental data on the business activities of the Adenese merchants and their associates, who were active in the India trade. A number of issues remain to be clarified, and the edition is still tentative.

The top and bottom of the letter are torn away, and the names of the writer and addressee, written on verso, are missing. But it is clearly in the handwriting of Joseph b. Abraham. As with other letters sent to Abraham Ben Yijū, the verso contains liturgical selections (for Passover and Pentecost), and at an earlier stage of my research, I had assumed that he was the addressee. However, a careful examination of the handwriting on verso indicates that it is definitely not his. Besides, the addressee's travels reconstructed below can hardly be reconciled with Ben Yijū's biography.

Having assumed that the recipient of the letter copied the prayers on verso, I compared the handwriting there with that of Joseph's other correspondents enumerated in the introductory note to chap., sec. F (page 407). While none of these matched, other liturgical selections, written in the same hand as those on the verso of II, 45a and evidently copied from the same prayer book, were found on the blank spaces on the verso of the following letters: II, 32, II, 61 and V, 11. No. V, 11, was written by Joseph b. Abraham to Abū Zikrī Kohēn b. Joseph. Maḏmūn b. Japheth wrote II, 32, and Goitein convincingly identified the anonymous recipient as Abū Zikrī. The anonymous writers of II, 61 were convincingly identified by Goitein as Ḥalfon and Bundār the sons of Maḏmūn and the recipient as Abū Zikrī's son Sulaymān. The yet-unidentified copyist of the prayer book evidently had access to Sulaymān's archive (the handwriting is not his) and made use of the blank spaces on his and his father's letters. Until matching liturgical selections are found on a letter written to someone else, it is logical to assume that II, 45a was written to either Abū Zikrī or his son Sulaymān. At first blush one might suggest that V, 11 (written to Abū Zikrī), on whose verso were written parts of the Additional Prayer of Passover, was the top of the same letter, whose continuation—after a break—comes in II, 45a, where on verso later portions of the Passover liturgy appear.

At this point, we must consider when II, 45 was written. The letter is dated the last day of the month of Rajab, “year 47.” In light of the period of Joseph b. Abraham’s activity, this abbreviated date could stand for 1447 E.D., corresponding to May 4, 1136 C.E., or 547 A.H. (the Muslim year), corresponding to October 31, 1152. Had the Seleucid era (E.D.) been intended, the writer probably would have retained the hundreds and abbreviated 1447 as 447. Accordingly, we can assume that the Muslim year was intended, which, of course, follows more naturally after the month of Rajab. This assumption is corroborated by reference to the ‘late Maḥrūz’ (lines 27–28), certainly Maḥrūz b. Jacob, who was still active ca. 1145.¹

In II, 61 the writers (Ḥalfon and Bundār the sons of Maḍmūn) conveyed their and their ailing father’s condolences to the recipient (Sulaymān b. Abū Zikrī) over the death of his father. Since, as we learn from VI, 3, Maḍmūn died some time before October 12, 1151, on the basis of the data presently available, we conclude that II, 45a, dated October 31, 1152, was most likely sent to Sulaymān—and did not continue V, 11. If our identification is correct, we learn furthermore, that Sulaymān, who was an accomplished trader, also traveled to India like his father before him.

Joseph b. Abraham writes an impassioned denial of accusations that he had misappropriated merchandise that had been left in the warehouse. He pleads with his correspondent, who had accused him of betrayal and embezzlement, to believe that he had found the package in question in his container but did not know how it got there. In any event, he never opened it and derived no benefit from it (“either in this world or in the hereafter”). He suggests that his correspondent’s accusations stem from suspicion that Joseph bore him a grudge—which, by rights, he should have, but doesn’t. The writer had fallen on hard times. We can only guess whether the trouble and grudge, to which he alludes, were connected with a business misadventure or with some other matter.

The data concerning the whereabouts of the correspondents is somewhat confusing. Joseph b. Abraham resided permanently in Aden. The general atmosphere of the letter, the description of the warehouse (line 8) and ‘the community’ (*al-jamā‘a*, line 4), Joseph’s return from a trip (line 14), the transaction with Maḥrūz (lines 27–28), the arrival of letters from the addressee for Joseph and his sons (line 29), while not conclusive, all suggest that the letter was written in Aden. On the other hand, as already noted, we see from this letter that Joseph also traveled abroad.

¹ See Introduction IIB1.

Two toponyms appear in the document, Barūṣ and Miṣr (= Fustat), where Sulaymān b. Abū Zikrī Kohen resided. Joseph writes that he found the package in question in his container after the addressee had set out for Barūṣ (line 12). The foreigners, who were traveling to Egypt, would confirm Joseph's innocence of the accusation of misappropriation (lines 26–27). The only way to make sense of this comment is that the addressee was also in Egypt. Barūṣ, however, is an Arabic rendition of Broach, the port city on the northern coast of India, often referred to in this book (usually spelled Barūj).² While other scenarios are possible, I suggest the following reconstruction: On his return trip from Broach to the West, the addressee sailed not to Aden but to some other South Arabian port, such as Mirbāt or Ghulayfiqa, and from there proceeded directly to Egypt, without traveling to Aden. The same had been done some fifty years earlier by Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm and by Joseph Lebdi, and they (or members of their families) subsequently carried on correspondence from Egypt with the representative of merchants in Aden concerning merchandise left there.³

Translation

[A. Denial of embezzlement]

(1) [...on the package at] the top of the container⁴ [there was a note]
 (2) in my handwriting, on which was written: "I found this package. I don't know who (3) deposited it with me. It will remain until its claimant arrives." Consequently, (4) the community knew that it belonged to your excellency.⁵ I swear by He who created me (5) and created you and by He who decreed my safety on sea and land, where (6) I traveled and

² See Maqbul Ahmad, *India*, 59; id., "Hind," 406b.

³ On Abu 'l-Faraj Nissīm's journey from Mirbāt to 'Aydhāb, see II, 4, line 14. On Lebdi's travel to Egypt via Mirbāt, see I, 14. For the Ghulayfiqa-India route, see page 334, n. 30; III, 9*v*, line 2; III, 12, line 38; III, 25.

⁴ Arabic *safaṭ* is used in the Geniza papers for a case made of wood for packing certain goods for transport around the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean (Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:130, 386, n. 174). See the detailed discussion of this term by Sadan, *Mobilier*, 148–50. The word appears a number of times in the India Book, e.g., I, 1, line 8; II, 48, lines 9, 14. Here it evidently refers to a warehouse container of large dimensions (that belonged to the writer).

⁵ Joseph's correspondent had written members of the community about his missing package, and because of the note they surmised that this was the package concerned.

arrived safely⁶—I had not been informed and (7) had no knowledge that it belonged to your excellency. No doubt you, my lord, laid it aside in (8) the warehouse, as you were accustomed to do, for the warehouse (9) was at your disposal and no one denied you access to it. No doubt the slave⁷ (10) threw⁸ the package in the container. I, your servant, know nothing about this. (11) And your excellency did not call attention⁹ to it among the things that you had mentioned,¹⁰ and I, your servant, had no knowledge (12) that it was yours. And when your excellency traveled to Barūs,¹¹ I searched (13) the container and found the package and wondered to whom it belongs. Therefore, (14) I wrote a note and left it inside. I, your servant, traveled and did not—(15) I swear by God!—open the package and did not see what was in it, because it was (16) bound by a rope—even if I, your servant, should have snatched¹² (17) it when I had that trouble.¹³ (18) But God did not let me derive any blessing or wealth¹⁴ from it, either in this world or in the hereafter.¹⁵ (19) Your excellency only said these words, no doubt, because I (20) had dropped in your esteem, because of my trouble. And I, your servant—far be it (21) from your excellency!—I don't believe that you are capable of such a thing, not even (22) in your innermost thoughts.¹⁶ Men may suffer, my lord, from injury and leprosy¹⁷ (23) and the like. There is no escaping what God has decreed, (24) nor

⁶ This is an appropriate oath for an international trader, who faces dangers on land and sea. It does not seem to appear elsewhere in the India Book. For a prayer to God for safety on both land and sea, cf. pages 157–58.

⁷ The writer consistently refers to himself as the addressee's *mamlūk*, 'servant.' Here 'abd must refer to a slave in his (or his correspondent's) service.

⁸ Arabic *ṭarah* can also be translated 'left,' 'deposited'; see Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 301.

⁹ For *ṭm*^c (I) 'be familiar,' see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:61. Here presumably the second form is intended, but I have not found it in any dictionary with this meaning. For a different use of *ṭm*^c, see line 16.

¹⁰ In an earlier letter of instructions.

¹¹ Broach. See the discussion above.

¹² Arabic *ṭama*^c is used in a different sense here than in line 11 (where, as noted, it is probably in the second form). For the translation 'snatched,' see Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 308; 'coveted' is also a possible translation. For the syntax (*an yakūna . . . qad ṭama*^c), see Blau, *Grammar*, 185, 256.

¹³ Trouble for which the writer held his correspondent responsible. For *ṭarā*, see Piamenta, 303.

¹⁴ I understand *mrh* = *umrān*.

¹⁵ The writer uses such phrases elsewhere, e.g., III, 10, lines 70–71: "without any liability for any risk on sea or land, in this world or in the world to come."

¹⁶ Apparently the writer says that he cannot believe that his correspondent really suspects him of theft.

¹⁷ Arabic *baras*; the reading is unambiguous.

anything to do,¹⁸ my lord, about intentions.¹⁹ *Concealed acts concern the Lord our God; the overt acts [concern us], etc.*²⁰ (25) My lord, a man cannot praise himself. (26) But the foreigners traveling to Egypt and others know (27) about everything.²¹

[B. Information on a separate package of clothing]

As to the package of clothing,²² the *late*²³ Sheikh (28) Maḥrūz²⁴ acquired it at a reduced price from the man who collected its proceeds from my sons.²⁵

[C. Further appeasement]

(29) Likewise, your esteemed letter (to me) and letters to my sons reached me. (30) And they contained harsh words from your excellency. But my lord is absolved of any blame,²⁶ (31) for I, your servant, could not have written this letter²⁷ unless there remained (32) no grudge whatsoever

¹⁸ For Arabic *ʿamal*, probably read *ʿilm* ‘knowledge’: ‘nor is there any knowledge of intentions.’

¹⁹ Even if the writer had entertained thoughts of taking the package, such thoughts caused no damage.

²⁰ Deut. 29:28.

²¹ The foreign merchants traveling from Aden to Egypt would confirm the writer’s story. I am uncertain why he speaks specifically about ‘foreigners’ (*ghurabāʾ*), which could hardly be translated ‘Maghrebis’; perhaps to emphasize that his supporters were not only fellow Yemenites.

²² A separate package left by the correspondent for sale.

²³ Hebrew *ḥay*; see 394, n. 31.

²⁴ Maḥrūz b. Jacob; see the discussion above.

²⁵ The writer had grown sons with whom his correspondent apparently had dealings as well. The exact nature of the transaction is not clear.

²⁶ Aramaic *bi-meḥil*.

²⁷ Arabic *ḥādhihi ʿl-kitāb*. While Yemenites often treated *kitāb* as masculine—as in classical Arabic—in many of their writings the word is treated as feminine. See Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 425. Besides this case, I have noted examples in the following texts: II, 47, lines 17–18; II, 49, line 27, verso, lines 6, 11; II, 57, line 34; II, 61, line 10; II, 67, lines 10, 28–29 (uncertain); II, 71v, lines 55–56; III, 3, line 10; III, 4, line 20, verso, lines 1–2, 15–16; III, 6v, line 5; III, 9, margin; III, 11, margin; IV, 9, lines 4–5; IV, 10, lines 15–16, verso, 31; IV, 12, line 12; IV, 15–II, 42, margin; VI, 4v, line 22. In the following texts *kitāb* is treated both as masculine and feminine: II, 61, line 10; II, 67, lines 10, 28–29 (uncertain); II, 71v, lines 55–56. In IV, 11, lines 14–16, the writer uses the Hebrew *ketāv* as if it were feminine, obviously because of the Arabic.

against [you] in my heart. And you are absolved of blame in the broadest (33) sense of the word,²⁸ //in this world and the hereafter,// with a pure heart. Likewise, when you write an answer to me, your servant, (34) you should consider me forgiven in this world and in the hereafter. To err is only *human*.²⁹ (35) By God, my lord, my master, [I, your servant,] was saddened (36) by the paucity of your letters and [...]

[D. Date]

[Margin] (1) Written on the last day of Rajab, (2) year forty-seven.}³⁰

²⁸ Arabic *bi-ḥall wa-awsa' al-ḥall*.

²⁹ Arabic *fa'l-khaṭ' lam yakun illā li-vnē ādām*. The Judeo-Arabic-Hebrew wording of this fundamental axiom calls to mind the adage *errare humanum est*, 'to err is human' (cf. Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 133).

³⁰ See the introduction to the document for the reconstruction of the date.}

II, G. *Khalaf b. Isaac b. Bundār, Maḍmūn's Cousin**

II, 46 *Letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to a Merchant in Egypt: Attack on Aden by the King of Kīsh*

Aden, 1135 {ca. 1136}

TS 18J 5, f. 5

The following is taken, with slight modifications, from Goitein "Kīsh," 247–57 (on 255 there is a partial publication of the text, transcribed in Arabic characters), for which the brief discussion in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:67–69 should be compared.¹

Arabic documents containing eyewitness reports on historical events are very rare. They are the more welcome when they complement and illustrate the often very meager literary sources. This is the case with the excerpts from two business letters from the 12th century, one II, 21–24, sent from Aden to India and one, II, 46 from the same town to Cairo. Both passages describe one and the same event: the attack on Aden by a fleet sent by the King of Kīsh with the aim of taking the town or at least a part of it.

Kīsh (Qays)² is a small island in the Persian Gulf, situated near the mainland of Iran exactly below 54 E and 26.30 N, being the last island of any size before one reaches the Strait of Hormuz, as one sails from

* See his letters to Abraham b. Yijū, III, 10–16; Halfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, IV, {1, 5–8,} 11–14; Abū 'Imrān Mūsā b. Sadaqa Ibn Nufay', VI, 37; 'Allān b. Ḥassūn, VI, 14.

¹ Note that TS 18 J 5, f. 5, in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:588, n. 37, is a misprint for TS 18 J 3, f. 5 and is not related to this document.

² This Persian name, which appears today on the maps as Qays, is very differently spelled in Arabic and European sources. See the detailed analysis in Streck, "Qays." In the documents dealing with the events described here, the island is invariably called Kīsh. However, in the literary sources recounting it, the name is spelled *qys* in the narrative and *ks* in the quotation of the words of the sailors coming from that island. This change is obviously intended to show them as speaking Persian. *Q* in *qys* was no doubt pronounced in the Bedouin-South Arabian way as a *g* formed very far back, while *k* in *ks* also represents a *g*, the Persian *g* being written as a *k* with three dots or a stroke superscript, these diacritics, however being often omitted. Thus the actual name of the island probably was 'Guess,' and so indeed it is spelled in some of the accounts of the European travelers who first visited it. See Streck, s.v. A full discussion of the medieval sources on this island is found in Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, 95–100. {As far as I have seen, the name appears only in II, 23, line 10, and as the pointing of *ṣ* indicates there, it was pronounced Kīṣ (or Kays); see 341, n. 10.}

Iraq along the Persian coast. Its situation made it an ideal maritime stronghold in medieval seafaring conditions and in the 11th century it took the place of Sīrāf, the famous emporium of the Abbasid period, as the main centre of commerce between Iraq, Iran, and India—a position which later passed to Hormuz, Bender Abbās and, in the 18th century, Bushire. The geographer Yāqūt, who had visited the island several times on his commercial travels, describes its king as the overlord of that whole sea and as ruler of Oman, and says that he looked like a Persian and dressed like a Dailamite. However, the ruling house of Kīsh was of South Arabian origin, and the king mentioned in II, 23, line 9, had an Arabic name, or at least surname; thus it seems that they adopted the attire of the Buwayhid (Dailamite) rulers of Iraq, the splendor of whose court was emulated by many smaller rulers. Despite the murderous climate of the island (the inconveniences of which were so drastically described by Qazwīnī, 2:167, line 21 ff), it succeeded, in the 11th and the greater part of the 12th century, in obtaining control of the sea route to India and so attracted a considerable influx of population. Thus, as late as 1176, the Spanish Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela reported the presence there of a Jewish community of about 500 families,³ while the Muslim geographers described it in general terms as a fine, flourishing town.

In these circumstances it is no wonder that the rulers of Kīsh tried to conquer Aden, the great *entrepôt* of the Egyptian, East African, and Indian trade, the port duties of which formed a most lucrative source of revenue. We learn, for example, from the section of II, 46 devoted to business that the duty on pepper, the main Indian commodity, amounted to one-third of its price. In order to illustrate the enormous wealth, which a capable governor of Aden could amass, I give a few details about the estate of the freedman Bilāl b. Jarīr, who administered Aden for the royal house of the Zurayʿids approximately between 1139 and 1151/2.⁴ He left, according to ʿUmāra al-Yamanī,⁵ the famous writer on the history of Yemen, who knew him personally: 650,000 Malikī (local), and over 300,000 Egyptian, dinars,⁶ 1,700 pounds of silver ornaments

³ {See *Itinerary of Benjamin*, 62.}

⁴ Kay, *Yaman*, 72, of the English translation. Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣir*, 123, line 19, obviously refers to one of Bilāl's sons.

⁵ Kay, *op. cit.*, 80.

⁶ At that time one could live in Cairo for a whole month for one dinar. {Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:359: one dinar a month was income for a lower middle-class family.}

of all descriptions, merchandise, perfumes, and arms in immeasurable quantities, in addition to 'rarities' from the remotest parts of the world, such as China or North Africa, obviously brought by the merchants as 'presents' to the almighty governor. Half a century earlier (as from 1083), the joint rulers of Aden, the 'Zuray'ids' Mas'ūd and 'Abbās, paid to their overlord, the Ṣulayḥī Queen Ḥurra, to whom Aden belonged as part of her dowry, a yearly tribute of about 100,000 dinars, which also may give an indication of the wealth of the town.⁷

Another reason for the attack of the king of Kīsh on Aden may have been the fact that owing to the rapacious character of his rule, much of the Indian trade had been diverted from the sea of Oman to Aden.⁸

The expedition of the king of Kīsh against Aden is described with some detail by Ibn al-Mujāwir (died {some time before} 1291).⁹ No date is included in this account, for the story about one of 'the strangest events of the year 545 (= 1150/1),' mentioned on page 125, line 15, has nothing to do with the siege of Aden, but is inserted to illustrate the immense riches treasured in the castle al-Akhḍar {al-Khaḍrā'}, which protected Aden from the sea.¹⁰ However, with the aid of the documents published here, the year of the events can be fixed with considerable certainty.

⁷ Kay, op. cit., 66; Strothmann, "Karam," 743. Other details about the tributes paid by the governors of Aden are to be found in Löfgren, *Aden*, 65, line 5 ff.

⁸ This is at least what Idrīsī, the famous 12th-century traveler, reports, cf. Wilson, op. cit., 98. {Chakravarti, "Tana," 179, incorrectly cites the Geniza letter edited here as the source for this information. Chakravarti explains there the background for the attack on Aden: the shift of the horse export operation to India from Qays to Aden. Also see Wink, *Al-Hind*, 1:58: "In Qays 'piracy' and 'commerce' were closely related activities."}

⁹ Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣir*, 124, lines 5–125, line 8, ib., lines 15–126, line 2. This passage is contained also in Löfgren, *Aden*, 43–45. It may be alluded to or discussed by Hunter, *Aden* {I did not find it there}, or Ferrand, "Navigations," 472–83 {it is not there}; cf. Löfgren, *Aden*, 19, n. 3 {I did not find this reference and assume it is a misprint}. However, owing to the well-known present conditions, I am unable to consult these books, which have remained on Mount Scopus {written by Goitein in 1954}. For the same reason I have to be excused for not using Ibn al-Jawzī's *Muntaẓam* and other sources on general history, which may contain details about the siege of Aden—although this, is not very likely. {On the author and dating of *Al-Mustabṣir*, where the last date is 1228/9, see Smith, *Studies*, chap. 3, 79–80.}

¹⁰ The date itself must be erroneous. For Saba' the Zuray'id, for whom the castle al-Akhḍar was stormed and taken by his freedman Bilāl b. Jarīr, died in 533 (= 1138). {On the location of the al-Khaḍrā' fortress, also known as al-Akhḍar, see Kay, *Yaman*, 67; Serjeant, *Portuguese*, 169, n. G. For the topography, the struggle between the cousins, with reference to II, 51, see Margariti, "Aden," 132 ff.}

As paper was expensive, the recipient of a letter first cut off the introductory part—invariably composed of polite phrases, Bible quotations, etc.—then re-used the paper thus saved for writing accounts, etc., on the back, which was often blank except for the address, and kept the main part in his files for reference. This occurred, for instance, with the two letters, II, 21–24 and II, 46, with the result that neither the names of the senders or addressees, nor the places of mailing or destination, nor the dates {which were usually omitted in any event} have been preserved. However, owing to the great mass of material collected it is possible to restore at least some of the details lost.

Thus, II, 21–24 was certainly sent from Aden to Abraham Ibn Yijū in India; {see there}. That II, 46 was sent from Aden to Cairo {Fustat} is evident from the many persons to whom greetings are extended, a number of whom are known to us as having lived in Cairo {Fustat} or passed through the town at the time of the letter; in addition, this is proved by the nature of the merchandise forwarded with the letter, which consisted mainly of spices and aromatic or dyeing plants, such as pepper, Indian myrobalan (*halīlaj*), Abyssinian cubeb (*fāghira*), lac, saffron (*zarnaba*), Amlaj myrobalan, cassia (*salikha*) and, as a present, clove. Moreover, as was usual in letters from Aden to Cairo, textiles and vessels of all descriptions and largely of Egyptian manufacture were ordered, in addition to a carefully described *thawb* (robe), no doubt for the writer's own use.¹¹

No. II, 46 enables us also to ascertain the year of the attack on Aden. For in it, the sender assures the addressee that he had written to Abū Sa'īd ad-Dimyāṭī—the Arabic name of Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, one of the most prominent Cairene India merchants—to help him in his business, mentioning also two North African merchants, who were at that time in Cairo on their way home from Aden. Now Ḥalfon was in Aden in the spring of 1134 (as can be ascertained from two dated documents),¹² while already in 1136 {or 1137} letters dispatched by him from Cairo or North Africa or Spain or all these places together arrived in that town.¹³ On his way back from Aden he had sent from the Suda-

¹¹ {According to Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:68, the clothing and tableware ordered were probably for an impending wedding. Cf. II, 44.}

¹² Nos. V, 2 and VI, 26.

¹³ As may be learnt from IV, 12 dispatched from Aden in the autumn of 1137. {Goitein, "Last Phase," 1137, explains that those letters may have been dispatched earlier in 1137. The dates of Ḥalfon's travels will be discussed further in the Introduction to chap. 4.}

nese port 'Aydhāb to his brother, the head of the rabbinical court in Cairo; a letter in which he recommended to him the two North African merchants just alluded to.¹⁴ All this taken together makes it certain that our letter was sent in 1135¹⁵ and this is in complete accordance with the situation described in the Muslim historian's report of the event, to the discussion of which we now turn.

At that time, Aden was held by two 'cousins,' a grandson and a great-grandson respectively of the brothers Mas'ūd and 'Abbās mentioned above. They had been installed by the former rulers of the greater part of Yemen, the Ṣulayhids, who in their turn nominally recognized the suzerainty of the Fatimids of Egypt. One of the cousins, 'Alī b. Abī 'l-Ghārāt, possessed the castle al-Khaḍrā', which, as said above, commanded the sea and the ports, while the other, Saba' b. Abū Su'ūd, held Ta'ker, which guarded the gates and the entrance to the town from the land. Each received the import and export duties paid at the entrance to the town under his command.¹⁶ This system, although it had then been in force for almost 50 years, was the cause of much strife—and certainly was intended to be so by the overlords of the Zuray'ids.¹⁷ In addition, the town population did not always accept without resistance the yoke of the ruthless extortionists of its riches. Matters became particularly acute when the representatives of the two 'cousins' in Aden came into more or less open conflict. The king of Kīsh rightly regarded this moment as appropriate for an attack on that important town.¹⁸ We give now a résumé of Ibn al-Mujāwir's account of the event, which will be followed by a discussion of the additional information to be gathered from II, 21–24 and II, 46.¹⁹

According to Ibn al-Mujāwir, the king of Kīsh intended to take the town as a whole from the Zuray'id cousins. Some of the ships sent by

¹⁴ No. IV, 4. {In my opinion that letter was probably written ca. 1131. The two merchants are Abraham Ibn Mu'ī and Joseph b. Ezra, below, lines 63–64.

¹⁵ As noted in the introduction to II, 33–34 (page 379), in 1135 Ḥalfon was apparently in Aden on his way back to Egypt. He probably arrived there late in that year. Our letter is likely to have been written in 1136; see further the discussion below.

¹⁶ Kay, op. cit., 67. Cf. Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣir*, 122, lines 6 and 8, 124, line 4.

¹⁷ 'Zuray'ids' is used here *a fortiori* {the intention seems to be: by extension}, Zuray', being the grandfather of Saba'. This is already the usage of the medieval Muslim historians, e.g., Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣir*, 124, line 8, calls the overlords of the castles al-Khaḍrā' and Ta'ker 'The sons of Zuray'', although only one of them actually was a descendant of Zuray'.

¹⁸ {See the introduction to II, 51.

¹⁹ Cf. II, 48, lines 10 ff.; II, 51, lines 12–20.}

him must have been of types not common in Aden; however, as the text is much mutilated in this place, we had better discuss the Kīsh warships, while considering the additional information to be gathered from the Geniza documents. The aggressors weighed anchor ‘under the mountain of Šīra,’ which was the usual anchorage for ships arriving at Aden,²⁰ and sent word to the commander of the two castles to surrender. The commander of al-Khaḍrā’, which was, of course, immediately threatened, replied: “I am your slave, the town is your town and you may appoint as governor over it whomsoever you like.”²¹ On the receipt of this answer, the crews²² disembarked and feasted on the food and the wine sent to them by the lord of al-Khaḍrā’, their commander warning them in vain to beware of a stratagem—for which purpose he recited high-sounding and not very appropriate Arabic verses, quoted in full. The lord of the inland fort Ta’ker took advantage of his cousin’s plight and offered to attack the intruders, if the other would cede him al-Khaḍrā’. The latter, ‘a man unclean as a thousand relievings of the bowels,’ i.e., a coward, accepted that offer—which gave opportunity for the quotation of other Arabic verses somewhat out of place—whereupon the garrison of Ta’ker rushed upon the drunken sailors and cut off the heads of all those who had not heeded the warnings of their commander and returned to their ships. From that time on the place where that slaughter occurred was called Jamājim, i.e., ‘skulls.’²³

One need be no expert in Muslim historiography in order to recognize in this account the stereotyped traits of ancient Arab war stories mixed with some authentic details. The stratagem; the feasting with cups of wine going round—a rather unlikely scene in a Muslim town; the unheeded warning expressed in Arabic verses—although the aggressors obviously spoke Persian (see note 2); the ignominious cowardice of one party—also illustrated by verses; and finally the etiological conclusion:

²⁰ Cf. Löfgren, *Aden*, 1:65, line 4. Today Šīra is the name of the small island, which protects the outer, eastern, port of Aden, and may be seen on any map of the town.

²¹ I.e., he would be prepared to serve them, just as he held the castle at present for his Sulayḥid overlord.

²² In the text: *jāshū*, a Persian word designating sailors, still used in the Persian gulf; cf. Löfgren, *Aden*, 1:44, n. 3, and 2:25. Ibn al-Mujāwir (*Al-Mustabṣir*, 100), indeed, reports in his description of Qays (Kīsh) that its prince had neither cavalry nor infantry, all the people of the island being mariners.

²³ Cf. Löfgren, *Aden*, 1:45, n. 11. There could hardly be a doubt that the reading is correct. The famous Dayr al-Jamājim, ‘The Convent of the Skulls,’ in Iraq, the scene of a great battle in 701 C.E., would be a parallel. {Cf. El-Ali, “Dayr al-Jamājim,” where the various etymological explanations of the name are noted.

the explanation of a present-day name of a place through a certain detail of the events recounted; all this belongs to the technique of the *Ayyām al-ʿArab* and shows that the story, as we have it, must have been written down a considerable time after the events described.

The situation is, of course, quite different with the accounts given in letters written a few weeks or months after the raising of the siege. It is also characteristic that the letter sent from Aden to India gives us more details concerning the military aspects of the affair—which were of great interest to the addressee, who on his way home had to cross the sea controlled by the king of Kīsh, while the letter to Cairo dwells more on the plight of the inhabitants of the town. In II, 21–24 we learn the name of the king of Kīsh, obviously a man who had only recently succeeded his father (*walad* al-ʿAmīd and not *ibn* al-ʿAmīd), the exact number and type of the warships involved and also the total number of their crews. The letter, like Ibn al-Mujāwir, mentions three types of ships. {See pages 341–42.}

According to II, 21–24 the king of Kīsh wanted to get ‘a portion’ (*quṭʿa*)²⁴ of Aden, obviously the seaside fort with its profitable port duties—a version which is more realistic than Ibn al-Mujāwir’s general remark that he wanted “to take Aden,” for he would hardly have been in a position to oust the Zurayʿids also from the inland castle, as he had at his command only 700 men (II, 23, line 13), while the defenders of Aden amounted to 2,000 (II, 46, line 14).

In one point, the literary and the documentary sources agree exactly: in the account of the successful landing of the aggressors and their subsequent disaster, which ended in the ‘cutting off of the heads’ (II, 46, line 18) of those who did not return in time to their ships. On the other hand, we learn from the letters various facts not registered by Ibn al-Mujāwir, such as that the siege was a prolonged affair (two months, according to II, 46, line 8), because neither of the two parties had sufficient men or equipment to overcome the other,²⁵ and that the turning point was not the reverse suffered by the landing crew, but the arrival of two merchant ships belonging, to the great merchant Rāmīsh, whose ships are several times mentioned in the documents of this collection.²⁶

²⁴ No. II, 23, line 10; see 341, n. 24.

²⁵ See II, 46, line 11.

²⁶ See pages 145–46.}

The ships were immediately manned with *dūwān*²⁷ obviously meaning 'regular troops' (II, 23, line 19, corresponding to 'askar in II, 46, line 25)—whereupon the aggressors, who already had suffered much from lack of food and water (II, 23, line 16 and 17), had to retreat. The interesting lesson to be learned from the account common to the two documents is that even a limited naval force was of decisive importance in medieval warfare on the Arabian coast.

This little comparative study of the literary and documentary evidence about a small-scale occurrence—not, however, devoid of historical significance—shows how much our knowledge of the medieval history of the Middle East would increase if the hundreds of thousands of letters and other documents which have been found in Egypt, and many of which have reached European libraries, were made the object of systematic research. As far as the Geniza papers are concerned work is now well in progress.

{Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:67, and in his notes to the India Book, does not explain why he identified the writer as Khalaf b. Isaac. As noted in the introduction to III, 10, the handwriting is neither Khalaf's nor that of the scribe who wrote for him III, 11 and 12 (though the latter's hand is similar). In the notes to line 46, we shall see that the letter was in fact not penned by its author but by a copyist, who also made mistakes in his transcription. I assume that the attribution of the document to Khalaf was influenced by a comparison with II, 48 and 51, both of which were written by him and describe the plunder of Aden that accompanied the conflict between the two sultans (see the introduction to II, 51).²⁸

Elsewhere in his preliminary papers, Goitein had suggested identifying the recipient of II, 46, as Abū 'Imrān Mūsā b. Ṣedāqā Ibn Nufay^ḥ, a well-known India trader.²⁹ Evidence for this might be adduced from lines 54–55, where the writer notes that he had written Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, to request that he assist the recipient in making sales and purchases for him. This corresponds with IV, 12, lines 19–23, written on October 20, 1137, some time after Ibn Nufay^ḥ's death. Khalaf there informs Ḥalfon that he had previously written him and requested that he provide Ibn Nufay^ḥ such assistance. Khalaf further refers to that affair in II, 51, written

²⁷ In a letter, written in Tarim, Hadhramaut, on December 9, 1953, Dr. R.B. Serjeant informs me that the term *dūwānī* is indeed found in a Yemenite manuscript dealing with tribal law in the sense of 'professional soldier.' {See 342, n. 32.

²⁸ In his note to II, 48*v*, lines 30–31, Goitein suggested that the Ṭalī robe whose arrival is acknowledged there, is the one ordered here, line 38.

²⁹ Below, 594. The identification is not mentioned in the 'New List' and later writings.

a year later, in 1138. This is inconclusive, however, since Ḥalfon's assistance was probably solicited frequently. The conflict between the two cousins and the plunder of Aden described in II, 51 (and in II, 48), evidently followed the attack on Aden by the ruler of Kīsh, depicted in II, 46.³⁰

Verso consists of rough notes, apparently written by the recipient. Because of the irregularities in the handwriting and difficulties in deciphering it, I have not attempted to transcribe the whole text. It contains six entries, which list five separate commodities. The first four commodities are clearly Oriental, and the first three may be identical with items listed in the letter on recto as being shipped to Egypt. The commodities are: a surplus unit (*fadla*) of *hindī* (Indian [myrobalan]);³¹ two entries); a surplus unit of saffron (*zarnaba*);³² a surplus unit of lac (*lakk*); a surplus unit of myrrh; and beer (*mizr*).³³ Each entry lists market price, 'reductions'³⁴ and weights (*si'r... al-ḥaṭṭ... al-wazn*). Three of them name agents:³⁵ Sheikh Abū Zikrī,³⁶ Abraham, a Christian (*naṣrānī*),³⁷ and Abu 'l-Surūr (?). There are also several lines of what seem to be Coptic numerals and a couple of random words in Arabic script (as *waṣal*, 'arrived').}

Translation³⁸

[A. On a Gentile who refused to give testimony, a truncated passage]

{(1) [...] and refused (2) to give testimony. May the Exalted Creator call them to account!³⁹ (3) Scripture has already said, "Never trust Gentiles."}⁴⁰

³⁰ In Goitein's remarks above and in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:69, he assumed that the conflict between the two sultans of Aden was a precursor to the attack by the ruler of Kīsh. It is likely that conflict between the two sultans was a perennial event, which also preceded the attack. Cf. the introduction to II, 51.

³¹ The suggestion that *hindī* is an abbreviation of *halīlaj hindī*, 'Indian myrobalan' (see recto, line 32), is found in Goitein's card indices. Another possibility is that *hindī* is a kind of aloes wood; see Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 29.

³² Here misspelled *zanarba*; see recto, note to line 34.

³³ Decipherment uncertain.

³⁴ Perhaps the commission of the representative of the merchants; see 322, n. 5.

³⁵ Arabic *alā* apparently is an abbreviation for *alā yad*, 'carried by.'

³⁶ Note that according to IV, 12, Abū Zikrī al-Ṣā'igh was one of the two agents who transported goods for Khalaf b. Isaac to Ibn Nufay'.

³⁷ Spelled *naṣrānī*, with short *a* after *r*.

³⁸ All of sec. B (lines 3–29) and sec. D, lines 40–41, 42–46, were translated and annotated by Goitein. I translated (and annotated) the rest.

³⁹ Arabic *ḥasabahum*. The reading is not certain.

⁴⁰ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:275 (see *ibid.*, 586, n. 3), cites this passage and comments: "The saying is not found in the Bible, although Ps. 144:8 'Whose mouth speaks lies and whose

[B. The Attack by the king of Kīsh on Aden]

As to the news from here (4) and all that befell us since you left—to explain all this would take too much space, (5) and even if I filled ten leaves to describe only a part of what befell (6) us, it would not suffice. I shall write concisely, (7) in particular as all our coreligionists, who departed from here, will inform you about what happened (8) and what they heard and saw. In short, we fought {alt. tr.: bore up against} the enemy for two months, (9) the enemy being at sea and we on land. In the town remained (10) neither high nor low {alt. tr.: neither grandee nor commoner}; everybody took refuge in the castles, while below the castles were only (11) empty houses and fighting {alt. tr.: enduring}⁴¹ the enemy; we faced each other {lit., ‘they looked at us, and we looked at them’}, but they did not dare (12) to land, while the people of the town had no vessels⁴² for attacking them. (13) Thus each was afraid of the other. There assembled in the town about (14) 2,000 men. Had there previously been in the town {add: with them} (even) 500, the (15) people would not have fled from their houses, but they (the soldiers) arrived only when the enemy had already entered the harbor.⁴³

(16) The people remained far from their houses,⁴⁴ until God overcame the enemy (17) and made the sea bad {alt. tr.: stormy},⁴⁵ while they (the enemy) were in Šīra⁴⁶ in the morning. They joined battle with (18) the people of the town, a number of them (the enemy) were killed near their (the people’s) houses, and their heads were cut off (19), and what

handshake is falsehood’ was understood in this sense in the Middle Ages. But that maxim must have been quite common, for I heard it as late as 1949, while visiting the South Arabian port.” In 2:586, n. 3, “. . . *lō emūnā ba-gōyīm*. For *lō*, in Aden I heard *ēn*, which is grammatically more correct.” This is a Talmudic maxim, BT Hullin 138b, *ēn emūnā ba-gōyīm*. I assume the usage with *lō* is based on the similar phrase in Deut. 32:20. Cf. Sifre to Deut., sec. 320: *lō emūn bām . . . she-ēn bākbem emūnā*.

⁴¹ Arabic *muqāsāb*. The difference in translation is of obvious significance. In the continuation, it is clear that fighting did not take place.

⁴² Arabic *jihāz*, fleet.

⁴³ Arabic *makalla*’, also in line 25. {In II, 23, line 13, *makalla*’ ‘*adan*, ‘the harbor of Aden,’ not to be confused with al-Mukallā, port of Ḥaḍramawt, some 550 km. east of Aden (see van Donzel, “al-Mukallā”). According to Margariti, “Aden,” 115, it “appears to have been the routine station for ocean going ships in Aden’s harbor.”

⁴⁴ Arabic *wal-nās qad harabū min buyūtibim*, which could be translated, as a continuation of the preceding: ‘when the people had already fled from their houses.’

⁴⁵ Arabic *naza’a*, see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:657 (*nāza’a*).

⁴⁶ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:523, n. 98: “the island of Šīra . . . details in {Löfgren, “‘Adan,’” 180–81.”

they had brought with them to Şīra was taken as booty, for they (20) had conquered Şīra and stayed there a night and a day, (21) when the disaster befell them and they returned to their ships while our men (22) were on the land.

Finally, Rāmish't's two ships arrived. They (the enemy) (23) tried {alt. tr.: went out towards them to try} to seize them, but the wind was good, so that they were dispersed on the sea (24) to the right and to the left. The two ships entered the port safely, where they were immediately manned (25) with troops. (At this juncture,) the enemy could not do anything more, either in the harbor (26) or in the town.

They retreated behind the mountain (of Şīra), until the wind (27) became favorable for them and they made off. It would take too long to go into detail. In any case they left after (28) having been beaten and suffering heavy losses and humiliation. May God—praise to Him—preserve us from (29) their evil and never show us their faces again!⁴⁷

[C. Oriental goods to be sold]

{I would like to inform you⁴⁸ that (30) I have made a bold demand⁴⁹ on your generosity, your good esprit de corps⁵⁰ (31) and your virtue,⁵¹ by having shipped to you various (or: some retail) commodities,⁵² namely: a bag of pepper (32) weighing 303 pounds, a bag of Indian myrobalan⁵³ weighing 303 pounds, a bag of (33) Abyssinian cubeb⁵⁴ weighing 300 pounds, a bag of lac weighing 300 pounds, (34) a small bag of saffron (*zarnaba*)⁵⁵

⁴⁷ {The translation is from Goitein, "Kīsh," 256–57, with minor changes according to Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:67–68.

⁴⁸ Lit., 'what you want to know.'

⁴⁹ Arabic *ḥamalatnī al-dālla*, lit. 'boldness induces me (to).' With slight variations the phrase appears regularly before requests, usually in the second half of the letter. Instead of *dālla*, we also find *idlāl* (e.g., I, 17, line 21) and *dalāla* (e.g., III, 11, line 31).

⁵⁰ Arabic *ʿaṣabiyya*. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:64.

⁵¹ Arabic *muruwwa*. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:191–93.

⁵² Arabic *tafāriq*; see page 333, n. 27.

⁵³ Arabic *ḥalīlāj*. See 420, n. 20.

⁵⁴ Arabic *fāghira*, xanthoxylum (see Maimonides-Meyerhof, no. 307), a pungent berry of a Javan shrub, used in medicine and cookery. See Dols, *Islamic Medicine*, 160, who translates *fāghira* 'Lotus of India.'

⁵⁵ So translated in Goitein's remarks in his 1954 article quoted above. The word is spelled here *zarumbā* (with final *alif*), which may be equivalent to *zarunbād*, zodoary, a plant; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:589 (*zarunba*); Maimonides, *Lexicography*, ed. Muntner, no. 145, 49 (*zurunabād*). See above concerning the notation on verso.

weighing 90 pounds, a bag of Amlaj myrobalan⁵⁶ weighing (35) 60 pounds, a bag of cassia⁵⁷ weighing 60 pounds. All are precise (figures).⁵⁸

[D. Orders of clothing and tableware]

(36) I ask of your generosity, your good esprit de corps and your customary performance of (37) kindness, that you sell the shipment sent you⁵⁹ for whatever price God, the Exalted, apportions as livelihood,⁶⁰ (38) and buy for me (your servant) an exquisite⁶¹ Ṭalī⁶² robe, the most exquisite there is, (39) five average, good Ṭalī robes, not mediocre, two pieces of cloth for (40) pillow cases, made by Ibn al-ʿĀṣir.⁶³ The remainder should be with *sharb* {alt. tr.: made of *sharb*}, (41) whether it is a *mulāʿa* wrap, a head cover, *arḍī*, or ‘Sevener.’⁶⁴ {This should be average merchandise, (42) neither very⁶⁵ exquisite nor very inferior.}

Also please buy (43) me six painted platters, made in Miṣr,⁶⁶ they should be of middle size, (44) neither very large nor very small; and twenty (regular) bowls (45) and forty small bowls.⁶⁷ All should be painted

⁵⁶ See 420, n. 18.

⁵⁷ Arabic *salikha*, cinnamon bark, cassia bark (Chinese cinnamon tree); see Wehr, *Dictionary*, 421.

⁵⁸ Arabic *naqīy*, literally, ‘clean.’ Goitein notes in his card index that the word is used to indicate the accuracy of what looks like a round figure. Cf., e.g., I, 1, line 22, verso, line 1; II, 48, line 14.

⁵⁹ Arabic *raḥla-ka*. *Rahl* for a shipment sent to someone is attested in other documents in the India Book.

⁶⁰ For this formula, see the discussion in pages 63–65.

⁶¹ Arabic *rafiʿ*, also: fine, delicate.

⁶² For Ṭalī linen, see 422, n. 29. As we have already seen, Goitein suggested that the robe ordered here is the one whose arrival is acknowledged in II, 48v, lines 30–31.

⁶³ Grape presser. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:92, 428, n. 56, where our document is cited (the ‘old number’ 149 is misprinted there as 49), and it is noted that this Ibn al-ʿĀṣir was the proprietor of a factory of world-famous textiles. ʿĀṣir is corrected here from ʿĀṣṣār, which according to Goitein, *ib.*, 92, means ‘operated an oil- or wine-press’; evidently the terms are interchangeable.

⁶⁴ Lines 40–41 (without the brackets) are translated in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:166. As noted there, *sharb* is an extremely fine and expensive linen; cf. al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 383 (rather than an equivalent of *sharb*, as taken there, *shurūb* is apparently the plural form). On the ‘sevener,’ *subāʿī*, ordered here, see page 176, n. 14.

⁶⁵ Arabic *bi-murra*. Cf. Pianta, *Dictionary*, 462 (*bi-l-murra*).

⁶⁶ Fustat or Egypt.)

⁶⁷ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:393, n. 51: *suk(ku)ruja*. {See Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:668: *sukrūja*, *sukurruja*; Sadan, “Clerks,” 44, n. 68: ‘butter dish’; al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 437: “an appetizers’ saucer, a starter saucer, a small dish for pickles and the like.”}

and their figures and colors should be (46) different.⁶⁸ {And (purchase) whatever *k'ḥn* and potions (perhaps read: platters and decanters)⁶⁹ are readily available.

Please pack this (47) in two good, strong baskets.⁷⁰ Pack the robes in one bundle. (48) If it is easy for you to send it all this year, *good*.⁷¹ (49) If it is difficult to load it all, send me whatever is easy.}

[E. Closing remarks and greetings.]

{(50) Please send me your letter containing happy news about you (51) and your propitious affairs and wishes, together with (52) any need or service your excellency requires. Honor me with this.⁷²

I have sent for (53) my lord Makārim a *mann* of cloves.⁷³ Kindly take delivery of this. (54) I have already written to my lord Sheikh Abū Sa'īd al-Dimiyāṭī⁷⁴ to kindly (55) assist you in making the sales and purchases.

To you, my excellency—may God protect you!—are sent (56) best wishes for your well-being. Please extend my wishes to my lord Makārim for his well-being. (57) Please extend my best wishes to his excellency, our most illustrious lord the *Rayyis*—*may his grandeur increase* (58) *and his honor be enhanced!*⁷⁵—for his well-being. Please extend my best wishes to

⁶⁸ These lines with the order of earthenware are translated and discussed in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:146, 393, n. 51.

⁶⁹ Arabic *k'ḥn* (*kāḥin?*) and *sharbāt*. The readings are fairly clear, but both words are difficult. The meaning of *kāḥin* is unknown, and 'potions' hardly fits the context. I suspect that the clerk who copied Khalaf b. Isaac's letter erred in copying the text before him, which may have read something like *ṣuḥūn* (סוּחֻן, which he copied סוּחֻן; the letters ס and צ and the letters פ and ש are similar in his script), 'platters' (as in line 43) and *sharābiyyāt*, pl. of *sharābiyya* 'vessel for potions,' 'decanter' (for which see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:147–48; Diem, *Dictionary*, 113; al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 333). Such errors by copyists are found in other documents. See, for example, 325, n. 23.

⁷⁰ Arabic *qafṣ*. See 339, n. 10.

⁷¹ In accordance with Arabic syntax, this word is usually not expressed in such a conditional sentence. Here it is written in Hebrew, *harē mūtāv*, introduced by the Arabic conjunction *fā-*.

⁷² Or translate literally from the end of line 51: "Whatever (*ma'amā*) needs or services your excellency has, honor me with them." For this meaning of *ma'amā* see 484, n. 29. Here, however, *ma'ā* (in *ma'amā*) can function as the preposition 'with.'

⁷³ This is a gift. Greetings are extended to Makārim in line 56. Several Makārim are mentioned in the India Book papers. The gift sent to Maṣliḥ Gaon in II, 34c, line 1, includes a *mann* of cloves.

⁷⁴ Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, to whom chap. 4 is devoted, also mentioned in lines 59–60.

⁷⁵ Maṣliḥ ha-Kohen, Head of the Yeshiva in Cairo.

his excellency, my lord (59) the *Prince (sar)* Eli Ibn al-Dimyātī⁷⁶ and Sheikh Abū Saʿīd (60) his brother, for their well-being. Please extend my best, bountiful wishes to my lord the *Diadem (nēzer)*, our lord's *scribe*⁷⁷ (61) and all my lords, the *judges*, the *cantors* and the welfare officials (*farānisa*)⁷⁸ and all of (62) our coreligionists the perfumers⁷⁹ and our friends and whoever asks for us, (63) for their well-being. And to my lord the most illustrious Sheikh Abū Ishāq Ibn Muʿtī⁸⁰ (64) and my lord the most illustrious Sheikh Joseph,⁸¹ his traveling companion (*rafīq*), and my lord Sheikh (65) Barakāt al-Maqdasī (the Jerusalemite), are extended best, bountiful wishes for their well-being. (66) *May your peace, my lord, forever increase and not decrease! And peace.* (67) Also my lord my father⁸² greets you with best wishes for your well-being, and your servants (68) my children kiss your hand and greet your excellency with best, (69) bountiful wishes for your well-being. *And peace.* }

⁷⁶ As identified in page 424, n. 47, he is Ḥalfon's older brother Eli b. Nethanel ha-Levi, 'The Diadem of the Discerning,' who presided over the High Court of the Palestinian Yeshiva, then seated in Cairo (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:305).

⁷⁷ Identified by Goitein in page 424, n. 47 (commenting on II, 46), as the judge Nathan b. Samuel. See also 424, n. 52, and the introduction to II, 45.

⁷⁸ Judeo-Arabic plural for Hebrew *parnās*.

⁷⁹ The *ʿattārs* (perfumers or druggists) were in close business contact with the Yemenites who exported Indian commodities.

⁸⁰ Abraham b. Muʿtī, a well-known Moroccan notable; see II, 47, line 13, for his business contacts with Khalaf b. Isaac.

⁸¹ Joseph (Abū Ishāq) b. Ezra, a merchant often mentioned in the India Book papers as Abraham b. Muʿtī's traveling companion.

⁸² Khalaf's father, Isaac b. Bundār, apparently died in 1138; see 465, n. 11.}

II, 47 *Letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, 'Aydhāb*

Aden {ca. 1131}

ENA NS 21, f. 7

Fragment about presents sent to communal officials in the capital of Egypt, accounts (and other details), one referring to the Moroccan notable Abraham b. Mu'ī, prominently mentioned in II, 46 (line 63).

{The top of the letter is torn away. Consequently the address on verso, with the names of the writer and the recipient, is missing. Goitein evidently identified the writer as Khalaf b. Isaac on the basis of his handwriting, known from other documents. As he does elsewhere, Khalaf writes the marginal addition to side a, in (two) straight lines, perpendicular to the body of the text, facing outward, from top to bottom, rather than the usual practice in Geniza letters to write in short slanting lines, from the bottom of the document to the top. The addressee can be identified as Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel from the first recipient of gifts to be delivered in Fustat, "my lord your brother, the diadem," undoubtedly Eli ha-Levi b. Nethanel 'Diadem of the Discerning.'¹ Other Fustat dignitaries for whom gifts (all Oriental spices: aromatic wood, civet, cloves) are sent include 'our lord,' viz. the Head of the Palestinian Yeshiva Maṣliāḥ, the *Rayyis* Abu 'l-Najm,² the cantors Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh and Abū Sa'īd³ and the banker Abu 'l-Faraj. An order of cinnamon is also mentioned. On his journey from Aden to Fustat, Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel evidently was staying temporarily in the Sudanese port town of 'Aydhāb, since Khalaf asks him to send back from there a deep bowl (*barniyya*), if Ḥalfon does not want it, and regards are sent to Ḥalfon's traveling companions for their safe arrival (in Egypt). Ḥalfon writes of being delayed in 'Aydhāb in IV, 4, lines 11–22. We can assume that this document was written during the same period, probably ca. 1131.}

¹ {Goitein apparently made the identification on the basis of 'my lord, his brother' alone, since his rough draft of the transcription does not include the damaged word *al-nezer*, 'the diadem.' For identification of 'the diadem,' see 424, n. 27. Eli died in 1139.

² The *Rayyis* Abu 'l-Najm is mentioned as a business associate of Ḥalfon in no. IV, 3, lines 15–16. He appears as a recipient of ten dirhems in a list of payments to community officials from the mid twelfth century (TS NS 321, f. 14; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:459, no. 70) and as a donor in another contemporary list (ULC Or. 1080 J 2; see *ibid.*, 2:502, no. 113 [There Goitein refers to him as a doctor. I assume this is because he is called *Rayyis*. But this appellation is used for various dignitaries; see page 246 (and note 5).]). Perhaps he was the father of Hillel b. Sādōq, whose son Meir addressed a letter to his three brothers, calling each one of them, *rayyis*, and signing his own name as: Nahray b. Abu 'l-Najm (= Meir b. Hillel): Mosseri VII,200 (ed. Frenkel, "Alexandria," 2:68–69). Hillel b. Sādōq may have been a judge, see Friedman, "Maimonides and Zūṭā," 503, 516–17.

³ See page 411, n. 17.}

II, 48 *Letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel: Plunder of Aden, Losses at Sea and a Servant not Purchased*

Aden {October 14–November 11, 1140}

TS Misc. 28, f. 256

{A long fragment of a letter from Khalaf b. Isaac from Aden to Egypt, written on both recto and verso.¹ The end of the recto and beginning of the verso have survived, but the beginning of the recto and the end of the verso, including the address with the names of writer and addressee, are missing. Goitein identified the writer by his handwriting. As to the identity of the addressee, as Goitein observed, the nature of the goods ordered and other considerations indicate that the addressee resided in Egypt. Furthermore, in line 4, Khalaf writes that the addressee had a credit of 45 dinars from the sale of spikenard. Since according to IV, 12, Khalaf's letter to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel dated October 20, 1137, this is the same sum credited to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel and credited to his partner Mubārak [b. Judah]² of Malaga, Spain, for the sale of spikenard, which had been delayed in India after their departure from there, II, 48 was evidently written to one of the two partners. Goitein suggested identifying the addressee as Ḥalfon. I have indeed now identified II, 48 as probably being a fragment of a large letter written by Khalaf to Ḥalfon, of which IV, 13 and IV, 14 are additional fragments, a letter written October 14–November 11, 1140.³

The upper part of the extant fragment of recto has survived almost intact, but the lower part is torn and badly damaged; the condition of the verso is the reverse. The text in the torn sections has been preserved, of course, only fragmentarily, and it is generally impossible to restore the content and determine the writer's intention there. Despite its damaged state, the letter yields several interesting pieces of information, some more complete than others. Perhaps the most intriguing part is a long section [B] on the recto, lines 5 ff. (It is difficult to pinpoint the end of the section, and our subsequent paragraphing is fairly arbitrary.) Among other things, this passage

¹ {Goitein identified the handwriting, made a draft copy of the text and added a few comments, incorporated in the following notes.

² His father's name Judah can be deduced from VII, 22.

³ Goitein's suggestion appears in his introduction to III, 10. The identification of these three fragments, II, 48, IV, 13 and IV, 14, as parts of the same letter was made when this book was already in proofs, and details will be given in chap. 4.

refers to an episode involving a person called al-Dughaym⁴ and to interne-cine strife between the forces loyal to the rulers of Aden. The two topics are interconnected, since al-Dughaym had placed in the writer's safekeeping a large chest with goods from the Far East, which the writer had opened and whose contents he had sold for fear of looting in the city. The letter's addressee had apparently undertaken to guarantee the safety of the goods. While the two correspondents clearly understood the situation, the whole episode presents us, for the time being, with an intriguing puzzle. On the other hand, we know of episodes indicative of the chaos in Aden from three other documents (II, 21–24, II, 46, both concerned with an attack on Aden by the ruler of Qays; see also II, 51) and from Arab historians' accounts. In connection with the 'al-Dughaym' affair, our letter mentions the struggle between forces of 'the two Sultans' (obviously, the cousins 'Alī b. Abu 'l-Ghārāt and Saba' b. Abū Su'ūd, who ruled Aden), which was accompanied by widespread robbery and banditry. This is discussed in greater detail in II, 51 (apparently written in the autumn of 1138).⁵

The letters in this book furnish abundant evidence of shipwrecks and merchants who perished at sea. Our letter, too, refers to such tragedies in sec. D. The writer mentions the loss of property before the loss of human life, primarily because he first apologizes to the addressee in case a previous letter, consoling the latter for someone's death, had not reached its destination because it had been lost at sea. In addition, the correspondents were preoccupied first and foremost with their business affairs. The writer prays that the deceased—a certain Jacob Ibn al-Shamūm and 'a group of our coreligionists'—should be considered worthy of resurrection.

Before the end of the letter [E], the writer refers to an unsuccessful attempt on his part to buy a servant for the addressee from a batch of new slaves, brought to Aden on the festival of Sukkot from *bilād al-Zanj*, that is, the Land of Zanj, in East Africa. This piece of information is noteworthy for several reasons. Many Zanjis were captured and sold into slavery in medieval Muslim society, and a famous 'Revolt of the Zanj' took place in

⁴ As shown by the definite article *al-* this is not a proper name here but a by-name. The (by-)name Dughaym is listed in Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmā'*, where it is explained as a diminutive derived from *adgham*, meaning Black-Nosed or One who Nasalizes.

⁵ See above, introduction to II, 46; and cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:525, n. 110, for a brief description of the relevant information from II, 48. Elsewhere in the same volume (5:68–69) Goitein refers to another letter from Khalaf, but without specifying the number (that volume, it should be remembered, was published after the author's death); he may have meant II, 51. See further the introductions to II, 46 and II, 51.

Iraq between 869 and 883.⁶ The Zanjis are also known to us from Gaonic literature in Iraq. Indeed, according to an ancient tradition in *Halakhot Pesuqot*, it was permissible for a Jew to marry a converted Zanj (“Those Zanjis—if they convert [to Judaism], they may be admitted into the congregation”). Later, however, some authorities prohibited this. Rav Hai Gaon, in the standard form of a deed of sale for a slave in his *Formulary*, refers to the sale of so-and-so ‘the ZANJI slave.’⁷ To the best of my knowledge, however, other Geniza documents do not refer to ZANJI slaves.⁸ We have few references in the Geniza to the purchase of slaves, who worked as household servants; all the Geniza documents that treat the purchase of male and female slaves by Jews seem exclusively to concern transactions among private individuals.⁹ Possibly, therefore, this evidence of a shipment of ZANJI slaves, from which a rich Jew of Aden wanted to buy a servant, is unique. The vendor was presumably a dealer who had bought the slaves from their captor or from the latter’s agent. An enlightened modern reader will probably be shocked by the writer’s unemotional, indifferent attitude to this unsuccessful transaction. However, slaves were an important component of the economy in the society of the Geniza period, and trusted household slaves played an active role in the India trade. As far as the correspondents were concerned, slavery was a routine phenomenon.

Following is a summary of the document’s contents, with select translations:

- [A] Expenses and other details belonging to the account of Khalaf’s correspondent (lines 1–5).
- [B] The ‘*Al-Dughaym*,’ affair, the plunder of Aden and various business matters (line 5-verso, line 2).

⁶ For the Land of Zanj and Muslim trade in slaves from that country, see Martin, “Medieval East Africa,” 128–30. Cf. Wink, *Al-Hind*, 1:26–27, 29–31. According to Wink’s map (ibid., 26), ‘Zanj’ is Zanzibar and the neighboring region of the mainland, in today’s Tanzania. However, the map in Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, 85, places *bilād al-Zanj* farther to the north, in the region of modern Somalia. On the revolt see Waines, *The Revolt of the Zanj* (and see ibid., 29 n. 117, for the origin of the ZANJI). *Bilād al-Zanj* is also mentioned below, II, 71, margin, lines 3, 16.

⁷ For sources from Gaonic literature, the relevant scholarly literature and an exhaustive discussion of these topics, see Danzig, *Introduction to HP*, 234–36.

⁸ At least, there is no such reference in the study of slavery in the Geniza documents in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:130–47.

⁹ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:140; Gil, *Ishmael*, 1:603–4 and n. 337; Wink, *Al-Hind*, 1:98.

It (the container) remained with me, his excellency's servant,¹⁰ for a long time, until the two Sultans fought each other. The inhabitants of the city were very frightened, and there were robbery and plunder (*nabb*) in the city.¹¹ I was afraid that something would happen to it (the container), and all¹² would be lost. Then there would be only his word against mine, and I would not be able to prove that I spoke the truth. So I opened the container and found in it 30 *manns* of clover, and just a little more than half of aromatic wood [...]

[C] Instructions for sales and purchases (verso, lines 2–9).

Please purchase for me a good [*fūṭa*], one large Sūsī¹³ [...] Alexandrian, exquisite [...] and average Ṭālī¹⁴ *thawbs* (robes), neither [exquisite nor inferior].

[D] Losses at sea and other business matters (verso, lines 10–37).

I, your servant, already received the Ṭālī *thawb* (robe), which you, my lord, had mentioned. [...] Sheikh Jacob Ibn al-Shamūm¹⁵ and a group of our coreligionists were lost at sea. May God, the Exalted, have mercy on them and resurrect them together with *the pious of Israel!*¹⁶ Sheikh Isaac al-Sijilmāsī¹⁷ wrote that the corals were lost at sea together with the other things. This is for your information, my lord.

[E] Failed purchases and consolation (verso, lines 37–43).

Further news about me, your servant, and my purchases: Our coreligionists arrived when the ships were ready to sail, and nothing remained with them.¹⁸

¹⁰ Arabic *'abd ḥaḍratihī*. The writer refers to himself in this excessively obsequious fashion a number of times in the letter, expressing his extraordinary esteem for the addressee. Khalaf uses the same expression in his letters, II, 51 and IV, 12. The equivalent *mamlūk ḥaḍratihī* appears several times in III, 31, III, 33, III, 38.

¹¹ Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:525, n. 110.

¹² Arabic *al-aṣl*. Another possibility would be to take the word to mean 'the (original) account book'; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:209, 452, n. 84 (who suggests a slightly different interpretation for *aṣl*).

¹³ See I, 1, line 8.

¹⁴ For Ṭālī linen, see 422, n. 29.

¹⁵ Jacob Ibn Shamūm (without *al-*) is mentioned also in V, 13, margin, line 2. In both documents, it is possible to read Shamūs, as well, but I assume he is the same as Ibn al-Shamūm, mentioned as having drowned in VI, 32v, line 1, where the reading (with *-m*) is preferable. *Shamūm* means 'fragrance' (Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 265).

¹⁶ The discussion on resurrection in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:411, implies that such prayers for resurrection of people who recently died (found also in II, 61, lines 11, 24), are rare in the Geniza papers. See Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 137.}

¹⁷ Isaac b. Aaron al-Sijilmāsī (from Sijilmāsa, Morocco), wrote VI, 31–33, addressed to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel; in VI, 32, he mentioned losses at sea.

¹⁸ The Egyptian Jewish merchants arrived when the ships to India were ready to sail. The Egyptians sold all of their merchandise to the traders setting out for India, and nothing was left for the writer's business.

During Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles) a *qinṭīr* (?)¹⁹ arrived from the Land of the Zanj, which had in it new slaves.²⁰ I tried to purchase a servant²¹ for you, my lord, but was not successful. . . .}]

¹⁹ {Obviously *qinṭīr/qanṭīr* is some kind of vessel, but I have not found the word in any dictionary. *Qanṭara* is a bridge. The reading *qntyr* is certain, despite a correction in the letter *t* (possibly from *b*, which calls to mind *qunbār*, a large merchant vessel, for which see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:306). Note that *qaṭīra* is a small vessel found in the Red Sea; see Kindermann, *Schiff*, 82–83 (Prof. Werner Diem kindly called this to my attention).

²⁰ Arabic *raqīq*. Hava, *Dictionary*, 264: ‘slave newly caught.’ According to Wehr, *Dictionary*, 352, the word is both singular and collective. Ibn al-Mujāwir (*Al-Mustabṣir*, 141) noted the customs, two dinars, paid in Aden for *raqīq*.

²¹ Arabic *waṣīf* means a slave engaged for household work. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:131–32, where he comments on the infrequent mention in the Geniza papers of male menials.}

II, 49 *Letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel*

Aden {ca. 1134}

TS AS 148, f. 9

Fragment of a large letter sent to India, mostly about textiles and pepper, and reporting that because of peace in Egypt many merchants arrived from there.

{This is a tattered and effaced fragment of a letter written in Khalaf's typical handwriting. The beginning of the letter and its left side are missing. Because of the document's poor state of preservation, not one sentence is intact. There are fragmentary data on such subjects as the sale of merchandise imported from India, including some prices; the sinking of a ship at the entrance to the city; the failure of Maḏmūn b. Ḥasan to ship anything (to Egypt, so it seems) that year; the arrival of Jewish merchants (from Egypt), with family names pointing to Syria, Palestine and the Maghreb, bearing good news about relations with the government;¹ the arrival of two ships from India, one small and one large; the writer's request that the recipient leave India and return to Aden (Margin: "Buy whatever God grants you success in and set out this year. Do not delay again; livelihood is apportioned [by God]");² the writer's illness and other business and sundry affairs. From the fragmentary greetings extended to friends and associates in Broach, it is reasonable to conclude that the addressee was then residing in that northwestern Indian port city.

Goitein identified the recipient as Abraham b. Yijū, though he may have later changed his mind on the identification.³ In any event, we can now establish with certainty that the addressee was someone else, namely, Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel. Incontrovertible evidence of this can be adduced from IV, 1, written in Khalaf's typical hand and entitled: "Account of my lord, Sheikh Abū Sa'īd Ḥalfon b. Nethanel." As several lines in II, 49 verify, IV, 1, is unmistakably the account, a copy of which accompanied that letter, referred to in it repeatedly. The match is unequivocal and makes it possible to restore in part many of the truncated passages in the letter.

¹ {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:50, 519, n. 26, where he cites this passage.

² Margin, line 3, *fa-'l-rizq maqsūm*. See Bosworth and McAuliffe, "*Rizq*." See the brief discussion below.

³ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:50, 519, n. 26. Goitein's working papers for this book point to his uncertainty concerning the identification, which does not appear in the Summary for the New List of texts. I do not know whether his final conclusion (or indecision) is to be found in these papers or in the fifth volume of *Med. Soc.*, which was published posthumously.

The account lists and the letter describes Ḥalfon's credits for sale of goods he had shipped from India to Aden and his debits for expenses incurred and purchases made for him there. Accompanying accounts are mentioned in many letters in this book (e.g., II, 28, lines 14–15 and II, 31, line 14), but I do not recall encountering any other examples, where such a pair has been identified.

After having matched II, 49 with IV, 1, I found additional documents associated with Ḥalfon's same consignments. No. IV, 15–II, 42 (see there) is a letter concerning these affairs by Khalaf's cousin Joseph b. Abraham. Joseph wrote there that Khalaf's letter would follow with details of his actions with Ḥalfon's sales and purchases. A fragment of that letter is in II, 49, and IV, 1 is the accompanying account. Furthermore, as already noted above (see II, 42), Ḥalfon's letter (or rather a partial draft of it) to Maḍmūn concerning these same matters is found in VI, 27. In it he mentions goods to be delivered to Khalaf and a letter and power of attorney to him. To these, again, II, 49 and IV, 1 are Khalaf's response. I am hopeful that additional papers related to these matters will yet emerge and will further complement the information made available by these five items. See II, 42 and the introduction to chap. 4, for the date of this letter.

Khalaf's aforementioned remark that man's earnings are predetermined warrants a further comment. This notion appears to counter the underpinnings of such a highly mercantile society, in which men left their homes and abandoned their families in the Maghreb and Egypt and set out on long, perilous journeys to the Far East, in order to accumulate wealth. Beliefs that God (or fate) determined a man's livelihood are common in Judaism and Islam. In a letter Ḥalfon received from his brother Ezekiel the latter wrote: "No one can exceed his fixed livelihood" (IV, 58, top, lines 18–19).⁴ Various undertakings by the Geniza people were repeatedly accompanied by their expressions of reliance on God.⁵ Nevertheless, the call by Khalaf, a learned man and veteran international merchant, to Ḥalfon, an even more illustrious scholar and seasoned trader, to cease and desist from certain commercial activity because of determinism is, I believe, rather extraordinary. In his

⁴ Arabic *wa-laysa yaqdur aḥad yata'adda rizqahu*; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:331. This is translated in Gil and Fleischer, *Yehuda ha-Levi*, 407: "One can not forgo his profit."

⁵ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:323 ff. Khalaf too often refers to sale or purchase of merchandise for a price, *bi-mā qasam allāh*, 'whatever God apportions.' See the discussion of this phrase above, pages 63–65. Cf. also DK 1, line 8, *al-rizq fa-laysa hūwa shay bil-ḥūr*, 'livelihood is not something acquired by endeavor' (ed. Goitein, "Kaufmann Collection," 194–95; cf. id., *Med. Soc.*, 1:201 [there: "success in business does not depend only on the effort made"], 450, n. 49).

letter to Maḏmūn, Ḥalfon, for his part, attributed his delay in India, occasioned by bad market conditions there, to divine decree (VI, 26, lines 7 ff.): “For a number of reasons, it happened that I was detained this year and was unable to leave [. . .]. Since the Creator has so decreed, *this too is for good.*” Joseph, in his letter (IV, 15–II, 42, lines. 21–23) comments on Ḥalfon’s delay in a similar vein: “Your being detained distressed me, your servant. But you, my lord, were unable to do anything about it. May God give you success with the most choice of things and make the outcome good for you!” Their approach is more typical.}

II, 50 *Memorandum from Khalaf b. Isaac ordering Pharmaceuticals from Egypt*
Aden, ca. 1130–50

P. Heidelberg 912

Ed. Dietrich, *Drogenhandel*.

Order in Arabic letters mostly of pharmaceuticals, sent to Fustat-Cairo. An entire book, a folio-sized study comprising 67 pages (Dietrich, *Drogenhandel*), has been devoted to this leaf from the famous Heidelberger Papyrus-sammlung. There can be little doubt that its provenance is the Cairo Geniza. The name of its sender, Khalaf b. Isaac the Yemenite, is written in Hebrew characters on the margin, and, as I am able to add, in his own handwriting.¹ The list enumerates shipments and a detailed order of certain drugs from Cairo, which required much research in order to identify. I suppose that Khalaf wrote the text in Hebrew characters, while his clerk transcribed it into Arabic letters, for more convenient use in the Cairene bazaar. During that process of transfer from one script to another some mishaps occurred, e.g., the name of the merchant, who was the bearer of the order, was distorted. I presume it is {not as copied Al-Mushriq, but} Al-Mutasawwiq, a man who is mentioned as going from Aden to Cairo on business in those days (thirties and forties of the twelfth century).² The Geniza has actually preserved another letter from Khalaf written entirely in Arabic script, VI, 14. At some time, Khalaf, a master of Hebrew calligraphy, may have decided to write letters of a certain type in Arabic characters, or ordered a clerk to do so. In general, the reading and interpretation provided in Dietrich's book are excellent. On the back of the order, the word, which the editor reads as SHDY and interprets as a name, is *ṣihri*, i.e., 'my brother-in-law.'³

¹ {The marginal notation reads: *al-nuskha* (*'lnskh*, not *'nshk*, as copied by Dietrich) *li-'abdihi Khalaf ibn Yiṣḥāq al-yamani*, 'the list (of pharmaceuticals) for his servant Khalaf b. Isaac the Yemenite.' For *nuskha*, see 362, n. 11.

² On Al-Mutasawwiq (the market trader), see IV, 9. The error in copying would be more readily understood were we to assume that the text had been written originally in Arabic script.

³ Taken from Goitein's remarks in his papers and especially in his articles, "Arabic Papyrology," 376–77 and "Portrait," 453–54. In the former article, the reader is referred also to the detailed review of Dietrich's book: Plessner, "Review." *Ṣibr* also means father-in-law and son-in-law; see above, 348–49, n. 76.

{As in II, 33–34, 43 and IV, 3, the order is entitled (after the *basma* invocation)⁴ *tadhkira mubāraka*, ‘a blessed memorandum.’ Khalaf sends a bundle containing forty pounds of cardamom to be sold in The Druggists’ Quarter in Fustat at the shop of Abu ’l-Ḥasan b. Baṣīr or Abu ’l-Ḥasan b. Hiba.}⁵

⁴ In II, 43, 44 and IV, 3, the Aramaic invocation *bi-shmākh raḥmānā*, ‘in Your name, O Merciful,’ appears here.

⁵ He is also mentioned in II, 58, line 18.}

II, 51 *Letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to Egypt about Turmoil in Yemen*

Aden {fall 1138}

ENA NS 48, f. 8¹

Letter about turmoil in Yemen and measures taken by Abū Zikrī Kohen for ensuring Khalaf's rights after the death of Abū 'Imrān Nufay'.²

{This is the lower portion of a large business letter written in Khalaf b. Isaac's typical handwriting. Sec. D (lines 20–31) parallels a long passage in Khalaf's letter to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel in IV, 12, lines 16–53. There Khalaf described in great detail an affair, which illustrates the vicissitudes of international trade and its dependence on the personal circumstances of business partners. Khalaf had entrusted merchandise to two traders, Abu 'l-Yumn al-Maḥallī and Abū Zikrī al-Ṣā'igh (goldsmith), for delivery in Egypt to Abū 'Imrān Mūsā b. Ṣedāqā Ibn Nufay', a well-known India trader, who had been asked to sell the merchandise and buy other goods. Khalaf had written Ḥalfon, who too had been in Fustat at the time, and requested that he assist Abū 'Imrān in making the sales and purchases (see II, 46, lines 54–55). But Abū 'Imrān died, and Ḥalfon left for the Maghreb. Abū Zikrī al-Ṣā'igh also decided to set out for the West, while Abu 'l-Yumn, traveled to Qūṣ, fell ill and returned to Egypt, his fate being unknown. Khalaf then wrote to the representative of the merchants in Fustat, Abū Zikrī Kohen, to ask his assistance in retrieving the goods in Egypt. He also wrote Ḥalfon and requested that he assist Abū Zikrī Kohen in collecting the merchandise and in sending the goods purchased with the proceeds.

The text of II, 51 is severely damaged in sec. D. The details are unclear and may not be identical with those of IV, 12. The writer mentions Abu 'l-Yumn, Abū 'Imrān and Abū Zikrī (Kohen). He also remarks that the recipient, who was involved in the affair, had traveled (from Egypt). I doubt that the letter was sent to Ḥalfon (a possibility that Goitein mentioned in his notes), as there is no reference to the assistance that had been requested of him in IV, 12.³ Perhaps it was sent to Abū Zikrī al-Ṣā'igh.

¹ {The manuscript was formerly listed 'JTS Geniza Misc. 8,' the number that appears in Goitein's writings.

² Besides a rough draft of the transcription, Goitein's India Book papers contain only sporadic notes on II, 51.

³ Furthermore, the letter was probably sent to Egypt at the time that Ḥalfon was in North Africa or Spain (see the introduction to chap. 4).

No. IV, 12 is dated 3 Marheshvan, 1449 E.D. (October 20, 1137), and in it (lines 45–46), Khalaf wrote that he sent ‘this year’ a power of attorney to Abū Zikrī Kohen. ‘This year’ (rather than ‘last month’) hardly refers to the thirty-three days that had transpired since the beginning of 1449 E.D. or, for that matter, to the thirty-one days that had passed since the beginning of 532 A.H. Khalaf evidently intended the period of months that preceded the letter, that is, probably some time after the beginning of 1137. The whole affair is summarized in the text of our letter, II, 51, where it is noted that the power of attorney was issued ‘last year’ (line 29).

More specific information on the time can be found in sec. C, where we read of the armed struggle between the two sultans who ruled Yemen, which Khalaf briefly described in II, 48. A chronicle written several years later describes the conflict at length. Aden was ruled and its revenues shared by two cousins, ‘Alī b. Abu ’l-Ghārāt, whose fortress was the al-Khaḍrā’ castle,⁴ and the *Dā’ī* (Fatimid chief propagandist of Yemen) Saba’ b. Abū Su‘ūd, who controlled the gates to the city. Of ‘Alī’s deputies it was reported:

[They] stretched forth their hands oppressively over the people. They created disorder and disturbance in the city... All who looked to him [Saba’] for protection were ill-treated and oppressed, the followers of ‘Alī being the more powerful party. The Dā’y bore his injuries in silence, but when his patience seemed likely to lead to the extinction of his authority, he determined upon an open struggle with his enemies. He appointed his deputy, the Sheykh as-Sa’īd al-Muwaffāq Bilāl son of Jarīr,⁵ over Aden, and ordered him to stir up the people, and to promote war in the city... The war at az-Za‘āzi’... endured for two years... The Dā’y Saba died at Aden, seven months after his conquest of az-Za‘āzi’... The same day on which he [Bilāl] took al-Khaḍrā, the Dā’y captured the city of az-Za‘āzi’... The Dā’y Saba entered Aden, but as we have stated, he lived in it for only seven months... His death occurred in A.H. 533...⁶

The year 533 A.H. corresponds to September 8, 1138–August 27, 1139, and its beginning serves as a *terminus ad quo* for our document, which mentions Saba’s death in line 19, where the description impresses one that this was also a fairly recent event. Taking the above data into consideration

⁴ See the introduction to II, 46 and page 439, n. 10.

⁵ His freedman (*mawlā*) and Maḍmūn’s partner in many business ventures. For his titles, see 362, n. 13.

⁶ Kay, *Yaman*, 68 ff.; cf. 159, 272. The chronicler ‘Umāra’s informants were Bilāl and Muḥammad b. Saba’. Also see the remarks in the introduction to II, 46.

(see also line 6), we can reasonably conclude that our document was written in the fall of 1138.

Khalaf's brief account of the struggle between the two sultans contains little new information on the conflict, though his remarks concerning the destruction of the al-Khaḍrā' castle are certainly noteworthy. But because of his perspective, the eyewitness account of a resident trader provided by the Geniza is a valuable addition to the historian's record. Unlike the latter, Khalaf emphasizes the suffering of Aden's population: the reign of terror, houses burnt and warehouses plundered. His remarks in II, 48, lines 10–12, complement this: "...the two sultans fought each other. The inhabitants of the city were very frightened, and there were robbery and plunder (*nabb*) in the city."

I assume that the complaint in paragraph B of II, 51 (line 7), concerning the 'oppression at the hands of the rulers' is also to be understood against the background of the conflict between the two sultans. The Hebrew *ḥāmās*, 'oppression,' conveys violence and robbery. This is likely to be an allusion not only to the exorbitantly high taxes demanded by the sultans, but to the high-handed tactics used by the combatants to finance their struggle. As the chronicler 'Umāra informs us:

Saba expended upon the war... three hundred thousand dinārs. His means were then exhausted, and he borrowed money from the merchants of Aden who supported his cause.⁷

Whether or not the 'loan' was voluntary in theory, in practice the merchants obviously felt compelled to make their resources available to the sultan who expected their support.

Despite 'Umāra's remarks on how Saba' took advantage of the wealth of the merchants to finance his campaign, Khalaf identified 'Alī as the oppressor and he thanked God for Saba's victory (lines 17–18). Conflict between the two cousins may have been a recurring event. See the discussion in the introduction to III, 32, for the continued struggle between 'Alī and Saba's son Muḥammad. In any case, the crisis, to which II, 51 and presumably II, 48, refer, seems to have no direct connection with the attack on Aden by the ruler of Kish (Qays), described in II, 46, which evidently took place at an earlier date.⁸

⁷ Kay, *Yaman*, 72.

⁸ See the introduction to II, 46. Note that despite the great detail in which II, 23 and II, 46 describe the battle with the forces of Kish, neither says a word on the pillage of Aden.

Translation

[A. Request to be at the service of the recipient]

(1–4) I [hope] to receive [from you, my lord—may] God [make permanent] your honored position!—[a letter, in which you honor me by asking me to take care of any of] your needs and propitious affa[irs⁹ . . .]

[B. Personal tragedy, government oppression and scarcity of food]

[This is to inform you of] (5) my (his excellency's servant's)¹⁰ hardships [caused by the illness of my father in the month of . . . until] (6) *his death*, which was *in the month of Adar*¹¹—*may he f[ind mercy!* And I suffered, after] (7) his death, *oppression at the hands of the rulers*.¹² And aside from that, [. . .] we have suffered (8) here in the city and the entire land of Yemen tremendously high prices (9) and scarcity.¹³ Millet¹⁴ and wheat reached here a dinar for three *mikyāls*,¹⁵ (10) and even for a smaller quantity. All

⁹ A similar phrase is used by the writer in II, 46, line 51. The request to fulfill future orders, etc., comes towards the end of the letter, at least after the large section dealing with business affairs. This suggests that the missing, upper part of the letter comprised most of its text.

¹⁰ Khalaf uses the same phrase in II, 48, lines 5 ff.; see 455, n. 10.

¹¹ Feb. 14–March 13, 1138; see the introductory remarks. Khalaf's father, Isaac b. Bundār, whose death was reported here according to the restoration in line 5, is known to have died sometime between October 20, 1137, when IV, 12, where his name appears with the blessing for the living, was written, and the Hebrew month beginning on October 14, 1140 or close to that date, when IV, 13 (see there for the date), where his name is followed for the blessing for the dead, was written. Khalaf thanks Abraham Ben Yijū for condolences expressed for the death of his father in III, 11, lines 1–2 and Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel for the same in II, 48v, line 41.

¹² Such an expression is written in Hebrew (*ḥāmās min al-shallīṭīm*, with the Arabic definite article *al-*) as a precaution, since it was assumed that the secret police could read Arabic written in Hebrew script, but did not understand Hebrew (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:271); cf. below, line 18. Cf. II, 59, line 11: *al-balad ḥāmās*, 'oppression abounds in the country'; IV, 60v, line 11: *wal-ḥāmās harbē*. On the likely background of the 'oppression' here, see the discussion above.

¹³ Arabic *qaḥṭ* also means famine.

¹⁴ Arabic *dukhn*. Wheat (*buṛr*) was scarce in some places in Yemen, and the Yemenites substituted *dukhn* for it. See Abraham Maimuni, *Responsa*, 126–29, no. 84.

¹⁵ A *mikyāl* is a dry measure, also mentioned in II, 24, line 12. According to Piamenta (*Dictionary*, 441, 388), it is equivalent to either one or two *thummas*, viz., eighths of a *qadah*, while the *qadah* held approximately 36 liters. Three *mikyāls* would thus be equivalent to either approximately 13.5 liters or 27 liters. The usual measure for wheat was the *irdabb*, which held some 90 liters (it weighed some 70 kg.; see the detailed discussion in Ashtor, "Weights," 479–80; cf. Gil, "Masse," 168, according to whom an *irdabb* weighed ca. 130 kg.; see II, 58, margin). Three *mikyāls* were thus slightly less than a sixth or third

of the foodstuffs are costly, from the first to (11) the last. May God, the Exalted, make the outcome of all these (12) matters good!

[C. Hostilities between the sultans and pillage of the city]

The land has again become frightful¹⁶ now (13) for us, because of Sultan 'Alī b. Abu 'l-[Ghārā]t, since (14) Sultan Saba' waged war with him and too[k...] (15) and destroyed al-Khaḍrā', which was his ('Alī's) stronghold [...He] (16) left it only after extreme hardship¹⁷ [...which included...] (17) and burning houses and plundering warehouses. Thank God, w[ho saved (?)] (18) the land. He ('Alī) had been a great *oppressor* of the people.¹⁸ The (19) Sultan Saba' died shortly after this.¹⁹ And the land is still frightful. (20) We pray that God, the Exalted, make the outcome good.

[D. Reclaiming assets after death of a partner]

I sent (21) with Abu 'l-Yumn²⁰ a shipment to you and to *the late*²¹ Abū (22) 'Imrān b. Nufay'. You, my lord, happened to travel,²² with the protection (23) of God,²³ and Abū 'Imrān passed away. And the condition of my lord al-Ḥalabī²⁴ [...] nor (24) what he had with him and that with which he transacted, by God's de[cree].²⁵ All of this is because of my bad

an *irdabb*. As Goitein (*Med. Soc.*, 4:239, 244) has demonstrated, the cost of an *irdabb* of wheat fluctuated widely above and below one dinar, and in times of scarcity two dinars or so was fairly common. (According to al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz*, 3:140, in 1129 prices in Cairo were particularly high and an *irdabb* of wheat cost one dinar.) This suggests that here the *mikyāl* was equivalent to two *thumnas*.

¹⁶ Arabic *mukhīfa*, also in line 19.

¹⁷ Arabic *ba'd ṣa'ūba 'aẓīma*. Cf. Kay, *Yaman*, 159, "He (Saba) wrested Aden from his ('Alī's) hands, after the infliction of much suffering," etc. (117 in the Arabic text: *ba'd muqāsāt*).

¹⁸ Arabic *'alā al-nās nōgēs* (the last word is Hebrew; cf. above, line 7). Cf. Kay, *Yaman*, 51 in the Arabic text: *ẓulm al-nās*.

¹⁹ Arabic *'aqība dhālīka*, lit., 'on the heels of this.' Wehr, *Dictionary*, 626, translates *'aqība* 'immediately after, subsequent to,' but as noted above, Saba' died seven months after his victory over 'Alī.

²⁰ Abu 'l-Yumn al-Maḥallī (from Maḥalla, Egypt) is also mentioned in II, 47, line 16. As noted above, according to IV, 12, merchandise was also sent with Abū Zikrī al-Ṣā'igh.

²¹ Hebrew *ḥay*; see 394, n. 31.

²² Arabic *fā-wāfā mawlāyā musāfir*. Cf. Maimonides, *Responsa*, 1:50, no. 34: *ittafaqa li-akbūhā (!) sāfara*.

²³ Arabic *fī dā'at* (= *wadā'at*) *allah*. See Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:792 (*wadī'a*).

²⁴ The word is corrected and the decipherment doubtful.

²⁵ The decipherment of the last sentence and its translation are uncertain.

(25) luck.²⁶ Then the man die[d].²⁷ I received a letter from Sheikh Abū (26) Zikrī, who wrote that in a court session²⁸ I, your servant, obtained (was awarded) seventy-seven (27) dinars minus one sixth. Perhaps this is one half of the (value of the) goods. But, (28) thank God, the Exalted, whatever was obtained from it is profit.²⁹ (29) Last year I wrote a power of attorney to the illustrious Sheikh (31) Abū Zikrī,³⁰ who acts in kindness to me and all [our comrades], (32) because of his esprit de corps, generosity³¹ and virtue.³²

[E. Closing greetings]

Please accept for [your] esteem[med self...] (32) best wishes for your well-being.[...] [Margin] [...] Your s[ervants] my children, all of them, greet your excellency with best wishes for your well-being.}

²⁶ Arabic *sū' qismī* ('my bad fate'). Here *qism* = *qisma*. In the parallel passage in IV, 12, line 25, Khalaf writes, *wa-kull dhālika li-sū' bakhtī wa-qillat qismī*, 'and all of this is because of my bad luck and ill fate.' These attributions of calamities (including others') to one's ill fate can be added to the discussion of responses to challenges and bad times in the Geniza found in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:45 ff. Also relevant are II, 2*v*, line 10; II, 61, line 34; III, 57, lines 16–17.

²⁷ Perhaps the individual named in line 23.

²⁸ Arabic *fī mawḍi' bēt dīn*.

²⁹ Even though he realized only half of his investment, the writer considers anything salvaged to be pure profit. Such statements are found elsewhere, e.g., III, 9, line 19.

³⁰ A power of attorney was sent to Abū Zikrī Kohen to recover Khalaf's assets. See the discussion above.

³¹ Arabic *nakhwa*. For this virtue in the Geniza papers, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:193–94.

³² Arabic *muruwwa*. For this virtue in the Geniza papers and its various shades of meaning, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:191–93. Khalaf does not request here the addressee's assistance, as he did in IV, 12, when writing Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, but the implication is evident.}

II, 52 *Letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to Egypt*

Aden {ca. 1130–39}

Bodl. MS. Heb. e. 98, fol. 67

Khalaf requests the delivery of three letters and consignments to be delivered to India travelers in Cairo and expresses his loyalty to the Head of the Jews residing there.

{The three traders named in this small fragment from the end of a letter, written in Khalaf's handwriting and consisting of 12 lines, are Abū Zikrī,¹ Abraham al-'Akāwī (from Akko)² and Musallam al-Ka'kī.³ The head of the Yeshiva to whom Khalaf expresses his devotion ('love') was undoubtedly Maṣliāh, who served in that capacity until 1139. Cf. II, 54, where Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel informs Maṣliāh of Khalaf's love and devotion.}

¹ {I assume this is Abū Zikrī Kohen, the representative of the merchants in Fustat.

² Also mentioned in II, 49, line 23.

³ See on him II, 24, line 27.}

II, 53 *Letter of Thanks from Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh to Khalaf b. Isaac*

Fustat {ca. 1120's}

Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 2 (Cat. 2805), fol. 16

Huge letter of thanks to Khalaf {addressed with the Hebrew form of his name Ḥalfon} b. Isaac, Aden, by the court clerk Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh, Fustat, for sending him as a gift a satchel containing one *mann* of *jawza* (nutmeg) and green *bisbāsa* (mace). These two spices {and medicinal substances} come from one tree, the first from the fruit's pit and the second from its hard shell, and were therefore included in one shipment.¹ For some reason the original of the letter is preserved here. It is very stylish and contains much Babylonian vocalization.² Most of the letter is written in florid Hebrew, and it emphasizes that the gifts are especially valued, because of the regularity, with which they were sent. It is also noted that Khalaf b. Isaac's father, who was alive at the time of the writing³ and to whom greetings were sent, was also a regular benefactor. This letter is several years older than II, 54, because here the Adenese donor's honorary title is still 'Delight of the Congregations,' while in the letter of thanks from the Yeshiva (II, 54) and the report on the events in Aden in 1132 {ca. 1131} (IV, 5), he is already called 'Splendor of the Scholars.' The latter title was bestowed on Khalaf only after the Head of the Yeshiva learned from his agent Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, 'Beloved of the Yeshiva,' that the donor was also learned man.⁴

{Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh thanks Khalaf (Ḥalfon) b. Isaac for the gifts delivered by the illustrious India trader and communal figure Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, who also delivered the gifts sent by Maḏmūn b. Ḥasan

¹ {For *jawza* and *bisbāsa*, see 382, n. 25 and n. 26.

² In other words, the exquisite execution, including vocalization, of this letter, intended to be sent to Aden, proves that it is the original and not a copy or draft. As such it is odd that it was preserved in the Geniza. The notation, in another script, on verso, 'Ibn al-Qaṭā'if, Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh's family name, suggests that the letter in fact was delivered to Aden, where the notation may have been added for filing purposes or the like. (Less probable is that the letter is a draft or copy retained in Fustat and later filed by someone other than the writer.) If so, the question, which requires further investigation, seems to be how this and other letters sent from Egypt to Yemen (and elsewhere) found their way back to Egypt and to the Geniza. Cf., e.g., I, 14 and II, 68; page 522, n. 1.

³ According to II, 51, line 6, he died in 1138, the last year of Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh's activity.}

⁴ Based on the brief description in the New List and on Goitein, *Yemenites*, 27. {For the date of IV, 5, see the Introduction to chap. 4. The citation of this document, line 16, in Goitein, "Partnerships," 321, 333, n. 15, is obviously an error, and the reference is omitted in id., *Med. Soc.*, 1:173, 442, n. 16.

for Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh, II, 33–34, and the gift for the Yeshiva, for which thanks are sent in II, 54. The honorary titles, which Ḥalfon adds to the names of Khalaf and his father, Isaac b. Bundār, were noted by him in II, 11b. The letter is written in Hebrew, mainly in rhymed prose, and in Arabic, and it can be compared to Ḥalfon's even more elaborate letter of thanks to Khalaf's uncle, Abraham b. Bundār, II, 11a. As noted by Goitein this exuberant letter of thanks proves Ḥalfon to be a master of Hebrew epistolography.⁵

⁵ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:626, n. 39.}

II, 54 *Letters from the Yeshiva in Egypt to Khalaf b. Isaac and Joseph b. Abraham, Aden*

{Cairo, ca. 1132}

ENA 3363, fs. 1–2

Partial publication in Mann, *Jews*, 2:337.

Drafts of letters of thanks, mostly in rhymed prose, to Khalaf {addressed with the Hebrew form of his name: Ḥalfon} (almost complete) and his cousin Joseph (beginning only), from the Academy in Cairo. Mann (*Jews*, 2:337) published part of the letter to Ḥalfon b. Isaac {and part of the letter to Joseph b. Abraham, though Mann did not mention his name}. The letter is written in Hebrew in very florid style. It contains only two words in Arabic *al-mann al-ʿūd*. Mann translated this: ‘the usual donation,’ but the words mean: a *mann*, that is two *ratls* (pounds), of aromatic wood. As we have seen, this was a common form of a gift, because the *ʿūd* was a readily marketable commodity, and as such was equivalent to cash. The letter expresses thanks not only for the contribution but also for Ḥalfon b. Isaac’s loyalty to the Academy: “your love of the Yeshiva and fondness for our office,” an attitude with which we are familiar from other sources.¹

{The document is a large bifolium, on which were written a draft of letters of thanks to Khalaf b. Isaac and to Joseph b. Abraham, Aden, for their gifts to the Palestinian Academy, then located in Cairo, Egypt. The letters are issued from the ‘Gate of the Academy,’ namely in the name of its Head, the Gaon. The style is somewhat reminiscent of the Scribe of the Academy’s letter to Joseph in II, 45. But the hands are distinct.

Aromatic wood (*ʿūd*) was used for fumigation after meals. This was a costly commodity imported from the Far East, and the wealthy Jewish traders of Yemen often sent some as a gift to the community leaders of Egyptian Jewry.² In II, 33, side b, lines 16–17, we read that Maḏmūn b. Japheth sent a *mann* of aromatic wood with the illustrious India trader and community leader Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, as a gift for the Head

¹ {Based on Goitein, *Yemenites*, 27.

² Fumigation: see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:137–38. According to Ibn Mujāwir, in the Abbāsid period a *mann* of *ʿūd* sold in Aden for six dinars, but the customs and various port costs for importing it came to fifteen dinars! See Smith, *Studies*, chap. 11, 209. For the medicinal faculties of aromatic wood (*ʿūd*), see Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 170; Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 208.

of the Academy in Cairo Maṣliaḥ ha-Kohen (1127–39). Khalaf instructed Ḥalfon in II, 47 (ca. 1131), to deliver two *manns* of aromatic wood, one to Ḥalfon's brother Eli, the President of the Court in Cairo, the other to 'our lord,' undoubtedly Maṣliaḥ. The aromatic wood for which our letter lavishes praise and thanks to Khalaf was sent by Ḥalfon as well, and it may refer to the same gift mentioned in II, 47.

Khalaf is addressed with the honorary titles bestowed on him by the Academy, Splendor of the Scholars (*hadar ha-talmidim*) and Favorite of the Academy (*reṣūy ha-yeshivā*),³ rather than his title used by Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh in the preceding letter, Delight of the Congregations. Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel's titles are Magnificence of the Levites (*hōd ha-lewiyim*) and Beloved of the Academy (*ahiv ha-yeshivā*). The writer notes that Ḥalfon praised Khalaf for his loyalty to the Academy and his acceptance of the authority of its Head.

While, as noted above, only the beginning of the letter to Joseph is preserved in this document, it appears to be written in a more restrained and less lavish tone of praise. This may reflect the size of his gift or the role that Joseph played in Yemenite Jewry's aborted revolt against Maṣliaḥ's authority ca. 1131.⁴

³ Though the Hebrew title (for this and other *rāṣūys*, see Mann, *Jews*, 1:279) is an appropriate embellishment of *rāṣūy* in Deut. 33:24 and Esther 10:3, it probably is a calque of the Arabic *radī*, as in *radī al-dīn* (Favorite or Well-pleasing of the Faith).

⁴ For which, see Goitein, *Yemenites*, 58 ff. and the Introduction to chap. 4.}

II, H. *Maḥrūz b. Jacob, Son of Maḍmūn's Paternal Aunt**II, 55 *Letter from Maḥrūz to Abū Zikrī Kohen, Broach*

Mangalore, India, ca. 1145 {ca. 1145–48}

Bodl. MS. Heb. b. 11 (Cat. 2874, no. 21), fol. 22

Ed. Goitein, *Yemenites*, 100–5. The following translation with accompanying introductory remarks and notes is based on Goitein, *Letters*, 62–65. A photograph of recto, a description and partial translation appear in Goitein, “India-Merchants,” 37, where the shelf mark is not noted.

A representative of the merchants in the capital of Egypt, stuck in Broach, north of Bombay, after having been captured by pirates, is invited by his brother-in-law in Mangalore, southern India, to join him in his own ship on the way back to Aden.

The writer of this letter, Maḥrūz b. Jacob, was a *nākhudā*, or shipowner, who commuted in his own boat between Aden and India. Occasionally we find him in the capital of Egypt, where his sister was married to the recipient of this letter, Judah b. Joseph ha-Kohen, representative of the merchants there. Judah's own sister was married to Maḍmūn, representative of the merchants in Aden (see page 371). Thus we see that these India traders bolstered their economic positions by carefully arranged family bonds.

Judah b. Joseph ha-Kohen was the grandson of his namesake, the Rāv, or Master {Rabbi}, who was so prominent in the Jewish community of Egypt during the second half of the eleventh century. In more elaborate addresses he, like his grandfather, is called ‘Scion of the Gaons,’ and, like the latter, he himself signs documents with the title ‘Scion of Yehōseph (same as Joseph), the righteous priest,’ referring to the first member of the family, who, after emigrating from Baghdad to Jerusalem, became president of the High Court there at the end of the tenth century.¹ Such transitions from religious and legal to commercial leadership and vice versa were natural to the bourgeois society of the

* {For Maḥrūz, see Introduction IIB1. The chronological order of the following documents is reversed, approximately: II, 60, II, 59, II, 58, II, 56–57, II, 55.

¹ See Goitein, “*Ha-Rav*”; id., “Additions.” Gil, *Palestine*, 1:223 challenged Goitein's conclusion that Abū Zikrī Judah b. Joseph ha-Kohen was the grandson of the Rāv, but he seems to have been unfamiliar with the latter's study: “Additions.”}

medieval Middle East and common to the three monotheistic religious communities.²

{The seizure by pirates of the ship in which Judah, a.k.a. Abū Zikrī Kohen, traveled near Tāna, in northern India, calls to mind the rampant piracy outside that port reported by Marco Polo a century and a half later. According to him, there “corsairs have a covenant with the king that he shall get all the horses they capture, and all other plunder shall remain with them.”³

Writing was a difficult task for Maḥrūz (see page 488), which is why others wrote most of his letters for him. Abraham Ben Yijū, to whom Maḥmūn had recommended Maḥrūz in II, 30, ca. 1136, wrote this letter. Ben Yijū is known to have been in India until the summer of 1139 and then from 1145–49; see page 648. The apparent reference to the sinking of al-Fawfalī’s ship (line 17) suggests that this letter was written during the second period of Ben Yijū’s stay in India, but III, 9 written to Ben Yijū while still in India, probably refers to al-Fawfalī (verso, lines 1–2), at a later time; see the introduction to that document (588–89). This suggests that our letter was written ca. 1145–48. The reconstruction will require re-evaluation as the research on Abū Zikrī Kohen’s activities progresses. No. II, 55 seems to have been written after II, 56–57; see the note to line 17.}

Translation

[A. Opening of letter; on Abū Zikrī’s captivity by pirates and release]

(1) *In Your Name, O Merciful.*

(2) *Your hand shall prevail over your foes, and all your enemies shall be cut down.*⁴

(3) I am writing to you, my lord and master, my chief, the illustrious elder—(4) may God prolong your life and make permanent your prominent position, (5) may He be for you and with you and guard you in all your affairs! (6) I am writing to you out of a strong longing—may God make us (7) meet together presently {alt. tr.: soon} in the best circum-

² India with its castes might have been different.

³ {See Chakravarti, “Tana,” 176.}

⁴ Mic. 5:8, intended as a good wish for {protection from} the pirates. {As noted II, 13, line 1, the verse appears at the tops of several letters; it is not associated specifically with protection from pirates, the matter dealt with here in the continuation.}

stances in His favor and bounty, (8) God willing, for it is up to Him and it is in His power alone!

(9) I wish to inform you, my lord, that I had previously written to you (10) at Tāna.⁵ Meanwhile, the boat escorting the ship arrived, (11) and its soldiers told us that the ship (12) in which your excellency, my lord, traveled had been seized by pirates,⁶ (13) and I was very sad about this. But afterwards I praised God (14) and thanked Him, when I heard that your life was saved {lit., 'I thanked Him for the safety of (your) life'.⁷ *Let them praise the Lord for His steadfast love.*⁸ (15) Everything can be replaced except life.⁹ I would indeed like to mention to you, (16) my lord, that your servant had a large shipment in the boat of (17) Fōfalī {read: al-Fawfalī} ('Betel nut merchant'), then God ordained what happened;¹⁰ in the end, (18) however, God compensated me—praise and thanks to Him! Likewise, my lord, (19) do not be sad. God will replace your loss to you soon; you will live, God willing, (20) and God will compensate you many times.¹¹

⁵ Spelled Thana today, "21 miles northeast of Bombay city," Maqbul Ahmad, *India*, 106, and passim (see index). This and the following Indian localities occur also in other Geniza letters. {Since the diacritic is omitted more often than not, the Hebrew letter *t* also represents *th*, and the name may have been pronounced Thāna. Besides this letter, Tāna is also mentioned in VI, 30, line 8. On this important commercial entrepôt, see Chakravarti, "Tana," 165–67.}

⁶ A smaller vessel serving as a lifeboat and carrying soldiers usually escorted a large, ocean-going ship that carried the freight and passengers. The soldiers stationed on it for the protection of the ship, on which Judah traveled, made off as soon as the pirates made their appearance. {The events could be reconstructed other ways of course, e.g., the sailors jettisoned much of the ship's cargo (see the continuation) in order to make it easier to flee from the pirates; the latter temporarily captured the ship, but were overpowered by the soldiers, who traveled in the smaller boat. The smaller vessel is called a *jalba*, which is common in the Red Sea, but as noted by Margariti, "Aden," 248, seems to appear in the Indian Ocean only here. The use of this term by Maḥrūz might reflect his language rather than local usage; see below the note to line 33. Margariti questions whether this vessel served as a lifeboat. See 341, n. 26.

⁷ Arabic *wa-shakartuhu 'alā salāmat al-ruh*. 'When I heard' is Goitein's explanatory addition to the translation. We need not infer from this that Maḥrūz had first thought that Abū Zikrī had been captured, for example, and was later informed of his safety. There is no evidence that Indian Ocean pirates took captives; see pages 162–63.}

⁸ Ps. 107:8. Usually said on such occasions.

⁹ {See the discussion in pages 161–62.}

¹⁰ Everything was lost when the ship sank. {I assume that these losses caused the gloom, which induced Maḥrūz to sail back to India from Aden, rather than return to Egypt, of which he writes in II, 56–57, lines 21–23. If so, the compensation that God gave him for his losses, which he mentions in the continuation here, was the profits he made on that return trip, and accordingly, II, 55 was written after II, 56–67.

¹¹ For the goods lost, when the pirates captured the ship.

[B. Appeal to Abū Zikrī to join Maḥrūz in Mangalore for return trip to Aden]

Your servant had thought (21) that your honor my lord was in Tāna, and I had previously sent (22) letters to the *nākhudā* Tinbū, advising him to pay to my lord (23) 21 [or: as much as 20] *mithqāls*¹² (Egyptian dinars) or more. Afterwards, however, (24) my lord the Sheikh Abu 'l-Qāsim Ibn Qaṭṭān ('Dealer in cotton')¹³ came to Mangalore. (25) I inquired about you, (26) and he told me that your excellency was in Broach.¹⁴ (27) Under all circumstances, please come quickly to Mangalore (28) and do not tarry, for I am waiting here {alt. tr.: delayed} in Mangalore (29) and—God willing—we {alt. tr.: I} shall embark on our {alt. tr.: my} way home¹⁵ as soon as possible {alt. tr.: at the beginning of the season.¹⁶ <<I wanted you to know this.>>}¹⁷ (30) It is better for you to travel from Mangalore with me (31) than to travel in the ships of foreign {alt. tr.: other} people. Please remember (32) that there is no difference between us, my money is yours; it is just the same. (33) The boats¹⁸

¹² Arabic *mithqāl wa-ʿisbrīn*. The translation in brackets is Goitein's revision, in his later, Hebrew edition. Following Goitein, *Palestinian Jewry*, 339, n. 6, translate: 'some 20.'

¹³ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:170, defines *qaṭṭān*, 'a maker of or trader in cotton' and notes that he did not find any examples of a Jewish *qaṭṭān*. In 404, n. 149, he cites our document as an example of a Muslim *qaṭṭān*. Abu 'l-Qāsim's name identifies him as a Muslim; see Goitein, *ibid.*, 2:605, n. 19. But Abū Sa'd b. Qaṭṭān (as I read his name—without aleph), in IV, 58v, line 46, might have been a Jew; see the note there. The fact that in both cases Qaṭṭān is written without the def. art. *al-* suggests that it functions as a proper name. Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmā'*, 2189, brings three different names with these consonants, Qaṭṭān, Quṭṭān, Qiṭān, and only for the first lists 'trader in cotton' as one of the definitions. See further n. 24.}

¹⁴ About four days' travel north of Tāna; see Maqbul Ahmad, *India*, 102.

¹⁵ {Arabic *anā* [...] *nakhruj*. As the pronoun proves, the writer intended the singular, and Goitein translated 'I' in the Hebrew edition. For use of the *nqtl* form for 1st pers. sg. imperf., see 743, n. 5. We do not know if Maḥrūz dictated this dialectical form or Ben Yijū wrote it on his own. For *kharaj* in the sense of returning home from the Indian Ocean (cf. line 33), see 372, n. 4.

¹⁶ Arabic *awwal al-zamān*, also in lines 33, 36; see 316, n. 23.

¹⁷ I assume that this marginal addition, not copied by Goitein, belongs here.}

¹⁸ Arabic *maṭāyā* {also in line 35, where it is translated 'vessels'}, a general word for mounts, riding animals, means of locomotion. The word may mean also carts drawn by oxen. The Middle East, throughout the Islamic period, was practically unfamiliar with any form of carriages and therefore had no word for them; see Rodinson, "*Ajala*." Carts drawn by oxen were common in India, and here possibly reference is made to convoys of them setting out at fixed periods. But see VII, 50, line 5. {Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 1:275 (468, n. 3), in reference to II, 55: "Carriages . . . are nowhere referred to in the Geniza papers with the possible exception of India (where they were drawn by oxen)." No. VII, 50, probably sent from Aden to Qūṣ in Upper Egypt, appears in Goitein, *Letters*, 67, where

start presently {alt. tr.: set out¹⁹ at the beginning of the season} from your place, (34) from Kanbāyat,²⁰ and from Tāna; please set out immediately (35) so that you reach Mangalore with the vessels, which (36) will soon be arriving {alt. tr.: make every possible effort to reach Mangalore in the *maṭiyya* vessels, which will be arriving at the beginning of the season} in Malibārāt,²¹ Kayākannūr {read: Fāknūr},²² (37) and Mangalore, God willing. If, my lord, you need (38) any gold, please take it on my account from the *nākhudā* Tinbū, (39) for he is staying in Tāna,²³ and between him and me there are bonds of inseparable (40) friendship and brotherhood.²⁴

maṭiyya is translated 'mount' (in quotation marks), and in note 4: "must denote here a type of boat or its name... [II, 55, line 33] refers to inland India, but here too, boats of a local type could be intended." Goitein, *Yemenites*, 103, n. 18, concludes that the term refers to a type of boat, probably small, which sailed between the western coast ports of India. That a boat is intended is also implied by the expression 'the beginning of the season,' as I translated. *Maṭiyya* (sg.), *maṭāyā* also occurs in II, 27, line 7, II, 31, line 16 (in both cases the term was not deciphered by Goitein), concerning transport of goods (from the west) to Aden. It follows that the term refers to some type of (small) boat used on both sides of the Indian Ocean. On the other hand, as we have seen, *jalba* in line 10, is common in the Red Sea but not in the Indian Ocean (see the note to line 12). Accordingly, it is possible that both of these terms for vessels in II, 55 reflect the Adenese speech of Maḥruz rather than local usage.

¹⁹ Arabic *takhruj*. For *kharaj*, see the note to line 29.}

²⁰ Present day Cambay on the gulf with the same name, still north of Broach.

²¹ Malibār or Manibār is Malabar, but meaning both a region and a place on the southwestern coast of India. {Perhaps vocalize Mulaybārāt; see Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 450.}

²² Kayākannār, explained by Professor A. L. Basham as 'Lesser Cannanore,' *kay* meaning 'lesser' in Tamil, the language spoken in those parts. Not found in any other Geniza paper. {Goitein, "India-Merchants," 37, combined the name with the preceding *l*, which indicates direction, and read 'Lakiyaknor.' The correct reading is Fāknūr/Fākanūr, a place on the Malabar coast north of Mangalore, the traditional capital of Tuḷuva; see Nainar, *Arab Geographers*, 33–34; Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 200, 456 (where the correct spelling Fāknūr, with long *ā* both in English and Arabic appears); Digby, "Maritime Trade," 154: "Bacanore (Fakanor) in Canara"; Chakravarti, "Coastal Trade," 112: "present Barkur up the Sitanadi river." After I deciphered the word here, I also identified the toponym on II, 22*v*; see the introduction to II, 21–24. Fāknūr/Fākanūr furthermore appears four times in VII, 70 (the last document added by Goitein to the India Book), published posthumously: Goitein, "Portrait"; on Fāknūr, see *ibid.*, 459, nn. 46, 51 (which is to be corrected concerning the spelling in Tibbetts).

²³ Tāna. The text has T(h)āt(h)na.}

²⁴ Tinbū, apparently a Hindu. Abu 'l-Qāsim, who was mentioned before (line 24) in deferential terms, was a Muslim. {See the note to line 24.

[C. Pepper sent in Maḍmūn's ship]

(41) You will be pleased to know,²⁵ my lord, that a sum in favor (42) of your excellency remained with me on account {alt. tr.: from the proceeds} of the silk. (43) With it I bought twelve [...], and sixteen large [*bahārs*] {read: twelve and a half large *bahārs*}²⁶ pepper for you, (44) and I dispatched this for you under God's protection {read: for you this year}²⁷ from Mangalore (45) with the 'Blessed' ship—may God ordain her safety!²⁸

[D. Summary and greetings]

[Verso] (1) Attached to this letter, (2) is another one in Arabic characters of the same content as this (3) letter; please take notice of this.²⁹ And again, my lord, do not take to (4) heart what you have lost; you have, my lord, (5) praise be to God, plenty to have recourse to and to be compensated with. (6) When life is saved, nothing else matters. {alt tr.: When one is alive and well, everything else can be replaced.}³⁰ (7) {Add: By God,} nor do I need to urge you again to come to (8) Mangalore.

Accept, my lord, profuse regards for your esteemed self (9) and convey profuse regards to the elder Abu Sa'd.

(10) The writer of these lines,³¹ Abraham Ben Yijū, conveys to your excellency (11) copious regards, and those who attend the writing of this

²⁵ Arabic *alladhī tuḥibbu 'ilmahu*. This phrase is repeated in the letters of Ben Yijū (III, 39, line 6, III, 41, line 5), who penned this letter, and obviously reflects his wording.}

²⁶ The terms 'large' and 'small' were applied to the *bahār*, usually 300 pounds in our papers. {See 322, n. 4.}

²⁷ As I discovered in Oxford in September 2001, a small piece of the manuscript had been misplaced here, which led to Goitein's erroneous reading of the text. From the text, whose translation I have now supplied, we can deduce that Maḥrūz stayed in India for more than one year.}

²⁸ The 'Blessed' {*al-Mubārak*} belonged to Maḍmūn of Aden (see II, 32) and operated between Aden and Mangalore. See II, 20 {line 31;} verso, lines 5–6. {The situation is rather interesting: An Egyptian Jewish trader, doing business in northern India, orders pepper to be shipped to Aden from an Adenese Jewish trader and shipowner, doing business in southern India, who, rather than waiting for the sailing of his own ship, sends it in the ship of a third Jewish trader from Aden. All three had familial and business ties.}

²⁹ See below, n. 31, according to which the letter written in Arabic characters may have been intended for presentation by Abū Zikrī to Tinbū or others as a letter of introduction or recommendation.

³⁰ The writer repeats his remarks on recto, lines 15–20.}

³¹ The letter is a beautiful example of Abraham Yijū's calligraphy. The letter in Arabic characters probably was written by Maḥrūz himself and was destined to be shown,

letter do the same {read: Maymūn, who was present at the writing of this letter, extends greetings}.³²

(12) *May the well-being of my lord increase indefinitely and never decrease!*

[E. Address]

To be delivered to my esteemed lord, the light of my eyes, his honor, our master and lord Judah ha-Kohen, the wise and discerning, the son of his honor, great and holy master and lord Joseph ha-Kohen—may his soul be satiated with pleasures in the Gardens {read: garden} of Eden³³ until he will be quickened at the end of the days!

From his servant Maḥrūz b. Jacob—may he rest in Eden!

Given in trust {alt. tr.: 'Steadfast faithfulness'} (i.e., no fees for delivery).³⁴

if necessary, to his non-Jewish business friends, especially Tinbū. The Hindu shipowner certainly knew Arabic. {Cf. Margariti, "Aden," 255, who notes that this shows that Arabic had become the lingua franca of the western Indian Ocean. Maḥrūz probably manifested his poor penmanship not only in Hebrew script but also in Arabic script, and I assume that Ben Yijū wrote that letter for him as well.

³² For *ḥaḍar al-kitāb mimman yakhuṣṣ bil-salām*, I read *ḥaḍar al-kitāb maymūn*, etc. Compare the wording, e.g., in II, 67, margin, lines 4–5; IV, 58, margin at top of page, lines 20–21, in both of which a personal name appears here. This Maymūn is likely to be the same as 'Sheikh Maymūn, the Muslim, the prominent merchant,' with whom Joseph b. Abraham sends goods to Ben Yijū to Mangalore in Maḥrūz's ship (page 564).

³³ Based on the Aramaic Targum to Ezek. 28:13 (on which, see Kasher, "Ezekiel 28:13–19"), this rare blessing for the dead is an interesting addition to the sources on life after death in the Geniza, discussed in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:182 ff., 406 ff., etc. Goitein read *gīnātā*, 'gardens,' for *gīnetā* (sg.).

³⁴ See page 257, n. 13.}

II, 56–57 *Letter from Maḥrūz to Sulaymān b. Abū Zikrī Kohēn before Sailing Back to India*

Aden {ca. 1137–47}

II, 56. T6 16.345

II, 57. BL Or. 5542, f. 17

Letter from Aden by Maḥrūz, shortly after his arrival from India, on the day he embarked to return there, to his nephew Sulaymān, Abū Zikrī Kohēn's son. By chance the letter has been preserved in two complete copies,¹ both written for Maḥrūz by the same clerk. Among other things, the writer mentions in it that he had sent various presents, or commodities ordered, with a person traveling from Aden to Cairo {Fustat}, while he had brought for the addressee sixty manns of *ṭabāshūr* (crystals extracted from bamboos), which he had delivered to the representative of the merchants in Aden, Maḍmūn, *yunfidhuhā fi'l-kārim ma'a man yarā* "in order to forward it 'in the Kārim' with whomever he found suitable."²

{Maḥrūz's first trip to India was probably ca. 1136; see 367. No. 56–57 seems to have been written before II, 55; see the note to line 22. The date is fixed accordingly ca. 1137–47, probably in the latter part of that period.}

{Translation

[A. Salutation]

In Your Name, O Merciful.

(1) The letter of your excellency arrived, my lord, the illustrious sheikh. May God prolong (2) your life and make permanent your well-being and safekeeping, your dignity³ (3) and happiness, your ascendancy, highness

¹ {More specifically, II, 56 is complete, while the first few lines and conclusion are missing in II, 57. Variants in II, 57, are mentioned in the notes below. For sending multiple copies of letters or accounts, see page 9, n. 23.

² This description was supplemented from Goitein, *Studies*, 353. On the sending of the *ṭabāshūr* in the Kārim, see below the note to line 33, where the nature of the Kārim is also discussed.

³ Arabic *zulfā*, which according to Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:599, means 'closeness to God'; but 'dignity,' for *zulfā* (without long *ā*), Hava, *Dictionary*, 294, fits the context better here. In fact, Sharoni, *Dictionary*, 683, equates *zulfā* with *zalaf*, one of whose meanings is 'position.'

and loftiness, your support and elevated station! (4) May He not deny you His superior gift of success! May He crush whoever is envious of you and destroy (5) whoever hates you and is your enemy! This (will be) with His favor and generosity,⁴ God willing.

[B. The writer's recent arrival from India and impending return there]

You will be happy (6) to know—may God make permanent your honored position!—that I arrived from India in (7) complete safety. *Let them praise the Lord for His steadfast love, etc.*⁵ I lack nothing but (8) looking at your upright appearance.⁶ May God speedily facilitate our meeting (9) in the happiest of circumstances, when achieving the most delightful hopes, (10) God willing! God, the Exalted, has already facilitated my decision to (11) return to India. May God, the Exalted, make the outcome good!⁷

[C. Delivery of a slave, other orders and gifts to the addressee]

(12) You mentioned, my lord—may God make your honored position permanent!—that the slave⁸ had arrived. (13) I, your servant,⁹ am glad that he reached you in complete safety. (14) You mentioned also the arrival of the articles that were with Sheikh (15) Nahray b. 'Allān.¹⁰ This made me happy. You had requested, my lord, a turban of (16) *lānas* silk.¹¹ I sent you an exquisite (or: delicate) turban of *lānas* silk, (17) embroidered. I also sent

⁴ No. II, 57 begins here with the word *bi-rahmatihī*, 'in His mercy,' not found in II, 56.

⁵ Ps. 107:8.

⁶ Arabic *al-rashīda* can be translated 'intelligent,' etc. In II, 57: 'but looking at you.' The same felicitous figure of speech to convey longing for the addressee of a letter appears in other documents in our collection, among them V, 20, line 5, a letter to Abū Zikrī Kohen (the father of the addressee of II, 56–57), written in Maḥrūz's hand.

⁷ No. II, 57 adds: God willing. Returning from Aden to India shortly after having arrived from there is somewhat unusual. Another example is in VII, 70; see Goitein, "Portrait," 453, where II, 56–57 is cited as a case of returning 'immediately.'

⁸ Arabic *al-'abd*. From the context, I assume that a slave, whose purchase Sulaymān had ordered from Maḥrūz, is intended.

⁹ Arabic *'abdūh*, literally, 'his servant.' Use of the same word, *'abd*, for a slave and for the writer, in consecutive lines, is typical of the ambiguous style in the Geniza letters. In some cases, an effort was made to distinguish between the two, however, as in II, 45a, line 9, where the slave is called *'abd*, and in line 10, the writer *mamlūk*.

¹⁰ See on him II, 32, line 4.

¹¹ For this kind of silk, see 307, n. 10.

another one for your father, and I wrote on (18) every side separately, the name of its owner. You (pl.) should take delivery of this from (19) Sheikh Abu 'l-Riḏā son of the boy of Sham'a.¹² May God decree his safe arrival!¹³ (20) I sent with him also a fine *Qaṣṣī* foot carpet.¹⁴

[D. Greetings and plans for coming home to Egypt, next year]

(21) I had hoped this year to travel home¹⁵ to Egypt, (22) but I was unable to come because of the state of gloom,¹⁶ which occurred. May God make (23) the outcome good! Convey my best¹⁷ wishes to your mother, (24) and tell her of my longing for her.¹⁸ God willing, I shall strive¹⁹ (25) to travel home to you²⁰ next year, at any rate, God willing. (26) Your excellency is greeted with best, profuse²¹ wishes. Convey for me (27) to the whole family my best wishes. And all our coreligionists (28) and whoever asks for us are greeted with the best, profuse wishes.

¹² Arabic *Ibn ṣabī Sham'a*. *Ṣabī* probably means freedman here. It could also mean slave or employee; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:440, no. 4–5. The name Sham'a ('Candle') is rare in Geniza documents. Another example can be found in TS NS 143, f. 5, a poem eulogizing Abu 'l-Wafā' Tamīm b. Sham'a, who died 1123, apparently in Damascus (see above, 284, n. 5).

¹³ The wish is absent in II, 57. On the other hand, at the end of line 11, the same copyist added there, 'God willing.' This suggests that the clerk took liberties in adding such pious wishes, required by good etiquette, to the letter dictated to him.

¹⁴ Arabic *qaṣṣī* is an Indian textile; see 373, n. 11. *Waṭā'*, is also used for a sleeping carpet (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:462, n. 205), and it is accordingly designated here *li-rijlik*, 'for your foot.' *Waṭā'* means 'shoe' as well; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:819. *Waṭā' li-arjulibim*, 'shoes for their feet,' appears in Maimonides, *Responsa*, 1:51, no. 34 (for the translation see J. Qāfil's note, *ib.*, 3:120). But because of the singular and the material, 'fine *Qaṣṣī* shoe(s) for your foot' would not fit here.

¹⁵ Arabic *khurūj*, also in the next line (there translated 'come') and in line 25. For this use of *kharaḡ*, *khurūj*, see 372, n. 4. In 1131/2 Maḥrūz acquired a home in Fustat: II, 60.

¹⁶ Arabic *'ubūs*. I assume that Maḥrūz alludes here to his gloom from the losses he suffered when al-Fawfalī's ship sank, of which he wrote in II, 55, lines 16–17. The compensation, which God subsequently gave him according to line 18 there, probably refers to his profits realized on the return trip to India, of which he writes in our letter. Accordingly, II, 55, was written after II, 56–57.

¹⁷ No. II, 57 adds: profuse.

¹⁸ Maḥrūz does not send greetings to Abū Zikrī Kohēn, Sulaymān's father. He was probably abroad on business at the time; see II, 55. As noted above, Sulaymān's mother was the writer's sister.

¹⁹ No. II, 57: I hope.

²⁰ Instead of 'to you,' II, 57 reads 'with them,' which may be an allusion to the merchants traveling in the Kārim, below, line 33.

²¹ This word is missing in II, 57.

[E. Postscript on unfinished business]

Sheikh Abū Naṣr²² had sent with me for your excellency a bag, in which were (30) red copper wires.²³ I sold it for seven *mithqāls*. Sheikh (31) Abū Naṣr has (for you) two *mithqāls*, the proceeds of myrrh,²⁴ which makes a total of nine *mithqāls*. (32) I purchased for you (pl.)²⁵ with them, sixty *manns* of *ṭabāshīr*.²⁶ I have already delivered it to the most illustrious (33) Sheikh Maḍmūn.²⁷ He will forward it in the Kārim with whomever he finds suitable,²⁸ (34) since I am about to travel, and I have written this letter on the very day [Margin] that I am sailing. This is for your information, my lord. Please honor me with whatever needs or services for you

²² Several Abū Naṣrs were active in the India trade. This one may have been Abū Naṣr b. Elisha or Abū Naṣr b. Abraham, both of whom had ties with Abū Zikrī Kohan and Maḥrūz; see II, 59 introduction for the former and V, 2, lines 15, for the latter. Abū Naṣr is also mentioned in Abū Zikrī's memorandum to Maḥrūz, II, 58. Here Abū Naṣr, who may have been in Yemen, shipped merchandise for Sulaymān with Maḥrūz to sell in India; see the next note.

²³ Arabic *ṣufr*. For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11. For shipping red *ṣufr* from Aden to India, cf. II, 20, line 26; II, 26, lines 11–14. For yellow and red strings (wires) shipped from Egypt to Aden, see II, 61, line 49.

²⁴ This aromatic resin was exported from Africa and Arabia (also to India; see Watt, *Commercial Products*, 400). Myrrh had medicinal faculties; see Dols, *Islamic Medicine*, 161; Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 150. In IV, 58*v*, lines 1–2, it was ordered to fill a prescription for someone sick. Myrrh is also mentioned in III, 20, line 17 (India); VII, 36*v*, line 15.

²⁵ The plural could be a polite form of address. Contrariwise, perhaps Sulaymān engaged in these ventures together with other family members or possibly with Abū Naṣr.

²⁶ Arabic *ṭabāshīr*, bamboo crystals or chalk, both imported for medicinal purposes. See Goitein, *Studies*, 353, n. 3; Dols, *Islamic Medicine*, 135, n. 37; Smith, *Studies*, chap. 10, 136, note d, and literature cited in these studies.

²⁷ Maḍmūn b. Japheth the Nagid of Yemen.

²⁸ For the translation of this line, see Goitein, *Studies*, 353. The meaning of Kārim (or Kāram), during this period, "a convoy or group of *nākhodās*, or shipowners, in whose ships merchants traveled and goods were transported" to and from India, is discussed by Goitein, *Studies*, 351–60 ("The Beginning of the Kārim Merchants and the Character of their Civilization" [the quote is from 358] and his earlier article "Kārim"). See further idem, *Yemenites*, 36–37 (our text is alluded to on 37), where it is noted that the Kārim convoy traveled together for reasons of security; see however II, 66, line 30, and page 509, n. 21. On the Kārim, see further, Labib, "Kārimī"; Serjeant, *Society*, 1:68–71; Wansbrough, Abulafia, "Asia," 437–43; "Kārim"; Meyer, *Glas*, 100–1; Rabie, "Geniza Documents," 74. Dasgupta, "Indian Merchants," 411, mistakenly places the beginning of the Kārim in the late twelfth century. Goitein notes that Braslavsky, "Jewish Trade," 137, n. 2, mistakenly read here (he cited our II, 57 as BL Or. 5542. f. 20, rather than f. 17) *fāris* for *kārim*, and took it to refer to a shipment to Persia. For letters from Aden to Egypt sent in the Kārim, see II, 67*a*, lines 10–11, and page 519.

excellency that may arise.²⁹ Your excellency is greeted with best, profuse wishes. *And abundant peace! Salvation is near.*³⁰

[F. Address]

(To) His excellency, the most illustrious sheikh, my lord Sulaymān Kohen³¹ b. Judah. May God guard his life!

(From) His servant Maḥrūz b. Jacob—*may the spirit of the Lord give him rest!*}³²

²⁹ Literally, 'whatever arises for your excellency of needs or services, honor me with them.' *Ma'a mā* seems to serve as the equivalent of *mahmā*, 'whatever.' The same usage, in similar context, can be found in II, 46 (there *ma'amā*, in one word; see 449, n. 72); III, 5*v*, line 5; III, 33, line 28.

³⁰ For this and other expressions of the urgency of messianic expectations, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:395 ff.; Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 14.

³¹ Sulaymān and his father Abū Zikrī (Judah) used Kohen (rather than ha-Kohen) as a family name.

³² Isa. 63:14.}

II, 58 *Memorandum from Abū Zikrī Kohēn to Maḥrūz*

Alexandria {ca. 1136–49}

TS 10 J 16, f. 15

Memorandum sent by Abū Zikrī Kohēn, sojourning on business in Alexandria, to his brother-in-law Maḥrūz in Fustat, who had arrived from Aden and, as in II, 56–57, was again preparing himself for a new journey to the East. The families of the two lived in one house in Fustat. The memorandum is written in the hand of a clerk.

{The memorandum is worded more or less like a regular business letter. Maḥrūz's reply might be found in the fragmentary V, 20. His first trip to India was probably ca. 1136 (see page 367). No. II, 58 can be divided into the following five sections, given below with selected translations:

A. Salutation (lines 1–4).

B. The writer's distress over his delay in Alexandria (lines 4–20).

(5) After I had written you and shipped a few commodities with Abu 'l-Riḍā (6) b. Hilāl,¹ all of the ships returned [...] and I had to (7) stay here, until I return my merchandise to the warehouse and lock it.² Then I'll come up (to Fustat),³ (8) God willing. I hope that we extricate ourselves from here this week, God willing. Don't ask, (9) my brother, what aggravation I had from the return of the ships, because I lost many (10) dues, expenditures, provisions and sizeable custom fees, from which I cannot recoup (11) one dirhem.⁴ I also shipped other merchandise to al-Mahdiyya, which came back. May God make (12) the outcome good! [...] (14) God knows how distressed I was (15) to have to stay here. I swear by these lines, were I to find a way not to sleep here (16) one night, I would not sleep here.⁵ This is for your information, my lord.

C. Purchase of wheat (lines 21-margin, 5).

(21) If the wheat in the house is depleted, buy for me two (22) or three dinars worth, which we shall eat until the wheat, (23) which you wrote that

¹ {Mentioned in V, 13, margin, line 4. On shipping between Alexandria and Fustat, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:298.}

² Abu Zikrī Kohēn kept a warehouse in Alexandria for his Mediterranean business.

³ {For 'coming up' when speaking of travel to Fustat, see 749, n. 4.}

⁴ For the losses incurred by merchants by the return of ships after they had set sail, because of bad weather or similar circumstances, see the discussion in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:322–23, 483, n. 73, where this passage is cited.

⁵ Abū Naṣr b. Abraham's remarks in a letter from Alexandria 1141, in IV, 78v, line 15, probably reflect other circumstances: "Were I just a little stronger, I would not stay in the city one hour."

Musallam⁶ has for me arrives. Do not neglect (24) the wheat, for it is one of the most essential things.⁷ And write to [Margin] (1) Musallam (2) to deposit for you in (3) Akhmīm two *irdabbs* of wheat or (4) three, to serve you as provisions for the journey, (5) God willing.⁸

(Akhmīm was on the Nile in Upper Egypt, and Maḥrūz would pass there on his way East. The two or three *irdabbs* of wheat would probably suffice for several months, while he traveled to India.)⁹

- D. Matters concerning two claims. One involved 11⁵/₈ dinars, which Makhluḥ Ibn ‘Ayn Shirra¹⁰ admitted owing Maḥrūz’s grandfather Isaac (margin, line 5-top of page, line 4). Abū Zikrī also urged the mother of Abū Iṣḥāq, son of the *Reliable* Claimant, not to take any action against Abū Naṣr (also mentioned in line 6 as being in Alexandria).¹¹
- E. Greetings and a special, urgent request, of an undisclosed nature,¹² of ‘our lord,’ Head of Egyptian Jewry (top of page, line 5-verso, line 3).}

⁶ He is also mentioned below, margin, line 1. Undoubtedly this is Musallam al-Ka‘ki; see II, 24, line 27 and 348, n. 74.

⁷ This sentence is quoted and discussed by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:235, 435, n. 68.

⁸ The consumption of wheat, its measures and prices are discussed in detail by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:235–44 (for the *irdabb* see above, 465, n. 15). Twelve *irdabbs* of wheat were yearly provisions for an average middle-class family. Maḥrūz writes Abū Zikrī about wheat in V, 20, line 7.

⁹ The Jewish merchants staying in certain areas of India imported wheat for their own consumption, since it was not considered a necessity of life for the natives there. See page 602, n. 45.

¹⁰ On Makhluḥ b. Musā, called Ibn ‘Ayn Sarra (here spelled *Shirra*, ‘mischief’), see 338–39 and n. 4.

¹¹ For Abū Iṣḥāq Abraham, see II, 32, line 13. Abū Naṣr is probably the prominent Alexandrian India trader Abū Naṣr b. Elisha; see II, 59. Makhluḥ complains about Abū Naṣr b. Elisha’s dishonesty in business in VI, 23 (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:247, 575, n. 143).

¹² Arabic *al-ḥāja alladbi katabak fi amrihā*, can be translated, ‘the need about which he wrote you for instructions’ (or: ‘concerning which he wrote you’). This could be connected to a passage in a letter by Abū Zikrī to someone else (V, 6, margin, lines 7–9): “If you travel up (to Fustat) perhaps you can take from the *Rayyis* the resposnum concerning the house.”}

II, 59 *Letter from Maḥrūz to Abū Zikrī Kohen with Urgent Warning*

Fustat {March 3, 1135}

ENA 4194, f. 3

Ed. Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:602–5, no. 801.¹

An urgent warning sent by Maḥrūz, Fustat, to Abū Zikrī, Alexandria, advising him to take all his merchandise out of a warehouse there. A business partner of Abū Zikrī in Fustat was dying, and because of the lawlessness prevailing at that time in Egypt, Abū Zikrī's goods would be confiscated together with those of the dead man (before 1129, it seems).

{The dying man, Abū Sa'īd, was related to Abū Zikrī's partner the well-known Alexandrian India trader Abū Naṣr b. Elisha.² Evidently, Abū Sa'īd did not have any heirs of the first degree, and the officials of the *dīwān al-mawārith* (line 5: *aṣḥāb mawārif!*),³ the Office of Estates, which took advantage of such situations, were about to confiscate all of his belongings held by Abū Naṣr.⁴ Not taking any chances, the officials would sequester Abū Naṣr's assets and, moreover, those of Abū Zikrī, since the partners' holdings were stored together. The Head of the Yeshiva, certainly Maṣliḥ ha-Kohen, who in fact was apparently Abū Zikrī's cousin, personally conveyed the warning to Maḥrūz and instructed him to send immediately an urgent message to his brother-in-law Abū Zikrī. For this purpose Maḥrūz

¹ {Gil did not identify the parties and mistakenly described the document as written in Alexandria, ca. 1062; cf. id., "Institutions," 156.

² Here in line 4. His father's name, Elisha, is only partially preserved and was not deciphered by Gil. Abū Naṣr b. Elisha is mentioned in III, 15, line 32, III, 29, lines 8–9, V, 8, lines 7–8, VI, 23, lines 13 ff., VI, 43v, line 12 (there his son, called Abu 'l-Majd b. Abū Naṣr b. Lishā'; see Zeldes and Frenkel, "The Sicilian Trade," 127, n. 12, where 'Elisha' is to be corrected). He was a prominent man, for the famous Spanish Hebrew poet Judah ha-Levi, when staying in Alexandria in the fall of 1140, dedicated to him a poem, in which he condoled him upon the death of a slave girl and apologized for being unable, owing to a sore eye, to visit him and express his sympathy in person (Brody, *Dīwān*, 40–41; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:143; Gil and Fleischer, *Yehuda ha-Levi*, 210, n. 143—where the reference to Goitein, "Letter to Judah ha-Levi," 344 is misprinted—and on condolences for the death of a slave girl, Friedman, *Polygyny*, 352). There were a number of India traders named Abū Naṣr. In some cases where Abū Naṣr is named without his father's name, Abū Naṣr b. Elisha is probably intended. See, e.g., II, 56, line 29, the note to II, 58, sec. D (486, n. 11), III, 47, line 14 and verso, line 3.

³ For the *th* > *f* shift (cf., e.g., *thūm* > *fūm*), see Blau, *Grammar*, 285.

⁴ On the activities of the Office of Estates and its effect on the Jewish community, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:395 ff., 613; 3:277 ff.; Rabie, *The Financial System*, 127–32; Friedman, "Responsa of Abraham Maimuni," 272, and the literature cited in these studies.}

hired a private courier (*najjāb*) to Alexandria by camel. In his letter, Maḥrūz tells Abū Zikrī to disregard costs and extricate his wares without delay. The warning is repeated in a postscript written after Musallam (see the previous document) informed the writer that the courier would not set out that night.

The Head of the Yeshiva's warning is not related to Abū Zikrī's urgent request to him in II, 58, since that letter was written several years after II, 59. No. II, 59 is dated Sunday, 15 Jumādā. Since Maḥrūz urges Abū Zikrī to return to Fustat to be with his family before the approaching holiday, the date can be fixed with a fair degree of certainty as March 2, 1135, when 15 Jumādā I came four weeks before Passover. (I do not know why Goitein assumed the letter had been written before 1129.) As already noted, Maḥrūz was not accustomed to writing, and others penned for him most of his letters, which have been preserved, except for this one and V, 20. Because of the urgency of this letter, he evidently wrote it himself. His untrained hand, poor style and substandard language, replete with vulgar forms and other orthographic irregularities, prove the wisdom of his normal practice.}

II, 60 *Bill of Sale for Purchase of House by Maḥrūz*

Fustat, 1131/2

TS NS 184, fs. 52, 55 and 56

Maḥrūz acquires (part of) a house in Fustat.

{Maḥrūz purchased the property from Abu 'l-Faraj Yeshū'ā ha-Levi b. Abraham, who was acting on behalf of his mother Lūlu'a. This is the second half of a draft of the bill of sale, written in the court notebook in the hand of the court scribe, Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh. The previous page, containing the first half of the deed, has not been identified yet. The three fragments are contiguous. Jacob, Maḥrūz's late father, is referred to as the distinguished *sar*, notable, probably indicating some governmental connection which he had, and *ḥāsīd*, pietist. The previous documents have depicted Maḥrūz's business activities in Fustat, where for a certain period his family lived together with that of his brother-in-law Abū Zikrī Kohen. Maḥrūz presumably purchased the house as a domicile rather than for investment purposes only.}

II, I. *Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan's Descendents**

II, 61 *Letter from Ḥalfon and Bundār b. Maḍmūn to Sulaymān b. Abū Zikrī Kohen*

Aden {ca. 1150}

TS 28.20

Maḍmūn's two sons write from Aden to express their sympathy on the death of Abū Zikrī Kohen to his son Sulaymān, Fustat ([A] 27 lines). They discuss unfinished business of the dead merchant ([B] 30 lines) and report briefly about the grave illness of their own father and the well-being of the widow of Sulaymān's maternal uncle, the shipowner Maḥrūz b. Jacob, and his children [C].¹

Section B can be subdivided into three portions {selections of which are given in translation below}.

(B1) Thanks to Sulaymān for honoring the writers by sending a power of attorney to collect a debt from a Jewish merchant.

{(27) Your two servants took note of (28) what you had described in your distinguished letter about sending a power of attorney against that Jew.² (29) By Great God and *the covenant of the living God*, your two servants were overwhelmed (30) with boundless joy by your having kindly honored (31) them with filling your need. We were prepared to perform this act of respect for you (32) and apply ourselves to realize your right and collect your due, in the most complete (33) and proper fashion possible. The two of us inquired about that Jew with our coreligionists, the Jews who have arrived (from Egypt). (34) They said that he had returned to Egypt (or Fustat: Miṣr) from 'Aydhāb. Certainly our bad luck caused (35) this³ [...] (36) We hope that your excellency will find a substitute, God willing, and God return to you your belongings.}

(B2) Profuse thanks for sending three wraps and a scarf of mediocre quality (!) and a request to send other goods to settle a minor account.

* {On Maḍmūn's descendents, see further pages 42–43 and the documents in sec. J below.

¹ The unbracketed descriptions of the contents of the document are culled from Goitein's papers. He wrote some notes on the margins of the photostat, but did not transcribe or translate the document.

² To collect a debt from a certain Jewish merchant.

³ Our being unable to fulfill your request is due to our bad luck. On blaming undesirable developments on one's poor fate, cf. 467, n. 26.

{(37) Your eminent excellency mentioned sending three wraps⁴ and a scarf. May God reward you well [for] (38) this and undertake to give you recompense! [...] (40) Your two servants thanked you for [your k]ind[ness] (41) and your effort over this. May we never want for you, God willing! Your excellency—(42) may God make <your honored position>⁵ permanent!—mentioned that we had had a credit for the proceeds from all the small items we had sent—(43) after the expenditures for customs, tolls⁶ and the like—of 11⅞ Egyptian dinars. There is nothing to say⁷ (44) concerning this, except that the wraps were not commensurate with what your two servants had suggested (ordered), (45) nor were they appropriate⁸ for them. Your two servants had rather ordered something more delicate (or: exquisite) (46) and beautiful than that. There are plenty like that brought by the travelers who arrive (from Egypt). We hope that your excellency will kindly find (47) a substitute. As to the balance of the account, of which your eminent excellency wrote that (48) you had sent them in payment, there is nothing to say.⁹ If there is still some (balance) left, kindly send (49) for it to your two servants fine yellow and red strings (wires),¹⁰ Egyptian handicraft, fine, (50) good work, if you will be so kind. Some time ago your *late*¹¹ father—(51) God's mercy be on him!—had sent to us what was most exquisite, fine and superb. Be so kind as to do this. May we never want for you!}

(B3) Gifts the writers had sent to the late Abū Zikrī.

{(52) But as for us,¹² your two servants had sent with the most eminent (53) Sheikh Abū 'Alī b. Wahab the *Fellow* (of the Yeshiva) something for your father, namely a piece (54) of delicate Indian red silk (*lānas*) and a head cover

⁴ Arabic *talāthīm*. For *talḥīm* (sg.), see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:337, 462, n. 214, 5:545, n. 75 (where our document is cited).

⁵ The writer mistakenly omitted the word *'izzahā*.

⁶ Arabic *mu'an*. See I, 1 v, line 2, and 171–72, n. 23.

⁷ Arabic *walā qawl*, that is, no argument. The same expression appears in line 48.

⁸ Arabic *ṣulḥ* = *ṣalahā*, plural of *ṣaliḥ* or *ṣāliḥ*. See *Lisān al-'Arab*, 2:516; Lane, *Dictionary*, 1715 (where he says that the plural is used only in reference to people; our document clearly uses it for inanimate objects).

⁹ While the writers say they have no quarrel with the recipient's accounting, they immediately proceed to suggest that there might be more credit due them.

¹⁰ Arabic *awṭār*, also mentioned in VII, 36, line 25. The primary use of *awṭār* was as strings for musical instruments (cf., e.g., Maimonides, *Responsa*, 2:398, no. 224, *tanghīm al-awṭār*), and perhaps this was the intention here. For red copper wires (*khayṭ*) shipped from Egypt to Aden, see II, 56, line 30.

¹¹ Hebrew *ḥay* (also verso, line 2); see 394, n. 31.

¹² Arabic *wa-yā min naḥnā*. *Wa-yā min* is an interjection and connotes surprise; see Wright, *Grammar*, 2:153. It could also express woe; see Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 534. The writers, having sent gifts of the best possible quality for Sulaymān's father, evidently wanted to contrast their actions with Sulaymān's halfhearted efforts described in the preceding paragraph. For *naḥnā*, see Blau, *Grammar*, 293 (perhaps *ā* is a dual morpheme here).

(*arḏī*) of delicate Indian red silk and, I think,¹³ one or two pairs of ‘Aththari (55) shoes made of unscraped skins.¹⁴ The details are in our letter there; please look for it. [Margin] (1) [...] If he delivered it, God is praised! That was the intention. If he did not deliver it, since at the time of his arrival your father had already died, and he (Abū ‘Alī) is still there, ask him for it...}

C. Personal news, including the well-being of Maḥrūz’s widow and children, about whom Sulaymān had clearly inquired.

{(2) Your servant my father sends profuse greetings for your well-being and best personal regards.¹⁵ Do not ask how upset he was by the grief, sorrow, regret and distress over the death of your father—may God sanctify his soul!¹⁶ However, there is no avoiding what God, the Exalted, has decreed.¹⁷ Do not ask how he (my father) is suffering from [Verso] (1) the strain of illnesses and constant pain. We pray that God in His mercy grant him health, God willing.¹⁸ (2) The wife¹⁹ of the *late* shipowner (*nākhudā*)²⁰ Maḥrūz and his children are all well. They all send your eminence profuse (3) excellent greetings for your well-being. And they greet the entire family, young and old, with the most excellent (4) wishes for their well-being. His (Maḥrūz’s) young daughter passed away two years ago. May your eminence have (5) good health and long life!²¹ Your two servants have informed you of this...

The top few lines of the letter, which contained the address on verso, are torn away, and no names, except Maḥrūz and the otherwise unknown traveling merchant mentioned in line 53, appear in the document. Goitein succeeded in identifying the writers, the two sons of an ailing Yemenite

¹³ Here and in the continuation, the actual writer (or dictator) of the letter, undoubtedly Ḥalfon b. Maḏmūn, presumably the older of the two brothers, lapses into first person singular.

¹⁴ ‘Aththar and ‘Athr are toponyms in Yemen (Goitein cites Yāqūt, *Geographical Dictionary*, 3:615). Shoes: *aqdām* (see Friedman, *Polygyny*, 262–63, line 5). Unscraped skins, *musha‘ar*; see Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 258.

¹⁵ Arabic *ilmām* (cf., e.g., II, 65, line 7; II, 67, line 7; III, 10, margin, line 12) means an act of personal recognition; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:549 (where he translates ‘*rendre une courte visite*’).

¹⁶ Arabic *qaddasa ‘llāhu la‘īfahu*. Thanks to Prof. Werner Diem for his comments (in a private communication) on the proper reading and meaning of this eulogy. Cf. III, 38, line 25.

¹⁷ The same adage appears in the condolences expressed in II, 71, line 35 and III, 1, lines 10–11, where Goitein comments that this is an Arabic version of Prov. 21:30.

¹⁸ The writers’ father Maḏmūn died not long after this letter was sent. See II, 38 and III, 62.

¹⁹ Arabic *manzil*, lit., ‘house.’ Etiquette demanded using such expressions when referring to a man’s wife. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:461, n. 2, where this document is cited. Cf. above, 235, n. 10.

²⁰ Maḥrūz was a family member, and there was no need to identify him as a shipowner. *Nākhudā* was clearly used as a title of respect. See above, Introduction IIIA.

²¹ Etiquette required adding such a wish for the recipient after news of a death.

merchant, and the recipient, by the letter's contents and in particular by the regards sent by the widow of Maḥrūz, which intimate a close connection between Maḥrūz's family and the correspondents. Maḍmūn b. Japheth had three sons: Ḥalfon, Bundār and Japheth (see II, 37, lines 49–52). Ḥalfon and Bundār are obviously intended here, as the two of them are mentioned as active together at the time of Maḍmūn's death (III, 38, lines 20–21; Ḥalfon alone appears in several documents, see below). As far as I know, Japheth does not appear again in the India book letters; perhaps he died at a young age. As already noted, Abū Zikrī Kohen, Sulaymān's father, had been married to Maḥrūz's sister (and Maḥrūz may have been married to Abū Zikrī's sister). Maḥrūz's mother had been associated with Maḍmūn's family and probably was his aunt. And Maḍmūn may have been married to a second sister of Abū Zikrī. Subsequent to Goitein's identification of the writers and recipient of II, 61, we find in this document further evidence for the ties between the families concerned.²²

Support for the identification of the recipient as Sulaymān b. Abū Zikrī Kohen can be adduced from the liturgical passages written on verso of the letter. As already noted above, other liturgical passages written in the same yet-unidentified handwriting and apparently from the same prayer book are found on the blank spaces of verso of the letters II, 32 and V, 11, both sent to Abū Zikrī Kohen (the first as identified by Goitein and the second explicitly) and II, 45a, sent to an anonymous recipient, presumably Sulaymān as well. The copyist evidently had access to Sulaymān's archive and made use of his and his father's letters; see further the introductions to these documents.}

²² For the familial ties alluded to here, see pages 48–49.}

II, 62 *Letter from Ḥalfon b. Maḍmūn to Ezekiel b. Nathan Acknowledging
Condolences on Maḍmūn's Death*

Aden, October–November 1152

University of Strasbourg, Ms. Heb. 4078, f. 31

Partial ed. in Goitein, *Yemenites*, 83.

Letter by Ḥalfon, Maḍmūn's son, Aden, thanking in rhymed Hebrew prose, a Cairene cantor (Ezekiel b. Nathan) for his expression of sympathy on the death of his father. A gift of two gold pieces is sent with a merchant (named Sālim), traveling to Egypt. {All but the very beginning of the letter is preserved. With the exception of lines 1–3, it was published by Goitein, *Yemenites*, 83.}¹

¹ {The shelf mark there is 4077.8, f. 31.}

II, 63 *Letter from Ḥalfon b. Maḏmūn to Saadya b. Abraham, an Egyptian Teacher*

Aden, October–November 1154

TS NS 323, f. 2

Ed. Ratzaby, "History," 108–10 (without address on verso).

Ḥalfon informs a teacher in Fustat that he had directed an acquaintance to give him two gold pieces. At present he could not send him more.

{A complete letter by Ḥalfon, again in rhymed Hebrew prose. It is a reply to the teacher Saadya b. Abraham's letter, in which the latter mentioned his bad health and the gift that had been sent to him the previous year. Evidently, the poor, religious functionaries of Egypt hoped to receive annual support from the wealthy Jews of Aden, and the sum of two gold pieces, the same as in II, 62, was indeed a generous gift. The money was sent with an otherwise unknown Yemenite (merchant), Joseph b. Fityān.}

II, 64 *Letter from Abū 'Alī b. Bū 'Umar to his Family, Praising Ḥalfon b. Maḍmūn's Assistance*

{Upper Egypt, ca. 1167}

TS Arabic 40, f. 56

Brief passage quoted in Rabie, "Geniza Documents," 76.

Letter in Arabic characters from 'Aydhāb, praising Ḥalfon (called by the Arabic equivalent of his name, Khalaf) b. Maḍmūn for his help after the writer had been stripped of everything by the Ghuzz (a Seljuk contingent) and for an invitation to Aden, from which he would proceed to India. Ḥalfon also took care of a young woman of the writer's family, who had been divorced by her husband in Aden.

Abū 'Alī b. Bū 'Umar, known from another Geniza letter (III, 31, line 9), as having visited Ceylon (Sri Lanka), writes to his family, which most probably lived in Fustat. The letter is addressed to his son Abu 'l-Maḥāsīn. But when writing, he has in mind his wife, whom he addresses and to whom he sends regards first (verso, line 3), while regards to Abu 'l-Maḥāsīn follow later (verso, line 4). Abū 'Alī was accompanied by Abū 'Umar (verso, line 5), most probably a son of his, named for his father. As usual Abū 'Alī first tried to do business in Upper Egypt. When unsuccessful, he proceeded further at the advice of Abu 'l-'Alā b. Abū Naṣr, a merchant also known from other India papers.¹ Abū 'Alī was able to do so after having received 30 dinars from Ḥalfon b. Maḍmūn, the well-known representative of the merchants, who succeeded his father in 1151. However, the Ghuzz plundered Minya, where Abū 'Alī did business, and he lost everything. To make good for his loss, he had to undertake the long journey to India.

At the end of the letter, he refers to another matter: the marital difficulties between 'the little one,' most probably his daughter, or another close relative, and her husband in Aden, one Abū 'Imrān. The affair was brought before the Muslim authorities. Abū 'Imrān embraced Islam (it is noteworthy that the writer reports this fact without adding any vituperative remark) and divorced his wife. The girl was in Ḥalfon b. Maḍmūn's good care. All this the writer had learned from the latter's correspondence.

¹ {Abu 'l-'Alā b. Abū Naṣr *al-Miṣrī al-kōhēn*, is mentioned in II, 65, line 54, as traveling between Egypt and Aden, and a letter addressed to him is found in VI, 52.

The letter is written in exceptionally orderly and good Arabic characters, but displays the same orthographic particularities as those familiar from letters in Hebrew characters, such as omission of *alif wāṣila*, of *lām* before sun letters and of *alif* as a sign of length inside words.

The letter does not make the impression that it was dictated. Thus our merchant must have had a large Muslim clientele.²

{The document is a moving personal letter from a destitute and despondent merchant, who feels compelled to travel to India to improve his lot. It is addressed to his wife, whom he fears he may never see again. Needless to say, our interest is also in the most generous assistance and encouragement, both financial and psychological, extended to a merchant who fell on bad times by Ḥalfon b. Maḍmūn, who himself had earlier suffered shipwreck and loss (see line 22).

Etiquette precluded having the letter addressed and delivered directly to Abū 'Alī's wife (who was probably illiterate in any event), and it was accordingly addressed to his son. The fact that the text is written in Arabic characters, a matter of socio-linguistic interest, obviously lends itself to explanations other than Abū 'Alī's clientele.³ The exaggerated, standard expressions of humility of the writer and aggrandizement of the addressee, for whose kindnesses the writer expresses his gratitude, etc., which originated in petitions to authorities, are plainly incongruent with the style expected of a father writing his son. Abū 'Alī could have mechanically copied these phrases from his regular business correspondence, where they were commonplace. But it is also noteworthy that besides the names, with which we are familiar from other documents, there is nothing in the letter, either in vocabulary or content, which identifies its writer and his family as Jewish. Contrary to Goitein's impression, my working hypothesis is that Abū 'Alī did not pen the letter, but rather dictated it; and the writer, a professional clerk or Muslim business associate, used the customary expressions, irrespective of their incompatibility with the letter's content.

² Goitein left the detailed, provisional description of the document given above and prepared a draft of its transcription; he did not translate the text. See the brief description of the letter in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:245, where the writer's father's name is spelled 'Abū 'Amr (or Omar).' ('Amr would normally be written in Arabic with final *w*, missing here, but I am unaware of Judeo-Arabic texts, where the *w* is written.) According to Goitein, the merchant's presumed large Muslim clientele, with whom he was accustomed to correspond, explains his familiarity with Arabic script; cf. Goitein, *Letters*, 94, n. 13 (and see our following remarks).

³ For the use of Arabic script by medieval Jews, see Blau, *Emergence*, 38 ff., 243 ff.

Goitein's comment concerning the absence of any derogatory remarks in connection with the news of Abū 'Imrān's conversion to Islam complements his observation elsewhere that the lack of such remarks was the rule.⁴ This is not the place for a detailed analysis of this observation, an indication of the Jewish community's relative tolerance towards the apostate. Three brief comments are in order, however. In his discussion, Goitein refers both to voluntary apostates and those, who under threat to their lives, ostensibly converted, while continuing the covert practice of Judaism. As far as the lack of condemnation is concerned, these, of course, are very different phenomena.⁵ Secondly, an example of the condemnation of the convert can be cited from IV, 76, line 14, where the apostate who made life difficult for Judah ha-Levi in Alexandria, was referred to as *al-kalb al-pōshēa'*, 'the dog of a renegade.' And finally, the suggestion that an Arab scribe wrote this letter for Abū 'Amr puts the absence of any condemnation of the apostate in a rather different perspective.

Ghuzz is a name applied in Arabic to the Turkish Oghuz people, of which the Seljuks were a family group or clan. The name is also extended to the Kurds, and it is possible that this is the meaning intended in our text. Since Ḥalfon b. Maḍmūn died in 1172 (on October 26),⁶ the assault by the Ghuzz on Minya obviously cannot be associated with the revolt of Upper Egypt against them in 1175 and its violent consequences. Perhaps it refers to the 1167 battle in the plain ten miles south of Minya in Upper Egypt led by Shīrkūh (d. 1169), one of Nūr al-Dīn's generals, against the Crusader king Amalric.⁷ In any event, the plunder of Minya mentioned in our letter (line 19) adds a documentary dimension to the historical records, while the latter place the Geniza manuscript in perspective and make it possible to fix its approximate date.

Some further words are in order on the format of the letter, in particular the address written on verso. Unlike the vast majority of Geniza letters in

⁴ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:302 ff.

⁵ On the lack of condemnation of the covert apostate under pain of death, see Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 35 ff.

⁶ Subar, "Tombstones," 305, published an English translation of Ḥalfon's tombstone, dated 6 Marḥeshwan, (1)484 (Sel.), on 'Thursday night' (a translation of *lēl ḥamīshī*, i.e., Wednesday evening when the fifth day of the week begins according to the Jewish calendar; Goitein, *Yemenites*, 81, understood the sixth day of the week, but 6 Marḥeshwan fell that year on Thursday and never falls on Friday). See now the photo in Klein-Franke, "Tombstones," 174, fig. 23 (the caption needs correction).

⁷ Based on the following studies: Cahen, "Ghuzz"; Bosworth, "Salḍjūkids"; Woidich, "al-Sa'id"; Richards, "Shīrkūh"; Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 181. On the Ghuzz, see also Gil, *Palestine*, 1:337; id., *Ishmael*, 4:887 (index).

this book and elsewhere, in which the name of the sender is added (in the original usually in a parallel column to the left), here only the name of the addressee appears. Among the documents in chaps. 1–3 other examples are found in II, 65, III, 53, III, 55, III, 56. In all of these the address is written in Arabic characters. The Arabic business letters recently discovered in Quṣayr, from the same ambience (a Red Sea port town east of Qūṣ, connected with the India trade, first four decades of the thirteenth century), also have in their addresses on verso only the name of the recipient, but not that of the sender.⁸ The use of the Arabic alphabet is not a decisive factor, however, as most of the Geniza letters, in which the address is written in Arabic characters, contain the name of the sender, while several of the letters in which the address is written in Judeo-Arabic, in Hebrew characters, lack the name of the sender: III, 56 and a number of items in chaps. 4–7 (in chap. 4, many of these emanate from the Spanish circle of Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel and Judah ha-Levi); some additional examples are found elsewhere in the Geniza. Such an item is VI, 15 (written in Quṣ in the mid 12th century). In his edition of that document, Goitein suggested two explanations for the absence of the sender's 'signature' there:

As so often happened, the person prepared to carry the letter was in a hurry to leave. Not signing a letter was an expression of intimacy and friendship. I am not sure that this was intended here.⁹

While the courier's urging to finish the letter is often noted as a reason for abbreviating an epistle,¹⁰ this could hardly be taken as the cause for omitting the sender's name at the very end of the address on verso, even if VI, 15, were the only known example, let alone for the multiple cases referred to here. The second explanation is certainly plausible, and it would apply to several of those cases. A letter would arrive folded and sealed (as noted in II, 61, line 3),¹¹ and when the sender's name was written with the address on verso, the recipient knew who he was before opening the letter. In some of the letters in which the name is missing there, it appears in the body of the letter (as in II, 64), something usually not done. In other cases, it can be assumed that the recipient recognized the sender's handwriting or otherwise was easily able to identify him from the contents of the letter. These practices merit further investigation.

⁸ See Guo, "Quṣayr Letters," 167.

⁹ Goitein, "Portrait," 464, n. 86.

¹⁰ See Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 45, 188; Kraemer, "Women Speak," 199. Additional examples can be multiplied; some will be listed in the note to IV, 4, line 2.

¹¹ For the sealing of letters see Sadan, "Clerks," 50.

Translation

[A. Typical opening of petitionary letter]

(1) Thankful of his kindnesses, (2) Bū ‘Alī b. Bū ‘Umar.¹²
 (3) In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate.
 (4) My letter (to you)—may God give long life to your excellency, my lord, the most illustrious sheikh, the master, and prolong (5) His support of you, your elevated position, high rank and prominent station, and not deny you (6) His gift of superior success, crush those envious of you and destroy your enemies!—is to enquire about information (7) concerning your situation and news about you, and the conduct of your affairs—may God, may His praise be glorified, conduct them as (8) you choose and to attain your goals! Were I to proceed to explain in detail even part of the (9) longing and yearning for you, which I feel, the letter would not encompass it nor would speech contain it. (10) But I pray to Him whose power and might are to be glorified to grant (11) quickly that I be reunited with you in the best of circumstances, in fulfillment of the most excellent hopes (12) soon, God, the Exalted, willing.

[B. Ḥalfon’s assistance and the plunder by the Ghuzz]

This is to inform you, my dear son—may [God, the Exalted,] streng[then you]!—(13) that I wrote you (pl.) a number of letters, but I have not received any answer from you (pl.).¹³ However, (14) I know of news of you (pl.), but hear it only from (other) people.¹⁴ The situation, which I am undergoing, (15) namely the dearth of my possessions, is not something, which can be described, because of heartache (16) and how little I have. I remained perplexed by my situation, until I received from (17) Sheikh Khalaf b. Maḍmūn thirty dinars, delivered by Sheikh Abu ‘l-‘Alā b. (18)

¹² Here and in the continuation, the writer uses the third person in addressing the recipient, mostly the third person singular feminine, referring to ‘his excellency,’ a feminine gender noun in Arabic. The style of a petition, in which the ‘thankful’ petitioner writes his name in the upper left corner, as here, hardly suits a father writing his son; see the discussion above. In the continuation, as noted, the writer uses the plural for the addressee.

¹³ The writer transfers here to the second person plural because the letter is intended for the whole family, especially his wife.

¹⁴ Arabic *a-nās* (= *al-nās*). This term is used regularly in the documents of this book for ‘merchants’ or ‘traveling merchants.’ See 239, n. 4.

Abū Naṣr. He is urging me to set out on a journey.¹⁵ I purchased the requisite (19) provisions for travel; then the Ghuzz swept down and plundered Minya. We departed naked, without (20) a covering. I remained with a brick under my head, hungry, passing the night in grief, worn out.¹⁶ (21) Thank God, had my life been in my hands, I would have given it up.¹⁷ (22) But Ibn Maḍmūn heard (23) of my dire situation and sent me letters, in which he said, "I have been afflicted by the same thing that you are enduring."¹⁸ (23) Set out and come up to me."

[C. News of 'the little one' whose husband apostatized]

He (Khalaf b. Maḍmūn) informed me what had happened to the girl ('the little one') with (24) Abū 'Imrān, namely the hardships she had suffered with him. Had it not been for God and the assistance of the Sheikh (Khalaf), (25) who looked after her rights, she would have been lost.¹⁹ Their crisis reached the sultan, and Bū 'Imrān (26) converted to Islam. The malice between them increased, and he divorced her. [Margin] (1) She remained with him²⁰ in the best possible situation.²¹

[D. The journey to 'Aydhāb and intention to set out for India]

Nothing remains for me but the journey. I traveled to 'Aydhāb, terrified and frightened by the ill-fated²² trip, but God (2) decreed my safe arrival.²³

¹⁵ According to Goitein's comments cited above, the advice was Abu 'l-'Alā b. Abū Naṣr's. I presume it could also refer to Ḥalfon b. Maḍmūn.

¹⁶ Arabic *bayyūt khalaq* (vocalized by Goitein). For *bayyūt*, see Lane, *Dictionary*, I, 281.

¹⁷ Thank God that my life is in His hands and not mine. This line is quoted in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:245, as part of a discussion on the attitude towards suicide in the Geniza papers.

¹⁸ Arabic *qad ghammanī mā jarā 'alayka*. Ḥalfon suffered tremendous business losses, when a ship of his loaded with his wares sank (see II, 71, line 30), yet he made a remarkable comeback. He thus reassured Abū 'Alī that he could do the same.

¹⁹ The last phrase, the apodosis of the sentence beginning with *lawlā*, is not expressed here. Cf. Wright, *Grammar*, 2:8.

²⁰ With Ḥalfon b. Maḍmūn (Goitein).

²¹ Arabic *'alā aḥsan qaḍīya*. The same expression appears in II, 66, line 23. Cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:363, *'alā adnā qaḍīya*. For this section of the letter, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:264, 485, n. 94, where he comments that Ḥalfon's intervention secured the bill of divorce.

²² Arabic *naḥs*, which can mean both 'disastrous' and 'ill-omened.'

²³ Rabie, *The Financial System*, 101, n. 1, cites this document as a Geniza letter which complains of the lack of safety on the road between 'Aydhāb and Qūṣ, but the text does not describe the journey south of 'Aydhāb.

Now I intend to set out²⁴ for India. May God, may He be praised, make the outcome good again!

[E. Painful separation from wife and closing greetings]

Everything that I have heard about what you (pl.) are undergoing and your circumstances (3) increased my distress over you.²⁵ [Verso] (1) Do not cut me off from news about you. I am traveling in faraway places.²⁶ I hope that we shall be able to be (2) in one town until God decrees the appointed time (death) for me or for you. By God, by God, do (3) no cut off (sg. f.)²⁷ your letters from me. We will not be reunited unless God wills. Accept for yourself (sg. f.) (4) profuse wishes for your complete well-being. And profuse wishes for Sheikh Abu 'l-Maḥāsīn's complete well-being.²⁸ And Peace. (5) And Abū 'Umar²⁹ sends everyone profuse wishes for complete well-being.

[F. Address]

(1) (To) His excellency, my dear son, master (2) Abu 'l-Maḥāsīn b. Abū 'Alī. May his grace be permanent!}³⁰

²⁴ Arabic *a-dukhūl* (= *al-dukhūl*). In contrast to *khurūj*, which means the opposite (see 372, n. 4), *dakhal*, *dukhūl*, literally, enter, means travel abroad (to India), i.e., enter the sea. See Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 145; II, 66*v*, line 21. The writer's experiences merit comparison with those described in a contemporary letter by David Maimonides (VI, 4); see above, page 157.

²⁵ After having complained about his suffering various trials and tribulations on the road, the husband remembers towards the end of the letter to commiserate with his wife and family over their dire circumstances in his absence, of which he had heard. On the complaints of the distant husband's wife and his responses in Geniza letters, see Kraemer, "Women Speak," 193–95.

²⁶ Arabic *fā-qad ba'uda al-mazār*, lit., 'the visiting place has already become distant.' A similar phrase is used for one traveling in distant places in IV, 13, line 17: *ṭūl asfāriḥ wa-bu'd mazāriḥ*, 'the length of his travels and distance of his visiting places'; IV, 18, line 16: *mā huwa 'alayhi al-mazār min al-bu'd*, 'the distance of his visiting places.'

²⁷ Obviously the writer intends his wife, and not the rest of the family, in the previous remarks as well, but he only begins to address her with the feminine singular here.

²⁸ As stated explicitly in the address, Abu 'l-Maḥāsīn was the writer's son, who was home with his mother.

²⁹ Abū 'Umar was the writer's older son, who accompanied him.

³⁰ On the absence of the sender's name, see the introduction to the document.}

II, 65 *Letter to a Merchant Away in the Far East, whose Interests were Protected by the 'Nagid David'*

Aden, ca. 1180

TS Misc. 28, f. 187

This letter from Aden (sent to India) reflects the situation in the town at the time of 'our Nagid¹ David,' probably the son or other relative and successor of Halfon b. Maḍmūn. The letter is written by a merchant to an India trader out in the Far East, probably India {see below}, who had taken loans from merchants in Aden, including one Ibn/Abū (al-)Daghīsh.² The latter took the law into his own hands and seized goods from the warehouse of the absentee debtor. The addressee's business partner or representative, Makārim b. al-Ṭayyib, came to an agreement with Ibn/Abū (al-)Daghīsh, in which the latter promised to pay 150 dinars for a release from any claim resulting from the unlawful seizure; but he subsequently used his connections with some VIPs in Aden to avoid payment. Word of the dispute spread among other creditors, one of whom, who was in Egypt, obtained a ruling from the Qadi Ibn al-Jazūlī,³ which allowed him to take part of the seized goods in payment of his loan. The writer had informed the Nagid David of the events, but because of the absence from Aden of important traders, the Nagid instructed the writer not to take any action until Makārim arrived from Egypt or until the addressee himself returned in the following year from India. The writer emphasizes the wisdom of this advice, rather than acting in a highhanded fashion, as the addressee had wanted.

The Nagid David is probably the father of the Nagid Maḍmūn/Shemaryā b. David, whom we meet in the following documents.⁴

{The fragmentary address on verso, written only in Arabic characters (the letter itself is in Judeo-Arabic) clearly contained only the name of the addressee and not that of the sender.⁵ The letter was sent to Lawāmanda

¹ {See the note to the translation of line 35 below on whether he was 'Nagid.'

² Not a proper name but a pejorative by-name. Daghīsh is registered as a (by-) name in Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmā'*, 1587, and means 'Scoundrel, Aggressor.' The diminutive Dughaysh also appears there, and that vocalization could be intended here as well.

³ The name comes from a Berber tribe in southern Morocco. See Colin, "Jazūla."

⁴ See Goitein, *Yemenites*, 81–8 {and above, Introduction IIB} on the Nagids. {The preceding remarks are based on various comments in Goitein's papers to II, 65. He did not translate the document.

⁵ On this practice, see pages 498–99.

(?), probably to be identified with an island off the west coast of Burma (see the note to the translation below), which, as far as I know, is mentioned in the Geniza papers only here. The letter can be divided into four sections. Selected translations are supplied below.

[A] Opening salutations and blessings, much in rhymed Arabic (lines 1–10).

[B] The Ibn/Abū (al-) Daghīsh affair (lines 10–48).

(35) Our [Nagi]d⁶ David—*may his Rock protect him!*—... (37) advised me (your servant) to let the matter (38) stand and leave it, until Sheikh Makārim (39) b. al-Ṭayyib [arrives], on condition that [the merchandise] be neither sold nor (40) purchased,⁷ until a court ruling is made in connection with it and Sheikh (41) Makārim b. al-Ṭayyib arrives or perhaps your excellency returns (42) next year and takes action which will (43) bring about commendable results. This is to inform you, that (44) were I to stubbornly pursue the suit, it would lead to *bloodshed*. (45) God protect me!

[C] News from Yemen, Egypt and the Maghreb and closing remarks (line 48-verso, line 8).

(49) News of the land: It is calm.⁸ (50) Resources are plentiful, and the pitchers⁹ are overflowing with water. (51) The Sultan—may God make his rule eternal!—is just, and all of (52) the inhabitants are safe and secure. News of (53) Egypt is good, and prices are up. For the (54) Maghreb, the same... [Margin] (4) Pepper is for [thirty-]seven [dinars a *babār*,¹⁰...] (5)

⁶ The word is only partially preserved, and Goitein copied [*negī*]dēnū. The corner of the *d* is also torn away, and though what remains resembles 𐤎 slightly more than 𐤍, no clear distinction can be made between the two letters. I am unaware of any other sources in which this David is designated Nagid, though the poem in praise of Maḍmūn b. David, presumably his son, in II, 69, vs. 10, speaks of his 'fathers (or: forefathers) the Nagids.' On the other hand, this Maḍmūn, called Shemaryā in Hebrew, is referred to in TS Arabic 48, f. 294, as 'Our Nagid Shemaryā son of the deceased, our grandee (*gevīrēnū*) David.' Subsequently, there is a distinct possibility that here too, we should read 𐤍𐤁𐤍 [גביר], 'our grandee.' If so, the title Nagid was never conferred on David.

⁷ A figure of speech, meaning that no business transactions should be carried out with the merchandise.

⁸ Similar good news, about the state of affairs in Egypt (see below, line 52), is found, for example, in I, 25v, lines 5 ff.

⁹ For this translation of *maṭārāt*, see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:600; according to Hava, *Dictionary*, 444, *maṭāra* is 'large-mouthed (well).'

¹⁰ The prices here are in Egyptian dinars. {The restoration 'thirty' is based on II, 20, line 20 (about 1133), according to which the best price for a *babār* of pepper was 37 dinars; according to IV, 15–II, 42, line 27, 38 dinars. But in 1199, the price was up to 45 dinars: II, 66v, line 6. Might Maliki dinars have been intended?

sixty, lac sixty, Faṣ[ūrī] camphor¹¹ (6) eighty a *mann*, Chinese camphor per *mann* (7) [...]teen, nutmeg¹² seventy per ten, (8) c[leaved] cloves fifty-five per ten (*manns*), (9) [...] a dinar per *mann*. Rhubarb¹³ is not selling in (10) the country [...] (11) galangal¹⁴ is not to be seen. [Verso] (1) Aromatic wood (*ūd*) is selling, especially of average quality.

[D] Address in Arabic characters:¹⁵

(1) (To) The most illustrious [...] Sheikh (2) Abū Ya‘qūb¹⁶ b. Hibat Allah (?).

[Written perpendicularly] (1) To be delivered to Lawāmanda (?),¹⁷ (2) God willing.}

¹¹ Faṣūr is a place in Sumatra, Indonesia, famous for its camphor. See Goitein, *Letters*, 228; Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 140–41. Faṣūrī camphor is also mentioned in VII, 36*v*, line 16 (incorrectly transcribed in the edition in Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:589 as Maṣūrī).

¹² Arabic *jawza*. See II, 34, side d, line 2.

¹³ Arabic *rāwand*. See II, 33, side b, line 4.

¹⁴ Arabic *khūlanjān*, the aromatic medicinal rhizome of certain East Asian plants. See Maimonides, *Lexicography*, ed. Muntner, no. 398, 109; Dols, *Islamic Medicine*, 158; Lev & Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 94.

¹⁵ Only partially transcribed by Goitein.

¹⁶ The name is very difficult to decipher. It looks somewhat like ‘Sa‘d’. Hiba b. Abū Sa‘d drowned ca. 1154 in the Indian Ocean a few days out of Yemen (II, 71, line 25). These names are common.

¹⁷ Goitein did not transcribe this part of the address. After the first letters, ‘Lawā’, the reading is not certain. Lawāmanda is probably to be identified with Iron Island or King Island, off the west coast of Burma; see Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 480–81, 566.}

II, 66 *Letter on the Forced Conversion of Yemenite Jews, but Business as Usual*

Aden, August {1199}

Mosseri IV,7 (L 12)

Ed. Goitein, *Yemenites*, 44–47. The following edition is based on the translation of the text in Goitein, *Letters*, 212–16. The part dealing with the forceful mass conversions was edited, with omissions, by Chapira, “Lettre de Maimonide,” 58. The first portion of the text, through line 25, is re-edited in Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 160–67.

Only the lower part of this interesting letter, still containing 59 lines, has been found thus far. The events described in its first section were preceded by a long period of crisis. Muslim religious propaganda had become extremely aggressive, while the Jews feverishly expected the immediate coming of the Messiah, and a simple-minded, pious man had indeed declared himself messiah and found followers.

In this period Moses Maimonides wrote his famous “Yemenite Epistle,” or rather epistles, in order to strengthen the faith of his brethren, but also to unmask the futility of their expectations.¹

Things came to a head when the eccentric nephew of the great Saladin, al-Malik al-Mu‘izz Ismā‘il, ruled Yemen (1197–1201). He had the audacity to style himself ‘caliph,’ although a caliph sat on the throne of the Abbasids in Baghdad at that time. His unorthodox ways are also evident in the forced mass conversions described in our letter, for Islam regards such conversions as illegal and invalid.²

{An unusual symbol is written in the original above the middle of the first line on verso, approximately , and I do not recall that such a sign has been discussed in Geniza research. Goitein did not mention it in his edition of this document. An almost identical sign appears, usually in the same position, in many of the roughly contemporary business letters from the Red Sea port of Quṣayr, as well as in some other Arabic documents. Two reproductions are given here as examples:  (from Guo, “Quṣayr Letters,” 174–75; id., *Commerce*, 113, where additional examples are found). In his preliminary study Guo (“Quṣayr Letters,” 176) specu-

¹ Scientific edition by Abraham S. Halkin, with an English translation by Boaz Cohen, New York, 1952. Halkin, following others, thought that the “Epistle to Yemen” (as he calls it) was written in 1172. {Contrary to what he wrote here (in *Letters*), Goitein, *Yemenites*, 44, refrains from taking a stand on the dating of the “Yemenite Epistle.” On this question, see Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 42 ff.

² On the question of forced apostasy in Islam, see Friedmann, *Tolerance*, 121 ff.

lated that it might have been equivalent to 'P.S.' Alternatively, he suggested that the sign could have signified a phrase such as 'to be continued on the verso' (if so, however, it would have been written at the bottom of recto) or was perhaps a special code for the keepers of the archive at Quṣayr. In his final publication Guo (*Commerce*, 112), takes this 'mysterious sign' as an abbreviation of sorts of the *basmala* (*bism allāh al-rahmān al-rahīm*, 'In the name of God, the Merciful the Compassionate') or some form of the name of God or His blessing. In his transcripts Guo replaces the sign with the *basmala* and determines that the side on which it appears is recto of the document, even in cases where this is questionable (e.g., 212–13).³

In all likelihood this is the same sign written in II, 66*v*. Here the words below the sign are from the end of the sentence that begins at the bottom of recto. The sign clearly functions as an indication of the continuation. It has the same function in the Quṣayr documents. It appears at the top of verso or the top of a note or a page that was probably appended to another document or page. The Geniza documents and the Arabic manuscripts are thus mutually illuminating. The sign is probably the abbreviation of a word or phrase. I suggest that it is an abbreviation of the Arabic الآخر *al-ākhir* or آخره *ākhiruh*, 'the continuation,' etc.

I have no doubt that future Geniza research will identify more examples of these symbols that scholars have overlooked. Another instance can be cited from TS 8 J 10, f. 16*v*.⁴ Maimonides wrote similar signs on the leaves on which the text of some of his draft compositions continued (so on a page from the 'Guide for the Perplexed').⁵ The close chronological and geographical match between the letter from Aden and the Quṣayr documents is not a decisive factor, accordingly.

For the sake of completeness, I note that in some of the documents in chap. 4 and in a few other Geniza letters, a different practice is used to mark the continuation of a letter. At the top of an added page in IV, 74 and in IV, 76 (by chance, the first page has not been identified in both cases), we find, written in Hebrew characters, the Islamic phrase *'awnak yā rabb*,

³ Cf. Friedman, "Quṣayr."

⁴ Amir Ashur calls my attention to the *L* symbol on the upper-right corner of CAJS Halper 379, a letter of a woman requesting assistance from the Nagid Samuel b. Ḥananyā (Egypt, 1140–59). The upper-left corner—where the name of the petitioner was probably written—is torn away, but the text seems to begin on this leaf (verso is blank). I assume that this letter was appended to another missive.

⁵ TS Ka4, f. 1*v*. Maimonides wrote two symbols at the top of the page, one in the right corner and one in the middle. The *L* sign is combined with a shape similar to the Hebrew letter b. I do not know if this is part of the sign (as it appears to be in the symbol in the middle of the page) or possibly marks the number (2) of the page (or quire).

‘with Your help, O Lord!’ While at the top of verso of IV, 72 and IV, 78 (there abbreviated: ‘*awnak*, ‘with Your help’) it continues the text on recto, like the symbols described above.}

Translation

[A. Forceful conversion of the local Jews]

(1) [...] to Aden. Immediately after his⁶ arrival [he was brought before the caliph?], (2) who said to him: “Become a Muslim, or you will cause the death of [your] brethren [...] {read: the death of most of the [Jews]}.” (3) He cried bitterly, but there was no other way for him [...] {read: to e[scape]} (4) except to embrace Islam. Before his arrival in Aden, (5), all those who were with him on the mountains had *apostatized*,⁷ (6) the physician (known as) the Efficient,⁸ and everyone on the mountains; only the (7) Jews of Aden remained. But⁹ Sheikh Maḍmūn¹⁰ accepted Islam (8) on Wednesday, the first of Dhu ’l-Qa’da.¹¹ (9) On Friday, the third, the bell (of the market-crier) was rung: “Community of Jews, (10) all of you, anyone who will be late in {alt. tr.: will refrain from} appearing in the audience hall¹² after {add: tomorrow} (11) noon, will be killed.” None of the Jews remained; all went up (12) to the audience hall. Moreover, he (the caliph) ordered that anyone returning to the Jewish faith {alt. tr.: refusing to accept Islam}¹³ (13) would be killed. Thus all apostatized. Some¹⁴ of the very religious, who defected from {alt. tr.: refused to accept} (14) Islam, were beheaded.

⁶ Maḍmūn b. David, mentioned in line 7.}

⁷ The Heb. term used here, and in the Geniza in general, is *pāsha* ‘{here spelled *bāsha*}’ (not *rāsha* ‘{rather: *kāsha* ‘[!]’ as in Chapira’s text), lit., ‘to renounce one’s allegiance.’ See *Med. Soc.*, 2:300. {Cf. Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 273.

⁸ For the honorific *al-sadīd*, see above, 274, n. 1.

⁹ This word is not expressed in the text.}

¹⁰ Maḍmūn b. David, the head of the Jewish community, who wrote II, 67. See *ibid.*, n. 1.

¹¹ Corresponding to August 25, 1198 {1199}.

¹² Arabic *manẓar*, in Yemen a room on the upper floor, open to the fresh air. {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:76, 370, n. 164. According to Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣir*, 111 (cf. 115, 116), the castle built by al-Malik al-Mu’izz on Mt. Ḥuqqāt was called *al-manẓar*.

¹³ Arabic *ta’abba ‘an al-⟨I⟩slām*. Goitein, *Yemenites*, 42, gives the correct translation.

¹⁴ Or: two.

[B. The foreign Jews]

As to us, do not (15) ask me what we felt, (16) witnessing that day horrors the like of which we had never seen. {alt tr.: . . . how much our hearts were pained. We have never seen a worse day.}

But God, the Exalted, wrought (17) with us *a miracle* and saved us, *not through our might and power* {alt. tr.: *not through our might* and by the strength of [our] me[rīt]},¹⁵ (18) but through His grace and favor. For when we went up (19) with them to the audience hall, the foreigners assembled separately, (20) and the caliph was consulted about them. God put these words into his mouth: (21) “No foreigner should be molested.”¹⁶ He ordered that everyone should (22) pay a third of {alt. tr.: triple}¹⁷ the poll tax.¹⁸ We disbursed this, and he dismissed us {alt. tr.: and we were delivered} (23) graciously {alt. tr.: in the best possible situation},¹⁹ thank God. This (24) is the upshot {add: of all} that happened. But, by the great God, I am really not able to convey to you (25) even part of what happened, for witnessing an event is one thing and hearing about it—quite another.

[C. New impositions on visitors to Aden]

(26) The merchants were outraged by {lit., ‘suffered from the indignation of’} the new²⁰ (27) impositions promulgated. Finally, however, God, the Exalted, helped. He (the caliph) had ordered (28) that 15 out (29) of 100 dinars should be taken from everyone both at arrival and departure, but God helped, (30) and he {add: retracted this and} ordered that this Kārim²¹ should remain [Verso] {add: Continuation}²² (1) unchanged

¹⁵ Zech. 4:6. The original is difficult to decipher and seems to have a combination of Hebrew and Arabic.

¹⁶ This shows that, at that time, the Jewish India traders must have been still of considerable importance for the economy of Aden.

¹⁷ {So, Goitein, *Yemenites*, 46.}

¹⁸ The poll tax of the non-Muslims was to be paid at their permanent residence. Thus, this imposition was illegal. But the travelers were content to buy their religious freedom with this price.

¹⁹ {Arabic *‘alā aḥsan qadīya*; cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:363a.

²⁰ ‘New’ does not appear in the Arabic.}

²¹ This use of the term Kārim in the meaning of the totality of India travelers operating during one year is very remarkable. See 483, n. 28.

²² {For the symbol written here in the original and its suggested meaning, see my comment added at the end of the introduction to this document.}

with no rise in tariff. But everyone coming (2) later would have to pay 15 (3) out of 100 dinars from all goods, and also from gold and silver, from wheat and (4) flour,²³ in short, from everything. Such will be the earnings of anyone coming here next year.

[D. Prices in Aden]

(5) {Add: Prices:}

Pepper, a sack—sold (6) for 52, later went down to {alt. tr.: for 42, then it went back up to} 45²⁴

Cinnamon, a sack—45

(7) Brazilwood obtained different prices:

Good Āmiri,²⁵ a sack—18

(8) Middle quality—16

End pieces (*trʿf*), a sack—16

The long variety, (9) a sack—18

Indian Indigo, a piece—70 din.

(10) Clove—not to be had; the mediocre—45 {read: 65}

the [...] {add: g[ood]}—(11) 44 {read: 65},²⁶ 10 (*manns*)

Celandine²⁷—not to be had

(12) New camphor—8½ a *mann*

The aromatic woods are of middle quality (13) and expensive.

The price of the copper was—²⁸

²³ Meaning that even from the provisions of the travelers 15 percent had to be turned over to the ruler of Aden.

²⁴ {This reflects a major rise in prices. About 65 years before this document, the highest price for a *babār* of pepper in Aden was 37 or 38 dinars (see II, 20, line 19; IV, 15–II, 42, line 27, II, 65, margin, line 4).

²⁵ Arabic *ʿl-ʿmry*, apparently, from a place called Āmir. Yāqūt, *Geographical Dictionary*, 1:252–53, lists a number of place names with the consonants *ʿmr*, including Amar in northern Arabia, Amr in Syria (Shām), and Amarr in the Syrian Desert (Āmir, Goitein's transcription, does not appear there), but I do not know if one of them was intended here.

²⁶ One of the numbers is evidently mistaken, and the notation 'not to be had,' also found in the next line, is suspect as well.

²⁷ Or swallowwort (which is an English rendering of the Greek word), a plant of the poppy family, serving as a tonic. See Maimonides-Meyerhof, 120, no. 241.

²⁸ Up to this point, our lists show goods imported from India or other eastern countries, which would be carried to Cairo and other places west. Here begins the list of imports from Spain and other western countries, which had been brought by these merchants. {Arabic *naḥās*. For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11.}

Copper in fragments,²⁹ First—(14) 72, later it reached—85;
in bars—70; later it reached 90

(15) Tin³⁰—70

Corals—11 {read: corals sell (well)}

(16) Antimony (kohl) of Shalwadh,³¹ a sack—17
of Madrid {read: Maghrebi},³² a sack—25

(17) The 'gray' perfume,³³ a sack—...

(18) Cinnabar³⁴—10 (*manns*) 18

Mercury—10 (*manns*) 17

(19) Please take notice of this, my lord.

[E. Conclusion]

I asked God for guidance³⁵ (20) and am traveling home³⁶ in the boat of Ibn Salmūn, the same (21) in which I made the passage out.³⁷ May God bestow safety upon it {add: in His mercy}! (22) My brother Abū Naṣr³⁸

²⁹ See Goitein, *Letters*, 86, n. 7: "Arabic *fajara* (cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:242b), a common item in both the Mediterranean and the Indian trade. The opposite is *qaḍīb*, copper in large bars, as follows here." {According to Qāfiḥ, "Lāz," *fajara* is pure red copper.

³⁰ Arabic *qazdīr*. See Shy, "Terms," 210.

³¹ A locality in Spain. Yāqūt, *Geographical Dictionary*, 3:316, says that kohl was produced there from lead.

³² Reading doubtful.

³³ Arabic *al-tīb al-shayba*. Maimonides-Meyerhof, 10, no. 11, and Dozy, *Supplément* 1:808a, probably refer to another product. I have not seen this expression elsewhere.

³⁴ Since Roman times a precious export of Spain.

³⁵ {For the *istikhāra*, see 256, n. 6.

³⁶ Arabic *wa-kharajtu*. See the following note.

³⁷ In the language of the India traders *dakhal*, to enter (namely, the Indian waters), designates the way out, and *kharaj*, to come out (from the Indian Ocean), means going home. {For *kharaj*, also in line 22 (there *yakhruj*), cf. 372, n. 4. For *dakhal*, see 502, n. 24. Goitein's translation of *kharajtu* in line 20, 'I am traveling home' implies that the writer (identified as a merchant from Egypt by Goitein, *Yemenites*, 44.) was announcing his return to Egypt. The note to line 24 (n. 39), further suggests that the recipient of the letter was a Cairene judge. But if so and were the writer traveling to Egypt, the writing of this letter would seem to have been superfluous. Goitein, *Yemenites*, 47, translates *kharajtu* in the preceding line 'I shall return,' without 'home,' and may have rejected that interpretation. For an example of a trader writing to Egypt after his arrival in Aden from India and announcing his return trip there, see II, 56–57, lines 21–22, 34. But there the word *khurūj* is used specifically for the trip to Egypt. The linguistic inconsistency would be obviated, were we to assume that this letter was intended to be sent not to Egypt, where the writer was traveling, but to India. But see further n. 39.}

³⁸ No identification possible. My India card index, still incomplete, notes twenty-five persons of this name.

will be traveling with me. (23) I am {add: informing you of this after} kissing your hands (24) and feet.³⁹

(A P.S. of four lines, referring to several of the goods mentioned before, is too much effaced to attempt translation.)⁴⁰

³⁹ One kisses the hands of a senior relative and the feet of a judge. {This distinction was not always followed. In II, 53, margin, line 1, Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh requests that Khalaf b. Isaac kiss his father's feet for him (the father, Isaac b. Bundār was not a judge); and in VI, 54, line 3, a woman writes to her father that she kisses his hands and feet.} The writer might have been a relative of the judge Isaac b. Sāsōn, who was the Jewish chief judge of Cairo and a close associate of Maimonides, but also very active in economic fields. See II, 67. {See also 511, n. 37.

⁴⁰ A letter to a Sheikh Ḥasan seems be mentioned there.}

II, 67 *Letter from Maḏmūn b. David: Murder of the 'Caliph' and Return of Jewish Life*

Aden, July 9, 1202

TS 28.11

Ed. Baneth, "Letter from Yemen," 205–14, with an excellent introduction and most instructive notes. With one exception, deviations from Baneth's interpretation are not noted expressly. The following is based on Goitein, *Letters*, 216–20. A new edition of most of the document is found in Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 167–78.

The sender of this letter, Maḏmūn b. David, was the head of the Jewish community of Aden. He is referred to in II, 75, as the Adenese counterpart of Abraham Maimonides, the head of the Jews in Egypt. Thus he is identical with the Maḏmūn of II, 66. The Hebrew equivalent of Maḏmūn, which means 'protected by God' was Shemaryā, and under this name, Shemaryā b. David, 'the Nagid (leader) of the Land of Yemen,' he appears both in Hebrew literature and in Geniza documents.¹

The aforementioned letter (II, 75) also contains the name of the recipient of our letter, *al-Muwaffaq*, 'the Successful,' a title which had become a proper name.² He had another title *Amīn (al-Dawla)*, 'Trustee (of the Government),' the like of which would be given to a Jewish representative of merchants {as well as a third title, *al-Sa'īd*, 'the Auspicious'}.³ The two {three} titles are contained in the untranslatable honorific epithets of the salutation, so characteristic for the artificial style of this late period.⁴

¹ Nos. II, 68 and II, 73. The famous Spanish Hebrew poet Judah al-Ḥarīzī dedicated to him his masterpiece *Tahkemōnī* (or, rather, a copy of it). See Mann, *Jews*, 2:338. {The text is published by Tobi, *Abraham b. Ḥalfon*, 25; cf. Schirmann-Fleischer, *Poetry in Christian Spain*, 187, n. 177; Yahalom & Blau, *Wanderings of Alharizi*, 26. On the identity of Maḏmūn and Shemaryā, see the introduction to II, 74 (page 546). Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:568, n. 19, has deduced from VII, 58 that Maḏmūn b. David died 1226–28.

² *Muwaffaq* is a proper name. *Al-Muwaffaq*, remained a title. Accordingly, there is no reason to associate Sheikh *Muwaffaq* mentioned in II, 75 (see 550, n. 3) with *al-Muwaffaq* of our document. For this title, which can be an abbreviation of *Muwaffaq al-dawla*, 'the Successful of the State,' see al-Qalqashandī, *Subh*, 5:491 (cited by Baneth, "Letter from Yemen," 208).

³ The honorific *al-Amīn* was bestowed on various dignitaries; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:10; Friedman, "Fragments of Maimonides' Responsa," 448–49; Cahen, "*Amīn*." *Al-Sa'īd* was often conferred on Jews. See al-Qalqashandī, *ibid.*; Friedman, *ibid.*, 449, n. 21. Compare Bilāl b. Jarīr's titles in page 362, n. 13.}

⁴ For instance, instead of the title Trustee (of the Government), the salutation has what can literally be rendered approximately: 'Your Trusteeish Excellency.' {In other

As far as I am able to read between the lines, the Jews were permitted to return to their religion only after the murder of the self-styled caliph. This is clearly alluded to in the remark that the Feast of Weeks was celebrated ‘*in the proper way*’ {lines 22–23}, which makes no sense in normal times. The writer did not mention the change of religion expressly because his action of leading the community into even temporary apostasy, although eminently reasonable, was religiously not without blemish. The P.S. of the writer’s namesake, perhaps a cousin, is even more outspoken.

{After minor emendations of Baneth’s transcription, it is clear that the letter does explicitly speak of returning to Judaism (see below, lines 18–20 and notes). Maḍmūn attributed these favorable developments to the ‘blessing’ (Arabic *baraka*) of Maimonides, the judge Isaac b. Sāsōn and the addressee (lines 25–27). Goitein explained (see page 518, n. 30) that they had intervened with the Muslim authorities in Egypt.⁵ As far as Maimonides was concerned, the connection with Yemenite Jewry was one of mutual support. The wealthy Jews of Yemen sent him Oriental spices valued at over 100 dinars—certainly to be used for communal needs—and ‘Sheikh Maḍmūn,’ presumably the writer of our letter, was associated with that contribution.}⁶

Translation

[A. Introductory greetings to the addressee]

(1) *In the name of the Merciful.* (2) <<[Margin (20)] The servant Maḍmūn b. David—*may the spirit of God grant him rest!*⁷>> greets his high and lofty excellency . . .⁸

words, an artificial adjectival form is employed. Note, for example, line 2, *al-ḥadra . . . al-shaykhiyya al-ajalliyya*, ‘the excellence . . . the most illustrious elder.’ For the last two words, one would have expected *al-shaykh al-ajall*, but each has an artificial adjectival ending appended, to appear more magisterial. Such forms were common in late petitions. See, for example, Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 308–9. Saladin’s famous private physician, Hibat Allah Ibn Jumay’, bore the title ‘the *shaykh al-Muwaffaq*,’ and it is likely that he is intended here. *Al-Muwaffaq* is known from other Geniza documents, some published later by Goitein, and he cooperated with Maimonides for many years. See further page 519.

⁵ Cf. Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 171.

⁶ No. VII, 66; see the discussion below, page 546.

⁷ Isa. 63:14. {Goitein correctly accepts Baneth’s suggestion that this line, written in the margin, belongs here. The name appears to be written by Maḍmūn b. Jacob, who wrote the postscript in the margin. See page 520.}

⁸ Eight lines of introduction. {See the introductory lines in II, 67a, which are similar.}

[B. Losses on consignment of pepper]

(9) I received (10) your distinguished letter in which you report the trouble (11) you encountered with the pepper carried with you. God, the Exalted, knows (12) that my intention in this matter was only to be useful to you. (13) May God, the Exalted, support you and grant you success! *Amen, Amen.*

[C. Murder of the 'caliph' and return of Jewish life]

(14) I should like you to share this with your servant {lit., 'What the servant has to share with him [= you] includes the following:': The troops (15) killed al-Malik al-Mu'izz, who had claimed to be caliph. (16) He is succeeded by al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ayyūb,⁹ the son of the Sultan (17) Sayf al-Islam,¹⁰ and his *Atabeg*¹¹ is the Sultan Sayf al-Dīn Sunqur.

(18) After his government had been settled, your servants submitted your case to him.¹² (19) He referred it to the administrative court. But your servants (20) declared that this was a case belonging to the religious court.

{Alt. tr.: (18) After his government had been settled, your servants submitted their case to him. (19) He related to them with equitable justice. Your servants (20) openly proclaimed their acceptance of the religion (Judaism).}¹³

⁹ Who was still a boy.

¹⁰ 'The victorious king, Job, the son of the Sword of Islam,' a younger brother of the murdered 'caliph.' The Sword of Islam was a brother of the famous Saladin.

¹¹ Guardian and regent. {For this office, see Cahen, "Atabak" (on 732 with reference to the Ayyūbids and Yemen).}

¹² Since a reference to the poll tax follows presently, I assume the case involved goods for which foreigners, but not local people, had to pay high customs dues. By paying the poll tax, the Cairene merchant, who had just visited Aden (see sec. B, above), and probably had done so often before, became a permanent resident there.

¹³ {Baneth's incorrect reading of two words, *qaḍiyatabā* for *qaḍiyatabum* and *ḥamalabā* for *ḥamalabum*, obscured the meaning of the passage, which explicitly refers to the writers' return to Judaism. *Shari'a* is often used in Judeo-Arabic for the Jewish religion. For the concept of *adl* in Islam and the just ruler, see Lewis, *Language*, 143, n. 60, and the literature cited there.

We obfuscated the matter before the divines {alt. tr.: put on the badge}¹⁴ (21) and paid the poll tax.¹⁵

All this happened in the month of (22) Sivan, one day before the eve of *Pentecost*.¹⁶ We celebrated the feast (23) in the proper way, in *happiness and joy*. Some *Jew-baiters*¹⁷ (24) formed menacing groups, but could not do a thing, thank God, (25) the Exalted. All that happened to us¹⁸ has come through the blessings¹⁹ of (26) our lord, the *Rayyis* Moses—*may memory of the righteous be for a blessing!*²⁰—and the blessings of our lord, (27) *the pious man, our master Isaac*,²¹ and through your blessings. May God, the Exalted, (28) grant you good reward for your munificence {alt. tr.: courage, virtue}²²

¹⁴ Arabic: *labbasnā al-‘ulamā*. But there is an extra *h* at the end of the last word. Prof. Haggai Ben-Shammai suggests (in a private communication) reading-restoring *labisnā al-‘alāmāt* (I prefer *al-‘alāma*, which is represented in the alternative translation above). This would refer to the distinctive clothing worn by Jews. See the discussion in *Stillman, Dress*, 101 ff. (110 for *‘alāma*); 114: “Already in late Almohad Morocco, Jewish forced converts to Islam were allowed to return to the open practice of Judaism as long [as] they adhered to the Pact of ‘Umar and wore the requisite distinguishing clothing,” etc.}

¹⁵ The Muslim divines, like their Jewish colleagues, were local and merchants. The administrative court was in the hand of officers from the foreign mercenary troops, with whom little contact existed. Matters affecting non-Muslims were indeed the domain of the religious court. Baneth, to my mind, misinterpreted this passage by taking *al-mamālīk*, which simply means ‘your servant,’ as ‘Mamluks.’ {As noted above, the passage refers to a proclamation of loyalty to the Torah, *sharī‘a*, not the religious courts. The payment of the poll tax retroactively for the period, during which they had feigned to accept Islam, was intended to reinstate the Jews to an uninterrupted status of protected minority, so that they could not be accused of apostasy from Islam, for which one was liable for the death penalty.}

¹⁶ Corresponding to May 27, 1202. The Hebrew word used here is not ‘Feast of Weeks’ (Shavuoth), as common today, but *‘ashereth*, as in the Talmud, which is identical with the Christian word for Pentecost, *‘anṣara*, used all over the Middle East.

¹⁷ {Hebrew *sōne’im*, sg. *sōnē* being a regular term in the Geniza for anti-Semite; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:278, 586, n. 14.

¹⁸ That is, the salvation from the forced conversion and from the devices of the Jew-baiters, who evidently accused the Jews of apostasy from Islam.

¹⁹ Arabic *bi-baraka*, i.e., thanks to the divine blessing bestowed on him (similarly in the next two lines); see Colin, “*Baraka*.”}

²⁰ Moses Maimonides the *Rayyis*, or head of the Jewish community in Egypt. The blessing following his name was normally said over a dead person, but in Yemen occasionally also over one alive, especially an eminent divine. {See above, II, 13, line 2, and 312, n. 4.}

²¹ The chief Jewish judge of Cairo. See 512, n. 39. {R. Isaac b. Sāsōn was referred to as *he-ḥāsīd*, ‘the pietist,’ in other sources. See Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 171. To the references there, add *Tabḥkemōnī*, 348, sec. 46, where he is called ‘the pietist R. Isaac, the pillar of the pietists’ (cf. Yahalom & Blau, *Wanderings of Alharizi*, 54). This makes the identification almost a certainty.}

²² See 518, n. 30. {Arabic *murūwā*. For the various meaning of this term (Goitein actually translated here ‘liberality’), see 467, n. 32.

[D. Mutual orders, including copies of Maimonides' writings.]

Your distinguished (29) letter, containing several orders {lit., 'instructions to your servant for many things'} has arrived. (30) Your servant hopes to be able to carry them out. (31) I do not doubt that you—may God make your honored position eternal!—(32) love me and are concerned with my well-being.²³ May God, the Exalted, help me (33) to satisfy your wishes, as is my duty, God willing!

(34) I renew my reliance on you for having the (35) two pieces {alt. tr.: items} sent with you co[l]lated (36) and {add: please have} a third copy made (37) in good script and on fine paper.²⁴ And have copied (38) for me the medical writings of my lord the *Rayyis*.²⁵ [Margin] (1) And buy for me any fine copies of (2) useful books you can lay your hands on and kindly send them to me.²⁶ {Add: May God make your honored position eternal!} (3) May I never be deprived of you and never miss you!

[E. Postscript by a bystander on the deliverance from the forced conversion.]

(4) The servant Maḏmūn b. Jacob—*may the spirit of God grant him rest!*²⁷—(5) present at the writing of this letter,²⁸ sends his (6) best regards to his excellency, my master. Thanks to [God...], (7) the affair with all *those Arabs*, ended happily (8) in this *salvation*. {read: The affair ended happily.

²³ As proved by your honoring me with your orders.}

²⁴ Most probably a reference to parts of Maimonides' legal code. The writer, like some other readers, had doubts with regard to many passages and wished his copies to be collated with a reliable text {undoubtedly Maimonides' original}. The other members of the rabbinical court needed a copy as well.

²⁵ Maḏmūn ordered all the medical writings of Maimonides (Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:625, n. 25).

²⁶ The writer may, among many other things, have dealt in books, as did the great trader and community leader Nahray b. Nissīm before him. But since this letter, certainly purposely, does not mention any business detail, I prefer to think that the head of the Yemenite Jews simply was a lover of books—as Yemenites are now. {On Nahray's trading in books, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:154. I assume that the Nagid Maḏmūn b. David participated in the India trade. This is implied in the above passage concerning the shipment of pepper and the reference in this paragraph to the addressee's orders. Also note the involvement of Sheikh Maḏmūn in a quantity of nutmeg and ambergris according to VII, 66; see page 546.}

²⁷ Isa. 63:14.

²⁸ {Similar wording is found in postscripts to other letters, such as II, 55*v*, line 11, or one written from Aden to a distinguished judge in Egypt, which includes an appeal for a ruling from Maimonides. The writer of the postscript in that document, Yaḥyā b. Muqbil, penned the body of the letter as well (TS 12.825; see page 540, n. 56).

May all (8) *Israel* be blessed with the sudden appearance of *salvation!*²⁹ We were not worthy of this, (9) but the *Holy One*—*may He be blessed!*—did what He is worthy of, *for the sake of* (10) *His great name*, and brought relief to the Jews in (11) the entire country of Yemen. Relief was brought first, slightly before us, (12) to the people of the mountains. Finally the Sultan came to us, (13) and the relief became complete, *by the help of God* {read: *the Creator*} and through your (14) success.³⁰ *Let them praise the Lord for His steadfast love.*³¹

(15) Kindest regards to his excellency my lord (= to you) and to all under his care (16) the kindest regards, *and to all connected with him and* (17) *subordinated to him a million greetings of peace.*

(18) Written *Tammuz 17*³² *1513 E.D.*³³ (19) *Salvation is near!*³⁴ (21) Two copies were made and sent by way of the *Ḥijāz*.³⁵

²⁹ Baneth mistakenly read *fi hānē yishmā'el* (a combination of Arabic, Aramaic and misspelled Hebrew!), instead of *ḥayabnī yisrā'el*. 'The sudden appearance,' *badh* (Baneth took *bdh* as equivalent to *bi-badbihi*). Goitein's erroneous translation followed accordingly. For the prayer, "May He let Salvation sprout as quickly as the blinking of any eye" in context of the Geniza documents, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:395.}

³⁰ Again a reference showing that the recipient had a significant role in the turn of the fate of the Jews in Yemen (see lines. 25 ff.). He, together with Maimonides and the Jewish judge of Cairo, had intervened with the Muslim authorities in that city. The allusion to his munificence means that the arguments based on Islamic law had to be fortified by 'presents' to the proper persons. {'Through success' translates *bi-sa'āda*. In this period *sa'āda* could mean the happiness associated with the closeness to God (see Daiber, "*Sa'āda*"), accordingly perhaps translate approximately: thanks to your closeness to God. On the 'munificence,' see 516, n. 22.}

³¹ Ps. 107:8, recited when saved from a danger.

³² A day on which fasting is obligatory. I have found many letters written on that fast in July: perhaps the merchants were too exhausted to do much business and passed the time in letter writing. {Abraham Ben Yijū listed the 17th of Tammuz and similar days as fasts in the calendars he wrote in India and Yemen for 1146–50, on II, 16*v* and in III, 26,. Some Babylonian Geonim did not recognize the 17th of Tammuz as an obligatory fast day; see *Otzar ha-Geonim (Rosh ha-Shana)*, 5:32, no. 34. As Prof. Shulamit Elizur has informed me, there is evidence in the Geniza that this and similar fast days were observed according to the rites of Eretz Israel. See, for example, Fleischer, "Additional Remnants," 17, 33.}

³³ July 9, 1202.

³⁴ {Cf. margin, line 8 and 484, n. 30.}

³⁵ Over land, and not, as usual, by sea, probably because all the ships of the season had already sailed. This note makes sense only if we assume that what we have is the original draft, which was destined to be retained in Maḏmūn's office. The manuscript gives the definite impression that this is indeed the case. It is written with utmost carelessness and the main letter lacks any conclusion. This draft found its way to Fustat as scrap paper: on the reverse side the Jewish calendar for the years 1207–12 is jotted down. Someone who used that calendar took the paper with him to Egypt. After it had lost its practical value, he threw it away into the Geniza. {For sending multiple copies of letters or accounts, see page 9, n. 23. The note could have been intended to indicate that this was one of the two copies. 'Two copies,' Arabic *nuskhatayn*, accordingly, is to be understood as duplicate originals of the letter. This is expressed explicitly, for example, in II, 71*v*, lines 55–56. The remark concerning sending the letters overland contrasts with the writer's comment in II, 67a, that his letters had been sent in the Kārim; see pages 519–20.}

{II, 67a *Letter from Shemaryā b. David to a Prominent Egyptian Jew*

Aden, Late twelfth century

ULC Or. 1081 J 6

While this fragment from the top of a letter preserves no details as to its main contents, I have added it to Goitein's 'India Book' corpus, since the sender's identity, the presumed identity of the recipient, the style and format as well as the information concerning sending letters in the Kārim, all illuminate data preserved in other documents in this chapter.

The sender, Shemaryā b. David, is undoubtedly the same Maḍmūn/Shemaryāhū b. David, the Nagid of Yemenite Jewry, in whose name II, 67 was sent in 1202.¹ The handwriting of his signature, affixed at the top of II, 67a (see below), appears to be identical to the handwriting of the text of II, 67; and both were almost certainly written by the same person. The text of II, 67a, on the other hand, seems to have been written by a professional scribe. This letter contains the same Hebrew invocation, *be-shēm raḥmān*, 'In the Name of the Merciful,' as II, 67, and the salutation used in addressing the recipient is almost identical.

The polite and artificial phrases used in the salutation, *al-ḥaḍra... al-shaykhiyya... al-muwwafaqa al-sa'ida*, 'his excellency... *shaykh*... the successful, the auspicious,' clearly mark the recipient as an important personage. In the introduction to II, 67, we suggested that the phrases that appear in the salutation there, *al-ḥaḍra... al-shaykhiyya... al-muwwafaqa al-sa'ida al-amīna*, 'his excellency... *shaykh*... the successful, the auspicious, the trusted,' refer to an notable who bore the titles the *shaykh... al-Muwwafaq al-Sa'id al-Amin*, and that this was likely to have been Maimonides' associate, the famous Jewish physician Hibat Allah Ibn Jumay^c, known as the *shaykh al-Muwaffaq*. Our letter was probably sent to the same individual before he was granted the additional title *al-Amin*, found in II, 67, and accordingly I suggest dating II, 67a to the late 12th century.

In any event, it is reasonable to conclude that the addressee resided in Egypt. The only information from the body of the letter preserved in this fragment is that the writer had already sent to the addressee other letters 'in the Kārim.' The Kārim was a convoy of ships in which merchants traveled and transported goods to and from India.² Since presumably all letters sent to India arrived in the Kārim, it stands to reason that this notation indicates that those letters were sent not there but to the west, to Egypt.

¹ {On the identicalness of Maḍmūn and Shemaryā/Shemaryāhū, see the introduction to II, 74.

² See 483, n. 28.

The comment on sending letters in the Kārim contrasts with the remark at the end of II, 67, that two copies of that letter had been sent overland, ‘by way of the Hijāz.’ The Kārim is called ‘blessed’ as a pious wish that it arrive safely and be crowned with financial success.³

Our letter provides an excellent example of an unusual style that appears in a number of petition-like missives from this period. After the invocation *In the name of the Merciful*, the scribe wrote *yakhuṣṣ al-ḥadra*, literally ‘greet the excellency,’ without any apparent subject. The same appears in II, 67 (there with the perfect aspect of the verb, *khaṣṣa*). Evidently only after the scribe had completed the letter did the sender sign his name ‘the servant Shemaryā b. David’ in the upper left-hand corner. This is the usual position for the sender’s name in a petition. But here, unlike the usual petition, the name, written in this case in two lines, above and below the invocation, functions as the subject of the following predicate.

Sometimes the sender’s name was written in the margin, rather than the upper left-hand corner. Such is the case in II, 67, where ‘the servant Maḍmūn b. David’ similarly functions as the subject of the predicate in the salutation at the beginning of the text. Writing the subject of the salutation in the margin appears also in roughly contemporary Arabic letters to important personages. So in a letter from the Red Sea port of Quṣayr, where after the *basmala* (comparable to *be-shēm raḥmān* here) the text begins ‘kisses the ground,’ etc., with the subject, *al-mamlūk*, ‘the servant,’ in the margin.⁴ Similarly in another petition, after the *basmala*, the letter begins *yakhdum*, ‘serves,’ etc., and the subject *al-mamlūk al-asghar*, ‘the smallest of servants,’ is written in the margin.⁵

The handwriting of the signature ‘the servant Shemaryā b. David’ at the top of II, 67a is hardly similar to the handwriting in the words ‘the servant Maḍmūn b. David’ in the margin of II, 67, even though, as already noted, they evidently refer to the same individual. It is not impossible that one person wrote both in different styles, but this is unlikely. As we have seen, II, 67, was sent in two copies. I speculate that Shemaryā/Maḍmūn b. David penned II, 67. Maḍmūn b. Jacob, the bystander who added a postscript there, might have been the copyist,⁶ who penned the second text of the letter and also signed Maḍmūn b. David’s name to II, 67.

³ See 377–78, for similar uses of *al-mubāarak*, ‘the blessed.’

⁴ See Guo, *Commerce*, 294.

⁵ See Diem, *Geschäftsbriefe*, 52.

⁶ See above, 517, n. 28, referring to TS 12.825, where a copyist uses a similar phrase when adding a greeting to Maimonides.

Be that as it may, it is clear that the name of the petitioner was added at the top of a letter or in its margin and served as the subject of the salutation, not only when the letter or name was written by a copyist but also when both were written by the sender. An example of such a text is found in II, 74, where in the upper left-hand corner, opposite the invocation, the petitioner wrote his name 'the servant Joseph . . .,' and this serves as the subject of the predicate in the text below, 'kisses the earth before the lofty seat.' The very same procedure and formula appear in several Arabic petitions from the 13th century.⁷ The poet laureate Judah al-Ḥarīzī also began an epistle with this style.⁸

Translation

[A. Salutation]

(13) *In the name of the Merciful.*⁹ The servant Shemaryā b. David—*may the spirit of the Lord give him rest!*¹⁰—(4) greets his high and lofty excellency, the most illustrious (5) *shaykh*, his lordship, the munificent, gracious, (6) 'the Successful,' 'the Auspicious'—may God make his honored position permanent, (7) renew his good fortune and crush his enemies!—greets him¹¹ (8) with profuse wishes for his well-being—and may He make it possible to meet him speedily, (9) God willing!

[B. On letters sent in the Kārim]

I inform you (10)—may God make your felicity permanent!—that my letters to you (11) have already been sent in the blessed Kārim. (12) Accordingly, the servant can dispense with (13) repeating their content in this letter. And I [. . .].¹²

⁷ See Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 372, 375 (TS Arabic 40, f. 16; TS K 16, f. 61); Guo, *Commerce*, 296, 298, 301, 302. In the text there on page 187, *yuhyi*, is probably an error in deciphering *yakhuṣ*.

⁸ PER H 86. See Yahalom & Blau, *Wanderings of Alharizi*, 274–75, where it was not interpreted correctly.

⁹ Hebrew *be-shēm raḥmān*. This invocation is found in numerous Yemenite sources. See Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 174, n. 152.

¹⁰ Isa. 63:14.

¹¹ Because of the succession of clauses that alternate between the greetings of the writer and pious wishes that God bless the addressee, the writer repeats here the verb *khaṣṣa*. The same was done in II, 65, line 6 and II, 67, line 6.

¹² The continuation is torn away.}

II, 68 *Letter from Ḥalfon (?) to Shemaryāhū b. David, Requesting Appointment as a Religious Functionary*

{Egypt, after 1213}

TS 6J 2, f. 10

Draft of a letter to Maḏmūn II (here called by his Hebrew name Shemaryāhū), asking him to appoint the writer as a cantor.

{The petitioner, whose name may have been Ḥal[fon] presumably traveled from Egypt to Yemen and took the original letter with him, and this fragment is from the draft, which remained in Egypt and thus found its way to the Geniza. On the other hand, it could be from the original, which somehow was returned to Egypt and eventually discarded in that chamber.¹ Of particular interest are Shemaryāhū's titles: "The Great Nagid, Prince of Princes, Head of the Pietists" (*ba-nāgīd ha-gādōl, negīd ha-negīdīm, rōsh ha-ḥasīdīm*).² These titles are unattested in Yemen, but in Egypt they often accompany the name of Abraham Maimuni, who assumed the title of Nagid apparently in 1213 and was the leader of a pietistic movement. Since it is highly unlikely that the Nagid's same titles and his leadership of an extension of the pietistic movement appeared in Yemen at this time, I assume that the Egyptian scribe who drafted the letter for the petitioner mechanically transferred Abraham Maimuni's titles to his Yemenite counterpart. The explanation by which the petitioner reinforces his request, is also of interest:

Your servant has no occupation in which to engage other than the service of God, the Exalted, and the service of the distinguished *community*,³ since I have poor eyesight and cannot perform work in the *majlis* other than ser[vice].⁴

¹ {As noted below, the titles ascribed to the Yemenite Nagid suggest that an Egyptian wrote the letter. The first sentence in my comment is intended to clarify Goitein's assumption that the fragment is from a draft of the letter; otherwise this paper would not have been found in the Geniza. From the fragment's appearance alone, there is no indication that it is not from the original. The second sentence raises the possibility that the original, for unknown reasons, was returned from Yemen to Egypt. This may have happened in other cases as well; see 469, n. 2.

² Lines 3–4, quoted by Mann, *Jews*, 2:338, no. 4.

³ On community service for the sake of remuneration, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:88, 541, n. 113, where he quotes this passage.

⁴ The last few words are fragmentary and their decipherment uncertain. *Majlis*, 'sitting hall,' is sometimes used as a designation for the synagogue; sources in Friedman, "Notes by a Disciple," 527, n. 21.}

II, 69 *Panegyrical Poem in Honor of Maḏmūn II*

{Cairo, after 1186}

ENA 1810, fs. 1 and 6

Long poem in honor of Maḏmūn II by a Cairene poet, who had already sung the praise of Maḏmūn's predecessors.

{On the various pages of fs. 1–6, the writer wrote drafts of panegyrical poems, in which he requested assistance from a number of notables, including Maimonides. In the latter poem and the accompanying letter he extended blessings to Maimonides' son, viz. Abraham, who was born in 1186. This allows us to establish the approximate time of our poem and ascertain that the panegyric was addressed to Maḏmūn II, who was active in Maimonides' later years, rather than to Maḏmūn I. Maḏmun is called Nagid, and the writer adds variations to the title: *Negīd 'am ēl* (Nagid of God's people) and *Negīd ḥakhmē te'ūdā* (Prince of Torah scholars). His forefathers, like him, are called Nagids. Maḏmūn's sons are blessed that they grow to become Torah scholars and marry. The writer was in dire straits and was apparently unable to pay the poll tax.}

II, J. *Shipwrecked Merchants, Whose Estates were Cared for by Maḍmūn I and His Successors*

II, 70 *Letter from the Rabbinical Court of Fustat to Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan re Estate of Ibn Jumayhir*

Fustat, 1146

TS 13 J 8, f. 17

Ed. Assaf, "Egypt and Aden," 116–19.

The document is a draft of a letter, written in Hebrew {with some Aramaic}, by the rabbinical court of Fustat to Maḍmūn I, with regard to the estate of Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Shemaryā Ibn Jamāhir,¹ who was shipwrecked near Aden. Ḥalfon is known from VI, 27 and IV, 4–5 {ca. 1131; and other documents}, as a {prominent} India merchant. In VI, 27, margin, lines 7–20, we find him in southern India purchasing pepper for his partner, then in northern India, from whom he, in turn, received Indian textiles.

Ḥalfon apparently was shipwrecked close to the coast of Aden ('in the port,' lines 3, 9). Divers were able to salvage much of his goods. These must have been highly valued, as the proposed trustee, who was asked to represent the estate in Aden and transport whatever remained to Fustat, was offered a tremendous fee of 80 gold pieces (line 25). But it is likely that the drowned man had other assets held by Adenese merchants, whom the trustee was expected to sue. According to VI, 27, Ḥalfon himself had received from his partner 200 Malikī dinars to purchase the pepper.

The dates of Samuel b. Ḥananyā the Nagid of Egyptian Jewry (1140–59) and Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan (d. 1151) allow fixing the approximate time of our document. A more specific date can be ascertained from information concerning the trustee-to-be, Abraham b. Joseph of al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia, who was traveling from Fustat to Aden. From one document, almost certainly to be dated in 1146, he is known as having arrived that year in Aden, and from another as returning to Egypt in 1149 (see 529, n. 21).

¹ {On the spelling of his family name, see below, the note to line 2.

On Maḏmūn's role as representative of the merchants in Aden and his caring for the estate of a trader who drowned, see Goitein, *Yemenites*, 39.²

{Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Shemaryā was also known by his Arabic name, Abū Sa'īd b. Maḥfūz; see 331, n. 13. If he was the same Abū Sa'īd b. Maḥfūz mentioned in II, 7*v*, line 4, written ca. 1094–6/7, rather than the latter's grandson, for example, he must have been at least 70 years old when he drowned. Goitein (*Med. Soc.*, 5:247), called attention to the surprising fact that another India merchant undertook the difficult journey from Egypt to Aden, when he must have been in his late sixties, if not older. Such arduous travel for an older man might not have been that rare. Also see above, page 255, n. 3.

The dating of this document requires further comment. While it can be established with a high degree of certainty that the proposed trustee Abraham b. Joseph visited Aden in 1146 and returned to Egypt in 1149, he, like other international traders, might have traveled there a number of times. Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Shemaryā could hardly have drowned much before 1146, however. About two years earlier he was involved in a rather sordid affair with a slave girl in the Sudanese port 'Aydḥāb. In the document alluded to (VII, 23), where he is called by his Arabic name Abū Sa'īd b. Maḥfūz Ibn Jamāhir, the date is given with the day of the week and the month, but for some reason the year was omitted. Nevertheless, Goitein's restoration of the date as equivalent to December 19, 1144 is eminently compelling; the reasons for this need not detain us here.³

The conclusion that II, 70 was written in 1146 raises other questions, however. The rabbis of Egypt address Maḏmūn with much deference as 'our prince (*sar*) and great one, our master and lord Maḏmūn, the prince and great one in Israel' (line 5), but they do not call him 'Nagid.' We cannot assume that he was awarded that title only after 1146 as we concluded in connection with II, 35 and II, 36, written ca. 1135, in which that honorific is also lacking. For a variety of reasons it is clear that Abraham Ben Yijū composed II, 40, an encomium in honor of Maḏmūn's appointment as Nagid, ca. 1140, some six years before II, 70. Unless there is some other explanation, we assume that for reasons unknown the judges in the Nagid

² The above and notes accompanying the translation are adapted from the Hebrew edition, which Goitein prepared for the text.

³ See Goitein, *Letters*, 336–37. I am not convinced, however, that the year was omitted because the witnesses had not yet signed (337, n. 8).

Samuel b. Ḥanayā's court in Egypt preferred not ascribing that title to his counterpart in Yemen.⁴

Translation

[A. Request of assistance from Maḍmūn concerning the drowned man's estate]

(1) *We, members of the court, assembled in the presence of our lord, the prince of God in our midst,⁵ our Nagid, Samuel the Nagid—(2) may his name be established forever!—in order to endeavor to deal with the estate of our master and lord Ḥalfon b. Shemaryā ha-Levi, known as Ibn Jumayhir,⁶ (3) who drowned in the Yemenite Sea, so that we might agree on what action to take in order to appoint a trustee, who would take care of the goods (4) and bring them to Egypt, since he left a minor son and two orphan girls and a widow. They require sustenance and (the girls need) a dowry for marriage, when they reach (5) their majority.⁷ We have agreed to hereby present our statement // with permission of our Nagid⁸ to our prince and great one, our master and lord Maḍmūn, the prince and great one in Israel, (6) etc.,⁹ who lightens the way for others and illuminates the unknown. 'He whose hands are clean,' like him, 'grows stronger.'¹⁰ He will not rest until he settles (7) the matter.¹¹ He has*

⁴ Sometimes the Yemenite Nagid was referred to simply as 'Sheikh Maḍmūn'; see the introduction to II, 74, there referring to Maḍmūn b. David. This would hardly apply, however, where various honorifics and titles for him and others were enumerated, as is the case here.}

⁵ Gen. 23:6 is adapted by replacing the word *nesī* with *negīd*.

⁶ Spelled here and in some other documents *jmyhr*, i.e., Jamēhir, with *imāla*, i.e., pronouncing *ē* for *ā*. {So explained also in Goitein, *Yemenites*, 55; id., *Med. Soc.*, 5:580, n. 58 (as noted there, it is spelled *jmyyhr* in TS NS 246.26.12). However, I assume that an *imāla* would reflect the pronunciation of a certain writer (or writers) in general rather than a spelling repeated for a particular word in different manuscripts. In any event, *jmyhr* could indicate a diminutive: Jumayhir, a probability demonstrated, in my opinion, by the spelling of the name with double *y*: *jmyyhr* in that manuscript (incorrectly cited by Goitein, *Yemenites*, 69, n. 15: *jmyyhr*).

⁷ According to Jewish law, only the son is a legal heir, but the widow and daughters are provided maintenance from the estate and the girls are given dowries. On the early age of marriage for orphan girls often found in the Geniza, see Friedman, "Marital Age" and for the expression 'when they reach their majority,' *ibid.*, 169, n. 33.}

⁸ Samuel b. Ḥanayā.

⁹ The scribe who wrote the final version was expected to fill in the well-known formulae.

¹⁰ {The last phrases are based on Job 41:24, 28:11 and 17:9.

¹¹ Cf. Ruth 3:18.}

been granted the merit to illuminate the eyes of those who are in the dark and to save the lives of orphans and a widow, such as these.

[B. Initial report on the drowning from Muslim merchants]

The following is our statement (8) before [our prince]: Last year we heard a rumor from Gentile traders that the aforementioned man sailed (9) in the sea, that the ship in which he traveled was wrecked and sank // in the port of Aden //, and that he departed from life leaving it for us and all Israel. They (these merchants) said that the sea cast up his body, that he was buried in Aden (10) and that days later divers salvaged from the sea some of his goods, part of which reached your hands, our prince, because of your authority,¹² (11) before the rulers (or: sultans) of the land seized the goods.¹³ On the basis of these words, which we heard from the Gentiles // at that point //, we did not consider it proper¹⁴ that we deal with and [...] (12) and take action by appointing a trustee and issuing him a power of attorney // to travel, proceed and undertake, // to take possession of the goods, because we believed that it is impossible that you, our prince, would not (13) inform us of the matter.¹⁵ We decided to wait until your report arrives, out of deference to you, and we determined that we would base on your report our decision on the action to be taken in this affair of the Jewish community.

¹² This apparently refers to Maḍmūn's position as superintendent of the port of Aden.

¹³ {The words *mi-lifnē she-tārḥū*, 'before they seized,' were not read by Assaf and Goitein, and the passage was not explained. Cf. II, 71*v*, margin, line 2 (see 539, n. 50) and VII, 18, line 5, VII, 33, lines 8–9, where it is also stated that the government confiscated the possessions of a drowned merchant. Also see above, page 12. According to Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*, 173–74, Muslim law required passing the possessions of a drowned Jewish merchant to the religious authority of his community, for delivery to his heirs, but sometimes the government confiscated the possessions.}

¹⁴ A non-Jew's testimony can be accepted in such cases. {For the circumstances see BT Yevamot 121b and parallels. Maimonides, *Responsa*, 2:410–12, no. 231, from Alexandria 1175, reports an interesting parallel concerning a non-Jewish seaman who buried the body of a Jew washed up on the shores of the Mediterranean after the ship in which he had traveled sank. Maimonides ruled that the non-Jew's account, which included a description of the dead man's face, was sufficient to pronounce his wife a widow, eligible to remarry. See below, lines 16–18.

¹⁵ There might be an intimation of criticism here for Maḍmūn's delay in reporting this urgent matter.

[C. Maḏmūn's letter and testimony of eyewitness Jewish traders]

While (14) we were still discussing the case, your letter, 'adorned with sapphires,'¹⁶ our prince, arrived, in which you reported everything that had transpired. (15) We relied //on your report// and proceeded to search for a trustee, to act on your words //your letter//. Before we accomplished this, there arrived (16) three [[upright]] //Jewish//¹⁷ witnesses, namely So-and-so, So-and-so, and So-and-so,¹⁸ who testified in our presence, saying:

We were indeed fully acquainted (17) with our master and lord Halfon, when he was alive, and //most// familiar with him. When he was cast up from the sea, we saw him and recognized his appearance and looks. His appearance (18) had not been altered, and his face and nose were intact, without change.¹⁹ We were present at his burial.

We accepted their //verball// testimony, and it is (19) c[ertified and verified] in a court record. Their testimony included what you, our prince, wrote, namely that the sultan seized whatever he seized, (20) [but that some of the goods] are deposited with you, our prince.

[D. A trustee departed for Yemen before negotiations over his fee were concluded]

After the report of your letter, our lord, and the report of those witnesses, we (21) proceeded to carry out our search and declared, "Whom shall we send? Who will go for us?"²⁰ We did not find anyone suitable to carry out this impor-

¹⁶ Song of Songs 5:14.} The expression refers to the flowery style of Maḏmūn's letter, which must have been written in Hebrew, as well.

¹⁷ {'Upright' (Hebrew *yōsher*) alone would have implied that the witnesses might have been Muslims. Muslim witnesses were certified as upright and reliable, 'udūl (from 'adl the Arabic equivalent of *yōsher*), and according to the Geonim, the testimony of such witnesses (called *mu'addalūn*) was acceptable in certain cases. (See *Otzar ha-Geonim*, 10:14, no. 32; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:367–68; Friedman, *JMP*, 2:306–7. In II, 24, lines 16–19: "the documents, which I had made out in Muslim and Jewish (courts), [...] are certified by reliable witnesses [*al-shubūd al-'ādila*].") Since a non-Jew's testimony on a Jew's death had questionable legal consequences, the writer clarified his intention, by deleting 'upright' and adding 'Jewish.'}

¹⁸ The actual names were to be supplied in the final copy.

¹⁹ M. Yevamot 16:3, requires such identification of a corpse. {Margariti, "Aden," 333, mistakenly writes that Maḏmūn identified the corpse with the help of an Egyptian merchant.}

²⁰ Cf. Isa. 6:8.

tant task. While (22) we were searching, we chanced upon our lord and master Abraham b. Joseph of al-Mahdiyya, known as Ibn Baqqāl,²¹ who was journeying to Yemen. (23) Some of us, among whom are signatories below, and some of the local elders²² and relatives of the orphans, contacted him and spoke with him about transporting and (24) taking possession of the goods held by you, our prince, and about suing, challenging and litigating with //under your authority, our prince, // anyone who is known to have had dealings with the dead man, in the fashion of all trustees (25) and agents, who take such actions. He demanded of [[us]] //them// a large fee, but [[we]] //they// offered eighty gold pieces²³ for his fee. (26) He categorically refused to accept this. //We believe that because of his great haste, he did not actually mean this; and the matter was not settled. For// when they began negotiating with him, he already had his baggage on the ship, and he had one foot on the ship and one foot (27) on the ground.²⁴ Neither he nor [[we]] //they// had time to resolve the matter. Before [[we]] //they// could blink, the anchor of the ship was raised, and he set out on his journey towards a safe arrival.

[E. Maḍmūn is free to complete negotiations with this trustee
or appoint another]

Now—(28) may you be blessed of the Lord!—if you have empowered anyone else, he is acceptable to us and empowered by us, and we consider him (29) to be a trustee appointed by the court, to undertake obligations and benefits, to impose primary and secondary oaths, and to use any stratagems used by trustees of (30) the court. If you have not had the opportunity to do so and agree with us, this man, our master and lord Abraham, mentioned above, is worthy of this, if you can come to an understanding with him.²⁵ We (31) shall agree with you and recognize him as the orphans' trustee, to supervise their affairs in Aden, etc.}

²¹ A seasoned India traveler. Abraham Ben Yijū stresses in his letter, III, 29, dated 1149, to his relatives in Sicily and North Africa, that he was sending it with this fellow Tunisian, and that only he should be trusted to carry their correspondence. Unlike the Judeo-Arabic texts, Baqqāl is here spelled in Hebrew without aleph. {According to III, 12 (datable as 1146), line 34, Abū Ishāq (= Abraham) b. Joseph arrived that year in Aden. In III, 29*v*, line 1, Ben Yijū wrote that he gave instructions to send his letters with Ibn Baqqāl, and in line 7, he stressed that his relatives should send their replies with reliable people only. For Baqqāl, 'Greengrocer,' cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:152, 426, n. 27.}

²² Hebrew *zeqēnīm* (*zeqēnē hā-āres*) corresponds to Arabic *shuyūkh*, viz., respected merchants.

²³ The Egyptian dinar is intended.

²⁴ Not intended as a literal description of his situation, but rather a translation of an Aramaic idiom {BT Gittin 59a: "One foot on the earth and one foot on the ladder."}

²⁵ Over the fee for his services.}

II, 71 *Letter from Saʿīd b. Marḥab to Hillel b. Naḥman re his Son-in-Law's Drowning*

Aden {January–February 1156}

PER H 161

Ed. Ashtor, “Journey to India.” Most differences in reading and translation from that edition are not noted. The following is based on a Hebrew edition prepared by Goitein.

The letter's writer has a very common Yemenite Jewish name, Saʿīd, but his father's name, Marḥab, has not been found in any documents from the Geniza period. Marḥab the Ḥimyarite (Yemenite) Jew, was one of the main figures associated with Muḥammad's siege on the city of Khaybar in 629.¹ Saʿīd b. Marḥab apparently served as the community's rabbi in Aden, since he declares that he clarified the background of the sea tragedy in the presence of the entire congregation on two Sabbaths (verso, lines 3–5). He functioned as court scribe and wrote and signed VI, 51–53. The addressee, Hillel the *ʿaṭṭār* (perfumer or druggist) b. Naḥman, the father-in-law of the drowned man, is referred to in II, 72, line 3 by the impressive title *Sayyid al-Kull*, ‘Lord of All.’² {Saʿīd b. Marḥab is one of the earliest known Yemenite Jewish poets and perhaps the first. At least eight of his poems have been preserved, among them the panegyric that opens this letter. As first recognized by Judah Ratzaby, he signs here with an acrostic: SʿYD BN MRḤB ḤZQ: Saʿīd b. Marḥab *ḥazaq* (= may he be strong).}³

The Nagid Ḥalfon, the owner of the ship that sank (lines 29–30) was the son of Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan. Just as his father was a shipowner (*nākhudā*), Ḥalfon, already equipped a new ship for the Aden-Kūlam (Kollam) route, that is, to Quilon, the famous port-city on the Coast of India, while his father was still alive.⁴ This ship was called the ‘Kūlamī’ (lines 49, 53, 56, etc.), since ships were named for their destination.⁵

¹ See Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, Cairo 1936, 3:347–48.

² {As Prof. Joel Kraemer calls to my attention, Ibn Sayyid al-Kull is fairly common in Arabic texts; cf. also the familiar woman's name Sitt al-Kull.

³ The poem is printed, according to Ashtor's somewhat flawed transcription, by Ratzaby, *Shīrat Tēmān*, 105. See further Tobi, *Abraham b. Ḥalfon*, 17–18; Friedman, “Date of Harbinger.”

⁴ I am unaware of any proof that Ḥalfon already equipped a ship while his father was still alive. This remark may have resulted from an error in reading the date; see verso, margin, line 1.

⁵ See page 24.}

The Kūlamī set out from Aden together with a second ship, also destined for the Malabar Coast, to the port of Barībatan, and was accordingly called the Barībatanī (lines 51, 53, 56, etc.). While the toponym Barībatan does not appear in any other document in this collection nor has it been found in this form elsewhere, the spelling can hardly be considered an error, since the writer carefully investigated the circumstances and penned the letter himself. Barībatan is to be identified with the port called Banī-Batan and elsewhere Brtqtn,⁶ which is a corrupted form of Barīfatan. According to Nainar, this is Valarapattanam or Baliapatam {Balyapattanam}, a port five miles from Cannanore, on the Malabar Coast to the north of Quilon.⁷

Though the shipowner was a Jew, only four Jews traveled on it (lines 32–33).⁸ Most of the cargo belonged to the shipowner Ḥalfon (line 30), and presumably such had been the case with his father Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan's ship (see III, 11, lines 28–29) {explicitly so in II, 21, line 8–II, 22, line 13}. Nevertheless, every Jewish trader from Aden owned some cargo on the ship (line 31). From the writer's emphasis of this fact, we infer that this may have been unusual. Perhaps investors had more faith in the chances of the new ship to survive the treacherous journey.

This letter is unique in preserving detailed testimony to a shipwreck, so many of which are reported in our documents. While the addressee had requested verification both of his son-in-law's death and the retrieval of his possessions, the writer devotes the entire letter to the former and adds only one brief sentence in the margin of verso, about the possessions, which were confiscated by the sultan. This is somewhat surprising, since in various instances Maḍmūn had been able to protect the possessions of foreign merchants, who died in Aden {cf. II, 70, line 11}.

Finally, it should be noted that while the writer politely states: "We may not make a ruling to permit or prohibit in this case before those who are greater than us, our rabbis the judges of Egypt" (verso, lines 29–31), he nevertheless emphasizes, that the ruling made in the presence

⁶ Respectively Ibn Ḥawkal, *Imaginis Terrae*, 227, note h and Dimashqī, *Nukhbat al-Dahar*, 173, in one of the variants.

⁷ Nainar, *Arab Geographers*, 26, 29–30. {Accordingly, vocalize *brybtny*: Baryabattanī.}

⁸ {The information concerning the number of Jewish merchants who lost their lives on the shipwrecked vessel on the way to India can be complemented by data from other documents. According to III, 11, lines 4–6 (written some sixteen years before II, 71), three Jewish traders went down on a boat that sank, while sailing from Eden to India.}

of the congregation in Aden (verso, lines 4, 62) is correct and should be followed (verso, lines 22, 32, 53–55). In his assessment of the relationship between the Adenese Jewish community and the Egyptian legal authorities, Assaf may have attributed too much weight to the writer's deferential remark.⁹

{The rabbinic court in Aden made an extremely lenient ruling, since all of the evidence for the shipwreck was circumstantial and, more to the point, Talmudic law (Yevamot 121a) forbids the marriage of a woman, whose husband drowned in a 'limitless' body of water, and recognizes the validity of such a marriage only post factum, if the woman married without permission. In essence, the court ruled that because of the nature of the Indian Ocean (in this location), it should have the same status of a limited body of water. Because of the boldness of the ruling, deferring to the Egyptian rabbinic court, as far as the status of the widow, who lived there, was somewhat more than a matter of good manners.}

The letter has a lengthy panegyric opening [A] in rhymed Hebrew prose, addressed to Hillel the perfumer (*'attār*) b. Naḥman by the writer, Sa'īd b. Marḥab. See II, 72, which deals with the dead man's estate.

Translation

[B. Sorrow over the addressee's losses and those of Adenese Jewry]

(19) Your distinguished letter, my lord, arrived, and it was the most perfect thing which arrived and the most satisfying to (20) come. Learning of your well-being and the good state of your affairs, my lord, gave me pleasure.¹⁰ (21) I thanked God, the Exalted, much for this and pray that He—may His praise be glorified!—(22) increase all good for you and let me hear from you good news (23) always, perpetually, through His kindness and abundant benevolence.

I, your servant, was distressed (24) very much by the causes of your complaint, your sorrow and grief over (25) what befell the *late*¹¹ Sheikh Hiba b. Abū Sa'īd,¹² your son-in-law, my lord, (26) namely that he and

⁹ Assaf, "Contacts." {See Goitein, *Yemenites*, 55; Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 47–48.

¹⁰ A stock response to what must have been the writer's standard remark that he was well, even though the bulk of the letter concerned the woes associated with his son-in-law's drowning.}

¹¹ Hebrew *hay* (also margin, line 5); see 394, n. 31.

¹² {For Abū Sa'īd (?) b. Hibat Allah (?), see 505 and n. 16.}

his partner the Kohen¹³ drowned, and that you had to undertake the support (27) of your daughter—may God protect her!—his wife, from the time he set out on his journey until now.¹⁴ (28) We have been afflicted by the same grief as you, my lord, and more so, (29) for a number of reasons: the anguish¹⁵ over the ship and its contents, since it (30) and most of its cargo belonged to our *Nagid* Halfon—*may his grandeur be elevated and his honor increase!*—(31) and there was no one here who did not have some merchandise on the ship, everyone according to his amount, (32) including me, your servant, and others. Also the anguish over our two coreligionists, mentioned above, (33) and over two of our Adenese coreligionists, who were in (34) the ship and who were married in Aden.¹⁶ So there was general grief, from every aspect. (35) But there is no stratagem against what God, the Exalted, has decreed. This is what God decreed (36) for them. This was their destiny. *Let it be far from us and* (37) *the house of Israel!* God save us from an end like this! (38) *I pray to Him, blessed be His name, that He make the outcome good for my lord* (39) *and for us and for all of Israel, in His abundant mercy and benevolence.*

[C. Three types of explanations on the evidence to the drowning]

You requested, (40) my lord, that I, your servant, inform you how the tragedy befell (41) the two men mentioned above when they drowned and that I endeavor for your sake to secure the release of (42) the young woman¹⁷ and her share in what remains from her husband's estate,¹⁸

¹³ It was unnecessary to mention his name, as his identity was well known to the addressee. One journeyed with a traveling companion, *rafiq*, who is often referred to as such, without name; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:347–49. Since in the current case the *rafiq* was also a business partner, the financial loss was greater.

¹⁴ {It is noteworthy that the traveling merchant relied on his father-in-law to support his wife in his absence. Travelers often left provisions for their wives. In this case, it might have been agreed that the son-in-law and father-in-law—who may have had a partnership—would settle the account for support after the former's return.}

¹⁵ Arabic *ḥurqa* (also in line 32), still used this way in Yemenite and Egyptian Arabic. See Goitein, *Jemenica*, xiv, note d; Spiro, *Dictionary*, 134. {Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 90; Hinds & Badawi, *Egyptian Arabic*, 200. Prof. Joel Kraemer calls to my attention that it is common elsewhere in Arabic, as noted in *Lisān al-ʿArab*, 8:327; 10:42.}

¹⁶ The two were foreign traders, who married women from Aden and settled there. {Accordingly, the ruling of the Adenese Jewish court to permit the widows of the drowned men to remarry directly affected the situation in that community.}

¹⁷ Recognition of the woman as a widow would release her from the status of one bound to her marriage (Hebrew *ʿagūnā*), so that she could remarry.

¹⁸ {The widow has no share in her husband's inheritance, but she is entitled to the money and other benefits promised in her marriage settlement.}

(43) in Aden. Be informed—may I never know of any bad day for you!—that my explanation (44) to you can be divided into three categories, since they are what is called for (45) here. The three aspects are: eyewitness accounts, (46) news heard at second hand and (47) what legal pronouncements¹⁹ there might be, whether clear-cut or otherwise, based on proofs (48) found in the statements of *our sages*.

[D. The shipwreck]

These are the details of their drowning. (49) The ship they were in, that is the Kūlamī,²⁰ sailed from Aden together (50) with the other ships that set sail. This ship and the (51) Barībatanī²¹ were in the same position. The two of them traveled together for about four (52) days out of Aden. On the eve of the fifth day, the sailors of the (53) Barībatanī heard the cries of the sailors of the Kūlamī (54) and their screams and shrieks in the night as the water inundated (55) them. When morning came, the sailors of the Barībatanī (56) did not encounter any trace or evidence of the Kūlamī, because (57) from the time the two had left Aden they had kept abreast of each other. (58) The two did not separate until this tragedy befell (59) the Kūlamī. This happened before they entered the *Maṣabb*.²² (60) Afterwards there appeared a ship's wood and furnishings, (61) which were new, on the shore of Abyan²³ and Shiḥr,²⁴ and some of them were conveyed (62) to Aden. There was no new ship with new rigging other than (63) the Kūlamī among the ships of that year, the year of the sinking of (64) of the Kūlamī. //(1) This is the report of some of our coreligionists concerning this and the report of some of the

¹⁹ Or: legal opinions, *fatwas*.)

²⁰ See the introduction to the document.

²¹ See the introduction to the document.

²² 'Funnel,' the name, which this document gives to the sea near the shore of Shiḥr. {Also cf. Margariti, "Aden," 276–77.}

²³ A place on the southern coast of Yemen, one night's journey east of Aden; see margin, line 15, verso, lines 17, 36–37, 46, esp. 36–37; Yāqūt, *Geographical Dictionary*, 1:110. {Löfgren, *Aden*, 2:88; id., "Abyan." For a ship that sank off the coast of Abyan, see III, 9, line 13.}

²⁴ A city and region on the southern coast of Arabia, about eight days journey east of Aden; see margin, line 15, verso, lines 17, 38, 46. The region is also called Ashḥār; see verso, line 4. A plural form is also used today, Sheḥērāt. In antiquity this was frankincense country, from which frankincense was exported via Ḥadramawt, Yemen and from there to the Mediterranean. See Smith, "Al-Shiḥr." A photograph of the city is printed in Ingrams, *Arabia*, opp. 217.

Barībatanī's men concerning (2) the Kūlamī as well, made in the presence of the signatories to this letter.//

[E. Return to Aden of all ships except the Kūlamī]

Also there arrived travelers in ships (65) from the year in which the Kūlamī sank and the next year as well. [Margin] (1) Travelers arrived in these two years in (2) ships from every sea: from all the lands of Hind and its provinces, (3) from the land of the Zanj²⁵ and its provinces, from the inland region of Berbera²⁶ and Abyssinia and their provinces (4) and from Ashhār²⁷ and Qamar²⁸ and their provinces. All (5) the travelers came to Aden in those two years. (6) And no news came to light of the Kūlamī or whoever was in it. (7) Not even one man, at all, (8) no trace, no report, not anyone, who could tell an (9) eyewitness account from someone who had been in it, not anyone who (10) could tell a report in his name, he or anyone who was (11) in it, except the story of the sailors of the Barībatanī (12), which was sailing with it. (13) Nothing else.

[F. Uncertain source of wreckage; certainty that the Kūlamī sank]

Some say also that the new furnishings (14) of the ship, which were found (15) on the shore of Abyan and Shiḥr, could (16) have been from one of the ships of the land of (17) the Zanj or from some other ship, which was not (18) from the ships of Aden.²⁹ *No one disagrees*, (19) rather all concur, that any (20) ship that sinks in the environs of Aden, (21) between the *Maṣabb* and Aden, never (22) surfaces, nor does anyone who (23) was in it survive at all, (24) because of the turbulence of the sea and the f[orce of its waves]³⁰ (25) at {alt. tr.: . . . and the distance from} the beach and the abundance of (26) fish (sharks).³¹

²⁵ East Africa, Madagascar, etc. {See pages 453–54.}

²⁶ See Lewis, "Berberā." Here Somalia is intended, since the 'inland of B.' is spoken of. There were close contacts between Aden and Somalia in those days, as there are now; see III, 10, line 28; VII, 23, line 7. Cf. II, 14, lines 11–12; II, 23, line 46. {Also see Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 423.}

²⁷ See above recto, line 61.

²⁸ A mountainous region and city near Ashhār, between Hadramawt and Oman. See Grohmann, *Südarabien*, 1:139. {Jabal Qamar is today part of Oman.}

²⁹ Ships that sailed in the Indian Ocean from Africa without docking in Aden.}

³⁰ Arabic *du[f'a]*. See Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:449b: "la force de l'eau"; Wharmund, *Wörterbuch*, 670b: "Anprall des Wassers." {I suggest reading *bu[d]*.}

³¹ Sharks are common in the Indian Ocean. Cf. below, verso, line 43. {Cf. above, pages 160–61.}

(27) This [Verso] (1) is what we heard and what we verified from the sea travelers, (2) from men of experience and from captains.³² And I have written this.

[G. Public enquiry]

Afterwards (3) I investigated the details³³ of the matter for two Sabbaths *in the synagogue, in the presence of* (4) *our Nagid Ḥalfon—may his grandeur be elevated and his honor increase!*—*and in the presence of the congregation* (5) *and in the presence of our coreligionists*³⁴ *who had arrived from Egypt.* And we affixed (6) our signatures to what we had heard, the report of the sailors of the (7) Barībatanī, a report related one from another, and to what we heard (8) from experienced and knowledgeable men³⁵ about the drowning of (9) a ship and its contents between the *Maṣabb* and Aden, namely that it does not survive (10) nor does whoever was in it. People verified that the water inundated the (11) Kūlamī, in this dangerous place, between (12) the *Maṣabb* and Aden, and it went down with whoever was in it. There did not surface from them (13) any man at all. Not only this ship, but also every ship (14) that sinks in this dangerous place and in the *Maṣabb*, never surfaces, (15) nor does what was in it. Should we suppose—and this is something that will never be—that someone surfaced (16) from the Kūlamī, which sank in the place mentioned above, he would not (17) emerge anywhere but at Abyan, Shiḥr or the city of Qamar. (18) Travelers journey back and forth from these places to Aden and vice versa. (19) There is no one there who says anything about the Kūlamī,

³² Arabic *ruyasā* {sg. *rayyis* = *raʿīs*}. *Rayyis* can mean ship captain, though in the sources dealing with the Indian Ocean a captain is usually called *rubbān*. {This remark corrects Goitein, *Studies*, 350, n. 1, according to which the captain is called *rayyis* in the papers dealing with the India trade. He does not cite any other example of *rayyis* for captain in the Indian Ocean. Concerning the terms used in reference to captains, see above, pages 126, 152–53.} Perhaps the writer intentionally used the term common in the Mediterranean, since he was writing to Egypt.

³³ Arabic *fataḥtu fī sharḥi*. In the Yemenite dialect, *fataḥa* can mean ‘examine, investigate.’ {See Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 364. In context, since the writer talks of the events in synagogue on Sabbath, perhaps translate ‘lectured about.’ Piamenta gives this meaning for *fataḥa ʿalā*.

³⁴ Hebrew *ḥavērenū*. This is not derived from PT Hagīgā 3:6 (69d) and parallels, *kol yisrāʾel ḥavērim*, but is rather a calque of Arabic *aṣḥābunā*. For the use of that term, see above, 202, n. 25.

³⁵ Arabic *ahl al-khibra wal-māʾrifā*, also below, lines 33, 50, 57. In Islamic law, experts in maritime affairs are called *ahl al-māʾrifā*; see Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*, 40.

nothing (20) about its survival or that of whoever was in it, only its total loss. (21) This is all that we have clarified concerning (22) *this in the presence of the congregation*. One should take action accordingly.³⁶

[H. Egyptian rabbis will make their own ruling in this matter;
for the Adenese it has been resolved]

As to (23) proof texts from the teachings of *our sages*, which are written concerning this. This is (24) what they *of blessed memory* stated in the *chapter A woman whose husband and co-wife went (25) abroad' in the Mishna: "If he sank in water, whether in (26) a finite or infinite expanse,"*³⁷ and what was written by the *Geonim* and the (27) writers in their compositions concerning this, whether a leniency or stringency, (28) and if a woman contravened the rule and married, "*in the case of a bound woman the sages were lenient.*"³⁸ This (29) and the like. *We may not make a ruling to permit or prohibit in this (30) case before those who are greater than us, our rabbis (31) the judges of Egypt—may they be mentioned for a blessing!*—because our responsum (32) will arrive there.³⁹

As far as we in our country are concerned, we have already verified (33) from the words of experienced and knowledgeable people *from earlier generations (34) until the present*, that whatever sinks in the aforementioned locality cannot (35) surface, neither it nor whoever was in it, other than wood and furnishings, which might (36) or might not happen.⁴⁰ The waves cast them only on the shore of Abyan, (37) a distance of one night from Aden, or at Aḥwar,⁴¹ a distance of about (38) three days, or at Shiḥr and the city of Qamar, a distance of about eight (39) days at most or even less. From al-Sīf⁴² to these (40) places, there being one beach to

³⁶ The missing travelers on the Kūlamī should be considered dead and their wives widows, permitted to remarry.

³⁷ M. Yevamot 16:4. BT Yevamot 121a.

³⁸ BT Yevamot 88a. The rabbis were lenient concerning the testimony to a man's death, and recognized his widow's remarriage.

³⁹ Polite rhetoric; see the introduction to the document. {The responsum also deals with the status of a married woman in Egypt. Accordingly, the Egyptian rabbis must rule in her case.}

⁴⁰ Sometimes wood and furnishings from a shipwreck there surface, see above, recto, lines 60–64; sometimes they do not, see ib., margin, lines 13–18.

⁴¹ A known city in the lower 'Awlaqī region, to the east of the former protectorate of Aden {today in Yemen; see Löfgren, "'Awlaqī"}. As we learn from VII, 58v, line 13, in this period Jews lived there.

⁴² A known city in western Ḥadramawt {Yemen} on the way between Hurayḍa and Mukalla, some eighty miles from the coast. See Ingrams, *Arabia*, 178–80 and the map in

the *Maṣabb*, it is seven days. The sinking of (41) the *Kūlamī* took place near the *Maṣabb* on the eve of the fourth day or the fifth,⁴³ after it had set sail (42) from Aden. In this situation one cannot say “*The waves submerged him*,”⁴⁴ because of the turbulence (43) of the sea in that place and the abundance of the fish (sharks). And were *the waves to submerge him* (44) and *carry him to another place*, there are there no *waves* (45) *which could submerge him (and carry him) to another place* other than to those places mentioned above, (46) Abyan, Aḥwar, Shih̄r and the city of Qamar, because the wind blows (47) towards them. But when the ships sail, the *kaws* wind⁴⁵ carries the ships (48) away from Aden and from those places towards the *Maṣabb* and India. And whatever sinks at the *Maṣabb* (49) and nearby does not surface, *ever*, at any place whatsoever. This is (49) *what any non-Jew says en passant*⁴⁶ and what experienced and knowledgeable people say about (51) the sea in those places mentioned above.

I have gone into detail at length concerning (52) this after investigations in public gatherings, so that (53) *our rabbis the judges* in Fustat—*may they be remembered for a blessing!*—might grant permission to you, my lord,⁴⁷ accordingly. As to us in our place, (54) we will act according to what is clarified and apparent to us, for permitting this or forbidding it. (55) This is for your knowledge.

[I. Conclusion and signatures]

This exposition has been written in two copies, this letter and a second (56) letter, *because of the safe journey*.⁴⁸ To what we have verified and heard from (57) experienced and knowledgeable people, as detailed above, we

that book as well as the map in van der Meulen, *Aden. Von Wrede, Reise*, 231, 254–56, calls it al-Sayf. He estimates that in 1843 it had 2,000–3,600 inhabitants. The distance between it and Shih̄r is actually some seven days. But it is strange that al-Sif is mentioned here, and the only logical explanation is that it was then a large trade center, with which the addressee was assumed to have been familiar.

⁴³ Arabic *laylat rābi‘ ḥāmis*, see recto, lines 51–52 {perhaps the night between the fourth and fifth days}.

⁴⁴ And carried him to a distant place, where he surfaced. BT Yevamot 121a.

⁴⁵ The *kaws* is the southwest monsoon wind. See Hess, “Himmels-gegenden,” 589; Tallqvist, “Himmelsgegenden,” 142–65; Löfgren, *Aden*, 1:29, line 6; “Glossary,” 56. This term is still used; cf. Hirsch, *Reisen*, 38 (cited by Ashtor, “Journey to India,” 226, n. 32). {Cf. Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, glossary, 540; id., “*Milāḥa*,” 51b.}

⁴⁶ Such remarks by non-Jews are considered reliable testimony for releasing a widow for remarriage: BT Yevamot 121b; Gittin 28b.

⁴⁷ For your daughter, the widow, to remarry.

⁴⁸ {A common euphemism for the danger of the journey. For sending multiple copies of letters or accounts, see page 9 and n. 23.}

have affixed (58) our signatures, so that action can be taken accordingly. *May the well-being of all our rabbis and your well-being, (59) my lord, increase and never decrease! Much peace! May salvation be near! Adar I, [Margin] (1) (1)467,⁴⁹ in the city of Aden. Salvation!*

- (2) All of the estate was taken by the king.⁵⁰
 (3) *The court appointed by order of (4) our prince (nāsī) the Exilarch,⁵¹ (5) and by order of our late Nagid⁵²—may he rest in Eden!—(6) and by order of our Nagid Ḥalfon (7) his son—may his (8) esteem increase forever!*
 (9) Sa'īd b. Marḥab—*may the memory of the pious be for a blessing!*
 (10) Solomon b. Nathan—*may he rest in Eden!*
 (11) Samuel b. Moses—*may the spirit of the Lord give him rest!*⁵³—b. Eleazar—*may he find mercy! May he live forever and merit life!*⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Ashtor published טסד (*tsd*), i.e., (1)464, and Goitein copied this as well. The original clearly reads טסז (*tsz*), i.e., (1)467. Adar 1, 1467 E.D. = January 25–February 23, 1156.

⁵⁰ For the original here, read by Goitein *wal-makhlaf qabada 'alaybi al-malik jamī'ahu*, Margariti ("Aden," 334) suggests reading, with the next two words: *wal-makhlaf qabada minhu al-mulk jamī'ahu bēt dīn*, which she translates: "as for (his) estate, the court has taken possession of the entirety of his property." This rendering is not tenable paleographically (*mnh* for *'lyh*), linguistically, as a translation of the Arabic (for one, *minhu* would be superfluous), or contextually (her reading severs the last two words from the continuation of the text). She considered it preferable, however, "because there is no evidence that in the Zuray'id period salvaged goods were ever confiscated by the local rulers." That evidence is now provided by II, 70, line 11, as I have deciphered the text (see 527, n. 13), where it is stated that the government seized salvaged goods.)

⁵¹ This could refer to the Exilarch in Baghdad, whose sphere of influence extended to Yemen. More likely a descendant of the Davidic line settled in Yemen, and the Yemenite Jews recognized him as Exilarch. Nos. IV, 4, 5, from 1134 {ca. 1131}, speak of a member of the family of the Exilarch, who came to Aden and was accorded recognition. The same individual could be intended here {also suggested in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:523, n. 46}. Benjamin of Tudela (ed. Adler, 47, cited by Ashtor, "Journey to India," 230) mentions two Davidic brothers, Salmon and Ḥanan, between whom the office of *nāsī* was divided in Yemen, and these may have been the sons of the Davidite, who appeared there in 1134. {In my opinion, that event was ca. 1131. Goitein, *Yemenites*, 208, rejects the possibility that the Exilarch in Baghdad is referred to here, since here we read that the man's title was *nāsī*, and concludes that in the twelfth century there was a *nāsī* called 'exilarch' in inner Yemen, whose authority extended over much of the land; *ibid.*, 56, n. 14, Goitein rejects this conclusion. In my note to IV, 5, line 2, I suggest that the Davidite referred to there might have been one of the two brothers and not their father.)}

⁵² Maḏmūn b. Ḥasan.

⁵³ Isa. 63:14.

⁵⁴ I.e., merit long life and life in the world to come. {Here Goitein took this as a blessing for the writer himself. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:182, 557, n. 305, suggested that the miniature letters comprising the latter part of the formula actually abbreviated the words meaning 'and merit life in the world to come' and saw the whole phrase as a blessing for the writer's father; but as we see here, the latter's name is followed by the blessing for the dead.

- (12) Maḍmūn b. Sālim!—*may he rest in Eden!*⁵⁵
 (13) Yaḥyā b. Muqbil⁵⁶—*may his end be good, his Rock protect him!*
 (14–25) The witnesses mentioned above testified in our presence, the signatories at the end of this letter.⁵⁷

Solomon ha-Levi b. Judah⁵⁸—*may he rest in Eden!* Moses b. Japheth—*may his end be good!*

[J. Address]

(1) *To his honor, the great and holy* (2) *respected elder, our master and lord Hillel*
 (3) *son of our master and lord Naḥman the pious*—[*may his memory be*] *for a blessing!*

(1) *From the court established in the city of* (2) *Aden. Saʿīd b. Marḥab*—(3) *may the memory of the pious be for a blessing!*

This scribe wrote and signed (with the same miniature letters accompanying his signature) a handsome marriage contract, ENA NS 2, f. 25 + NS 1, f. 13 (L49), which I hope to publish elsewhere.}

⁵⁵ A veteran India traveler. See III, 12, line 36, III, 22, lines 1, 3, 22, III, 23*v*, line 1.

⁵⁶ Muqbil was a rare name, even among Muslims during that period (mentioned only once in Löfgren, *Aden*: 136, line 16). The name means ‘Successful.’ The Hebrew equivalent Maṣliḥ was very common then. {In TS 12.825, written a few years later, the same Yaḥyā b. Muqbil, whose father was no longer alive, expressed his devotion to Maimonides; on that document, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:470, n. 16. The name appears with the definite article, al-Muqbil, a few years earlier in Alexandria in IV, 68*v*, line 6 and IV, 69*v*, line 4. According to Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmāʾ*, 2432, Muqbil means ‘the coming’; for ‘Successful’ see Hava, *Dictionary*, 585 (*aqbala*).}

⁵⁷ This verification of the witnesses is written by the first of the two following signatories.

⁵⁸ Perhaps identical with his namesake, who composed a *maqāma* (VII, 61), in which he tells that his father had traveled from Spain to Yemen, married a woman there, then returned to Egypt. Our signatory may have followed in his father’s path, traveling to Yemen on trade and was here about to undertake his return journey from Aden to Egypt. {Lines 14–25 contain a verification (often made in the Geniza papers by two rather than three signatories) of the preceding witnesses’ signatures, and Solomon need not have been journeying to Egypt with the letter.}

II, 72 *Testimony of Sitt al-Ahl d. Sayyid al-Kull, Widow of Hiba the Drowned Merchant*

Fustat {ca. 1156}

TS 12.527

Fragment from a draft of a declaration by Sitt al-Ahl d. Sayyid al-Kull, widow of Hiba, who had drowned near Aden (see II, 71), that she received from Abu 'l-Surūr Perahyā ha-Levi b. Tiqwā a certain sum from the estate of her late husband. (Halfon b. Maḍmūn probably obtained a partial release of the confiscated goods.)¹

¹ {The sum collected from Abu 'l-Surūr could have been part of a debt owed Hiba separate from his assets seized by the sultan in Aden. Perahyā ha-Levi b. Tiqwā is the groom in a marriage contract from Fustat 1155: TS 12.552+20.8.}

II, 73 *Quittance by the Rabbinical Court of Fustat for Money sent by Maḏmūn II*

Fustat {probably March 13, 1214}

TS NS J 242

A quittance issued by the rabbinical court of Fustat to the Nagid Maḏmūn II for 173^{7/24} dinars, representing the estate of Petaḥyā, a merchant drowned ‘near Yemen,’ which was salvaged by the Nagid and sent by him with a Muslim (a Qadi) to the dead man’s heir in Alexandria.

{The sum involved indicates that this was the estate of a successful merchant. This document does not state that Petaḥyā drowned near Yemen, and Goitein’s remarks are obviously based on the assumption, which he made explicit in his discussion of II, 74, that these two documents refer to the same man; see further evidence of this there.

The document gives a glimpse of a fascinating spirit of cooperation, which crossed religious and geographical boundaries. A Muslim Qadi, probably himself a trader and close business associate of the Jewish Nagid of Yemen (called here by his Hebrew name Shemaryāhū), carries to Fustat the proceeds from the estate of an Alexandrian Jew. Probably no Jewish traders were traveling that year to Fustat, so Maḏmūn used the good offices of the Qadi. See the introduction to II, 74 for the date.

Translation

(1) On Monday, 12 Nisan [...] (2) in Fustat Egypt, *situated on the Nile river, [in the jurisdiction of our lord Abraham...]* (3) *the strong hammer, the western lamp, banner of the rabbis, unique [of his generation...]*² (4) There appeared before us, *we the undersigned, our master and lord Eleazar the [distinguished] elder [b...and master and lord]* (5) *Josiah the distinguished elder b. our master and lord Japheth—may his memory by a blessing!*—the agents, whom [were appointed...and made] (6) agents to accept payment of the money left by *our master and lord Petaḥ[yā...]* (7) He left a minor

¹ {The formula in line 3 appears regularly in documents issued in Abraham Maimuni’s jurisdiction between 1213–37 (see Friedman, “Responsum on *Reshut*,” 333–34.) During that period these particulars of the day in the week and month correspond to the years 1214, 1218, 1221, 1228, 1231, 1234 and 1235.

² See the preceding note.

orphan //whose name is Abu 'l-Ḥasan³// who has the right to his inheritance according [to the Torah⁴...and...appointed] (8) them in the port city of Alexandria. They said to us:

Perform with us the symbolic act of obligation and testify [to us...one to] (9) another (?), and we collected and took payment from the Qadi al-Sadīd⁵ 'Alī b. Maḥmūd known as Ibn al-Muḥtasib⁶—may his honored position be permanent!—(10) good, verified, weighed Egyptian gold coinage, 173^{7/24} dinars, (11) Egyptian gold coins, good, confirmed, weighed, Egyptian standard *mithqāls*,⁷ which had been sent with him to carry as a trust (12) by our lord the most illustrious Sheikh, *his honor, great and holy master and lord Shemaryāhū*,⁸ *the distinguished prince (sar), the important Nagid, the Nagid (13) of the land of Yemen, who is good before God and trusted by men*,⁹ which had been deposited with him for the heirs of our *master* Petaḥyā, *mentioned above*. (14) He proceeded to send them (the funds) to them, intending that a quittance from the responsibility be issued him, for today and the future. Now perform with us the symbolic act of obligation (15) and testify to us, that each of us has released *our master and lord Shemaryāhū the distinguished prince mentioned above* and his heirs after him (16) from responsibility for this sum, which we have received from the aforementioned Qadi 'Alī—a complete, final, ultimate release. (17) Nothing will discredit it, no condition will invalidate it, and no interpretation will nullify it, a release for payment and full collection, as we were entrusted to do by [...]

³ In all likelihood Petaḥyā's father was the India trader Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Iwād, known from Maimonides, *Responsa*, 1:99–102, no. 63 (see the introduction to II, 74). As usual, a boy was named after his paternal grandfather (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:6). This boy is likely the individual intended in the note added on the back of a letter, TS NS J 544v: "Sheikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan b. Futūḥ collected 19½ dirhems." See the introduction to II, 74 on the correspondence of the names Petaḥyā and Futūḥ.

⁴ From II, 74, it appears that the dead man's brother was disappointed that he did not receive a share of the estate.

⁵ 'The Sound.' On this honorific, see 274, n. 1. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:271: "It should be noted that a Jewish *kātib*, or government official, and a Muslim judge, doing business on the trade route to India bore the same title." Cf., *ib.*, 582, n. 80, where for the Muslim judge this document is cited.

⁶ Market Supervisor, which could here refer to the Qadi's father or serve as a family name associated with an earlier ancestor.

⁷ Pleonasm is common in this context.

⁸ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:598, n. 5, citing this document (correct there: line 12): "The Nagid is called Shemaryā (Protected by God), which is the Hebrew equivalent of his Arabic name Maḍmūn (II)," etc. On the identity of Maḍmūn and Shemaryā, see the introduction to II, 74.

⁹ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:333: "In general, a person's religiosity was the measure of his reliability and probity in his relations with his fellow men... 'Being good before God and trusted by men' was a praise said of a Nagid of the land of Yemen, who had saved the property of a dead India trader for his orphans." The reference (598, n. 5) is to this document.}

II, 74 *Letter from Joseph b. ʿIwād to Ḥananel b. Samuel*

Alexandria {probably 1214 or 1215}

TS 10J 17, f. 4

Hebrew translation in Goitein, “R. Ḥananel,” 377–78. English translation in Cohen, *Voice*, 44–46. The reference to the India Book in Reif, *Bibliography*, 141, is incorrect.

This Alexandrian, Joseph b. ʿAllān {read: ʿIwād},¹ tells the addressee that his father was one of ‘the India travelers’ (lines 6–7). From the letter it is clear that the writer’s brother Futūḥ (probably the Arabic equivalent of Hebrew Petaḥya; see II, 73) also engaged in the same trade and died on a journey in the Indian Ocean. The petitioner’s family, once well-to-do thanks to the India trade (lines 6, 20), was now destitute, especially since his hope to get some of his brother’s estate had been frustrated. While his brother had died on the ship and Maḍmūn II, the representative of the merchants in Aden, had gotten hold of his possessions and sent them to his heirs in Alexandria, both Jewish and Muslim law did not recognize the brother as an heir when the deceased left children, unless he was specifically named in the will as recipient of a gift. A formal will had not been executed in this case, and all the writer’s approaches to the Nagid of Egyptian Jewry {Abraham Maimuni} and the latter’s letters of recommendation to the Alexandrian Jewish community were of no avail. The writer now requests from the letter’s recipient to give him a robe as a gift, so that he could visit the synagogue, i.e., move about in society. This short document is interesting for a number of reasons. It exemplifies how an Indian trader supported a large extended family.

{The letter’s addressee, Judge Ḥananel b. Samuel, was a member of the Ibn al-Amshāḥī family and the father-in-law of the Nagid Abraham Maimuni, referred to in line 14.}²

Appeals for assistance were addressed to Ḥananel during his father’s lifetime, when he himself did not yet have any sons but already served as a judge, as indicated by the opening of the letter: “I kiss the earth before the lofty seat.” The thawb (robe), which the writer asked Ḥananel to give him, cost in those circles at least two dinars, though it was possible to get a thawb for one dinar. A family could live on two dinars for a month. This was, as such, a most valuable gift. The writer’s only basis

¹ {See below on his father’s name.

² For Ḥananel, see pages 112–17 and the literature cited there.}

for strengthening his request is the fact that his father and brother were acquaintances of Samuel, Ḥananel's father. This leads us to assume that Samuel too was involved in the India trade, and perhaps that was the source of his wealth.³

{As his working papers show, Goitein wavered over the decipherment of Joseph the petitioner's father's name, between עוואד ('Iwād) and עללאן ('Allān), finally deciding on the latter.⁴ In my opinion, the correct reading is 'Iwād. As we shall see, this makes possible an interesting identification of the trader, and I beg the reader's indulgence in explaining the question concerning the decipherment. Because of a small hole and discoloration in the paper above the letter ו (w), it resembles ו (l). The letter י (final n) in the document, when joined with the preceding letter, resembles י (final d). However, when it is not connected, it does not resemble that letter. Since there is no such connection here, the letter in question is undoubtedly י, and the reading 'Iwād seems certain.

This 'Iwād the India trader from Alexandria is most probably the same as Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Iwād *al-tājir* (= the prominent merchant) b. Abū Sa'd, who is the subject of one of Maimonides' responsa. The query, from Alexandria, 1182, states that at that time, 'Iwād was seriously ill, with half of his body paralyzed. Two daughters of an India trader from Fustat, Abū Sa'd Ibn Karnīb, sued 'Iwād for a quantity of coins from Broach, the Indian port-city north of Bombay, and corals, which their father had given to 'Iwād, when they met in Aden, to carry to Egypt for him, a claim which 'Iwād categorically denied ("It never happened!").⁵

This suggestion greatly increases the likelihood that Futūḥ, the dead man mentioned in II, 74, is the same as Petaḥyā, the dead man mentioned to II, 73. The correspondence of the Hebrew name Petaḥyā and the Arabic name Futūḥ is attested in contemporary documents.⁶ As we have seen

³ Further evidence for this is found in the manuscript from the now destroyed Geniza collection from Frankfurt, edited in Goitein, "R. Ḥananel," 378–82.

⁴ {Cohen, Voice, 44–45, also copies 'Allān.

⁵ Maimonides, *Responsa*, 1:99–102, no. 63. For the correct meaning of this passage and its background see Goitein, "Chief Justice," 202 (cf. Goitein's note in Maimonides, *Responsa*, 3:121): "the merchant had sold part of the corals confided to him in India and received for them Indian silver-coins, which he sent back to Egypt together with the corals which he had not been able to sell." On *marjān* = 'corals,' see 170–71, n. 18, and for its meaning in this passage, see also Shy, "Terms," 222. For *al-tājir* (= the prominent merchant), see above, page 27, n. 4. Abū Sa'd Ibn Karnīb is mentioned also in IV, 60, line 4, written in 1140.

⁶ One of the investors in the Lebdi sugar factory named in I, 41 (lines 6–7), a contract from Fustat, 1239, was Joseph b. Petaḥyā al-A'sar (his father's name was misread as 'Peraḥyā' in earlier publications). The Arabic form of his name, Yūsuf b. Futūḥ al-A'sar,

(II, 73, line 7), Petaḥyā's son was named Abu 'l-Ḥasan; he was thus the namesake of Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Iwād. A boy was often named for his paternal grandfather. Due to the correspondence between these two contemporary documents, Goitein's assumption that the Nagid Shemaryā b. David and the Nagid Maḍmūn b. David were one and the same is incontrovertible.

The information from the two documents concerning the transfer of assets from an estate from Yemen to Alexandria can be presented in tabular form.

	The Deceased	Estate Sent by
II, 73	Petaḥyā b. Abu 'l-Ḥasan	Nagid Shemaryāhū b. David
II, 74	Futūḥ b. Abu 'l-Ḥasan	Sheikh Maḍmūn b. David

Since there is no doubt that Maḍmūn b. David was the Nagid of Yemen when this letter was written, it is noteworthy that he was referred to in what might seem a relatively informal way as 'Sheikh Maḍmūn.' Similarly, II, 66, line 7, written in Aden, 1199, describes how 'Sheikh Maḍmūn' was forced to accept Islam. And II, 75, lines 7–8, refers to a legal procedure in Yemen at 'the seat (*majlis*) of Sheikh Maḍmūn b. David.' This manner of expression in referring to the leader of Yemenite Jewry occurs regularly with regard to different Nagids, beginning with the first, Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan. Maḍmūn was a fairly common name in Yemen, and, as we have seen, another Maḍmūn, Maḍmūn b. Jacob, appears together with Maḍmūn b. David in II, 67. But when in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, a letter mentions 'Sheikh Maḍmūn,' without any further qualification, it is reasonable to assume that the Nagid Maḍmūn b. David was intended. I call attention to the epistle (VII, 66) that describes valuable gifts of Indian spices, cloves and nutmeg, sent from Yemen to Jewish dignitaries in Egypt. A particularly costly gift was sent to Rabbi Moses. From the names of other Egyptians named in the letter, Goitein deduced that Maimonides was intended. To this we can add that the fragment opens with a report that 'the nutmeg and ambergris' were transferred to 'Sheikh Madmūn,' probably the same Maḍmūn b. David.⁷

appears in ULC Or. 1081 J 31, according to which he purchased a house with his brother in Cairo, 1225. See also the note to II, 73, line 7.

⁷ See the description of VII, 66 in Goitein, *Yemenites*, 32 (he refers to Maḍmūn in this document—without mentioning his name—as an India trader); cf. Friedman, "Notes by a Disciple," 527; above, page 514. For nutmeg (Arabic *jawza*), see 382, n. 26. For ambergris (Arabic *'anbar*) as an import item from India, see 298, n. 5.

Unfortunately, the year is missing in the date formula in II, 73, and no date is supplied in II, 74. Since the writer of II, 74 mentions that his brother had ‘recently traveled to Yemen’ (line 8) and that the assets from his estate were forwarded to Alexandria, as attested in II, 73, the letter was obviously written shortly after that quittance. Goitein called attention to the fact that Ḥananel b. Samuel did not yet have any sons when II, 74 was addressed to him, which is proven by the good wishes extended to his father in lines 4–5, that he live: “until he sees your living male child.” In his study on Ḥananel, Goitein further concluded from this remark that in 1211 when, in another letter, greetings were extended to Ḥananel and his brother Solomon “and their sons,” Ḥananel’s son or sons were small children.⁸

This comment is evidently based on the assumption that II, 74 was written before 1211, a logical conclusion from the comparison of the wishes in that letter with the greetings in the other one. This sequence is untenable, however. The *rāshūt* formula for Abraham Maimuni partially preserved in II, 73, line 3, does not appear before 1213.⁹ Elsewhere Goitein noted that Ḥananel b. Samuel’s activity as judge, alluded to in II, 74, line 1, is datable from 1223.¹⁰

The greetings in the letter from 1211 were actually sent to Ḥananel, his brother Solomon “and their *bānīm*.” Needless to say, this Hebrew word can be translated not only ‘sons,’ but also ‘children,’ including daughters. We know that Ḥananel had two daughters, one of whom became Abraham Maimuni’s wife and, in 1222, bore him a son, David. This background adds a certain nuance to the wish in II, 74 that Ḥananel’s father see his “living *male child*.”¹¹

In a letter (in my opinion from the mid 1230’s) that Abraham Maimuni (d. 1237) sent to his brother-in-law Ḥayyīm b. Ḥananel, and in a passage from a letter someone else wrote to him, copied on the same page, Ḥayyīm was addressed with much deference.¹² He must have been a respected scholar, but a rather young man. Presumably, Ḥananel began

⁸ Goitein, “R. Ḥananel,” 378, n. 20, with reference to TS 24.41. The note was misinterpreted by Friedman, “Ibn al-Amshāṭī,” 285, n. 78.

⁹ See the note to II, 73, line 1.

¹⁰ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:515, no. 31.

¹¹ Contrariwise, Ḥananel might have had a son in 1211, who died before the writing of II, 74, which would place the emphasis in the wish on the word ‘living.’ For David Maimonides’s birth in 1222, see Friedman, *Polygyny*, 326, n. 1 and the literature (Goitein’s researches) cited there.

¹² ENA NS 18, f. 36, ed. Fenton, “Commentary,” 49–54.

his activity as judge a few years before the date previously attested. The most likely date for II, 73 that corresponds to the data preserved there, is accordingly March 13, 1214 (with the years 1218 and 1221 with rapidly decreasing likelihood).¹³ This was followed by II, 74, and Ḥayyīm must have been born shortly afterwards (ca. 1215).¹⁴ He was still active in the 1290's.¹⁵ Ḥananel's father, Samuel b. Ḥananel, was alive in 1224,¹⁶ and thus had the good fortune to see Ḥayyīm's birth.}

Translation

In God's name.¹⁷ His servant Joseph b. 'Allān {read: 'Iwād},
the Alexandrian¹⁸

(1) kisses the earth before the lofty seat of his illustrious lordship¹⁹ (2) *R. Ḥananel, the wise and the discerning, son of his honor, great and holy master* (3) *and lord, Samuel the esteemed elder, the munificent and the noble—may his end surpass* (4) *his beginning*²⁰ *and may his days last until he sees your living male* (5) *child*²¹ And may He render your praise good in this world and the next world!

(6) This is to inform you that I am *from a well-to-do family* and that my father was one of the India (7) travelers. God had bestowed upon us

¹³ See the note to II, 73, line 1.

¹⁴ Pace Fenton, "Commentary," 30, n. 13, who assumes that Ḥayyīm was about the same age as Abraham Maimuni. I intend to discuss these matters further elsewhere.

¹⁵ See above, pages 116–17, on Ḥananel's children.

¹⁶ See page 105.

¹⁷ It is not clear if the squiggle in the original is for the Arabic *basmala* or the Aramaic *b'r* ('In Your name, O Merciful,' as taken by Cohen, *Voice*, 45). It is probably not from the Hebrew *b'h*, since there is no evidence for that superscription in contemporary documents (see Spiegel, *Chapters*, 632). Goitein did not number the lines in the superscription, and I have followed accordingly.

¹⁸ For the style in which the petitioner's name, written in the upper left-hand corner, served as the predicate of the following text, see 520–21.}

¹⁹ The unusual form of address in the Arabic, *al-majlis . . . al-mawlawī*, lit., 'the lordly . . . seat,' rather than simply 'my lord,' is found in contemporary letters. {In the Arabic phrase, *al-majlis al-sāmīy al-ajallī al-mawlawī*, 'the lofty, most illustrious, lordly seat,' the adjectives and noun following *al-majlis* are given superfluous adjectival endings. Such forms were considered in this period to be of higher distinction than the simple ones. See Bosworth, "*Alqāb*," 627b (who cites the example *al-majlis al-sāmīy*). Cf., e.g., above, page 513.}

²⁰ Samuel, who apparently amassed his fortune on his own and did not inherit it from his father, is wished more success in the future.

²¹ {The phrase is taken from 1 Sam. 1:11. See the introductory remarks.

{alt. tr.: them}²² His grace.²³ My lord your father is acquainted with (8) my father and my brother Futūḥ,²⁴ who recently traveled to Yemen (9) and died on the ship.²⁵ Sheikh Maḍmūn²⁶ took his possessions (10) and sent them to his heirs in Alexandria. He (Futūḥ) had previously willed me something, (11) when he set out on his journey. That is, should his appointed time²⁷ overtake him, something would be given to me (12) from his estate. But the document was not written according to legal procedure, (13) because the two of us were in a wine party.²⁸

I, your servant, went up²⁹ (14) to his excellency our lord³⁰—*may his grandeur increase!*—and complained to him. (15) He wrote a number of letters to the congregation about me, in order that I might (16) get something to support my family, which has in it nine (17) people.³¹

In short, I am now in a state of *hunger and thirst* (18) *and naked and lacking everything*³² I ask God and you (19) to give me a *ṭhawb* (robe), with which I can enter the synagogue and hear ‘*Holy*’ (20) and ‘*Blessed*,’³³ for the sake of Dear God, after (I had) *niṣāfi* and *sābūrī* [Margin] and *mutakḥkhat*.³⁴ May you be saved from *a reverse of fate!* *May your well-being increase!*

²² Refers to his family.

²³ Made them prosperous.

²⁴ Goitein, *Letters*, 68, n. 10: “‘Openings’ or ‘Conquests, Victories,’ a very common Jewish name at this time.”

²⁵ Since the writer says nothing about a shipwreck, it is likely that his brother took ill and died on board. For cases of death on board ships, see Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*, 175–76.}

²⁶ Not Maḍmūn I, as I thought in my early days of Geniza research (see Shaked, *Bibliography*, 106), but Maḍmūn II b. David, who was a contemporary of Moses Maimonides and Abraham Maimuni.

²⁷ {Arabic *ajal*. See 362, n. 16.}

²⁸ It is strange that the writer mentions this detail, which weakens his claim. But when troubled, one is not always careful with his words. For promises made at wine parties, see Goitein, *Letters*, 255–56. {Cf. id., *Med. Soc.*, 5:39, 516, n. 47; Friedman, “New Fragments,” 117, 119–220.

²⁹ Traveled from Alexandria to Fustat.

³⁰ Abraham Maimuni.}

³¹ Here we see that even at the beginning of his term as Nagid, Abraham Maimuni took the time to assist needy people. Since the law did not allow giving Joseph part of the estate, the Nagid wrote the community leaders to assist him, rather than the judges.

³² {Cf. Deut. 28:48.

³³ These portions of the liturgy can be recited only in public prayer. The expression became an idiom for attending the synagogue service.}

³⁴ Expensive textiles, I had worn. These terms are known and found in the Geniza, and there is no need to give elaborate explanations here. {For *niṣāfi*, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:415, n. 294, 5:547, n. 138 (“silk and cotton woven together”). For *sābūrī*, see Jāhiz, *al-Ṭabaṣṣur*, 19: “the best of many-colored (clothing) is *sābūrī*,” etc.; Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 56–57; al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 358: “a very sheer cloth.” Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 60, n. 80, explains *mutakḥkhat* ‘checked.’ Perhaps ‘pressed,’ Blau, *Dictionary*, 62.}

II, 75 *Letter from Yemen to Egypt re Consignment of Pearls*

Aden, after 1205

TS 8Ja 1, f. 3

A brief description is found in Goitein, *Letters*, 216, where the document is cited as TS 8Ja.

Letter from Aden to Cairo dealing with a package of pearls, which had been the object of litigation before the (Nagid) Abraham Maimuni in the capital of Egypt and before Maḍmūn b. David in Aden.

{The beginning and end of the letter are missing, so that we do not know who the writer and addressee were. The letter deals exclusively with the package of pearls, which belonged to the writer.¹ Someone had arranged for their salvage/release² and deposited them in Fustat, in the presence of Abraham Maimuni, with Sheikh Muwaffaq ('Successful').³ The writer's business partner later encountered some difficulties in getting Muwaffaq to deliver the bundle, and he made a public report on these difficulties in Aden in Maḍmūn b. David's presence. Muwaffaq had claimed that he had been instructed to deliver the pearls to another merchant. The writer now appeals to the latter to take delivery of the pearls for him. He suspects that there may be further difficulties in getting 'Successful' to relinquish the valuable deposit, however. The Tripolitan merchant 'Alī the Maghrebi was instructed to bring the merchandise with him when he came to Aden or have an oath imposed on Muwaffaq for breach of trust. The blessing for the dead, added to Moses Maimonides' name, 'may he find mercy!' suggests that he had passed away recently; the same is suggested (as noted by Goitein) by the informal reference to Abraham Maimuni: 'the *Rayyis* Abu 'l-Munā, the offspring of our master Moses.'}

¹ {As indicated in this document (esp. lines 10–12), the pearls were exported from Aden to Egypt, where with their proceeds other merchandise was to be purchased for sale or use in Aden. Cf. 171, n. 18.

² The text in line 2 is fragmentary and breaks off after *khallaṣa al[-lu'lu']*. Goitein may have understood this as salvaging the pearls from a shipwreck, as he placed II, 75 in chap. 2, sec. J, which deals with such cases. Margariti, "Aden," 336, assumes in fact that this was intended by the text. It could, however, refer, for example, to releasing the pearls from customs (releasing pearls, that had been shipped from Aden, from customs at Fustat is mentioned in III, 42, list a, line 1).

³ Muwaffaq is here a personal name (cf. Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmā'*, 2472), not to be confused with the title *al-muwaffaq*, with the definite article; see 513, n. 2.}

CHAPTER THREE

ABRAHAM BEN YIJŪ AND HIS FAMILY

III, A. *Letters Sent to Ben Yijū by Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan*

(See II, 13–31)

III, B. *Letters Sent to Ben Yijū by Joseph b. Abraham*

III, 1 *Letter from Joseph b. Abraham to Abraham Ben Yijū, Malabar Coast, India*

Aden, ca. 1137–40

TS 12.320

The text is translated in Goitein, *Letters*, 192–97. The following is based both on that publication and Goitein's fuller original edition.

Light-grayish, thick paper, the same as that used in III, 4, III, 7 and III, 9.

This document is in the same hand as in II, 43; III, 3–6, 9; IV, 15–II, 42; V, 11 and VI, 36, also letters sent by Joseph b. Abraham. Two other of his communications to Ben Yijū, III, 2 and 7, are in two other different scripts. Evidently, the seven letters with identical script, from different years, were written by Joseph himself, while the two others were written by clerks. Joseph's handwriting, with its long, straight vertical strokes, is symmetrical and decorative and has several distinctive features, e.g., the division of the upper strokes into two, the left part of which is a serif.

On the first page, the writer left a margin about 4 cm wide, which he filled afterwards with four straight lines, written along the whole length of the paper. In Spain and North Africa, and sometimes also in Egypt (cf. the letters of Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, IV, 4, or Abū Zikrī Kohen, IV, 3; V, 1, 2) the distribution of the writing over the page was characterized by the progressively increasing indentation of the beginnings of the lines, so that the main body of writing, as well as the margins, formed trapezoids and sometimes even triangles. In this piece of calligraphy from Yemen a strict rectangular shape is preserved.

Nothing is written in the margin of verso, and only little space is left between the end of the text and the address, which is, as usual, written upside down.

The recipient of the letter, Ben Yijū, used that space for writing the main dates of the Jewish calendar for the year 1461 of the Seleucid era, corresponding to 1149/50 C.E. {III, 26}.

The recipient of this letter, Abraham b. Yijū, is the most important single figure in the India papers preserved in the Geniza. At least seventy items were addressed to him or emanated from his hands, including a poem (III, 29a) in honor of the Jewish judge of that city, Labraṭ II b. Moses II, which he might have written in his youth, while still in his native city, al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia. The preservation of so much material related to one merchant finds its explanation in his life story. After a sojourn of at least seventeen years in India and an additional three in Yemen, he returned to Egypt and married off his daughter and only surviving child to his nephew, who later became a judge. We can assume that he showed little interest for the mercantile and industrial exploits of his father-in-law (and even perhaps his poetical creations). Thus these carefully kept writings, which had been spared by the termites of India for so many years, then traveled by sea all the way from India to Aden, from there to a Sudanese port, then through the desert, and finally on the Nile down to Fustat, were heedlessly thrown away one day into the Geniza chamber.¹ Nor did they remain there undisturbed. Most of the larger pieces are fragmentary, and the total of the material preserved clearly makes the impression of being only a small remnant of the original collection. Ben Yijū was a calligrapher,² as were several of his prominent correspondents. Merchants with a poor hand, such as Maḍmūn, usually had their letters copied by professional clerks. The synagogue compound, where the Geniza was located, also contained a school, and the schoolmasters, always eager to provide their more advanced pupils with examples of well-styled and beautifully written business letters, certainly plundered Yijū's files for generations. Yet what has survived is truly priceless.³

The letter was penned in Aden, the permanent residence of the writer, Joseph b. Abraham. This is stated expressly in line 14, and is implied by the context of the whole letter. All seven other letters written by him to Ben Yijū (III, 2–8), as well as those addressed to the same by

¹ {See page 61, n. 31.

² See page 632, for documents written in his hand.

³ This paragraph is based on Goitein, *Letters*, 186; see further pages 52–89.

Maḏmūn (II, 13–20, 23–25, 27) and Khalaf b. Isaac (III, 10–16), were sent to the Malabar coast of southwest India.⁴

Joseph b. Abraham must have been one of the prominent merchants of Aden, since the distinguished gathering described in IV, 5 (lines 15, 28, 51) took place in his home.⁵ The style of his letters to Ben Yijū, to Abu Zikrī Kohen, the representative of the Cairene merchants (V, 9–12), and to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, another Cairene notable (IV, 15–II, 42) was common in correspondence between equals. He traveled to Cairo (V, 2, line 19) and most probably also to Dahbattan in southern India (cf. III, 10, line 17) where reference is made to him as a *nākhudā*, a shipowner.⁶ Since he speaks repeatedly about measures to be taken against defaulting merchants (the *kārdār* or manager, who is threatened with excommunication, see below lines 13–17; the Baghdādī, III, 4, ll, 18 ff.; Fawfalī, III, 9*v*, line 1), he may have held some position of authority in the community. {Chap. 2, sec. F is devoted to Joseph, who was the cousin of Maḏmūn, Nagid of Yemen.}

In most of his letters, Joseph b. Abraham ordered copper (or bronze) vessels from India; he sent old ones or bars of copper and tin (III, 1, lines 11–13, 22–verso, line 3.; ib., lines 7–9, 19–20; III, 2, lines 1–21; III, 3, line 2. 5–10; III, 4, lines 2–8; cf. also III, 12, lines 38–39; III, 23 margin, lines 6–7). He also dealt in iron (III, 9, lines 12–21; margin, lines 11–18; III, 25, line 15) as well as such Indian spices as pepper (II, 16, lines 29–30; III, 7, line 8; III, 9, margin, lines 1–6; III, 22, line 6; III, 25, line 5), cardamom (III, 1*v*, line 6; III, 3, line 4), betel nuts (III, 1, lines 17–20) and ginger (III, 22, line 6). There is also one reference to textiles (IV, 15–II, 42, lines 9–11, 29, margin, lines 12–14).

The quantities of vessels ordered are small. Their frequent mention (also in the letters of Maḏmūn and Khalaf of Aden), the fact that some copper is sent for sale in India (III, 4, line 7) as well as the urgency attached to these orders (III, 3, lines 6–10) suggest that they were destined not only for private needs, but were also for local customers. The detailed description of many vessels (cf. especially the lamp mentioned below, margin, lines 2 ff.) reflects a civilization of high aesthetic standards. (Cf. also III, 4, line 7.)

⁴ No. III, 8, seems to have been sent by Joseph, from Mangalore, India, to Ben Yijū, inland Yemen. Also see III, 9.

⁵ Joseph b. Abraham hosted members of the Jewish community in Aden, in which affairs of interest to the entire community were discussed.

⁶ This could refer to someone else; see pages 151 and 598, n. 14.

The approximate date of our letter can be fixed with some certainty. The addressee, Ben Yijū, traveled to India in 1131/2 (II, 20, line 9). Rāmishṭ, whose ships are referred to (lines 7–8), died in April 1140 (cf. pages 145–46). Consequently, our letter must have been sent sometime between 1132–40. To be more precise, it was preceded by III, 4, for there (line 13) Abū ‘Alī b. Ṭayyib is recommended to Ben Yijū as a newcomer to India, while here (line 11), he brings merchandise back from there. It is later than III, 2: there (lines 7–9) Joseph explains at length what a *z̄v̄khuwān* is; here (lines 11–13), he assumes that Ben Yijū is familiar with it. Furthermore, III, 3 seems to contain a reminder of orders placed in III, 2, which were carried out in III, 4. The sequence of these letters thus is as follows: III, 2, 3, 4–6, 1. No. III, 2, shows Ben Yijū already well established in the copper industry in India. Since the letters are separated from each other by approximately one year, III, 1, must have been written between 1137–40.⁷

The calendar for the Jewish year corresponding to 1149/50 jotted down by Ben Yijū in the blank space of the verso does not prove that the letter arrived in India at that time. In 1149, Ben Yijū had already left India for Aden (see III, 29). Similar notations for the years 1146–49 were made by Ben Yijū on the back of II, 16 {cf. III, 10a; III, 51}. Paper was scarce, and when, around 1145, the Tunisian India merchant wanted to copy a calendar for the four next years, he used free space he found on old letters that he no longer needed.

Translation

[A. Losses and arrivals]

(1) *In Your name, O Merciful.*

(2) The letter of your excellency, the illustrious elder, my master, has arrived. It was the most pleasant letter that came (3) and the most delightful message that reached me. I read and understood it and was pleased to learn that you were well (4) and your affairs successful, for

⁷ Ben Yijū was established already in India some time before October 17, 1132; see III, 17. For the sake of clarity, I note that the dating of III, 1 and the documents associated with it are dependent on the logical assumption that the ships of Rāmishṭ—who owned a fleet in partnership with his son and son-in-law—would not be referred to as such after his death.}

which I praised the Lord very much. Now, I ask God to (5) reunite us {lit., 'facilitate our reunion'} under the most pleasant circumstances and in the best of spirits, through His favor and mercy, (6) God willing.

You, my master—may God make your honored position permanent!—wrote that you kindly sold (7) the silk⁸ and sent goods for {alt. tr.: purchased with} its proceeds and that you sent them in the ships of Rāshmit (!).⁹ (8) I {alt. tr.: we} learned (however) that Rāshmit's two ships were total losses. May *the Holy one blessed be He* (9) compensate me {alt. tr.: us} and you! Do not ask (me), my master, how much I was distressed by the loss of the cargo belonging to you. (10) But the Creator will {alt. tr.: may the Creator} compensate you soon. In any case, there is no counsel {lit., 'stratagem'} against (11) the decree of God.¹⁰

All the copper (vessels)¹¹ that you sent with Abū Alī¹² (12) arrived, and the 'table-bowl' {alt. tr.: 'table jug'}¹³ also arrived. It was exactly as

⁸ Silk was sent from the West to India, almost like gold, as a means of payment, see below verso, line 3; III, 4, line 12; III, 10, line 48; III, 11, lines 32 and 51; III, 12, line 18. {See also II, 55, line 42, III, 6, line 5; above, page 20; the entry 'silk' in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:107; Goitein, *Letters*, 357.}

⁹ The writer, a native of Aden, had difficulties pronouncing Persian names; thus he writes Rāshmit for Rāmishṭ and *kārdāl* (line 13) for *kārdār*. Details about Rāmishṭ, whose ships are frequently mentioned in our papers, are found in pages 145–46.

¹⁰ An Arabic version of Prov. 21:30. {It is also found, e.g., in II, 45a, line 23; II, 61, margin, line 2; II, 71, line 35.}

¹¹ Arabic *naḥās*. The writer seems to use this word (cf. margin, line 3, verso, lines 5, 13, 19, 20) and *ṣufr* indiscriminately. *Naḥās* in verso, lines 19–20, clearly refers to *ṣufr* in recto, lines 24–26. Therefore, when he wants to say 'yellow copper,' i.e., with a greater alloy of tin, he uses the tautology *ṣufr aṣfar*, line 26. Brass is hardly ever traded in bars, at least when coming from the West. The Arabic terms cover copper and brass or bronze. The vessels were made of an alloy of copper and tin (lines 26–28), i.e., they were made of bronze. We use 'copper' in order to reflect the usage of the original. Richard Ettinghausen drew my attention to Aga-Oglu, "Islamic Terminology," 218 ff., who arrives at similar conclusions while discussing Islamic literary sources. {Arabic *ṣufr* is defined as bronze in Baer, "*Ma'din*," 983a, and as brass in Dietrich, "*Maghnāṭis*," 1167a and id., "*Nuḥās*," 111b.}

¹² No doubt identical with Abū 'Alī b. Tayyib al-Miṣrī, a Jewish India trader, whom we find as a novice on his way from Aden to India with presents and a recommendation by our writer to Ben Yijū in III, 4, lines 13; verso, 23. In III, 10v, line 5, he transports silk on the same route. In III, 22, line 4, he travels back from India to Aden {also mentioned in III, 6, line 4}. To be sure, a Jew bearing exactly the same name lived in Egypt a hundred years before the time of our letter (see Mann, *Jews*, 1:111; 2:122).

¹³ Arabic *zrkw'n*, otherwise (line 29 and margin, line 1 {III, 2, lines 8, 10}) written *zrkw'n* and in III, 19, line 26 and III, 23, margin, line 6 (twice) {and III, 24, lines 12, 36} *zrkw'n*. It is certainly composed of Persian *zūr* 'jug' and *khawān* 'table,' although I was not able to find it in any dictionary. In III, 2, lines 8 and 10, which must be earlier, Joseph b. Abraham explains it, while ordering some bronze vessels from Ben Yijū: 'a *marfā'* {or *mirfā'*} decorated with wickerwork, which we call *z*.' The word *marfā'* is still commonly used in Yemen for a drum made of copper, as well as for a big bowl for

I wished¹⁴—may God give you (13) a good reward and undertake your compensation (for only He is able to do it adequately)!¹⁵

[B. Excommunication of a tardy debtor]

You, my master, mentioned that you approached the *kārdāl*¹⁶ gently, (14) in order to get something for us back from him. Perhaps you should threaten him that here in Aden we excommunicate¹⁷ (15) anyone that

keeping water, formed approximately like this ☉; see III, 2, line 8. Thus the *zīkhuwān* was a bowl in which water was kept on the table. {In III, 19, 23, 24, all penned by Ben Yijū, it is written as two words, *zyr 'kw'n*. This is particularly clear in III, 19, line 26, but also discernable in the other two texts. Perhaps Ben Yijū took the second word, *'kw'n* to be the Arabic *ikhwān* and understood the expression literally as 'jug for brothers.' In his various writings Goitein translated alternatively 'table-bowl' or 'table jug.' The latter appears in his last discussion of the term in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:147 (see ib., 393, 463; the definition in the Index, *Med. Soc.*, 6:68, is erroneous). Accordingly I have supplied here 'table jug' in brackets and in subsequent translations without brackets. For *marfā'* in Yemenite Arabic, cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 185.}

¹⁴ This may be a reference to III, 2, lines 8–10. {For *ṣarīf* 'exactly,' cf. 731, n. 30.

¹⁵ The last words 'and undertake,' etc. render *wa-tawallā kifā'ahu*. *Kifā'* means both compensation and sufficiency. As variations of the phrase in other documents prove, the first meaning was clearly intended. The words that Goitein added in parenthesis here may have been intended to reflect the second meaning.}

¹⁶ The *kārdār*, a Persian word (see above, the note to line 7, on the misspelling), meaning literally, 'one who has work.' Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 1002: 'a money-maker.' Haim, *Dictionary*, 592: 'a manager.' {A *kārdār* ('the *kārdār*') is mentioned in India in VII, 70 (TS AS 156, f. 238, line 13); see Goitein, "Portrait," 460, where he translates 'the manager.'}

¹⁷ This fraudulent 'manager' is threatened here with the religious ban or the exclusion from the Jewish community. The merchants of Aden included several scholars, who were qualified to pronounce the ban. Already in Talmudic times, the ban was used as a means of coercion against defaulting debtors, cf. BT Mo'ed Qaṭan 17a. This affair is treated in greater detail in III, 9, line 20; verso, lines 3–6 (see there); III, 12, lines 26–34; III, 18 sec. a, lines 2–5; sec. e, line 1. *Nshmt* is an Arabic form of Aram. *shamattā* (= *shamadtā*), 'ban,' as proven by *shamāt* in lines 15–16. Arabic *shamāt* denotes 'malicious joy at the misfortune of others, Schadenfruede' (used in this sense in II, 20v, line 6) {there *shamāta*, which means the same; in III, 32, line 24, *shamt*} and has nothing to do with the meaning intended here. {In Judeo-Arabic the word for the ban is often Arabicized and spelled *samār*; see Blau, *Emergence*, 163. For the verbal form *smt*, see Ratzaby, "Geniza Words," 228. Ghosh (*Antique*, 276, 383; id., "The Slave," 207) cites a suggestion by Prof. G. Khan that here *shmt* represents a metathesis of Arabic *shīm*, which should be translated 'insult,' 'defame' and refers to some form of public defamation or 'rogues gallery.' From the linguistic and historical points of view, this seems rather unlikely, in my opinion. Ghosh assumed that the *kārdār* was not Jewish and subsequently concluded that formal excommunication would hardly be appropriate. Margariti, "Aden," 340–41, also concludes that the *kārdār* was not Jewish and cites as evidence the curses showered on him by Khalaf b. Isaac (III, 12, line 27 [this proves nothing; see 617, n. 17]) and the fact that his name is not mentioned. She suggests that the use of the word 'excommunication' may have been intentional but in a metaphorical sense, namely to exclude him from the community of

owes us something and does not fulfill his commitments. Maybe, he will be afraid of the excommunication. (16) If he does not pay, we shall issue an official letter of excommunication (17) and send it to him, so that he will become aware of his crime.¹⁸

{Alt. tr.: You, my master, mentioned the affair of the *kārdāl*. You approach him, my master, with wily graciousness¹⁹ (14) and ask him to pay us. My master, were you to threaten him that we excommunicate in Aden (15) whoever does not pay a debt to us, perhaps he would fear the excommunication. (16) If he does not deliver anything/merchandise to us, we shall write²⁰ a real letter of excommunication (17) and send it to him, until he attends to his disgraceful behavior.}

[C. Various orders, especially for bronze vessels]

The red betel nuts arrived, (18) as well as the two washbasins²¹—may God give you a good reward! Please do not send me any more red (19) betel nuts, for they are not good. If there are to be had white fresh betel nuts, it will be (20) all right.²²

reputable merchants and fair play. On the likelihood that the *kārdār* was Jewish, see 635, n. 17. I doubt whether the expression *kitāb shamāt ḥaqīq*, 'a real letter of excommunication,' would have been used unless it had been intended as such.}

¹⁸ A person under the ban is religiously bound to refrain from any social intercourse with the community. Therefore, formal notification must be sent to him. {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:331 (mistakenly referring to the affair of the Baghdādī merchant, dealt with in III, 4, lines 19 ff.; see there 579, n. 38), 599, n. 17, where it is suggested that a conditional letter of excommunication had been sent; perhaps this was derived from the threat mentioned in line 14. On the contacts between the Jewish court of Aden and India, see 196, n. 1; cf. 633–34.

¹⁹ Arabic *yatalattaf*. *Talattuf* is an important concept in Maimonides' *Guide* 3:32, and is translated by S. Pines, 'wily graciousness' or 'gracious ruse.' See *Guide* (Pines), lxxii–lxxiv; *Guide* (Schwarz), 532, n. 2.

²⁰ Arabic *wa-in lam...wa-illā*, literally, 'and if (he does) not..., and if not.' The word *wa-illā* in the apodosis is pleonastic. The same occurs in II, 75v, lines 10–11: *wa-in lam yafal yusallim 'alaykim shay wa-illā yuhlifuhu yamīn*, 'if he does not agree to pay you anything, he [PN] will impose an oath on him.' For the pleonastic *wa-illā* in the apodosis, see Blau, *Grammar*, 259, who also cites an oath. In my opinion, these examples point to the use of this pleonasm as an emphatic, regularly associated with oaths.}

²¹ Arabic *jafna*; also in verso, line 8. From the diminutive of this word, Spanish *jofaina* is derived, which means the same. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:142, 391, n. 23, where *jifān lil-'ajin*, wooden kneading troughs, are mentioned. Maimonides in his commentary to M. Shabbat 17:5 (Shailat, *Shabbat*, 152) defines kneading trough ('*arēvā*): *jafna*. According to al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, 424, a *jafna* is 'the largest kind of *qaṣ'ah* (...), a large bowl from which wine is ladled'; cf. ib., 349. For *qaṣ'a*, see 629, n. 10.

²² Arabic *lā ba's*, lit., 'that's not bad,' is used by the writer as an understatement to express his approval. Cf. verso, line 1, where it is translated 'let it be so.' See Blau, *Diction-ary*, 30: 'excellent.'}

Please do not send me anything {add: else}, whether betel nuts (21) or any other goods you acquire for me, in partnership with anyone, but specify what belongs to each person and (for) every (22) item purchased.²³ {Add: This is the greatest favor you can do for me.}

I am sending you (23) a broken ewer and a dipper²⁴ that together weigh seven pounds less a quarter. Please (24) make me a ewer of the same measure from its copper,²⁵ for its copper is good copper. The (25) weight of the ewer should be five pounds exactly.²⁶

I am sending also eighteen and a quarter pounds (26) of good yellow copper in bars and five pounds of Qalī ‘lead’²⁷ in a big mold²⁸ (27) and

²³ Evidence of the extent to which the writer opposed partnerships can be found in III, 2, lines 17–18, III, 3, lines 11–12, where he asked Ben Yijū to keep his son’s business dealings separate from his own. This could have been a unique request, intended to train the young man in independent dealings. The Yemenites in general, however, seem to be similarly minded. Thus their proverb has it: “If partnership were any good, one would have partnership in women” (Goitein, *Yemenica*, 39, no. 201). However, big business was done in Aden as elsewhere, through partnerships, see II, 32, lines 23, 32, 37.

²⁴ Arabic *karnīb*, or *kirnīb*, from Greek *chernips* ‘water for washing the hands and the vessel containing it.’ {According to Diem, *Dictionary*, 188, n. 199, the word is derived from the Greek *kbernibeōson/kbérnibon*, which means ‘vessel for water to wash the hands, basin.’} In Arabic it denotes a gourd and also a somewhat round vessel. The same translation is found in *mada‘ah*, which in Yemen is a gourd and then the brass or glass receptacle of the water of the hookah, or water pipe {cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 462}. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:461a, explains *karnīb* as ‘courage vide servant de bouteille.’ This word often occurs in lists of household utensils brought in by a bride, and there it is always connected with other copper utensils used in the bathroom, especially the *saṭl* or *ṣaṭl*, a pail (from Latin *situla*, a bucket, see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:653). {Details in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:140. For the ewer, Arabic *ibrīq*, see 410, n. 16.

²⁵ Arabic *ṣufī* (also in continuation here and in line 26, margin, line 1). For the meaning of this term, see the note to line 11.

²⁶ Arabic *khālīs*, lit., ‘clean.’ The same term for an exact weight appears in III, 4, lines 4, 6.}

²⁷ Arabic *raṣāṣ qalī*. In Streck “*Qalī*,” the word is derived from Kalah on the peninsula of Malacca, which was famed for its tin mines. This derivation, which is orthographically difficult, has become even more doubtful now that we learn from the Geniza papers published here that tin was sent from the *West* to India. In addition to Qalī we have here Egyptian tin, see II, 16v, line 11; II, 24, line 2. It therefore stands to reason that the derivation from Qalī in the district of Cabra in Spain (Yāqūt, *Geographical Dictionary*, 4:162, lines 15 ff.) is verified. In III, 19, lines 15 and 22, *Qalī* alone (without the determinant *raṣāṣ*) means tin. For a similar usage see Streck, “*Qalī*.” I put ‘lead’ in quotation marks, for ‘Qalī lead’ was a regular term for tin in the Muslim East. {Qalī ‘lead’ is a commodity exported from India to Aden in III, 28a, line 5. Accordingly, the eastern option for the toponym remains viable. While it is curious that here it was sent from the *West* to India, it is feasible that a Malaccan export item was available at this time in Aden but not on the Malabar coast of India. For *qalī*, ‘tin,’ see also Shy, “Terms,” 210.}

²⁸ Tin obviously was traded in molds of different size, *qālab*; see below verso, line 13, where the same word is used with regard to cheese.

a piece of Egyptian 'lead' (in the form of) a shell.²⁹ Please put the bars, (28) the 'lead', and what remains from the manufacture of the ewer together and have made for me, your servant, (29) {add: [[a lamp]]} two table jugs for two platters, each table jug being of [Margin] (1) seventeen *fills*,³⁰ of the same form {alt. tr.: make}³¹ as the table jug you sent me; they should be of good workmanship.

[D. Detailed description of a lamp ordered]

From the rest of all the copper (*sufr*) make me (2) {add: a lamp, it should be;} an attractive lamp. Its column should be octagonal and stout; its base should be in the form³² of a lampstand with strong (3) feet. On its head there should be a copper (*naḥās*) lamp with two ends for two wicks, which should be set on the end of the column so that it could move up and down. (4) All the three, the column, the stand and the lamp, should be separate parts. If they could [Verso] (1) make the feet in spirals, let it be so, for this is more beautiful.³³ The *late*³⁴ (2) Abu 'l-Faraj

²⁹ Arabic *mahāra*. Egyptian tin obviously was sold in a shape similar to a shell. These shells certainly had a fixed volume; however, Dozy (*Supplément*, 1:334b) defines only the plural of the word, *maḥā'ir*, as a weight.

³⁰ From III, 18, sec. b, line 3, sec. c, line 6, III, 19, lines 4–5, it is evident that a *fill* was $\frac{1}{100}$ of a *farāsila*. The *farāsila* had different values according to the merchandise being weighed. Hinz, *Islamische Masse*, 9, cites (for Hormuz on the Persian Gulf during the 16th century) weights varying from 10.395–12.5 kg. Löfgren, "Glossary," 49, notes, mostly according to modern South Arabian sources, 10–17 kg. Thus, a *fil(l)* would be at least 10 gr. I have not found mention of this weight in literary sources. However, Yemenites told me that silversmiths of the older generation kept in their boxes oval metal pieces on which there were inscriptions and which they called *fill*. The word might be derived from the Persian *pul*, a small coin, see Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 260. {For the Indian weight *pala*, see Maqbul Ahmad, *India*, 153; Basham, *India*, 503 (approximately 37.75 gr). Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 370, describes the *farāsila* as a South Arabian weight, 5 kg. or 10–70 (!) kg. See further 616, n. 13.

³¹ Arabic *'amal*, as distinguished from *shaghbl* ('workmanship'), used in the continuation.

³² Arabic *shakhḥ*. See Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 248: 'vessel of brass', 'figure'.

³³ The lamp described here in such detail is very similar to the 'lamp d'usage domestique' No. 39.85.2, which was kindly shown to me by Mlle. LeScour in the Musée de l'Homme, Paris, sec. Asie. It was acquired in Dindigul, north of Madura in Southern India, not very far from the Malabar Coast, where the recipient of this letter lived. The famous bronze lamps of Southern India, mostly representing a female figure holding in her outstretched arms receptacles for oil, were objectionable to Jews and Muslims for religious reasons. Perhaps the simple form described in this letter and represented by the 18th century lamp from Dindigul was introduced to India by coppersmiths brought to India from the West, from a Muslim country.

³⁴ {Hebrew *ḥay*; see page 394, n. 31.}

al-Jubayl³⁵ made a lamp of such a description. Perhaps this will be {alt. tr.: can be made} (3) like it.³⁶

[E. Additional orders]

This year, I did not succeed in sending gold³⁷ or silk.³⁸ (4) Instead, I am sending currency,³⁹ 20 Malikī dinars, old dinars of good (5) gold.⁴⁰ Please pay with it {alt. tr.: them} the fee for the labor of the coppersmith⁴¹ and with the rest buy me (6) a {add: small} quantity of ‘eggs’⁴² and cardamom, and if this is not available,⁴³ anything else, which God—may He be praised!—makes available. (7) And, please, send everything with the first ship sailing.

Please buy me (8) two washbasins, of average size, somewhat larger than those you sent me, and a large washbasin, which holds (9) two water skins⁴⁴ of water, measuring two *siqāyas*.⁴⁵

³⁵ This man {from Jubayl, Lebanon} figures in VII, 10.

³⁶ {This passage is quoted in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:134–35. Attention is called to the different terms used here, for which Goitein’s discussion *ibid.*, 133–36 and accompanying notes should be consulted: *manāra* (recto, line 29, margin, lines 2 [x 2], verso, line 2), translated ‘lamp,’ which is the entire light fixture or candelabrum; *‘amūd* (margin, lines 2–4), ‘column’; *qā‘* (margin, line 2), ‘base,’ to be fashioned like a *ḥasakat al-sham‘a* (margin, line 2), ‘lampstand’ (Goitein, *ibid.*, 133, ‘candlestick’), and in the continuation (margin, line 4) simply called *ḥasaka*; on the head, the *ṣirāj* (margin, lines 3–4), also translated here ‘lamp,’ which held the wicks and oil. For the ‘*ṣirāj* with two ends for two wicks’ (margin, line 3), cf. the fragmentary illustration of a candelabrum on TS 12.659v, a facsimile of which appears at the end of Friedman, *JMP*, 2, no. 6; also see references to an illustration in cf. Sadan, “*Manāra*.”}

³⁷ Meaning Egyptian dinars.

³⁸ {See recto, line 7.}

³⁹ Arabic *sabīb*; the same word appear in the writer’s letters III, 4v, line 17 and VI, 36, line 16. I take it as a derivative of *tasabbaba*, ‘to do business.’

⁴⁰ The Malikī dinar was introduced in 479/1086, about 60 {50} years before this letter was written.

⁴¹ Arabic *naḥḥās*; see III, 19.

⁴² A kind of cardamom; see II, 16v, line 20. {See pages 369–70, where it is explained that it designates a form of iron.}

⁴³ Arabic *in lam yattafiq*. The same phrase is in III, 3, line 13, where cardamom was ordered. {The phrase is also used in III, 2, line 15; III, 11, line 33.}

⁴⁴ Arabic *jahla*, a big bag made of a skin and used for keeping water, as here and in III, 2, line 9; III, 15, line 35; or melted butter, III, 21b, lines 3–4, 12; or fruits, III, 3, line 4. {It is also used for various pickled foods and oil, e.g., III, 8, lines 4 ff. According to Pianta, *Dictionary*, 61, *jahla* is also a glass bowl of a hookah, a large water vessel or a terra cotta jug or jar in the shape of a bottle with a narrow neck.}

⁴⁵ ‘A measure, particularly for water or wine’: Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 705a, *Wahrmund*, *Wörterbuch*, 908b; but I was unable to find an exact definition.

[F. Presents sent]

I am sending you what has no importance or value, (10) namely two *rubā'iyas*⁴⁶ of white sugar; a bottle, in a tight basket {alt. tr.: firmly set in a basket/in a basket—of *muhkam* glass},⁴⁷ filled with raisins;⁴⁸ and in (11) a *mazza*⁴⁹ a pound of Maghrebi kohl,⁵⁰ a pound of costus,⁵¹ a pound of vitriol,⁵² half a pound of litharge,⁵³ (12) three ounces of *ilk* gum,⁵⁴ and

⁴⁶ For this measure, see the note to II, 14, line 21. {For the sake of consistency I transcribe *rubā'iyya*, but Joseph b. Abraham always writes *rubā'iyya*, with a short *a*.}

⁴⁷ See 345, n. 52.

⁴⁸ Sometimes raisins were mixed with sugar (see II, 14, line 21; II, 20v, line 9; II, 24, line 9; II, 26, line 11). Raisins were not always available in Aden (see III, 4, line 17). These were presents for the children.

⁴⁹ Cf. III, 3, line 18, where five similar presents are forwarded in such a receptacle and III, 4, lines 2 and 12, where copper is sent in it. This is obviously a Yemenite word, probably an earthen vessel. In contemporary southern Yemen *mazzah*, pl. *mazā'iz*, denotes the clay receptacle for the water of the water-pipe used by the poor. {Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 464.}

⁵⁰ Khalaf b. Isaac sent the same quantity of this eye powder to Ben Yijū (see III, 11, line 24). In III, 4, line 10, Joseph b. Abraham dispatched half a pound of 'Isfahan antimony' and in III, 3, line 18 the same quantity, not defined by place of origin.

⁵¹ In III, 15, line 49, Khalaf b. Isaac presents Ben Yijū with the same quantity. In III, 4, line 17, Joseph b. Abraham sends 5 pounds of costus. This Indian plant was shipped to Egypt in large quantities via Aden. See 256, n. 10; V, 1, lines 21–22; VI, 37, line 15 (a small quantity, but destined to be sold, not as a present); VII, 36, line 20. It was shipped to Egypt through such ports as Nahrwāra in the Gujerat. When we find costus sent as a present from Aden to the Malabar Coast, we conclude that the traffic between these two regions, separated by an ocean, was at least as lively as between northern and southern India.

⁵² Arabic *zāj*. Half pounds of vitriol were sent by Joseph b. Abraham (III, 3, line 18) and by Khalaf b. Isaac (III, 12, line 43, and III, 15, line 48). It served as an eye-salve (see Maimonides-Meyerhof, 68–69, no. 140). {For other medicinal uses, see Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 55–56.}

⁵³ Arabic *martak*, which via Syriac, comes from the Persian *mudra(r)-sang* 'the impure stone.' It denotes the litharge (Greek 'the stone of the silver') and is a by-product of the extraction of silver from native sulfide of lead (galena). It too served as an eye powder (see Maimonides-Meyerhof, 119, no. 239).

⁵⁴ In III, 4, line 10, Joseph b. Abraham sends Ben Yijū half a pound of *ilk* gum, twice as much as here (1 *raṭl* = 12 *ūqia*). In III, 3, line 19, he sends half a pound of *samgh* (spelled thus) gum; the same quantity is sent by Khalaf b. Isaac both in III, 12, line 43 and III, 15, line 48 (spelled by him, as usual, *samgh*). The *ilk* is most probably identical with *ilk al-anbāt* 'the gum of the Nabateans,' which is extracted from the pistachio tree (*Pistachio vera* L.), while the *samgh* is the gum of the lentisk, the mastic tree (*Pistachio Lentiscus* L.). Both trees are indigenous to the Mediterranean area. Chewing gum made the breath fresh and fragrant (Maimonides-Meyerhof, 148, no. 301 and 115, no. 232; Loew, *Flora*, 1:195–200). {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:248, 442, n. 164; Dietrich, "Samgh"; Lev & Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 78. In III, 2v, line 2, Joseph b. Abraham sends Ben Yijū a half a pound of *maṣṭakā* 'gum. In his commentary to M. Shabbat 8:4 (Shailat, *Shabbat*, 99), Maimonides defines *deveq* ('glue'): *ilk*.}

five *dasts*⁵⁵ of Egyptian paper;⁵⁶ furthermore, in a little basket⁵⁷ seven (13) molds of ‘kosher’⁵⁸ cheese; five packages⁵⁹ altogether. Furthermore, all the copper (*nahās*) sent by me is (14) in a canvas. This makes six packages. I wrote on each: ‘Abraham Yijū, (15) shipment of Joseph,’ and sent the whole together with the 20 dinars with Sheikh (16) Aḥmad, the captain, b. Abu ʿl-Faraj.

Furthermore, in a satchel there are two linen *fūṭas*⁶⁰ (17) for the children and two network veils⁶¹ dyed with carthamus.⁶² Please {add: [[forward them]]} accept delivery and forward them (18) to Sheikh Abu ʿl-Surūr b. Khallūf al-Ṭalḥī,⁶³ as well as the letter destined for him. His name is (19) on the satchel.

⁵⁵ A *dast* was a certain quantity that made up a set of a particular item; cf. 304, n. 9.

⁵⁶ A commodity often sent to traders in India; see page 61. Joseph b. Abraham sent paper to Ben Yijū also in III, 3, line 15; III, 4, line 10; III, 9, line 24.

⁵⁷ Arabic *zunaybīl*, diminutive of *zanbīl*. This Persian word, although not noted by the dictionaries of Hava and Dozy, is commonplace in Yemen (cf. Stace, *Vocabulary*, 17 ‘round and open basket’) and Egypt (cf. Spiro, *Dictionary*, 208: ‘large native basket’). Cf. III, 2, line 16: ‘Indian basket’ for carrying copper; III, 3, line 3 (for carrying pepper); {III, 24, lines 1 ff;} VII, 55, line 1 for pepper. {Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:486, n. 9 (who spells *zinbīl*): “containing 300–400 pounds”; Pimenta, *Dictionary*, 205: “small filigree basket-like ornaments suspended from the chains of woman’s *qarqūsh*”; “bundle including aromatic herbs, perfumes and decorations for the bride”; Hinds & Badawi, *Egyptian Arabic*, 381: ‘large basket made of green palm leaves’; Wehr, *Dictionary*, 382: ‘basket made of palm leaves.’}

⁵⁸ Arabic *ḥalāl*, ‘religiously permitted.’ In VII, 41, line 24, where the same commodity is sent from Alexandria to Aden, the Hebrew Equivalent *tāhōr*, ‘pure’ appears. The term ‘kosher’ was used in Europe, not in the East. Cheese was one of the main food items of the India traders. Then, as today, it was traded in molds and came in this form from Sicily and other places to Alexandria, from where it was exported to Aden, and from there to India. {Goitein later identified TS AS 147 f. 24, which attests the sale of Sicilian ‘kosher’ cheese in Alexandria in 1214. The document is translated in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:251, where the year 4975 A.M. is misprinted 4971. ‘Molds’ translates Arabic *qawālib*, sing. *qālab*; see recto, line 26. Wehr, *Dictionary*, 785, translates *qālab jubn*: ‘a chunk or loaf of cheese.’ Gil & Fleischer, *Yehuda ha-Levi*, 392, n. 5, according to which this is not found in dictionaries is to be corrected.) See also Zeldes and Frenkel, “The Sicilian Trade,” 132, n. 4. For the supervision of kosher imported cheese, also see the note to III, 52, margin.

⁵⁹ Arabic, *shakbīs*, pl. *shukhūṣ*, denotes one piece of a consignment. This is a common usage in the documents dealing with the India trade; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 1:487, n. 8. Additional examples in lines 14, 20, III, 2, line 5, III, 3, lines 8, 10.

⁶⁰ On the *fūṭa*, see 175–80. *Fūṭas* for children: II, 44, lines 23 and 25; III, 49v margin, line 58.

⁶¹ Arabic *shabka*. Cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:723a; Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 738b, s.v. *shabaka*. {Pimenta, *Dictionary*, 245, *shabka*: net-like red cover for bride.}

⁶² Arabic *ʿusfur*. (carthamus tinctorius L.), a yellow dye. {Cf. Pimenta, *Dictionary*, 330.}

⁶³ Most probably called thus, because he traded in a type of paper known by that name. See II, 16v, line 31; {III, 6v, line 5} III, 9, line 24.

My lord mentioned that there remained {add: in my credit}, from last year, copper (*naḥās*) to manufacture two bowls for drinking (20) water. Kindly send them with the other copper.

Altogether there are seven packages with the satchel of (21) Abu 'l-Surūr al-Ṭallḥī.

May my master receive for his esteemed self the best greetings! *And upon you be peace!*⁶⁴

[G. Address]

(1) *To his honor my lord, the light of my eyes, and the ornament of my neck,*⁶⁵ *my master and lord* (2) *Abraham, the wise and discerning, son of his honor, great and holy master* {add: *our Rabbi*}⁶⁶ *Perahyā—may he rest in Eden!*—*Yījū.*

(1) (From) *He that loves you and is proud of your good* (2) *name,*⁶⁷ *Joseph b. Abraham.*

⁶⁴ Because of lack of space the greetings are unusually short. *We-shālōm* is common at the end of letters; *we-shālōm lākh*, found here, is extremely rare. {It is also found in the following letters, all from Yemen: III, 6*v*, line 1; III, 31, line 27; III, 32, margin, line 4; III, 38, margin, line 9; III, 41*v*, line 11; IV, 10*v*, line 33; VI, 3*v*, line 6.}

⁶⁵ The same elaborate Hebrew phrases appear in III, 7, lines 7–8.

⁶⁶ {See page 54, n. 14.}

⁶⁷ An unusual expression meaning that the writer felt honored to be the addressee's friend. {The same expression, *mitpā'er be-zikhrākh ha-tōv*, occurs—with slight variations—in other letters: III, 33, line 10, III, 38, line 9, IV, 10, line 8, verso, address, IV, 11, line 12, VII, 64, line 6; cf. II, 35, line 6.}

III, 2 *Memorandum from Joseph b. Abraham to Abraham Ben Yijū*

Aden, ca. 1134–37

TS 8J 7, f. 23

This is not a formal letter, but a short memorandum handed to the merchant mentioned in line 2, who carried the scrap copper to India. Accordingly, the document contains neither polite phrases at the beginning nor greetings at the end. The name of the sender is written above the text and not, as usual in letters, {opposite the address} on the reverse side.¹

This memorandum preceded III, 3 by a year and was referred to in it (III, 3, lines 6, 9); see the introduction to III, 1.

Translation

[A. Old copper vessels sent to the addressee]

- (1) *In Your name, O Merciful.* His servant Joseph b. Abraham—*may he rest in Eden!*
- (2) I have sent to Sheikh Abraham b. Peraḥyā Yijū, through the agency of Sheikh Maymūn, the Muslim,² (3) the {prominent} merchant, to Manjarūr,³ in the ship of the *nākhudā* Maḥrūz⁴—may God ordain its safety {alt. tr.: safe arrival}!—(4) a bag containing copper,⁵ in which are

¹ {The continuation with four lines on verso, concluding with the blessing ‘And peace,’ which is followed by a separate account written, in the opposite direction, by Ben Yijū, was inadvertently not copied by Goitein. The continuation is added below, and the account now appears as III, 28a.}

² The exact details seem to be superfluous in a memorandum sent with the bearer. However, it was common usage to send copies of such communications through other persons or even on board other ships. {For this practice, see page 9 (n. 23).} Obviously, it was necessary for this purpose to provide complete information about the addressee and the bearer. Maymūn is characterized as a Muslim, because this name was common also among Jews. Over a dozen Jews named sons of Maymūn (or Maimon, i.e., Maimonides) are mentioned in the Geniza papers. {This is likely the same Maymūn who sends regards to Abū Zikrī Kohēn in II, 55v, line 11, a letter composed in Mangalore by Maḥrūz (see line 3) and penned by Ben Yijū. Use of the good services of Muslim acquaintances or agents occurs in a number of the India Book papers, e.g., II, 73.}

³ Mangalore on the Malabar coast. {For *tājir*, ‘prominent merchant,’ see page 27, n. 4.}

⁴ The shipowner Maḥrūz b. Jacob, on whom see the Introduction IIB1.

⁵ Arabic *naḥās* (also lines 13, 20). For the meaning of this term, see page 555, n. 11.}

four pieces of scrap,⁶ and a copper {ten-cornered} tray,⁷ weighing 41½ (5) pounds, and a tall boiler,⁸ in a separate package, weighing 12 pounds. Total weight: (6) 53½ pounds.

[B. Order of vessels described in detail]

If God decrees that it arrives safely, please have made for me (7) a {ten-cornered} tray the same size as the one sent to you and also a *marfa*⁹ decorated with wickerwork {alt. tr.: filigree},¹⁰ (8) which we call *zīr-khuwān* (a table jug). It should fit into the center of the {ten-cornered} tray, so that when (9) water is poured into it from a water skin, the drops should fall on the {ten-cornered} tray {lit., ‘so that whatever water drips from the water skin above it should fall on the (ten-cornered) tray.’}¹¹ (10) The wickerwork decoration {alt. tr.: filigree} should be like that of a bamboo basket;¹² the table jug should weigh eight pounds, more (11) or less, and the {ten-corned} tray about four pounds.

⁶ Arabic *fajar*. For *fajara* see 511, n. 29. See below, line 17 {and III, 28a, line 12, written on the verso of this document, where *fajar* is also used}. In III, 3, line 6, scrap metal is called *kusāra*, with reference to our letter.

⁷ Arabic *mu'ashshara sufr*. For the material denoted by *sufr* (also line 16), see the note to 555, line 11. The word *mu'ashshara* seems not to be listed in the Arabic dictionaries, but it {or *ma'shara*} is common in colloquial Yemenite Arabic {see Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 328}. For a good picture of such a tray, see Scott, *High Yemen*, opposite 130. As the picture shows, these trays are very large; their main task is to protect the carpets, which cover the ground, from being spoiled by water dripping from vases with flowers, etc., and in particular from the charcoals of the water pipes assembled on them. These trays are often covered with inscriptions and are preserved in well-to-do families for hundred of years. The Yemenite Jews make more use of them as tables on which the whole family eats. This usage seems to be alluded to below, line 20. The connection with the table jug, line 8, indicates that at that time the *mu'ashshara* too served as a tray from which meals were taken in company. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:147, 393, n. 65, citing this text, where it is translated: ‘ten-cornered tray.’}

⁸ Arabic *qunqum*. This word has two different meanings. Mostly, it denotes a flask for rose water; see II, 44, lines 20–21. Here it means ‘a cucumber-shaped vessel used for warming water’ (Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 989) or ‘copper-boiler’ (Hava, *Dictionary*, 627) {Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 413: ‘metal meat pot.’}

⁹ The *marfa* (or *mirfa*) was a container (with a cover) for water or other liquids. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:147, where from here to line 11 is translated, and above, 555, n. 13.

¹⁰ Arabic *mushabbak*, also in line 19; in line 10 *tashbīk*. For this term, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:211; Shy, “Terms,” 236.

¹¹ The tray should be so large that when water is poured from a water skin into the table jug no drops would fall on the carpet. {This seems to refer to the positioning of the table jug in the center of the tray, rather than the size of the tray.}

¹² Arabic *khūzarānī*. This word, too, seems not to be listed in the dictionaries. In southern Yemen, *khūzarān* denotes the plant from which the straw skullcaps are made

Furthermore, a (12) small candlestick, weighing about three pounds, made in the form of steps;¹³ and a small *t'lm* (?),¹⁴ whose (13) mouth should be no more than one and a half handbreadths,¹⁵ and whose *'sb'dr*¹⁶ should be of fine workmanship.

As to the remainder of the copper, (14) please sell it, and with its proceeds pay the craftsman's fee. With the balance buy me, your servant, a small quantity of (15) fresh betel nuts, or, if they are not available, cardamom or tumeric.¹⁷

[C. On similar shipments and orders on the separate account
of the sender's son]

There was also sent (16) to your excellency an Indian basket¹⁸ with nineteen pounds of copper, four pieces (17) of scrap and a basin.¹⁹ I, your servant, was asked by my son to help him with this. However, I would like you to please (18) keep his account separate; it should not be entered in my account.²⁰

Please have made from it for its owner (19) a basin and a ewer, both small, a small *marfa'* with nice bamboo wickerwork {alt. tr.: filigree, like bamboo wickerwork}. (20) He wishes to place it on a platter²¹ on the table.

which most men wear beneath other headgear. These *khūzarān* caps are of a very fine texture, which, imitated in brass or bronze, would indeed make a beautiful ornament. {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:138, 388–89, n. 217, where this text is cited (for 'lines 7, 10' there, correct: lines 10, 19). Here and in line 19, *khūzarānī* is clearly spelled with *w* for the second letter, and the suggestion in Diem, *Dictionary*, 63, n. 64, that Goitein may have misread *w* for *y* is to be rejected. For *khayzurān*, see III, 24, line 11 and 662, n. 19.

¹³ Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:135, 388, n. 206.

¹⁴ Cf. III, 24, line 37, where the plural seems to appear.

¹⁵ Handbreadth, Arabic *shibr*. Joseph b. Abraham orders from Egypt a basin with a diameter of one and a half handbreadths in II, 43, line 14.}

¹⁶ Meaning unknown.

¹⁷ See III, 3, line 3.

¹⁸ Arabic *zambīl*. See 562, n. 57.

¹⁹ Arabic *ṭast*. {See 410, n. 13.}

²⁰ See III, 3, lines 11–12. {Cf. III, 1, line 22 and 558, n. 23; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:192, 561, n. 9.}

²¹ Arabic *ṣaḥn*, which is smaller than the *mu'ashshara*, but serves the same purpose of a platter for the whole family. While the *ṣaḥn* is put on a low table, the *mu'ashshara* rests permanently on a tripod or a construction similar to that seen in the picture mentioned above, in the note to line 4. {This passage is translated in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:147. See Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 278.}

As to the remainder of the copper, please sell it for him (21) and use the proceeds to pay the craftsman's fee. With the balance buy him a small quantity of betel nuts or cardamom.

[D. Presents sent to the addressee]

[Margin] There was dispatched to your excellency for your esteemed (2) household what has no importance and no value, namely a bottle of raisins; a *rubā'yya*²² of almonds and a *rubā'yya* of soap; an embroidered kerchief,²³ [Verso] {(1) woven in Aden; five *dasts*²⁴ of Egyptian paper; half an ounce of civet;²⁵ half a pound of kohl; (2) and half a pound of mastic gum.²⁶ The kerchief, civet, paper, kohl and gum are (3) all in one piece of cloth, on which is written your excellency's name. All of this is sent together with (4) the aforementioned Sheikh Maymūn.²⁷ And peace.}

²² For this measure, see II, 14, line 21. {As already noted, Joseph spells *rubā'yya*, with short *a*.}

²³ See II, 44*v*, lines 5 and 20, where various embroidered fabrics are ordered from Cairo for Aden, and *ib.*, line 18, where an order is given to embroider the sender's name on a piece of fine cloth. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:474, s.v. embroidery; Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 120 ff. As the continuation shows, here Adenese embroidery was intended.

²⁴ A *dast* was a certain quantity that made up a set of a particular item; cf. page 304, n. 9.

²⁵ The export of civet perfume (*zabād*), as a gift, from Aden to India is noteworthy, since according to Goitein, *Letters*, 49–50, it was imported from the Far East ("from far away... the Malay archipelago"). For example of civet being sent from Aden to the West, see III, 29, lines 8, 10.

²⁶ Arabic *maṣṭakā'*.

²⁷ Mentioned above, recto, line 2.}

III, 3 *Short Letter from Joseph b. Abraham to Abraham Ben Yijū*

Aden, ca. 1135–38

TS 10 J 9, f. 24 {+ TS 10 J 32, f. 6}

The upper piece of the letter has been detached. The paper is brown, darkened by stains. On the verso, the sender had written only the address; the address in Arabic letters is preserved. The missing piece must have contained the address in Hebrew characters, for Joseph b. Abraham used to write the address either in Hebrew alone, as in III, 1 and 9, or in the two scripts, as in V, 11 and VI, 36; and an address always appeared on the top of the reverse side of a letter, so that it could be read when the letter was folded, for in those times no envelopes were used. {The missing portion is found in TS 10 J 32, f. 6, the verso of which is III, 35. While a few letters are missing in the margin, the match is perfect, and the tops of the letters/in III, 3, line 1 are preserved at the bottom of TS 10 J 32, f. 6. The content of verso is exactly as Goitein surmised.}

On the free space on the verso, Ben Yijū wrote drafts for responsa to two legal questions. On the margin of the recto, he wrote two lines concerning a third legal problem. See III, 34 {and 35; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:195}.

The letter obviously was sent to India a year after III, 2 and a year before III, 4 (see the introduction to III, 1, and here the note to line 7), approximately between 1135 and 1138. Despite its shortness, it contains a number of new interesting details.

Translation

[A. Receipt of addressee's letter and small shipments]

{TS 10 J 32, f. 6

(1) *In Your name, O Merciful.*

(2) The letter of your excellency, the most illustrious elder, my lord, has arrived. It was the most pleasant letter that came and the most delightful

(3) [message] that arrived. I read it with joy, examined it with delight, with gladness. I understood it, and was happy} [TS 10 J 9, f. 24] (1) [to learn that] you were well and your affairs in order, for which I thanked God very much and asked Him, in His mercy, to give you more (2) of every good thing, God willing.¹

¹ For the letter's opening lines compare II, 14, line 3; II, 17, line 4; IV, 13.

There arrived, my master, what you have kindly sent, (3) namely, a basket² with pepper and ginger,³ another basket with *Manjal*-turmeric,⁴ in which there was also a little ginger, and 3 *qaṣ'a*-bowls.⁵ (4) May God reward you well and satisfy your needs, and may you never cease to bestow kindness (on me)!⁶

However, the water skin with lemon and mango⁷ (5) arrived spoiled and stinking, and we threw them away.

There arrived also the cardamom. I took (6) one fourth from Sheikh Maḍmūn, and he took three fourths.⁸

² Arabic *zanbil*. See note to 562, n. 57. As is explained in line 14, small quantities of Oriental spices, packed in baskets—rather than leather-bales—were free of charge for the freight and the customs duties in Aden. They were obviously regarded as personal goods of the carrier. Cf. III, 10, line 20.

³ This strange habit—attested here twice—of mixing two commodities in one receptacle is found elsewhere; cf. III, 15, lines 35–36, V, 1, line 20. {There and in III, 41, line 28, such a 'mixture' is called *khulṭa*. See the discussion and additional sources in Goitein, *Letters*, 67, n. 5.}

⁴ The word *manjal* is Indian; see Watt, *Commercial Products*, 445. This plant, *Curcuma longa* L., is cultivated in {two} different varieties. The rootstocks of one, which is fairly soft, is used as a condiment, being one of the indispensable ingredients in curries; the other is harder and employed mainly for dyeing purposes (Watt). In our documents, both varieties are mentioned. Here, certainly the condiment is intended, while with *hurud*, V, 1, margin, lines 5–6; VII, 36, line 17, the dye is meant. Up to the present day, Yemenite village women dye their faces yellow with this *hurud*, while all Yemenites use it to color and season soup. {Cf. Pianta, *Dictionary*, 507.}

⁵ Large bowls, from which the whole family used to eat; see 326, n. 33.

⁶ {Arabic *wa-lā zāla mutafaddīl*. Since the third person is used, the syntax is ambiguous and one might take the subject to be God ('may He never cease to bestow kindness [on you]'), rather than the recipient of the letter. The ambiguity is lacking in some of the parallels of this phrase (IV, 15–II, 42, line 20; II, 48*v*, line 32; III, 7, line 15; III, 9, line 8; IV, 34*v*, line 6; V, 8, lines 11–12; VI, 28, line 13; VI, 36, line 15), from which it is evident that the recipient was intended. Nevertheless, one was believed to grant kindness because he was the recipient of divine grace. Cf. 426, n. 67.}

⁷ The mango fruit of the *Mangifera Indica* L. (cf. Watt, *Commercial Products*, 764–66) was described in detail by the Moroccan geographer Idrisi (1100–66) (Maqbul Ahmad, *India*, 20). According to him—and the same is true today (cf. Watt, loc. cit.)—the mango was pickled in vinegar; in the Indian diet, it took the place of olives in Mediterranean countries. From Idrisi it seems that the mango was not eaten in the West. In our documents, this (together with III, 2, line 15, which contains the order executed here) is the only instance of mango exported to the West; and it was not successful. However, the way in which the order is given in III, 2, shows that such orders must have been a matter of routine; and the Italian Varthéma describes in 1510 the mango under its Arabic {rather, Marathi} name *ambā* {Arabic 'anbā'; see Watt, loc. cit., and also Spies {*Ibn Fadlallah*, 32, n. 14; Maqbul Ahmad, "Hind," 408b}.

⁸ The merchandise may have been sent to Maḍmūn b. Hasan, because he had ordered the greater part of the shipment (cf. IV, 12, line 55 {which concerns a partnership with another merchant for goods ordered}), rather than in his capacity as representative of the merchants.

[B. Urgency of immediate dispatch of copper vessels ordered]

You mentioned, my lord, (7) that you would have the copper⁹ vessels that had been ordered made from the scrap.¹⁰ By God, do not postpone it¹¹ (8) this year, for the matter is urgent. Do not delay any of the copper vessels, //that is// the shipments {alt. tr.: items}, which (9) I had mentioned to your excellency, for all this is very urgent. Please, my master, have a {add: another} look (10) at my previous letter¹² from last year, and do not defer any of the shipments {alt. tr.: items} //of the copper vessels//. (11) By God, oblige (me by) this deed {alt. tr.: grant me this favor.}.¹³

[C. Request to keep son's consignments separate]

The copper ordered for [[the sake of apprenticeship¹⁴ of]] //my son// (12) should be in a separate account. Please do not mix his account with mine.

[D. Note on balance of previous account]

(13) For the balance of my {lit., 'your servant's'} account, please buy some betel nuts or, if that is not to be had,¹⁵ (14) pepper in one or two baskets, in order to save freight and customs duties in Aden.

⁹ {Arabic *ṣufr* (also lines 9, 10, 12). For the meaning of this term, see page 555, n. 11.}

¹⁰ Arabic *kusāra*. The reference is certainly to the broken or old vessels enumerated in III, 2. Though such vessels are mentioned in several letters, III, 2, was devoted solely to an order of new copper vessels and to the sending of old ones in considerable quantities. In addition, only there are found the details about an order of mango (see above lines 4–5), and the writer's wish to keep his son's account apart (here, line 11 and III, 2, line 18).

¹¹ Arabic *lā tukhallifhu*. The same usage appears in III, 11, lines 43–44. {Cf. III, 4*v*, line 19, III, 8, lines 14–15; cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 135, 'leave' (intransitive; here apparently transitive).}

¹² No. III, 2, is intended; see line 6.

¹³ Arabic *yuqallidunī fī dhālika 'l-ṣanī'a*. A similar phrase occurs in I, 14, line 57 {and III, 49, line 20}.

¹⁴ Arabic *al-ta'allum*. The father wants his son to become a merchant by his own right. {Perhaps read *al-mu'allam*, i.e., *muta'allim*, apprentice. Cf. the note to III, 1, line 20; and Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:192, 561, n. 9. On apprenticeship, see Goitein, *ib.*, VI, 11; cf. Frenkel, "Adolescence," 276–77.}

¹⁵ It is interesting to note that such staple goods as cardamom or betel nuts were assumed likely to be not available at a reasonable price in a port on the Malabar Coast of southern India. Pepper, on the other hand, never seems to have been lacking. {Cf. III, 2, line 15.}

[E. Dispatch of two consignments of eleven presents]

I sent to you, (15) my lord, for your esteemed household¹⁶ what has no value or importance, namely (16) an Alexandrian *maqṭa'*,¹⁷ a goat-wool *fūta*¹⁸—your name is written on them—15 large sheets of Ṭalḥī-paper,¹⁹ (17) a brazilwood box²⁰ with sugar, a brazilwood box with raisins and a brazilwood box with soap—large boxes, (18) on which is //written//: 'Yijū, shipped by Joseph.'

I also sent you five pounds of costus, a half a pound (19) of kohl,²¹ an ounce of ladanum,²² a half a pound of vitriol²³ and half a pound of *samgh* gum.²⁴ These commodities are in a *mazza*.²⁵ (20) All this is forwarded to you through the *nākhudā* Maḥrūz.²⁶ May God ordain his safe arrival!

May my lord receive for his esteemed (21) self the best greetings! *And may my lord be blessed with peace!*²⁷

¹⁶ I.e., as a present; the same phrase {*bi-rasm manzilihi al-sharif*} in III, 2, margin, lines 1–2.

¹⁷ {For this piece of cloth or robe, see II, 16*v*, line 8, and 325, n. 26. Joseph sends a *maqṭa'* to Ben Yijū also in III, 4, line 9; III, 9, line 23.}

¹⁸ In III, 21*b*, line 19, the same present goes from Aden to India. In I, 1, line 10, it is sent from Cairo to Aden as merchandise to be sold.

¹⁹ Cf. III, 9, line 24, where 12 sheets, not designated as large, were included in the list of Joseph's presents.

²⁰ Arabic *baqqamiya*. Cf. 327, n. 34.

²¹ See III, 1*v*, line 11.

²² Arabic *lādan* {here spelled *lādān*}, a word used already by the Assyrians and appearing in the Mishna under the form *lōṭem*. Herodotus III, sec. 112, quotes it as an Arabic word. The ladanum is a resin excreted by various bushes found in Asia Minor, Cyprus, Crete and the isles of the Aegean Sea, especially *Cistus ladaniferus* L. and *Cistus creticus* L. It was highly appreciated owing to its pleasant aroma and its use for the treatment of ailments of the stomach and the eyes. Daumas, *Sahara*, says that rich people used to give ladanum as a present; See Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:524*a*; Maimonides-Meyerhof, no. 208, 104; Loew, *Flora*, 1:362–63 {Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 173–74}.

²³ See III, 1*v*, line 11.

²⁴ See *ib.*, line 12.

²⁵ Cf. *ib.*, line 11.

²⁶ Maḥrūz b. Jacob. {See Introduction IIB1.

²⁷ This Hebrew phrase, *we-shalōm yehi ladōnī*, appears also in the contemporary Yemenite letter IV, 15–II, 42, margin, line 8.}

[F. Address]

[Verso, in Arabic letters]

(1) (To) His excellency, the most illustrious elder, my lord Ibrāhīm (2) b. Yījū, the Israelite.

(1) (From) His servant Yūsuf b. Ibrāhīm.

{TS 10 J 32. 6v, in Hebrew characters:

(1) (To) His excellency, the most illustrious elder, my lord (2) Abraham b. Peraḥyā—*may he rest in Eden!*

(1) (From) His servant, who tha[nks him for his kindness], (2) Jose[ph b. Abraham].}

III, 4–6 *Letter from Joseph b. Abraham to Abraham Ben Yijū re Undependable Merchant*

Aden, ca. 1136–39

III, 4. TS 10 J 12, f. 5

III, 5. TS NS J 181

III, 6. TS AS 146, f. 12

{Three contiguous pieces of a long letter, which, on recto, begins with III, 6, continues with III, 5 and concludes with III, 4. Goitein prepared an edition of III, 4 during the early stages of his work on the India Book. Years later he added the other two small pieces and made provisional copies of their texts, without translation or notes. Since he identified them as dealing with the same topics and written at the same time as III, 4, when he rearranged the documents according to the New List, they became III, 5–6. In preparing this chapter for publication, I realized that the three items belong to the same document.

The letter was written on (at least) two sheets of paper, pasted together beneath III, 6, line 9. The very bottoms of the letters, 𐤓 and 𐤔, written in this line, appear at the top of III, 5. Nos. III, 5 and 4 comprise the lower sheet, which was torn unevenly in two, between lines 4–6 of III, 5. The match is perfect, and between nos. III, 5 and 4 the entire text of the lower sheet is intact. On recto it contains 25 lines. No. III, 6's upper edge is torn unevenly; and, in general, this piece has suffered more damage. It consists of part of eight or nine lines (of its first line, only the very bottom of a few letters are intact). Were we to assume that the upper sheet had the same dimensions and number of lines as the lower one, we would conclude that the complete letter had on recto ca. 50 lines. Of these some thirty lines are intact, and parts of three or four more remain at the top of III, 6. Verso contains between the three pieces 31 lines, 26 on III, 4–5 and 5 on III, 6. After the last line on III, 6, there are about 5 cm with no traces of writing, and this was evidently to be the end of the letter. Due to the poor state of preservation of the writing on III, 6v, much of the postscript, added after the concluding greetings at the middle of line 1, has been lost or eludes decipherment. The tops of the long letters 𐤔 on III, 6v, line 1, appear at the bottom of III, 5v.}

Same paper, width and script as in III, 1. Beginning and end, including the address, lost. The writer's name is mentioned in III, 4, line 19 {that of addressee *ibid.*, line 18; the two names in III, 6, line 6.}. At first sight, the handwriting looks different from that in other letters written by Joseph b. Abraham. This impression is caused by the different pens used. The other letters were written with a broad pen, which emphasized the contrast between thick and thin strokes and enabled the writer to give to his letters serifs; see the introduction to III, 1. Here, a pen of medium width was used, which caused the horizontal and vertical strokes to be of the same thickness. However, an analysis of the form of the individual letters, as well as of the general character of the writing shows that we have here

the same hand as in II, 43; III, 1, 3, 9; IV, 15–II, 42; V, 11 and VI, 36. The writer tried another style, adapting himself to the different pen. At the end of the letter, approximately the last third of the verso, he relapsed into his usual style.

The letter preceded III, 1 approximately by one year; see the introduction there. The main section of the letter which has been preserved, which deals with the measures to be taken against the young Abu 'l-Faraj b. Moses/Mūsā al-Baghdādī, is of special interest. Baghdādī worked for Joseph on the basis of a commenda, according to which Joseph, as the investor, received two thirds of the profits, and Baghdādī one third (see margin, line 1). The young man, who had obviously misused Joseph's confidence, tried to abscond from India to Ceylon and from there to another country. The power of attorney, which Joseph issued against him, may have been executed before a Muslim court, since in reference to the warrant of proxy, he calls {Baghdādī's father} by the Arabic form of his name, Mūsā. However, Joseph was extremely careful not to expose the young man, unless it was established with absolute certainty that he "deviated from the right way." He was even prepared to assist Baghdādī with money to enable him to return to Aden. This shows that the reputation, even of a young man, was guarded with greatest care. On the other hand, Joseph seems not to have given up hope of retrieving his investment, perhaps by putting the young Baghdādī to work.

Translation

[A. Shipment of silk and arsenic and order of other commodities]

{[III, 6] (1) and... (2) and not... (3) my lord. Making a bold demand¹ on [your kindness, I have sent you a package] (4) through the agency of Sheikh Abū 'Alī b. Ṭayyib [and... (?) the Egyptians.² In it are (5) goods, namely six *manns* of good [...] silk in a waterproof satchel.³

¹ {Arabic *dālla*. For this expression, which usually appears in the second half of the letter, see 447, n. 49.

² The restoration of the word after the break, ending with *ryyn*, is speculative. Abū 'Alī b. Ṭayyib *al-Miṣrī* ('the Egyptian'; 'of Fustat') alone is referred to in III, 4, line 13; cf. III, 6v, line 3. Presumably the name of another Egyptian merchant (hence the plural *al-Miṣriyyin*) traveling to India appeared here, perhaps Dāfir, mentioned in the margin, line 2.

³ Arabic *kbarīṭa mushamma'a*. I have not found this expression elsewhere in the documents included in this collection.

(6) On top of the satchel is a canvas on which is written ‘Abraham Yijū, sent by Joseph b. Abraham.’ (7) Moreover, I had here a bag of yellow arsenic. I heard that arsenic in your place (8) is in demand, and in particular the people of Ceylon search for it a great deal. I have sent [it], my lord, (9) to you, its weight exactly⁴ 160 pounds. And it is fine arsenic.⁵ Please make an effort, [III, 5, line 1] my lord, to sell it all, as you are graciously accustomed to do, for whatever price God apportions (2) as livelihood.⁶

With the proceeds purchase for me, your servant, a small quantity of iron, if available, and cardamom, and if (3) you can, a little borax,⁷ or whatever you consider proper. For one who is present sees [III, 4] (0)⁸ what is not seen by [III, 5] (4) one who is absent.⁹ Send it to me on the first ship traveling to Aden. And you, my lord,} [III, 4] (1) are free of liability.¹⁰ And if [III, 5] {(5) you, my lord, have an opportunity to come, bring it with you, God willing.}¹¹

[B. Shipment of copper and bronze vessels and order of new ones]

[III, 4] (2) Furthermore, I sent a *mazza*,¹² in which there are 14½ pounds of copper,¹³ [III, 5] {(6) including a ewer} [III, 4] (3) that is broken, a

⁴ Arabic *bi-ṣarfibi*. Cf. III, 42, line 28.

⁵ On the arsenic (mentioned below in III, 4, line 18), Goitein comments: Arsenic, used for medical and criminal (poisoning) purposes is imported to India from the West through modern times; see Watt, *Commercial Products*, 92–93. For its medicinal uses, see Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 48. For the use of arsenic in medical purposes in the Geniza documents see now Isaacs, *Medical Manuscripts*, 125. In III, 12, line 41; III, 13, line 6 and III, 15, line 50, it is said that no arsenic was to be had in Aden at that time.

⁶ For this formula, see the discussion in pages 63–65.}

⁷ Arabic *tinkār*. In V, 1, margin, lines 7–8 spelled *dinkār*. This sodium borate is “invaluable in welding and is employed by blacksmiths, brassfounders and electroplaters” (Watt, *Commercial Products*, 173; cf. Maimonides-Meyerhof, no. 383. {For the use of *tinkār* in the making of jewelry in Yemen, see Qāfīh, “*Lāz*,” 971.

⁸ The first line in III, 4 contains only a few letters and was not copied by Goitein (he restored them in III, 5, line 4, from the context). I have designated it line ‘0,’ so as not to alter his numbering of the rest of III, 4, because of the frequent cross-references in the book.

⁹ Arabic *al-ḥāḍir yarā mā lā yarā al-ghā’ib*. This aphorism was used when one requested that a partner found in another locality purchase something, the point being that he can assess the market conditions, while the writer cannot. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:157, 168, 440, n. 11. It also appears in II, 58, line 14; IV, 29*v*, margin (so it seems, the text is fragmentary); VII, 41, lines 27–28, 32. As Prof. Joel Kraemer informs me, in Arabic sources *al-ḥāḍir* is usually replaced by *al-shāhid*.

¹⁰ Cf. III, 10, lines 53–54.

¹¹ Joseph b. Abraham foresees Ben Yijū’s traveling from India to Aden.}

¹² About this receptacle see III, 1*v*, line 11.

¹³ {Arabic *ṣufr* (also line 12). For the meaning of this term, see page 555, n. 11.}

broken stool¹⁴ and other things. Please be kind enough to make for me from it (4) a basin and ewer, which should be small and simple,¹⁵ their weight being exactly¹⁶ six pounds (5) or five and a half, more or less, and a small stand for a small (6) candle; its weight should be exactly from two to two and a half pounds; it should be simple (7) and of good workmanship of the type you find attractive.¹⁷ The rest of the copper should be sold and added (8) to the account (in my favor).

[C. Five presents sent]

I sent to your illustrious excellency what has no importance and which is not (9) worth mentioning, namely a large brazilwood box¹⁸ containing white sugar, an Alexandrian *maqta*¹⁹, a half a pound (10) Iṣbahānī²⁰ kohl, half a pound of *ilk* gum, four *dasts*²¹ of Egyptian paper of small (11) size.²² Please accept this in return for some of your services.²³ The paper, the kohl, and the *ilk* are in (12) the *mazza* with the copper. The *maqta*¹⁹ alone is in a piece of cloth. All this, together with the bag of silk and the bag (13) of arsenic, is sent in the ship of Fidyār²⁴ with the above-mentioned Sheikh Abū ʿAlī b. Ṭayyib al-Miṣrī.²⁵

¹⁴ Arabic *kursī*. The copper tray, which serves as table, is placed on this. Cf. Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, 146–47, illustration no. 45 (in chap. 3). In modern times, as depicted by Lane, the *kursī* is made of wood and inlaid with mother-of-pearl, etc. Here it is made of tinned copper. {Four wooden rods and a board for a *kursī* are noted in III, 24, line 34. For a detailed discussion of the *kursī*, see Sadan, *Mobilier*, 123–33; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:130.} On the sending of broken vessels as material for new ones see III, 1.

¹⁵ Arabic *sādhij*, Persian *sāde*, i.e., without decorations like the spirals ordered in III, 1*v*, line 1. {The same term appears in line 6 and in one of the orders of payments of Abū Zikrī Kohēn in V, 47.}

¹⁶ Arabic *khāliṣ*. The same term appears in line 6; see 558, n. 26.}

¹⁷ It is noteworthy that Joseph relies on Ben Yijū's good taste.

¹⁸ See II, 16*v*, line 29, and III, 3, line 17, where also a large *baqqamīya* is used as a receptacle for sugar.

¹⁹ See 571, n. 17 for this gift.

²⁰ {From Iṣfahān, Persia.}

²¹ A *dast* was a certain quantity that made a set of a particular item; cf. page 304, n. 9.

²² For these commodities, see III, 1*v*, lines 11–12.

²³ {I have not seen in other letters this comment concerning gifts sent.}

²⁴ See below verso, line 1. With the same ship and the same man (Abū ʿAlī b. Ṭayyib) goods are sent by Khalaf b. Isaac in III, 10*v*, lines 2 and 5–6. {See also III, 6*v*, line 3 and page 147.}

²⁵ Cf. III, 1, line 11 [and III, 6, line 4].

[D. Recommendation for an Egyptian merchant,
a newcomer to India]

(14) And, my lord, I would like you to help him (Abū 'Alī) in all he buys
(15) and sells, for he is a stranger, unfamiliar with that country.²⁶ What-
ever you do for him (16) will reach me. May I never miss your favors!

[E. Regret for being unable to send raisins]

By God, my lord, I attempted to get (17) some raisins to send to your
excellency. However, none whatsoever (18) was to be had in Aden this
year. Please forgive your servant for this.

[F. Details concerning the shipment of arsenic]

On the bag of arsenic there is written 'Abraham Yijū, (19) sent by Joseph
b. Abraham.' It is wrapped in hides.

[G. Request to deal with the affairs of the young Baghdādī]

You, my lord, mentioned that the young man Abu 'l-Faraj b. Moses
(20) al-Baghdādī was traveling to Ceylon. I received his letter, in which
he complained that the *nākhudā* (21) Ibn Abu 'l-Katā'ib²⁷ demanded
from him payment for the hire of a compartment,²⁸ even though he

²⁶ A similar request appears in V, 2, top, line 6.

²⁷ Abu 'l-Ḥasan b. Abu 'l-Katā'ib, a shipowner often mentioned in our papers. {See page 149.}

²⁸ Arabic *bilij*. Cf. I, 33, line 9 {where it is vocalized in the manuscript *balij*, with *a*, and appears to mean 'bungalow'}; IV, 30, line 4; V, 8, line 12. See Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:108b. The word is derived from the Malayan and designates a place in a ship separated from others by mats and serving for the storage of goods. The goods were normally covered with hides and each merchant slept on the cover of his own *bilij*. Sometimes, several travelers shared one such 'compartment'; cf. V, 8, line 12. {The *bilij* is discussed in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:315, 481, n. 15, where (315) he notes that such cabins or compartments are known from the Indian Ocean but not from the Mediterranean. The comment that one would sleep on top of his consignment, found there, seems to refer only to the Mediterranean evidence, and it is not at all clear that in the Indian Ocean one would sleep on top of his *bilij*. A door and boards for a *bilij* are mentioned in III, 24, lines 30, 33; accordingly, these compartments might have been made of wood as well. See the discussion on cabins in Indian Ocean ships by Meyer, *Glass*, 115, where it is suggested that they might have been temporary structures erected at the beginning of each voyage. The aforementioned door and boards for a *bilij* adds weight to this suggestion. For sharing a *bilij*, besides V, 8, line 12, cf. VI, 38a, line 9; both of these documents refer to the same journey on a Red Sea vessel to Aden. Also

did not carry {alt tr.: did not agree to carry}²⁹ for him anything (22) in his ship.³⁰ He also mentioned that he might travel to Ceylon or stay on.

[Margin] {(1) [. . . Between us] [III, 6] is a commenda for 259 dinars. His share [III, 5] in it is one third of the profit,} [III, 4] while I, your servant, get two thirds.³¹ Now, my lord, if he has traveled to Ceylon, nothing can be done. However, if he returns to you or if he did not make the journey (2) { [. . . perhaps he intends to travel to] [III, 6] a place other than to Aden. My lord, when [III, 5] I learned this} [III, 4] news, that he was traveling to Ceylon, I became distressed. Afterwards I took courage and saw that Sheikh Ḍāfir³² b. Farāj was traveling to your place {lit., ‘to you’} [Verso] (1) this year in the ship of [[Nbrdwy {or read: Nbyrwy}]] Fidyār.³³ I sent with him {alt. tr.: wrote and sent with him}³⁴ a letter of proxy, (2) {which I confirmed by witnesses; and the document}³⁵ is (designated) ‘a letter of proxy against Abu ’l-Faraj b. Mūsā (3) al-Baghdādī.’ I did so as a matter of precaution.

Now, may I, your servant, ask you a favor—may God make permanent (4) your honored position! If this young man is (still) with you, or has come back from Ceylon and is going to (5) Aden, let no one know that I sent a letter of proxy against him or against anyone else. Moreover, please tell Sheikh (6) Ḍāfir that in this case he should not undertake anything in the matter despite my instructions to him. However, if

see Margariti, *Aden*, 241; Chakravarti, “*Nakbudās*,” 49 (which seems to be based in part on VI, 38a, line 9). The editor of Buzurg, *ʿAjāʾib al-Hind*, comments on 194, that he changed the diacritic marks from بليج (*blyj*) in the manuscript to read بلنج (*blnj*: *balanj*); see also Nadvi, “Navigation,” 439. The Geniza texts written in Hebrew characters prove that بليج (*bilij*) is correct. Also note the English bilge.

²⁹ Arabic *mā faʿal yahmil*. In my opinion, *faʿal* with the word of negation denotes here ‘did not agree (to do something).’ Similarly, II, 75v, line 10: *wa-in lam yafʿal yusallim*, ‘if he does not agree to pay’ (cf. II, 75, line 12: *fa-lam yafʿal*). Goitein apparently understood *faʿal* here as an auxiliary verb. For this possibility, see Blau, *Grammar*, 188, 329 (where also *lam yafʿal yadfaʿhā*, could be translated in my opinion ‘he did not agree to pay them’).

³⁰ A warning not to pay a *nākbudā*, who might demand payment without cause, is found in III, 8, line 18.}

³¹ The writer had given the young man capital {259 dinars} for doing business; in such a contract the investor took two thirds of the profit and the other partner one third, cf. VII, 10, line 6 {and Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:171 ff.}. Joseph correctly writes here the classical *thulthayn* for the unconnected form and not *thulthay* as did the learned scribes of II, 1, line 10; IV, 3, lines 13, 20, 22; VII, 10, line 6.

³² See III, 10, line 23.

³³ Most probably Nbrdwy {or: Nbyrwy} was the owner of another ship which sailed from Aden to India at that time. About Fidyār see above, line 13.

³⁴ {Arabic *katabtu maʿabu*. For this phrase, see 375, n. 37.

³⁵ Arabic *wal-bayyina*. Goitein translated: ‘confirmed by witnesses and proof.’}

(7)—God forbid—he has deviated from the right path and has declared bankruptcy³⁶ or intends to travel (8) to a place other than Aden, please inform Sheikh Dāfir to produce the letter of proxy against him in order to demand from him (9) what he owes. Sheikh Dāfir is a very busy man and perhaps will not attend to this matter {alt. tr.: will temporize}³⁷ and not (10) ‘break’ him.³⁸ I can rely only on your excellency and your kindness for reprimanding him, and for dealing with {alt. tr.: to counsel him and investigate}³⁹ (11) this discreetly, not overtly. However, if he deviates from the right path, there is no choice (12) but to deal with it overtly. Please make an effort to act for your servant in this matter as is right.

Furthermore, my lord, (13) I wrote to this young man three letters, each sent on another ship and each accompanied by another copy {lit., ‘by your letter’},⁴⁰ (14) and instructed those carrying them to hand them over only to your excellency; and (15) I told him in his letter what you will read {alt. tr.: are reading}.⁴¹ Please, open every letter addressed to him (16) and read it and give it to him, without his knowing (that you read it).

³⁶ Arabic *muftit*. This word seems to be merchants’ jargon and a combination of *muftis*, ‘bankrupt,’ and *muftit*, ‘escaping,’ with the *t* pronounced as *t̄*, perhaps under the influence of Hebrew. Even the Jewish grammarian Ibn Janāh (*Hebrew Roots*, 573, line 33), writes the word with *t̄*; cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:279a. Perhaps also compare *taballaṭa*, ‘s’enfuir,’ Dozy, ib., 1:111b (according to an ancient source, al-Balādhuri); cf. Mez, *Renaissance*, 450, n. 8, *muballit*, ‘pleite’ (German ‘Boersen-jargon’), according to *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, s.v., *blt*. (*Tāj al-‘Arūs*, 19:158, actually gives *ablāṭa* in the sense of *aflasa*, becoming bankrupt.) {Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 379, *fālit*, ‘to be all gone, to be through.’ Nurit Reich calls my attention to Ratzaby, “*Leshōnōt*,” 111, who cites *‘āsā pelēṭā* from the responsa literature with the meaning ‘went bankrupt.’ Also note that the Mishnaic Hebrew *pāshat lo et ha-regel* is understood as: had insufficient funds, refused or delayed payment and absconded; see Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshuṭah*, 6:379.

³⁷ Arabic *yatawānā*.)

³⁸ Arabic *yahudduhu*. Perhaps this too belongs to the merchants’ jargon. Otherwise, the writer probably omitted one *d* and intended to write *yuhaddiduhu*, ‘to threaten him.’ {According to Piamenta, *Dictionary*, *hdd* (I) means ‘threaten, menace, frighten.’ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:331, refers to the affair of Baghdādī, but inadvertently speaks of a letter of excommunication instead of a letter of proxy and on 599, n. 17, cites III, 1, which in fact refers to a threat of excommunication (against someone else); see III, 1, lines 13–17, and 557, n. 18.

³⁹ Arabic *mudbākaratihi wa-‘fikādika*. Perhaps Goitein read *mudākbara*.)

⁴⁰ This procedure of sending three copies of one letter in three different ships obviously was nothing exceptional. {For sending multiple copies of letters or accounts, see page 9 (n. 23) and below, III, 6*v*, line 2.} With each letter, Joseph sent here another copy {of the letter addressed to Ben Yijū} for Ben Yijū’s own use; the latter needed it for reference, as he was asked to hand over money to the young Baghdādī, see lines 16–21.

⁴¹ {The intention seems to be that Baghdādī’s letter contained information on the affair but not the exact specifics, such as the instructions to read his letters, mentioned in the continuation, since this was to be done in a clandestine fashion.}

I wrote to him in his letter (17) that I sent to you currency.⁴² If he wants {lit., ‘needs’} from you about ten dinars (18) or ten *mithqāls* from my goods, you should give it to him, my lord, if he is proceeding to (19) Aden without delay.⁴³ However, if he deviates from the path, do not pay him anything, my lord. (20) Thus, please inquire {alt. tr.: do not pay him anything, my lord, after you, my lord, have inquired} into that matter; and if he, my lord, is proceeding to Aden and asks (21) for ten *mithqāls* and even more, pay them to him from my goods.

[H. Shipment of sugar and letters to be forwarded to Baghdādī; greetings]

My lord, (22) I sent him (Baghdādī) a large brazilwood box with sugar, on [III, 5*v*] {(1) which is his name, through the agency of Sheikh} [III, 4*v*] (23) Abū ‘Alī, mentioned above. [III, 5*v*] {(2) If he is at your place, give him the letters and the brazilwood box} [III, 4*v*] (24) with sugar. [III, 5*v*] {(3). And if, God forbid, he is in Ceylon, kindly be so good as to send (4) to him these letters and sugar with someone whom you trust, in your kindness.⁴⁴ Accept, my esteemed lord, (5) for yourself, best, profuse greetings. Whatever⁴⁵ need or service you require, my lord, [III, 6*v*] (1) let me know to perform it. *And upon you be peace!*⁴⁶

[J. Postscript: three copies of letter sent as well as another letter]

On the first of *the month of Elul*,⁴⁷ [... there were] (2) forwarded to his illustrious excellency three letters with the same text, this as a precaution.⁴⁸

⁴² Arabic *sabīb*; cf. 560, n. 39. Adenese Malikī dinars and Egyptian *mithqāls* are intended.

⁴³ {Arabic *tukballuf*. Cf. 570, n. 11.

⁴⁴ Obviously a second box of sugar, other than that with white sugar sent as a personal gift to Ben Yijū (III, 4, line 8), is intended in these lines, this one as a gift to Baghdādī. Even though his reliability was questioned, Joseph b. Abraham sent him gifts, presumably to mellow the caustic remarks in his letters.

⁴⁵ For *ma‘a mā* = ‘whatever,’ see 484, n. 29.

⁴⁶ Hebrew *we-shālōm lākḥ*. For this expression, see 563, n. 64.

⁴⁷ This letter was probably sent in a ship that sailed soon afterwards. Arabic-Hebrew *awwal ḥōdesh* means the first of the month but can also designate ‘the beginning of the month.’ See page 90, n. 2.

⁴⁸ A clarification concerning the ships and carriers of the three copies of letters is added here to III, 4*v*, lines 12 ff. The text here and in the following lines is effaced, and the decipherment somewhat uncertain. As above, III, 4, line 20, and commonly found in the Yemenite documents, *kitāb*, ‘letter,’ is feminine.

One is in (3) the ship of Fi[dyār wit]h Sheikh Abū ʿAlī. The second is in the ship of [Nbrdwy/Nbyrwy (?)]⁴⁹ (4) with Muwaffaq al-ʿAshāʿirī.⁵⁰ The third is in the ship of Ibn Abu ʿl-Katāʿib,⁵¹ with his son. (5) And with your letter is a letter to Sheikh Abu ʿl-Surūr b. Khallūf al-Ṭalhī.⁵² Please deliver/send⁵³ it to him.}

⁴⁹ Cf. III, 4*v*, line 1.

⁵⁰ Also mentioned in III, 11, lines 15 (see 609, n. 11), 52.

⁵¹ See above, III, 4*r*, line 21.

⁵² See on him III, 1*v*, line 18, and 562, n. 63.

⁵³ Read either *tūjidhā* or *tunfidhbā*.}

III, 7 *Short Letter from Joseph b. Abraham to Abraham Ben Yijū*

Aden, ca. 1147–48

TS 13 J 7, f. 27

For a description of the paper and the scribe see the introduction to III, 1. The handwriting of this clerk is different here from that of III, 2. Here the long final strokes turn to the right, while in III, 2, to the left. With the exception of the address, the verso is blank.

The date of this letter to India can be fixed with considerable certainty owing to the reference to the addressee's brother; see comments to lines 16–19.

Translation

[A. Preamble, six verses from the Bible]

(1) *In Your name, O Merciful.*

(2) *For the Lord will be your trust; He will keep your feet from being caught.¹ The Lord (3) is your guardian, the Lord is your protection at your right hand. The Lord will guard you (4) from all harm; He will guard your life. He will guard your going (5) and your coming now and forever. By day the sun will not (6) strike you, nor the moon by night.² Those who love Your teaching enjoy well-being; (7) they encounter no adversity.³*

¹ Prov. 3:26. Cf. III, 15, line 4. In the first occurrence the name of God is written here, perhaps by mistake, "י", afterwards with the more common "י". It was not uncommon, especially in Yemen, to open a letter with a quotation from the Bible; cf. II, 13, 25; III, 32. However, the concentration of so many verses here and in III, 15 is exceptional. The addressee most probably had expressed his intention to travel from India to Aden, as in fact he did two years after this letter (see below line 16) and III, 15 were written. The verses at the beginning of these two letters express the wish for a safe journey. Most of the verses quoted here are indeed from Ps. 121 and form part of the Jewish prayer for a safe journey.

² Ps. 121:5, 7, 8, 6. It is unusual that the verses of such a well-known psalm were written out of order. In line 4, the name of God was erroneously omitted. {Perhaps the verses were quoted from memory.}

³ Ps. 119:165. {Quoting this verse reflects Ben Yijū's reputation for scholarship.}

[B. Salutation]

*To my esteemed lord, the light of my eyes and the ornament (8) on my neck, my master and lord Abraham, the son of his honor, great and holy master Perahyā Ben Yījū—may he rest in Eden!*⁴

[C. Receipt of small shipment of pepper, the balance of last year's transactions]

(9) My lord, there arrived the small shipment of pepper, namely one and a quarter *bahār* (10) less four pounds of big measure.⁵ I, your servant, went to take (11) delivery and received the whole due. Likewise, Sheikh Khalaf⁶ received (12) his shipment. You mentioned, my lord, that this (13) *bahār* and a quarter less four pounds of pepper was (sent against) the balance of my, your servant's, entire account (14) from the cardamom and the 'eggs,' etc.⁷ May God reward (15) and care for you well {alt. tr.: undertake to provide you with a good reward}, and may I never miss your favors!

[D. Concerning the addressee's brother]

(16) You, my lord, asked about your brother Mevassēr.⁸ He has not come during (17) this entire period, nor have I seen a letter for you (18) from Egypt. Had I gotten a letter for you, my lord, (19) I, your servant, would have forwarded it to you.⁹

⁴ The same phrases in III, 1, address.

⁵ The *bahār* came in two sizes, the smaller weighing about 1/5 less; see II, 16, line 4.

⁶ {Khalaf b. Isaac.}

⁷ Joseph b. Abraham had sent money to India for purchasing large quantities of cardamom. {For *bayd*, 'eggs,' see pages 369–70.} For the balance of the account, Ben Yījū sent pepper the following year. A similar transaction with regard to the balance of a preceding year appears in II, 16*v*, lines 25–26.

⁸ The expected arrival in Aden of Ben Yījū's brother Mevassēr is referred to three times in Khalaf b. Isaac's letters: in III, 12, lines 34–36, Ben Yījū was notified that his brother had arrived in Egypt (from Sicily or Tunisia; see III, 29); III, 15, lines 29–30, dated 1147, reports that he was well, but had not come to Aden; III, 16, lines 10–14, dated 1148, states that enquiries had been made whether he had gone to Eretz Israel, but in any case he had not come to Aden. It appears from III, 16 that, in 1148, Ben Yījū already had become very impatient with regard to news about his brother. Our letter seems to have been sent in the same year as III, 15, namely 1147. Mevassēr came to Aden only after Ben Yījū's arrival there; see III, 41, line 7.

⁹ {In III, 9, margin, lines 8–10, Joseph writes Ben Yījū that he was forwarding a letter from Mevassēr.}

[E. News from Egypt]

You, my lord, (certainly) have (20) heard the news from Egypt from the merchants who arrived, (21) God willing, at your place.¹⁰

[F. Greetings]

I send your eminent excellency the best (22) profuse greetings, and to all those in your protective care (23) the choicest, profuse greetings. *And much peace. Salvation is near!*¹¹

[G. Address]

[Verso] (1) *To his honor, great and holy master and lord Abraham, son of* (2) *his honor, great and holy master and lord Rabbi Parahyā Ben Yījū—may his rest be honored!*¹²

(1) (From) *He that experiences your favors daily,*¹³ (2) *Joseph b. Abraham—may he rest in Eden!*

¹⁰ Ben Yījū had asked about news from Egypt. The Near Eastern merchants frequented many ports on the Indian West Coast, and apparently they did not arrive at Ben Yījū's place every year. Joseph knew that some were due to arrive there the year he wrote this letter. Here we see additional evidence that ships sailing from Aden had their fixed ports of destination in India.

¹¹ See 484, n. 30.

¹² This blessing for the dead, *תהא מנוחתו כבוד* (see Isa. 11:10), is not common in our papers; cf. II, 11a, line 18 {מנוחתו כבוד תהא כסא הכבוד} and see Zunz, *Geschichte*, 345. {It appears on some twelfth century tombstones from Aden. See Goitein, "Tombstones from Aden," 84.}

¹³ Literally, 'every morning.' This strange phrase is based on Ps. 27:4 {cf. commentaries}.

III, 8 *Letter from Joseph b. Abraham to Abraham Ben Yijū*

{Mangalore, India, ca. 1140–44}

TS NS 324, f. 114

A brief letter written by Joseph b. Abraham, about the same time as III, 7, and sent by him, not from Aden, as with his other letters, but from somewhere in India, to Abraham Ben Yijū, Mangalore. We are able to ascertain that Joseph was in India from, *inter alia*, the goods which he sent to Ben Yijū and ordered from him, their small quantity and the fact that they were carried not by Sheikh PN but by a soldier (*muqātil*), who in order to transport them hired a *fāl* (*fʿl*), apparently a compartment in a ship.¹ Ben Yijū is asked whether he intends to travel to Aden this year, and Joseph presumably wanted to travel there with him. Ben Yijū did indeed make the trip, and verso of the manuscript contains a list of goods, which he shipped with him on his way out of India; see below, III, 24. It is unusual, however, that Joseph asks Ben Yijū, who too was in India, to send him *burr*, wheat.²

{The letter is complete and contains an address. It did not indicate Ben Yijū's whereabouts, presumably because the letter was to be delivered by the bearer. I read the document somewhat differently from how Goitein seems to have read it according to the sparse notes he left. Due to the vagaries of the Arabic syntax and the writer's style (he alternates between the third person and the first, in referring to himself, and between the third and second, in referring to Ben Yijū), it is not clear whom the writer mentions as being in Mangalore. I believe it was Joseph. The goods he sends Ben Yijū include salted fish and pickled foods, items otherwise shipped from India to Aden. The commodities that Joseph ordered from Ben Yijū include wheat, which as noted by Goitein was normally sent from Aden to India.³ Joseph also ordered the spice (and medicinal substance) cumin. While in modern times cumin is grown extensively in India, it is not indigenous there and is assumed to have come from Egypt or the countries of the Mediterranean.⁴ As attested by the India Book documents (III, 27, sec. a, line 10; III, 43*v*, line 12) and other Geniza papers, cumin indeed was

¹ {According to II, 55, lines 10–11, soldiers, who protected a ship, traveled in a smaller boat that escorted it. A *fāl* is mentioned in connection with shipping something valuable from Aden to India in IV, 14, line 15.

² These comments are based largely on notes written by Goitein on May 29, 1979.

³ See II, 26, line 3; III, 10, line 46.

⁴ See Watt, *Commercial Products*, 442–43.}

found in Sicily, Egypt and Yemen. Joseph asks Ben Yijū (lines 27–28) *in kāna tamma laka safr ilā ‘adan am lā*, the most simple translation of which would be ‘did you succeed in traveling to Aden or not.’ All of this leads us to the conclusion that the letter was sent to Ben Yijū somewhere in inland Yemen, where we find him, for example, in III, 32 and 38. The fact that he later wrote on the paper’s reverse, blank side a list of items he carried with him on his way out of India to Yemen (III, 24) does not prove otherwise. As we have already seen, he saved and carried with him wherever he went every piece of paper he had and often wrote on a letter’s blank space something else in a different place. Note, for example, that Joseph b. Abraham sent III, 2 from Aden to Ben Yijū, who was in India, but the latter later wrote in Yemen the text of his own letter to some other merchant in India (III, 28a). From all of this it follows that there is no evident reason to fix the time of this letter on the basis II, 7. On the contrary, it probably was written during Ben Yijū’s stay in Yemen, ca. 1140–45; for these dates see the introduction to III, 21.}

III, 9 *Letter from Joseph b. Abraham to Abraham Ben Yijū*

Aden, ca. 1150 {ca. 1148–49}

TS 12.235

Same paper and hand as III, 1. Very much damaged by holes. About two thirds of the text is effaced by water. On the verso, Ben Yijū wrote accounts [= III, 27].

The letter was written in Aden, as proven by references to persons and places (lines 20–21; 13 and 15 respectively) and is addressed to Zabīd (verso, line 2).¹ About this town on the coastal plain of southwest Yemen, see II, 20, lines 45–47. From Zabīd, or rather its seaport Ghulayfiqa (see III, 25, lines 1–4), one traveled directly to India, without stopping at Aden, though it was along the route (see II, 20, line 47). This explains the reference to pepper (margin, line 3) in a letter sent to a town lying to the northwest of Aden. The elaborate description of a consignment of almonds (line 25 and margin, lines 15–17) appears puzzling. Zabīd, of course, is nearer to the almond growing district of Yemen than Aden.² However, in those years Zabīd was mostly in the hands of the Abyssinian Banu 'l-Najjāh, who were at war with the various other rulers of Yemen.³ Thus it was easier to supply that town with luxury fruits growing around San'ā from Aden, and, as we learn from our letter (margin, lines 16–17), even there only limited quantities were available.

A comparison of the passage in the margin, lines 11–18, with recto, lines 22–23, shows that the letter was sent after the sailing season, overland from Aden to Zabīd.⁴ Also in Mediterranean countries, letters dealing with people and merchandise traveling by sea were commonly sent by messengers overland; cf. IV, 76, lines 3–6. Perhaps our letter was damaged by water when Ben Yijū sailed from Yemen to Egypt {or, as I have suggested, when sent to him to India}.

The approximate date of the letter can again be fixed by a reference to Ben Yijū's brother Mevassēr. In lines 8–9 of the margin, Joseph announces that a letter had arrived from Mevassēr and would be forwarded together with our document. In 1148, Mevassēr still lingered

¹ {See the comments added at the end of the introduction, where an alternate interpretation is suggested.}

² See Grohmann, *Südarabien*, 1:229.

³ See Smith, "Şulayḥids"; Strothmann, "Zabīd" and id., "Karam."

⁴ {Those passages, in my opinion, do not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the letter was sent by land. See page 591, n. 28.}

in Egypt (III, 16, lines 10–14), although he had previously expressed his desire to join his brother in the East (III, 12, lines 34–36). In 1149, after Ben Yijū arrived in Aden, he invited Mevassēr to come (see III, 29). In our letter, we find Ben Yijū in Yemen. Thus, it is highly probably, that here the reference is to a letter from Mevassēr in reply to III, 29, for in III, 41 Ben Yijū writes, that Mevassēr had arrived in Yemen and had proven a complete failure. Our letter can hardly have been written between 1132 and 1149, the years of Ben Yijū's stay in India, during a temporary stay in Yemen, for the whole tenor of III, 29 and 41 clearly indicates that Ben Yijū was not in contact with his brothers during that entire period. Accordingly, the most likely date for our letter is 1150.

This assumption is corroborated by the references to another person, Al-Fawfalī (line 11 and verso, lines 1–2). 'Alī b. Maṣṣūr al-Fawfalī was a shipowner; Maḍmūn, the representative of the merchants in Aden, made him his business agent in Mangalore on the Malabar coast of India (II, 24*v*, lines 11–13). Ben Yijū sent with him pepper from India (II, 25, lines 9–10). However, his ship was wrecked and lost (II, 55, line 17—before 1149, because that letter was written, although not sent, by our Ben Yijū). That disaster explains perhaps the not very dignified behavior of al-Fawfalī here.

Only about one third of the letter is legible.

{'Zabīd' is not part of the address itself, which as usual is written on verso in the opposite direction, but is referred to, in the body of the letter, verso, line 2, as the place to which Al-Fawfalī absconded. The continuation, *fa-in waṣāla ilaykum*, was translated by Goitein: 'when he arrives at your place,' from which he obviously concluded that Ben Yijū himself was in Zabīd. A more literal translation would be: 'if he arrives at your place.' As such, the letter presumably was sent by ship to Ben Yijū in India (and was identified as such, by Goitein, in Shaked, *Bibliography*, 55). Other portions of the letter, as the list of gifts sent Ben Yijū, the reference to almonds and pepper, Ben Yijū's dealing with the *kardāl*, and the apparent reference in lines 5 ff. to bronze vessels manufactured by Ben Yijū corroborate this suggestion.

While III, 29 and III, 41 speak of Ben Yijū's separation from his brothers for an extended period, they do not say that he had no indirect contact with them since he traveled to the East. In III, 7, lines 16–19 (dated by Goitein 1147 or 1148), for example, Joseph promised to forward to Ben Yijū any letter from Mevassēr that might arrive. Earlier Ben Yijū had sent a gift of 40 dinars to Mevassēr; see II, 29, lines 3 ff. and 363, n. 18. In the note to III, 16, line 12, Goitein in fact comments that Mevassēr had

informed Ben Yijū, who at that time was residing in India, of his intention to visit Eretz Israel. Accordingly, our letter was probably written during 1145–49, when Ben Yijū was in India (see page 648) or as suggested by III, 7, ca. 1148–49. Maḍmūn's later attempts to apprehend al-Fawfalī at Zabīd are described by Joseph b. Abraham in V, 9.⁵

Contents:

A. Acknowledgement of Ben Yijū's letter (lines 1–4).

B. Sundry items (lines 5–10).

{For the continuation, see the following translation.}

Translation

[C. Iron salvaged from ship grounded near Abyan, east of Aden,
and other losses]

(11) Al-Fawfalī⁶ has not arrived. (12) The Kūfi iron,⁷ wh[ich was sent in] the ship of (13) Ibn al-Muqaddam;⁸ the ship [foundered] off the coast of Abyan⁹ [...] (14) The pepper and a part of the ir[on] was lost. [The iron] which [was salvaged]¹⁰ (15) is being detained¹¹ in the Furḍa¹² [...] and I do not know how much we will realize (16) from it, if anything at all [...]. You, my master, mentioned [...] that my share in it was (17) one and a quarter *bahārs* [...] (18) will be salvaged, God willing. Let's wait for what will arrive from it. This will be only after the sailing of the ships.¹³

⁵ See 704 and n. 3.

⁶ See the introductory comments and verso, line 1.

⁷ Cf. III, 25, lines 2, 3, 5, 9.

⁸ {For Ibn al-Muqaddam's ships, see page 147.}

⁹ The town Abyan, east of Aden, is intended. {See II, 71, line 61, margin, line 15, verso, lines 17, 36, 46, on Abyan and ships that sank in its vicinity.}

¹⁰ The restoration of the line is based on what follows here and on the striking parallel in III, 10, lines 28–34.

¹¹ Arabic *muhayyar*, common in this sense both in central Yemen (cf. Goitein, *Travels in Yēmen*, 84) and in Aden (see Stace, *Vocabulary*, 47b; Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:344b: empêcher). {Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 117; Margariti, "Aden," 176, where delays in the customs house are discussed.}

¹² The customs house of Aden.

¹³ In III, 10, line 34, the writer remarks that the salvaging was done while he was writing his letter, at the time of the end of the summer season. Here obviously the custom officers were busy and could not attend to the assessment of the salvaged iron before the ships were dispatched. {Cf. Margariti, "Aden," 48.}

(19) Whatever will be realized, is profit,¹⁴ for it is better [...] (20) Should there be anything {add: more} realized from the *kārdāl*,¹⁵ kindly send it. Please make an effort (21) in this matter. Likewise in the matter of the ‘eggs’,¹⁶ whatever will be realized [...], God willing.

[D. Five presents sent]

(22) There was already sent to you, my master, in the ship of Sheikh Maḍmūn with the *nākhudā* (23) Maḥrūz¹⁷—may God ordain his safe arrival!—what has no importance, namely a *maqta*¹⁸ for (24) your boy¹⁹ and a *dast*²⁰ of 12 sheets of Ṭalhī paper,²¹ a bottle of wine, (25) a *rubāʿiyya*²² of soap and a *rubāʿiyya* of almonds. Please accept all of this. (26) The *maqta* and the paper are wrapped in a piece of cloth, on which is your name. Likewise on (27) every item is your name [...]

[E. The low price of pepper]

[Would] you, my lord, [send me] [Margin] (1) this year some (2) profitable purchase, as you have (3) kindly accustomed me to? However, the pepper (4) this year was cheap and did not return (5) the capital.²³ It is better²⁴ not to risk one’s (6) possessions²⁵ and go bankrupt {alt. tr.:... this

¹⁴ When all might be lost, anything salvaged is profit. Similarly in II, 51, line 28.}

¹⁵ See 592, n. 35.

¹⁶ {See pages 369–70.}

¹⁷ Maḍmūn b. Hasan and Maḥrūz b. Jacob.

¹⁸ For this gift, which Joseph sends, see 571, n. 17.

¹⁹ {Arabic *ghulām* can mean, among other things (see 598, n. 20), ‘slave-agent’ or ‘son.’ The context shows that ‘son’ was almost certainly intended here.}

²⁰ A *dast* was a certain quantity that made up a set of a particular item; cf. 304, n. 9.

²¹ Cf. II, 16*v*, line 31; II, 3, line 14.

²² {For this measure, see 314, n. 14. Joseph spells *rubāʿiyya*, with short *a*; see 561, n. 46.}

²³ The writer obviously asks not to buy for him pepper, which shows that Ben Yijū either was setting out to India again or had there the appropriate business connections. {As noted above, this letter was apparently sent to Ben Yijū in India. Accordingly, he is asked not to purchase pepper there.}

²⁴ Arabic *akhyar*. Same form in III, 10, line 50 (Yemenite); III, 29, line 16 (Maghrebi). See Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:416 (modern Egyptian) and Füick, *Arabīya*, 116 and 172. {Also see *Lisān al-ʿArab*, 4:265; for the Yemenite dialect, cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 141. In II, 55, line 30 (dictated by a Yemenite to a Maghrebi), *akhyar* is crossed out and corrected to *afdal*. *Akhyar* also appears in II, 59, line 16, verso, line 5 (Yemenite, written in Egypt, the context somewhat similar to that found here); VII, 38, line 12.}

²⁵ Arabic *rahl*, literally ‘baggage’, i.e., the total of merchandise and money sent to a country or acquired there. Cf. III, 1, line 9; III, 4*v*, line 18. {*Rahl* can mean ‘goods’; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:452, n. 1.

year has sold poorly and does not guarantee the capital better than a risky investment on which one loses all}.²⁶

[F. Conclusion]

Please accept, my master, (7) the best, profuse greetings for your esteemed self. *And Peace.*

[G. Postscripts: Arrival of a letter from Ben Yijū's brother]

(8) There arrived a letter from your brother²⁷ (9) and I am forwarding it to you with this letter. (10) *And Peace.*

[H. Shipment of almonds]

(11) I beg to inform you, my master, that the ship (12) had sailed and could not be seen for some days. Then it came back (13) safe, thank God. (14) The aforementioned goods were forwarded to you, (15) except the almonds, for they were spoiled. I tried to get (16) others for you; but none arrived in town before the departure (18) of the people.²⁸

[I. Arrival of iron (from India) as well as some of the salvaged iron]

The iron has arrived.²⁹ (19) I took 123 pounds (20) and Sheikh Khalaf³⁰ his share, (21) while Sheikh Maḍmūn took the rest for you.³¹ [Verso]

²⁶ Arabic... *rakhiṣ mā yukhalliṣ rās al-māl akhyar min mā yukhāṭir al-insān bi-rahlihi wayuksar*. For *khallaṣ*, 'guarantee,' see Pianta, *Dictionary*, 134.} For *yuksar* cf. modern *inkasar*, Spiro, *Dictionary*, 376 and *kasara al-ḥākīm al-tājir*, 'the judge declared the merchant bankrupt' (literally, 'broken'), Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:465 according to *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*. See also III, 12, line 29. {Pianta, *ibid.*, 430, *ksr* VII, 'to lose.'}

²⁷ See the introduction to this document.

²⁸ {Arabic *a-nās* (= *al-nās*). This term is used regularly in the documents of this book for 'merchants' or 'traveling merchants.' See 239, n. 4. As noted above, Goitein deduced from this passage that the letter was sent overland. I suggest that after the return of the ship to port, the writer took back the letter and checked the merchandise. The ship apparently returned because of a storm at sea, during which the almonds were spoiled. The postscripts, where the ink is slightly darker in the original than in the preceding lines, were added at this time, and the letter was then returned to the same ship. As was the practice, copies of the same letter could have been sent in different boats (see page 9 [n. 23]); this would explain the naming of the ship in recto, line 22.}

²⁹ Ben Yijū had bought or ordered that iron, while he was still in India. {Again, we can assume that this letter was sent to India. The iron referred to here and in the continuation is the same iron spoken of on recto, lines 12–18.}

³⁰ Khalaf b. Isaac.

³¹ Ben Yijū's share was brought to the warehouse of Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan, the representative of the merchants.

(1) Likewise, a little of the iron that was salvaged for us from the shipwreck.

[J. Measures to be taken concerning two unreliable merchants]

Al-Fawfalī (2) absconded to Zabīd.³² When {alt. tr.: If} he arrives at your place,³³ take from him for me the ‘eggs’³⁴ or their proceeds. (3) Likewise, you mentioned that the *kārdāl*³⁵ did not deliver to you anything. And (4) you did not deliver to me goods purchased from him for six *mīthqāls*. You know, my lord, (5) that you paid the *kardāl* (!) at your own initiative. Now, if you, my lord, send something, fine. However, (6) I leave the decision entirely to you {alt. tr.: if not—your opinion is more worthy}.³⁶ *And Peace*.

[K. Address]

(1) (To) *His excellency, the most illustrious sheikh [my master and lord] Abraham, son of his honor, great and holy* (2) *master Perahyā the scribe*³⁷ *b. Yījū*—may God make his honored position permanent!

³² See the introductory comments concerning al-Fawfalī. Absconded, Arabic *kharat* (or perhaps the word was pronounced *khirīt*), obviously a word from the merchants’ jargon; cf. V, 8, line 17, *kunnā mukhriṭin* ‘we fled’. The root *khrt* has in its first and seventh conjugations various meanings from which the sense intended here could be derived. So far, however, I have not found the latter in any other source. In southern Yemen, *mkhruṭ* means to trick people. {Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 125: ‘brag,’ ‘exaggerate,’ ‘lie,’ ‘allure,’ etc. See II, 28, line 18, *kharat labu shay*, tentatively translated: ‘something had made you act in haste.’ Al-Fawfalī fled to Zabīd, because at that time forces that were the enemies of the rulers of Aden held it.

³³ For the significance of the alternate translation in establishing Ben Yījū’s whereabouts, when this letter was written, see the discussion in the introduction.

³⁴ See recto, line 21.}

³⁵ See III, 1, line 13. Ben Yījū had ordered from him merchandise and paid for it with Joseph b. Abraham’s money; however, the man did not deliver. It is not clear who had to bear the loss under such circumstances. In III, 18 A and E, Ben Yījū paid back similar losses incurred from the *kārdār* (this is the correct form; see III, 1, line 13), while in III, 12, lines 27–29, we read a complaint that Ben Yījū charged his customers for money spent in transactions with that man (who perhaps had a monopoly in a certain field, viz., cardamom).

³⁶ {Arabic *fa-huwa awlā bi-ra’yihī*. Cf. III, 12, line 33. For such *ra’y* formulas in Fatimid petitions, see Khan, *Documents*, 314–16. For similar *ra’y* expressions, see 411, n. 21; 695, n. 8.}

³⁷ The addressee certainly excelled in the art of writing; and in II, 37, vs. 47, he calls himself a scribe, *lawlār* {for instances of his serving as a scribe, see page 54 and n. 15}. It seems, however, that here (and in III, 10*v*, the address; III, 10*av*, line 3) the title *sājfir* refers to his father. Ben Yījū’s nephews, Perahyā (cf. III, 43, 45 and 55) and Moses (cf.

(1) (From) His servant, who is grateful for his favors (2) Joseph b. Abraham—*may the spirit of the Lord give him rest!*³⁸

III, 46), also were calligraphers {especially the former}; it is a well-known fact that the art of writing was handed down in the same family for many generations, as is proved by the colophons of Hebrew manuscripts and by the living tradition in both Morocco and Yemen; see Goitein, *Yemenites*, 209 and n. 34 {id., *Med. Soc.*, 2:240}.

³⁸ Isa. 63:14.

III, C. *Letters Sent to Ben Yijū by Khalaf b. Isaac*III, 10 *Letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to Abraham Ben Yijū, Dahbattan, India*

Aden {after 1138}

TS 24.64

Translated in Goitein, *Letters*, 185–92. The following is based both on that publication and Goitein's fuller original edition.

The writer of this letter, Khalaf b. Isaac b. Bundār, was a cousin of Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan who closely cooperated with him. His correspondence, much of which has been preserved, is a valuable source for the India trade around the middle of the twelfth century {in the 1120–30's}. It shows that a very lively traffic connected India with the West; because of the tremendous risks the quantities sent in each ship for each individual merchant were comparatively limited in size; losses were borne with remarkable equanimity; and a spirit of friendly cooperation prevailed between Jew, Muslim, and Hindu (also Christian, of course, although rarely mentioned), and between the free merchants and the bond-servants who served as their agents. Three of these slaves appear in this letter as business agents. One had an Arab name, one a Persian, and one a Hindu.

The following documents concerning Khalaf have been found: five letters to Ben Yijū, III, 10–16, one of them in three copies (III, 12–14); 5 documents (II, 51; IV, 1, 11–13)—an account and four letters—addressed to Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel;¹ two letters (II, 46²; VI, 37) to Abu 'Imrān b. Nufay'; one letter (II, 48), to a Cairene merchant, most probably the above mentioned Ḥalfon, and one order of drugs, written in Arabic letters, with a marginal note in Hebrew characters (II, 50). In addition, two letters of thanks addressed to him by the Palestinian Yeshiva in Cairo have come to light (II, 53, 54).³

Of the documents emanating from Khalaf's office, the same handwriting appears on the following thirteen: III, 10, 14, 16; the postscripts and marginal notes to III, 11 (the body of which is written in a different

¹ {See the introduction to II, 51, where I suggested that that letter was sent to someone else.

² See pages 444–45, concerning the addressee of this document.

³ On Khalaf, see further chap. 2, sec. G.

hand); II, 48, 50–51; III, 15; IV, 1, 11–13; VI, 37. Two other documents, III, 11, 12 (with the exception of the postscripts and the marginal notes; see above), are written in another, especially large and elaborate script. No. II, 46 is again in another handwriting, much smaller than the two just mentioned, but still done very carefully.

Thus, it is highly probable that the 13 pieces, on which the same hand appears, were written by Khalaf himself, especially since the various additions to III, 11 would hardly have been made by any clerk, and certainly not by a clerk different from the one who had written the letter itself. Joseph b. Abraham also wrote most of his letters in his own hand; see the introduction to III, 1. It may be, of course, that the recipient mainly preserved the originals written by the boss for reference, while he disposed of most of the copies made by the clerks.⁴

Khalaf's handwriting excels in regularity and clearness and approaches the type of writing used in highly official legal documents, such as marriage contracts. However, there is nothing strange in this fact. It was the pride of the medieval Jewish gentleman to be regarded, not only as learned, but also 'to wear the crown of calligraphy.'⁵ The recipient of our letter, Ben Yijū, could pride himself on the same achievement. However, the documents collected in this book prove that a really beautiful hand is an art attained only by a select few.

After he had filled the front page with seventy-four lines—which are slightly broader at the bottom than at the top—and concluded his letter, Khalaf wrote a first postscript in eleven short lines, on the narrow margin, beginning at the bottom and ending at the head of the page. On the verso he appended a second addition of seven lines, while the address, as usual, is written upside down at the other end of the verso. The letter is carefully folded in such a way that the address fits exactly into the second fold.

The addresses have been preserved in only seven of Khalaf's letters (III, 10, 12, 16; IV, 11–13; VI, 37). All are in Hebrew characters; in two cases, however, III, 12, 16, the address is also written in Arabic letters. This suggests that normally letters were carried by Jewish merchants; and only when none was found, the letter was sent with a Muslim, and the address was added in Arabic characters.

⁴ This is unlikely, however, in light of Ben Yijū's habit of saving even copies on which there was no blank space.

⁵ See page 306. {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:228 ff.; Friedman, *JMP*, 1:11.}

Although it is extremely difficult to compare the intrinsically cursive Arabic script to the very monumental Hebrew, I have the feeling that Khalaf himself wrote the Arabic addresses on III, 12 and 16 (the latter should be reexamined), for they betray the same strong and grand style of writing which characterizes Khalaf's Hebrew script.

Khalaf writes from Aden (cf. lines 33–34). From line 50 it is clear that Ben Yijū resided on the Malabar Coast, not in Fandarayna (a line 24 {and accompanying note}), and most probably in Dahbattan (see line 17).

The time of our letter can be fixed according to the following considerations: The blessing after the name of the sender's father shows that he was dead at that time. Khalaf's father died in February 1139 {Feb. 14–March 13, 1138} (see II, 51 {line 6}). In two other letters, which certainly were written a year later (1140), he thanks a Cairene merchant, most probably Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel, and Ben Yijū for their expressions of sympathy (II, 48, line 41;⁶ III, 11, line 1). In III, 11, there seem to be several references to our letter; cf. *ib.*, lines 13, 21, 32. If our interpretation is correct, our letter must have been sent after 1139 {1138}.

Translation

[A. Introduction, the beginning in rhyme]

(1) *In Your name, O Merciful.*

(2) The letter of your excellency the illustrious Sheikh, has arrived— [may God prolong your life/] (3) and make permanent your honored position, and rank/highness and loftiness/ex[cellence, and ascendancy!/] (4) May He never deprive your dwelling-place and court of any good!/[May He bestow] (5) upon you that which is most suitable of all He usually confers {alt. tr.: [May He protect] for your sake... of all He has conferred upon you}}!⁷/May He subdue those that are envious of

⁶ This letter was written in 1140.

⁷ Arabic *ṣāliḥ mā awlāhu*. {For this phrase, see page 330, n. 2. Goitein evidently understood the pronominal suffix in *awlāhu* as referring to the preceding *mā*. However, in the parallel phrase in IV, 17, line 16, *ṣāliḥ mā 'aṭāhum*, the recipient is evidently intended.}

you and crush your enemies/(6) and may all your affairs be completed successfully {lit., '...be joined by blessings'}!⁸

I was glad when I looked at your letter even before (7) I had taken notice of its content.⁹ Then I read it full of happiness and, while studying it, became joyous and cheerful. (8) For, it was reassuring for me to learn from it about your well-being and your satisfactory state. Then I praised (9) God for this very much and asked Him to give you more of all the best (10) in His mercy.

Whatever longing (for me) you expressed, my lord, I, (11) your servant, feel twice as strongly (for you) and more than what you have described in writing. (12) May God decree {read: facilitate}¹⁰ our coming together in the near future in complete happiness (13) through His mercy, God willing!

[B. Shipments from India]

I took notice, (14) my master, of your detailed statement concerning sending 'refurbished' iron¹¹ in the boat of the (15) *nākhudā* Ibn Abu 'l-Katā'ib.¹² It (the shipment) has arrived, and I received from him (16) two *bahārs* and one third, as you noted, my lord.¹³

⁸ Arabic *itaṣṣalat bi-'lkhayrat asbābuhu*. For *asbāb*, 'affairs,' cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:623b, and III, 12, line 5, where the same phrase is used.

⁹ {For such expressions of joy on the receipt of a letter, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:229.

¹⁰ I read *sabhal*, commonly used in this context, instead of Goitein's reading *sajjal*.)

¹¹ Because of the perennial wars between Christians and Muslims, the Jews did not trade in iron in the Mediterranean. In the India trade, however, iron was a staple commodity rarely absent from any larger shipment leaving India. Four types are mentioned; 'refurbished' translates *muhdath*, lit., 'renewed.' {For six types of iron, see 315, n. 17 and for 'refurbished' 316, n. 21a.

¹² For this shipowner, Abu 'l-Ḥasan b. Abu 'l-Katā'ib, see page 142.}

¹³ As already noted (376, n. 39), the *bahār* contained 300 pounds. But the *bahārs* of different products sometimes differed in weight. See Hinz, *Islamische Masse*, 8–10 {and below, 616, n. 13}. According to II, 16, lines 16 ff., 31–32, the same type of iron was transported in the same ship from India to Aden; there, Khalaf received two and one fourth *bahārs*, here two and one third. Despite the similarities, it is not certain that II, 16 and III, 10 refer to the same shipment, for II, 16 is an exact statement of the transactions made by Maḍmūn for Ben Yijū. Here, lines 18–20, Khalaf reports that he had received from Maḍmūn a certain quantity of cardamom on Ben Yijū's account. However, nothing of the kind is mentioned in Maḍmūn's letter. The detail discussed confirms a fact, reflected in other documents published here: There was a certain routine in the Indian trade. Similar quantities of the same commodity were ordered by the same merchant in different years and were carried by the same ship from India to Aden; cf., e.g., 611, n. 28.

The *nākhudā* (17) Joseph¹⁴ arrived from Dahbattan¹⁵ on the Malabar Coast in the ship of Ibn al-Muqaddam,¹⁶ and I received from him (18) two basins, two ewers and two basins for candlesticks.¹⁷

Likewise, I took delivery from my lord, (19) the most illustrious Sheikh Maḍmūn, of 30 pounds of cardamom from your excellency's bag (20) and paid for it the customs duties, as you had written.¹⁸

Please send the remaining lids,¹⁹ (21) my lord.

However, of the betel nuts (22) mentioned by you, my lord, I, your servant, have not received anything, for you wrote that you had sent them with (23) Jawhar, the slave-agent²⁰ of Dāfir,²¹ but he has not arrived this year.

¹⁴ Certainly Joseph b. Abraham b. Bundār, another cousin of Khalaf active in the India trade. As III, 1 shows, Joseph was especially interested in Indian bronze vessels. {For Joseph b. Abraham, see chap. 2, sec. F; chap. 3, sec. B. He is not called *nākhudā* elsewhere, nor is there any other data that suggests that he was a shipowner. It is likely that some other individual is referred to here as the *nākhudā* Joseph/Yūsuf. This is further suggested by that fact that in contrast to other distinguished merchants mentioned in the letter, this Joseph is not designated Sheikh. When Khalaf b. Isaac referred to 'Sheikh Joseph' in III, 12, lines 37–38, he certainly intended Joseph b. Abraham. See also page 151.}

¹⁵ A port on the Malabar Coast (still existing, under the name Valarapattanam), repeatedly mentioned, because Abraham Ben Yijū had his brass factory there. See Nainar, *Arab Geographers*, 29. {Also see III, 18, sec. B, line 9.}

¹⁶ See III, 9, line 13. In II, 16, line 48, a ship of his father is mentioned. This, by the way, also suggests that II, 16 preceded our letter, although this argument is not decisive, since in the case of Rāmīsh, a man, his sons and his brothers-in-law {or, his son and son-in-law}, each had separate ships operating at one and the same time; see II, 24, line 31. {As already noted, from II, 29, margin and verso, line 5, it appears that al-Muqaddam and Ibn al-Muqaddam were one and the same.}

¹⁷ These basins, called here *ṭast sham*^c—but today in Yemen *maḡhras*—serve as lamp stand, flower vase (when turned upside down), and drinking vessel. {On the basins that went along with the lamps, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 4:135, 388, n. 205.}

¹⁸ This comparatively small quantity (one tenth of a *bahār*) obviously was sent by Ben Yijū to Khalaf for the payment of minor orders. Customs were due, as the cardamom was not carried in an open basket; see III, 3, line 13, and 569, n. 2. {Obviously, Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan, the representative of the merchants, was intended here and in the continuation.}

¹⁹ Certainly bronze lids, as in III, 11, line 13. Lids were traded separately from the vessels for which they were destined. This proves how much standardized the copper industry was; see below line 46. In I, 1, line 15 and I, 14, line 1, where silver vessels are referred to, a water jug and its lid are mentioned together.

²⁰ Arabic *ghulām*, which simply means 'young man'; cf. Hebrew *na'ar*, which also denotes both a young man and a servant. {It can also mean 'freedman,' 'apprentice,' 'employee,' 'son.' See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:40 (Index); Diem, *Dictionary*, 158. Jawhar was a common name for a slave; see page 151.} Jawhar seems to have been commuting between India and Aden regularly, just as we find Bama, Ben Yijū's slave and agent, staying for a summer in Aden; see II, 23, lines 41–45. The importance for the Indian trade of these slaves, who served as business representatives of their masters, is brought home by our letter, where three of them are mentioned by name; cf. lines 65, 74. {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:131 ff.}

²¹ Two India traders bearing this extremely rare name appear in our papers: one, the

[C. Shipwreck]

As to your shipment, (24) my master, forwarded from Fandarayna²² in the ship of Fatan Swamī²³ through Sheikh (25) Abu 'l-Ḥasan b. Ja'far.²⁴

The smaller ship²⁵ arrived and I took delivery (26) from it {alt. tr.: from him} of 1³/₈ *bahār* of pepper, as had been stated in your memorandum²⁶ (27) to my master, the most illustrious Sheikh Maḍmūn, as well as of a *bahār* of *amlas* ('smooth') iron.²⁷

(28) The larger ship, however, arrived near Berbera,²⁸ when its captain ran into trouble with it, until (29) it was thrust against Bāb al-Mandab,²⁹ where it foundered {alt. tr.: it crashed at . . . and broke up there}. (30) The pepper was a total loss. God salvaged³⁰ none of it. (31) As to the iron, mariners were brought from Aden, with whom it was stipulated (32) that they would dive for it and salvage it. They salvaged (33) about one half of the iron, and, while I am writing this letter, (34) they are bringing it out of the Furḍa to {alt. tr.: releasing all of it from the . . . and bringing it to} the storehouse³¹ of the most illustrious Sheikh, (35) my master

son of Farāj (III, 4, margin, line 2, and verso, lines 6–9), the other, the son of Burayk, the Alexandrian (II, 34, side e, lines 1 ff.).

²² {For Fandarayna, see 332, n. 16.} As it appears clearly from the context, Ben Yijū was not in that town, but had advised his correspondent 'Alī [= Abu 'l-Ḥasan] b. Ja'far to buy and to dispatch from there the goods mentioned. See line 25.

²³ Indian *paṭṭana-svāmi*, 'lord of the mart,' chief of merchant guild in a port or market town (communicated by Professor A. L. Basham). {Also see page 146.}

²⁴ Certainly identical with Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ja'far, lines 64 and 65, whom we find in India. He did not transport the items listed in person, but sent them through his agent, line 65. While the name Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī was common among Jews, I have never come across a Jew named Ja'far. Therefore, this Abu 'l-Ḥasan certainly was a Muslim. Thus, we see a Jew sending merchandise to another through a Muslim merchant, traveling on a Hindu ship. The same appears in sec. G and II, 20. Whether the Ja'far, whose ship foundered according to II, 32, line 7, was the father of our 'Alī cannot be ascertained.

²⁵ In the Indian Ocean, ships used to be escorted by a smaller ship of a different type; cf. 341, n. 26.

²⁶ {Arabic *nuskha*. See 362, n. 11.}

²⁷ Cf. III, 11, lines 37–40.

²⁸ A town in the Somali Republic, Africa. The town itself seems to be known only from literary sources over a hundred years later than the references in the Geniza. See Lewis, "Berberā," 1172. See [II, 71 margin, line 3] VII, 23, line 7.

²⁹ Up to the present day the name of the straits between the southern tip of Arabia and Africa. But in ancient times it was also the name of a place on that tip {see Rentz, "Bāb al-Mandab"}, and this is what is intended here and apparently in V, 8, line 16. The sea of Berbera was famous for its treacherous, 'mad' waters. See the verses quoted by Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, 2:438–39; cf. Maqbul Ahmad, "Mas'ūdī's Geography," 284.

³⁰ {Arabic *jama'*. The same expression for God returning lost belongings to their owner is used in II, 61, line 36.

³¹ Arabic *dār*. Margariti, "Aden," 156, 321, suggests that this may have been Maḍmūn's home rather than a storehouse.}

Maḍmūn b. al-Ḥasan. All the expenses (36) incurred for the diving and for transport³² will be deducted from whatever will be {alt. tr.: was deducted from whatever was} realized for it (that iron), and the rest will be divided proportionally, (37) each taking his proper share.

I regret very much your losses. But the (38) *Holy one, blessed be He* will compensate you and me presently {alt. tr.: may...compensate...speedily}.³³

[D. Household goods ordered]

As to the (household) goods ordered (39) by you, my master: You asked me to buy a frying pan of stone³⁴ in a {lit., ‘and its’} case.³⁵ Later on³⁶ (40) its case broke {alt. tr.:...pan of stone, and I wrapped it and after

³² Arabic *kirā*, the wages paid to the camel drivers, who transported the salvaged iron from Bāb al-Mandab to the customs house of Aden, an extra expenditure made necessary owing to the foundering of the ship.

³³ Those merchants bore their losses with great restraint, both because they were used to them and because of their strong belief that God ordained everything, and “everything that God does is for the good.”

³⁴ Arabic *tājīn* {also in III, 24, lines 17, 36}, the Greek *teganon* (τήγανον) (which came to the Arabs through the Aramaic; cf. Fraenkel, *Fremdwörter*, 69). In III, 11, lines 21 and 23, the Arabic word {*miqlā*,} *miqlāt* (pronounced today in central Yemen *maglā*⁷) is used instead. {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:391, n. 33.} A *maglā*⁷ made of *ḥarād* stone is believed by the Yemenites to give the food an especially tasty flavor; cf. Goitein, *Jemenica*, 169, No. 1319 and 49, No. 273. The famous Yemenite Sabbath dish *kubānāh* is kept warm in a pot made of this *ḥarād*. In former times, Yemenite immigrants to Eretz Israel used to bring those stone pots with them, which shows how much they valued them. In modern times, *maglā*⁷ denotes in the language of the Yemenite Jews not a frying pan—which is called *sullā*⁷—but a large dish, in which warm food, destined for the whole family, is served {see Piamenta, *Dictionary*, II, 412}. However, as *tājīn* and *miqlāt* are used here in one and the same sense, the common Arabic use of these words was presumably intended. As we learn from III, 11, lines 21–23, Khalaf forgot to send the iron pan and sent instead two pans of stone. {In Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:143, frying pans made ‘of iron or of “stone”’ are described. R. Ettinghausen, in his notes to the text, which he sent to Goitein on April 2, 1959, remarks that cooking vessels carved from a gray stone were in use in the 10–12th centuries (and still today) in Khurasan. Waines, “*Maṭbakh*,” 809a: “Pans (sing. *mīklā* or *mīklāt*) generally used for frying fish and the like were made of iron. A stone-made *mīklā* was used for other purposes, although the distinction between it and the former is unclear.” Stone (*ḥajar*) kitchenware appears here, lines 39, 41; III, 11, line 23; III, 24, lines 17–18. Such vessels from Yemen are discussed by Muchawsky-Schnapper, “Stone.”}

³⁵ Arabic {*wa-}glfth*, which could correspond to Arabic *ghalfā* or *jalfā*; the former is preferable, although it seems not to be attested by the dictionaries {see, however, n. 37}. In the same sense, III, 11, line 24: *ghilāf* {see note there}.

³⁶ Arabic *ba’d* for *ba’dan*, as in modern Yemenite speech; cf. Goitein-Habshush, *Travels in Yemen*, Text, 77, line 18. {See next note.

I wrapped it, it broke},³⁷ whereupon I bought you an iron frying pan for a *niṣāfi*,³⁸ (41) which is, after all, better than a stone pan {lit., ‘more recommended than the stone one’}. I bought you (also) for a *niṣāfi*, (42) glassware:³⁹ tumblers, bowls {alt. tr.: jugs/cups}⁴⁰ and cups {alt. tr.: jars},⁴¹ namely sixty-eight (43) tumblers, ten bowls and five cups {alt. tr.: jars}; with the basket, which cost a *qirāt*, it made exactly (44) one *niṣāfi*; furthermore, five green⁴² bottles with {lit., ‘in’} their baskets⁴³ for eleven *qirāt*, the (45) total being a dinar and eleven *qirāts*. As to the small pots, I (46) could not get any single items, only in *dasts*.⁴⁴ The wheat has been

³⁷ The words in the original following *tājin ḥajar*, ‘a frying pan of stone,’ can be vocalized *wa-ghallaftuh wa-ba’d* (see Blau, *Grammar*, 217) *ghallaftuh inkasara*. This has the advantage of avoiding the unattested *ghalfā* and the lack of concord between it and the following verb. Furthermore, the breakage of the case does not explain the need to buy an iron pan, since the text as read by Goitein does not state that the stone pan broke.}

³⁸ Half a Maliki dinar; see II, 20 (page 333), line 34.

³⁹ Glass vessels were ordered very frequently by Ben Yijū; cf. II, 20, line 47 ff.; II, 23, lines 45 ff.; II, 26, line 7; III, 11, lines 25–30, 50. As the low prices indicate, local glass, such as that manufactured in Lakhaba near Aden (cf. II, 26, line 7), is intended here. The Adenese themselves ordered Beirut glass or glass made by the Dār al-Jawhar from Cairo; see II, 44, lines 18–19, verso, lines 28–29.

⁴⁰ {For ‘bowls,’ here and in the next line, the original has *kisān*. I have not found this word elsewhere. From his working papers it is clear that Goitein understood it as a plural form of *kaʿs*, which in III, 11, lines 25, 50, he similarly translated ‘bowl’ (perhaps to differentiate between this item and the previous one here). I suggest that *kisān* may be an irregular spelling or dialectal form for *kizān*, plural of *kūz*, jug or drinking cup, for which see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:143, 148, and above, 422, n. 32 (there: ‘copper vessels for wine’). Both in II, 44, lines 18–19, and here the item in question appears together with *aqdāḥ* and *arṭāl*. (For the *z>s* shift, see Blau, *Grammar*, 37. Blau lists, with due reservation, only one example, Bodl. MS. Heb. b. 3 [Cat. 2806], fol. 9v, line 6, *wsnb*’, taken by the editor, Baneth, “Documents,” 85, n. 56, as possibly equivalent to *waznuhā*. In context, however, this is highly unlikely, and *wa-su<k>nuhā* should be preferred. Ashtor, *Mamluks*, 3:59, 147 already noted the correction; thanks are due to Amir Ashur for calling this to my attention. As such, I am aware of no other documentation for the proposed shift.) According to Sadan, “*Masbrūbāt*,” 721b, Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:146, “translates *kizān* as ‘bowls,’ a sense which the word possesses in certain dialects.” As far as the reference to Goitein is concerned, a mishap seems to have occurred here. On page 146, he quotes a passage with ‘bowls, platters and cups.’ As indicated in the accompanying note, page 393, n. 51, this is a translation from the text in this book II, 32, lines 49–50, which in the original reads *zabādi wa-ṣuḥūn wa-kizān*, i.e., *zabādi* = ‘bowls’; *kizān* = ‘cups.’

⁴¹ For ‘jars,’ *arṭāl*, see 423, n. 34.}

⁴² Arabic *ksr*, which most probably is to be understood as *khudr*, plural of *akhḍar*; cf. II, 44v, lines 28–29, where red and white glass is mentioned. It could hardly be *khusr*, ‘slender,’ as this form is not attested in literary or Yemenite Arabic.

⁴³ Arabic *shutūt*, a Yemenite word; see II, 23, line 44.

⁴⁴ This, too, shows how much the industry was standardized in those days. See above line 20. A *dast* was a certain quantity that made up a set of a particular item; cf. 304, n. 9.

made ready for dispatch (47) to {lit., 'has been packed for'} you by my lord, the most illustrious Sheikh Maḍmūn.⁴⁵

[E. Silk sent instead of gold]

I, your servant, sent to [you] on my (48) account five *manns* of good silk,⁴⁶ for I saw that my master, the most illustrious Sheikh (49) Maḍmūn, had sent some to Ibn 'Adlān⁴⁷ and to others and it was reported in his (Ibn 'Adlān's) name (50) that it is selling well in Malabar. Therefore, I thought it was preferable⁴⁸ to send, instead of gold, (51) merchandise, which might bring some profit. Thus, kindly sell it for me, your servant, (52) for whatever price God, the Exalted, apportions as livelihood, and buy for me, your servant, whatever (53) God, the Exalted, apportions⁴⁹ and send it to me in any ship, without any liability, my lord, (54) for any perils on land or sea. If the commodities purchased include (55) betel nut or cardamom, kindly purchase for whatever price is available; but you, my master, (56) need no instructions, for you are competent {alt. tr.: the epitome of competence}.⁵⁰ Indeed, I, your servant, cause you trouble

⁴⁵ Wheat was indigenous in India, especially in its northwestern and central parts. According to Watt, *Commercial Products*, 1092: "With the vast majority of the people of India, wheat is not, however, a necessity of life; it is indeed rarely if ever eaten by them. Wheat becomes an important article of food in the Panjāb only." It is evident from III, 18B, lines 4 and 10, that Ben Yijū's staple food in India was rice. He needed wheat, perhaps, not so much as food, as for religious purposes, for according to the Jewish ritual, the full grace cannot be recited except after the eating of bread made of one of the main five grains grown in Palestine (wheat, barley, etc.). A scholar like Ben Yijū certainly would have hated the idea never to pronounce the full grace. Therefore, he—and certainly also the other Jewish merchants out in India—needed to have wheat bread, at least for the Sabbath meals. In fact, a similar problem existed in southern Yemen, where the staple food was at that time—and still is—durra ('Indian millet,' *Andropogon Sorghum Brot.*). The Yemenite Jews approached the head of the Egyptian Jewish community, Abraham Maimuni (in office 1204–37) on this matter. In a long letter he explained to them what they could do; cf. Abraham Maimuni, *Responsa*, 126–28 (no. 84) and 197 (no. 109). In II, 26, line 3, Maḍmūn charges Ben Yijū three dinars for wheat sent to him. Wheat was brought to Aden from Egypt via 'Aydhāb; cf. VI, 36, line 19, verso, line 17. In letters from Aden to India, the Yemenite word *burr* is used for wheat {as here; II, 51, line 9, in a letter from Aden to Egypt; III, 8, line 12, from India to Yemen}; in orders from 'Aydhāb, the Egyptian *qamḥ*. {See, e.g., II, 58, line 24, where wheat is called 'an essential.'}

⁴⁶ Approximately 10 pounds. Silk was traded in standard quantities of 10 pounds, costing 20 Egyptian dinars. On shipping silk to India, see III, 1, line 7 and 555, n. 8.

⁴⁷ Not known from other documents.

⁴⁸ Arabic *akhyar*; cf. III, 9, margin, line 5.

⁴⁹ {For the 'whatever...apportions' formula, also in lines 60, 69, see the discussion in pages 63–65.}

⁵⁰ Such an apology is made, after the writer has given his instructions. See below, line 71. {Arabic *mawḍi' al-kifāya*, lit., 'the place of competence.' I have not seen *mawḍi'*}

(57) every year; but you, my master, do [excuse] your servant,⁵¹ (58) as it has always been your habit, in the past and recently.

[F. Request to intervene with a Muslim notable]

Moreover, {add: I inform you} my master, (59) last year, I sent to the captain Mas'ūd, the Abyssinian, (60) 30 Egyptian *mithqāls*, with which to buy whatever God, the Exalted, would apportion. When, however, (61) he arrived at your place, the well-known misfortune {lit., 'that misfortune'} befell him. He {lit., 'the man'} informed me that he (62) had bought me two *bahārs* of pepper, which he carried with him, and that there remained for me $17\frac{1}{4}$ (63) *mithqāls*, which were deposited with my master, the most illustrious Sheikh (64) Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ja'far.⁵² Therefore, I, the captain (65) Mas'ūd, and Bakhtiyār,⁵³ the slave-agent of 'Alī b. Ja'far, went to the most illustrious Sheikh (66) 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Nīlī,⁵⁴ and he (Mas'ūd) reported to him the matter, whereupon I received (67) a notification from al-Nīlī {alt. tr.: took a note/letter, which al-Nīlī wrote} to 'Alī b. Ja'far about it. (68) When you meet him, kindly greet him in my name and ask him (69) to buy for me with this whatever God, the Exalted, apportions⁵⁵ and to send it in (70) any ship without

used this way in the dictionaries, and the exact translation is uncertain. For such an apology, see further, 592, n. 36.

⁵¹ Arabic *ya'khudh 'alā 'abdiḥ bil*-. . . The last word was restored by Goitein *bil-'udhr*, and the phrase translated, without brackets 'do excuse me.' From the dictionary definitions of *akbadha 'alā bi-*, I would expect something like *ya'khudh 'alā 'abdiḥ bil-[faḍl]*, 'force [kindness] upon his servant,' or the like. But I am uncertain that is idiomatic.

⁵² See above, line 25.

⁵³ A very common Persian name; cf. II, 20, line 25, 28; II, 23, line 43 {contrary to Margariti, "Aden," 244, it is unlikely in my opinion that the same Bakhtiyār was intended}. According to Jāhīz, *Fakhr al-Sūdān*, 84, one should not confide one's business to a Persian slave (a Khorāsānī).

⁵⁴ Al-Nīlī means 'the indigo merchant,' here, perhaps, a family name. {'Alī al-Nīlī was the name of the wealthy clerk-agent of the shipowner Rāmishṭ (see pages 145–46). Stern, "Rāmishṭ," 10, n. 5, explains that al-Nīl is a place in Iraq. The same man could be intended here; see the following note.}

⁵⁵ The Abyssinian captain, after his return from his unsuccessful voyage to India, testified in Aden that he had left with 'Alī b. Ja'far $17\frac{1}{4}$ Egyptian gold *mithqāls* belonging to Khalaf. The captain, Khalaf and 'Alī b. Ja'far's slave-agent went subsequently to a Muslim merchant en route to India and asked him to urge 'Alī b. Ja'far to send merchandise for the money deposited, the reason being obviously that the Abyssinian captain did not intend to return to India in the near future. Here Khalaf requests Ben Yijū to see to it that his Muslim business associate {'Alī b. Ja'far} fulfilled his obligations. {It is not clear that al-Nīlī was en route to India. Had that been the case, it would hardly have been necessary to take from him a letter that he wrote to 'Alī b. Ja'far. Al-Nīlī may have been a highly respected merchant (see the previous note), who also had dealings with 'Alī b. Ja'far and was expected to be able to influence him. By what appears to be coincidence, our papers

any liability for any risk on sea (71) or land, in this world or in the world to come.⁵⁶ I do not need giving you instructions, how to approach {lit., 'to speak to'} (72) him; "a *hint is sufficient for a wise man.*"⁵⁷

May my lord receive for his esteemed self (73) the best greetings and convey the best and most profuse greetings in my name to my master, the noble scion,⁵⁸ and all (74) whom your care embraces and Bama!⁵⁹ *And Peace.*

[G. Presents sent]

[Margin] (1) I, your servant, sent (2) what has no importance or (3) value, namely a bottle of sugar (4) and a good Abyssinian hide.⁶⁰ (5) On the hide, is written (6) 'Yiju' from outside (7) and from inside on various places. (8) Favor me by accepting and excuse (9) me,⁶¹ as had been your habit, (10) in the past and recently. (11) And best greetings to you (12) and sincerest salutation and personal regards.⁶² (12) *And Peace.*

[Verso] (1) I also notify you, my lord, that the basket with the glassware and the five bottles (2) are with the *nākhudā* Aḥmad {read:

mention another merchant, whose name combines those of some of the figures described here, viz. Abu 'l-Ḥasan b. Mas'ūd al-Nīlī (VII, 5, lines 11–12, VII, 36*v*, line 8).}

⁵⁶ This religious formula is not specifically Islamic. It is found in Hebrew and Aramaic Geniza documents. {Cf., e.g., II, 45a, lines 18, 33, 34.}

⁵⁷ Lit., 'give to a wise man {Prov. 9:9} (only) the beginning of a thing.' Khalaf uses the same Hebrew phrase in III, 11, lines 46–47.

⁵⁸ Ben Yijū's son, Peraḥyā Abu 'l-Surūr; cf. II, 14, line 36.

⁵⁹ Ben Yijū's slave agent; cf. II, 14, line 36. He is regarded as a member of the family and called in III, 16, line 23, 'The Brother.' Similarly, Maimonides, in one of his letters says: "All the members of my family, free men or slaves." See also 487, n. 2. Bama, as I learn from Professor A. L. Basham, is vernacular for Brahma. {The above reference is to Maimonides, *Epistles* (Baneth), 71. In sending regards to the addressee, Maimonides mentions *wa-kull man fī dāri aḥrār wa-jiwār*, lit., 'and everyone in my home, free men and female slaves.' Cf. Friedman, "Menstrual Impurity," 12, n. 44. On greetings to Bama, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:435, n. 82; *Letters*, 13. Ghosh (*Antique*, 246–54), concludes that the slave's name is to be vocalized Bomma, ultimately derived from Brahma.}

⁶⁰ Before the main meal, which is brought in ready-made on portable tables or on a tray, is served, the Yemenites eat *ja'lāh*, all kinds of fruits, raw vegetables, and nuts, which are heaped up on a hide, on which one puts also the peels, seeds and pits. During the interval between the *ja'lāh* and the meal, the hide, with all it contains, is removed. It stands to reason that the hides sent as presents served the same purpose. A hide bought for Ben Yijū by Maḍmūn cost two (Malikī) dinars (II, 16*v*, line 5). See Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 1:111 {and 4:129}.

⁶¹ A polite phrase implying that a far more valuable present should have been sent.

⁶² {Arabic *ilmām*. See 492, n. 15.}

Muḥammad}, the *nākhudā* of the ship of the Fidyār;⁶³ on all of them (3) is written ‘Yiju’ in Hebrew letters. The hide (4) and the bottle of sugar are with Sheikh Abu ‘l-Ḥasan al-Maḥallī,⁶⁴ and (5) the silk is with the elder Abū ‘Alī b. Ṭayyib.⁶⁵ Please, my lord, take delivery (6) of all this, which is in the Fidyār’s ship—may God ordain its safety!

(7) May God, the Exalted, unite you with us *in His mercy and compassion!*⁶⁶ *And Peace.*

[H. Address]

(1) (To) His excellency, the most illustrious Sheikh, my master Abū Ishāq (2) Abraham, *son of his honor, great and holy master Perahyā, the scribe,*⁶⁷ (3) b. Yijū—may God preserve his prosperous state!

(1) (From) His servant, who is longing (2) for him, Khalaf b. (3) Isaac—*may he be remembered for resurrection!*⁶⁸

⁶³ *Nākhudā* means literally ‘master of the ship’ (in Persian) and usually designates its owner. But here it designates the man in command of the finances and other matters related to the passengers, i.e., the purser. The proprietor of this frequently mentioned boat was a Hindu, and the name, like Fatan Swamī (recto, line 24), was in reality a title. {See page 147. The *nākhudā* Aḥmad b. Bakhtiyār is mentioned in II, 20, lines 25, 28; but our text seems to read Muḥammad.}

⁶⁴ From the provincial town al-Maḥalla in Lower Egypt. Of course, this could have been a family name of a man whose father or grandfather had settled in Cairo.

⁶⁵ As each of the three merchants, to whom Khalaf confided his consignments, traveled on the same ship, the distribution was made not as a matter of safety, but out of consideration for the carriers, who certainly took with them the comparatively small shipments without remuneration. The first was a Muslim, the two others certainly Jews; for details about Abū ‘Alī b. Ṭayyib, see 555, n. 12.

⁶⁶ A conclusion like this is not common and expresses real, personal feelings.

⁶⁷ See 592, n. 37.

⁶⁸ This blessing, *zikh[ro] li-te[hiyyā]*, seems not to be included in Zunz, *Geschichte*, 304–70, where the Hebrew formulas used for the remembrance of the dead are listed. It is, however, in use with the Yemenite Jews up to the present day, and the second word is pronounced *lithhōyōh*. {For the blessing’s use (also see 394, n. 33) in relationship to the belief in resurrection, see Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 137. Klein-Franke, “Tombstones,” 174, mistranslates “his memory will stay alive.” Also note IV, 68*v*, address: ‘may he be remembered for a blessing and resurrection’ (Alexandria, 1140).}

III, 10a *Beginning of a Letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to Abraham Ben Yijū*

Aden, ca. 1138–50

ENA 2727, f. 7b

{The first (nine) lines of a letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to Abraham Ben Yijū, torn away at the fold. Lines 1–3 quote Job 22:25; 8:7; Gen. 28:14. The last two verses, quoted from memory, are written with some errors, especially the last one. Lines 4–9: salutation to Ben Yijū, in Hebrew and Arabic, and acknowledgment of receipt of his letter. Of the body of Khalaf’s letter, only one line written in the margin, is preserved: “The small items (*tafāriq*, see 649, n. 5), all of them from your servant . . .” Verso contains three lines with the names—and the accompanying polite phrases—of the addressee and the sender. Ben Yijū’s father, as in the address on III, 9*v* (see there, 592, n. 37) and III, 10*v*, is styled ‘the scribe’ (*sōfēr*). Khalaf refers to himself as ‘his servant, who counts his praise’ (Heb.). Ben Yijū added, in Judeo-Arabic, a fourth line under the address: “in which is written the *intercalation* of five years.” For calendars written by Ben Yijū, see the introduction to III, 1. Khalaf adds the blessing for the dead to his father’s name, from which we learn that the letter was written sometime after the beginning of 1138.}

¹ {This document, III, 10a, was identified, copied and numbered ‘56a’ in the ‘Old List’ by Prof. Goitein, but not transferred to the ‘New List.’ For the date of Khalaf b. Isaac’s father, see II, 51, line 6.}

III, 11 *Letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to Abraham Ben Yijū*

Aden, probably 1140 {after July 29, 1139}

TS 18J 5, f. 1

The upper part, containing the polite phrases of the preamble, has been detached. On that section of the verso the address had been written, which thus also is lost. Likewise, the left lower corner, containing parts of fifteen lines (lines 39–54), has been torn away.

The identity of the letter's writer and addressee can be fixed with certainty despite the lack of the address. Lines 1–49 are written by the same clerk who wrote III, 12, while the postscripts and the remarks on the margin and between the lines are in the hand of Khalaf b. Isaac; see the introduction to III, 10. The addressee is referred to as Abū Ishāq (line 2), the honorary by-name given to Ben Yijū in the addresses of Khalaf's letters III, 10, {10a,} 12 and 16, but never, for example, by Joseph b. Abraham. In addition, there are a number of obvious references to III, 10; see here lines 11, 13, 21 and 32. This provides us also with the date of our fragment. If III, 10 was sent in {or after} 1139 {1138}, as we assumed, III, 11 must have been written in {or after} 1140 {1139} and some time after August 15 {July 29, 1139}, the last day of the month of Av of that year; see line 8.

Although the same clerk wrote III, 11 and 12, he did not use the same paper. No. III, 11 is smaller and light gray, while III, 12 is light brown. The latter is smoother, while the paper of our letter is rather woolly. The ink seeped through to the verso; and unlike III, 12, the blank space there could not be used by the recipient for making notes. Because of the narrower size of the paper, the clerk's calligraphic script is somewhat smaller than in III, 12, an aesthetic rule followed by all better scribes. {The clerk can be identified as Samuel b. Moses b. Eleazar. He signed II, 71 and penned a marriage contract preserved in ENA NS 1, f. 13 (L 49) & ENA NS 2, f. 25.}

Translation

[A. Thanks for condolence and news of other deaths]

(1) I, your servant, acknowledge your words of condolence over the death of my *late*¹ (2) father—*may he find mercy!* I never doubted your friendship, Sheikh Abū Ishāq, (3) and know well that what happened at your place {alt. tr.: with you} is like what happened (4) with us.² Those two young men, the sons of Mūsā, namely (5) Judah and Hārūn, journeyed to Broach, but the ship was struck in the Khawr (the gulf); (6) the two young men perished together with Sheikh Abu 'l-Faraj al-Maḥallī. God forbid (7) that we should be forgetful of them!³

Furthermore, the death of my mother occurred this year (8) in the month of Av; thus, even more grief⁴ befell me. However, at all times (9) everything is governed by God, the Exalted. *He can do anything He pleases;* (10) *and none can say to Him, "What are You doing?"*⁵ May God, the Exalted, turn all matters to a good end!⁶

¹ Hebrew *hay*; see page 394, n. 31. The death of Khalaf's father occurred in February 1139 [February 14–March 13, 1138]; see II, 51, line 6.

² In his letter of condolence, Ben Yijū obviously had mentioned cases of young people who had perished while setting out from India {see the continuation}. This implied that Khalaf should bear the death of his old father with equanimity. {Khalaf compares the personal grief of the addressee of his letter in II, 48*v*, lines 41–42, to his own grief over the death of his father. Perhaps Khalaf alluded to a personal tragedy of Ben Yijū here as well.}

³ Here, Khalaf quotes cases of other young men who died on the high seas in the prime of their lives, merchants who had set out from Aden to Broach on the northern part of the west coast of India. For our knowledge of the traffic on the Indian Ocean, this passage is most revealing. Khalaf reports from Aden about a case of shipwreck on the Indian coast to a merchant living on the same coast, but further south. Thus, Aden at that time was in closer contact with those Indian ports than they were among themselves. {On the other hand, Broach might have been the destination, rather than the vicinity where the ship foundered. If so, the gulf referred to here could be the gulf of Aden; see the introductions to II, 31 and III, 22.}

⁴ Arabic *krb* 'alā *krb*, presumably *karb*, 'grief' (intending the writer's grief over the earlier death of his father), rather than *kharb* 'destruction'; in any event this might be a double entendre, referring also to the mourning over the destruction of the Temple on 9 Av.}

⁵ Eccles. 8:3, 4, quoted in a Jewish prayer of mourning.

⁶ After everybody mentioned in the previous lines was dead, it is difficult to see how everything could end well. However, up to the present day in the Near East, when one discusses a hopeless situation he concludes with similar phrases. After all, man expects a better life in the world to come. {Cf. II, 20, lines 6–7; II, 51, lines 11–12; II, 56, lines 22–23; II, 58, lines 11–12; IV, 15–II, 42, lines 22–23; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:51, 519–20, n. 31.}

[B. Receipt of Consignments.]

There (11) arrived the ‘eggs’⁷ and the ‘refurbished’ iron,⁸ which were sent in the ship of Ibn Abu (12) ʿl-Katāʿib. Many thanks for your kindness.

There arrived also four (13) copper lids;⁹ they are very heavy. I had wanted (14) lighter ones.

The betel nuts, which you, my lord, kindly sent with Sheikh (15) Abu ʿl-Surūr¹⁰ and Muwaffaq al-ʿAshāʿirī,¹¹ arrived. May God reward you well, (16) my lord, and undertake to give you recompense and never let me want for you life!

[C. On the delay in receipt of cardamom]

As to the cardamom, (17) which you, my lord, mentioned had been delayed this year, do not worry about it, my lord. (18) I talked with my lord, the most illustrious Sheikh Maḍmūn¹² and suggested (19) to him to write about it to Ibn al-Marīḍa¹³ and to the Fidyār.¹⁴ (20) But he said

⁷ Most probably, a kind of cardamom {a form of iron; see pages 369–70.

⁸ For the various types of iron here and in lines 36–40, see 315, n. 17.}

⁹ For the meaning of *ṣufr* (‘copper’), see 555, n. 11. For the lids, see III, 10, line 20.

¹⁰ Too common a name to lend itself to identification. {Perhaps Abu ʿl-Surūr b. Khallūf al-Ṭalḥī, mentioned in III, 6*v*, line 5, after Muwaffaq al-ʿAshāʿirī, who follows here.

¹¹ Mentioned also in III, 6*v*, line 4.} Muwaffaq was a name common among Jews; cf. II, 75 *passim* (thirteenth century); Mann, *Texts*, 1:449 (twelfth century); Strauss, “*Vermutung*” (thirteenth century). ʿAshāʿir was a great confederation of Arab tribes in southwest Yemen around Zabīd; cf. Löfgren, *Aden*, 216, lines 6–12. It was common for Jews to bear as a family name the name of a tribe under whose protection they lived; cf. the name Ben Yijū (Ishū being a big Berber tribe living around Meknes in Morocco) {see page 53 and n. 11}. Muwaffaq could hardly have been a Muslim, since were that the case, the request to assist him and his companion in line 54, would not have been necessary. Again, we see that two traders carried merchandise in joint responsibility. {Only II, 75 has Muwaffaq without *al-*. The other two sources concern al-Muwaffaq (or Abu ʿl-Muwaffaq), a common honorific; cf. introduction to II, 67. Mann, *Texts*, 1:449, does actually speak of one al-Saʿīd Muwaffaq, but the citation is from GW II, where both the manuscript and the printed edition read al-Muwaffaq (see Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 172, n. 146).

¹² Sheikh Maḍmūn is, of course, Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan, the representative of the merchants.}

¹³ ‘The son of the sick woman,’ certainly identical with Abu ʿl-Ḥasan Ibn al-Marīḍa al-Qarawī, a Tunisian Jewish merchant mentioned in III, 18, sec. d, line 1.

¹⁴ {See page 147.}

that you had already made the same suggestion {lit., ‘mentioned this’} in your letter to him.¹⁵

[D. Apology for not having sent a frying pan]

You (21) inquired in your letter, my lord, about the iron pan.¹⁶ (As a matter of fact) I (22) had forgotten it in my house on that day and did not send it.

[E. Gifts sent to the addressee]

God, the Exalted, made it possible for me to forward (23) to you for your household two bottles of raisins, a sieve,¹⁷ and two stone pans, (24) both in one case,¹⁸ and a pound of Maghrebi kohl.¹⁹ Please, my master, take delivery (25) and forgive me (for not sending more).

[F. Problems in filling Ben Yijū’s order]

You ordered twenty bowls {alt. tr.: cups} and four lamps.²⁰ (26) *By my faith*,²¹ I paid for this in advance two months before the sailing of the

¹⁵ The import of this passage seems to be the following: Cardamom did not grow in the vicinity of the port where Ben Yijū lived. He used to order it from such places as Fandarayna (see III, 18, lines 3–4). At the time of the departure of the ships from India that year, it was not available to him. Thus, the suggestion is made that the representative of the Adenese merchants should apply to other merchants in India for that commodity.

¹⁶ See III, 10, lines 39–41, and here, line 23.

¹⁷ In I, 14, line 34, we find seventy sieves exported from Mirbāt in southeast Arabia to Aden. A sieve of fine quality is a very important implement in a household where grain is always ground.

¹⁸ {Arabic *ghilāf*. Maimonides in his commentary to Shabbat 16:1, translates ‘case’ (*tīq*): *ghilāf*. Also see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:394, n. 79; Sadan, *Mobilier*, 142; and 600, n. 35, 601, n. 37.}

¹⁹ Cf. III, 1*v*, line 11.

²⁰ Certainly made of glass. Glass was manufactured in Aden; see III, 10, line 42. {I am not sure why Goitein translated *kaṣ* here and in line 50, ‘bowl,’ rather than ‘cup,’ ‘drinking glass’; see 601, n. 40. The lamps are designated *qindīl*, pl. *qanādīl*, here and in line 50. Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 4:136, comments that *qindīl* is common in Arabic for a lighting appliance in the house but is not used as such in the Geniza, where it appears only as silver lamp suspended by silver chains before the Holy Ark in the synagogue. I see no reason to assume that the *qindīls* in this document were intended for anything other than household use. The word is registered in Goitein’s card index for the India Book, and his failure to take note of it in writing *Med. Soc.* vol. 4 is probably the result of a curiosity in connection with the history of his Geniza research: the indexes for these two books were never entirely integrated.

²¹ Hebrew *we-emūnā* (or Arabic and Hebrew *wa-emūnā*). Cf. I, 25, line 13, *wal-emūnā*; IV, 10*v*, line 29: *we-emūnā*. For this oath, see Ben Yehuda, *Dictionary*, 275; Ratzaby,

ships. (27–28) However, it happened that my lord,²² Sheikh Maḍmūn, and Sheikh Bilāl²³ were outfitting a boat {add: that belonged to them} for Ceylon in partnership and sent the attendants²⁴ to set aside all that (29) was being manufactured, so that they could take whatever they needed.²⁵ Until the moment I wrote this letter, they (30) were promising some of it. If I get some, I, your servant, shall send it and add a note about it at (31) the end of the letter.²⁶

[G. Orders for Indian Commodities]

Making a bold demand²⁷ on your kindness, I sent (32) five *manns* of silk—of that silk.²⁸ I was forced to do so, because of (33) the devaluation²⁹ of the Malikī (dinar); and by chance I had no {alt. tr.: and I did not succeed in acquiring}³⁰ *mithqāls*, the price of which is here (34) higher even than last year.³¹ Please, my master, just sell it for whatever God, (35) the Exalted, apportions³² and with its proceeds buy for me, your servant,

Dictionary, 15, where the form with *welwa-* (or *wal-*) is not documented. It is not clear whether the spelling *w'ymunh* (also in IV, 10*v*, line 29), with *y*, indicates the pronunciation of *hataf-segol* as *e*, rather than *a*, as common in Yemenite Hebrew (Morag, *The Hebrew of Yemenites*, 119 or if *ə* → *i* (see Morag, 181, and the sources cited in Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 154, n. 22).)

²² One expects 'lords,' Arabic *mawāliya*.

²³ Bilāl was at that time already vizier and actual ruler of Aden and the whole of southern Yemen; cf. II, 32, line 24. This did not hinder him from forming a partnership with the representative of the Jewish merchants in Aden.

²⁴ {Arabic *khadam*, which can also be translated 'servants' (as did Goitein). The writer refers to himself as the addressee's 'servant,' Arabic 'abd.}

²⁵ In the same high-handed way in which the two partners acted here, we see Bilāl act against all the other merchants; see II, 27, lines 4 and 7. {According to Maimonides' comment cited above page 357, n. 4, merchants regularly granted such privileges to an important trader. Cf. page 357, for bitter criticism of Maḍmūn's behavior towards the Jewish merchants of Aden. No. II, 32, line 24, also speaks of Maḍmūn and Bilāl outfitting a boat to Ceylon; that document has been dated ca. 1130.}

²⁶ See line 50.

²⁷ Arabic *dalāla*. The usual form is *dalāl*, while *dalāla* or *dilāla* means brokerage. {For *dilāla*, *dalāla*, 'brokerage,' cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 1:185; 4:289 et passim. I have not seen *dalāl* for 'bold demand.' For the variants of this expression, see 447, n. 49.}

²⁸ Certainly a reference to III, 10, line 48, where, a year before, also the same quantity was sent.

²⁹ Arabic *fasād*, 'damage.'

³⁰ {Arabic *wa-lam yattafaq li*. On the shortage of ready cash among merchants, see page 20, n. 43.}

³¹ Reference to the high price of the Egyptian *mithqāl* in Aden also in II, 27, line 12.

³² For the 'whatever...apportions' formula, also in line 44, see the discussion in pages 63–65.

a little pepper or ‘eggs’³³ and betel nuts (36) and cardamom. However, do not buy for me ‘standard,’ //shiny//³⁴ or refurbished iron, (37) even for one dinar or one dirhem.³⁵ But, if you happen {alt. tr.: are able} to get smooth iron, packed (38) in *bārbazās* {alt. tr.: in containers with ventilation},³⁶ it will be all right. For when there are vapors, the iron becomes (39) rusty. Thus, please do not buy me, your servant, standard, <<shiny (40) or>> refurbished iron, but only smooth, long (bars) or pepper and ‘eggs,’ (41) betel nuts and cardamom.

Please hire for these wares some space³⁷ (in a ship), even if it is expensive, (42) either from a shipowner or a captain³⁸ or if you happen to find [merchants, who are], (43) trustworthy, even if the rental is expensive. Do not cause me a delay [...] (44) whatever God, the Exalted, appor-tions; do not delay selling it [...] as soon as] (45) you, my lord, have taken delivery, and when you buy, [my] lo[rd...] (46) even if it is expensive. There is no need, my master, [to give you advice. *A hint is sufficient to a*] (47) *wise man*.³⁹

[H. Greetings]

Accept, my lord, for your es[teemed self the best greetings]. (48) And best regards to my lord, your son, and Sheikh [Bama and those embraced] (49) by your care.⁴⁰ *And peace*.

³³ See above, line 11.

³⁴ Here and in line 39, added between the lines by Khalaf.

³⁵ See above, the note to line 11, for the various kinds of iron.

³⁶ For *bārbazā* (or *bārbuzā*) perhaps Persian *bārbūga*, ‘a load, a baggage’ or ‘small wares’ (Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 141) is to be compared. {The Arabic reads here *mu‘abba’ b’rbz’i*. The *b* in the second word could be taken as a prefix and *arbaza* or *arbuza* compared to *rābūz*, for which see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:500, ‘soufflet.’ *Bārbazā*, however, appears in III, 21, sec b, lines 23 (with def. art., *al-*), 27.}

³⁷ Arabic *taktarī*. Khalaf prefers the renting of a definite space in a ship to the payment of the *nawl* or freight. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:341–44, and for *taktarī*, Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:461–62.

³⁸ Arabic *nākhudā aw rubbān*. For these terms, see Introduction IIIA.

³⁹ The preceding phrases were restored by comparison with III, 10, line 72 and III, 12, line 46.

⁴⁰ The restoration of the greetings follows III, 10, lines 73–74 and other letters of Khalaf to Ben Yijū.

[I. Postscripts, in Khalaf's hand, (a) concerning items sent and not sent]

(50) I acquired thirteen bowls and two lamps and th[ey are in such or such a package.⁴¹ I sent] (51) the silk, the sieve and the [Maghrebi] kohl [with Muwaffaq al-] (52) 'Ashā'irī; and the two bottles [of raisins and the two stone pots] (53) in the ship of Ibn al-Muqaddam [with . . .]⁴² (54) Please assist them, [my] lo[rd . . . [Margin] . . .] Excuse me, your servant, for not sending sugar. There is none to be had this year; and you, my master, are disposed to forgiving.

[J. (b) Request to forward letters]

Together with this letter is a letter for Sheikh Isaac Tilimsānī.⁴³ Please deliver it to him without delay. [Verso] (1) And another letter to [. . . Please deliver it] (2) to him, for I have heard th[at he is in . . . *And Peace.*]

⁴¹ See above, lines 25 ff.

⁴² Most probably Abu 'l-Surūr was mentioned here; see line 15. He and Muwaffaq certainly were Yemenites; this explains Khalaf's special interest in them. {For the ship of Ibn al-Muqaddam, see page 147.}

⁴³ One of the two merchants to whom Ben Yijū is requested to deliver letters was a North African like himself; most probably this was the case also with the second, whose name is lost. To his Muslim and Indian correspondents, Khalaf perhaps sent letters and consignments through their respective compatriots and coreligionists. See about this matter II, 24v, lines 1 ff.

III, 12–14 *Letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to Abraham Ben Yijū, Mainly about Shipwrecked Goods*

Aden, almost certainly 1146

III, 12. TS 18J 4, f. 18

III, 13. TS NSJ 21

III, 14. TS 8.19

No. 12 is written with great care and in unusually big and elaborate letters, by the same clerk {Samuel b. Moses b. Eleazar} who wrote most of III, 11. Cf. the introduction to III, 10. The verso bears only the address written in both Hebrew and Arabic (facing each other in opposite directions).

No. III, 13 (corresponding to III, 12, lines 13–36) and III, 14 (corresponding to III, 12, lines 36–49) look very different, owing to their different states of preservation. They are, however, fragments of one and the same letter, the original written by Khalaf himself, which was also sent on to Ben Yijū.¹

There are surprisingly few differences between the texts of the original and the copy, mostly errors by the boss, silently corrected by the clerk—silently, for the corrections do not appear in the original itself. See III, 12, lines 20, 26, 30, 36, 43, and 46. This letter was almost certainly written in 1146; see the note to line 35.

Ben Yijū, the addressee, used the blank verso of III, 13 for writing, in a very large and clear hand, a Hebrew liturgical poem by the Spanish Jewish poet, Isaac b. Ghiyāth (1038–89). It is a so-called *reshut* for *nishmat*, a poem recited by the cantor before the beginning of the main service on Sabbaths or festivals.² These poems did not constitute an integral part of the service, but were chosen by the cantor according to his taste. We may imagine that one of the India traders had with him a *dīwān*, or collection of poems, by that author and that Ben Yijū copied the poem for himself with the intention of using it while leading the community prayer. {See pages 67–68, on the liturgical poems copied by Ben Yijū.}

On the blank side of III, 14_v, (which appears on TS 8.19 as recto), Ben Yijū wrote the accounts that are our III, 25.

¹ {For sending multiple copies of letters or accounts, see page 9 (n. 23) and below, the note to line 18.}

² See Davidson, *Thesaurus*, 2:473. I had regarded the poem as a fragment, as it was written on a piece of paper forming the middle part of the sheet. I learned its true nature from Professor J. H. Schirmann.

Translation

[A. Acknowledgment of letter and good wishes]

(1) *In Your name, O Merciful.*

(2) The letter of his excellency, the most illustrious Sheikh, my lord, has arrived—may God protect your life (3) and make permanent your honored position, rank, pre-eminence, supremacy, superiority and ascendancy! (4) May He never deprive your dwelling place and court of any good! May He prostrate in weakness {alt. tr.: crush in disgrace} (5) those that are envious of you and humiliate your enemies! May all your affairs be completed successfully {lit., ‘be joined by blessings’}!

I read it (6) and comprehended it and was happy to learn about your well-being and that your affairs are in order. I praised God for this (7) very much and asked Him to give you more of all that is good, in His mercy.

I, your servant, acknowledge, (8) my lord, your kind inquiry (about my well-being) {alt. tr.: your kind attention}³ and concern. May God concern Himself with bestowing favors upon you {alt. tr.: Himself favorably with you} (9) and may He avert from you the misfortunes of this world! May He unite us, after the completion of your affairs, soon, (10), not belatedly, in His might and His kindness, which is (a) sufficient (guarantee) {alt. tr.: and His bounteous kindness}⁴

[B. On goods lost or salvaged last year off the coast of India]⁵

You detailed, my lord, what (11) was salvaged for me, your servant, in the *shaffāra*,⁶ namely half a *bahār* of big measure of pepper, less (12) a *farāsila*.⁷ However, you did not mention to me, your servant, anything about the ginger which had been carried in it, (13) namely, three *bahārs*

³ {Arabic *iftiqād*.

⁴ Arabic *bi-mannih wa-kafīyy luftīh*. The expression appears regularly. Cf. II, 61, line 9: *bi-mannih wa-kafīyy ṣun’ih bi-karamih wa-rahmatih*.} The elaborate proem is a combination of the phrases found also in Khalaf’s letters III, 10 and 16, with some variations and additions. Thus, the words ‘after the completion of your affairs,’ line 9, obviously indicate that Ben Yijū had mentioned in a previous letter that he could not yet leave India, because he had still urgent business there.

⁵ This section is explained in detail in III, 22.

⁶ A small ship accompanying a larger one; see 341, n. 26.

⁷ For the *farāsila*, see 559, n. 30.

of ginger, less one quarter, for you, my lord, had mentioned it to me in your letter of (14) last year, and (wrote) that the *nākhudā* had insisted on collecting the freight only {alt. tr.: refused⁸ to collect the freight except} from it. (15) This is what it says in your letter of last year, my lord, which is in my—your servant’s—possession, and that the (loss incurred by) (16) jettisoning (part of the cargo) from the *shaffāra* had been distributed over the (whole) cargo.⁹ Now I do not know whether you, my lord, forgot (17) to mention this in your letters or what the matter is {alt. tr.: what (else) happened}.¹⁰ For in your letters from (18) last year, which I, your servant, have kept,¹¹ you explained that the proceeds from the silk, after (19) expenses {alt. tr.: tolls},¹² were 17½ *mithqāls*. You had bought me, your servant, three *bahārs* less one quarter of ginger (20) for 11 *mithqāls*, the price being four *mithqāls* per *bahār*. The balance in my, your servant’s, favor: six (21) and a half *mithqāls*. From this, there had been deducted one *mithqāl*, the balance (due from the purchase) of {lit., ‘the difference from’} the iron last year. (22) There had remained a balance in my, your servant’s, favor of five and a half *mithqāls*. For this you had bought for me, your servant, pepper, half a *bahār* (23) of big measure, less one *qirāt*.¹³ This is what you had written to me, your servant, about the *shaffāra* last (24) year. Your letter concerning this, my lord, is still with me.

Furthermore, my lord, please check what is due to me {alt. tr.: is my loss}¹⁴ from the distribution.¹⁵ (25) From the total proceeds for me, your servant, buy whatever God, the Exalted, apportions: (26) pepper or something else, and forward it with one of the first ships coming out {lit., ‘one of the ships coming out at the beginning of the season’}.¹⁶

⁸ {Arabic *ghalab*; also in III, 22, line 9. See Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 358.

⁹ For this practice, see page 163.

¹⁰ Arabic *am kayfa al-khabr*.

¹¹ Khalaf refers to one letter. But it had been sent to him in various copies, all of which he kept.

¹² {Arabic *mu’na*. See 171–72, n. 23.}

¹³ A *qirāt* usually designates 1/24. Line. 12 uses *farāsila* in the same connection. The large *bahār* must have been composed of 24 *farāsila*, as opposed to the small one, which held 20. The same ratio of 1.2:1 for the large and small *bahārs* is found in Aden; see the introduction to II, 16 and 322, n. 4. {Since the *bahār* contained some 300 pounds, the *farāsila* would have accordingly weighed 12.5 pounds or approximately 5.7 kg.; this does not agree with the values listed in 559, n. 30; see 641, n. 31.

¹⁴ Arabic *lahiqanī*.

¹⁵ See lines 15–16.

¹⁶ Arabic *al-mutakhallīṣa awwal al-zamān*. For *takhallāṣa*, see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:392a. {For the whole phrase, see 316, n. 23. Correct accordingly Margariti, “Aden,” 282: “that have been proven safe in the past.”}

[C. Losses from the *kārdār*'s defaulting on cardamom]

Concerning (27) the cardamom owed by the *kārdār*—may God curse him!¹⁷—I spoke with someone (28) about this, and he told me that the cardamom actually was on your account, and we had nothing to do with it {lit., ‘was exclusively for you and we have no share in it’}.¹⁸ You had (29) made a transaction with the *kārdār* in which your share was lost {alt. tr.: and he defaulted on it},¹⁹ whereupon you charged it to us.²⁰ (30) However, as do others, your servant sends you consignments, relying on you to buy merchandise that needs no (31) bartering²¹ or advance, but an available commodity,²² which, if its purchase is convenient, fine, and if not, it should be abandoned; (32) for whoever sends you a consignment, does not write: “advance me money for certain merchandise,” but: (33) “purchase for whatever price God apportions as livelihood, and send it.”²³ However, my lord, the decision lies with you²⁴ (34) in all matters.

¹⁷ Cf. III, 1, line 13 and III, 18, sec. a, line 2. No. III, 9v, lines 3–6, clearly refers to the same incident. {‘May God curse him,’ in Arabic *la’anahu ʿllāhu*. He is cursed with the same language by Ben Yijū in III, 18 sec. a. line 2. As evidence for her assumption that the *kārdār* was not Jewish, Margariti, “Aden,” 340–41 (see 556, n. 17), cites Khalaf’s cursing him. An example of viliifications showered on Jewish malefactors can be cited from VI, 31, lines 4, 6, ‘may they be remembered with a ban (*shamattā*) . . . evil will never depart from the homes of those who repay good with evil’ (the original is a combination of Prov. 17:13 and Ps. 38:21). For additional examples (in reference to a freed slave), see Gil, “Merchants,” 307–8.

¹⁸ Arabic *li-khāṣṣatik wa-mā lanā fibi shay*. For *li-khāṣṣa*, see 285, n. 9.

¹⁹ Arabic *inkhasara ʿalayhi hādha ʿl-shay*. Cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:371a, *istakhsara ʿalayhi al-shay*. For this use of the seventh form of the verb, see Blau, *Grammar*, 78.

²⁰ Ghosh, *In an Antique Land*, 276: “deal with this thing individually with him, separately from us.” This translation, apparently accepted by Margariti, “Aden,” 340, is untenable.

²¹ Arabic *muʿāraḍa*. See n. 23.

²² Goitein transcribed $\gamma\aleph\aleph$ ω (*shay khāṣṣ*) and translated ‘a definite article.’ But the text—both in III, 13 (in Khalaf’s hand) and III, 12 (the clerk’s copy)—clearly reads $\gamma\aleph\aleph$ ω (*shay nādḍ*); for the translation, cf. Lane, *Dictionary*, 2804–5. The same expression is found, for example, in TS 16.339 (ed. Ben-Sasson, *Sicily*, 489, no. 101; Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:145, no. 348), line 22: *jamīʿ mā yanīḍḍ lanā ʿindah* (translate: ‘whatever he has on hand that belongs to us’), line 23: *wa-jamīʿ mā nādḍa lī ʿindak* (‘and whatever you have on hand that belongs to me’), lines 25–26 *wahuwa shay ʿayn nādḍ mā huwa shay yatʿabuk* (‘it is something readily available, on hand; it is not something which would trouble you,’ etc.).

²³ This highly interesting passage contains important information about the business practices of the India trade. A merchant in Egypt or South Arabia might ask his correspondent in India (a) to barter for him certain merchandise against some sent to India (cf. I, 2, line 5; I, 7, line 8; I, 9, line 14 and here lines 30–31). This was called *muʿāraḍa*, a term not found by me so far elsewhere. {The verb *ʿaraḍ* is used for barter in the passages cited; in light of its frequent use the correction suggested by Diem, *Dictionary*, 142, n. 146, is to be rejected.} He might ask him also (b) to advance him money and buy for it

[D. Arrival of Ben Yijū's brother in Egypt]

Sheikh Abū Iṣḥāq b. Joseph²⁵ arrived this year and reported (35) that your brother Mevassēr had arrived in Egypt and wishes to go to your place.²⁶ Please take note of (36) this.

a specific commodity; cf. I, 2, line 10. In these two cases, as we learn here, the merchant who gave the order had to bear the losses incurred in the course of the transaction. However, when a merchant sent wares or money to India and asked his correspondent to buy him any merchandise which he deemed fit, the latter could not charge the former for losses incurred, when for example, his customer proved unreliable. {Goitein's reading of the passage was influenced by the mistaken reading *khāṣṣ* in line 31; see n. 22. In line 32, I suggest a slightly different translation: 'does not write to you that you should advance for him money on a commodity.' In any case, I believe that Khalaf intended to contrast a request to advance money against a commodity not yet available, in which case loss incurred by the supplier's default would be borne by the orderer, with a request to purchase something readily available (*nādd*), whether a specified commodity (as suggested here in line 26) or not. In the latter case, if Ben Yijū deviated from his instructions and put money down against a future delivery of merchandise—probably at below the market value, he did so at his own risk and was expected to bear losses for failure to deliver. For the 'whatever... apportionments' formula, here also in lines 25–26, see the discussion in pages 63–65. Here, in line 33, Khalaf writes the formula *tashtari bi-mā qasama 'llāhu wa-razaq*. The prefix *bi-* conveys 'for whatever price,' namely for the best price then on the market, and was intended to emphasize the availability of the commodity in contrast to paying an advance for future delivery at a lower price. Similarly, he wrote in III, 10, lines 54–55: 'If the commodities purchased include betel nut or cardamom, kindly purchase for whatever price (*bi-mā*) is available.' Elsewhere 'purchase whatever (*mā*) God apportionments' (here, line 25; III, 10, lines 51–53, 60, 69, also written by Khalaf). The phrase *wa-tunfidh bibi* (with *bi-*, rather than the direct object also in other documents), 'and send it,' was also intended here to emphasize that the commodity was available. For examples of this phrase see, III, 1*v*, lines 5–7; III, 5, lines 2–4; III, 9*v*, line 5 (all concerning cardamom, the last connected with the dispute in question); III, 10, lines 52–53. Examples of orders for only available merchandise, without the 'whatever... apportionments' formula, other than those cited here, can be found in III, 2, lines 14–15; III, 3, lines 13–14.}

²⁴ In the original, the word *bi-ra'yih* is understood; cf. 592, n. 36.

²⁵ 'Father of Isaac' is a *kunya* for a man called Abraham. Our Abū Iṣḥāq almost certainly is identical with Abraham b. Joseph Ibn al-Baqqāl from al-Mahdiyya, a friend of the Ben Yijū family mentioned in III, 29*v*, line 1. {He is also mentioned in II, 70, line 22, as he was departing Egypt for Yemen.}

²⁶ This is the first intimation of the arrival in Egypt of Ben Yijū's brother from Sicily, whereto the family had fled or had been brought as prisoners from Tunisia. Ben Yijū responds to this information in 1147 (III, 15, line 29); accordingly, our letter must have been written one year earlier, in 1146.

[E. Receipt of consignment from India via Zabīd,
northwest of Aden]

As to ‘the salted foods’²⁷ and the *qaṣ‘a*-bowls,²⁸ which you had sent with Maḍmūn b. Sālim: (37) While at sea, he boarded a ship of Fidyār, but left everything in the ship (which had transported him from India).²⁹ So far, (38) there arrived from Zabīd only three *qaṣ‘a*-bowls, one for Sheikh Maḍmūn, one for Sheikh (39) Joseph,³⁰ and one for me, and the mōja wood³¹ destined for me, nothing else.

[F. Gifts and orders for Ben Yijū’s household]

I, your servant, sent you (40) what has no importance, namely a bottle of sugar and a bottle of raisins for the children—may God, the Exalted, (41) keep them with {alt. tr.: for} you!³²

²⁷ Arabic *mālīh*; cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:611a ‘des choses confites au sel’; Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary* {see 1370}, salted fish. Cf. III, 3, line 4 (and 569, n. 70) {and III, 8, line 4}.

²⁸ About these bowls, see 326, n. 33.

²⁹ Maḍmūn b. Sālim, an Adenese merchant (see about him the introduction to III, 22), traveled from India on a ship, which was going to Ghulayfiqa, the seaport of Zabīd in southwest Yemen. On the high seas, which must have been very calm at the time, he boarded another ship, which was heading for Aden, while the merchandise (and presents) carried by him continued on to the port of Zabīd.

³⁰ {Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan and Joseph b. Abraham.}

³¹ Perhaps artemisia moxa or common mugwort, one of the chief specialties of Chinese medicine; cf. Wong and Teh, *Chinese Medicine*, 45. I learn from Dr. Derk Bodde of the University of Pennsylvania that moxa is a Japanese word. The combustible cones {formed from the down of the leaves} of this plant are applied to the skin at certain spots and ignited. As the smoldering fire burns into the skin, a blister is raised. Its effect is similar to the counterirritant or cauterization, but more painful. Early Portuguese navigators carried it to the West. The treatment with moxa was as common in China as cauterization with iron in the Middle East. {Mōja also appears in III, 24, line 32. Besides various medicinal actions, the plant was believed to protect against misfortunes and was valued for its flavor and aroma. According to Isaacs, *Medical Manuscripts*, 18, no. 230, the actions and uses of artemesia are defined in TS Ar. 39, f. 381.}

³² Owing to high child mortality, such wishes were common. As a matter of fact, they were not fulfilled as far as Ben Yijū was concerned. His only son died in Yemen on the way back to the West, where Ben Yijū arrived accompanied by a daughter; see III, 41. {A revised reading of III, 41, reveals that Ben Yijū also had a young son who died in India.

You asked, my lord, to buy a dinar's worth of arsenic.³³ But, it is not to be had in the town, (42) nor is ladanum.³⁴ However, I bought you a dinar's worth of paper, (43) 30 sheets.³⁵

There were forwarded to you also half a pound of kohl (antimony), half a pound of chewing gum³⁶ and half a pound of vitriol.³⁷ (44) This is from me, your servant. It cost nothing {alt. tr.: No charge}. As to the dinar for the paper, add it to my, your servant's, account (45) for the ginger and pepper salvaged in the *shaffāra* and buy, my lord, what (46) God facilitates <and send it>³⁸ in one of the ships heading (for Aden) {alt. tr.: arriving (here)}. There is no need, my lord, to give you advice.

[G. Greetings]

Receive, my master, (47) for your esteemed self the best greetings from me, your servant, and give the best greetings to my lords, your two children {alt. tr.: your two sons},³⁹ (48) and greetings to Sheikh Bama.⁴⁰

[H. Added request for cardamom]

If you are able to buy some cardamom, (49) send it together with what you happen to buy {If there is some cardamom available, . . . with what you were able to buy}. *And Peace.*

³³ A year later, arsenic was also not available; see III, 15, lines 50–51. In III, 6, 160 pounds of arsenic are shipped from Aden to Ben Yijū in India, for sale in Ceylon.}

³⁴ See III, 3, line 19 (and 571, n. 22).

³⁵ {Cited by Ashtor, *Prix*, 212, n. 9. The word for paper used here (twice in line 42 and once in line 44), Arabic *qirtās* (in III, 21, sec. b, line 4, spelled *qirtās*), originally papyrus or papyrus roll, then parchment, was used for rag paper. See Sellheim, “*Qirtās*” (cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:334). The regular word for paper in our documents is *waraq*. Sometimes *kāghadh* was used; see III, 21, sec. b, line 13.}

³⁶ Arabic *ṣanḡh*; see III, 1*v*, 1, line 12 (and 561, n. 54).

³⁷ See III, 1*v*, 1, line 11 (and 561, n. 52).

³⁸ Mistakenly omitted by Khalaf' and the clerk. {Rather than an error in writing, the word for sending was sometimes omitted when it could be inferred from the context. So in IV, 17*v*, margin, lines 9–10, *kuṭiba . . . kuṭub fī markab*, ‘letters were written (and sent) in the ship.’ For *kataba ma‘a fulān*, ‘he wrote (something and sent) with PN,’ see II, 32, line 51 and 375, n. 37. Similarly, here ‘buy . . . in one of the ships’ implies sending. Cf. III, 15, lines 17, 23; 754, n. 30.

³⁹ Arabic *al-waladāyn al-sayyidayn*. On Ben Yijū's second son, see above note to line 41. Cf. below, III, 16, line 22. However, in 1151, when Ben Yijū had only a son and a daughter, the writer of III, 38 (top, lines 2–3), sent greetings to *sādatī awlādih*, ‘my lords, your children.’

⁴⁰ Bama, Ben Yijū's slave-agent and commercial agent, was a member of his household and is addressed with the title ‘sheikh,’ i.e., honored elder; see III, 10, line 74 (and 604, n. 59).}

[I. Address]

[Verso] (1) (To) His excellency, the most illustrious Sheikh, my lord, Abū Iṣḥāq (2) *Abraham son of his honor, great and holy master Perahyā—may he rest in Eden!*—*b. Yījū.*

(1) (From) Your servant, who is grateful for your beneficence, (2) Khalaf b. Isaac—may I be spared losing you!⁴¹

(Followed by the address in Arabic script which adds ‘the Israelite’ for both sender and addressee; the name of the sender is prefaced by: ‘the one who is sincere in affection for you.’)⁴²

⁴¹ Arabic *wuqīya ‘adamahu*, for the more common *mā ‘adīmtuhu*. {The same is found in IV, 13v, line 3, also written by Khalaf b. Isaac.}

⁴² Arabic *ṣafī waddihi*; also in III, 22v. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:279, for this and other expressions of love in the Geniza letters; Diem, *Dictionary*, 125, 223, where he suggests reading *ṣafī wadduhu*. Cf. IV, 42, line 9: *ṣafī waddihi*.}

III, 15 *Letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to Abraham Ben Yijū, Jurbattan*

Aden, July 30–August 27, 1147

TS Misc. 25, f. 103

Because of the narrow sheet, Khalaf's script is here far smaller than, for example, in III, 10, 13, 14; cf. the introduction to III, 11. Another peculiarity in the outward appearance of this letter is the slight incline of the lines, i.e., they end somewhat higher than they begin. Between lines 32–53 the lines are also curved and their beginnings recess very slightly, with the effect that the margin at the bottom is wider than at the top. Obviously, Khalaf wrote this letter placing the paper on his knee¹ or the palm of his left hand. The other letters had been written with the paper spread on a writing pad or *misnada*; cf. Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, 214.

Except for the address, nothing was written on the verso, nor was it used by the recipient, for here, as in III, 11 (although not as strongly as there), the ink seeped through. The paper is only slightly damaged. The hole in lines 40–41, as the text shows, was there before the letter was written, a very rare phenomenon in letters written on paper.

Translation

[A. Three biblical verses, wishes for a good journey]

- (1) *In Your name, O Merciful.*
 (2) *You will walk, without breaking stride; when you run, you will not stumble.*²
 (3) *And Shaddai be your treasure, and precious silver for you.*³ (4) *For the Lord will be your trust; He will keep your feet from being caught.*⁴

¹ {For writing on the knee, see page 764.}

² Prov. 4:12. *S'dyk* is spelled in the Massoretic text without *y*. Ben Yijū had expressed, in his letter to Khalaf, his intention to travel from India to Aden; see III, 16, lines 23–24. The biblical verses quoted here are used as wishes for a good journey. See III, 7, lines 2–7 (and 582, n. 1).

³ Job 22:25.

⁴ Prov. 3:26. Used for the same purpose in III, 7, line 2, where also *bkslyk* is spelled plene, unlike the Massoretic text.

[B. Acknowledgement of letters and expression of good wishes]

(5–15) There arrived the letters, etc. (A combination, with variations and additions, of the introductory phrases used in Khalaf's letters, III, 10–11.)⁵

[C. Previous letters lost when two ships sunk]

(15) I, your servant, have taken note of your remark, (16) my lord, of how little I had written you, my lord, last (17) year.⁶ I, your servant, wish to inform you that I had (sent) {lit., 'written'}⁷ letters (18) with Sheikh Abū 'Abd Allah b. Abu 'l-Katā'ib,⁸ (19) and a consignment as well, to you, my lord, from me, your servant, in the (20) Jurbattānī,⁹ the ship of the Sultan.¹⁰ You know, (21) my master, what happened to it. Thus, the letters (22) and the consignment entrusted to him were lost. In the ship (23) in which Sheikh Abū Zikrī Ibn al-Shāmī¹¹ traveled (I had sent)

⁵ In addition to the polite phrases known to us from previous letters, Khalaf uses in lines 11–12 two Hebrew expressions to describe his gladness at the receipt of Ben Yijū's letter: "It was like water on a thirsty land" (cf. Prov. 25:25 and Ps. 143:6) and "I was like one that finds much spoil" (cf. Ps. 119:162). {The former appears in IV, 13, lines 6–7; the latter is also used in II, 35, line 15; VII, 65, line 30; cf. IV, 11, line 15.}

⁶ I take this phrase as meaning that Ben Yijū had not received any letters from Khalaf that year. For, as we learn here, line 23, and indeed everywhere in our documents, owing to the great risks of sea travel, the India merchants used to refer in their letters to everything sent to an overseas correspondent. Normally, the ships heading for one port set out together; therefore, each year, there was only one opportunity to send letters to one destination. It may be, however, that Khalaf had sent a short letter (of course in a number of copies) to another port on the Indian coast, with which Ben Yijū was connected, e.g., in addition to Jurbattan (lines 20 and 28), Mangalore or Fandarayna (see line 44 and III, 10, line 24 respectively).

⁷ {The verb for sending is implied here and in line 23. See III, 12, line 46 and 620, n. 38.}

⁸ About this *nākbudā*, see page 149.}

⁹ I.e., the ship whose port of destination was Jurbattan. So far this place has been found only in our document (cf. also line 28). {On the practice of naming ships according to their destination, see page 24. For the town of Jurbattan (also spelled Jurbatan, with one *t*), known for its rice and pepper, five *marḥalas* from Fandarayna, see Nainar, *Arab Geographers*, 40–41. A *marḥala* is the distance a traveler can cover in one day, ca. 36–50 km.; cf. Ed., "Marḥala."}

¹⁰ While in documents from the Mediterranean, ships owned by a Sultan or a Qā'id (military leader), are very frequently mentioned [see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:310], for the Indian Ocean we have so far only the reference here and in II, 48 [line 24], a letter written by Khalaf in 1139 or 1140 [ca. 1138]. As there, too, shipwreck is alluded to, the two letters must refer to different ships {because of the different dates of the letters}.

¹¹ No doubt identical with Zechariah or Abū Zikrī b. Sar Shalom Ibn al-Shāmī. Details concerning him are found in 264, n. 31.

letters to notify you (24) about the consignment sent with Sheikh Abū ‘Abd Allah b. Abu ‘l- (25) Kata’ib. However, this ship, too, suffered what (26) you know. For I, your servant, enquired about you, (27) my lord, and learned {lit., ‘and they told me’} that your house¹² and your children were in (28) Jurbattan. Therefore, I sent the things with the above mentioned.¹³

[D. Addressee’s brother, Mevassēr, was well but had not come to Aden]

(29) As to the news concerning your brother Mevassēr¹⁴—he is well, but has not arrived. (30) I shall act in this matter {alt. tr.: concerning him}, as you advised, my lord.

[E. Forty dinars sent (to Ben Yijū’s family) by Maḍmūn, the representative of the merchants in Aden]

Concerning (31) the forty dinars transmitted by Sheikh (32) Maḍmūn¹⁵ through Sheikh Abū Naṣr b. Elisha,¹⁶ (33) I have no information; I do not know whether he (Mevassēr) received something (34) or not.

¹² {Arabic *bayt*, coupled with *awlād*, ‘children’, would seem best taken not literally as ‘house’ but as the familiar metaphor for wife (see 235, n. 10). If so, this passage is of some interest, since the absence in Ben Yijū’s letters of any reference to his wife seems to have been adduced by Goitein (*Letters*, 202) as support for his suggestion that Ben Yijū married his manumitted slave girl Ashu (III, 17).}

¹³ Khalaf had previously sent his letters and consignments to Mangalore (see III, 2) or Dahbattan (III, 10).

¹⁴ Cf. III, 7, line 16 (and 583, n. 8). Obviously, Ben Yijū had asked Khalaf to send some money to his refugee brother. {According to III, 12, line 35, Mevassēr intended to travel to Yemen.}

¹⁵ This suggests that Ben Yijū had asked the representative of the merchants Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan to transmit to Mevassēr, who was at that time in Egypt, forty dinars {mentioned in Maḍmūn’s letter to Ben Yijū, II, 29, lines 3–4}. Maḍmūn obviously had been absent from Aden at that time, and perhaps it was not prudent to inquire about such delicate matters with clerks. In II, 31, line 15, we find that Ben Yijū had asked Maḍmūn to send twenty dinars to his other brother, Joseph, who was a refugee from Tunisia in Sicily. {Goitein evidently surmised that Maḍmūn had been away from Aden from the very fact that Ben Yijū had inquired with Khalaf about the money Maḍmūn had sent, rather than inquiring with Maḍmūn (or one of his clerks). This need not have been the case, however, since the inquiry was whether Khalaf, through his contacts in Egypt, had any information as to whether Mevassēr had received the funds.}

¹⁶ This Abū Naṣr b. Elisha must have been a busy traveler. Here we find him on his way from Aden to Egypt in 1146 or 1147. In 1149, he again made the same journey; see III, 29, lines 7–10. {For Abū Naṣr b. Elisha, see 487, n. 2. The dates in the two preceding sentences apparently require revision. In my opinion Khalaf was not informing Ben Yijū

[F. Acknowledgement of goods received]

There arrived what you, my lord, kindly sent, namely the three (35) *qaṣ'a*-bowls,¹⁷ the water skin with lemon,¹⁸ the ginger, and the basket (36) with pepper and ginger.¹⁹ I received all this and thank (37) you, my lord, for your kindness and effort in this matter. (38) May God reward you, my master, and satisfy your needs {alt. tr.: undertake your compensation}, and (39) may I never {lit., 'may He never let me'} miss you!

[G. Delay in sending betel nuts not Ben Yijū's fault]

As to excusing you, my lord, for not being able to purchase the new (40) betel nuts—you, my lord, (41) are excused, for all the travelers (42) arrived and told the same story.²⁰

[H. List of presents and household orders forwarded]

I, your servant, sent (43) with Sheikh Abū 'Alī Ibn al-Ḥallā²¹ to (44) Manj<ar>ūr²² two bottles of sugar, two bottles of raisins, and a bottle (45) of almonds, a total of five bottles.²³ The bottle with almonds was

here of a shipment made by Abū Naṣr but rather responding to Ben Yijū's inquiry, sent from India, about the success of that mission. Accordingly, Abū Naṣr must have traveled from Aden to Egypt approximately in 1145. No. III, 29, lines 9–10, which Ben Yijū wrote in 1149 from Aden, to Mevassēr in Sicily, refers to the same trip by Abū Naṣr. He had not succeeded in delivering the goods, since in the meantime Mevassēr had returned to Sicily, where the goods were then forwarded. Abū Naṣr b. Elisha is probably identical with the Abū Naṣr (whose father's name is not mentioned), who a few years later assisted Ben Yijū's nephews, Moses and Peraḥyā sons of Joseph, according to III, 47, line 14, verso, line 3.}

¹⁷ About these bowls, see 326, n. 33.

¹⁸ In III, 3, line 3–4 lemons and mangos were carried in a water skin. {Here Goitein did not read the word *al-līm*, 'the lemon'; cf. III, 8, lines 4, 9, 31, 33.}

¹⁹ The ginger mentioned first was a separate shipment, certainly of a considerable size. That forwarded in a basket together with pepper (as *khulṭa* or 'mixture') was dispatched in that form in order to save freight and customs duties; see III, 3, lines 3 and 4.

²⁰ Cf. III, 11, lines 16–20, where cardamom was not to be had at Ben Yijū's place. The testimony of 'all the travelers' proved that Ben Yijū had not been remiss in his efforts for his Adenese correspondents.

²¹ The son of the silversmith. Arabic *hallā'* is the common word for silversmith in southern Yemen [cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 106], while in central Yemen and most other Arabic-speaking countries, the usual word is *ṣā'igh*. The word could be used here also as a family name. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:108, 420, n. 54.}

²² = Mangalore. See III, 16. Khalaf wrote *Manjūr*. In this line, he omitted letters three times.

²³ {The same items were sent a year later; see III, 16, lines 18–19.}

filled (46) with sugar, for it had a little empty space; therefore, I filled it (47) with sugar. I, your servant, sent you also with the above (48) mentioned (Abū ‘Alī) half a pound of vitriol, half a pound of chewing gum, (49) ten sheets of white²⁴ paper and a pound of costus. (50) I could not get hold of arsenic in (51) the market; otherwise, I would have sent it to you, my lord {alt. tr.: but it will reach you (later), my lord}.²⁵

[I. Greetings and date]

Please, my master, (52) receive for your esteemed self the best greetings from me. (53) And to my lords, your children—may God let you enjoy their being alive {alt. tr.: give you pleasure with them throughout your life}!—²⁶ (54) and to Sheikh Bama²⁷ the best greetings. (55) And your servants,²⁸ my children, send you (56) and your children the best greetings.²⁹ *And Peace.*

(57) *Written in the month of Elul of the year (58) 1458 E.D.*³⁰

[J. Address]

[Verso] (1) (To) His excellency, the most illustrious Sheikh (2) Abū Ishāq Abraham b. (3) Peraḥyā, known as Ibn Yijū.

(1) (From) His servant and the property of his hands,³¹ (2) Khalaf b. Isaac—(3) *may God’s spirit give him peace!*³²

²⁴ Arabic *bayād*, which occurs only here. As we have often had opportunity to state that the Yemenite letter writers sometimes use brown and sometimes white (now grayish) paper, it stands to reason that with *bayād*, a particularly white paper is meant. {Also in II, 24, line 9. According to IV, 69*v*, line 10, sheets of white paper, *waraqā baydā*, were used to prepare a letter from Alexandria in 1141, in order to highlight the writing.

²⁵ Arabic *fa-kāna yašilu*. . . Cf. III, 8, lines 9–10. Also in the letter written before this one, Khalaf commented that arsenic was not available; see III, 12, line 41.} All the presents and household goods mentioned here have occurred in the other letters. Cf. especially III, 16, lines 16–19, where also the same quantities were sent.

²⁶ {Arabic *amta’ahu allāh bihim*. For this phrase see Hava, *Dictionary*, 706; Diem, *Ara-bische Briefe*, 15.

²⁷ Ben Yijū’s servant, mentioned repeatedly.}

²⁸ Arabic *mamlūkak*, in the singular, perhaps because Khalaf had first in mind to send greetings in the name of one son only. {Perhaps read *mmlykk*, a defective spelling of *mamālīkāk*, ‘your servants.’}

²⁹ The greetings as in the previous letters. A novelty is introduced by the regards sent by Khalaf’s children. The same is found in II, 51, margin {cf. II, 46, lines 67–68}.

³⁰ July 30–August 27, 1147. On writing the date, see III, 16, introduction.

³¹ {Arabic *ydh* looks more like *wdh* (*milk wuddihi*): ‘(the possession of) his love’ (expressions of love are common here; see, e.g., 621, n. 42); but the reading *ydh* is clear in III, 32, line 10 and address and IV, 12, address, which is also written by Khalaf.

³² Isa. 63:14.}

III, 16 *Letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to Abraham Ben Yijū, Mangalore*

Aden, July 19–August 17, 1148

JNUL 4° 577.3/6

Ed. Ashtor, "Documents," 148–51. Described by Yellin, "JNUL Geniza," 295. No reference is made here to some mistakes, misconceptions, and an omission made in the first edition of this document. Had its learned editor had at his disposal the material collected in this book, he would have made all the necessary corrections himself.

The double lines created during the manufacture of the paper are clearly visible; they parallel the length of the sheet. Written in Khalaf's own hand; see the introduction to III, 10. The verso is blank, except for the address, which is written in the same direction as the letter itself and not upside down, as usual. The reason for the normal procedure was to differentiate the address from the text, which, as a rule, continued on verso. Here, where the verso bore no writing except the address, it was more convenient to write the latter in the same direction as the main text, so that the reader had only to turn the page without needing to turn it also upside down. {The address in Hebrew characters was normally on verso in the same direction as the text of recto, whether the letter had a continuation on verso (almost always written in the opposite direction) or not as, e.g., here and III, 7. The address in Arabic script, added when the letter was to be delivered by a non-Jew, was written in the opposite direction, as usual. Perhaps the direction of the address was connected to the practice of folding and sealing the letter before delivery.}

Normally, letters were not dated, as the carrier who had received them from the sender handed them over in person to the addressee. The special reason for dating this letter was perhaps that the usual yearly business letter had already been sent out to Ben Yijū by Khalaf, while our short note was sent in response to Ben Yijū's query about his brother, which was accompanied by presents, reciprocated here immediately. As usual, only the month, but not the day, is noted, for normally it took an unforeseeable number of days before the ship in which the letter was to be carried could set sail. {Khalaf dated other letters that he wrote, e.g., III, 15, IV, 12, IV, 14. This book includes additional dated letters, many of which include the day in the month.}

Translation

[A. Acknowledgement of letter]

(1) *In Your name, O Merciful.*

(2) The letter of his excellence, the most illustrious Sheikh, my master and lord,¹ has arrived. (3) May God preserve your prosperous state and make eternal your happiness! May He enhance (4) your comfort,² raise your reputation,³ elevate your status in both worlds,⁴ (5) and crush your enemies and those envious of you! You mentioned, my master, (6) your longing and concern—may God concern Himself (7) in doing you good! May He avert from you sorrow and unite us (8) in complete happiness and in the best circumstances for which one can hope, with His favor (9) and might, God willing!

[B. Details about addressee's brother]

This is to inform you⁵—may God preserve (10) your honored position!—that I enquired with regard to your brother Mevassēr⁶ and was informed that he was (11) well and in good health. Furthermore, I enquired whether he was traveling (12) to Eretz Israel,⁷ but the people whom I had asked said they did not know, but that he was well. (13) Had he come to Aden, I, your servant, certainly would have taken care of {alt. tr.: performed every courtesy for} him, even (14) without your instructions, my lord, to this effect {alt. tr.: concerning him}—God

¹ Arabic *mālikī*, lit., 'he who owns me.' {For this common expression, see page 362, n. 13.}

² Arabic *baṣṭatahu*, a rare usage which refers to both prosperity and contentment. {Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 31.

³ Arabic *wa-a'lā kalimatahu*. *Kalima* can be translated 'authority,' 'powerful position,' etc. Cf. II, 68, line 6, *wa-naḥādh kalimatika*, 'the execution of your authority.')

⁴ This world and the world to come.

⁵ Arabic *wamu'liman*, an interesting, completely unconnected {with the preceding} form. {For vestiges of the *tanwīn an*, see the discussion and references in the introduction to III, 47.}

⁶ See III, 7, line 16 (and 583, n. 8).

⁷ Arabic *al-shām*; see 285, n. 7. Mevassēr, who had come from Tunisia and Sicily to Egypt, obviously had informed his brother that before joining him in India, he would like to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The fact that Jerusalem was, at that time, in the hands of the Crusaders by no means acted as a deterrent. {Cf. Goitein, *Palestinian Jewry*, 283–305.}

beware (that I should not take care of him). {Alt. tr.: I, your servant, feel regret on his account.}⁸

[C. Acknowledgement of receipt of betel nuts and bronze vessels]

(15) There arrived what you kindly sent, my lord, namely the betel nuts, the two locks⁹ (16) and the two wooden *qaṣʿa*-bowls.¹⁰ And I have taken delivery of all this.

[D. Presents and greetings]

I, your servant, sent (17) what has no importance or value, for (18) the children,¹¹ namely two bottles of sugar, a bottle of almonds and two bottles of (19) raisins, altogether five bottles,¹² all of them in the ship of Sheikh Maḍmūn, (20) which is going to Mangalore,¹³ through the agency of the purser {alt. tr.: *nākhudā*}.¹⁴ Please, my lord, take them from him. (21) Receive, my lord, for your esteemed self¹⁵ the best (22)

⁸ Arabic *ʿazīz ʿalā ʿabdihi bihi*. Cf. TS 24.72v, ed. Goitein, *Palestinian Jewry*, 272, lines 1, 10, 16. {The expression is unusual. *ʿAzīz ʿalā* usually means ‘dear to PN’ (cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:124a). Accordingly, Ashtor, “Documents,” 150, translated here: ‘because he is dear to his servant’ and commented (149, n. 3) that *bihi* is superfluous. Another meaning, found three times in the document cited in this note, is ‘PN regrets,’ i.e., the equivalent of *ʿazza ʿalā*. Goitein paraphrased this somewhat freely as ‘God forbid,’ etc. The translation, printed above in brackets, is an attempt at a more literal translation. The intention is: I regret not having been able to take care of Mevassēr (as in the preceding phrase *bihi* apparently refers to him). Cf. IV, 10v, line 26, *fa-ʿazīz ʿalayya bi-hājat sayyidī*, which seems to mean: ‘I am (would be) upset not to be able to take care of my lord’s needs.’}

⁹ Arabic *quflayn*. See 313, n. 7.

¹⁰ {For these bowls, see 326, n. 33, where too they are sent together with locks.}

¹¹ Besides a son, Ben Yijū had a daughter; see III, 41. {As noted there, he also had another son. See below, n. 16.}

¹² The same items were sent a year earlier; see III, 15, lines 44–45.}

¹³ Cf. II, 20, line 23 {and introduction} where details about these Indian headquarters of Ben Yijū are given.

¹⁴ Arabic *nākhudā* {translated here by Ashtor, “Documents,” 150, ‘captain’; for the translation ‘purser,’ see III, 10v, line 2. Clearly, Maḍmūn himself did not travel on this ship. Otherwise, Khalaf would have expressed himself quite differently. {See the discussion in page 126.}

¹⁵ Arabic *ʿazīz nafsihi*. The same unusual expression in III, 1v, line 21; III, 10, line 72, etc. {This is a common expression in our papers; cf. *ʿizzatu al-nafsi*, ‘noble fierté,’ Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:123b.}

greetings and give in my name to my lord, your boy,¹⁶ the best greetings, (23) and likewise to the brother Bama¹⁷ the best greetings in my name.

[E. Regret that the addressee had not yet left India]

Every year (24) you write that you are leaving for Aden, but nothing happens.¹⁸ May God, the Exalted, (25) ordain a happy conclusion! If you have any order (26) or require any service, please honor me with it.

[F. Date]

*Written in the month of Av of the year (27) 1459 E.D.*¹⁹

[G. P.S. about a present consisting of paper]

I sent you also two *dasts*²⁰ of (28) Egyptian paper.²¹ Please take notice of this. *And Peace.*

[H. Address]

[Verso] (1) (To) His excellency, the most illustrious Sheikh, my master, (2) Abū Ishāq Abraham, *son of* (3) *his honor, great and holy master Perahyā b. Yijū* from al-Mahdiyya,²²—(4) *may he rest in Eden the Garden!*²³

¹⁶ In II, 12, line 47, ‘my lords, your two sons.’ The other son presumably died between the writing of these two letters. See III, 41, line 14.}

¹⁷ Ben Yijū’s slave-agent; see III, 10, line 74.

¹⁸ Ben Yijū traveled from India to Aden in the following year (1149); see III, 29.

¹⁹ July 19–August 17, 1148 C.E. As usual, the date is written in Hebrew.

²⁰ A *dast* was a certain quantity that made up a set of a particular item; cf. 304, n. 9.

²¹ See III, 1*v*, line 12; III, 4, line 10.

²² Arabic *al-Mahdawī*, which is, of course, not to be regarded as a fixed family name, for normally, Ben Yijū is not designated as originating from al-Mahdiyya, then the capital of Tunisia. {Cf. II, 37, verse 48, where he calls himself *ha-ma’aravi*, the Maghrebi.}

²³ This strange expression {*nū’ah ‘eden gan*} is also found in the letters of other Yemenites (see the addresses of II, 25; III, 32; III, 38 {as well as additional texts}), and can be heard from Yemenites up to the present day. However, it was not confined to Yemen {for its use in the responsa literature by Yemenites only, see Sharvit, “Blessings,” 85}; it occurs, e.g., in the signature of the famous rabbi Baruch b. Isaac of Aleppo (lived around 1050–1125) on a responsum published by Assaf “R. Baruch,” 107. Zunz, *Geschichte*, 341–48, seems not to have noted this expression. It has its origin in the ancient conception that Eden was different from, and higher than, Paradise; see the Talmudic

(1) (From) His servant, who is grateful (2) for his favors, Khalaf b. (3) Isaac—*may the spirit of the Lord give him rest!*²⁴

{In the address written in Arabic script both parties are referred to as ‘the Israelite’ and Khalaf signs ‘his servant, who longs for him.’}²⁵

sources {Berakhot 34b; Sanhedrin 99a} quoted by Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:30, n. 84. {The wording is based on Ezekiel 28:13 (“in Eden the garden of God”) and need not bear any relationship with the distinction between Eden and Paradise. Maimonides’ contemporary, the Egyptian judge Isaac b. Sāsōn, often signed with the letters *n’g* (= *nū’ah’ ēden gan elōhim*), ‘may he rest in Eden garden of God,’ after his father’s name; see Maimonides, *Responsa*, 1:174, 2:629, 681, 686, 687, 3:141, nos. 103, 351, 403, 408, 409; TS G 1, f. 19. See also above II, 55*v*, address, and 479, n. 33.

²⁴ Isa. 63:14.

²⁵ Arabic *al-mushtāq ilayhi*, these two words deciphered by Prof. Moshe Gil.}

III, D. *Documents Related to Abraham Ben Yijū During his Stay in India and Yemen*

III, 17 *Deed of Manumission of Ashū, Slave Girl Purchased by Abraham Ben Yijū*

Mangalore, October 17, 1132

SPIOS D55.10

Described in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:20; *Letters*, 202. Ben Yijū used the blank side of the paper and the margins around the deed of manumission to write drafts of poems in honor of Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan (II, 40) and *selḥōt* liturgical poems.

Ben Yijū's handwriting is known so far from the following pieces:

Accounts and other statements, mostly written on the verso of letters received or on narrow strips of paper: III, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 28, 34;

letters, two by himself, III, 29 and 41, and one dictated to him by a business friend out in India, II, 55;

poems, three by himself, II, 37, 38, 41, and one copied on verso of III, 13; see introduction to III, 12–14;

calendars for Jewish years corresponding to 1146–49 (on II, 16*v*), 1149–50 (III, 26) and 1153–56 (III, 51), published by Mann, *Jews*, 2:291–92, who could not, of course, identify the writer).

Ben Yijū's script is that of a trained scribe: clear, strong, and graceful, and is so much similar to the handwriting used in court records that one wonders whether the highly official document IV, 5 (Aden 1134) was not written by him.¹ He certainly came from a family of scribes (see 592, n. 37).

The pieces enumerated above differ widely as to how cursive the script is and the size and forms of their letters and represent thus an interesting object of study for the paleographer and even the graphologist. In the poem II, 37, 38, the script is almost square and a little stiff; in the accounts, especially those written on narrow strips, it is cursive and hasty; between these extremes we find the calendars and letters, the former copied perhaps with a little more care than the latter.²

{The following items are also in Ben Yijū's hand: II, 40; III, 17, 24, 28, 28a, 29a–c, 34–36, 39, 40a–c, 42.}

¹ {Apparently, Goitein did not repeat this possible identification elsewhere. In my opinion IV, 5, was probably written in 1131 by another North African India trader, Joseph b. Ezra.

² These paragraphs concerning Ben Yijū's handwriting were transferred from III, 25, which in the Old List of documents was the first in this section of the chapter.

Deed of manumission, written by Ben Yijū in Manjarūr, India, on October 17, 1132, in which he freed his slave girl Ashū, no doubt with the intention to marry her.

{This draft or copy of a deed of manumission is the earliest dated document from Ben Yijū's archive, probably dating from a few months after his arrival in India from Yemen. It was written in Manjarūr, i.e., Mangalore, on the Malabar Coast of southwest India, in the province of Tuḷuva (or, Tuḷunad). Ben Yijū granted freedom to the Tuḷu slave girl Ashū, whom he had recently purchased from her proprietress. Ashū means 'Fast' or 'Quick' in Sanskrit, a fitting name for a slave girl. Through manumission she became a Jewish convert, and was given 'the name for a Jewish woman' Berākhā (this could be read as Arabic Baraka), 'Blessing.'³ When he was in Egypt, Ben Yijū wrote instructions for issuing a bill of manumission for a slave girl (III, 40b). Responsa in his hand also deal with the case of an anonymous Jewish trader who purchased a slave girl in India, released her and married her, and with the status of their children (III, 29b–c), and these may refer to Ben Yijū's own family.⁴ The India traders were often separated from their familiar communities for extended periods, and it is not surprising that some of them found a solution for their loneliness by association with local slave girls, who were readily available.⁵ Contemporary Arab traders in Malabar may have also integrated through *mut'a*, 'temporary marriage,' with local women.⁶

Besides the fascinating socio-economic background of this deed, its very formulation is of interest. It contains the most remarkable example of a *rashut* formula, whereby the issuer acknowledged the hegemony of the central Jewish leadership, here with the double recognition of the Exilarch Daniel b. Hiṣdai in Baghdād and the Gaon Maṣliāḥ, Head of the Palestinian Academy, whose seat was then in Cairo.⁷ Furthermore, it attests to the impact of Yemenite religious teaching in India, a phenomenon well known from Islam. The Ismā'īlī *da'wa* or propaganda office of Yemen (whose authority initially came from Egypt) extended its activity to India.⁸ The

³ Muslims did not call their slaves Baraka. See Schimmel, *Names*, 70.

⁴ See the discussion above, 55–57, 73–76.

⁵ See Friedman, *Polygyny*, 294–95, and the references there to Goitein's publications and other literature.

⁶ See Wink, *Al-Hind*, 1:71. Certain medieval Jewish authorities in Islamic countries vigorously opposed *mut'a* marriage; see Friedman, "Sexual Mores," 99–104.

⁷ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:20–21. On the *rashut* formula in general, see Friedman, "Responsum on *Reshut*."

⁸ See Madelung, "*Ismā'iliyya*."

same double *rashut* formula was in use during this period in Yemen, and as proven by the India Book documents, major communal discord resulted from an attempt to eliminate mention of Maṣṣliḥ there.⁹ The manumission deed written by Ben Yijū contains certain other phrases, which to the best of my knowledge have been identified only in Yemenite Jewish documents, e.g., ‘by the merit of our patriarch Abraham,’ known from marriage contracts written there.¹⁰

The double recognition of the authorities of Baghdād and Egypt as well as the Yemenite influence in this document also find a certain parallel in Islam on the Malabar Coast, where the presence of the Shāfi‘ī school (*madhhab*) points to “continuing contacts with Baghdad and the towns of the Persian Gulf, as well as with Arabia, Yemen and Hadramaut.”¹¹

⁹ Nos. IV, 4–9; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:21; *Yemenites*, 53–74. On the contacts between the Jewish court in Yemen and India, see above, 196 and 557, n. 18.

¹⁰ Found in a marriage contract from Shibām, west of Ṣan‘ā, dated 1679 in my possession. For another clause in the deed of manumission, known only from a Jewish marriage contract apparently written in Aden in the 1130’s or 1140’s, see Friedman, *JMP*, 1:86.

¹¹ See Wink, *Al-Hind*, 1:69.}

III, 18 *Five Accounts Written by Abraham Ben Yijū*

India {apparently 1136–39, 1145–49}

TS 20.137

The accounts are written on the verso of II, 23, a letter sent by Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan from Aden to India in {ca.} 1135. See the description of the ms. there. As Ben Yijū returned from India in 1149 (III, 29), the accounts must have been written between these two dates. The accounts are separated from each other by intervals of 2–4 lines left blank. Sec. C is very much damaged and effaced. The beginning and the end of the page were cut away; see II, 23. {The dates are somewhat refined according to the details discussed in page 648. It is not clear, whether or not the accounts on the verso of II, 22, part of that same letter, were written at the same time or earlier; see 337.}

[Sec. A: End of Account Dealing with Cardamom and Iron]

This is the end of a draft of a yearly account for a merchant, most probably residing in Aden, for whom Ben Yijū did business in India. A good example of a final copy of such an account is IV, 1 {for which see 457–58}.

The name of the merchant for whom the account was made (see line 2) is not preserved. A deal in cardamom with Ben Yijū through the *kārdār* (line 2) is referred to in Khalaf b. Isaac's letter to Ben Yijū, III, 12, lines 27–34. But it does not necessarily follow that Khalaf is intended here.

Mithqāl (abridged here as *m.*) certainly denotes the Egyptian gold coin; see line 11.

Cardamom and iron appear together frequently, e.g., below E, lines 6–7 (cf. III, 11, line 11; III, 21 sec. A, lines 5–6; III, 21, sec. B, lines 28–29), perhaps because they were exported from the same ports.

The upshot of the cardamom business is the following: The *kārdār* had not supplied the two *bahārs* ordered from him, and Ben Yijū had to procure them elsewhere on his own account. In any case, the merchant for whom the account had been made was not charged, as Khalaf had indeed demanded (III, 12, lines 27–34; cf. there). Ben Yijū had to pay 17 *m.*, while the *kārdār* had been expected to procure them for 14 *m.*, which indicates perhaps that he specialized in that commodity; see below section E.

As to the iron deal, lines 6–11, it seems strange that a *bahār* of *muḥdath*, ‘refurbished’ iron, which was regarded as inferior (see III, 11, line 36), was sold in Mangalore for 3½ *m.* while the same quantity of *amlas*, ‘smooth,’ cost 2 *m.* in Fandarayna. On the other hand, one gets the impression that Ben Yijū acted here in compliance with III, 11, lines 36–40, exchanging the ‘refurbished’ for ‘smooth’ iron.

Here the ‘smooth’ is packed in *jūniyas*, ‘bags,’ and not in *bārbaza*, as in III, 11, line 38. {See 612, n. 36.}

In addition to cardamom and iron, the account had contained many other entries in the missing portion, for the total given at the end, line 12, is 75 *m.*, while the sums mentioned here do not total more than 35 *m.*

Translation

(1) The balance of the account from the *bš'rh* (*bišāra*?)¹ 3 *m.*

(2) The *kādār* (!)—may God curse him!²—owed him 14 *m.* (3) for (an order of) two *bahārs* cardamom, which he did not deliver. I bought for him (4) instead two *bahārs* from Fandarayna for 17 *m.* (5) Thus I paid for him three *m.* more, plus the freight of the cardamom, which was one *m.* and a half.

(6) His credit: 14 *m.*, the proceeds of four *bahārs* ‘refurbished’ iron (sold) in Manjarūr.³ (7) For this, I bought for him from Fandarayna six *bahārs* (8) ‘smooth’ iron in two *jūniyas* (bags),⁴ price 12 *m.*, freight (9) two *m.*, which makes the account even.

¹ This is the end of the previous item, the beginning of which is missing. *Bišāra* means ‘insight,’ ‘intimate knowledge,’ but one expects here the name of a merchandise or a ship. The reading אֶלְכַבְּסָרָה (*lks'rb*) is beyond doubt. {Goitein crossed out this note and corrected his copy of the text to read אֶלְכַבְּסָרָה (*lks'rb*), which he took as equivalent to *al-kbasāra*, ‘the loss’ (Ben Yijū indeed spells that word *kbasāra* in III, 41, margin). However, as he initially commented, the manuscript distinctly has *lks'rb*. Since it is difficult to assume that Ben Yijū made such an error, I conclude that when Goitein noted the ‘correction,’ he had not rechecked the photocopy—the letters ב (*b*) and כ (*k*) are often indistinct, but not so here. Following the original comment, we could take *al-bišāra*—or *al-bašāra*—to be the name of a ship. Alternatively, perhaps it could be an abbreviated form of the honorific by-name of a merchant *Abu 'l-Bašāra (?), which would fit the context, and if so, the following ‘him,’ ‘his’ refer to such an individual. Various elements of *bšr* appear in names, but Bašāra has not been found.}

² For the *kādār*; see III, 1, line 13. The Arabic-writing merchants spelled this Persian word in different ways; see below sec. E, line 1. God’s curse is invoked upon this agent of dubious reputation also in III, 12, line 27. {See 617, n. 17.

³ Mangalore.

⁴ For the *jūniya*, see 343, n. 39.}

The bags and the expenses {alt. tr.: tolls}⁵ are included (10) in the price; they were one eighth of a *m*. [[Total of his debt]]

His debit {alt. tr.: expenditures charged him}: (11) damage⁶ of two *filīyā* {alt. tr.: *filīs*}⁷ *m.*, a *rawbaj*⁸ // and a negligible sum⁹ // making [[one eighth]] one sixth of a *m*.

(12) Total: 75 *m*. less on third. (13) Balance in his favor: one *m*. and one quarter, with which the whole account is closed {alt. tr.: after all accounting}.

[Sec. B(1): Expenditures for Ben Yijū's Bronze factory]

In order to understand this section, we have to bear in mind that the metals (copper and tin or zinc) were normally provided by the customers, as we have learned from many letters to Ben Yijū (cf. III, 1 ff.). Likewise the customers paid the coppersmith, who fashioned the vessel, for his

⁵ Arabic *mūna*, which means here most probably the cost of the transport by land from Fandarayna to Mangalore, while *nawl*, 'freight,' refers to the payment for the transport by sea. As the cost, together with that for the bags, was less than one percent of the price, it was included in the latter. In other words, the merchant in Fandarayna undertook to deliver the iron in Mangalore, packed ready for ship transport. {See 171–72, n. 23.}

⁶ It is not stated here what damage was incurred. This was certainly done in one of the previous entries. {Arabic *waks* means 'difference, when foreign coinage was exchanged at a lower rate' (Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:239, 460, n. 47, referring to Egypt).}

⁷ *Fīliyā* or *filī* is an Indian coin of either gold or silver and is called in III, 20, line 2 and verso, line 4 *filī Kūlam*, i.e., the coinage of the port of Kūlam (Quilon). The *filīyā mīthqāl* seems to have been more or less equivalent to the Egyptian *mīthqāl* (dinar), as once like the latter, it corresponds to 2.5 Adenese Malīkī dinars. {From III, 18 (sec. B, line 10); III, 20; III, 21, sec. B; III, 23, it is clear that *filīyā* is the plural of *filī*. Perhaps *filī* is to be related to various coins from southern India, which have 'Pala' as an element in their name. See Chattopadhyaya, *Coins*, 345 (index).}

⁸ On this coin, see below sec. D, line 3, and in particular III, 19, lines 5–7. {The vocalization of *rubg* is uncertain; the diacritic mark over *g* indicates its pronunciation as *j*. In III, 19, lines 5–6, the plural *rawābij* is used. The *rubg* is mentioned in the Book of Oaths of Hai Gaon (as preserved in a Medieval Hebrew translation): "(...) Coins of Arabia called *rubgyn*, which are one-eighth of a silver coin" (see *Otzar ha-Geonim*, Ketubbot, Responsa, 40, no. 123, and parallel). Elsewhere (Friedman, "Dispute," 172, n. 163) I had suggested that *rubgyn* was an error for *tmnyn* or *tumnyn* (from Arabic *thumn*, 'an eighth'). However, I have now learned (thanks to Dr. David Sklare) that the original Judeo-Arabic in Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 46 (Cat. 2643, no. 23), fol. 133v (and parallels) indeed has: "(...) two Arab coins called *rubgyn* (*rawbajayn*, two *rawbajs*), which are *thumāniya* dirhems, eight of which equal one dirhem." Consequently, the similarity between *rubg* and the Indian coin Rūpaka, for which see Chattopadhyaya, *Coins*, 184, would seem to be only coincidental.}

⁹ *Hfsw't* appears only here. {It seems to have been an unidentified, small Indian coin.

work; cf. III, 1*v*, line 5; III, 2, line 21. The proprietor provided the workplace, the tools and, as we see here, also the fuel (for which the artisan had to pay)—and, of course, it was he who procured customers. Conditions similar to those found in our papers seem to have remained up to the end of the 19th century (see *Census of India* [28], 450).

Expenditures, as is evident from line 4, mean the cost of fuel, for which served rice husks, as this is the meaning of *ruzz* here. Rice husks are still used as fuel in the bronze industry (see *Census of India, ib.*, 449).

In addition to someone named Lngy (pronunciation unknown), who worked on his own account and provided in one case also a small quantity of copper, Ben Yijū worked with the assistance of slaves and a man called Abram, most probably a local or Yemenite Jew.¹⁰

The subsection B(1) is divided into two parts; the total in line 5 refers to part 2 only.

Translation

(1) Lngy's¹¹ debit for expenditures: ten *fīlī* dirhems and one Egyptian *mīthqāl*. (2) The period of the expenditure begins on the new moon of Nisan;¹² and it is 30 *na'ls*,¹³ five per month. (3) Lngy's credit: four dirhems and also for 33 *fills*¹⁴ of *btrw*,¹⁵ the price of (4) six and a half dirhems and half a *fāj*.¹⁶ Furthermore, his credit: the cost of the rice husks for my expenditure and that (5) of the slaves and of Abram at the price of two and a half dirhems. Total: 13 dirhems and half a *fāj*.

¹⁰ Cf. Isenberg, *Bene Israel*, 29, n. 17.}

¹¹ Could be pronounced Lanji, Linji, etc. It is perhaps not an Indian name; cf. the name Ben Lngw in VII, 1, line 5, where certainly a North African Jew is intended (dated 1037); also cf. Bodl. MS. Heb. b. 3 (Cat. 2806, no. 20), fol. 22. {There in line 9, Iṣḥāq b. Lngw is mentioned; this document has been published in Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:795, no. 538; see *ib.*, 4:866, a list of documents in which this Isaac b. Jacob b. Lanjū (as Gil vocalizes the name) appears. Ghosh, *Antique*, 385, note to 279, suggests that Lngy is a variant of the Tamil Brahmin name-element Linga. For the name Linajw, see Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmā'*, 2310, and for Lanjāwī, *id.*, *Mu'jam*, 1500.}

¹² The Jewish month of Nisan corresponds to March–April. The fuel was thus provided for the six months of spring and summer.

¹³ Cf. lines 9, 10 and 11. Obviously a certain measure. {This is probably the *nālī*, for which see Hall, "Price-making," 60 ff.}

¹⁴ One percent of a *fawāsila*; see 559, n. 30.

¹⁵ A type of copper; see I, 13, fol. 67*v*, line 9 and 201, n. 19.

¹⁶ A small Indian coin, as we see here less than one half dirhem. See in the continuation here and III, 19 and 23 *passim*. {It is probably identical with the *pāga*, a small unit common throughout Karnataka; see Chattopadhyaya, *Coins*, 130, 132.}

[Sec. B(2): Sundry Entries]

Translation

(6) My brother-in-law Nair's¹⁷ credit: one dinar. (7) Sulaymān's credit: one and a third *fāj* the price of the *dādhi* (lichen).¹⁸ (8) Joseph, the maternal uncle of my boys¹⁹ credit: three dirhems and half a *fāj*. (9) Due Joseph Lnbj in Darmattan²⁰ a *na'l* of melted butter²¹ [[for half a dirhem]]. (10) Due him also is the price of five *na'ls* rice husks. His debit: three

¹⁷ Probably identical with Abū 'Alī, who came with Ben Yijū to Cairo; see the list of donors for his synagogue in III, 51, and in particular TS K 6, f. 149, a list {see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:481–82}, which is headed "Abū 'Alī, the brother in law of Ben Yijū," which shows that the man was known in Cairo under this designation. From all this, it is evident that Ben Yijū, while out in the East, married there a local Jewish woman, Indian or Yemenite. The name Nair is extremely rare; however, it occurs again in III, 23*v*, margin, where it is borne by the brother of the *kārdār*. Evidently it was in use in those parts. {In III, 51, Ben Yijū refers to "Abū 'Alī, my brother-in-law (*šibrī*)"; see the discussion there (773–74). Goitein concluded from III, 17, which he identified only later, that Ben Yijū married his emancipated Indian slave girl, Ashū. *Šibr*, translated here and below sec. C, line 7 and in the other documents, 'brother-in-law,' also means father-in-law and son-in-law; see 348, n. 76. Abū 'Alī and Nair might have both been *šibr*s. Isenberg (*Bene Israel*, 29, n. 19) notes that Nair is the name of a high and important matrilineal caste in Kerala. See her discussion on the possible significance of this passage for the background of Ben Yijū's marriage. Goitein evidently was of the opinion that the two Nairs mentioned were not one and the same man, and it does seem unlikely that Ben Yijū would refer to the same individual once as 'my brother-in-law' and once as 'the *kārdār*'s brother.' As such, the suggestion by Ghosh (*Antique*, 229, 277; "The Slave," 208) that the *kārdār* was related to Ben Yijū by marriage is speculative at best.}

¹⁸ This product appears also in III, 27, line 5; VI, 49, lines 2, 15, 19. See Maimonides-Meyerhof, 46, no. 86, and in particular Löfgren, *Aden*, 51, line 8, from which it clearly appears that *dādhi* was used for fermenting processes in the production of wine. About the countries of origin of the *dādhi*, see the literature given by Meyerhof and Löfgren. According to Idrīsī's ms. book on plants, quoted by Meyerhof, the best quality of this edible lichen (*Lecanora esculenta* Ev.) grew in Khorasān in northeastern Iran, although an inferior quantity was found also in Spain. Thus it was obviously imported to India. On the other hand, *dādhi* is a common word in India for curdled milk (see Watt, *Commercial Products*, 470 and 474), and thus perhaps the word originated there. From VI, 49, it appears, however, that the *dādhi* occurring in these documents was imported to India. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:260, 447, nn. 51, 52; Sadan, "*Mashrūbāt*," 721a.

¹⁹ Arabic *šibyān* here denotes workmen.}

²⁰ As another Lnbj appears in III, 19, lines 2, 13, 15, this one is differentiated from the other by the name of his domicile. Darmattan or Darmadam (Dharmapattanam, 'city of the law'—or 'of pepper,' Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*) is according to Nainar, *Arab Geographers*, 32, note, identical with Dahfattan; see above III, 10, line 17. {There it is spelled Dabhattan; also cf. Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 457, who also identifies the two. 'Dharmadam' is a small village in the Cannanore district of Kerala earlier known as Dharmapattanam.

²¹ Arabic *samm*. See 650, n. 10.}

*fāliyāt*²² and another three *fāliyāt*. (11) Also two *naʿls* {add: (delivered) in his hand}.²³

[Sec. C: Advances to important merchants]

This section is very poorly preserved, being both effaced and deleted, which means that the accounts had been settled. These merchants, one of whom is called a shipowner {*nākhudā*}, took comparatively small advances. This seems to indicate that money always was in rotation, and even bigger merchants did not keep much cash with them. For orders, sometimes money was paid in advance. In other cases, even after delivery, payment was not immediately made; see line 10.

Translation

[[(1) My brother,²⁴ my lord, the *nākhudā* Saʿd's credit: five *fīliyā mithqāl*, an advance. (2) Of these, he took {add: in his hand} three *fīliyā m*. Balance in his favor: (3) two *fīliyā m*. He collected {add: in his hand}. (3a) My lord the *nākhudā* Saʿd's credit: one dinar, an advance. (4) Another *d.*, an advance. (5) His credit: two Malikī dinars. He took one dinar worth of wax²⁵ and two *niṣāfīs*.²⁶ (6) Due [...] less an eighth [...]. He collected this, as an advance. (7) Owed to [...] in the presence of Sheikh Amram (?), his brother-in-law the proceeds of [...] (8) My lord the most illustrious Sheikh Abu ʿl-Ḥasan b. Jaʿfar's²⁷ credit: (9) two Malikī dinars for locks²⁸ from Kajandra (?). (10) Also one *fīlī mithqāl*, an advance. (11) His credit: two thousand betel nuts. He took eight *niṣāfīs*.]]

²² Most probably identical with *fīliyā*, above sec. A, line 11 and 637, n. 7.

²³ Certainly of rice husks; see line 10.

²⁴ This merely indicates that Ben Yijū was an intimate friend of this *nākhudā* {see page 155}, who seems not to be mentioned in other papers published here. Ben Yijū had promised him an advance on the purchase of some merchandise to the amount of 5 *fīliyā mithqāls*, of which Saʿd, so far, had cashed in only 3. Lines 3a and 4 show that the rest was paid in another two installments (if Ben Yijū uses here 'dinar' loosely for *mithqāl*, for in line 5, Malikī dinars are mentioned expressly, which makes it improbable that Malikī dinars were intended here as well).

²⁵ See III, 19, line 10.

²⁶ This half-dinar of Yemen—see II, 20, line 34; III, 10, lines 40–44—was in use in India just as was the Malikī dinar of Aden—see here line 11 and III, 27, sec. C, line 1.

²⁷ In III, 10, line 25, he carries goods for Ben Yijū from India to Aden.

²⁸ For Indian locks, see III, 16, line 15. {There Khalaf b. Isaac acknowledges delivery in Aden of two locks and betel nuts (and bowls) sent by Ben Yijū. In II, 14, lines 7–8, Maḍmūn b. Japheth acknowledges delivery of two locks and two thousand betel nuts (see here, line 11, not read by Goitein), sent by Ben Yijū.}

[Sec. D]

Translation

(1) My lord Sheikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan Ibn al-Marīḍa al-Qarawī's²⁹ credit:
 (2) two *fīliyā mithqāls*, an advance. Also a dirhem due the boy of the smelter.³⁰

(3) He received six Egyptian *mithqāls* less one *rawbaj*, (4) for which he will deliver two *farāsila* of copper.³¹

[Sec. E: Other dealings (1) in cardamom with the *kārdār* and (2) in cardamom and iron with an Indian supplier]

The *kārdār* had not delivered a consignment of cardamom ordered for a merchant called Semaḥ b. Nissī; Ben Yijū presumably purchased it from another supplier. Ben Yijū is now being compensated with another consignment, which he reserves for a relative of his, for whom he also placed orders with an Indian business friend.

²⁹ I.e., he, or his family, came from Qayrawān in Tunisia. He was an important businessman; see III, 11, line 19. {Perhaps read Abu 'l-Ḥassūn.}

³⁰ Arabic *ṣabī*, son or servant of the smelter {*al-sabbāk*, not read here by Goitein; smelters are mentioned in III, 19, line 1. *Sabbāk* also means 'goldsmith'; see Shy, "Terms," 250.}

³¹ Arabic *ṣufr*. For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11.} Leaving Aden, a *bahār* of copper cost from 60 to 68 Malikī dinars; see II, 20, line 26, II, 26, lines 11–12. As a *farāsila* normally was one twentieth of a *bahār* {see 616, n. 13: 1/24}, two *farāsilas* would have cost 6 to 6.8 Malikī dinars. If the reading *msry*' (Egyptian) is correct, then here the price would be about two and a half times higher, as one Egyptian *m.* was worth about 2½ Malikī *d.* {on the variable exchange rate, see 172, n. 27}. Naturally, for a commodity coming from the West, prices would be higher in India than in Aden. Still, the difference seems to be too great. Perhaps *mlky*' (Malikī) is to be read for *msry*'; on the other hand, here again we would be forced to assume that Ben Yijū uses the word loosely, as in all our papers Malikī dinars, but not *mithqāls*, are mentioned. {A price two and a half times higher on sale in Egypt of import items from the Far East, purchased in Yemen, is reported in V, 2, margin, line 7.}

Translation

(1) Debit of the *kādār* (1)³² //for// the cardamom of Şemaḥ b. Nissī: (2) twenty-eight *farāsila*³³ cardamom in bales,³⁴ of which I shall take delivery (3) on the first day of Kislev,³⁵ God willing, for Abu 'l-Khayr (4) Ibn al-Minqār,³⁶ the son of my maternal aunt.³⁷ He paid me two Malikī³⁸ dinars in advance.

(5) Debit of Fl'dr Sh'nk Dās³⁹ in Fandarayna: (6) two *bahārs* 'smooth' iron and three *farāsila* and 55 *fills* (7) cardamom in bales for Abu 'l-Khayr

³² The same misspelling occurs above sec. A, line 2.

³³ For 28 *farāsila* one would have expected: one *bahār* and eight *farāsila*. It seems, however, that reckoning according to *farāsilas* was common in Mangalore, where Ben Yijū was based.

³⁴ Arabic (*ḥfīsh*, perhaps to be read (*bi-*)*faysh*; cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:293a, *faysha* 'bande,' with the denominative verb *fayyash* 'bander, lier, serrer avec une bande.' The word is derived from Spanish, but appears as a loanword in Arabic already in the thirteenth century, as noted by Schiaparelli, *Vocabulista*. Thus it would not be excluded that merchants coming from the West to India in the twelfth century used it. However, the word might mean something quite different. In modern Yemenite speech *faysh* is a common word for 'open field.' Accordingly, the phrase could indicate here, that the cardamom was still not picked, but in the fields. Were that the case, however, one would expect *bil-faysh* (with the def. art.). The reading of the letters (*ḥfīsh*), both in lines 2 and 7, is certain. {Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 383, *faysha*, 'field'; *fīsh*, 'tie, knot.' The latter is from a Yemenite account book from the mid twentieth century, and the vocalization is probably the speculation of the lexicographer for reading the consonantal text. Ben Yijū uses the dual (*fayshatan dhabab*) in III, 42, list a, line 2, from which it is clear that some kind of bundle ('two bags of gold') was intended. The singular, accordingly, is evidently *faysha*, and here in lines 2 and 7, the plural form should be read *faysh*. This might have been the intended reading in the Yemenite account book as well.}

³⁵ November–December.

³⁶ {Arabic *minqār* (not deciphered by Goitein) means 'beak' or 'pickax.' As the definite article *al-* suggests, it is not a proper name here but a nickname. Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmā'*, 2457, explains the meaning of the name Minqāra as one who investigates, hurries or strikes something. The death of one Abu 'l-Naşr Ibn al-Minqār in 1140 is mentioned in IV, 60v, lower margin, line 9. Ibn al-Minqār Bu 'l-Ma'ālī is mentioned in TS 8 J 16, f. 27 from the mid twelfth century.}

³⁷ Also below, line 7. This is the only indication of a person from the Yijū family being out in India together with Abraham Yijū. Ben Yijū extends greetings to his maternal aunt in his letter, III, 29 (margin, line 20). {That letter was sent from Aden to the West. On II, 22v (not edited; see the introduction to II, 21–24), Ben Yijū wrote an account for 'the son of my maternal aunt.' I assume that the same individual was intended, but since Ben Yijū repeated here twice his cousin's name, it is possible that at the time of this writing there was a second son of his maternal aunt in India. See further page 69.}

³⁸ The reading is uncertain.

³⁹ As the familiar component of an Indian name 'Dās' (servant) indicates, the person must have been a Hindu.

Ibn al-Minqār, the son of my maternal aunt, (8) of which he will take delivery from him in Qny't,⁴⁰ God willing.

[Sec. F. Beginning of Account]

(1) [...] owes me [...] from the silver [...]

⁴⁰ Obviously the name of a place. The form of the letter *n* is slightly unusual, but hardly another letter could be read in its place.

III, 19 *Accounts of Abraham Ben Yijū's Workshop for Bronze Vessels*

India {apparently 1132–39, 1145–49}

ULC Or. 1080 J 95

The paper is woolly and dark brown and in a bad state of preservation: corrugated, stained, and covered in various places with a dark substance, which cannot be removed without destroying the writing beneath it. The sheet was folded into extremely narrow strips, between $\frac{1}{2}$ and 1 cm wide, as people do still in Yemen with their accounts and other documents. The accounts III, 21, written on the verso, were certainly not made in India, but in Aden. Presently we cannot ascertain whether or not III, 19 preceded III, 21.

Out text is of considerable interest for the history of the copper industry in India. The following facts, which are partly confirmed by other documents, emerge from it:

- 1) The workmen did not receive wages, but were remunerated for piecework. Ben Yijū was assisted by slaves and a local Jew, whose status is not specified {see III, 18, sec. B1, line 5}.
- 2) The craftsmen were paid according to the weight of the vessels produced—see here lines 4 and 26—a system, which was in use also with the Jewish silversmiths in Yemen.
- 3) The weight of the finished product did not differ much from that of the metals put into it. In lines 19–27, we find that out of $116\frac{1}{2}$ *fills* of bronze and two *fills* of tin, the master cast a table jug of 45 *fills* and an ingot of 70 *fills* = 115 *fills*.
- 4) The coppersmith certainly used the same procedure of ‘cire perdue,’ which is applied in India in the traditional copper industry today {known today as lost-wax casting}.¹ The Arabic word ‘*asal*, lit., ‘honey,’ in line 10, must denote ‘wax,’ as it is mentioned together with ‘rice husks for fuel’ in line 11. The Sanskrit word for wax, *makshikaja* or *makshikamala* is derived from *makshika*, ‘honey.’ Thus, the use of the Arabic word honey for wax may be simply the translation of a local term.²

¹ See *Census of India* (28), 448.

² Cf. also Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:128b: *sham* ‘*asali*, ‘chandelle de cire’—modern usage—where ‘*asal*’ also stands for ‘wax.’ {In III, 8, line 12, ‘*asal*’ appears together with wheat and oil; in III, 20, line 12, together with sugar; and in III, 27, line 6, together with *dādhi* (lichen). For wax and honey as trade commodities in medieval southern India, see Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, 180–81.

- 5) As the small quantity of tin (less than one fiftieth; see lines 19–27) indicates, it was not copper which was melted here, but bronze that was recast. Although the Adenese merchants writing to Ben Yijū use the words *ṣufr* ('yellow,' namely copper) and *naḥās* (copper) indiscriminately, *ṣufr* must designate here bronze or even brass.³
- 6) Borax was used in the brass industry, as it is today; see line 25.
- 7) It is also interesting to note that one man working for Ben Yijū is called 'Iyārī. *Iyār* means marking or assaying measures and weights. Thus, the artisan obviously had been—or perhaps still was—an officer of a mint or of the market police. Another man is called Ibn al-'Iyārī (see lines 16 and 19), which shows that such a connection was quite natural.⁴

The account is subdivided into two parts by a line drawn beneath line 18. {For the dates see the introduction to III, 21.}

Translation

(1) Owed by the {add: smelters}⁵ //...// al-'Iyā[rī] (2) and his son Lnby⁶ four M[aliki]⁷ dinars (3) and a half.

Due them: the balance of the account and a *fill* [...] (4) Due them: //four *fills* more than in the account// payment for the manufacture of one *farāsila* and eighty (5) *fills*. The price of one *farāsila*: five *rawbajs*. (6) Total: nine *rawbajs*, which is the equivalent of (7) 31 dirhem and one *fāj*.⁸ Balance: (8) 5 dirhems less one *fāj* and half a [dirhem]. (9) Altogether five dirhems (10) and a *fāj*.

³ For the meaning of Arabic *ṣufr*, see 555, n. 11.

⁴ According to A. Ghosh, *Antique*, 385, note to 279, 'Iyārī appears to be a variant of the Tamil Brahmin name Ayyar.

⁵ The decipherment of the word is doubtful. {I read *sabbākin*, 'smelters'; cf. III, 18, sec. D, line 2.} Before al-'Iyārī, several letters were inserted above the line, which, for the time being, defy decipherment, perhaps al-'Iyārī's first name. {It looks like two words, *al-arjāl li-nāthān*, 'the legs for Nathan'; probably the legs are a stand for a lamp or the like.

⁶ The name Lnby appears also in lines 13, 15, 24, and in III, 18, sec. B, line 8 (see 639, n. 20).

⁷ For M[aliki], one could read, of course, also M[iṣri], i.e., Egyptian. However, in these papers Maliki dinars and Egyptian *mithqāls* are always mentioned as being in use in India.

⁸ These lines prove that one *farāsila* contained 100 *fills*. One *rawbaj* was evidently equal to about three and a half (Indian) dirhems. {For the *rawbaj* see 637, n. 8. For the *fāj*, see there, 638, n. 16.}

His debit: one *fāj* for wax⁹ (11) and one *fāj* for rice husks for fuel¹⁰ (12) and one dirhem cash.

(13) Al-ʿIyārī and his son Lnby received (14) a bar,¹¹ one *farāsila* and three *fills* less one quarter (15) of tin.¹² Lnby received also 10 *fills*, (16) which he handed over to Ibn al-ʿIyārī (17) and another 20 *fills*. Altogether his debit: one *farāsila* (18) and 23 *fills*.¹³

(19) Ibn al-ʿIyārī received also (20) one *farāsila* and six *fills* and a half (21) *ṣufr* in a bar, as well as two *fills* (22) tin. Altogether one *farāsila* and eight *fills* (23) and a half. His debit: 10 *fills*, which were handed over to him (24) by Lnby al-ʿIyārī. (25) His debit: two dirhems and for one dirhem borax.¹⁴

(26) He manufactured {alt. tr.: his credit: manufactured items}¹⁵ a table jug¹⁶ of 45 *fills* (27) and an ingot¹⁷ of 70 *fills*.

⁹ See the introduction to this document.

¹⁰ See III, 18, sec. B, line 4.

¹¹ Of bronze; see lines 19–23.

¹² Arabic *qalī* also in line 22. See 558, n. 27.

¹³ The addition checks out: Out of a total of 33 *fills*, Lnby had delivered to Ibn al-ʿIyārī 10 *fills*. These 10 *fills* are referred to in lines 23–24.

¹⁴ Arabic *tīnkār*. See 575, n. 7.

¹⁵ {Arabic *lahu maʿmūl*.}

¹⁶ Arabic *zīr ikhwān*. See 555, n. 13.

¹⁷ Arabic *masbūk*; cf. *naḥās sabīka*, mentioned in Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 26v, line 11. {Shy, “Terms,” 204, 206, explains *masbūk* (usually in the plural, *masbūkāt*), ‘metal’; see ib., 207 for *sabīka*.}

III, 20 *Similar Accounts, not in Ben Yijū's Hand*

India

ENA 1822A, f. 66

Accounts similar to III, 19, perhaps with one of Ben Yijū's workers, but not in his handwriting.

{The account was clearly written in India, as the prices are given in Indian coinage, Kūlamī *filīs*, i.e., from the famous port city Quilon on the Malabar Coast, and *fanam*.¹ The latter has been found in the India Book papers, only in VI, 49; as the calculation shows, it was worth a quarter of a *filī*.² The writer's anonymous associate, whose account is registered here, was charged for the receipt of various commodities, including both Indian products and items usually imported for personal use from Yemen and the West. He must have been a Yemenite or from elsewhere in the West, who was staying in India.}

¹ {A common small gold coin (*paṇam*) in southern India. See Chattopadhyaya, *Coins*, 336 (index).

² On this coin, see III, 18, sec. A, line 11.}

III, 21 *Two Accounts by Ben Yijū about Transactions with the Nākhudā Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Abu ‘l-Katā’ib*

Aden, 1140–45 {1140–44}

ULC Or. 1080 J 95

These are rough drafts written on III, 19*v*. No. III, 21, sec. B is written in the opposite direction to sec. A. A blank space of about seven lines has been left between the two. In sec. A, the beginnings of lines 1–7 were torn away, but not much is lost.

The *nākhudā* Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Abu ‘l-Katā’ib drowned on his way from Aden to India in 1146 (III, 15, lines 18–25). No. 21, sec. A, concerns goods brought from India; sec. B goods shipped there and sums due the *nākhudā* for transport of the goods mentioned in sec. A. We find him doing business together with his father Abu ‘l-Ḥasan here, sec. B, lines 26 and 31, just as in II, 16, line 19. The terminus ad quem for III, 21 is, therefore, the summer of 1146. As, however, Ben Yijū was at that time in India (see III, 12–14), and had been established there for many years, these statements must have been written before that year. We have many letters written from Aden to Ben Yijū in India during the years 1133–40 and again from 1145–48. Presumably he paid a visit to Aden in the early 1140’s, and these accounts were written at that time.

{We know that Ben Yijū was in India between 1132 (see III, 17) through at least the summer of 1139 (see III, 1, and III, 11) and then again between 1145 (see II, 28–29, III, 22) and 1149 (see III, 16 [July–August, 1148, in India] and III, 29 [September, 1149, from Aden]). His visit to Yemen probably began ca. 1140 and was an extended one, and during this time he wrote a poem in praise of Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan, when the Nagid was expecting his third ‘son’ (II, 40) and another when that son was a young child (II, 37).}

While the honorific name Abu ‘l-Ḥasan was very common among Jews at that time, Abū ‘Abd Allāh is seldom found, if at all.¹ The name

¹ Cf. TS 16.179 and 13 J 17, f. 2. {TS 16.179 has been published by Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:36 ff., no. 617, and 13 J 17, f. 2, ib., 3:357 ff., no. 400. In both, Abū ‘Abd Allāh is identified by Gil as Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sā’igh, the last Muslim ruler of Sicily, concerning whom see ib., 1:553–56. Other Abū ‘Abd Allāhs mentioned in Geniza letters are cited ib., 4:826. TS 16.179 was published also by Ben Sasson, *Sicily*, 36 ff., no. 8, and on 46, he identifies that Abū ‘Abd Allāh as *ghulām ṣāhib al-sūq*, ‘the boy of the market superintendent,’ mentioned in CAJS 389*v*, line 40 (ib., 73, no. 12; Gil, ib., 4:470, no. 751), but there ‘Abd Allāh is referred to, not Abū ‘Abd Allāh; and while Abū of the honorific is often omitted, there is no reason to assume that was the case here. Over forty different Abū ‘Abd Allāhs are mentioned in *ET*², and all seem to be Muslims. ‘Abd Allāh is the Arabic equivalent of the biblical name Obadiah. In Arabic documents a Jew named

Abu 'l-Katā'ib, moreover, was borne by at least one Muslim savant of the thirteenth century.² Thus, it is most probable that these merchants were Muslims.

These accounts are very instructive concerning various aspects of the Indian trade.

Translation of sec. A

(1) [The] *nākhudā* Abū 'Abd Allāh.

(2) His credit: eight *bahārs* of pepper in one bale.³ (3) Price: 56 *mithqāls*.⁴ And his credit: 22 (4) *mithqāls* on account of specific goods {alt. tr.: retail goods}.⁵ (5) And his credit: the price of two *bahārs* of iron [[and of two *bahārs*]] (6) [and] two hundred [and si]x 'eggs,⁶ 16 *mithqāls*. (7) Total: 94 *mithqāls*.

(8) [His credit: eleven] and a half *mithqāls* for specific goods {alt. tr.: retail goods}, in a second (9) account. The combined total: 105½ (10) *mithqāls*.

Obadiah is called 'Abd Allāh, e.g., TS Ar. 38.93v, line 4 (Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 460; cf. ib., 465). For 'Abd Allāh and its equivalence to Obadiah, cf. Mann, *Texts*, 2:1576; and for a Jewish 'Abd Allāh see, e.g., Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 6:1. Because of his ancestor Obadiah, Maimonides was sometimes referred to, especially in Arabic sources, as Ibn 'Abd Allāh (see Freimann, "Genealogy," 13; on 15, he unconvincingly suggests that Abu 'l-Ma'ānī Joseph b. 'Abd Allāh was Maimonides' sister's son) or, with the diminutive, Ibn 'Ubayd Allāh (see Vajda, "Ibn Maymūn," 876a). It is curious that though Jews freely used the name 'Abd Allāh, they seem to have shunned Abū 'Abd Allāh. Abū 'Abd Allāh is usually coupled with the name Muḥammad (Muḥammad's father was 'Abd Allāh), and Prof. Joël Kraemer (in a private communication) suggests that for that reason Jews avoided this honorific. Perhaps the Muslims prohibited Jews and Christians from using this byname. Cf. 287, n. 20, for such a prohibition, usually observed in the breach, concerning the byname Abu 'l-Ḥasan.)

² Cf. Al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafāyāt*, 2:28.

³ The *nākhudā* had brought from India to Aden eight *bahārs*—i.e., 2,400 pounds (*ratls*)—of pepper in one bale, Arabic *'idl*, literally '(camel's) load.' This quantity exceeds, of course, by far the weight, which can be carried by a camel. {See 190, n. 23.}

⁴ Here a *bahār* of pepper costs at arrival at Aden seven *mithqāls*. From a comparison of sec. B, line 9 with lines 19–20, it is evident that the rate of exchange of the local Maliki dinar against the *mithqāl* was, at that time, 1:2.5. Thus, the price of a *bahār* of pepper at arrival was 17½ Maliki dinars. In 1133, as II, 20, lines 9, 10 and 20 show, a *bahār* of pepper cost at arrival in Aden 14 *d.* and was sold, while outgoing for Egypt, for 37 *d.*

⁵ Arabic *tafāriq*. While the standard goods, such as pepper, iron or cardamom, appeared in the main account, other merchandise, which was handled in smaller quantities, was specified in separate accounts. Cf. II, 20, line 43; II, 23, line 50; II, 24, line 23; verso, line 20.

⁶ See the note to II, 16v, line 20. For the identification of this commodity, it is important that it is reckoned together with iron under one and the same heading here and in sec. B, line 29. Here, the 'eggs' are *numbered*: 200 and x (perhaps 6); below, sec. B, line 29, their weight is given as one *bahār*. {For 'eggs,' see 369–70.}

- (11) His debit: 186 *mithqāls*. Balance (12) of his debit: 80½ *mithqāls*.⁷
 (13) Balance of his debit: 80½ *mithqāls*.⁸

Sec. B

[A (I). List of commodities delivered to the *nākhudā* for transport to India]

The nature and quantities of the items indicate that they were destined not for selling but for Ben Yijū's extended household and for presents. The list of prices, lines 12–21, was intended either for purposes of identification or because the shipowner had taken upon himself to refund their value in case they were lost. From this document it is evident that Ben Yijū was in Aden for only a short visit. The prices are given in line 10 and lines 13 ff. in *fiṭī* (Indian) *mithqāls*, which is natural, as the commodities were transported to India. It seems that the Indian *mithqāl* was approximately of the same value as the Egyptian, for here its exchange rate for the Adenese Malikī dinar is 1:2.5, while the Egyptian mostly was 1:2.35 (II, 16*v*, line 16; II, 20, line 32) or 1:2.3 (IV, 1, line 23) and sometimes 1:3.5 (II, 23, lines 35–36; II, 25 and II, 26 margin).⁹

Translation

- (1) I delivered to (2) the *nākhudā* Abū 'Abd Allāh Ibn <Abu> 'l-Katā'ib:
 (3) three water skins of melted butter¹⁰ and (4) two other water skins; two

⁷ The account is correct. Most probably, Ben Yijū had handed over in India to the *nākhudā* the amount of 186 *mithqāls*, but the latter had found merchandise worth buying for only 105½ *mithqāls*. Ben Yijū and the *nākhudā* certainly traveled on different ships because they set out from different ports.

⁸ {The balance is repeated as a final total.

⁹ For the exchange rate of the Adenese Malikī dinar, see 172, n. 27.}

¹⁰ Arabic *samn*. Melted butter (ghee) is one of the most common foodstuffs of Yemen and obviously was cherished by the Jewish craftsmen engaged in Ben Yijū's workshop in India; see III, 18, sec. B, line 9, where one Joseph receives a certain quantity. But ghee is also extremely popular in India and was even exported from there already in Roman times; see Watt, *Commercial Products*, 478. The reason for shipping it to India here could hardly be religious, as the most observant Yemenite Jews—as far as I know—eat, without scruples, *samnāh*, or clarified butter, prepared by Muslims. The import of ghee to India possibly was a matter of taste. Perhaps on the Malabar Coast ghee was made from buffalo milk, while the Jews (as certainly the Muslims and Christians) who came from

*dasts*¹¹ of large-sized paper;¹² (5) four cushions,¹³ two of Zanzibar type¹⁴ (6) and two of new *miḥbas*;¹⁵ ten (7) beryl stones;¹⁶ two *farāsilas* of garlic;¹⁷ (8) also a 'fulled' *fūta*,¹⁸ worth (9) 3½ dinars // and a quarter//¹⁹ from Aden; a Manārī *fūta*²⁰ (10) worth a *fīlī mithqāl*; a silk band²¹ (11) with (?) {lit., 'in which are'} forty silver beads, five little bells.²²

the West were accustomed to ghee from cows. 'If carefully enclosed in skins, while still hot, [ghee] may be preserved for many years without requiring the aid of salt or other preservatives,' Watt, *ibid.*, 479. There was, therefore, no difficulty in sending quantities of it from Yemen to India.

¹¹ A *dast* was a certain quantity that made up a set of a particular item; cf. 304, n. 9.

¹² Arabic *qirtās* (for *qirtās*). See 620, n. 35. In line 13, the more common *kāghadh* is used for the same item. About the enormous need for paper in India, where none was produced at that time, see II, 14, line 20.

¹³ Arabic *makhādīd*. This form is Maghrebi colloquial; Schiaparelli, *Vocabulista*, quoted by Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:353a.

¹⁴ As Zanzibar is famous for its leathersgoods and not for textiles, most probably cushions covered with leather are meant here.

¹⁵ According to our documents, *miḥbas* textiles were going both from West to East and vice versa. {See 207, n. 12.} New: in those times, when textiles were of a high quality and handed down from one generation to the next, it was emphasized when a material was new. In the Geniza, many lists of trousseaus have been preserved, in which similar statements occur, which shows that the brides often got used clothes. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:184–85, 188.}

¹⁶ Of the three meanings of the word *bizādī*, given by Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:81a, according to a twelfth century vocabulary of Spanish-Jewish origin, obviously the second is intended here. As there, *bizādī* is here defined by *ḥajar*, 'stone.' *Bizādī* has the meaning beryl also in Persian; cf. Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 182. {Here for 'stones,' the plural is written *ḥijār*; in line 16, the usual *ahjār* appears. For *ḥajar*, 'jewel,' see 381, n. 16.}

¹⁷ Garlic is used by the Jews of High Yemen sparsely and only for cooking, while those of southern Yemen consume it frequently in its natural state. The considerable quantity mentioned here seems to indicate that it was intended not only for Ben Yijū's household, but for the people working in his factory as well.

¹⁸ See I, 1, line 12 {and pages 175–80}. Below, line 19, it is described as a fulled goat wool *fūta*. Clothing of exactly the same description was sent to Ben Yijū, while in India, from Aden by Maḍmūn (cf. II, 23, lines 49–50) as well as by Joseph b. Abraham (III, 3, line 15; where the word 'fulled' is not used).

¹⁹ Here, the price of the *fūta* is given in (Malikī) dinars: 3¾ to which below, line 20, corresponds to 1½ *mithqāls*, i.e. a ratio of 2.5:1.

²⁰ Two Manārī *fūtas*, obviously a Spanish fabric (see II, 16v, line 9), were sent to Ben Yijū by Maḍmūn (see *ib.*). This kind of clothing must have been popular among the Maghrebis living in India at that time. The price of those sent by Maḍmūn was three Malikī dinars per piece. The price here, according to the exchange rate calculated from line 20, would be two and a half dinars.

²¹ *Ibrizim* = *ibrisim*, silk, here a silk band with silver beads and bells. {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:60, 103; Gil, "Silk," 31–32 ('*ibrisam*').}

²² Arabic *jalājīl*, perhaps for a robe of Ben Yijū's little daughter. Such bells (obviously of silver) constituted part of a trousseau of a bride from al-Maḥalla in Lower Egypt according to TS 12.125v, line 7. {By a strange coincidence, Ben Yijū's daughter Sitt al-Dār eventually settled in al-Maḥalla (see III, 56). The trousseau list is approximately from the same period she was living there (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:427, n. 486). On *jalājīl*, see also Shy, "Terms," 246.}

[A (II). Prices of the commodities listed above]²³

(12) Price of the five water skins with melted butter, three *filī* (13) *mithqāls*. Price of the two *dasts* of paper,²⁴ one *mithqāl*. (14) Price of the four cushions, one half of a *mithqāl*. (15) Price of two *farāsīlas* of garlic, $\frac{1}{4}$ *mithqāl*. (16) Price of ten stones, one quarter of a *mithqāl*. (17) Price of the silver beads and the bells, (18) three quarters. Price of the Manārī *fūta*, (19) one *mithqāl*. Price of the woolen, ‘fulled’ *fūta*, (20) one and a half *mithqāl*. Total: nine *mithqāls* (21) less one quarter.²⁵

[B. Payment due the *nākhudā* for the transport of the goods listed in sec. A from India to Aden]

(22) [[Pepper

(23) His credit: [[7 (?)]] *mithqāls* for freight after the *bārbazā*²⁶ (24) [[and he received]] and also his credit]]²⁷

(25) His credit: freight for eight *bahārs* of pepper, less (26) one *bahār* duties paid for his father²⁸ (27) and one *bahār bārbazā*; balance in his credit, six (28) *mithqāls*.²⁹

His credit: freight for two *bahārs* of iron (29) and one *bahār* of ‘eggs,’ three *mithqāls*, including the customs.

(30) Total: nine *mithqāls*. His debit: freight (31) for one *bahār* of iron belonging to his father.

²³ In two cases, lines 8–10, the writer had already stated the prices and repeats them in lines 18–20. This is only a rough copy and precision is not to be expected.

²⁴ Arabic *kāghadh*. {On its manufacture and use, see Huart & Grohmann, “*Kāghadh*.” This word is familiar from a variety of sources but appears only sporadically in the letters of this book. Another example is in III, 48, line 32. The same is called *qirtās* in line 4; this shows that the terms were interchangeable. See also Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:348–49, 19 (there spelled *kāghidh*).}

²⁵ The total of the prices enumerated in lines 12–20 is $8\frac{1}{4}$ and not $8\frac{3}{4}$ *mithqāls*. The reading of all the numbers is certain. {The end of line 13 is torn; perhaps read there *wanisf*, ‘and a half.’}

²⁶ ‘After the *bārbazā*’ obviously means that for the iron sent in *bārbazā* packing (cf. III, 11, line 38) freight had been paid in advance in India. {Ben Yijū often spells *tā marbūṭa* with *alif*—see 332, n. 16—accordingly, probably read here and in line 27: *bārbaza*.}

²⁷ Lines 22–24 are crossed out.

²⁸ The pepper belonged to Ben Yijū (see sec. A, line 2), but a sum equivalent to the freight of one *bahār* had been paid by Ben Yijū to ‘Abd Allah Ibn al-Katā‘ib’s father. The word *rasm* (duties) seems to have been added later and in different ink.

²⁹ This shows that for one *bahār*, costing seven *mithqāls*, a freight of one *mithqāl* was paid for the transport from India to Aden.

III, 22 *Statements by Two Yemenite Merchants about Consignments Shipped by Ben Yijū and Mostly Lost*

India, probably 1145

TS 18J 2, f. 14

Thick, light-grayish paper. On recto, beneath line 22, about 10.5 cm of the height were left blank and obviously had been intended for another statement, which was, however, written on the verso, in the middle of the page.

The two merchants themselves wrote the statements, and both betray typical Yemenite hands. The first is of the cursive type, like III, 7 and III, 32, while the second, with its unusually big and strong letters, resembles III, 33 and III, 38.

Maḍmūn b. Sālīm, the writer of the first statement, was in the spring of 1153 {read: 1156} a member of the rabbinical court of Aden (II, 71v, margin, line 12). However, as his very erratic spelling, his afterthoughts (lines 1, 2, 10), and his clumsy and awkward sentences show, he was not experienced in drawing up written statements.¹ Even less trained is the hand of his companion, Abraham b. Fayyūmī, a merchant mentioned in several documents as staying in India (see II, 20, line 29; II, 24v, line 1–2).

Fortunately, we have another source for the events so imperfectly described in these statements, namely a passage in the letter III, 12, lines 10–26. From the two documents, the following details emerge:

Ben Yijū, whose family name is spelled Yishū by Maḍmūn and Ishū by Ibn Fayyūmī, sent from India consignments of pepper and ginger on a ship called *ghazāla* ('Gazelle'). Its owner bore the name Bashīr (lines 2, 6, 9 {see II, 24v, lines 4–5}), while its captain was Makkī b. Abu 'l-Hawl (line 19).

A smaller ship, described as a *shaffāra*,² escorted the 'Gazelle.' When an attack occurred, the sailors would jettison part of the cargo in order to increase the speed and maneuverability of the galley. Such an instance is reported in II, 31, lines 9–10, with reference to an attack of Indian pirates in the Fam al-Khawr, the entrance to the gulf of Broach and

¹ {Maḍmūn b. Sālīm was a merchant, who traveled back and forth between Aden and India, and is mentioned in several documents in connection with Ben Yijū. See III, 12, line 36, III, 22, lines 1, 3, 22, III, 32v, line 1.}

² See 341, n. 26.

Cambay.³ A similar disaster occurred here; see III, 12, line 16. After the losses incurred by the attack, the ships returned to a harbor on the Indian coast. It was there that the two Yemenite merchants—no doubt old acquaintances or friends of Khalaf b. Isaac—made their statements. Copies of the statements or quotations from them certainly were forwarded to the Adenese merchants concerned, as the clear allusions to them in III, 12 prove (compare, e.g., III, 12, line 14 with III, 22, lines 9–10). This fact provides us also with the date for III, 22. Since III, 12 was sent almost certainly in 1146 (see the introduction there), our statements, which are repeatedly referred to there as written in the previous year, must be dated 1145.

The formal depositions of the Yemenite merchants had been necessitated by the fact that prior to the departure of the ‘Gazelle,’ Ben Yijū had sent with Abū ‘Alī b. Ṭayyib (see III, 1, line 11), slightly different statements about the consignments forwarded to Khalaf. In those letters, it was certainly stated that ginger belonging to Khalaf had been sent in the *shaffāra* (see III, 12, line 12), while in III, 22, lines 21–22, it is emphasized that none destined for him was carried in that galley. Only during the night preceding the departure of the ships, the merchants made their final arrangements, which were described in memorandums carried in two copies, one in the ‘Gazelle’ and another in its accompanying galley.⁴ However, owing to the confusion during an attack by pirates—or perhaps in a stormy sea—both copies were lost. Thus, the two merchants had to verify the facts from the *shatmī*, the manifest of passengers {?} and wares kept by the captain (lines 18–20). It seems certain that the ships did not return to the port from which they had sailed and where Ben Yijū lived, for otherwise Ben Yijū himself could have made the enquiry.

On first reading III, 12 and 22, I had the impression that the two accounts reported that the ‘Gazelle’ was lost altogether and that the main consignment carried for Khalaf, $2\frac{3}{4}$ *bahārs* of ginger, had been lost (see III, 12, line 19 and III, 22, lines 7 and 21). However, this is expressly ruled out by III, 22, line 14. Thus, we must assume that Khalaf correctly surmised that Ben Yijū forgot to mention that consignment in his letter (see III, 12, line 16). In other words, Ben Yijū reported the disaster, which befell the *shaffāra*, but did not find it necessary to say anything

³ {See my discussion at the end of the introduction to II, 31 (page 369), on the identity of Fam al-Khawr.

⁴ For sending multiple copies of letters or accounts, see page 9 (n. 23).}

about the goods carried in the main boat, which obviously had been salvaged.

Translation

[A. Maḍmūn b. Sālīm's statement]

(1) This is what I testify,⁵ //I//, Maḍmūn b. Sālīm: Abraham b. Yishū wrote (2) the letters⁶ a few days⁷ before //he settled the account// with the *nākhudā* Bashīr; and we, (3) namely I, Maḍmūn b. Sālīm and Sheikh Abraham b. Yishū, handed them over to Sheikh (4) Abū 'Alī the Egyptian b. Ṭayyib⁸ after one or several days.⁹

Now,¹⁰ (5) when there remained only one night before the sailing,¹¹ we all made the account with¹² the *nākhudā* (6) Bashīr in one place. There were listed¹³ for Sheikh Joseph b. Abraham (7) and Sheikh Khalaf b. Isaac in the boat 'Gazelle,' 5½ *bahārs*¹⁴ of (8) ginger, worth 22 *mithqāls*. And the *nākhudā* Bashīr (9) took the freight from¹⁵ the ginger, for he

⁵ Arabic *nashhadu anā*, lit., 'we, I, testify'; the same in line 22. This *nqtl* is not a 'Maghrebi' form, but 'the plural of modesty,' used by the Yemenites up to the present day; cf. Goitein-Habshush, *Travels in Yemen*, 78, para. 29. The plural of modesty is used in all tenses, as *takashshafnā* in line 18 shows. {Cf. Blau, *Emergence*, 53, n. 2. In the present case, this form could also be considered *nqtl* for 1st pers. sg. imperf.—for which see 743, n. 5. When he writes *takashshafnā* in line 18 (there without the independent pronoun or name), Maḍmūn might be referring to actions taken by him and others.}

⁶ To Joseph b. Abraham and Khalaf b. Isaac.

⁷ *B'ym 'dh*. For Arabic *bi'ayyām*^m 'idda. The writer knew that the *tanwīn* was expressed by an *alif*, but regarded it as a part of the following word. {For vestiges of the *tanwīn an*, see the discussion and references in the introduction to III, 47 (page 751).}

⁸ Abū 'Alī carried the letters with him to Aden.}

⁹ Arabic *yawm wa'ayyām*, either a mistake for *aw'ayyām* or meaning the same. {For *wa* = *aw*, cf. III, 32, line 15, *al-wāhid wal-ithnayn*.}

¹⁰ *Qad*, in the original, is detached from its verb. {See 351, n. 91.}

¹¹ Arabic *lsfr* (*li-safar*) for *llsfr*.} The Yemenites (and others) often omit *l* before the so-called sun-letters, because it is not pronounced; see also lines 6, 12, 17, and verso, line 3. However, there is no consistency in this matter; in our document that *l* is mostly written, as indeed Yemenites do today.

¹² Arabic *ma'ā*, as spoken and often written in Yemen today; see Goitein-Habshush, *Travels in Yemen*, 94 {Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 469}.

¹³ Arabic *thubbīta* or *thabata*, the former being preferable, as the word here is parallel to *kutība*, 'registered,' in line 11.

¹⁴ Five and a half *bahārs* for the two partners, two and three quarters for each; cf. III, 12, line 13. The partners had assets totaling 33 *mithqāls* (cf. {line 8 and} line 10), one half of which being 17½ (cf. III, 12, line 19). {These are the figures listed in those references, but obviously the arithmetic is incorrect. Perhaps something is missing in Goitein's note.}

¹⁵ Written *jamb*, as pronounced, for *janb*. Ibn Fayyūmī writes *janb*, verso, line 2.

insisted (10) on taking for it gold //as his freight// {alt. tr.: because he refused to take gold for its freight}.¹⁶ There remained to their credit 11 *mīhqāls*, (11) constituting one-third of their assets.

In the *shaffāra*, there was registered for them one *bahār* (12) less two *qīrāts*¹⁷ pepper, free of freight.¹⁸

Nothing was salvaged for Sheikh (13) Abraham b. Yishū, of eleven *bahārs* of ginger in the *shaffāra*, (14) except for two *bahārs*, no more. There remained, however, the merchandise, both ginger and pepper, (15) which had been in the ship. {lit., ‘The remainder of the merchandise¹⁹... was in the ship.’} In the *shaffāra*, there were salvaged only (16) three *bahārs* of pepper belonging exclusively to Abraham b. Yishū and one *bahār* less (17) two *qīrāts* for Sheikh Joseph b. Abraham and Sheikh Khalaf b. Isaac.

(18) I {alt. tr.: we} verified²⁰ this from the *shatmī*²¹ of the ship, which was kept by (19) Sheikh Makkī²² b. Abu ʿl-Hawl,²³ as the memos²⁴ in the (20) ship had been lost, and those that had been in the *shaffāra* also were lost.

(21) No ginger belonging to Sheikh Joseph or Sheikh Khalaf had been carried in the *shaffāra*, (22) none whatsoever.

This is what I testify, I, Maḍmūn b. Sālīm.

¹⁶ The freight used to be paid either at dispatch (cf. II, 16, lines 40–49; verso, lines 11–14) or on delivery (cf. III, 21, sec. B, lines 25 ff. {and here, verso, line 2}). In any case, before the ship sailed, it was stipulated from which item the freight was to be paid. As this document shows, the stipulation was of great practical importance: Ben Yijū, after having lost most of his consignment carried in the *shaffāra*, was freed from paying for the rest; see verso, line 3. {For Arabic *ghalab*, ‘refused,’ see 616, n. 8. On the prerogative of the *nākhudā* to choose between taking cash or part of the cargo for the freight charge, see Khalilieh, *Maritime Law*, 64.}

¹⁷ See III, 12, line 23.

¹⁸ Because it had been stipulated that the freight was to be paid from the ginger; see lines 8–10.

¹⁹ {Arabic *baqiyat* (*bqyt*)... Cf. verso, line 4, *al-bāqī*.

²⁰ Arabic *takashshafnā*. See the note to line 1.}

²¹ Manifest. See 325, n. 20, where the word is spelled *satmī*.

²² Concerning the writing of this rather rare name {as Makī}, see Brockelmann, *Literatur*, 1:515, n. 1, with the reference to Noeldeke, *Geschichte*, 336, n. 1. Brockelmann (*Supplementband*, 3:493 and 644) himself spells Makkī. {In the introduction to this document, Goitein corrected Makī to Makkī, but left Makī in the translation here. A search of *EI* shows three articles with Makī and 199 with Makkī. Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmāʿ*, 2441, and id., *Muʿjam*, 1661, registers only Makkī.}

²³ ‘The one experienced with terrors.’ {This *kunya*, lit., ‘Father of Terror,’ is the Arabic name of the sphinx of Gizeh. It is uncommon to find people who were called this. One example is the poet Abu ʿl-Hawl al-Ḥimyarī.

²⁴ Arabic *riqāʿ*. For this passage and the distinction between the *satmī* and *ruqʿa* (sg.), see page 131.}

[B. Abraham b. Fayyūmī's statement]

[Verso] (1) Abraham b. Ishū had eleven (2) *bahārs* of ginger, from which its freight was to be deducted.²⁵ Of these, (3) there were salvaged in the *shaffāra* two *bahārs*, free of freight. (4) The rest was in the ship 'Gazelle.'

Written by²⁶ Abraham (5) b. Fayyūmī, who is sincere (6) in affection for you.²⁷

²⁵ I.e., after arrival, see above, lines 8–10. Arabic *kharaja nawluhā min janbihā*, 'its freight was, or is, deducted.' However, if Ben Yijū already had paid freight, there would have been no point in stating, line 3, that the two *bahārs* salvaged were free of charge.

²⁶ {Arabic *wa-kataba*. For this signature formula, see 119, n. 135.}

²⁷ Arabic *ṣafī waddīhi*. See 621 and n. 42, for this rare phrase.

III, 23 *Fragment of Detailed Accounts Written by Abraham Ben Yijū*

India {apparently 1132–39, 1145–49}

TS NS J 10

These accounts were written in India, as they register Indian products shipped to Adenese merchants and products, from the West, such as tin and oil (see verso, lines 13–14), received from them. {The coinage is also Indian.}

However, in the fragmentary twenty lines of page one, Ben Yijū clearly lists receipt of pepper and of ‘smooth,’ heavy iron (the expression ‘heavy’ iron occurs only here, lines 8 and 13), for which freight had been paid by him, in a big and a small ship; cf. the introduction to III, 22. In various instances Ben Yijū gave orders to send commodities to Aden from ports other than the one where he resided; here he assembled merchandise to be shipped to Aden from his homeport. See also verso, line 1.

The other accounts, with the exception of the last, are better preserved and constitute a useful addition to our knowledge of the Indian trade. {For the dates, see the introduction to III, 21.}

Contents

- [A] Receipt of quantities of pepper and iron (lines 1–20).
 [B]–[G]. {See the translation.}
 [H] Fragmentary memo (traces of writing in the opposite direction) on the same sum of 146 (*ḥilī*) *mithqāls*, less two dirhems, which completed account A on the first page (lines 18–19).

Translation of Sections B–G

[B. Shipments to the Adenese merchants Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan and Joseph b. Abraham through a *nākhudā* Rayḥān]

[Margin] (1) [...] three bags of iron, [[3.]] 340 pieces, weighing 26 [*bahārs?*] (2) [...] which the *nā[khudā]* Rayḥān, God willing, [will deliver] to Sheikh M[āḍmūn...] after safe arrival. (3) [//...b]y the *nākhudā*// a small basket of r[ed] betel nuts, containing 21 p[ieces],¹ which he will

¹ It seems that in the basket of betel nuts some pieces of another product were carried. The betel nuts themselves were traded in thousands; see verso, line 4. {For *qit'a*, lit., ‘piece,’ used here and in the continuation for ‘unit,’ see 168, n. 1.}

de]liver to Sheikh [M]aḍmūn after safe arrival, please God. (4) [Likewise,] the *nākhudā* Rayḥān is carrying [...] baskets of betel nuts, which he will deliver to Sheikh Maḍmūn (5) (after) safe arrival, God willing. Likewise, the *nākhudā* Rayḥān is carrying a basket of copper² vessels manufactured for Sheikh Joseph (6) [b. Abraha]m, containing the following seven items: a round tray,³ a big table jug, a lamp stand, two small table jugs, (7) [a basin and] a ewer.⁴ Sheikh Joseph will take delivery of all this from the *nākhudā* Rayḥān, God willing.

[C. Shipments to the Adenese merchant Khalaf b. Isaac]

[Verso] (1) Also in the small ship,⁵ there is a basket carried by Maḍmūn b. Ṣalīm⁶ (2) of white betel nuts for Sheikh Khalaf b. Isaac, to be delivered to Sheikh Khalaf.

(3) Also in the small ship, there are two baskets, one of them large, [containing] (4) six {perhaps read: seven} thousand large (?) [nuts?],⁷ to be delivered by Ya‘q[ū]b b. Joseph.

[D. Sundry assets]

(5) Sheikh Abū ‘Alī Ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Miṣrī owes me, on d[elivery]⁸ (6) half a *fīlī mithqāl* and the price of [...]ty⁹ *dnḡly*¹⁰ of wheat.

(7) My lord Sheikh [‘Abd] al-Laṭīf, *may he be remembered with [b[lessings]* {read: [...] b.] Naṭīr (?),¹¹ owes me five *bahārs* of (8) ‘refurbished’ [iron], each *bahār* consisting of [...] *farāsila*.¹²

² {Arabic *ṣufr*. For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11.}

³ Arabic *ṣmīyya*. {See 209, n. 2.}

⁴ For the table jug, see 555, n. 13; the lamp stand, 559, margin; for basin and ewer, 558, line 25. As we see, the same merchant ordered mostly the same vessels.

⁵ Other items in the small ship are listed on recto, lines 5 ff. The two ships mentioned in this document had arrived from another port in India and called on Ben Yiḥū’s homeport before sailing to Aden. On larger and smaller ships sailing together, see 341, n. 26.

⁶ See III, 22, where this Adenese merchant is engaged in a similar mission.

⁷ As betel nuts are sent here, it is highly probable that the effaced word was *ḥabba*, literally ‘grain,’ but used for a unit of any commodity, especially as the vestiges of a ḥ are still visible. Cf. II, 14, lines 7–8, where 2,000 betel nuts were sent to Maḍmūn by Ben Yiḥū {and the word *ḥabba* is used; cf. 190, n. 27; I, III, 18, sec. C, line 11}.

⁸ Cf. line 15.

⁹ Any number between 20 and 90 ([...]m).

¹⁰ Obviously a local measure for wheat or for grains in general.

¹¹ {While the decipherment of the name is uncertain, Goitein’s reading [‘bd] *llyfz[l]* is unlikely, in my opinion. Furthermore, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, a Muslim name, would not normally be followed by the blessing *z’l*.}

¹² As there was a big and a small *bahār* (see II, 16, line 4), the numbers of *farāsila* in a *bahār* differed from one to another; cf. here recto, line 6.

[E. Credits due from the *nākhudā* Maḥrūz and another merchant]

(9) I gave to the *nākhudā* Ma[ḥr]ūz¹³ eight *mithqā*[ls also] (10) from my hand into his hand, 32 *mithqā*ls. [[[Likewise, owed me] (11) by Sheikh [Ab]ū ‘Alī the Little,¹⁴ as a favor for me {alt. tr.: my fee} a *mithqāl* //I collected in full//. T[otal...]]¹⁵

[F. Debts to Maḥrūz]

(12) Due the *nākhudā* Maḥrūz, customs duties [...] (13) a p[iece...] and customs duties for a piece of tin and customs duties for [...] (14) [[and the price of a water skin with oil, one third *fīlī* and one half *fāj*. (15) His credit: four dirhems less one *fāj* on delivery]].¹⁶

[G. Balance in favor of the *kārdār*'s brother]

[Margin] (1) Balance due Nair,¹⁷ the brother of the *kārdār*, three *fīliyā* dirhems, (2) the remainder of the price of the red and the white betel nuts.

¹³ About this Adense notable, see Introduction IIB1.

¹⁴ {Abū ‘Alī *al-ṣaghīr*. *Al-ṣaghīr* is hardly a standard byname and was added by Ben Yijū in his private accounts to distinguish the junior Abū ‘Alī from another, more senior one. Several Abū ‘Alīs were associated with Ben Yijū.}

¹⁵ The line is crossed out, because the money had been paid back. {For *khayritī* (?), ‘as a favor for me’ (Goitein wrote: ‘as a favor on my side,’ but I assume this is what he meant), Prof. Werner Diem suggested, in a private communication, to read *kīratī*, to be taken as a plene spelling of *kīratī* = *kīrā’ī* (cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:462a), ‘(for) my fee’.)

¹⁶ Crossed out, because delivery had taken place. {‘On delivery’ translates *bi-taslim al-shay* (after which the paper is torn), lit., ‘on delivery of the thing/merchandise.’ Perhaps restore *bi-taslim al-shay*[*kh*], ‘delivered by Shei[kh...].’}

¹⁷ See 639, n. 17. While the *kārdār* (see III, 18, sec. A, line 2) specialized in cardamom, his brother, as we see here, specialized in betel nuts.

III, 24 *Abraham Ben Yijū's Inventory of Baggage for Journey from India to the West*

India {probably 1140 or 1149}

TS NS 324, f. 114

Detailed list in Ben Yijū's hand of receptacles containing food and other commodities, as well as of certain objects taken with him (on a trip from India to the West).¹

{The list, almost complete, is written on the verso and blank spots of III, 8. According to the heading it enumerates 'the baskets, sacks, bottles, *fātiyas* and remaining baggage.' Actually at least twelve different kinds of containers and their contents are detailed. Fragile items were packed in hay or straw.² It is not clear whether Ben Yijū was on his final journey out of India to Aden or merely traveling there for an extended visit (cf. the list in III, 21, sec. B, which seems to have been written for a relatively short visit). The dates are given according to these two possibilities. The items enumerated presumably represent all of the provisions and accompanying baggage taken on the trip for him and probably for his whole household. The list contains foods; kitchenware, furnishings and other household goods; clothing; metals, viz., iron and copper, including items apparently manufactured in Ben Yijū's workshop, as well as other items. It is a valuable resource for the study of the material civilization and also includes many words, Arabic or Indian, not attested elsewhere, whose exact meaning is yet unclear.

¹ {Goitein's papers preserve this brief description of the document and a draft copy of the Judeo-Arabic text.

² For packing for shipping on the high seas, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:332 ff., where this document is not discussed.

Translation

(1) *In the name of the Lord.*³ Specification⁴ of the number of baskets,⁵ (2) sacks,⁶ bottles,⁷ *fātiyas*⁸ (3) and remaining⁹ baggage.¹⁰ These include: a large (4) sack of rice and a small sack of [...] (5) Also for the traveling provisions, four small (6) sacks and two baskets of rice, two baskets of wheat, a basket (7) of coconuts,¹¹ a thin basket and three *fātiyas* of [...], (8) a *fātiya* of *dādhī* (lichen), a *fātiya* of copper¹² and iron, (9) a *fātiya* of the fishermen's gear¹³ // a bundle¹⁴ // in which is iron (10) and *adbash*¹⁵ and a flat basket of palm leaves¹⁶ of bread, five *marīnas*¹⁷ of vinegar,¹⁸ (11) also a bamboo *fātiya*¹⁹

³ Hebrew *beshēm yy*. This form of the invocation written over documents, rather than *bi-shmākh rahmānā*, 'in Your name, O Merciful,' for example, is most rare. See Friedman, *JMP*, 1:91–92.

⁴ Arabic *ma'rifā*, used here in the same sense as *ta'rif*.

⁵ Arabic *zanābil* (sg. *zanbil*). See 562, n. 57.

⁶ Arabic *jūniya*, *jawānī*. See 343, n. 39.

⁷ Arabic *qanānī* (sg. *qinnīna*). See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:584, n. 48 (there: flask). In II, 26, line 9, III, 10, line 44, empty *qanīnas* were shipped from Aden to Ben Yijū in India. Often they were sent to him full, usually holding sugar, raisins or almonds.

⁸ Arabic *fātiya*, pl. *fawāti*. I have not found this word, which appears several times in the following lines, in dictionaries. It obviously is a kind of basket or chest; cf. line 11: 'a bamboo *fātiya*.'

⁹ Arabic *baqāya* = *baqāyā* (pl.).

¹⁰ Arabic *dabash*. Cf. I, 22, line 19 and 228, n. 9.

¹¹ Arabic *nārjīn* (cf. *nārjīl*), also below, line 39. As Dr. Amir Ashur informed me the definition (*jawz Hindī*) is from <http://www.lakii.com/cookportal/index.php?doWhat=showcook&cookid=835> (a Saudi cooking forum, accessed March 13, 2007).

¹² Arabic *ṣufr*. For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11.

¹³ 'Gear' translates *matā'*, which also expresses the construct (see Blau, *Grammar*, 159; III, 25, line 5; III, 48, line 28); accordingly, 'a fishermen's *fātiya*' is also possible.

¹⁴ Arabic *ṣīmād* = *ṣimād*, 'head kerchief,' from which I understand a cloth for tying a bundle. But the word in the text resembles more *ṣīmār*, which I have not found in dictionaries, apparently a term for some type of container.

¹⁵ Meaning unknown. *Dabash*, here, in line 3 translated 'baggage,' also means 'small items.' Perhaps *adbash* = *a-dabash* (= *al-dabash*), with assimilation of *l* before the solar letter *d*; alternatively it could be a defective spelling of *adbāsh* (sg. *dabash*).

¹⁶ Arabic *qartāla*. Cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:331a.

¹⁷ Arabic *marānī*, apparently the plural of *marīna*, which also does not appear in dictionaries. See 425, n. 54, where the dual appears for containers for oil (cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:426, n. 28).

¹⁸ Arabic *khall*.

¹⁹ Arabic *fātiya khayzurān*. In TS 10 J 16, f. 3v, line 17, a letter written about a century later, we find a bamboo *fātiya*, covered with a skin, mentioned in connection with Judge Perahyā, a great-grandson of Abraham Ben Yijū. Vessels made of *khayzurān* (also in II, 48, lines 10, 19), were considered expensive. So Maimonides, *Commentary to Mishnah*, 2:372: 'expensive vessels, such as receptacles made of skins and bamboo (*khayzurān*) vessels' (my translation). See Lane, *Dictionary*, 732b; Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 141; Sadan, *Mobilier*, 153. Also see 565–66, n. 12.

of locks²⁰ and a basket (12) and a separate meal carrier²¹ in straw, a table jug²² (13) separate in straw, a basket of manufactured copper²³ items, (14) another basket of manufactured copper items, another basket (15) of manufactured copper items, large,²⁴ three small baskets (16) iro[n (?)] and small items,²⁵ a small basket of glasses,²⁶ two *fātiyas* (17) of glasses, two stone frying pans in hay,²⁷ two stone (18) pots,²⁸ a small basket of china, four jars²⁹ filled with (19) oil³⁰ and sour juice,³¹ a bottle of wine³² a trap (20) for mice,³³ six bottles of oil, a *fātiya* of wood, (21) six empty³⁴ bottles, a bottle of soap (*ṣābūn*), (22) two earthenware vessels³⁵ of lemon³⁶ and ginger, five water skins³⁷ of mango,³⁸ (23) two water skins of (pickled) fish,³⁹ two water skins of lemon, five empty water skins, (24) the small basket of bread, a large round tray,⁴⁰ three *mrbs*⁴¹ and a large (25) *mr̄b*. Of the *qaṣʿa-*

²⁰ For importing Indian locks to Yemen, see 313, n. 7.

²¹ Arabic *ḥāmil*. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:141 (“a contrivance consisting of several compartments and a handle in which various warm dishes could be brought home at a time”), 148, 390, 394. According to al-Qaddūmi, *Gifts*, 422: “a stand (for a pot or a jar).”

²² See 555, n. 13.

²³ Arabic *naḥās*. For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11.

²⁴ I am not sure whether the adjective modifies the preceding ‘basket’ or the ‘copper items.’

²⁵ Arabic *ḥawāʾij*. For the different meanings of this word as cited in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, see Diem, *Dictionary*, 50.

²⁶ Arabic *salla jazāj* (= *zajāj*; Goitein’s note).

²⁷ Arabic *ḥashīsh*.

²⁸ Arabic *burma*.

²⁹ Arabic *raṭālī* (or *raṭālā*), sg. *raṭliya*; see 345, n. 51.

³⁰ Arabic *salīṭ*. Cf. III, 8, line 12.

³¹ Arabic *ḥumūḍa*. Cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:323.

³² Arabic *nabīdh*.

³³ Arabic *miṣyada li-ʿl-firān*. While I am not familiar with other evidence from the Geniza for the use of mousetraps, the translation, suggested by Prof. Joel Kraemer, is beyond question, and Prof. Joseph Sadan informs me that mousetraps in fact appear in medieval Arabic sources. The kitchen, of course, is where the mice were most annoying, and this explains why this item appears here in the list.

³⁴ Arabic *farigh*; cf. line 23 (*f-r-gh* or *f-r-j* could be some unidentified commodity, however).

³⁵ Arabic *barniyya*.

³⁶ Probably pickled lemon. Cf. III, 8, line 4: *lim makkūs*.

³⁷ Arabic *jaḥla*.

³⁸ Arabic *ʿanbā*. Cf. III, 3, line 4.

³⁹ Cf. III, 8, lines 6, 9.

⁴⁰ Arabic *ṭabaq* can denote a cover, round tray, large dish, bowl (‘saucer,’ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:150; cf. Sadan, *Mobilier*, 86, n. 323). The context suggests the definition given by Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 300: ‘flat wicker-tray . . . used for serving bread.’

⁴¹ Vocalization and meaning unknown. It is presumably a serving utensil. Hava, *Dictionary*, 236, defines *marabb* ‘gatherer.’ *Mirabba* means ‘preserved fruit.’ Cf. Lane, *Dictionary*, 1007.

bowls:⁴² two *qaṣʿa*-bowls, also a large (26) *qaṣʿa*-bowl, a new *qaṣʿa*-bowl and two old *qaṣʿa*-bowls. (27) And of the *fāṭiyas*: four *fāṭiyas* of clothing. (28) Two earthenware vessels of melted butter.⁴³ Four legs for a bedstead.⁴⁴ Two old (29) *qaṣʿa*-bowls, four new *qaṣʿa*-bowls, three bundles⁴⁵ of pots.⁴⁶ (30) An unfinished door of a cabin.⁴⁷ (31) [top] With the *nākhudā* Abu ʿl-Sh[...] a *mahbal*,⁴⁸ (32) a *mawjah*⁴⁹ and four *qaṣʿa*-bowls. (33) [upside down][...] boards (of teak wood)⁵⁰ [for] the cabin, and three boards for bedsteads,⁵¹ (34) four rods and a stool⁵² board, (35) and a [...] in which are small items. (36) [recto top] Of the copper (*ṣufr*): a table jug, a frying pan, a basin and ewer, (37) three *tālīm*s;⁵³ twenty carpets;⁵⁴ an iron lamp, (38) [recto margin] two strips of leather,⁵⁵ [...] *farāsila* [...], (39) a steel comb (?)⁵⁶ for the coconuts, seven [...], a *mīzār*⁵⁷ [...] six [...] with the *nākhudā* Abu ʿl-Faraj.}⁵⁸

⁴² About these bowls, see 326, n. 33.

⁴³ On the consumption of *samn* (ghee), see 650, n. 10.

⁴⁴ For the bedstead, *sarīr* (also below, line 33), see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:113 (where it is noted that it went out of fashion during the eleventh century), 114, 379, nn. 36, 37. *Sarīr* can also be a sofa or elevated seat. For its different meanings and a detailed description, see Sadan, *Mobilier*, 32–51 (*arjul*, ‘legs,’ *ib.*, 75).

⁴⁵ Arabic *barākhīs*, sg. *barkhas*. See Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 25.

⁴⁶ Arabic *burām*, sg. *burma*. See above, line 18; II, 24v, line 17; III, 20, line 6. Wehr, *Dictionary*, 55: ‘earthenware pot’; Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 28: ‘hanging lamp.’

⁴⁷ Arabic *bilij*. Cf. below, line 33 and 577, n. 28.

⁴⁸ Meaning unknown.

⁴⁹ Arabic *mujh*. Perhaps the same as *mōja* in III, 12, line 39, where it is also coupled with *qaṣʿa*-bowls (as in the continuation here); see 619, n. 31.

⁵⁰ See 347, n. 69.

⁵¹ Arabic *sirwar*, sg. *sarīr*. See Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 219, and above, line 28.

⁵² For the *kursī*, see note to III, 4, line 3.

⁵³ The singular *tʿlm*, whose meaning is unknown, appears in III, 3, line 12.

⁵⁴ Arabic *busuṭ*.

⁵⁵ Arabic *siratayn*.

⁵⁶ Arabic *mīhakk*/*maḥakk*. Perhaps translate ‘shining brush’; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:309a; Blau, *Dictionary*, 138 (*mīhukka*).

⁵⁷ See above, line 7.

⁵⁸ A *mīzār* is a ‘wrap’; see Diem, *Dictionary*, 3. But according to Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 7, it is a “small sharp stone placed behind facing stones to keep the latter in position and straight,” which may fit the context here.}

III, 25 *Account written by Abraham Ben Yijū: Compensation to Khalaf b. Isaac and Joseph b. Abraham*

Yemen, 1149 or later {1149–52}

TS 8.19

The account was written by Ben Yijū on III, 14v. For a description of the manuscript, see the introduction to III, 12–14. Lines 1–12 are written in large bold letters, with much space between the lines. The postscript in lines 13–17 is much more compressed and irregular.

The background might be reconstructed as follows: Although III, 14 was sent from Aden to India, there can be no doubt that this account, written on the verso of that letter, was made in Yemen, almost certainly in Zabīd, whose seaport was Ghulayfiqa. A ship carrying a cargo of pepper and cardamom for the two Adenese merchants Khalaf b. Isaac and Joseph b. Abraham, for which Ben Yijū was responsible, as well as a load of iron for the latter, foundered off Ghulayfiqa. The pepper and cardamom were lost, the iron, or at least the part specified here, was salvaged. The Adenese merchants had to be compensated. This was done not with money, but in kind, probably because merchandise delivered promised additional profit.

Evidently, the first four *bahārs* had been salvaged and sent on to Aden, while an additional one, later salvaged, remained in Ghulayfiqa, when Ben Yijū made the account.

As the text is somewhat involved, a table showing the account in full is given first.

Note: one *bahār* (abridged *b.*) = 300 *raṭl* (pound abr. *r.*), *mithqāl*, abr. *m.*

Due Khalaf, for pepper	1 <i>b.</i>	14 <i>r.</i> of iron
For cardamom 2 <i>m.</i> worth		120 <i>r.</i>
<hr/>		
Khalaf, total	1 <i>b.</i>	134 <i>r.</i>
Due Joseph, for pepper	1 <i>b.</i>	75 <i>r.</i>
For cardamom 4 <i>m.</i> worth		240 <i>r.</i>
<hr/>		
Joseph, total	2 <i>b.</i>	15 <i>r.</i>
<hr/>		
Total, Khalaf and Joseph	3 <i>b.</i>	149 <i>r.</i> of iron,
worth 17½ <i>m.</i>		
Balance for Ben Yijū	1 <i>b.</i>	151 <i>r.</i>
<hr/>		
Total	5 <i>b.</i>	

This was the account, not what actually had been sent to Aden, for only four, not five *bahārs* had been available. Thus, each of the three merchants got one-fifth less the sums calculated above. As stated in the postscript, the fifth due them from the *bahār* of iron remaining in Ghulayfiqa amounted to the following sums:

Khalaf	87 <i>r.</i>
Isaac	123 <i>r.</i>
Ben Yijū	90 <i>r.</i>
<hr/>	
Total	300 <i>r.</i> = 1 <i>b.</i>

From lines 6 and 11, it is evident that a *bahār* iron was worth five *mithqāls*. The account is made not in local Malikī dinars, but in Egyptian *mithqāls*, probably because the merchandise was destined for Egypt.

No quantities of the lost goods are given; the value is indicated only for the cardamom, not for the pepper. However, as the price of the iron given in compensation for the lost goods is known, it is simple to find the value of the pepper: for Khalaf, five and a quarter *mithqāls* and for Joseph, six and a quarter *mithqāls*. Most probably, this was not the total value of the goods sent, but only the portion that Ben Yijū, according to the agreement, had to refund.

{Since III, 14 was written almost certainly in 1146, Ben Yijū evidently wrote III, 25 on the verso of that letter, after he had left India for good and arrived in Yemen in 1149.}

Translation

(1) For the value of the pepper, which had been in Ghulayfiqa, (2) for Sheikh Khalaf b. Isaac from the four *bahārs* of Kūfī iron¹ which had been (3) in the new ship of Ibn al-Muqaddam that had perished²—one *bahār* //Kūfī// iron (4) and 14 pounds For the value of the pepper which had been in Ghulayfiqa, for Sheikh Joseph (5) b. Ibrāhīm: one and a quarter *bahārs* //Kūfī iron// (which had been) in Ibn al-Muqaddam³

¹ {Kūfī iron is also mentioned in III, 9, line 12. For the types of iron in the India trade, see 315, n. 17.}

² The old ship of the same man also foundered; see III, 9, line 13. {For (Ibn) al-Muqaddam and his ships, see page 147.}

³ The construct is expressed by *matāʿ*; see 662, n. 13.

new ship (6) that had perished. For him also, for four *mithqāls*, the value of the cardamom, 240 (7) pounds. Total: two *bahārs* and 15 pounds. (8) For Sheikh Khalaf, also for two *mithqāls*, the value of the cardamom, 120 pounds of the (9) Kūfī iron. Total for him: one *bahār* and 134 pounds.

(10) This makes the total of that iron for both: three and a half *bahārs* (11) less one pound, valued at $17\frac{1}{2}$ *mithqāls*. For me, exclusively mine:⁴ (12) one and a half *bahārs* and one pound. There remains delayed one *bahār*, to be distributed between all of us.

(13) Sent: 1,200 pounds (of iron). Delayed: 300 pounds (15) due Sheikh Joseph from the delayed // *bahār* of // iron: 123 pounds, (15) and due Sheikh Khalaf 87 pounds; total: 210 pounds, and for me exclusively 90 (16) pounds. Total: 300 pounds.

⁴ Arabic *wa-lī anā li-khāṣṣatī*, with triple emphasis. For *khāṣṣa*, see 285, n. 9.}

III, 26 *Calendar for 1461 E.D. (1149/50 C.E.)*

Yemen, 1149/50

TS 12.320

A calendar written by Ben Yijū for the year September 1149–September 1150, which seems to indicate that, as before in India and later in Egypt, he planned to organize in Yemen a private service led by him. Additional calendars written by Ben Yijū are found in II, 16*v* and III, 51.

{This calendar is written on the blank space between the end of the text and the address on III, 1*v*. It appears to be a simple, straightforward calendar, listing the days on which months begin and on which occur festivals and fast days. He wrote similar calendars for the preceding three years, 1458–60 E.D. on II, 16*v*. The very beginning of a calendar for 1461 is preserved there as well and was probably a rough copy. I see no indication in the calendars for these four years that Ben Yijū intended them for anything but his personal use. Contrariwise, in III, 51, he listed monthly contributions to a synagogue. I am also unaware of evidence for a private prayer service he led in India. On his heading a congregation in Yemen, see the introduction to III, 31; for Egypt, the introduction to III, 41 and III, 51.}

III, 27 *Sundry Accounts Written by Abraham Ben Yijū*

{Yemen, apparently 1140–44, 1149–1152}

TS 12.235

Written on verso of III, 9. See the description of the manuscript there. The accounts were written in three different places on the blank space between the end of the letter in III, 9 and its address:

- A) Twelve lines, about 11 cm long, on the left side of the paper, beneath the address and in the same direction. Large bold letters; the beginning of the lines are almost completely illegible, owing to damage by water or holes in the paper. Between lines 10 and 11, another line, written in smaller letters, is inserted.
- B) At an angle of ninety degrees to the first 4–6 lines in A, thirteen lines of 2–4 cm are written in small letters on the right side of the page. They are effaced to such a degree that even an ultraviolet photograph could bring out only single, incoherent words. {The third line before the end includes “Sheikh Sa‘īd al-‘Aṭṭār” (Perfumer/Druggist).}
- C) Beneath B, there are other accounts written in the same direction as A, of which, owing to their bad state of preservation, even the number of lines could not be made out. The ends of three lines of C are visible beneath A.

Whether these accounts were written in India or in Yemen will be ascertained after one or more of the smaller coins mentioned here is identified. As pointed out in note 2, the Indian coins usually listed by Ben Yijū do not occur here. I am inclined to assume that these accounts were written in Yemen.

Despite its poor state of preservation, the document is not without interest. We learn about the daily life of the Maghrebis in Yemen (or India), as well as about smaller coins used there at that time. {In the notes evidence is adduced to the likelihood that the account was written in Yemen. The dates are those of Ben Yijū’s likely stays in Yemen; see the introduction to III, 21 (page 648).}

Translation

[A]

(1) [[Seven¹ dirhems² due from Sheikh Abū Saʿd,³ the rest of the dinar.⁴
 (2) [...] two Maṣṣūrī dirhems and two others, one Ḥusaynī, (3) and
 the second Aḥmadī. Total: three dirhems⁵ and two *fulūs*. He paid me
 one (4) Ḥusaynī dirhem in five *fulūs*. Total: four dirhems less one *fals*.
 (5) [...] dirhems and one *fals*. His credit: one dirhem for *dādḥī* (lichen).⁶
 (6) [...] two [dir]hems and one *fals*. He owes the owner of the wax⁷ (7)
 [...] Total: three dirhems and six *fulūs*. (8) [...] and four *fulūs*. Balance:
 two dirhems and two *fulūs*.] (9) [...] dirhems. He received five dirhems
 and the worth of (10) [...] one *fals* [...] a quarter *raṭl* of cumin;⁸ price
 six *fulūs*; // [...] His debit: one Aḥmadī dirhem; balance in his favor: one

¹ Lines 1–8 are deleted by two intersecting strokes—a sign that these accounts had been settled.

² Four types of dirhems are mentioned here: (1) Not specified. This was perhaps the Indian standard coin; cf. I, 2, line 5; I, 6, lines 8–9 (where about fifteen Nahrwāra dirhems correspond to one Egyptian dinar); I, 33, lines 1–5. See also III, 18, sec. B, lines 3–5. (2–4) Local dirhems, called Maṣṣūrī, Ḥusaynī, and Aḥmadī, respectively, which were of a lower value than the standard dirhem; see lines 2–3. The dirhem seems to be divided into eight copper coins called *fals* {pl. *fulūs*} (see Udovitch, “Fals”); for in lines 3–4, 3 dirhems, 2 *fulūs* + 5 *fulūs* = 4 dirhems, less 1 *fals*. Likewise, in lines 9–10 mention is made of 1 + 6 *fulūs* assets, with one *fals* remaining as a liability, totaling one Aḥmadī dirhem. When it is said in lines 11–12 that to cover a debt totaling seven *fulūs* the writer gave one dirhem, this implies that the dirhem contained approximately that number of copper coins. Ben Yijū did not live in the same locality when writing this account as he did when writing III, 18, since the local coins here seem to be different. {For Aḥmadī coins, see Lowick, “Ṣanʿā,” 3. On Maṣṣūrī dirhems, see id., “Dirham.” The Imām al-Maṣṣūr is believed to have issued the Maṣṣūrī dirhem in 601 A.H. (1204/5 C.E.), and the earliest preserved Maṣṣūrī dirhem is from that year! Our document attests an earlier Yemenite (?) Maṣṣūrī dirhem. The two aforementioned articles are reprinted in Lowick, *Coinage*, to which my attention was called by D. Wasserstein.}

³ This name was rather common among Jews. A Sheikh Abū Saʿd was one of Ben Yijū’s acquaintances in India (II, 55*v*, line 9), another (?) contributed oil to his synagogue (III, 51, lines 1, 5 and 7). {The popularity of the name is presumably because of its meaning, ‘Fortunate.’ In II, 55*v*, line 9, to be more precise, Abū Saʿd was an acquaintance of Maḥrūz b. Jacob, for whom Ben Yijū wrote that letter. Debts owed the *nākhudā* Saʿd are mentioned by Ben Yijū in III, 18, sec. C, lines 1 and 3a; a Yemenite acquaintance of his, named Abū Saʿd b. Nethanel, is mentioned in III, 31, lines 7–8.}

⁴ Ben Yijū had given Abū Saʿd a dinar; the latter had paid back probably eight dirhems and still owed seven.

⁵ The local dirhems were of a lower exchange rate than the standard dirhem.

⁶ See 639, n. 18.

⁷ *Asl*. See III, 18, sec. C, line 5; III, 19, line 10. {Also see the introduction to III, 19.

⁸ The cumin also points to the Yemenite provenance of this document; see 585.

fals.// (11) [...] His credit: one *fals* for radish;⁹ another *fals* for radish; another for the tailor.¹⁰ (12) His credit: three *fulūs* for soap. Total: seven *fulūs*. I {add: personally}¹¹ paid him one dirhem.

[C]

(1) The price of [...] and Sheikh ʿAlī (or Eli) al-Baṣṣāṭ¹² is holding one dirhem as an advance for the *niṣāfi*.¹³ (2) [...] five and a half dirhems. The Kōhēn¹⁴ owes me: one dinar and his son Joseph is holding (3) [...] two dinars [...] (4) {add: Sheikh Sulaymān's¹⁵ debit—one and a half dinars}, three dirhems and one *raṭl* of sugar candy.¹⁶

⁹ For the medicinal faculties of radish (Arabic *fujl*), see Lev & Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 194.}

¹⁰ Probably a factotum who did various errands for Ben Yijū.

¹¹ {Arabic *min yadī*, lit., 'from my hand.'}

¹² The reading is clear; ṣ stands for *s* (regressive phonetic assimilation). The word may mean a carpet maker (from *bisāl*, carpet)—a form which, however, is not to be found in the dictionaries—or perhaps peddler, like *bisāṭī*, (cf. Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 185, Wahrmond, *Dictionary*, 215). {Pimenta, *Dictionary*, 31, defines *biṣāṭ*, 'trousers decorated with silver threads.' The alternate transliterations, ʿAlī or Eli, are because it is not clear whether the Arabic or Hebrew name is intended.}

¹³ Half a Malikī dinar and the currency of Dhū Jibla, then the capital of Yemen {see II, 20, line 34}.

¹⁴ The Kōhēn is also mentioned in sec. B.

¹⁵ {A number of Sulaymāns appear in Ben Yijū's papers: III, 18, sec. B, line 7; III, 29, line 12; III, 41, lines 26–35.}

¹⁶ This (Arabic *ḡānīd*) type was common in India, while sugar proper was imported. {Cf. Pimenta, *Dictionary*, 364.}

III, 28 *Account by Abraham Ben Yijū of Indian Products Sold for Another Merchant*

Aden {ca. 1141–44}

ENA NS 48, f. 2¹

This draft, in Ben Yijū's hand, is written on the back of a letter addressed to him (II, 27).² The neat copy was certainly sent to the merchant for whom the transaction was made (see line 8), while the draft went with Ben Yijū's other papers to Cairo and finally to the Geniza.

Evidently Ben Yijū had brought pepper, iron, and 'eggs' to Aden on one of his visits to that port from India—perhaps in the early 1140's (see page 648)—and sold them for a merchant out in India. The currency is the Adenese Malīkī dinar (line 3), and Indian products are sold; accordingly, we must be here in Aden. Another quantity of pepper (restored; see line 10) was sent by the same merchant from a port (other than the one from which Ben Yijū embarked), namely Kūlam (Quilon, line 11); we may certainly assume that Ben Yijū was requested to deal with that consignment as well.

Here, the same three commodities, which according to III, 21, sec. A arrived in Aden, are sold; but since the quantities are entirely different, another consignment must be intended. There is nothing unusual in finding two different merchants sending the same kind of wares in the same boat with the same trusted individual.

The prices obtained here by Ben Yijū were mediocre. For two sales of pepper, he secured 25 and 28½ Malīkī dinars respectively (lines 1 and 11). In a good year, as much as 37 dinars were fetched in Aden for a *bahār*; see II, 20, line 20 and IV, 1, lines 5 and 7 {38 dinars: IV, 15–II, 42, line 27}. For 'refurbished' iron, he received 17–18 dinars, while in II, 14v, lines 5–7, the same variety was sold for 20 dinars {21 dinars: II, 16, line 18}. Of the 'eggs,' Ben Yijū himself writes that they obtained a poor price. For three *bahārs* and 126 pounds (a small *bahār* had 250 pounds), he realized only 99 dinars, about 28.3 dinars per *bahār*. In III, 21, sec. A, line 6, a *bahār* cost, on arrival, 16 *mithqāls*, a *mithqāl* then worth 2½ dinars. Thus, a *bahār* of 'eggs' was worth 40 dinars and was sold here at a considerable loss. This is obviously the meaning of the Arabic word

¹ {The manuscript was formerly listed 'JTS Geniza Misc. 2,' which number alone appears in Goitein's writings.

² In Goitein, "Portrait," 461, n. 61, this account was mistakenly described as written on verso of one of the manuscripts of II, 13–15.}

kāsīd, ‘selling badly,’ used here in line 6. See also the note to line 8.

As far as we can see, there is a slight error in the arithmetic, a rare phenomenon in the accounts of the India merchants: Ben Yijū sold:

pepper	for	600 <i>d.</i>
iron		220
‘eggs’		99
		919 <i>d.</i>

Ben Yijū, however, states that the total was 927. As the numbers are written in words, there can be no mistake in the reading. I suppose Ben Yijū omitted a number, perhaps while stating the total for the iron, which, in any case, cannot be 220 according to the details given by him (rather less).

{The 24 small *bahārs* of pepper, sold at 25 dinars each, are probably the same 24 *bahārs* mentioned in III, 28a; see there. Accordingly, III, 28 was probably written one year after III, 28a. See there for the date.}

Translation

(1) [...] ³ I sold the pepper for 25 dinars, (2) which makes, for 24 *bahārs* of small measure, 600 (3) Malikī ⁴ dinars; the ‘refurbished’ iron, 12½ *bahārs* (4) and 30 pounds; of these, two *bahārs* for 18 (5) and the rest for 17 dinars. ⁵ Proceeds: 220 (6) dinars. ⁶ The ‘eggs’ were selling badly. I sold (7) a quantity {lit., ‘weight’} of three *bahārs* and 126 pounds, after the weighing ⁷ (8) and the defect, ⁸ for the price of 99 dinars.

³ The document opens with two illegible letters, most probably *br*, an abbreviation of *bi-shimākh raḥmānā*, ‘In Your name, O Merciful.’

⁴ The spelling of the final *a* in *malakiya* with *alif* instead of *he* occurs again in *abhira*, line 7, and is common with Ben Yijū and other Maghrebi writers. {Ben Yijū often spells *tā marbūṭa* with *alif*; see 332, n. 16.}

⁵ These merchants mention the higher price first (18, 17 and not, as we would say: 17, 18).

⁶ {According to my calculation the iron should have sold for 216.54 dinars!}

⁷ The first letter in the original is not sure, and it is difficult to see how weighing could influence the price. {See next note.}

⁸ Arabic *al-qilla*; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:387a. It seems that the very low price was due, in addition to the general slump in the market, to some defect, known, of course, to the sender. {Perhaps translate ‘decrease.’ In any event, Ben Yijū seems to be referring here to the weight rather than the price (see preceding note): I sold what weighed three *bahārs* and 126 pounds—after the weighing and decrease. Sometimes at sale the weight was decreased. Such seems to be registered in II, 49*v*, line 7; see II, 23, line 40 and 344, n. 46.

His total credit: (9) 927 dinars.

(10) He owes for the rest of the freight⁹ of the pepper 30 *ḥil*[*īs*. Due
him for pepper]¹⁰ (11) from Kūlam priced at 28½ [...]

⁹ The freight had been paid at dispatch, but not in full.}

¹⁰ I restored 'pepper', since approximately the same price as that mentioned for this commodity in line 1 is obtained here. {For *ḥil*, see III, 18, sec. A, line 11 and 637, n. 7.}

{III, 28a *Account of a Merchant in India Written by Abraham Ben Yijū*

Yemen, ca. 1140–43

TS 8 J 7, f. 23

For a description of the paper, see above III, 2.

The document contains a final draft or a copy of an import-export account of a merchant in India, written by his business associate in Aden (or elsewhere in Yemen), the text of which was undoubtedly incorporated in a letter. The writer can be identified as Ben Yijū both by his handwriting (at its best) and by the very fact that the account is written on the blank space of the verso of III, 2, a memorandum sent from Aden to Ben Yijū in India. Prof. Goitein inadvertently failed to copy the two texts on TS 8 J 7, f. 23^v (four lines continuing III, 2 and III, 28a), and subsequently he did not include the present document in the India Book.

The nature of the text is exceptionally clear from the commodities mentioned in it. Here Ben Yijū serves as the agent in Aden (or elsewhere in Yemen) of a Jewish merchant who was residing in India. Ben Yijū obviously took with him the paper, on which he later wrote this account, when he traveled back from India to Aden; compare III, 25.

The text is intact, and with the exception of a few words can be deciphered with certainty in its entirety. The first and main item in the account is a large shipment of pepper, 60 *bahārs* of small measure. Of these Ben Yijū sold 36 *bahārs* at 24 dinars each and stored 24 *bahārs*, per instructions of his associate, so that they could later be shipped elsewhere (the destination is not indicated, and here the text is discontinued). It stands to reason that this is the same pepper, 24 *bahārs* of small measure, sold by Ben Yijū at 25 Malikī (Adenese) dinars each, for an associate in India according to III, 28. Accordingly, we can assume that III, 28a precedes III, 28, probably by one year. During this period, Ben Yijū was instructed by his business associate to sell the remaining 24 *bahārs* in Aden, and they brought a slightly higher price than the first quantity of 36 bales.

Like Ben Yijū, his correspondent engaged in India in both the import-export business and the manufacture of bronze vessels. While it is possible that he continued the work in Ben Yijū's bronze factory in the latter's absence, a separate factory could be intended as well. The account contains new data, not found in other India Book texts, such as the export of Qal'ī 'lead' from India to Aden and the name of an otherwise unknown *nākhudā*, and also corroborates and complements data attested in other manuscripts.

The account can be summarized as follows:

<i>Credits (Sales)</i>		<i>Debits (Expenses; commodities sent)</i>	
Pepper, 36 small <i>bahārs</i>	864 ¹	Pepper, customs on 60 <i>bahārs</i>	425
Fee for weigher and broker	<u>-4</u>	Basket of [...]	6 ^{1/2}
	860		
Qal'i 'lead' (tin)	7	Registration fee	5
Copper (<i>ṣufr</i>), 50 pounds	23	Discount	<u>-6^{1/2}</u>
			430
		(Scrap) copper, 20 pieces, 3 <i>bahārs</i>	300
		Exit tolls and packing	4
		40 Egyptian <i>mithqāls</i>	96
		Old, good dinars	60
Total	890	Total	890

The date of the account can be calculated by the following data. It was written on the verso of III, 2, a letter from ca. 1134–37. Abū Zikrī Ibn al-Shamī, with whom Ben Yijū sent goods and cash from Yemen to India (here, lines 13–14, 18), apparently drowned on a later journey on that same route, in 1146, when traveling on a ship, on which goods and letters were being shipped to Ben Yijū (III, 15, lines 22–24). Accordingly, III, 28a, was written when Ben Yijū was in Yemen ca. 1140–44 (see page 648), rather than during his stay of 1149–52. Since he was still in Yemen when he wrote III, 28, a year later, III, 28a, must have been written (ca.) 1140–43.

Translation

[A. Credits: sale of commodities sent from India]

(1) With the assistance of God, the Exalted, I have sold for you ('him'), from the pepper that had arrived, namely sixty (2) *bahārs* of small measure,²

¹ {All prices are given in (Malikī) dinars.

² A *bahār* of small measure contained 250 pounds, of large measure 300; see 322, n. 4.

thirty-six *bahārs*, at twenty-four dinars per *bahār*: (3) Proceeds: eight hundred and sixty-four dinars. Expenditures for (4) the weigher and broker:³ four dinars. Balance: eight hundred and sixty dinars. Total (5) weight of the Qal'ī 'lead':⁴ twenty-nine pounds, the price seven dinars. Proceeds to your credit from (6) the fifty pounds of copper,⁵ which were brought by the *nākhudā* Najīb al-Kharazī:⁶ (7) twenty-three dinars. Sum total: eight hundred and ninety dinars.

[B. Debits: customs and other fees; commodities sent to India]

Your debit: The customs for (8) the [sixt]y *bahārs* of pepper—four hundred and tw[enty-f]ive dinars.⁷ The price of a basket (?) of (9) [. . .], six and a half dinars; the fee for the manifest—five dinars.⁸ Total: four hundred, thirty-six (10) and a half dinars. My (your servant's) discount⁹—six and a half dinars. Balance of customs—four (11) hundred and thirty.

There were forwarded to your excellency exclusively,¹⁰ in the large ship, together with (12) 'Double Wages (?)'¹¹ Abu 'l-Faraj [[a bag of Egyptian gold]] a bag of scrap¹² copper, numbering 20 (13) pieces, the weight a *bahār* and a half. In the small ship¹³ together with the *nākhudā* Abū (14) Zikrī Ibn al-Shāmī,¹⁴ pieces of copper, 20 pieces, the weight a *bahār* and

³ On the brokerage payment (*dilāla*), see Smith, *Studies*, chap. 10, 134.

⁴ For this term for tin and the importance of our document for the identification of the toponym Qal'a, see 558, n. 27.

⁵ Arabic *ṣufr* (also lines 12, 14). For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11.

⁶ The *nākhudā* Najīb is apparently not mentioned elsewhere in the India Book papers. His family name Kharazī means 'bead maker,' a common occupation; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:416, n. 2. Credit is given here for bronze vessels manufactured in India.

⁷ The *'ashūr* ('*ushūr*'), was slightly more than seven dinars for a small *bahār* of pepper. Cf. 344, n. 45.

⁸ For the *satmī*, see 325, n. 20. The fee noted there was approximately 0.25%. If we calculate the value of 60 *bahārs* of pepper at 24 dinars per *bahār*, its total value would be 1,440 dinars, and here the fee for registering it in the manifest approximately 0.347%.

⁹ Arabic *musāmaha*; see 331, n. 10. Here Ben Yijū received a discount, in which the expenses were rounded off to the lower tens.

¹⁰ Arabic *al-khāssa*. See 285, n. 9.

¹¹ The word, which appears here and in line 16, seems to be a nickname of Abu 'l-Faraj, but the reading 'l-*kr'yyn* is not certain (especially the letters *kr*), and its vocalization (*al-kirā'ayn*) and translation are doubtful.

¹² Arabic *fajar*; see III, 2, lines 4 (and 565, n. 6), 17.

¹³ As usual, a small ship escorted a larger one; see 341, n. 26.

¹⁴ See on him page 150.

a half. The total: (15) two units,¹⁵ the weight three *bahārs*, the price three hundred dinars. Exit tolls from the (16) *Furḍa* and wrapping in skins and packing, four dinars.¹⁶ Also forwarded to you with Abu 'l-Faraj 'Double Wages (?),' (17) in the large ship, a purse, in which are forty Egyptian *mīthqāls*. The price: (18) ninety-six dinars.¹⁷ In the ship together with Abū Zikrī Ibn al-Shamī—may God decree his safe arrival!—(19) is a purse, in which are sixty dinars, old, good dinars. The total of your debit: (20) eight hundred and ninety dinars. There remains to your excellency's credit in 'the house,'¹⁸ pepper—(21) twenty-four *bahārs* of small measure, because your excellency mentioned sending this (22) aforementioned amount [...]}¹⁹

¹⁵ Arabic *qit'a* is used both for the separate pieces and for each of the two shipments.

¹⁶ Cf., e.g., II, 16, lines 45–46; II, 48, lines 1–2.

¹⁷ This gives an exchange rate between the Egyptian dinar (*mīthqāl*) and the Adenese Maliki dinar of 1:2.4. See 172, n. 27.

¹⁸ The warehouse and bourse of Aden. See 343, n. 41.

¹⁹ The writer finishes here in the middle of the line. The recipient had obviously left instructions not to sell in Aden the 24 *bahārs* of pepper but to ship them to the West. As already mentioned above, it is likely that this pepper was sold by Ben Yijū in the following year, as reported in III, 28, lines 1–2.}

III, E. *Correspondence after Leaving India and while Returning 'Home'*III, 29 *Letter from Abraham Ben Yijū to his Brothers and Sisters after His Safe Return from India*

Aden, 11 September, 1149

TS 10J 10, f. 15

Ed. Braslavsky, "Jewish Trade," 135–39. English translation in Goitein, "Two Historical Letters," 51–55; id., *Letters*, 201–6, upon which together with some material in Goitein's other papers the following is based. A translation is also printed in Simonsohn, *Jews in Sicily*, 1:397–400.

The top of the document was detached, but obviously only little has been lost, for the address on the verso is preserved completely. As addresses normally were written near the upper edge of the page, only a few cms. can be lacking. {It is likely that an address in Arabic letters was written in the missing portion of the verso.} Of the length, 20.5 cm have been preserved. The right margin is damaged, but the words written on it can be restored almost completely. The paper is of the same dark-brown variety used in Yemen as in III, 33 and III, 38. The script shows Ben Yijū the scribe (cf. the introduction to III, 17) almost at his best.

Since Braslavsky had at his disposal only one item from Yijū's hand, while we have today over seventy {written by him or relating to his activity}, it is natural that many of his readings, translations and interpretations need qualification. Here no reference is made to most of these.

The letter is marked by the strong attachment of the writer to his brothers and sisters and their families. While out in India during at least eighteen {or: as much as seventeen} years, Ben Yijū had not kept up regular correspondence with them. Our letter shows that he was poorly informed about their children and he needed to supply details about his own children (see line 18); cf. III, 41, lines 20–25 and III, 30, line 7, where his nephew expressly states that the family had been out of touch with him for many years.

The particularly strong upsurge of family attachment felt here had its source in the dire fate that had befallen Ben Yijū's homeland, details of which must have reached Aden when he arrived there from India. The Normans, under King Roger II, had ravaged and occupied al-Mahdiyya and Sfax in 1148. Ben Yijū's relatives, if alive at all, were now captives, or, at best, refugees. Indeed, we find them in Sicily, and not in their native country—as he expected in this letter—and in a completely destitute state (see below sec. C and III, 43). From III, 30 we learn that this letter actually reached Messina in Sicily. Now, Ben Yijū's long years

of toil in India made sense: the riches accumulated by him could put his relatives on their feet again.

There was another, more intimate, aspect involved in this relationship of Ben Yijū with his family. His wife certainly was an ‘outsider,’ not, as usual, a cousin, or other more remote relative. Nowhere, not even here, is a reference made to her in his letters.¹ In *Med. Soc.*, 2:20, I suggested that the (probably beautiful) Indian slave girl Ashū, whom Abraham Ben Yijū manumitted in Mangalore on October 17, 1132, with so much ado {III, 17}, might have become his wife and the mother of his children. Now returning to the West and the social climate of his youth, he hoped that at least his daughter would marry into the family. In a later letter, sent from inland Yemen, he again emphasized that many were seeking her hand, but that he had only one wish: to have her married to her cousin.² This wish was fulfilled: the Firkovitch Collection in the State Library of Leningrad {today: St. Petersburg} has preserved a detailed list of her trousseau {III, 54}. She married her cousin, in the summer of 1156, seven years after the writing of the letter translated here.

Abraham speaks in this letter to his brother Mevassēr (‘Bearer of good tidings,’ a name with messianic undertones), because the latter had already visited Egypt and thus shown a sign a life. But the letter is in the first place addressed to the elder of Abraham’s two brothers, Joseph, a father of three sons, while Mevassēr, as the extant correspondence shows, was unmarried.³

It is interesting to observe that, after so many years out in the East, Ben Yijū relapses here in various places into his Maghrebi dialect, while addressing his brother, whereas in India (II, 55), he wrote the standard Arabic of his time (to be sure, II, 55 is a letter dictated to him).

¹ {See, however, III, 15, lines 27–28. In his note to III, 41, line 22 (730, n. 21), Goitein deduced from the failure to mention Ben Yijū’s wife that she was dead.

² The intention seems to be to III, 41, which however, was not sent from inland Yemen but from Fustat.

³ Or: had no children—or sons. The greetings to him and his ‘household’ in the margin, suggest that he may have been married.

Translation

[A. Arrival from India to Aden with wealth]

(1) {Add: [This] is to inform you} my brother, {add: that} I do not know what to write; (2) so strong is my longing and so ardent my yearning. I ask God to unite us all presently in the best of circumstances.

(3) This is to announce to you, my brother, that I have set out from {alt. tr.: left} India⁴ and arrived in Aden—may God protect it!—(4) safely with my belongings,⁵ life, and children. May God be thanked for this! *Let them praise the Lord for His steadfast love, His wondrous deeds* (5) *for mankind*.⁶

Now I wish to let you know that I have enough to live on (6) for all of us. May God, the Exalted, let this money be for my livelihood and my children's and be sufficient for you as well!

[B. The forty dinars sent Mevassēr]

(7) I have to reproach⁷ you, my brother {add: greatly}, that {because}⁸ you got as far as Egypt and did not come to Aden.⁹ I sent (8) you to Egypt, //with a shipment of {alt. tr.: through the agency of}¹⁰ my master, Sheikh Maḍmūn, // ¹¹ about fifty ounces of civet perfume¹² worth 40

⁴ Arabic *bilād al-Hind*. For the geographical area that this term designates, see pages 6–7. *Kharaj*, 'set out' or 'left,' conveys 'traveling home'; see 372, n. 4.}

⁵ The writer mentions his belongings first, because the aim of his letter was to invite his refugee brothers to share them with him. {The tripartite expression of gratitude for arriving safely, in body (Arabic *rūḥ*), with children and possessions, reflects the midrash Ber. R. 69:5, 940. There the order of 'children and possessions' is reversed in some manuscripts.}

⁶ Ps. 107:8, 15, etc. Always said after safe arrival.

⁷ Arabic *'aibān*; cf., e.g., Spiro, *Dictionary*, 288a. {Cf. Hinds & Badawi, *Egyptian Arabic*, 561: 'reproachful, mildly reproving, gently critical.'

⁸ Arabic *alladhī* here introduces a causal clause; see Blau, *Grammar*, 227.

⁹ After receiving this letter, Mevassēr traveled from Sicily to Aden to meet Abraham: III, 30, line 9; III, 41, line 7.

¹⁰ Arabic *bi-infādh*, lit., 'sent by.' Braslavsky, "Jewish Trade," 138, n. 5, commented that the ship or the caravan in which Abū Naṣr (see the continuation) carried the package was owned by Maḍmūn. While Maḍmūn was in fact a shipowner on the India route, there is no evidence that his ships (or caravans!) traveled to Egypt. Here the meaning is that Ben Yijū had written from India to Maḍmūn and asked him to send the gift from Aden to Egypt, which he did by entrusting it to Abū Naṣr, who must have carried a shipment for him as well.}

¹¹ For Maḍmūn b. Hasan, see Introduction IIB and the documents in chap. 2.

¹² Arabic *zbd'*, to be read *zabada*. For this form of the word, see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:578b. In line 10, the usual form *zabād* is used. Ben Yijū often spells *tā marbūta* with *alif* {see 332, n. 16}, e.g., line 11 *tyq*²—*thiqa*, or verso, line 6 *mhd*²—*Mahdiyya*.

dinars,¹³ carried by the elder Abū Naṣr (9) b. Elisha¹⁴—*may he be remembered with blessings* {alt. tr.: *favorably*}!¹⁵ Afterward, I learned from the elder Abū Zikrī, the Kōhēn //al-Sijilmāsi//, the brother-in-law of my master, Sheikh Maḍmūn,¹⁶ (10) that the civet arrived duly {lit., ‘safely’} in Miṣr (Fustat); however, as they did not find you there, my brother, they forwarded it to you (11) to Sicily with a trustworthy Jew called Samuel, (himself) a Sicilian.¹⁷ //I hope it has reached you.//

¹³ Here, certainly, Egyptian dinars and ounces are intended. In 1133, ten ounces civet perfume cost in Cairo seven dinars; see V, 1, lines 18–19. {Ben Yijū, writing in Egypt, notes the value of ten ounces in 1153 as nine dinars minus a fraction: III, 42, list 3, lines 5–6; but according to VII, 38*v*, line 14-margin, line 1, ten ounces were worth eight dinars. In III, 15, lines 30–34, it is also noted that Maḍmūn sent with Abū Naṣr 40 dinars for Mevassēr, without further specification. But in II, 29, line 3, it is specified that Ben Yijū had asked Maḍmūn to send 40 Malikī dinars, not Egyptian dinars. Presumably the same sum is referred to in all three documents, but the matter requires further study.}

¹⁴ About this important India trader from Alexandria, see III, 15, line 32. Abū Naṣr carried a consignment for Maḍmūn and also consented to make a delivery for Ben Yijū. Forty dinars were sufficient for one year of modest living. {For Abū Naṣr, see 487, n. 2. As indicated by the alternate translation in line 8 (see note there), the consignment for Maḍmūn was not explicitly mentioned. For the value of the dinar, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 1:359.}

¹⁵ 5 Hebrew *yizzākḥēr be-tōvā*, a blessing for the living. The usual form is *be-tōv*, so in {I, 34a, line 11; IV, line 33; VI, 21*v*, line 7} VI, 26, line 3; VI, 27, line 30; ib. margin, line 21, etc. For the Arabic equivalent *aḥsana ʾllāhu dhikrahu*, see IV, 18, margin, line 4, IV, 31, line 33, V, 2, line 19. {This can be associated with the variant *yizkerēbū be-tōvā* or *yizkerēhā be-tōvā*, ‘may He remember him/her favorably,’ in III, 48*v*, line 34 and III, 49, line 10. But a closer Arabic equivalent can be cited from PSR 1444, line 9: *dhakarahu ʾllāhu bi-khayr*. For *yizzākḥēr* alone, see III, 48, line 32; III, 49, line 38. For the blessing *zʾl* for the living, see 312, n. 4.}

¹⁶ Abū Zikrī Judah b. Joseph ha-Kohen Sijilmāsi (Ben Yijū wrote ‘Sijilmāsi’) is the subject of chap. 5. {Abū Zikrī often signed his name ‘Abū Zikrī Kōhēn,’ without the def. art. Here Ben Yijū uses the Arabic def. art., ‘al-Kōhēn.’ He uses the same form in reference to a business associate in India, III, 27, sec. C, line 2. Abū Zikrī was probably visiting Aden, as he sometimes did, when he conveyed this information to Ben Yijū, rather than by correspondence. He died about a year later; see II, 61. ‘Brother-in-law’ here translates *ṣibr* in the original, the same word used below in line 25; for the use of this term, see the note to II, 24, line 31 (348, n. 76). Goitein (*Letters*, 62, in the introduction to the text translated there, II, 55; *Yemenites*, 39) noted that Maḍmūn married Abū Zikrī’s sister. From II, 34, side d, lines 6–7, we learn that Abū Zikrī’s wife was Maḥrūz b. Jacob’s sister; see on him Introduction IIA2.}

¹⁷ A certain Samuel’s arrival in Sicily (from Egypt) is mentioned in the letter of Peraḥyā and Moses Yijū to their father Joseph in III, 43*v*, line 6. R. Samuel the Sicilian’s death is announced in the letter of Peraḥyā and Moses’ brother, Samuel Yijū, in III, 48*v*, line 36.}

[C. Invitation to brother to join him in Aden]

I (also) met (12) Sheikh Sulaymān Ibn Gabbay [//...//]¹⁸ and he told me that you have been reduced to a single loaf of bread; therefore, I ask you, (13) my brother, to come to me under any circumstances and without delay; *come down to me without delay*, (14) *there I will provide for you*.¹⁹ I have a son and a daughter, take them and take with them (15) all the money and the riches—*may the Lord fulfill my wishes for good and yours!*²⁰ (16) Come quickly and take possession of this money; this is better than strangers taking it.²¹

[D. Offer to give daughter in marriage]

(17) Also, find out who is the best of the sons of my brother Joseph or the sons of your sister²² Berākḥā, so that I may marry him off to my daughter. (18) After you come here, we shall live in Aden or Fustat or Alexandria, if it will (19) not be possible for us to go to al-Mahdiyya or to Ifrīqiya, namely, to Tunis or Qayrawān.²³ (20) Everything, of course, is in God's hand {alt. tr.: But God governs all}.

[E. Greetings, condolence, etc.]

Please convey the best greetings to your brother Joseph and to his children {alt. tr.: sons}²⁴ in my name, and say (21) to him: “Your brother

¹⁸ *Gabbay*, ‘Almoner,’ is a common Jewish family name today, but is rare in the Geniza. It is likely that this Sulaymān Ibn Gabbay is none other than the merchant bearing this name who accompanied the Spanish Hebrew poet Judah ha-Levi on his voyage to Egypt in 1140. See Goitein, “A Letter to Judah ha-Levi,” 345. {See above, page 68. The supralinear addition is illegible. In his unpublished papers, Goitein suggested, with hesitation, *al-Andalusi*. But the letter before *s* appears to be *alif*. Perhaps read *al-Fāsi*.}

¹⁹ Gen. 45:9, 11. Joseph sending a message to his father Jacob.

²⁰ {Cf. Ps. 20:6.

²¹ Cf. III, 41, lines 23–24 (and 730, n. 24), written after the death of Ben Yijū's son.}

²² In lines 22, 20, he speaks of ‘my sister’ and ‘your brother.’ {Here he apparently wrote ‘his’ first then corrected to ‘your.’}

²³ Ifrīqiya is present-day Tunisia. Interesting is the emergence of the town of Tunis, which was of little importance in the eleventh century, and the revival of Qayrawān. In a few more years the whole region came under Almohad domination and was uninhabitable for non-Muslims.

²⁴ {Arabic *awlād*, which in the continuation the writer uses for sons rather than children.}

Abraham says to you: By God, I shall not grudge you a thing; this money, which I have here, (22) is at your disposal.” Likewise, greet my sister Berākhā and her children {alt. tr.: sons} and tell her (23) the same.

I heard that Ma‘mar, Yumn’s husband, died,²⁵ but was not sure about {alt. tr.: unable to verify} it. If it is (24) true, may God comfort you all! However, by these lines,²⁶ it is hard for me to write words of consolation on the death (25) of anyone {lit., ‘it is hard for me to console anyone on his death’}.²⁷

Convey to my brother-in-law Marwān,²⁸ son of Zikrī—*may he rest in Eden!*—Ibn Biḥār²⁹ the best greetings in my name—may God (26) keep him alive and preserve him for you!³⁰—and likewise to Abu ‘l-Barakāt b. Qayyōmā³¹ the best greetings.

[F. Further plea to Mevassēr to come and take over business]

(27) By God, and again by God,³² do not delay your coming here, take this dirhem,³³ (28) which I have earned, and buy and sell with it, God

²⁵ Ma‘mar (or Mu‘ammar), ‘Long-lived.’ Yumn, ‘Happiness, Good Luck.’ She must have been another sister of Abraham Yijū, for Abraham’s granddaughter was also called by this name (III, 55, top, line 12), presumably because the sister had no offspring of her own.

²⁶ An oath, meaning: just as the letter, which the receiver holds in his hands, is something real, thus the assertion is true. {Arabic *wa-ḥaqq ḥādhibi ‘l-ahruf*: While not very common, this oath is found in a number of letters: II, 58, line 15, III, 41, margin (also written by Ben Yijū), III, 47, line 12 (written by Moses Yijū, Ben Yijū’s nephew), VI, 1, line 24.}

²⁷ Abraham was shaken by the terrible news from his native country, to which he had intended to return, and was in general a tired man. {Arabic *la-qad ‘azza ‘alayya al-‘azā’ fihī wāḥid*. In his original draft, Goitein adhered to the literal translation. I take the phrase to mean that Ben Yijū was so grieved by Ma‘mar’s death that he could not console anyone else over it and left the consolation to God.}

²⁸ This name of the founder of the second Umayyad dynasty was in use among Jews in Syria and Spain, countries formerly ruled by the Umayyads. See Goitein, *Letters*, 87, n. 22. {This Marwān is also mentioned in III, 41*v*, line 5; see also the introduction to III, 50.}

²⁹ ‘The Seas,’ ‘An Ocean of Bounty,’ a family name still popular in many different forms with North African Jews.

³⁰ {The blessing is added to his name after the death of the other brother-in-law was mentioned.

³¹ For the name Qayyōmā, see Friedman, *JMP*, 2:439, where this reference is also found.

³² In the original, the urgency is emphasized by repeating God’s name four times: *wa-‘llāh Allāh thumma Allāh Allāh*, ‘by God, by God, and again by God, by God.’ See 730, n. 18, where the text is torn away after the first pair. Cf. here, verso, line 2, *fa-‘llāh Allāh*, which appears frequently in our papers.

³³ Arabic *dirham* parallels *māl* in the rest of the letter and means simply ‘money.’ The dictionaries give the plural *darāhim* in this sense, but not the singular. *Dirham* is used

willing. Saying less about this would have been enough.³⁴ (29) Would I try {read: set out}³⁵ to write all that is in my heart, no letter could contain it and no epistle could comprise it.

(30) *Written on the 7th of Tishre*—may God let you partake in the blessings of the month {lit., ‘acquaint you with its blessings’}!—of the year (31) 1461 *E.D.*³⁶

[G. Postscripts: Greetings]

To the cantor {R.} Moses, son of the cantor Abraham—*may he rest in Eden!*³⁷—[Margin] my best regards. *And Peace*. And to my brother, his children {alt. tr.: sons} and [his] wife special greetings. Likewise, to my sister, her husband Marwān, her sons and her daughter, special greetings. And to the daughters of my paternal uncle, their sons and their daughters greetings. To my maternal aunt and her ch[ildren] {alt. tr.: so[ns]} greetings. *Greetings to you and to your household!*³⁸

[H. Forwarding of letters, more urging and greetings]

[Verso] (1) I gave instructions that my letters to you should be in the hands of Sheikh Abraham b. Joseph—*may he rest in Eden!*—Ibn al-Baqqāl (‘Grocer’)³⁹—(2) may God ordain his safe arrival! And, by God, come as quickly as possible to Aden {add: God willing}.

the same way, in the quote, or rather paraphrase, of Abraham Ben Yijū’s letter in III, 50, line 8.

³⁴ The same expression in III, 41, line 25.}

³⁵ Arabic *ghazaytu* for *ghazawtu*. {I read *ji’tu*. For this use of *jā’a* with following imperf., see, e.g., Wehr, *Dictionary*, 150. The synonymous *dhabab* is used the same way, e.g., IV, 78, line 2, *law dhahabtu asif*, ‘were I to begin to describe.’ For this expression, see Diem, *Arabische Briefe*, 73. Braslavsky, “Jewish Trade,” 137, also read *ji’t*, but not being familiar with the *nqtl* form for first pers. sg. imperf. (see page 743, note 5), he translated (139), with following *naktub*: “were you to come, we would write.”}

³⁶ September 11, 1149.

³⁷ {Ben Yijū sends regards to him also in III, 41 *v*, line 9.} Up to the present day, in Jewish North Africa, the public offices are rigorously hereditary; see Chouraqui, *La Condition juridique*, 123.

³⁸ 1 Sam. 25:6.

³⁹ Having been informed that his letters would be forwarded to them through this merchant, Ben Yijū’s family would inquire with him from time to time whether any mail had arrived for them. About Abraham b. Joseph, see II, 70, line 22 and the accompanying note. He was a native of al-Mahdiyya, like the Yijūs, and actually contacted Ben Yijū’s nephews; see III, 46, lines 27–28, where we find him traveling from Tyre to Sicily. {There he is referred to as Abraham of al-Mahdiyya and he carried letters also for

(3) And kiss the soil⁴⁰ before my lord, // *our teacher*// Labraṭ, the *dayyān* (*judge*), *son of his honor, our master and teacher Moses*, (4) *the dayyān—may he rest in Eden!*⁴¹—(and convey to him) the best greetings; to all my friends of *my age class* {alt. tr.: our coreligionists of my generation},⁴² the best greetings. *And Peace.*

[I. Inquiry about the disaster that befell Tunisia]

(5) I heard what happened to {alt. tr.: of the tragic events⁴³ in} the coastland of Ifrīqiya, Tripoli, Jerba, Qarqanna, (6) Sfax, al-Mahdiyya, and Sūsa. No letter, however, from which I could learn who died and who remained alive, has arrived.⁴⁴ (7) By God, write exact details {confirm in writing}⁴⁵ and send your letters with reliable people to soothe my mind. *And Peace.*

the nephew, Moses b. Joseph Yijū, to his family. This, however, could refer to Abraham b. Elijah of al-Mahdiyya, the addressee of III, 30. Also see the note to III, 41, line 35, where Goitein assumes that Abraham mentioned there is the same Abraham b. Joseph. In his introduction to II, 70 and his note to II, 70, line 22 (529, n. 21), Goitein remarked that Ibn al-Baqqāl had been in Aden in 1149 (as he was in 1146, according to III, 12, line 34, there called Abū Ishāq b. Joseph) and that he took from Ben Yijū his letter on his way back to Egypt. The present letter was apparently one of several sent to the family.

⁴⁰ Used in reference to a judge, Muslim or Jewish. Abraham Ben Yijū had no doubt studied under Labraṭ II (see page 552), and was himself an accomplished Talmudic scholar, as is evident from the many learned notes written by him on the reverse sides of letters received in his office. {For kissing the ground before a Muslim, see an example in the introduction to II, 67a, before a Jewish judge see II, 74, line 1.

⁴¹ For Labraṭ b. Moses, see III 29a.

⁴² Arabic *aṣḥābunā bny gyly*. As the italics in his translation indicate, Goitein took the last two words to be Hebrew, *benē gily*. They could very well be Arabic (as noted by Braslavsky, "Jewish Trade," 139, n. 14), *bani jily*. For *aṣḥābunā*, 'coreligionists,' see above, page 202, n. 25.

⁴³ Arabic *mā ṭarā*.

⁴⁴ Ben Yijū had heard about the Norman devastation and occupation of the Tunisian coastland, but knew no details as to how his friends and acquaintance were affected by these events. The towns mentioned are well known, with the exception of Qarqana, an island ten miles off the coast of Sfax. See Yaqūt, *Geographical Dictionary*, 4:66–67, who says that the scholars spelled the name Qarqanna, while local people pronounced it with one *n*. {See Louis, "Qarqana," according to whom after conquering al-Mahdiyya in 1148, the Normans raided Qarqana, which is an archipelago, consisting of two main islands fifteen miles from the Sfax coast, but did not take possession of it until 1153. Cf. Hirschberg, *History*, 1:85.}

⁴⁵ Arabic *taktubū wa-tu'akkidū*. Cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:836b.

[J. Address]

(1) This letter [should reach] my dear brothers—may God prolong [their] live[s]!—(2) Joseph and Mevassēr, the sons of Perahyā—*may he rest in Eden!*—Ben⁴⁶ Yijū. God may recompense him that will be concerned (3) to make an effort to transmit it into their hands, *and from the Lord he will receive good reward!*⁴⁷

(4) Convey and get remuneration.⁴⁸ *This is a deposit entrusted {alt. tr.: Steadfast faithfulness.}*⁴⁹

(1) (From) Their brother, who is longing for them—(2) may God unite him with them!—(3) Abraham b. Perahyā—*may he rest in Eden!*—Ben Yijū. To al-Mahdiyya, God willing, or anywhere else (5) in Ifriqiya.

⁴⁶ I leave here 'Ben' (instead of 'Ibn'), because Ben Yijū, especially in the French spelling Benichou, is still common among Jews of North African origin, of whom Paul Benichou, the author of *Morales du Grand Siècle* (6th ed., 1948) is particularly well known.

⁴⁷ {Unlike the following phrases in line 4, such elaborate blessings (in Arabic and Hebrew) for divine reward to the messenger who makes an effort to deliver a letter are unusual in the Geniza. They reflect the uncertainties in sending a letter with an unknown address. On the other hand, we note the similar wishes on letters from other members of the Yijū family. In III, 48v, Samuel b. Joseph Yijū writes (also in Arabic and Hebrew) on his letter from Sicily to his brothers Perahyā and Moses: "Whoever delivers it—it will be considered a meritorious act—to Alexandria or Fustat may he be blessed by the Almighty and may He decree his safety on land and sea!" And on his letter, their father Joseph b. Perahyā Yijū writes (III, 49v): "And he who makes the effort to deliver them, may there be fulfilled for him 'When you pass through water, I will be with you,' etc. (Isa.43:2). And may He provide him with support and aid. [...] Whoever sees my letters should act in my behalf for the sake of heaven and make an effort to deliver them. May the Lord bless him with the blessing of the Patriarch Abraham and guard his going and coming (cf. Ps. 121:8). Amen."}

⁴⁸ Arabic *balligh tūjar* (or *tu'jar*). The same formula, in Arabic letters, in III, 55, a letter from Abraham Ben Yijū's nephew, written many years later. The meaning of the formula is evident: on delivery the bearer of the letter will receive a reward from God. It is found also in a letter, quoted by Goldziher, "Mélanges," 55. Goldziher read *blgt wjd*; however, from a photograph of the document referred to, DK XVII, it appears that there, too, *balligh tūjar* is to be read. The comparatively rare occurrence of the formula in our documents is to be explained by the fact that, on the India route, letters were normally carried by business friends, while on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, mail was sent with paid messengers, *fayj*. {Another example of *balligh tūjar* in Arabic letters is found in IV, 52. On whether or not this phrase implies that the reward will be from God, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:284 and the note to III, 55v (789, n. 25). A letter from the Red Sea port of Qusayr, reads at the end of the address, as edited (Guo, *Commerce*, 304): بلغ نوح امانته مولاہ (*ballagh nuḥ amānīh mawlāh*), which the editor translated: "Nūḥ has fulfilled his master's wishes." The Arabic obviously should be read: بلغ تاجر امانة موداه (*balligh tūjar amāna mu'addāh*) and translated: "Convey and get remuneration, as a trust to be delivered" (on the last words, see 257, n. 13). For *fayj*, pl. *fuyūj*; cf. Goitein, *ib.*, 283–84.}

⁴⁹ About this Hebrew formula, see 257, n. 13. In III, 55, address, too, it is found together with the Arabic formula just discussed.

III, 29a *Poem by Abraham Ben Yijū in Honor of Judge Labraṭ II*

{Yemen, possibly ca. 1140}

TS Misc. 29, f. 4a

A poem by Ben Yijū in honor of the spiritual leader of the Jews of al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia, probably attached to the preceding (III, 29), in which {verso, line 3} deep respect is paid to him. For other poems by Ben Yijū, see chap. 2, sec. E.

{The poem is written in Abraham Ben Yijū's hand, and the three stanzas preserved on this page contain the acrostic RHM, i.e., [Ab]raham (the first two stanzas were presumably written on a separate sheet). It is dedicated to 'the son of Moses b. Labraṭ,' who as suggested by Goitein is to be identified as Judge Labraṭ b. Moses b. Labraṭ, to whom Ben Yijū sent greetings in III, 29. Ben Yijū lauds Labraṭ's wisdom, especially his Talmudic commentary, for which this poem seems to provide unique testimony. This confirms Ibn Daud's statement:

[Accordingly], with the demise of these two [R. Ḥananēl and R. Nissīm], Talmudic learning came to an end in Ifrīqiya except for a meager representation in al-Mahdiyya through the leadership of the Sons of Zughmār. . .

We can now identify this as a reference to Judge Labraṭ b. Moses and other members of the Ibn Sughmār family.¹

Goitein, above, page 552, suggested that Ben Yijū might have written the poem "in his youth while still in his native city, al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia."² Nothing else written by Ben Yijū before he left the Maghreb has been preserved. The above comment, that the poem was "probably attached to the preceding (III, 29)," supersedes that suggestion.

Notwithstanding Ben Yijū's obsequious greetings to Labraṭ in III, 29, there is nothing in that letter to suggest that this poem was appended to it. Presumably a panegyric poem such as this implied that at the time of its writing the poet was in close contact with the individual, whose praises he sang, and perhaps intended to express his gratitude for some favor recently bestowed or soon anticipated. Ben Yijū wrote a draft of the same three

¹ {Cohen, *Book of Tradition*, 78 (quoted with minor changes in the spelling). Hirschberg, "Sughmār," 240, already associated Ibn Daud's statement with members of the Ibn Sughmār family, with which he was familiar from Goitein's India Book papers; cf. Gil, "Sughmār," 151 (but neither was familiar with the evidence from Ben Yijū's poem).

² In page 686, n. 40, Goitein remarked: "Yijū had no doubt studied under Labraṭ II."

stanzas of this poem on a second page, TS G 2, f. 59^v, together with a draft of another poem, tentatively dated ca. 1140, in honor of his Adenese patron Maḍmūn b. Japheth (II, 40).³ This supplies the tentative dating for composing the poem in honor of Labraṭ, which looks as if it was written at the same time. The responsum in Ben Yijū's hand, written on TS G 2, f. 59^r, concerns the marital status of a manumitted slave girl and her children (III 29b). Were we to suppose that it concerned Ben Yijū's wife and children and further speculate that Judge Labraṭ authored it, the rationale for the panegyric, written on the paper's blank side, would be supplied. On this assumption and speculation, see below, the description of III, 29b. On Ben Yijū as a poet, see pages 66–67.}

³ See Friedman, *Polygyny*, 352. On the opposite side of the bifolium, which contains III, 29a, Ben Yijū wrote a liturgical poem (*selihā*); thanks to Dr. Ben Outhwaite of the Cambridge University Library Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit for checking the manuscript for me.}

{III, 29bc *Responsa in Abraham Ben Yijū's Hand: Legitimacy of a Manumitted Slave Girl's Marriage and Status of Her Children*

Yemen, possibly ca. 1140

III, 29b. TS G 2, f. 59

III, 29c. TS K 25, f. 285

The first, second and fourth rulings were published by Friedman, *Polygyny*, 209–399, where they were arranged in a different order and the connection to Ben Yijū's family was not considered.

Four legal opinions, all written in Abraham b. Yijū's hand, which deal with the legitimacy of an Indian slave girl's marriage to her former owner and the status of her children. Based on the subject matter of the different rulings, we can reconstruct the sequence as III, 29cv, III, 29cr, and III, 29b.

(1) No. III, 29cv discusses the validity of a slave girl's betrothal (*qiddūshīn*), whose formula included a proviso that it take effect only after her emancipation. This was done in the case under review, when a Jewish man ('Reuben,' i.e., John Doe) in India betrothed a slave girl he had acquired there. When a slave girl was purchased, she was required by Jewish law to immerse in a ritual bath, after which she was obligated to perform some of the commandments and had a semi-Jewish status. The immersion was to be repeated at emancipation, when she became a full proselyte. Jewish law strictly forbids sexual relations between a slave girl and her owner. The owner may have felt that there was some semblance of legitimacy to such relations, if the slave girl underwent a provisory betrothal ceremony. He would presumably emancipate her, if she became pregnant. This procedure would also guarantee that she remain under his control, since a manumitted slave girl was considered a free agent, not obligated to marry her emancipator.

The case under review was the object of dispute among legal experts. Someone had claimed that since there was no evidence that the slave girl had immersed in the ritual bath and thereby proselytized, before the betrothal, that act was invalid, and her former owner had to perform with her a second *qiddūshīn*. Our writer rejects this claim. He argues that the concluding words of 'you are betrothed to me after your emancipation' are like any other condition; once it is fulfilled, the betrothal takes effect. In doing so, he quotes M. Qiddushin 3:5 as if it says the opposite of all preserved texts (according to which such betrothal was invalid) and interprets other Talmudic texts in a unique fashion.

(2) Obviously someone had argued that since 'Reuben' was suspect of having had illicit relations with his slave girl before her emancipation, the marriage was illegal; he was obligated to divorce her and would be barred from remarrying her. In III, 29^{cr} the juriconsult quotes Talmudic passages, from which he proves that in such a case, specifically if the marriage had already taken place, it was upheld and no action was to be taken against the husband.¹

(3) In its first portion III, 29^b quotes, in Arabic translation, a responsum written by Yehudai Gaon (Iraq, second half of eighth century), which deals with a leviratic widow, who married a stranger, without having received from her brother-in-law the release (*ḥaliṣā*) prescribed by Deut. 25:9. Normally, the religious authorities would require her second husband to divorce her and the brother-in-law to then perform the release ceremony, after which she would be forbidden to marry either of them. Yehudai ruled that if the woman had surviving children from her second husband, he would not be required to divorce her, to prevent anyone from questioning the children's legitimacy. From Yehudai's ruling the writer draws an analogy to other cases, where there was some impropriety in the marriage. Here too, were there surviving children, the marriage should be allowed to continue, to prevent anyone from questioning the children's legitimacy. The writer does not specify to which cases this applied, but I assume he intended the slave girl, whose former owner was suspected of having engaged in an illicit affair with her.

(4) In the continuation of III, 29^b, the writer rules that the children of an emancipated slave girl are legitimate Jews, and the son inherits his father's estate:

Furthermore, we conclude that *the son of an emancipated slave girl* inherits his father's estate and is *considered a Jew for all purposes*, from the words of the sages, peace be on them:

Whoever has a son from anywhere² exempts his sister-in-law from the levirate, and he is considered his son for all purposes, except for one who has a son from a slave girl or a Gentile.³

¹ {Maimonides (*Responsa*, 2:373–75, no. 211), on the other hand, extended the Talmudic post facto provision and encouraged such marriages, so that men would feel free to legitimize their illicit relations with slave girls. His action is indicative of how widespread this behavior had become.

² Even a bastard.

³ M. Yevamot 2:5. Because of the matrilineal rule for matters of personal status, this child is considered a slave or Gentile and not the son of his biological father.

From this we surmise and deduce that were she an *emancipated slave girl* or a *proselytized Gentile*, the matter would be decided contrariwise; and the child would be *his son for all purposes* and inherit his father's estate and would be *considered a Jew for all purposes*. We have verified *through valid witnesses* that this son and this daughter are the children of an *emancipated slave girl*. This discussion lacks nothing whatsoever.⁴

I suggest that nos. 3–4 deal with the same case as nos. 1–2. We are thus concerned with a Jew, who purchased a slave girl in India, betrothed her on condition that the betrothal take effect after her emancipation, and she subsequently bore him a son and a daughter. After the legitimacy of the marriage and the status of the children were challenged, legal opinions were produced, which upheld both.

It is tempting to assume that Ben Yijū and his family are the subjects of these legal opinions. As we have seen, the text of the bill of manumission, which he issued his slave girl Ashū in Mangalore, India in 1132 (III, 17), suggests that he may have believed that she assumed the status of a Jewish proselyte when he purchased her. He had two sons and one daughter, but one son died as a young child in India (see III, 41, line 14). When this respectable, wealthy merchant traveled with his family from India to Yemen, local conservative members of the Jewish community may have looked askance at his wife and children and challenged their legitimacy.⁵ Though III, 29bc are in Ben Yijū's handwriting and he did author responsa, I doubt that he authored these rulings. More likely he commissioned them from some legal expert in Yemen or from the Tunisian judge Labraṭ b. Moses, whose praise Ben Yijū sings in the poem (III, 29a), a rough draft of which is found on the reverse side of rulings 3–4, that is on TS G 2, f. 59v. Ben Yijū seems to have arrived in Yemen for an extended visit ca. 1140, the tentative date assigned to the poem in Maḍmūn's b. Hasan's honor, and the draft of some stanzas of that poem are written on TS G 2, f. 59v as well. These responsa may very well have been written about the same time.}

⁴ On the question whether the son would inherit his father, if his mother had been emancipated only after his conception, see the sources in Friedman, *Polygyny*, 300, n. 5.

⁵ As I have suggested interpreting II, 37, lines 25–32; see the discussion above, pages 75–76.}

III, 30 *Letter from Perahyā b. Joseph to Abraham b. Elijah, al-Mahdiyya, Inquiring about Perahyā's Uncle Abraham Ben Yijū*

Mazara, Sicily, 1151/2

Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 139

Perahyā's handwriting, known to us also from III, 43, 45, 50, and 55 {also III, 52, 55a, 56, 57 and other documents}, is somewhat similar to that of his uncle, but more elegant and cursive. As we learn from III, 43, margin, he actually occupied himself with the copying of books. His script in this letter is indeed that used for literary texts.

The style of the letter, at least in the preamble, is unusually elaborate and involved, which is the more conspicuous, as the writer is ignorant of classical Arabic.

The year 911, referred to in line 8, abridged from 4911, is according to the era of the Creation, which was in common use in the western Mediterranean countries. That year began on September 23, 1150 and ended on September 12, 1151. At least a year, but most probably a slightly longer period, had elapsed from the date of Abraham Yijū's letter III, 29, mentioned here in line 9, before the family of his brother Joseph first heard of it in Mazara, a town in the western part of the island of Sicily. On the other hand, we learn here that Mevassēr, Abraham's other brother, had already joined him in Aden, after having received that letter in Messina, the well-known port on the east coast of Sicily. {Cf. III, 41, lines 6–7.}

The most interesting detail to be learned from this letter is the fact that the whereabouts of Abraham Ben Yijū had remained unknown to his brothers 'for ages' *kabrat sinīn*, lines 7–8.

There exist three possibilities how this letter, which was addressed to Tunisia, finally reached the Cairo Geniza. The receiver might have forwarded the letter to Ben Yijū (cf. lines 13–15), whose correspondence, as we witness in this volume, was to a large extent disposed of in the Geniza. Or, the addressee, who had returned from the East, made another trip there, passing through Cairo. On the other hand, it is possible, that the letter was not sent at all, because the Yijūs in Mazara had received a message from the two brothers out in Aden, before they had an opportunity to dispatch it. Thus, it reached the Geniza with other papers emanating from the family of Joseph Yijū (chap. 3, sec. F).

{The notation on verso, *tajribat qalam*, 'a pen trial,' seems to be in Perahyā's hand. Accordingly, we can assume that the letter was never sent,

since the writer would have used the empty space to jot these words, only if there were no further need for the letter. Abraham Ben Yijū informed his family that he was sending his letters with Abraham b. *Joseph* of al-Mahdiyya (III, 29*v*, line 1), while here (III, 30*v*) Peraḥyā's inquiry about Ben Yijū's letters is addressed to the otherwise unknown Abraham b. *Elijah* of al-Mahdiyya. It is tempting to speculate that this letter was not sent because Peraḥyā realized he had made a mistake in writing the name of the addressee's father. But the appearance of two Abrahams of al-Mahdiyya in the same context is probably a matter of coincidence only.¹

Contents

- A. Polite preamble (lines 1–5).
- B. Inquiry about Abraham Ben Yijū (lines 5–15).
- C. Greetings and polite conclusion (lines 15–22 and margin 1–17).

Translation of Sec. B

(5) I was obliged² to write to you, my lord, these few, short (6) lines,³ for I heard that you had arrived in your homeland.⁴ Therefore, I wish to ask you (7) whether you are aware of news of my uncle, Abraham, known as Ben Yijū, for he had absented himself (8) from us for ages; then, last year, the year 911, we learned (9) that an epistle of his had arrived in Messina, but fell into the hands of my uncle Mevassēr, who took it <<and set out to meet him>>. (10) We did not see it, nor do we know its content,⁵ but are very eager {alt. tr.: anxious}⁶ to hear (11) about him (Uncle Abraham) {alt. tr.: anything about his circumstances}.

¹ {As we have already seen, in III, 46, lines 27–28, mention is made of 'Abraham of al-Mahdiyya,' without his father's name. Also see 732, n. 36.}

² Arabic *ʿdrt* is perhaps not a scribal error (omission of an *r*), but indicates, perhaps, a dialectical form, *idrt*. {Cf. Blau, *Grammar*, 81.}

³ Arabic *hādhihi sīṭayn*. Literally, 'two lines'; cf. English 'a couple' and IV, 78*v*, line 14 {*hādhayn al-ḥarfayn*}. The same expression is found in the writer's letter in III, 45, line 1. {It also appears in his brother Moses' letter in III, 47*a*, line 14. Many additional examples can be cited. For such a use of the dual, see Blau, *Grammar*, 176 and references there to Goitein.

⁴ Obviously Abraham had traveled to the East, as Goitein remarked in the introduction.}

⁵ Mevassēr's failure to transmit to his relatives Abraham's urgent messages in III, 29 is typical of his behavior as described in III, 41.

⁶ {Arabic *mu'allaqin al-qulūb*. The same expression appears, in the same context, in the letter written by Abraham Ben Yijū's nephew Moses, III, 47*v*, line 6. Similarly, when

Therefore, I ask you now, my lord, to kindly send me, your servant, (12) a letter,⁷ informing me whether you know any news of him or not, whether you have seen him, and in which (13) place he is found at present. If you think it possible that I should {lit., 'if you deem appropriate to instruct me to'}⁸ write an epistle, which would be forwarded to him (14) through your endeavors and favor, please, send me a letter to this effect (15) quickly. This will be a kindness on your part, which will be rewarded⁹ and thanked.

no news was heard about a ship that sailed in the Indian Ocean, Buzurg, *ʿAjāʿib al-Hind*, 17, describes that *wa-taʿallaqat* (fifth form) *al-qulūb bi-akhbār al-baḥr*, 'they were anxious about news of the sea.' In Joseph Yijū's letter, III, 57, line 11: *muʿallaq al-khāṭir*. For this phrase see Diem, *Arabische Briefe*, 110.

⁷ Arabic *ruqʿa*, also in line 14, lit., 'note,' is used for a letter regardless of its length (IV, 10, is called *ruqʿ* [also a singular form], and contains more than 70 lines). It is also used this way in III, 31, line 22, III, 32, margin and address, III, 57, line 24. During the Fatimid period petitions were called *ruqʿa*, even if several pages long (see Khan, *Documents*, 306). The writer also uses the more common *kitāb* in line 13, where I have translated 'epistle,' in order to distinguish the terms. Both words also appear in IV, 10.

⁸ Arabic *wa-ʿin raʿayta an taʿmurānī*. For *in raʿā* or *in raʿayta* phrases in appeals to dignitaries, see Khan, *Documents*, 316; Diem, *Arabische Briefe*, 15.

⁹ By God.}

{III, 30a *Deed of Lease of an Apartment in Sicily for Forty Years for Joseph Yijū*

Probably Mazara, after 1136

ENA NS 16, f. 27

Vellum, brittle with some damage and somewhat faded writing. Not part of Goitein's India Book Collection.

This almost complete deed of lease reveals the plans and arrangements made by Abraham Ben Yijū's brother Joseph, after having been exiled (or emigrating) from his native al-Mahdiyya, to settle in Sicily for an extended period. The document's provenance was probably designated in the last few lines, now unfortunately missing. But since the rent is paid in Ducan *rubā'īs* (quarter dinars), the contract was certainly drawn up in Sicily, presumably in Mazara, where, as we know, from other documents, Joseph Yijū settled.

The proprietress of the residence was a Jewish woman with the rare name Umm al-'Izz, 'Distinguished Woman' (several men called Abu 'l-'Izz appear in the Geniza papers).¹ The terms of the contract, written in Judeo-Arabic, are quite unusual in comparison to rentals in Egypt attested in the Geniza papers. The latter are usually for relatively short periods, six months or a year. According to Goitein, rentals for as long as four or five years were made sometimes between relatives, but they were exceptional and the results of specific circumstances. Rent was usually paid at the end of the month, and a certain discount was allowed when payment was made in advance.² The forty-years rental, all paid in advance in this Sicilian document is, as far as I know, without parallel. Interestingly, either party was allowed to rescind the agreement at any time without penalty, and the full sum for the period, in which Joseph did not dwell in the apartment, would be refunded. Elsewhere Joseph complained that he was completely without means (III, 49*v*, lines 12 ff.). Perhaps the twenty dinars which Abraham Ben Yijū tried, through Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan's assistance, to send to Joseph ca. 1136 (II, 30, lines 18–21) reached him, and he used them to pay for this lease. The option to cancel and get a full refund may reflect Joseph's hope to return to al-Mahdiyya.

¹ {For the name Umm al-'Izz, see Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmā'*, 1030.

² See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:91–97.

Obviously this is one of the family papers, which the Yijūs brought with them when they immigrated to Egypt.

Verso is blank except for a few words, in a smaller script, which have not yet been deciphered.

Translation

(1) There appeared before us, we the signatories to this document, Umm al-‘Izz d. Zur‘a. (2) She said to us:

Testify to me and perform with me the symbolic act of obligation, *as of now*, will all the (binding) terms of deeds. (3) Write and sign that which I hereby declare in your presence, (4) willingly and not coerced. Give it to R. Joseph b. R. Perah[yā] (5) Ben Yijū. Namely, I have already collected from him twenty, good Ducan *rubā‘īs* of legal tender, (6) full (weight), grain for grain,³ for which I have rented him an apartment, in my house—which I had purchased (7) [in the] neighborhood of the tower of the *Rayyis*—for forty years, at a rate of one half *rubā‘ī* per year, for him to dwell (8) in [any] apartment that he chooses and of which he approves. We have agreed to this in the manner in which dwells everyone who (9) rents. Whatever falls into decay and requires repair, I shall repair for him, the way any landlord does.⁴

(10) Whenever either of us desires to cancel the agreement or believes that he has suffered damages from the other and is not able (11) to live together with him, he⁵ will collect his money, after I settle accounts with him, deducting from the twenty *rubā‘īs* (12) the amount for the period he shall have dwelled there until the time of the cancellation, at a rate of one-half *rubā‘ī* per year, (13) just as I have rented to him.

We wrote and signed the declaration which she had made in our presence, (14) after having performed with her the symbolic act of obligation, according to the most firm and binding regulations fixed by the ancients of *blessed memory* in circumstances such as (15) this [...]

³ Arabic *ḥabba ḥabba*. Precise to the weight of the last grain of barley of the standard coin's weight.

⁴ Such an arrangement is found in I, 24, side a, lines 10 ff.

⁵ Joseph.}

III, 31 *Letter from Yeshū'ā ha-Kohen b. Jacob to Abraham Ben Yijū, then in Aden*

Dhū Jibla, Yemen, 1150

ENA 1822 A, f. 75

As at least five lines are missing at the beginning, this sheet was longer than III, 33 and 38. The paper also is different: light grayish, very thick and wooly. The upper part, which also contained the address, was torn away unevenly, but the identity of the sender can be fixed with certainty by the very characteristic handwriting, which is identical in these three letters.

In the introduction to III, 22, a certain resemblance between the script used by the writer of that document, who once belonged to the rabbinical court of Aden, and that of our Yeshū'ā was noted. However, the latter writes far more beautifully. His characters are unusually large, with the tendency to being oblong and are similar to those used when copying books. The particularly long necks of the letter *lamed* occurring in the first line of a page (in III, 33 and 38) are a decorative embellishment used in biblical and other manuscripts.

Besides this document, the same writer sent III, 33 and 38 to Ben Yijū, and the three letters are considered here together. The sender of our letters is no doubt identical with Yeshū'ā, one of the three sons of Jacob ha-Kohen of Dhū Jibla, mentioned in II, 35 and II, 36 as complaining about Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan, the representative of the merchants in Aden. The identity is confirmed by the names of the man, his father and his family, as well as his domicile (for the latter, see III, 38, margin, line 4). No. III, 38 is also in conformity with II, 35 and II, 36, in so far as we learn from it that the writer did not entertain personal relations with Maḍmūn's family, although his father had once deposited money with Maḍmūn's brother.

Although III, 31 does not expressly mention Ben Yijū's name, there is little doubt that the letter was addressed to him. We find our sender in correspondence with him in III, 33 and 38. Here, he asks whether he should rent a house for him. In III, 33 he writes details about the house rented. Ben Yijū praised Maḍmūn for favors bestowed on him (see II, 37, vs. 53 ff. {and elsewhere}); this is referred to here, III, 31, lines 23 ff. {see note to line 25}. Finally, the very fact that this letter, sent from inland Yemen to Aden, has reached the Cairo Geniza, is best explained by the assumption that it was carried there by an India traveler who had sojourned for some time in Yemen and afterwards disposed of his corre-

spendence in the Geniza. So far, we know of only one person following this path, who stayed in Yemen for a considerable period: Ben Yijū.

The sequence of the three letters can be fixed according to the following considerations. No. III, 31 was written when Maḍmūn was alive, but some time after Ben Yijū's arrival in Aden. It seems that Ben Yijū had already visited Dhū Jibla, as even the children of the two men {Ben Yijū and Yeshū'ā} knew each other (margin, line 2), and Ben Yijū had already had opportunity to write to Yeshū'ā about Maḍmūn's benevolence. Considerable time must have elapsed between III, 31 and II, 33. In the former, the sender inquires whether Ben Yijū wants to come to his town, in which case he would rent a house for him, while in the latter, he reports about that house, after Ben Yijū had already gone back to Aden. No. III, 38 contains the news of Maḍmūn's death, which occurred in 1151 (or early in 1152).¹ At that time, Ben Yijū was neither in Aden nor in Dhū Jibla. Thus, the chronology of the three documents may be fixed as follows: III, 31: 1150; III, 38: 1151/2 {1151}; III, 33, later than III, 31, may precede or follow III, 38.

These short letters are not without interest in various respects. In III, 38, line 7, Ben Yijū is addressed as 'Head of the Congregation.' It is not difficult to surmise where Ben Yijū assumed that office during his comparatively short stay in Yemen. In II, 35, lines 7–8, we learn about Jews from three different towns who had settled in Dhū Jibla, the new capital of Yemen. According to all we know about the communal life of the Yemenites—and other Jewish communities described in the Geniza papers, each of these three groups almost certainly formed a separate congregation. To these was added another, led by Ben Yijū. It most probably consisted of Tunisian merchants who were on their way back from India but hesitated to return to their homeland owing to the Norman occupation of most of that country's coastal towns. These merchants were looking for a place to settle (cf. III, 29, lines 18–19); and some of them, including Ben Yijū, tried the newly founded town of Dhū Jibla, a natural choice.

Obviously, that trial was not successful. Ben Yijū left for Aden (III, 33), and after the death of his only {surviving} son, settled in Cairo. When we find him there again at the head of a small congregation (see the introduction to III, 41 {and III, 51}), we may safely assume that he

¹ {His death was in 1151; see the introduction to III, 38.

was followed to Cairo by some of the traders who had been with him in India and Yemen, an assumption which is corroborated by the names of some of the congregants.

{Translation²

[A. End of preamble]

(1) [... Reading your letter] brought me joy, [because of the news of your well-being and the success] (2) of your affairs. I asked God—may He be praised!—[to increase] (3) for your excellency all that is good. And [I thanked Him] (4) and extolled Him for your well-being and the well-being of your (5) family; may God protect and guard them and make me (6) their ransom³ from all evil.

[B. Inquiry about Abū Sa'd b. Nethanel, son of the writer's paternal uncle, and Abū 'Alī b. Abū 'Amr of Ceylon]

Your excellency's servant (7) inquires of you as to the welfare of the most illustrious sheikh, my lord Abū Sa'd (8) b. R. Nethanel⁴—*may the Rock of Israel protect him!*—the son of my paternal uncle, and the welfare of (9) the most illustrious sheikh, my lord Abū 'Alī b. (10) Abū 'Amr [or: 'Umar] of Ceylon.⁵

² Goitein wrote a description of the document's contents and notes, but I have not found its translation among his papers.

³ Arabic *wa-ja'alanī* [...] *fidā'ahum*. A similar expression is used in addressing Ben Yijū in III, 32, line 6 (their: your ransom). With slight variations, it was common in the correspondence of very close people; the writer wishes that all evil, which had been destined for the addressee, befall him instead. According to Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:18, it is usually found in the correspondence of brothers and of parents and children (see also *ib.*, 480, n. 154) and when used by non-relatives, the writer intended to convey that he considered himself a member of the addressee's family and had a claim on his support. In my opinion, the frequency of the phrase in the correspondence of non-relatives might be greater than suggested there by Goitein. Additional examples in such letters can be cited in I, 17, line 7, IV, 12*v*, address, IV, 24, lines 4–5, IV, 42, line 5, etc.)

⁴ It is highly probable that this man is identical with Abū Sa'd the India traveler named in II, 55*v*, line 9 (in Broach, India), as we find him in Ben Yijū's company in Yemen, III, 27, line 1 and afterwards in Egypt, III, 51. {It is difficult to ascertain whether or not the same man was intended in these documents; see the notes to these references. The India trader Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel was also called Abū Sa'd.}

⁵ Abū 'Alī of Ceylon is almost certainly identical with the goldsmith Abū 'Alī who went to Ceylon according to II, 32, line 27. As he is expected here to be in Aden, he must

[C. Request to be notified whether Ben Yijū would come
'to the mountains' or remain in Aden]

Let me know, (11) your excellency, whether you intend to come to the mountains,⁶ (12) so that, were you to be coming, I would rent (13) a house for your excellency. And if the city is agreeable to you, (14) that is Aden, inform me thereof, (15) so that I can act accordingly. I shall have no difficulty (16) in traveling to Aden, God willing, (17) soon. Your excellency's servant has much longing (18) and yearning for you. *May God show me the countenance (19) of my lord soon!*

[D. Greetings]

For your eminent (20) excellency and their excellencies, the two children, (21) the best, most profuse greetings.

[E. Reference to Ben Yijū's report about Maḍmūn's kindness]

As to (22) what you expressed in you esteemed letter⁷ concerning (23) the action of our master *the Prince of the Lord's People*⁸ with you. May (24) his customary acts of kindness such as this never cease with (25) all mankind!⁹ May the Holy one blessed be He compensate him for (26) all with complete good! *Amen. May it thus (27) be willed! And Peace to you. May peace overtake (28) peace!*¹⁰ *And much salvation / from east and west.*

have been out in Ceylon for about ten years at least. {In II, 64, Abū 'Alī b. Abū 'Umar (or: 'Amr) writes from Upper Egypt ca. 1167 about his intention to set out for India.}

⁶ Arabic *al-jabal*, is a general designation for inland Yemen, as opposed to Aden. Here, more specifically, Dhū Jibla is meant, the writer's domicile, where he offers to rent a house for Ben Yijū.

⁷ {Arabic *ruq'a*. See 697, n. 7.}

⁸ 'Prince of the Lord's People' {*negid 'am y.*} was one of Maḍmūn's official titles, see {II, 37–40, and in reference to Maḍmūn II, cf.} II, 69, line 4 ff.

⁹ It is interesting to note that Yeshū'ā says about Maḍmūn that he showed kindness to everybody, despite the strained relations existing between his family and Maḍmūn, as reflected in II, 35, 36 and III, 38.

¹⁰ {For 'peace to you,' *we-shālōm lakh*, see III, 1v, line 21, and 563, n. 64, where other references are given. 'May peace overtake peace,' *shālōm yassig shālōm*, unknown from other sources, appears with slight variations also in III, 32 margin, lines 5–6, III, 37v, line 15 (see 715, n. 10); IV, 10v, line 33 (all Yemenite). As Prof. Y. Ratzabi suggested to me, 'may peace overtake peace' is probably an allusion to Lev. 26: 5.}

[F. Additional greetings from one Fayrūz, the writer's children and Ḥasan 'to all']

[Margin] (1) Similarly, your excellency's servant Fayrūz¹¹ extends greetings to your excellency. (2) And all the children and Ḥasan extend greetings to all the excellencies. May your (3) excellency's servant receive an unequivocal reply concerning what you would like me to do! *And Peace.*}

¹¹ A Persian name. This man probably was a slave who served as Yeshū'ā's factotum and business agent. {Fayrūz or Firūz ('Turquoise') was a common name for slaves. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:138, 433, n. 50, 435, n. 83; Schimmel, *Names*, 71.}

III, 32 *Letter from Joseph ha-Kohen b. Meshullām to Abraham Ben Yijū, in Inland Yemen*

Aden, 1150–51

Bodl. Ms. Heb. d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 61

The letter was written in Aden, as the details about the arrival of the ships and the activities of Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan, the representative of the merchants in that city, prove (cf. lines 18–22). It is addressed to inland Yemen, for the writer speaks about Ben Yijū's 'coming down' to Aden. Likewise, III, 38 was sent to Ben Yijū while he sojourned in inland Yemen. From III, 31, we learn that Ben Yijū, while staying in Aden—or having returned to it, considered leaving that town for the highland of Yemen. It is highly probable that Ben Yijū was the head of a small congregation of Tunisian merchants in the High Yemen (cf. the introduction to III, 31). Our letter, however, presupposes that he intended to return from there to Aden as soon as circumstances permitted.

This letter was written in 1150 or 1151, for Ben Yijū was still in Aden in September 1149 (see III, 29), while Maḍmūn died late in 1151 {see the introduction to III, 38}.

The *Dāʿī*, 'Missionary,' the official title given by the Fatimid caliphs of Egypt to the ruler of Yemen recognized by them, certainly refers here to Muḥammad b. Saba' (ruled 1139–53 or 1155), the most successful Sultan of the Zuray'id dynasty.¹ In 1150, he killed his last major rival, 'Alī b. Abu 'l-Ghārāt (cf. II, 51, line 13),² and in the same year (see Löfgren, *ib.*), he acquired by purchase twenty-eight castles as well as some towns, including Dhū Jibla, then the capital of Yemen. Clearly, our letter refers to these events, which contributed to the pacification of the country. The letter is interesting because of the reference to the high-handed ways of Maḍmūn and other details.

{See the introduction to II, 51, on the conflict between Muḥammad's father, Saba' b. Abū Su'ūd, and 'Alī. Another fragmentary Geniza letter, V, 9, probably refers to a battle between Muḥammad and 'Alī or other rivals and sheds light on the loyalties of the Jewish merchants of Aden. We have

¹ About him, see Strothmann, "Karam," and Löfgren, *Aden*, 2:217. {According to the chronicler 'Umāra al-Yamanī, in his *Ta'rikh al-Yaman*, Muḥammad b. Saba' died in 548 A.H. (March 29, 1153–March 17, 1154). Al-Janadi dates his death to 548, 549 or 540. See Kay, *Yaman*, 278, n. 70. Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Al-Mustabṣir*, 123, supports the 548 date.

² Both 'Umāra al-Yamanī (Kay, *Yaman*, 73) and Ibn al-Mujāwir (*Al-Mustabṣir*, 123) give 545 A.H. (April 30, 1150–April 19, 1151) as the year of 'Alī's death.

already had occasion to speak of the partnerships in the shipping business between Maḍmūn and Bilāl b. Jarīr, whom Sabaʿ had appointed governor and military commander. In his letter to Abū Zikrī Kohen, Joseph b. Abraham thanked God for Bilāl's victory and described Maḍmūn's active role in the war effort:

Maḍmūn [participated] in outfitting [...] *jāshujiyyas* and whatever they required. Sheikh Bilāl and the Sultan advanced to the vicinity of the mountains to conquer villages there from their enemies. God, the Exalted, gave them victory, and they conquered many villages and huge fortresses, in which there were many riches. And they derived from them each (or: the whole) year much food and income. Now, this gave us [...] great joy. *Let them praise the Lord.*³

In his Summaries of the documents, Goitein notes that the writer of III, 32, Joseph ha-Kohen b. Meshullām, was probably a cousin of Yeshūʿā Kohen of III, 31.}

Contents

- A. Preamble, including two biblical verses⁴ opening the letter (lines 1–10).
- B–D. See translation, below.
- E. Address (verso).

Translation of B–D

[B. Report about the pacification of the country by the Dāʿī]

(10–11) Your servant {lit., ‘the property of his hands’}⁵ took notice of your inquiry, my lord, (12) about the news of the roads and the reconciliation between the Dāʿī (13) and his adversaries. I am able to inform you, (14) my lord, that even one or two persons (15) can travel on any

³ Ps. 107:8. No. V, 9, margin and top. The *jāshujiyya* was a military vessel; see the note to II, 23, line 12. In the continuation here Joseph described how Maḍmūn took advantage of the military operation to try to apprehend al-Fawfālī, who had absconded to Zabīd without paying debts (see III, 9v, lines 1–2).}

⁴ Mic. 5:8, used also by Maḍmūn in II, 13, line 1 and by another writer, possibly from Alexandria, II, 6, line 36 {also II, 55, line 2}; Job 22:25, used also by another writer from Aden, see III, 15, line 3. {See also III, 10a, line 1; IV, 11, line 5; V, 8, line 1.

⁵ Arabic *milk yadīhi*. The same appears on verso, in the address. See III, 15v, address, and 626, n. 31.

road⁶ and that the whole country (16) is *peaceful*. Likewise, the Dā'ī has been reconciled (17) with all his enemies and has received from them (18) hostages.⁷

[C. Details about happenings in Aden]

All the ships have arrived (19) safely.⁸ Sheikh Maḍmūn—*may God remember him favorably* {alt. tr.: *may he be remembered for a blessing*}⁹—has seized (20) the entire two shops,¹⁰ and nothing remains in the possession of Ibrahīm (21) except the doorway and the room for the manufacture of wine. This was done out of compassion (22) by him (Maḍmūn) for the people.¹¹

Now I pray to the *God of Israel* to protect you (23) from all misfortunes and calamities.¹²

⁶ In light of the warning in the margin to travel only with trustworthy people, this would appear to be an exaggeration.

⁷ I am not aware of information supplied by the chroniclers on his taking hostages, which of course were taken to guarantee the continued peace. See above, n. 3, on V, 9, concerning apprehending al-Fawfalī.

⁸ This remark about the safe arrival of 'all the ships' seems to indicate that traffic on the Indian Ocean must have been rather regular, i.e., that it was known in Aden, and even in inland Yemen, which ships were expected to arrive each year.

⁹ The blessing for Maḍmūn is either a matter of routine or meant sarcastically. {*Z'īl* is used as a blessing following the name of the living; see II, 13, line 2, and 312, n. 4.}

¹⁰ Arabic *al-saqīfatayn*. The word is damaged, partly by emendation and partly by water {and essentially illegible}. 'The two shops' obviously refer to that belonging to the man mentioned in the same line and to the writer; cf. line 26. For *saqīfa*, cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:663a, 'portique, galerie couverte.' {Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 225: 'small portico of house or shop . . .; kitchen.'} Obviously 'shop' is intended here. On both sides of the entrance door to a Yemenite house, there may be shops. Under circumstances not specified, but obviously known to the recipient, the two merchants were 'robbed' (line 26) of these places, while one of them retained the entrance to the house and the room for the preparation of wine (line 21). Such a room (mostly for the preparation of brandy) is found in every better Jewish house in Yemen at the back of the entrance hall; see Rathjens, *Architecture*, 24. The partition even of one floor between different properties was common in Yemen; see the documents published by Goitein in Rathjens, *Architecture*, 71–74. {Cf. Goitein, *Yemenites*, 141–59.}

¹¹ This could either be praise of Maḍmūn for not having taken possession of the door and the winery or a sarcastic remark about his high-handed behavior, concerning which see III, 11, lines 27 ff.}

¹² Here, the writer intended to conclude his letter with good wishes for a safe journey, but added an afterthought concerning his own shop. {'To protect you', *yakfīhi*, literally, 'to protect him,' could be a sarcastic blessing for Maḍmūn.}

Please (24) do not ask me, my lord, what I experienced from Mūsā b. (25) Mevōrākh¹³ and his malicious joy at my misfortune¹⁴ over the loss (26) of my shop. Yes, my shop was taken away from me by force {alt. tr.: I was robbed only of my shop}.¹⁵

[D. Advice to the addressee about his journey from the High Yemen to the Coast]

[Margin] (1) Receive for your honored self the best (2) greetings, and do not defer your travel¹⁶—may God assist you!—(3) indeed,¹⁷ to our place. And please, do not travel (4) except in the company of people on whom you can rely.¹⁸ (5) *May peace for you overtake* (6) *peace!*¹⁹ (7) This letter²⁰ was written in a hurry.²¹

¹³ Both this man's name and that of his father are common in their Hebrew and Arabic forms, and it is interesting that the two were mixed here.

¹⁴ On gloating over a rival's misfortunes in the Geniza papers, see the note to II, 20*v*, line 6 (335, n. 42).

¹⁵ Arabic *wa-mā suriqtu illā min saqīfatī*, another sarcastic statement.}

¹⁶ Lit., coming down.

¹⁷ {Arabic *wa-a-mā*. Goitein, who had not deciphered the preceding phrase, translated: 'or.'}

¹⁸ Arabic *tkn* [*'alayhim*], from *wkn*. In the High Yemen, the relevant form would be pronounced *tūkan* or *tkan*; cf. Goitein, *Jemenica*, XXI, para. 17a. {Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 53, has only *wikin bi*-.}

¹⁹ Cf. III, 31, lines 27–28 and 701, n. 10 and III, 37*v*, line 15.

²⁰ Arabic *rq'* (vocalization is uncertain). See notes to II, 34, side f, line 2 and III, 30, line 12 (385, n. 46; 695, n. 7).

²¹ A frequent form of apology for the poor handwriting, etc.}

III, 33 *Letter from ʾEshū‘ā ha-Kohen b. Jacob to Abraham Ben ʾYijū re House Rented for Him*

Dhū Jibla, Yemen, 1150–51

TS 10J 14, f. 2

For the background of this letter and its relationships to III, 31 and 38, see the introduction to III, 31.

Contents

- A. Preamble, consisting mostly of rhymed Hebrew prose (lines 1–15).
- B–C. See translation, below.
- D. Address (verso).

Translation of B–C

[B. Communication that everything was all right with Ben ʾYijū’s house in the sender’s town]

(15) I,¹ the servant of (16) your excellency, inform you—may God make your prosperity permanent!—(17) that when you departed from me {alt tr.: I departed from you},² I went to the house; (18) and the hand mill³ and the durra crusher⁴ were in the house. I locked⁵ (19) the house and departed and entrusted⁶ Sheikh Ḥusayn with the care (20) of the

¹ {This section begins with the words, *ghayra anna*, ‘furthermore.’ I have not seen this usage in dictionaries; cf. Blau, *Grammar*, 203, *ghayra dhālīka anna*.

² Arabic *maḏā minhu*, lit., ‘when he departed from him.’ The third person is used for both writer and addressee.

³ Arabic *maḥḥan*. A sketch of a Yemenite hand mill can be seen in Rathjens, *Südarabien-Reise*, 3:120. {For the *maḥḥan*, also see Margariti, “Aden,” 161.}

⁴ Arabic *marḥā’*, a common word in Southern Yemen denoting a smaller hand mill for the crushing of peeled durra. The peeled durra grains, after having been soaked in water overnight, are crushed in the *marḥā’*, until they become a liquid used for the preparation of *lhūḥi*, a flexible flat cake forming one of the main dishes of the population; cf. details in Goitein, *Jemenica*, 136, no. 1004 {cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 190}. While the hand mill normally is built on a fixed platform, the *marḥā’* is mobile.

⁵ Arabic *rbṭ*, normally meaning to tie, to bind. As the door is fastened with a leather string, one says in Yemen, *urbuṭ al-bāb*, ‘tie up the door.’ Perhaps, the writer intended to say *al-bāb* and wrote erroneously *al-bayt*. {On locks in Yemen, see page 313, n. 7.}

⁶ Arabic *zakkan* (a *shadda* is written on the top of the word). This is Yemenite speech. *Ant muzakkan bifulān*, ‘you are responsible for so and so (e.g., that he should not escape)’.

house, which he was prepared to do (lit., ‘the man said only “good, ’”).⁷ (21) Qays,⁸ however, was angry⁹ and said: “He¹⁰ lost the house’s (22) furnishings¹¹ and rent.” In fact, I, your excellency’s servant, inform you (23) that Sheikh Ḥusayn received payment of (24) the entire rent and that you have not suffered any loss (25) from the house. Therefore, when he¹² reaches Aden and talks (26) to you, my lord, about this matter, do not accept (27) his words (as true) {alt. tr.: do not take notice of his words}¹³ nor be distressed or (28) worried by them.

[C. Conclusion and greetings]

If you, my lord, have any {alt. tr.: Whatever, you, my lord}¹⁴ (29) need or require any service, honor your servant (30) with it. To you, my lord (31) and master, and to my lord Peraḥyā¹⁵—*may his Rock preserve him!*—the best greetings. *And peace.*

[Margin] Kindly do not cease writing to me, the servant of your excellency. May I never be deprived of you!

zakkin bilada ‘ind *fulān*, ‘entrust the clothes to so and so.’ In documents, they write: *zkn* *wdrkt* (*zukkint wa-udrikt*), ‘I have taken upon myself full responsibility’ (Goitein, “Documents from San‘a,” 200 {Goitein, *Yemenites*, 159}, line 15 of the document published there, dated 1678). Cf. also Goitein-Ḥabshush, *Travels in Yemen*, 45, 46, 112, 123. {Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 202–3, where this meaning should be added for the second form.}

⁷ A common way of expressing consent in Yemenite speech.

⁸ It is doubtful whether this person was Jewish. I have never heard the name Qays used by Yemenite Jews, nor is it common today in Yemen among Muslims. It was mentioned to me as a family name among Muslims.

⁹ Arabic *ḥrd*, most probably pronounced *ḥirid*, as today.

¹⁰ {Ben Yijū.}

¹¹ Arabic *āla*. This is in Yemen the legal term for everything movable in a house. If a newly-wed woman quarrels with her mother-in-law and the judge decides that the husband has to leave his father’s house and provide his wife with a house of his own, the formula used is: *an tuḥaddir bayt wa-āla*, ‘you have to provide a house with its furnishings.’

¹² Obviously, Qays.

¹³ {Arabic *fa-lā ya’khubdh bi-kalāmih*.

¹⁴ For *ma’a mā* here, see 484, n. 29.

¹⁵ Ben Yijū’s son Abū Surūr.

III, 34–35 *Fragments of Three Responsa Written by Abraham Ben Yijū*

Probably Yemen, ca. 1151

III, 34. TS 10J 9, f. 24

III, 35. TS 10J 32, f. 6

For the description of III, 34, see III, 3, the verso and margin on recto of which were used by Ben Yijū for writing these opinions. {No. III, 35 is a direct continuation. Goitein noted the connection in his letter to me of Jan. 29, 1979.}

The many additions written between the lines (e.g., lines 1, 5, 7, 8, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, etc.), deletions and corrections (e.g., lines 5, 16, 21, 23) prove that these were legal opinions given by Ben Yijū himself, not responsa by others copied by him. This is further to be recognized by the very state of the manuscript. The beginning of the first responsum and the end of the second had been written on other sheets; of the third, only a passage from its midsection was written in the free space on the recto of the letter (III, 3). Thus, there can be no doubt that we have here actual drafts of opinions.

The names mentioned, such as Salīm (line 17) and Saʿīd (lines 4 and 14) and above all the personal name Fayyūmī¹ (line 24 and 32), point to Yemen as the country, in which these opinions were given. In Cairo or Tunisia, then great centers of Jewish learning, Ben Yijū would neither have been approached nor would have considered himself entitled to act as a legal expert. Of course, the responsa could have been written in India. This would require assuming that a rather sizable community of Yemenite Jews was settled then in that country and had been there for a considerable time (in case I, three generations are mentioned as well as the gift of a house). However, since the currency referred to is the dinar, and not Indian money, it is almost certain that we are here in Yemen. As we know from Maimonides' famous *Epistle to Yemen*, the Jews were then—as up to the exodus of 1949/50—dispersed in tiny communities all over the country.² These country Jews represent a curious mixture of learning and ignorance. Thus, in case II here, reference is made to a legal document, properly drawn up, but witnessed by a father and his son, which, according to a most elementary rule of Jewish

¹ {See the note to II, 24v, line 2 (349, n. 78).}

² Cf. Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 85, n. 3.}

law, invalidates the testimony. Accordingly, it may be assumed that these legal questions were addressed to Ben Yijū, while he was head of a congregation in Dhū Jibla (see III, 38, line 7) from persons in the adjacent villages. This would not imply that there were no other learned Jews in that new capital of Yemen, where people from three ancient congregations, including Ṣanʿa, had settled (see II, 35). Thus, the Hebrew in the letters of Yeshūʿā of Dhū Jibla (III, 33, 38) shows that he was a learned man. But it was common usage to ask for the legal opinions of various scholars on the same issues.

As far as the present writer is able to judge, both the legal knowledge and reasoning of Ben Yijū are sound. Although these are only drafts, his responsa compare favorable with others of that time emanating from famous authorities and known to us from literary sources. All decisions are based on quotations from the Babylonian Talmud, the primary source of Jewish law. To be sure, these drafts were written a generation before the promulgation of Maimonides' code. Some of the deviations from the printed text of the Babylonian Talmud may be due to slips (e.g. lines 18 and 21); others correspond to variants known from manuscripts (e.g. lines 1 ff.). All in all, these fragments complement the picture of our India trader as that of an accomplished gentleman according to the conceptions of his time: businessman, public figure, poet and versed in religious law (there was no secular law in the sense of a body of knowledge).

Case I (lines 1–23)

Although the first part of this opinion was written on a page not yet found, its background can be reconstructed almost in its entirety.

Six parties are involved: a father, already dead; a mother; a married daughter, also dead, and her husband; their boy and 'the orphans,' meaning the brothers of the daughter. Only the names of the father, Saʿīd, and those of two representatives of the mother, Nethanel and Salīm, are given.

The case is a claim of 'the orphans' against their brother-in-law, who had inherited from his wife a house, money and jewelry. The plaintiffs argue that these possessions, which had originally belonged to their parents, had not been the legal property of their late sister and consequently had to be given back to them as the legal heirs (according to ancient Jewish law, daughters do not inherit when sons are alive).

Against this, the defendant had claimed (a) that the father had already ear-marked a 'gift' (as dowry) for his daughter; (b) that the gift had been confirmed by the mother, who, in addition, had presented her daughter on her wedding day with some of her own jewelry, namely a *shamsa* (an ornament in form of a 'sun')³ and a *khannāqa* (a necklace).⁴

Ben Yiju rules:

- A. The father's gift was not valid, as it was neither handed over formally to his daughter during his lifetime nor made in the form of a will (in which case, no further formalities would be necessary) (lines 1–7).
- B. The mother had possessions of her own, belonging to her according to her marriage contract, which exceeded both the sum of twenty-five dinars and the value of the house given to her daughter at her marriage. (According to Jewish law, a wife does not inherit her husband; therefore, the mother was entitled to make a gift to her daughter only out of her own property.) The dowry gift to the daughter was binding, as long as it was not proved that the mother had revoked it before the wedding.
Likewise, the gift of her jewelry to her daughter was valid, as it was made in the presence of two trustworthy witnesses, in which case, no formal transfer was required (lines 7–16).
- C. Part of the twenty-five dinars obviously had been handed over to the daughter at her marriage, while the mother's representative paid another part, perhaps after her. This payment, too, was legal (lines 16–18).
- D. The husband had legally inherited his wife's belongings (lines 18–21).
- E. The boy to whom she gave birth—if he remained alive—would inherit all the dues stipulated by his father for his mother in her marriage contract (lines 21–23).

³ See Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:786. Most probably identical with the modern *šubra*, a most beautiful round ornament borne by the women of the Khawlān and Sharaf districts of Yemen on their foreheads. [See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:216, where sun disks are discussed, with reference to this document. As noted there, the jewelry in Ben Yiju's daughter's dowry (III, 54, line 16) included a pair of *shamsas*. According to R. Ettinghausen in his notes sent to Prof. Goitein on April 2, 1959, *shamsa*, a circular ornament with radiating points, is a common term in Islamic ornamentation in Iraq and Iran. Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 266, where definitions include: 'a silver decoration inlaid with colorful gems . . .; silver crown of bride.']

⁴ See Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:409b [and Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:216, 427, n. 481].

Case II (lines 24–32)

This section opens with the deleted word ‘The question.’ Obviously, Ben Yijū intended first to copy or to summarize the question addressed to him, before drafting his answer. On second thought, he proceeded immediately to give his opinion.

A document was produced, in which a man called Fayyūmī, since deceased, had made a gift to his daughter, Durra (‘Pearl’). The document, according to Ben Yijū, was drawn up in compliance with the accepted rules, but was invalid, as it was signed by a father and his son as witnesses. At the end of this section, Ben Yijū weighs the possibility that Fayyūmī himself had consented to having a father and a son as witnesses. {The continuation is on III, 35.}

Case III (recto margin)

Of this case, the facts themselves have not been preserved but only part of the discussion. The question was, in which cases a guaranty for a debt required a symbolic act of obligation {*qinyān*}, in order to be legal.

Ben Yijū’s opinions are written in a very lively style, which reflects oral discussion. As such, they are a valuable contribution to our knowledge of legal study and practice.

III, 36 *A Court Record and Medical Prescriptions on Cloth Written by Abraham Ben Yijū*

{India, 1132–39, 1145–49}

TS Arabic 41, f. 81

Part of a court record, carefully written on a piece of cloth but almost completely effaced. Verso, two medical prescriptions in Arabic characters, it seems, also in Ben Yijū's hand.

{The very fact that this document was written on cloth is of interest. This indicates that it was written in India, where there was a chronic shortage of paper. As such, the document belongs actually in chap. 3, sec. D, rather than sec. E. Goitein identified Ben Yijū as the writer on the basis of his handwriting. The text of the Judeo-Arabic court record (or: deposition of witnesses) is so effaced that not more than a few consecutive words can be deciphered with any degree of certainty. Nevertheless, the contents are interesting. It notes that someone, presumably a trader, presented a court record, or rather a court ruling (Hebrew *ma'ase*),¹ written in Broach, the well-known port city in northwest India. As such, this document contains unique evidence of some kind of autonomous juridical activity by Jewish traders in at least two different localities in India: Broach and Mangalore—or wherever else Ben Yijū was at the time of the writing. It only stands to reason that the Mediterranean Jewish traders in India set up an ad hoc court system of sorts to adjudicate their disputes there, but I am not aware of other documentation thereof.² The dispute between the parties apparently concerned an accusation that one of them had spoken disparagingly about Jewish sages. Unfortunately, because of its fragmentariness, the text conceals the exact nature of the supposed sacrilege.

The other side of the cloth contains jottings of medical recipes described by Isaacs, *Medical Manuscripts*, 30, no. 381. The recipes list Indian spices and other Oriental ingredients. If the handwriting is in fact Ben Yijū's, it would further suggest that this trader also had some medical education. The dates given above are those for which we have evidence that Ben Yijū was in India; see the introduction to III, 21 (page 648).}

¹ {For the meaning of this word, see the note to I, 13, fol. 67, line 16 (page 200, n. 13).

² Cf. 196, n. 1.}

III, 37 *Letter Appealing for Assistance Against Abraham Ben Yijū*

Yemen

TS 13 J 24, f. 2

Request, addressed apparently to Maḍmūn b. Japheth, by a person in inland Yemen, to help him against Ben Yijū, involving a shipment of five *bahārs* (of what is not said). The addressee is asked by the writer to take care of his affairs until he himself would arrive in Aden.

{The complaints about Ben Yijū are reminiscent of those sent to Maḍmūn and other traders by Makhlūf b. Mūsā (see pages 65–66), but the handwriting does not resemble his.

Translation

(1) [...] with him [...] (2) *al-Sadīd*¹—may [God] pro[lon]g [his life!—...] (3) the most illustrious *nākhudā*² was kind enough (to assist) in what (4) you had already begun. Praise and thanks (5) are only to you. My lord, you (6) have already concerned yourself with the matter. Please complete it, for (7) kindness is yours³ in the past and recently. I request (8) of you, my lord, that you consider me one of (9) your devotees⁴ and servants. God already (10) knows and attests my love for my master.

(11) Sheikh Abraham b. Yijū (12) has made little of a (the) load of five *bahārs*. (13) All the time I see him, he repeats to (14) me, your servant, his talk. I have become exasperated by him. (15) He says to me all the time: “Come back.” Then he makes himself scarce (16) and disappears, in a short day a hundred (17) times. I request that you act in the name of your esprit

¹ {For this honorific, see 274, n. 1.

² According to a note by Goitein, this is probably a reference to Mahrūz b. Jacob. This suggestion was made at an early stage of Goitein’s research before the large number of *nākhudās* mentioned in these letters came to light; see pages 142–46, 148–52. Note that also Maḍmūn was a *nākhudā*.

³ Arabic *al-faḍl laka*. For this expression, see 426, n. 67.

⁴ Arabic *ahbāb*. Chamberlain, “Ayyūbid,” 238: “Perhaps the most important of the ties that bound rulers to their supporters were love and service. Love (*ḥubb*, *maḥabba*) referred to the intimate ties of the family and the sentimental attachments of masters and disciples; it also was a means by which the powerful recruited political supporters. . . .” (Thanks to Prof. Joel Kraemer for this reference.) Cf., e.g., IV, 34, margin, fourth addition, lines 1–2: “Our lord has acquired as his servants a multitude of devotees (*ahbāb*) and has taken possession of souls and hearts.”

de corps (18) with me, in keeping with your customary acts of kindness and noble (19) character with me and with others, concerning (20) something that one has taken from another. I have already (21) spoken with the *nākhudā* (22) about this, and he said to me: “I shall look after you.”⁵ (23) I request of your exalted excellency (24) to take care of this, until you take [Margin] (1) [...] *mithqāls* in the city (of Aden), whatever there is that remains. I shall complete my business with it, with your assistance. Then I shall come to Aden and proclaim⁶ the graces of the Lord—may He be praised!—(2) [and your grace]. I entreat God *blessed be He* and you. Stand by me and strengthen your surroundings,⁷ my lord and master. May your patronage protect me and your assistance embrace me! I ask of *the Holy One* [Verso] (1) *blessed be He* to increase all good things in (2) this world in your hands, make you successful, enable you to attain (3) your goals and make you, as (4) *the Holy One blessed be He* has already made you, (5) a permanent support. May He protect you from all (6) danger! Be kind enough, my lord (7) and master, to be present where your servant (8) is absent.⁸ May God make permanent your prosperity! (9) Expedite for your servant whatever (10) will be, in a (any) number of ways.⁹ Whatever there is (11) is from my load. I hope to receive whatever (12) is recovered soon, so that I can derive benefit (13) from it. *Peace on your pure* (14) *spirit and your virtuous soul.* (15) *May peace overtake peace!*¹⁰

⁵ Arabic *anā nanzur laka*. A somewhat imprecise translation of part of III, 37 is given by Ghosh, *Antique*, 178, e.g., for the last phrase: “I should turn to you.” For the *nqt* form for 1st pers. sg. imperf., see 743, n. 5.

⁶ Arabic *wa-anuththu*. Hava, *Dictionary*, 749, translates *naththa*: ‘to divulge (news).’

⁷ Arabic *wa-tushiddu wasatāka*. (I do not find the fourth form of *shdd* in dictionaries with this meaning; but the reading is certain, and *t* is vocalized with a *ḍamma*.) Cf. III, 38, top margin, line 4, which I vocalize *wa-yumahḥil lahu qurbahu*.

⁸ That is to act on my behalf in my absence.

⁹ I take this to mean: Use whatever methods necessary to collect quickly for me any money you can.

¹⁰ Goitein commented: May God, designated as ‘Peace,’ grant peace! See 701, n. 10.}

III, 38 *Letter from Yeshū'ā b. Jacob to Abraham Ben Yijū About the Death of Maḏmūn*

Dhū Jibla {1151}

TS 10J 13, f. 6

Although not being on speaking terms with Maḏmūn's family, Yeshū'ā expresses sympathy on Maḏmūn's death to Abraham Ben Yijū.

For this letter and its connection with III, 31 and III, 33, see the introduction to III, 31. As Ḥalfon, Maḏmūn's son, acknowledges a letter of condolence on the death of his father in October 1152 (II, 62), Maḏmūn's death, reported in this letter, occurred earlier that year or in late 1151.

The letter opens [A] with a preamble in Hebrew, similar to that of III, 33 (lines 1–13).

{As noted in the introduction to III, 31, at the time Yeshū'ā wrote this letter from Dhū Jibla (see margin), Ben Yijū was in Yemen but not in Aden. A novice at trade, residing in a foreign land, informs his correspondent of Maḏmūn's death on October 12, 1151 (VI, 3). Accordingly, the death must have occurred earlier that year.}

Translation

[B. Announcement of the death of Maḏmūn b. Japheth]

(13) I, your eminent excellency's servant, learned of the death (14) of the *late*¹ master and lord Maḏmūn, *the Mordecai of our time*, (15) *the eminent pillar, the Nagid (Prince) of the land of Yemen, the leader* (16) *of the congregations, the pride of the communities*²—*may his soul be bound up in the bundle of life together with the righteous and pious!*³—(17) *son of his honor, great and holy master and lord Japheth—may he rest in Eden!*

¹ Hebrew *hay*; see 394, n. 31.

² These epithets are partly official titles and partly honorific by-names quite frequently found, as, for example, the expression 'Mordecai of our time,' for which cf. Mann, *Jews*, 2:420. {Cf. Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 195.

³ The beginning of the blessing is based on 1 Sam. 25:9. 'With the righteous and pious' appears in the blessing of the dead in II, 71, line 15, and in VI, 3, line 13, where it also applies to Maḏmūn. It is found on contemporary tombstones from Aden, as well. See Subar, "Tombstones," 302; Klein-Franke, "Tombstones," 174.}

I, the servant of (18) your excellency, was informed of this by other people, not from a letter that reached me, the servant of (19) your excellency, either from his excellency, my master,⁴ or one from their excellencies, (20) my lords and masters, *our master and lord Ḥalfon—may his Rock preserve him!*—and *our master* (21) *and lord Bundār—may the Merciful keep him!*—*the sons of our master Maḍmūn—may he rest in Eden!* (22) But there arrived a letter from the two brothers {lit., ‘from their two excellencies’} to friends of mine {alt. tr.: our coreligionists}, (23) which, however, I, the servant of your excellency, have not read. For you—may (24) God make your honored position permanent!—know that their correspondence with the lamented—may God (25) favor him with His preference {read: sanctify his soul!}⁵—was separate from mine {alt. tr.: their correspondence concerning he who may God sanctify his soul was kept separate from me}, your excellency’s servant.⁶ However, (26) I wrote to his two sons {lit., ‘the two eminent excellencies’} that their noble letters (27) should reach

⁴ Obviously something {someone else’s name after ‘master’} is missing here, as the writer can hardly mean to say that he has not received the tidings of Maḍmūn’s death from the addressee. Nor is it feasible to complement *min kitāb (ittasala)*, ‘a letter addressed to.’ For, it would be strange to assume that Ben Yijū had asked the writer to read the letters addressed to him. {The writer may have been uncertain whether or not Ben Yijū already knew of Maḍmūn’s death. Thus while he conveyed the news, he commented that he would have expected to have been informed by Ben Yijū, had the latter heard of the death earlier.}

⁵ Arabic *mimman qaddama ‘llāhu laṭīfahu*. The same eulogy over a dead person appears in {II, 61, line 11, margin, line 2 and} TS 16.250, line 28, published by Goitein, “New Sources,” 151a [= Goitein, *Palestinian Jewry*, 292]; *laṭīf* stands here for *laṭīf al-makān*, ‘qui jouit d’un grand faveur,’ Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:532b; *qaddama* here in the sense of ‘to prefer,’ Dozy, *ib.*, 2:315b. {Read *qaddasa*, and translate ‘may God sanctify his soul.’ The expression is to be compared to the common blessing for a dead saint in Arabic, *qaddasa ‘llāhu rūḥahu*. *Laṭīf*, literally ‘fine, delicate,’ etc., does not appear in the dictionaries as denoting ‘soul.’ Evidence that it has this meaning can be adduced from a poem in Abu ‘l-‘Alā al-Ma‘arrī’s *Luzūmiyyāt*: *Al-rūḥ shay’ laṭīf*... “The spirit is a delicate matter,” etc. I would like to thank Prof. Werner Diem for his suggestion, in a private communication, concerning the reading and the phrase’s meaning and for the citation from Abu ‘l-‘Alā al-Ma‘arrī’s poem. Prof. Joel Kraemer calls my attention to the fact that this depiction of *rūḥ* as a delicate matter is derived from Galenic medicine and cites Altmann and Stern, *Isaac Israeli*, 48–49. Also see Calverley and Netton, “*Nafs*,” and note there, for example, the summary of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s *Kitāb al-Nafs*. Lexicographers have not always understood the parallel expression *qaddasa ‘llāhu sirrabu*. Wehr, *Dictionary*, 405, 747, translated this *sirr*, ‘secret,’ though it clearly means ‘soul,’ as already correctly translated by Lane, *Dictionary*, 1338.}

⁶ The very involved sentence seems to mean that Maḍmūn addressed the writer only on official business and did not entertain with him a correspondence on personal matters. ‘Their correspondence’ refers to that of the writer’s friends. {As I understand the sentence, the writer says that Maḍmūn’s sons wrote only other people concerning their father’s death and did not inform Yeshū‘ā thereof.}

the most beloved {alt. tr.: devoted} servant of their father {lit., ‘his excellency’}, (28) to inform you of this, for you are one of the most beloved {alt. tr.: devoted} (29) servants of his excellency.⁷

[C. Greetings and request for information on travel plans.]

To your excellency and to all those embraced (30) by your care, the best greetings. Kindly send me—may God make permanent [Margin] your honored position!—your esteemed letter notifying me whether you will come to Dhū Jibla or travel on the sea...⁸

[D. Address]⁹

⁷ ‘I wrote,’ etc. {Arabic *kātaba ḥaḍratabumā al-sāmiya liyattašila bi-kutubihimā al-sharīfa aḥbabu (!) mamlūk ḥaḍratihī muṭāla‘atahā...*} The subject of *kātaba* is *mamlūk*, while the subject of *liyattašila* is *aḥbabu*, defined in line 28 by *muṭāla‘atahā*. The writer’s syntax is somewhat shaky. He obviously wants to say that he had informed Maḍmūn’s sons of Ben Yījū’s whereabouts, so that they could write to him directly. {Cf. IV, 15-II, 42, margin, line 3 where the words *aḥabba* (spelled: *ḥbb*) ‘*abduhu muṭāla‘atahu bi-dhālīka* mean ‘your servant wanted to inform you of this.’}

⁸ The rest of the letter contains a medley of wishes, among them the wish of compensation for a loss, which obviously refers solely to Ben Yījū’s bereavement of Maḍmūn and not to any material losses. After greetings to Ben Yījū’s children, the writer concludes: ‘may He strengthen their arms *wayumahḥīl lahu qurabahu* and make strong his relatives’—a phrase not found by me so far elsewhere. {Perhaps *ikblāf‘alā* refers here not to ‘compensation for a loss’ but to ‘satisfy,’ ‘multiply’ good; cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:396. As for ‘make strong his relatives,’ cf. III, 37, margin, line 2, *wa-tushiddu wasaṭaka*, ‘and strengthen your surroundings.’ Similarly, perhaps vocalize here *qurbahu*, ‘his environs.’}

⁹ The writer’s predilection for Hebrew rhymed prose induces him to begin the address of this letter, which is exclusively devoted to the announcement of Maḍmūn’s death, with the words: ‘*May this letter reach in speed and joy...*’ {Writers often adhered to the conventions of correspondence even when not congruent with the contents of the letter. In II, 61, Maḍmūn’s sons begin their (Judeo-Arabic) letter to Sulaymān b. Abū Zikrī Kohen with a florid description of their joy in receiving his letter, in which they learned of the death of his father. Also note the incompatibility between the style and contents of II, 64.}

III, 39 *Letter from Abraham Ben Yijū on the Way to Egypt: Distrust between Associates and Disruption of Family Life*

‘Aydhāb, probably 1152

TS 8J 21, f. 10

Letter from ‘Aydhāb (spelled ‘*Adhāb*, ‘tribulations’),¹ in which Ben Yijū describes the yearning of his little daughter for the family in Aden with which she had stayed (see III, 41 and III, 50). He would return to Aden, if he were successful in selling his goods in ‘Aydhāb.²

{After leaving India in 1149, Ben Yijū returned to Yemen, where he stayed about three years. He arranged a marriage for his daughter Sitt al-Dār with a distinguished family in Aden. But then his beloved son died, and he resolved on a reunion with his own kin, then residing in Sicily. He wrote them to join him in Egypt and promised to give Sitt al-Dār in marriage to one of his nephews and leave them all his wealth (III, 41).

After departing Aden, Ben Yijū writes from the Sudanese port of ‘Aydhāb that his daughter cries day and night over her separation from the addressee’s family. Obviously she had fallen in love with her intended groom, the son of Khalaf b. Bundār (see line 17; III, 41, line 21 and III, 50, line 6), in whose home she had lived for three years.

Using a conciliatory tone in addressing his correspondent (evidently a member of Khalaf’s family) in Aden, Ben Yijū emphasizes that he is not fleeing because of a debt. The money he owes is not worth talking about, and, if he succeeds in returning to Aden, he will pay it in person. The letter is discontinued in the middle of the sentence, and this paper was obviously never sent to Aden but stayed in Ben Yijū’s possession.

His hasty departure with Sitt al-Dār evidently led his time-tested associates to conclude that Ben Yijū could no longer be trusted for even a small debt. As we know from other documents, his decision to break the engagement and return to Egypt was deliberate and absolute. This letter suggests that he may have intended to conceal his true intentions. Perhaps

¹ {In lines 6 and 9. The same spelling occurs in III, 40a, line 5; VI, 1, line 13; VI, 31*v*, line 3. In VI, 1, line 13 the writer makes the pun explicit: *waṣaltu ilā ‘Aydhāb bil-ḥaqīq innahā balad al-‘adhāb*, “I arrived in ‘Aydhāb, which truly is the city of ‘*adhāb* (tribulations).” Accordingly, the spelling without *y* in the other texts is not an error but an allusion to the same pun. This, in fact, as called to my attention by Prof. Joel Kraemer, was found in contemporary Arabic sources as well. So in the twelfth century al-Wahrānī, *Manāmāt*, 19: ‘*adhāb bi-kull naqma wa-‘adhāb*, “‘Aydhāb, in all affliction and ‘*adhāb* (tribulations).”

² Goitein identified this text, prepared a draft transcription and wrote this brief description; otherwise, no edition was prepared.

he decided not to send the letter because of doubts as to how it would be received as worded. Mistrust often became mutual. Here Ben Yijū mentions goods, which he had left in the Adenese warehouse, from which the debt could be collected. In II, 45a, an Adenese associate denies accusations that he had stolen a package left by another trader in the warehouse. As the international trade was based on the mutual trust of partners, these accusations were extraordinary and unsettling.

Translation

[A. Introduction]

(1) *In Your name, O Merciful.* (2) *For the Lord will be your trust; He will keep your feet from being caught. You will decree and it will be fulfilled, etc.*³

(3) My letter to my lord and master, the most illustrious sheikh—may God give you long life and make permanent your well-being!—(4) written in a state of well-being and good health, with strong longing for you. May God soon reunite me with you (5) in the best of circumstances, through His favor and grace, for He is omnipotent⁴ and trustworthy!

[B. Arrival in ‘Aydhāb and daughter’s loneliness]

(6) You will be pleased to know,⁵ my lord, that I arrived in complete safety at ‘Aydhāb (‘Adhāb’). (7) *Let them praise the Lord for His steadfast love, etc.*⁶

My lord, the little one, my daughter, cries day and night⁷ over (8) your (pl.) separation from her.⁸ May God facilitate //her// reunion with you—

³ Prov. 3:26; Job 22:28. Biblical verses at the top of a letter allude to the writer’s situation (or the addressee’s). Here he prays that God protect him from danger and help him realize his plans.

⁴ Arabic *qadīr*. The wish to be reunited with the addressee is ubiquitous in our letters. But while several other examples of this particular wording are found in the Geniza, it is not common in the letters in this book. Besides another letter by Ben Yijū, III, 41, line 5, and his brother Joseph’s letter, III, 49, line 24, I have only seen one other example, in a letter from Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Nethanel to his brother, IV, 4, line 10.

⁵ Arabic *alladhī tuḥibbu ‘ilmahu*. This phrase is repeated in the letters of Ibn Yijū. See 478, n. 25.

⁶ Ps. 107:8. The prayer of thanksgiving of the seafarers, often found in Geniza letters.

⁷ As usually expressed in Arabic, the original has *layl wa-nahār*, lit., ‘night and day.’ This probably fit the circumstances, as the crying increased at night; the same expression, ‘crying night and day,’ appears, e.g., in III, 48v, line 1.

⁸ Arabic *firqatukum minhā*.

God willing—in the best of circumstances! (9) I am making a great effort to accomplish this. Were I able to make a sale in ‘Aydhāb (‘Adhāb’), I would sell and return. (10) But only what God decrees will come about.⁹

[C. Accusations of fleeing a debt]

I have heard that you had mentioned that I owe you the balance (11) of an account and that the smaller packages¹⁰ left in the warehouse do not cover the sum. Your account, (12) my lord, is this: I owe you five dirhems, no more no less! You already made an accounting with me for it. (13) If there is good iron in the warehouse, which will cover the sum, after you kindly (14) give instructions to someone to sell the smaller packages left in the warehouse, fine. If your servant still owes something, I am not (15) running away.¹¹ What I still owe is not worth talking about.¹² I shall either arrive, (16) God willing, in Aden and pay you, or I shall send something of that value, or you can collect from (17) the *nākhudā* Ma‘ālī¹³ or from my lord and master Sheikh Khalaf¹⁴...}

⁹ The wish expressed by the verse cited at the end of line 2 notwithstanding, the writer knows that God sets market conditions, not man.

¹⁰ Arabic *dabash*. See 228, n. 9.

¹¹ Arabic *hārib*. On fleeing when unable to pay debts see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:382, 607, n. 44.

¹² Contrary to Margariti, “Aden,” 325, Ben Yijū does not say that the *dabash* was completely worthless.

¹³ Not known from other documents.

¹⁴ Probably Khalaf b. Isaac.}

III, 40a *List of Customs Paid in 'Aydhāb by Abraham Ben Yijū*

{'Aydhāb, probably 1152}

TS 12.458

Notes on customs dues and transport fees on five Oriental products carried by Ben Yijū (from Aden) to 'Aydhāb (again spelled 'Adhāb)—written on the upper portion of the page, the continuation of which is in III, 40b.

{Neither Ben Yijū's name nor any other name appears on the manuscript, and Goitein identified him as the writer from his handwriting.

Translation

(1) *In Your Name, O Merciful.*

(2) Customs for *qāṭir*,¹ three and a sixth and a half of a *qirāt*,² half for it; galangal,³ one and a third and a quarter; (3) frankincense,⁴ five and a half; aloe vera,⁵ seven and two thirds and a *qirāt*, half for it, its third we (4) still owe; five (pieces of) China, a dinar. Transport fees for our portion of the aloe vera and customs for it on the way //[[five (?) and a half and a quarter]] four and a sixth//; transport fees for the frankincense (5) and the *qāṭir* //[[... and a fourth]] a third and a fourth//; customs on the frankincense in 'Aydhāb ('Adhāb),⁶ a third; the *qāṭir*, 23 *manns*⁷ ... }

¹ {Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:365b, a pharmaceutical term: the liquid, which drips drop by drop from a still. Hava, *Dictionary*, 614: dripping, gum; *al-qāṭir al-makiyyu*, dragon's blood. Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:904, line 17: shavings of aloes wood (for incense).

² A *qirāt* is one twenty-fourth of a dinar.

³ See II, 65, margin, line 11.

⁴ Arabic *lubān*, imported from Somalia and South Arabia. See Dietrich, "Lubān"; Lev & Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 134.

⁵ Arabic *ṣabir*. See Maimonides-Meyerhof, no. 318; Dols, *ibid.*, 153; Lev & Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 74.

⁶ For the spelling, see III, 39, n. 1.

⁷ Or: 23 'from' (*min*).}

III, 40b *Instructions for Manumission of a Slave Girl Written by Abraham Ben Yijū*

{Egypt, after 1152}

TS 12. 458

Detailed instructions in Ben Yijū's hand how to make out a bill giving freedom to a slave girl. Cf. III, 17. Written on the lower portion of the page, below III, 40a. Probably written for the benefit of a fellow traveler. (Further evidence that Ben Yijū was a man of learning who dealt with practical matters of Jewish law.)

{Since the formula describes the location 'on the Nile,' Ben Yijū presumably wrote this after his arrival in Egypt.}

III, 40c *Letter in Abraham Ben Yijū's Hand in Support of Victims of Persecution and Proselytes*

TS 12.458

Ed. Assaf, *Texts*, 149–51 (see *ibid.*, 144–46). Written on verso.

Draft of a letter from one community leader to another with an appeal to contribute towards the support of persons displaced by Christian persecutions (it was Crusader times) and heaping curses on anyone informing against proselytes. (Under Islam, only conversion to the ruling religion was permitted.)

Although Ben Yijū, whose wife and brother-in-law were converts,¹ had a stake in this matter, and although India and Yemen are mentioned, among others, as countries to which copies of the letter should be sent, it seems that this draft was not conceived by Ben Yijū, but dictated to him long before he traveled to the East.

{See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:305 (592, n. 29), on the puzzling nature of this text. Perhaps it was composed in the aftermath of the Norman invasion of the East, which began in 1153.}

¹ {See III, 17 and 639, n. 17.}

III, F. *Reunion of the India Trader with his Extended Family**

Introduction

Joseph Yijū's Family Settles in Egypt

In III, 43, Peraḥyā, accompanied by his brother Moses, writes to his parents {Joseph, the brother of Abraham Ben Yijū, and his wife} from Messina, Sicily, from where he intended to embark on his journey to the East. In III, 45, Moses is sent back to Mazara via Palermo, in order to get from his father a power of attorney for the claim of certain debts. No. III, 49, written about two years later, is a diffuse letter of about a hundred lines, in which Joseph urges his two sons, whom he believes to have arrived in Egypt, to arrange for the transfer of the rest of the family to that country. No. III, 46, is a letter (dated April 14, 1155) by Moses, who had been captured by pirates and subsequently released, from Tyre or another town in Syria or Palestine, to Peraḥyā in Egypt, expressing the hope to take part in his forthcoming wedding. No. III, 44 is a short note by one Hajjāj notifying Joseph of a consignment sent to him by his sons. No. III, 48, diffuse and in the same vein as III, 49, written by Samuel, Joseph's third son, warns his brothers, whose exact whereabouts were still not known to the family in Sicily, not to travel owing to the danger of war in the Mediterranean (fall 1156). Finally, III, 55 proves that the Yijūs actually had succeeded in getting to Egypt. For here Peraḥyā writes to his brother Samuel, who obviously occupied an important position at the rabbinical court of Fustat {to be more precise, was a teacher there},¹ greeting his mother, who lived with the latter, and sending regards from his own wife and two children, the elder bearing the name Joseph after his meanwhile deceased father.

As at least one member of the family had settled in Fustat and was connected with the rabbinical court there, it is not surprising that all these letters had found their way into the Geniza. Still, it is significant that even letters of such transitory importance as III, 45 were not only preserved for such a long time, but also carried overseas on the journey from Sicily to Egypt.

In the addresses of III, 30, III, 43, III, 45, III, 46 and III, 48, Joseph Yijū is called *melammed*, schoolmaster, and in Hajjāj's letter, III, 44 *hazzān*, cantor, and appears as a poor man without regular income.

* {This is a partial introduction to sec. F. Goitein's remarks refer only to III, 43–46, 48–49, 55, since he wrote them before adding the other documents in this section.

¹ See III, 55 (page 785), n. 2 and III, 58.}

The troubles of the Yijū family on their way to Egypt are to be explained against the background of the insecurity prevailing in the Mediterranean in the fifties of the twelfth century. In addition to the continually precarious situation on the coast of Tunisia and Tripolitania, there were raids of the Norman fleet on the coastal towns of Egypt, one on Tinnīs in 1153/4 and one on Damietta, Tinnīs, Rosetta, and Alexandria in August 1155.² In addition, piracy was strife.³ Finally, there loomed the danger of a total war by the Almohads. The conquest of Tunisia and Tripolitania by these fanatic sectarians was accomplished only in 1159/60. However, Ibn al-Athīr reports that for their drive to the East, the Almohads stored up the crops of three years.⁴ No. III, 48 (lines 27–29) contains the interesting fact, obviously not yet noted in literary sources, that the Almohad fleet, too, was preparing for that great onslaught three years ahead.

Naturally, the financing of the family's move from Sicily to Egypt also presented a problem, as we see from various passages, e.g., III, 43, lines 19–20; III, 48*v*, lines 14–18; III, 49*v*, lines 17–20, especially the two latter, in which the help of the Head of the Jews in Egypt is solicited. One wonders why Abraham Ben Yijū did not provide for this, after he had invited his brother in such glowing terms. The fact that in all these letters, greetings are never extended to him, while his daughter, Sitt al-Dār, the bride, is greeted most affectionately (see {III, 46, margin, line 4–5} III, 49*v*, line 30) only adds to the puzzle. On the other hand, when Ben Yijū was mentioned (as III, 49*v*, line 29), no blessing for the dead was added, which would certainly not have lacked in these letters of utmost family attachment, had he died recently. {On the rift between Ben Yijū and his nephew Peraḥyā, see III, 50, and on the time of Abraham's death, III, 51 and III, 54.}

² See Amari, *Musulmani di Sicilia*, 3:433 and 477, who suggests that the first raid was perhaps directed against Tanas on the Algerian coast.

³ See III, 46 and III, 48.

⁴ Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 11:159.

III, 41 *Letter from Abraham Ben Yijū to his Brother Joseph in Mazara, Sicily*

Fustat, September 1153 {1152}

TS 12.337

Ed. Simonsohn and Gil, "Sicily," 36–39; an English translation appears in Simonsohn, *Sicily*, 402–4. Written in Abraham Ben Yijū's best hand. Clearly, this is a copy of a draft made by him, for at the bottom of the page; one line had been dropped and was filled in by him afterwards with the sharp end of the pen and in characters of a narrower type.

The date of the letter can be fixed by the following considerations. In line 22, Ben Yijū states that his young daughter had remained for three years in the house of a Yemenite notable in Aden. He had arrived there in the fall of 1149 (see III, 29). When Ben Yijū's nephew—whom he invited to join him—was on his way to Egypt in the fall of 1154, he already sent certain goods to his father in Mazara, Sicily (cf. III, 48, lines 31 ff.). In III, 51, Ben Yijū made arrangements for the provision of oil for a little synagogue, certainly headed by him, as from fall 1153. All this taken together shows that Ben Yijū must have traveled from Aden to Cairo in spring or summer 1153, while the reference in line 34 to the Feast of the Cross indicates September as the time of the writing of our letter.¹

The letter is interesting for various reasons. It shows again, like III, 29, the strong family attachment of the Tunisian merchant. Although rich merchants, both in Aden and in Cairo, wanted their sons to marry his daughter, he preferred to save her for his poor, refugee nephew—of course, on one condition: that the future son-in-law should be 'learned in Torah' (line 12). Ben Yijū had had opportunity to inquire both from his brother Mevassēr and from Sicilian merchants frequenting Aden and Fustat (see lines 26–27) about the prospective bridegroom. Having been favorably impressed by these reports, he invites him to come and marry his daughter. Surūr/Peraḥyā, Ben Yijū's nephew, certainly was a learned Jew, as his letters show. From III, 55 we learn that he became a

¹ {In Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:336: "around 1150"; 5:191: "ca. 1152." The first year must be seen as only a general approximation of the date, since it does not allow for the three years mentioned here, and it is also clear that Ben Yijū was in Yemen at the time of Maḍmūn b. Japheth's death in 1151 (see the introduction to III, 38). However, it is probable that Ben Yijū already arrived in Egypt in 1152. Note that according to verso, line 8, he had received a letter in Aden 'this year.' According to Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:480, no. 28, Ben Yijū arrived in Old Cairo in 1151 or 1152.

religious dignitary in a provincial town of Egypt, a position that might not have been quite to the taste of the old India trader.²

A very similar case is found in VII, 62. An India merchant, while angry with his family, prefers marrying his daughter off to a relative and asks him to travel to him for that purpose, rather than being ‘devoured by other people.’

Ben Yijū mentions losses ‘from his capital’ of 1040 dinars and 300 *mithqāls*; see margin and verso, line 11 and the note to the margin. The meaning of those lines is obviously that expenses for charity {and gifts} should be covered from one’s earnings, not from one’s capital.³

Translation

[A. Preamble; worthless brother Mevassēr had not forwarded letters]

(1) *In Your name, O Merciful.*

(2) This is my letter to you, my dear, nob[le]⁴ brother and lord [...],

(3) may God prolong your life and preserve you and keep you! May he unite us in the near future (4) in the best of circumstances, fulfilling our happiest hopes in His grace and favor, for He (5) is omnipotent!⁵

You will be pleased to know⁶ that I had sent (6) you (pl.) a number of letters, which, however, came into the possession of Mevassēr, who did not make the effort (7) to forward them to you. Then, he came to Aden, and I exerted myself for him (8) beyond my ability, until I found out that I had gotten myself into trouble {alt. tr.: beyond my ability, and he had found me immediately after (I had suffered) a disaster}.⁷ (9) However, it

² Peraḥyā served as judge in al-Maḥalla. However, it seems that he first served as a judge in Fustat and assumed the judgeship in al-Maḥalla only after 1161, years after the death of his uncle Abraham Ben Yijū; see Friedman, “Maimonides and Zūṭā,” 507–10, 516. For Ben Yijū’s disappointment with him, see III, 50.

³ Ben Yijū specifically mentions the loss from the ‘capital’ concerning the 300 *mithqāls* in verso, line 11. The margin on recto mentions a further loss of 600 dinars, not preserved in the photograph Goitein used for his transcription.

⁴ Arabic *athīr* is frequently used in the letters of the members of the Ben Yijū family to describe close relatives or honored individuals (cf. III, 43, line 1; III, 48v, line 32; III, 55v, address). It can also be translated ‘excellent,’ ‘favored,’ ‘select.’

⁵ Arabic *qadīr*. See the note to another letter by Ben Yijū, III, 39, line 5 (720, n. 4).

⁶ Arabic *alladhī tuḥibbu ‘ilmahu*. This phrase, which means ‘this is to inform you,’ is repeated in the letters of Ibn Yijū. See 478, n. 25.

⁷ Arabic [[*wawjadit*]] *wawjadny*. . . . Obviously, Ben Yijū intended to write: *wawjadatunī*. {Lit., ‘I found myself’. Simonsohn and Gil do not translate this word. And ‘until’ is not expressed

would take too much time to explain my experience with him {alt. tr.: The details of my story would take up too much space}.⁸

[B. After the death of his son{s} Abraham had arrived in Fustat]

Now, my brother, it has pleased (10) God, the Exalted, to ordain my safe arrival in Fustat—(11) *Let them praise the Lord for His steadfast love*⁹—and I have already heard that [you have a grown son . . .] {alt. tr.: [you have three sons, the eldest]}¹⁰ (12) who is *learned in Torah*,¹¹ and two other sons. [I am in the possession of × thousand and ×] (13) hundred dinars and am well-off {alt. tr.: [I lost ×] hundred dinars, but remain prosperous}.¹² [. . . Out in India] (14) two children {alt. tr.: boys}¹³ were born to me, (pleasant) as the twigs of sweet basil.¹⁴ {Add: [The younger died in India.]}¹⁵ (15) The firstborn {alt. tr.: the older}¹⁶ died in Aden [. . .] (16) I have no words to describe him [. . .] (17) I have left a daughter, his {read: their}¹⁷ sister,

in the original. ‘Had gotten myself into trouble’ seems to translate *man* (see below Goitein’s note on the phrase in the margin) *athira jā’iḥar^{an}*, lit., ‘one who began a disaster.’ I suggest reading *wa-wajadānī min athari jā’iḥar^{an}*. While I have not found *min athar* in the dictionaries, I take it as equivalent to *alā athar* or *fi athar* (‘immediately after’). The deleted *wujdt* was probably intended as a passive, *wa-wujidtu*, ‘I was found.’ The disaster, to which Abraham alludes, was, as explained below, margin, a huge financial loss.

⁸ Arabic *wa-ḥadīthi yatūl fihī al-sharḥ* }

⁹ The usual quotation from Ps. 107:8, etc., after a safe arrival; cf. III, 29, lines 4–5.

¹⁰ The content of most of the words lost in lines 11–20 is reconstructed as far as appears reasonably sure. Cf. III, 29, lines 5 ff. {Goitein restored *bāligh* and translated ‘a grown son.’ This would imply, however, that the other two sons were minors. This is unlikely, in my opinion, especially concerning Moses, whose travels are discussed above, page 725. I suggest restoring *kabīr*, as in line 15, which here could mean firstborn or oldest.}

¹¹ See the introductory remarks. {For the Hebrew *ba’al tōrā*, rather than *ben tōrā*, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:565, n. 2; id., *Yemenites*, 68, n. 6. The suggestion in the latter note, that the first expression follows the Palestinian Talmud and the second the Babylonian Talmud, needs some revision, since both are found in the Palestinian Talmud.}

¹² Arabic *mastūr*, as in modern Egyptian speech; see Spiro, *Dictionary*, 215b. {Cf. Hinds & Badawi, *Egyptian Arabic*, 399. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:438, n. 31 (*mastūra*); *ibid.*, 3:85, translates *mastūr* ‘respectable’; also cf. Cohen, *Poverty*, 42–44. As to the lacuna in line 12, perhaps read ‘500’; cf. III, 50, line 5. ‘I . . . am’ translates *baqaytu*; cf. Blau, *Grammar*, 187; literally, ‘remained,’ as suggested in the alternate translation.

¹³ See line 17.}

¹⁴ Arabic *rayḥān*. This pleasantly smelling plant is kept in every Yemenite house and, on certain occasions, even in synagogues. {For *rayḥān*, see al-Qazwānī, *Ajā’ib*, 331.

¹⁵ For the restoration, see line 17. For the approximate year of his death, see III, 16, line 22 (630, n. 16).

¹⁶ Arabic *kabīr*. See note 10.

¹⁷ Read *ukhtubum* for *ukthub*. The writing after *’kth* is fragmentary and was not deciphered by Goitein. The suggested reading requires assuming that Ben Yijū had two sons

li[ke... She will receive] (18) all my money. Now by God¹⁸ [when my letter arrives,] (19) send your [eldest] son [...] (20) so that we {alt. tr.: I} have joy from her and from him¹⁹ and marry [them... While] (21) in Aden, Sheikh Khalaf b. Bundār²⁰ [had asked me for her hand] for his son, and she stayed (22) three years in their house.²¹ However, I called the engagement off,²² when I heard (23) about your son Surūr,²³ because I said: “My brother’s son has more rights (to her) {alt. tr.: is more deserving} than (24) strangers.”²⁴ When I brought her to Egypt {alt. tr.: Fustat}, many (25) asked me for her hand.²⁵ I am writing you this, so that you should know. (26) Saying less about this would have been enough.²⁶

that died, the younger of whom died in India; thus the alternative translation of *waladayn*, ‘boys,’ in line 14. Cf. *ibid.* for the word *mith[l]* which follows here.}

¹⁸ Arabic *allāh allāh*, which means quickly; {See Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 11, and cf. III, 29, line 27.}

¹⁹ Arabic *nafrāh bihā wa-bihi*. For the *nqtl* form for 1st pers. sg. imperf., see 743, n. 5. *Farāh bi-*, lit., ‘rejoice in,’ also means ‘celebrate a child’s wedding.’ See Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:249a.

²⁰ See III, 39, line 17; III, 50, line 6.} Almost certainly a nephew of Maḍmūn, the representative of the Jewish merchants in Aden. About his father Bundār b. Ḥasan b. Bundār, see above; II, 11b, II, 12, II, 35, lines 22 and 24, and VI, 36v, lines 15 ff. The fact that while writing to his brother out in Sicily, Ben Yijū did not find it necessary to explain who that man was, indicates again how closely the trade routes between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean connected even people who were not themselves merchants.

²¹ As the mother of the girl was dead—for she is never mentioned—the education of the future bride was entrusted to the house into which she was expected to marry. {In his introduction to III, 29 (page 680) Goitein suggested that Ben Yijū’s wife was never mentioned because she was an ‘outsider’ and probably the manumitted slave girl Ashu. See, however, III, 15, lines 27–28. As to the education of the young bride in her husband’s home, see III, 49, line 11.}

²² Arabic *wnkt*, representing *wanakatht*, assimilated to *wanakatt*. {See Blau, *Grammar*, 35.}

²³ It is remarkable that Abraham Yijū should shorten in this way {Surūr, also in line 32} the *kunya* or honorific by-name of his nephew Peraḥyā, Abu ’l-Surūr (see III, 48, line 14 and address {III, 49, line 27 and verso, line 1; III, 54, line 1; the introduction to III, 50}. In later times, such abbreviations were common. See, however, below the address, line 3. {Peraḥyā’s own son had been called Surūr; see II, 14, line 36; II, 24, line 11; II, 26v, line 8.}

²⁴ Concerning the prerogative of a cousin on the daughter of his paternal uncle, see III, 49v, lines 2 ff. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:27–31, 56. Cf. III, 29, lines 14–16, which was written when a son was still alive. In VII, 62, another India trader, whose only child was a young daughter, writes his good-for-nothing brother-in-law and asks him to send his son to marry her: “Others will not devour me; you have a stronger claim” (line 20; see Goitein, *ib.*, 35, and in the introduction to this document).

²⁵ Cited in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:441, n. 1.}

²⁶ The writer uses the same phrase in III, 29, line 28.

[C. Gift of pepper and ginger sent to Joseph; apologies for not having sent more]

I sent you with Sulaymān (27) b. Siṭrūn²⁷ a bale {alt. tr.: bag} (*shikāra*), called *ṣurra*,²⁸ containing pepper (28) and ginger, in a mixture,²⁹ weighing exactly one *qinṭār*³⁰ and fifteen *raṭl*. (29) May God ordain that it arrives safely and comes into your hand //safely//! However, do not (30) deal with it as you did with the pepper, which I had sent (31) you and which you lost through incompetence.³¹

Your letters to me should reach me (32) in Fustat, God willing.³² Let your son Surūr (33) carry the letters.³³ Were it not now the time of the sailing (34) of the *Salībiyya* (winds),³⁴ I would have sent more for you

²⁷ The same man is certainly intended below, line 35 and in III, 43, lines 19, 20, 26 {Ibn Siṭlūn}, verso, line 5 {Ibn Siṭlūn; see also III, 45, line 4: Abu 'l-Rabī'}.
²⁸ A bale {bag} was called in the Indian Ocean *ṣurra*, a good Arabic word, but in the Mediterranean *shikāra*, possibly of foreign origin, see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:777b. Obviously, the bale was sent on from Cairo-Fustat as it arrived from India, without being repacked; therefore, the explanation was necessary. {Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:336, quotes this passage, with 'bag' rather than 'bale' (correct there 'Fustat' for 'Aden'; a similar mishap in Goitein, *Letters*, 202), and it is suggested that *shikāra* (or *shakāra*) is derived from Italian; 486, n. 22. *Surra* is used in the India Book for packages of commodities of all types and sizes. It has usually been translated 'bag' or 'purse,' according to the context. Heidemann, "*Surra*" only discusses the meaning 'purse.' I am not sure how the remark concerning not repacking clarifies why Ben Yijū found it necessary to define *ṣurra*. Perhaps he anticipated that Sulaymān would notify Joseph that he had a *ṣurra* for delivery to him. A note sent to Joseph about a gift to be delivered to him is preserved in III, 44.}

²⁹ For the mixture of pepper and ginger in one receptacle, see 569, n. 3.

³⁰ A hundred *raṭl* (pounds). 'Exactly,' Arabic *bil-ṣarf*, as in modern speech, cf. Barthélemy, *Dialectes*, 431, *majnūn ṣarf*, 'a real fool,' or perhaps *ṣarf*, which in classical Arabic means 'exact weight or measure.'

³¹ {On pepper sent by Ben Yijū to his brother Joseph that was lost, see III, 57, line 13.}

³² This shows that Abraham Ben Yijū had no intention to go further West. The Almohad menace in the far West and the Norman piracy in the middle part of the Mediterranean made a return to Tunisia unattractive. {Cf. III, 29, lines 18–19, where Ben Yijū still considered returning to the Maghreb. I assume that Goitein's note to III, 48, line 26 (761, n. 21), according to which Ben Yijū actually traveled to Tunisia after returning to Egypt was written at an early stage of his research.

³³ Sending the letters with the perspective groom would expedite the anticipated marriage.}

³⁴ *Salībiyya* is the feast of the Cross, which is celebrated by the Copts on the 26th and 27th of September; cf. Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, 547 (Supplement, chap. 1) and Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:840b–841a. As the Muslim calendar is useless for marking anything connected with the natural course of the year, Christian and Jewish feasts normally were used by Muslim populations for that purpose. Late September was the time for sailing from the shores of Egypt to the West. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:317, 481–82, n. 31; Sperber, *Nautica*, 99–101; Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 45–46.} As the ships were sailing, Ben Yijū had no time to buy anything else.

[[and sons]] (35) and your sons. Sulaymān³⁵ and Abraham³⁶ will explain to you my situation and the troubles I [Margin] have {lit., ‘my heart’s troubles’}.³⁷

[D. Losses incurred by Mevassēr and Abraham’s travel to Egypt]

As to Mevassēr, he is not a man,³⁸ he is indolent, possessed of a hard³⁹ heart. I gave him all he needed, although I got into trouble (through him) {alt. tr.: I had just suffered a disaster}.⁴⁰ By these lines {alt. tr.: because, by these lines},⁴¹ I {add: had} lost one thousand and forty dinars⁴² and suffered also losses⁴³ on my way to Fustat, six hundred dinars.

[E. Greetings, especially to the writer’s sister and her family, condolences to an acquaintance and another apology for not having sent more]

[Verso] (1) Receive for your noble self the best greetings, and to your [[two]] three sons—(2) may God preserve them!—the best greetings, and she who is with you,⁴⁴ their mother, is greeted by me (3) with the best greetings.

³⁵ Certainly Sulaymān b. Šiṭrūn, mentioned above, lines 26–27.

³⁶ Almost certainly identical with Abraham b. Joseph of al-Mahdiyya; see III, 29v, line 1; III, 46, lines 27–28. {See 685, n. 39; 749, n. 8.}

³⁷ Arabic *ta’b al-qalb*, cf. Spiro, *Dictionary*, 89. {Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 51, according to which translate: my anxiety.}

³⁸ Arabic *mā huwa rajul*. On the virtues of manliness, *rujla*, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:192–93. For the expression ‘be a man,’ see a mother’s letter to her son, *wa-lā takūn yā waladī illā rajul*, ‘just be a man, my son’ (VII, 58, line 19, ed. Goitein, *Yemenites*, 50; English translation—with slight variation—in Kraemer, “Women Speak,” 210, see there, n. 148, on *rajul*). As to Mevassēr, compare Maḍmūn’s comment in II, 29, line 6: ‘a good-for-nothing.’}

³⁹ Arabic *qāṣī* {= *qāṣī*}, a spelling given also in an ancient Spanish-Jewish vocabulary see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:347a. {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:191, 560, n. 29, where this passage is quoted.}

⁴⁰ The same expression above line 8 {see the note there}, also in connection with the writer’s unworthy brother. Here, one expects *man* {read: *min*} for *mā*.

⁴¹ For this oath, see 684, n. 26. {‘Because,’ Arabic *alladhī*.}

⁴² The dinars referred to here may be Malikī dinars of Aden, as the context suggests. The sum of 1040 dinars is perhaps identical with that of 300 *mithqāls*, given below verso, line 11, the ratio being 1:3.46, which is almost the same as that (1:3.5) in II, 23, lines 35–36 and II, 25–26, written in 1135 and 1134 respectively. {See 172, n. 27}.}

⁴³ Arabic *khaṣāra* {= *khasāra*}. The same spelling in VII, 23, line 14. {Cf. 636, n. 1.}

⁴⁴ Arabic *man ʿindak*. This is one of the curious circumlocutions for ‘wife,’ which was too intimate to be used in polite speech. In III, 29, margin, line 5, Ben Yijū simply says

Together with this letter I sent⁴⁵ a letter to my beloved sister (4) Berākha, to her and her children. Please see to it that she receives it (5) and extend to her, in my name, the best greetings and likewise, to her husband Marwān⁴⁶ (6) and to my sister's children profuse greetings.

Should Sheikh Barhūn b. (7) Ḥassūn b. 'Aṭīyya be in the country, greet him and express to him sympathy in my name at the loss (8) of the one who is dear to me. I received this year in Aden a letter from my sister, (9) written by him.⁴⁷ Likewise, greet *R. Moses, the great cantor*.⁴⁸

My dear brother, I shall not cease (10) to favor you (pl.) and to send you presents showing my affection. However, this year (11) excuse me, for I lost three hundred *mithqāls* from my capital. *Greetings to you and your sons and your house!*⁴⁹

(12) *Greetings to you and to your household, etc!*⁵⁰

[F. Address]

(1) *To the brother, who suffered scorn, who went through fire (2) and cold* {alt. tr.: *snare/heat*},⁵¹ *but is still fresh*,⁵² Joseph b. Perahyā—*may he rest in Eden!*— (3)

'wife,' but here he has returned to the traditional scholarly milieu. Cf. 'your house' below, line 11. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:160–61. Goitein undoubtedly understood *man 'inda* as 'family,' 'household,' which here and elsewhere often designates 'wife.' See the clarification by Diem, *Dictionary*, 152, n. 152. In II, 6v, line 16, *kull man 'indanā* clearly means 'all members of our household.'

⁴⁵ Lit., 'I wrote with.' The word for sending is inferred from the context. See II, 32, line 51 and 620, n. 38.

⁴⁶ Marwān b. Zikrī, mentioned in III, 29, line 25; also see the introduction to III, 50.

⁴⁷ The sister evidently did not know how to write.}

⁴⁸ See III, 29, line 31. Whether this man is identical with Moses, the cantor of Reggio, the town on the mainland of Italy opposite Sicily, with whom Anatoli b. Joseph exchanged poems, cannot be ascertained. For the poems, see Stern, "Hebrew Poets," 75.

⁴⁹ For Hebrew 'house' as a polite word for 'wife,' see 235, n. 10.

⁵⁰ I Samuel 25: 6.

⁵¹ Curiously enough, the address is written in rhymed Hebrew prose. The words 'who has suffered scorn, who went through fire and cold' almost certainly refer to the fact that during the Norman conquest of Tunisia, Joseph was taken captive. The word translated here as 'cold' is Hebrew *paḥīm*, which has many meanings; but as here it is opposed to 'fire,' it may rightly be taken as alluding to Prov. 22:5, as understood in a maxim in BT Ketubbot 30a {and parallels}: "Everything is in God's hand except colds." {Goitein follows the commentators who take the second word in the expression *šinnīm paḥīm* as defining the first (see, e.g., the opinion brought in Tosafot, a.l., 'they are one thing'; Rashi to BM 107b: 'cold that blows'). Most commentators take *paḥīm* in the maxim to mean 'heat' or 'snare,' which I consider preferable in the context here. Cf. Ben-Yehuda, *Dictionary*, 4870.

⁵² Or: vigorous; cf. Deut. 34:7.}

known as Ibn (?) Surūr⁵³ Ben Yijū of al-Mahdiyya, (4) living in Mazara—may Go[d protect it]! *This is a deposit entrusted.* {Alt. tr.: *Steadfast faithfulness.*}⁵⁴

(From) *His brother, the son of his mother,*⁵⁵ (2) *who longs to see him,* (3) Abraham b. Perahyā—*may he rest in Eden.* (4) Ben Yijū. (5) *May salvation be near!*⁵⁶

⁵³ The reading seems {almost} certain. This would show that already Joseph's father was called *Surūr* instead of Abu 'l-Surūr; see above line 23.

⁵⁴ About this Hebrew formula, see 257, n. 13.

⁵⁵ {An expression of closeness between brothers, especially cogent in a polygamous society.}

⁵⁶ For this formula, see 484, n. 30.

III, 42 *List of Ben Yijū's Deposits and Expenditures after Arriving in the Egyptian Capital*

Fustat, ca. 1152

CAJS 472

Large sheet with numerous irregular notes on large quantities of jewelry, money and goods deposited by Abraham Ben Yijū with Abu 'l-Fakhr (Ibn al-Amshāṭī) and other friends in the Egyptian capital. Daily expenditures, especially for bread,¹ oil and household goods, are also listed. His Indian factotum Bama is mentioned three times.²

{Besides jewelry and gold ("weighing 20 Indian *mithqāls*"), which Ben Yijū deposited with Abu 'l-Fakhr, a sum of 197 $\frac{3}{4}$ dinars, also deposited with him, from the sale of a load of pepper, sold to one Abū Naṣr b. Futayḥ, is also mentioned repeatedly. Ben Yijū also listed in these accounts other Indian goods, which he brought with him to Egypt, and these include bronze (undoubtedly from his Indian bronze factory), chinaware, camphor, civet and lac.}

¹ {Ben Yijū uses three different Arabic words for bread, one, *qurṣ*, used in Yemen (see Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 393), where he stayed on his way from India to Egypt; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:243, 439, n. 131.

² The date given below the title is from Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:400, n. 100 (there mention is made of a pair of shoes Ben Yijū purchased for Bama, for ten dirhems); on p. 224: in the early 1150's. Cf. the introduction to III, 41 (n. 1). For Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāṭī and his support of the Ibn Yijū family, see pages 95–101.}

III, 43 *Letter from Peraḥyā Yijū to his father Joseph: Skipping along the Coast of Sicily*

Messina, ca. 1153

ENA 2557, f. 151

Ed. Simonsohn and Gil, "Sicily," 32–36. Translation published in Goitein, "Sicily," 28–30; Goitein, *Letters*, 327–30, on which, together with additional notes in Goitein's papers, the following is based; also translated in Simonsohn, *Jews In Sicily*, 1:405–8.

The warm invitation extended by the India trader Abraham Ben Yijū to his family in September 1149 (III, 29) did not find immediate response. Letters were exchanged, but no action was taken. Finally, after a lapse of about four years, we find here Ben Yijū's nephew, Peraḥyā b. Joseph, on the first leg of his trip to Egypt, where, again after considerable time, he finally married his cousin, the only remaining child of the India trader.

Peraḥyā's family had left Tunisia, probably in 1148, when it was partly occupied by the Normans, and settled in Mazara, a port on the southwestern coast of Sicily. During the eleventh century, Mazara was a lively entrepôt, serving as a bridgehead to Tunisia and a terminal for ships going to the Levant. After the Norman conquest of Sicily, however, and the subsequent severing of close relations between Tunisia and the island, Mazara lost its importance as a seaport. Peraḥyā had to look for another way to get to Egypt. He turned first north overland to Palermo and from there went by boat to Messina on the east coast of Sicily.¹ This voyage is described in our letter. {Peraḥyā wrote the letter in his and his brother Moses' name and sent it to their father in Mazara.}

With a craving for adventure—attested in the Geniza for other young men too²—Peraḥyā's younger brother Moses insisted on accompanying him to the foreign country. After some mishaps—Moses was captured by pirates—the two finally arrived and were later followed by the rest of the family. Many letters concerning this family have been preserved in the Geniza, which is to be explained by the fact that the youngest brother, referred to in this letter {line 25}, became a judge of the rabbinical court in Old Cairo.³

¹ {For Messina in the Geniza documents, see Kraemer, "Messina," with reference to this letter on 366, 368.}

² See, for instance, Goitein, *Letters*, 255–57 (TS 10 J 16, f. 19).

³ {Samuel was the youngest of the three brothers; see III, 48, line 11, where he refers to Moses as 'my brother and head,' i.e., my older brother. He was a schoolteacher

The writing is effaced in several places, but can mostly be restored by reasonable surmise.

Translation

[A. The trip from Mazara to Messina]

(3) This⁴ is to inform you—may God {add: keep you safe!}⁵—that we arrived (4) in Messina in safety and good health—for which we must thank God, *and not ascribe it to our own merit* (5) *or good deeds*⁶—after we had passed eight days on our journey. For a rainstorm (6) kept us back in Baqtas.⁷ We paid the *Christian* skipper {alt. tr.: owner} (7) of the boat⁸ a fare of two *rubāʿs* less one-quarter and stipulated {lit., ‘we made an agreement with him’} that he should let us disembark at the lighthouse (8) near Messina⁹—the town is, indeed, visible from it.

We embarked on Friday (9) night,¹⁰ in the company of a Jew, a *Kohen*, from Salerno, and were at sea until [...-]day, (10) when we arrived at

in Fustat, and there is no evidence that he became a judge; see the introduction to III, 58.

⁴ The beginning of the letter contains a standard salutation, omitted by Goitein in his translation.

⁵ I read: *sallamaka ʿllāhu* (the first word was not deciphered by Goitein or by Simonsohn and Gil). The phrase (sometimes with a different pronominal suffix) appears frequently in the Geniza letters, e.g., in III, 28a, line 18, VI, 7, lines 3–4; VI, 34, line 3.

⁶ The translation does not fit the words in the original Hebrew, *lo bi-ḥesed we-lo bi-maʿasim*. One would expect *lo bi-zkhūt we-lo bi-maʿasim (tōvim)*. In his papers Goitein marked these words as unusual. The writer probably intended to write *bi-ḥesed lo bi-zkhūt* . . . , ‘and ascribe it to His grace, not our own merit or good deeds.’ Cf. CAJS 389, line 11 (facsimile in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, opp. 1:20), in Aramaic and Arabic: *lā bi-zkhū we-lā bi-ʿōvādīn ṭāvīn ellā bi-rahmatihī* .}

⁷ Patti, a town and a gulf of the same name on the northern shore of Sicily.

⁸ {Arabic *ṣāḥib al-qārib*. The *qārib* (also in lines 11–13) is a seagoing barge; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:305, and other references *ib.*, 6:91.}

⁹ Spelled here, as in other Geniza papers, *msyny*, which indicates that the writer pronounced the name Messīnī or Messēnī. {See Kraemer, “Messina,” 373, n. 39, who suggests that the final *y* may represent *alif maqṣūra*, so that the name was pronounced Messina. The lighthouse is called here and in line 13 ‘the *faro*,’ an Italian word derived from Pharos, the islet situated at the entrance to the port of Alexandria, on which had stood a famous lighthouse; see Sadan, “*Manāra*,” 358a.

¹⁰ On the prohibition of sailing on the Sabbath and the exceptions to this rule, see *Tosefta Shabbat* 13:13, ed. Lieberman, 61, and parallels; Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutab*, 3:216–18. Below, lines 14–17, the writer describes the pains he took not to desecrate the Sabbath. Here he writes *ṭalaʿnā ilā ʿl-baḥr*, ‘we went up to the sea,’ and in lines 10–11, *ṭalaʿnā ilā ʿl-qārib*, ‘we went up to the boat.’}

Baq̄tas. There, however, a rainstorm befell us, and we stayed until Friday. We boarded (11) the boat (again) in the morning and arrived at a place called Milās.¹¹ There, (12) the (above-mentioned) Jew, along with Isaac, the son-in-law of Giovanna's son {alt. tr.: of Ibn Giovanna},¹² disembarked and continued their travel by land. (13) The *Christian* skipper told us that we would not reach the lighthouse—the (14) place where we had agreed that he would let us off—before the Sabbath¹³ and said that (15) we could disembark there whenever we arrived, but that he could not take a shortcut {alt. tr.: . . . and said, “Whenever I arrive there with you, I will let you disembark, because I cannot interrupt the journey.”}.¹⁴ As I was afraid (16) of *desecrating the Sabbath*, and of other things (as well),¹⁵ I took another boat {alt. tr.: hired a boat together with other people} for two-thirds of a *rubāʿī*, (17) and we arrived in Messina on *Saturday*.¹⁶

[B. Meeting Uncle Mevassēr and others; plans for travel to Egypt]

On Sunday, I inquired about my uncle (18) Mevassēr¹⁷ and found him there. He did not fall short,¹⁸ and we stayed with him. Then I inquired¹⁹ (19) about Ibn Siṭlūn and Ibn Bārūkh²⁰ and found them. Ibn Siṭlūn said:

¹¹ Milazzo, a town on the eastern end of the gulf of Patti, the ancient Mylae.

¹² {I assume that *bn* = Ibn, and this functions here as a family name.}

¹³ The Sabbath begins on Friday evening at nightfall.

¹⁴ {By staying till after the Sabbath. The last words in Arabic are *mā nuṭīqu naqṭaʿu al-tariq*.

¹⁵ I assume that Perahyā alludes to some fear for his and his brother's personal safety.

¹⁶ Evidently they did not disembark until after the Sabbath. For the circumstances when a Jew may disembark from a ship on the Sabbath, see M. Shabbat 16:8; Tosefta Shabbat 13:14, ed. Lieberman, 61–62; Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutab*, 3:218–19; Maimonides, *Responsa*, 2:569 (see additional sources *ib.*, n. 48), 4:15, no. 308 (TS NS 325, f. 182 is a fragment of this responsum—the identification should be added to Brody, *Hand-List*, 238—in the hand of R. Joseph *rōsh ha-sēder* b. Jacob; in Friedman, “Fragments of Maimonides' Responsa,” 457, mistakenly printed as TS NS 235.182). Amir Ashur calls my attention to a list of responsa from R. Nissim Gaon in CAJS Halper 160, the first item of which reads (In Hebrew): “It is permissible for a Jew to disembark from a ship on a festival.”}

¹⁷ This is Abraham {and Joseph} Ben Yijū's brother, whom Abraham addressed in III, 29.

¹⁸ Of his family duties. {The remark echoes the criticism of Mevassēr in III, 30, lines 9 ff. and other documents.}

¹⁹ Arabic *asqasaytu* for *astasqaytu*.

²⁰ Business friends of his uncle, the India trader Abraham Ben Yijū. The usual spelling of the first name was *Sitrūn* (citron), a family name still common among so-called Sefaradi, or Spanish, Jews. {In our documents the spelling Siṭlūn seems more common. Abraham Ben Yijū sent from Egypt to Sicily with Sulymān b. Siṭrūn a bale with commodities as a gift for his brother Joseph: III, 41, lines 26–27; see 731, n. 27 and the following

“I shall take care (20) of your fare, and you will go up with me {alt. tr.: with us},²¹ God willing.” Then I consulted my uncle and Ibn Siṭlūn (21) about Moses’ travel, and they said: “There is nothing to be gained by it. He had better {alt. tr.: It is better that he} go back to his father.” (22) But he insisted on setting out with me, so that he would not come back empty-handed {lit., ‘But he said: “My travel is absolutely necessary, so that I do not . . .”’}.²² Thus I am uncertain (23) with regard to him, and I have not received a letter from you giving instructions, or about your well-being, (24) as might be expected {lit., ‘a detailed letter or [one] about your circumstances, as people do’}. Now, please²³ do not neglect to send a detailed letter (25) with information about your well-being and that of my mother and my brother,²⁴ and do not worry (26) about us, for we are well.

[C. The stay in Messina and the city’s deplorable state]

Ibn Siṭlūn let me copy [Margin] the Commentary on *‘Ērūwīn* by Rabbēnū Nissīm for him.²⁵ And most of the people in the town have asked me to

note here. As far as I know, Ibn Bārūkh is not mentioned in connection with Abraham Ben Yijū. Isaac b. Bārūkh, of Almeria, Spain, appears several times in the documents of chap. 4. See the following note.}

²¹ I.e., to Egypt. {Arabic *taṭla‘ ma’anā*. For *ṭala‘a*, ‘reach (a country),’ see Hava, *Dictionary*, 436. For ‘going up’ to Egypt from Sicily, cf. III, 49*v*, line 19; but there it may simply mean embark—see 749, n. 4. Perahyā attempted to borrow money from Ibn Siṭlūn to send to his father Joseph; see 746, n. 8. Ibn Bārūkh did travel from Sicily to Egypt. In a letter from Alexandria, Moses Yijū wrote his brother Perahyā in Fustat that he would journey there with Ibn Bārūkh; cf. III, 47*v*, line 4.}

²² Young Moses wanted to come home a success. In Messina, obviously, there was no opportunity for business, while he hoped that in Egypt he would do better. {Joseph, on the other hand, wrote to his son Perahyā in Egypt that Moses had traveled with Perahyā only out of compassion for him (III, 49, line 28).}

²³ ‘Now, please,’ Arabic *wa-asa‘a* = *wal-sā‘a*. For this spelling see Blau, *Grammar*, 23–24, 282; Goitein, *Palestinian Jewry*, 224, n. 19. In III, 48, lines 29, 43, verso, lines 5, 28, *wa-asā‘ā*. For the meanings ‘now’ and ‘please,’ see Blau, “Judeo-Arabic Features,” 187–92. In the same context, *wa-asā* is used for ‘please’ in III, 47*v*, line 7; III, 48, line 39, verso, line 15; III, 49*v*, line 15. The members of the Ben Yijū family who wrote these letters evidently did not distinguish between the two words. See further 426, n. 68 on *asā*.

²⁴ His youngest brother, Samuel.}

²⁵ The frequently quoted book of the great Tunisian Jewish scholar is lost, except for three pages found in the Geniza, which are indeed in the handwriting of our Perahyā! Obviously, they were his first attempt before he made the copy mentioned here and he carried them with him to Egypt. ENA 2936, ed. Lewin, “R. Nissim.” {The correct shelf mark is: ENA 2639, fs. 1–2. See Abramson, *R. Nissim Gaon*, 100 ff. The Commentary on *‘Ērūwīn* by Rabbēnū Nissīm’ is mentioned in several book lists found in the Geniza; see Allony, *Library*, 491. The order of a copy of Ibn Gebirol’s *Dīwān* from a copyist named R. Perahyā the scholar called Abu ‘l-Surūr, is mentioned in TS 12.394. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:238, 574, n. 47, suggested identifying him as Perahyā b. Joseph Yijū (this reference to

serve as a schoolmaster in his house,²⁶ for the town lacks everything.²⁷ Were the town not unfit for you to live in (you could find a good job here) {read: I would suggest that you come}.²⁸ However, the town is mediocre; one cannot live here. (. . . Here, it requires an) effort {read: Its homes are filthy and its people make little effort}²⁹ to study and to pray. Since we arrived, there has been no *public prayer* [Verso] (1) *in the afternoon and the evening*,³⁰ while the *morning* prayer is said (2) before dawn; at daybreak, they are already through with it.³¹ (3) If we lived here . . . , (4) we would miss the prayer {read: Whenever someone goes to the sea for his business—since the residential area of the town is not within view of it—he misses the prayer};³² and it is impossible to walk in the streets here because of the [dir].t.³³

Perahyā is to be added to the index of Goitein, *Med. Soc.*). Some support for the identification can be adduced from the names, known from Perahyā's family and close circle, mentioned in the letter, including R. Nissīm, the name of one of Perahyā's sons; but since the fathers' names are not provided, this is inconclusive. The writer asks Perahyā to give regards to his son-in-law, "the elder, the esteemed, respected cantor." The writer was found in Fustat ('Miṣrayim'), and Goitein identified him as 'a bibliophile from Byzantium.' Beit-Arié, "Qunṭres," 75, rejects this identification (there is an error in the page reference to Goitein) and notes that the script of the letter is Eastern in style, and accordingly the language of the letter writer (though not necessarily its author) conforms to the Eastern tradition. Goitein's tripartite explanation for his identification of the writer detailed in the note cited above and Beit-Arié's characterization of the handwriting are perhaps to be resolved by the suggested distinction between writer and author. Attention should also be paid to the use of vellum for the letter, which is atypical of letters written in Egypt in the 12th century.}

²⁶ Arabic *ʿindahu* {lit., 'with him,' which could mean 'at his place'}. One expects *ʿindahum* {'with them'}, but there is no space left for *m*. Most probably, Ibn Siṭrūn had a spacious house, where he could harbor the proposed school—or Perahyā simply forgot the letter, as the word occurs at the end of a line.

²⁷ Religious education is referred to, of course. Joseph, as remarked above, had become a schoolmaster.

²⁸ {Arabic *la-kāna nushīru ʿalayka [bi]l-majīʿ*, not read by Goitein, who supplied the words in parenthesis. For *la-kāna*, see Blau, *Grammar*, 186.

²⁹ I read *qadhar al-suknā wa-qawmubu qalīlu ʿ-ijtihād*.

³⁰ Abulafia, *Two Italies*, 44–45, correctly notes that this refers to the difficulty of finding a *minyān*, a quorum of ten males for the services, but his reference to 'the rabbi' no longer holding these prayers is imprecise.

³¹ For the preceding lines, cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:98, 2:157. The morning prayer service is not supposed to be completed until after sunrise.

³² The original is effaced and its decipherment is doubtful here. I tentatively read *wamā [yam]dī al-insān ilā al-baḥr lil-taṣarruf idh suknā al-balad mi[n] ghayr (mlhʿzth [?] =) mulāḥazatihi tafūtuḥu al-ṣalā*. The suggested translation is approximate. This passage may have some significance for the economic history of Sicily. From the fact that in Goitein's published translation of this letter Perahyā fails to mention the port in Messina as a commercial center, Abulafia (*Two Italies*, 44–45) infers that it no longer played a great role in trade with Egypt or elsewhere, as it had in the eleventh century and that this had passed to Syracuse. See Kraemer, "Messina," 366, who notes that the port was not in Perahyā's purview and that Abulafia's inference is therefore unwarranted.}

³³ Both Muslim and Jewish writers used to decry the low standard of their coreligionists in Sicily in Norman times. Mazara, the town to which this letter was directed, was of

[D. Miscellaneous and greetings]

(After dealing with some sundry items, the writer asks his parents not to worry too much about their absent sons and, in particular, not to exaggerate in their fast for them—it was customary to fast as a means of enhancing the efficacy of prayer for relatives who were traveling. He then reiterates a medical prescription for his mother, which he had previously sent from Palermo,³⁴ and concludes with a series of greetings, which shows that the community in Mazara must have included quite a number of scholars.)³⁵

[E. Address]

(1) (To) Our {alt. tr.: my} dear father—may God keep him with His never-ceasing protection!—(2) Joseph, *the teacher* {alt. tr.: *Teacher*},³⁶ b. Peraḥyā Yijū, God is his protector {add: and preserver}!

(1) (From) His sons, who are longing (2) for him, Peraḥyā and Moses.

(3) *Salvation is near!*

a different type, owing to its close connections with Tunisia (see above). {For Muslim and Jewish writers' description of Messina, see Kraemer, "Messina," 365. For a description of Palermo by Muslim writers similar to that found here, see Ahmad, *Islamic Sicily*, 40.

³⁴ Palermo is not mentioned explicitly in the text here. In the continuation the writer speaks of meeting someone in al-Madīna ('the City'), which often designates Palermo (cf. Kraemer, "Messina," 364). It is noteworthy that Peraḥyā evidently had some medical training.}

³⁵ From the greetings here and in III, 45, lines 11–12, it appears that the Jewish community in Mazara was a well-organized congregation headed by the usual functionaries. *Mu'allim* means here (line 16) rabbi, as it does in southern Yemen up to the present time. This is proven by the fact that greetings to him and to his brother (Jacob) are given in both letters before Rabbi Zechariah, an authority of Jewish law, quoted by Peraḥyā many years later in his letter III, 55, line 10. {There referred to as 'Rabbi Zechariah, our teacher (*mu'allimūnā*)' Goitein later crossed out the translation 'rabbi' for *mu'allim* in his edition of III, 49, line 17. In Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, the word is rendered 'teacher,' 'master [craftsman],' or 'young physician.' In III, 48*v*, lines 35–36, greetings are sent from "the *mu'allim*, the rabbi, our Rabbi Zechariah and... the *mu'allim* Jacob." Here in III, 43*v*, lines 17–18, greetings are also sent to Solomon, Ḥiyyā ha-Kohen and to the cantor. On fasting and praying for relatives in danger, see page 158.

³⁶ Joseph's sons Peraḥyā and Samuel refer to their father in the addresses of their letters (here and III, 30*v*, III, 45*v* and III, 48*v*) with the Hebrew *melammēd*, 'Teacher,' without the definite article, which seems to function not only as a designation of his occupation but an honorific. Moses, the third son, in the address of his letters (III, 46*v*, III, 47*av*), uses the def. art., referring to his father Joseph as *ha-melammēd*, 'the teacher.'}

III, 44 *Note from Ḥajjāj to Joseph Yījū, Mazara, about a Consignment Sent to him by his Sons*

Messina, October–November 1154

TS Arabic 7, f. 18

Ed. Simonsohn and Gil, “Sicily,” 40. Described in Ben-Sasson, *Sicily*, 647; Baker and Polliack, *TS Arabic Catalogue*, 36; English translation by Simonsohn, *Jews in Sicily*, 1:404–5. In all of these it is mistakenly identified as addressed to Abraham Ben Yījū. The correct identification appears in Shaked, *Bibliography*, 144.

The brothers Peraḥyā and Moses had sent merchandise to their father Joseph that they had received, of course, from their uncle Abraham Ben Yījū. The carrier Ḥajjāj asks Joseph how he wishes to receive it.

This is the *siḥāya*, or slip of paper, referred to in III, 48, line 31, where also the date is given.¹ Obviously, it was sent from Messina, the main port for the traffic to the East in those days.

For a first notification, such a small piece of paper would suffice. However, since we learn from III, 48 and III, 49 that the writer Ḥajjāj remained silent for another year and only after pressure from another merchant finally sent the sums involved, altogether 179 *rubāʿīs* (Sicilian quarter dinars, according to III, 48, lines 34 ff., a sum sufficient to keep the family for two years), this announcement, in its very general terms, is somewhat suspect. It states that Peraḥyā had expressly advised Ḥajjāj to send the money in three installments, obviously, because he did not rely on his old father for using it economically. The suspicions of the Yījū family were, perhaps, exaggerated.²

Joseph Yījū is addressed here as ‘Mevassēr’s brother,’ just as in III, 57, line 3 {where Joseph refers to himself this way}, obviously because the writer was acquainted with Mevassēr.³

¹ {The date there is for receiving the note, which may have been written somewhat earlier.

² On Joseph’s mishandling a gift of pepper that his brother Abraham Ben Yījū had sent him, see III, 41, lines 29–31 and III, 57, line 13. But large amounts of money were frequently sent in installments because of the precariousness of travel. See 375, n. 30. The figure of 179 *rubāʿīs* is not mentioned in III, 44, and is obviously derived from III, 48, lines 33–34, 40 (cf. III, 49, line 44). In his Summaries of the documents, Goitein mentioned a sum of 270 *rubāʿīs*.

³ This designation led to the incorrect identification of the recipient as Abraham Ben Yījū, the third brother, in the studies cited in the bibliographical data. For several reasons the circumstances concerned apply well to Joseph but could not possibly fit Abraham. Among other things, the writer of the note refers to the recipient’s sons. Joseph’s two older

The name Ḥajjāj is found several times in the Geniza papers and also in Hebrew literary sources of that time. It is still very frequent among the Jews of North Africa.⁴ Al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf was the viceroy in Iraq of the Umayyad Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (685–705). How did his name become popular among Jews? Since his father’s name was Yūsuf (Joseph), the honorific byname (*kunya*) of a man called Joseph became Abu ‘l-Ḥajjāj, father of al-Ḥajjāj, e.g., Abu ‘l-Ḥajjāj Joseph b. Nathan (TS 18J 1, f. 29) {also Abu ‘l-Ḥajjāj Joseph b. Peraḥyā, one of the investors in I, 41}. This led to the use of Ḥajjāj as an independent name used by Jews.

As the Maghrebi form *naqsīmū* in line 3 indicates, Ḥajjāj was a ‘local’ merchant.⁵

Translation

(1) My lord, the most illustrious Sheikh—may God prolong your life!—this is to inform you (2) that your sons are well and in good health. They sent (3) for you with me something⁶ and instructed me⁷ to divide it for you into three (4) installments. Now, I beg you to inform me with whom

sons, Peraḥyā and Moses, had left him to travel to Egypt; they met the writer on the way. Abraham had had two sons, both of whom had died years before this note was written.}

⁴ See Eisenbeth, *Juifs*, 132, where, however, an incorrect explanation of the name is given.

⁵ {Ḥajjāj uses the *nqtl* form for 1st pers. sg. imperf. in three (other) words: *nūhibb*, *nūfīdh* and *nūlimuka*. I assume that Goitein cited *nqsmw*, since it is the first example, rather than as a *nqtlū* form for first pers. pl. imperf. In any case, some comment is called for here. While the *nqillnqtlū* forms are best known in Maghrebi Arabic, they have recently been identified in Muslim Egyptian dialects from the Mamluk period onwards; see Blau, *Emergence*, 250 and 264 and the literature cited there. For a recent discussion see Owens, “Dialect.” The *nqtl* form for first pers. sg. imperf. also appears elsewhere, but in Judeo-Arabic texts, *nqtlū* is known only from those texts emanating from North Africa (Blau, *ib.*, 58, n. 3; for *nqillnqtlū*, cf. other references, *ib.*, 283). Nevertheless, the letter *w* in *nqsmw*, is the pronominal third person singular suffix, i.e., *naqsimu/naqsimo = naqsimuhu*, ‘I shall divide it’ (as indeed translated by Goitein); see Blau, *Grammar*, 59. On the use of Maghrebi Arabic by the Jews of Sicily, see Kraemer, “Messina,” 368. For examples of *nqtlū*, we cite III, 43v, line 6, written by the North African Peraḥyā Yijū in Sicily: *natawassatū*, ‘we shall make a compromise,’ or in his brother Samuel’s letter III, 48, line 42, *natazarrā’ū*, ‘we shall make humble supplication,’ verso, line 19: *nashtariyū*, ‘we shall purchase.’

⁶ Arabic *shay* can be translated ‘(some) merchandise.’ See 262, n. 22.}

⁷ Arabic *wa-awṣānī*, which is in the singular. Obviously, the instructions had been given by the elder son, Peraḥyā, alone. {It could be a pseudo-literary form for the dual; see Blau, *Grammar*, 303.}

I should send it to you, (5) and you need no instructions.⁸ For your information: the unpacking⁹ cost (6) one dirhem.¹⁰

Profuse greetings to you.

[Address]

[Verso] (1) To the Sheikh, the *cantor*, (2) Mevassēr's brother, (3) known as Ibn Yījū.¹¹

(1) From Ḥajjāj.

⁸ A warning that Joseph Yījū should choose only a very trustworthy man, cf. {II, 55*v*, line 7} III, 10, line 71; {IV, 3*v*, lines 12–13} V, 1, margin, line 15, etc. {Arabic *wa-mā taḥtāju waṣāyā*. Often the singular is used for the last word, *waṣīyya*, 'instruction.' From the use of the plural here and other parallel expressions, it is clear that in the phrase *mā taḥtāju waṣyḥ*, in the thirteenth century documents from Quṣayr, the last word is also to be vocalized *waṣīyya* and the phrase is to be translated, 'you do not require instruction,' rather than as rendered by Guo, *Commerce*, 50, *waṣīhi* (!), 'whatever you need, order it.'

⁹ Arabic *inḥallat*, with which *nanḥall* in III, 48, line 33, which refers to our note, is to be compared. While charges for packing (*ta'biya*) are common, I have not yet seen a charge for unpacking, especially a sum as negligible as that mentioned here. Therefore, the interpretation must remain tentative, until parallels are found. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:338, 487, n. 35, where it is translated 'untying' and other examples are adduced.

¹⁰ 'Cost one dirhem' translates *fi dirham wāḥid*. Note that the expression *dirham wāḥid* (without *fi*) also appears with the meaning '(as) one sum': I, 34*b*, line 6, *wa-jumil dirham wāḥid*; VI, 27, line 22, *wa-taḥaqqaq dirham wāḥid*; VII, 11, line 11: *al-jamī' khulṭa dirham wāḥid*.

¹¹ See the introduction to the document on the way the writer referred to Joseph.}

III, 45 *Short Letter from Perahyā b. Joseph Yijū to His Father in Mazara*

Sicily or southern Italy, most probably June 1154

TS 8J 36, f. 3

The letter most probably was written in 1154, as it contains a reference to the proposed move to Egypt of the Yijū family. Perahyā is on a journey along the coast, certainly in Sicily or southern Italy, because he speaks here of his brother being sent back to Mazara via Palermo, while he himself had not yet set out on his passage to Egypt. This letter, as III, 43, shows that there still remained assets to be realized for Joseph Yijū, most probably from the time he was a merchant.¹

Translation

[A. Reference to a letter from Egypt expressing doubts as to travel to that country]

(1) I am sending you these few lines² in well-being and health. [We arrived] on Sunday night (2) of the week *Wayiqqah Qōrah*³ and stayed overnight on board. On Monday [. . .], I disembarked [to take care of] sundry business and was met (3) by a man from Egypt, called Ibn Jāfi,⁴ who gave me a letter from Sheikh Abu 'l-Fakhr (4) Ibn al-Amshāfi,⁵

¹ {Goitein surmises here and elsewhere (e.g., in the introduction to III, 49) that Joseph had previously been a trader. While this assumption is attractive, I have not seen any specific support for it in our texts. Debts owed Joseph are alluded to in III, 43*v*, lines 4–6. On Joseph's mishandling of pepper sent by Ben Yijū to his brother, see III, 41, lines 30–31, III, 57, line 13.}

² Lit., 'two.' See 694, n. 3. {For 'sending' the original has *'allaqtu*, lit., 'attaching,' because Perahyā attached his letter to the one mentioned in the continuation; see lines 13–14. His brother writes the same in his letter, III, 47*a*, line 14. *'Allaqa* also means 'got down'; see IV, 4, line 1.}

³ The weeks are called according to the words beginning the Torah reading of the following Sabbath. The section referred to (Num., chaps. 16–18) is normally read in the month of June. {Perahyā was in the habit of dating his letters by the weekly Torah reading; cf. III, 55, line 2; introduction to III, 55*a*. This dating is not very common in the Geniza letters.}

⁴ For this rare name, see Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmā'*, 1390.}

⁵ Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāfi was the friend and helper of the Yijū family in Fustat. {See pages 95–101.}

addressed to you, in which he expresses doubt about going there {alt. tr.: reservations about the trip}.⁶

[B. Request to send power of attorney with Moses, who returned to Mazara, and report about a loan not obtained]

My brother Moses had traveled to Palermo⁷ (5) heading for your place, so that you can write him the power of attorney. Please take the matter, namely the legal confirmation of that power of attorney, firmly in hand, with utmost (6) resolution, and send it as quickly as possible.

I tried to get a loan from Sheikh (7) Abu 'l-Rabī' of twenty *rubā'īs*, in order to send them to you (pl). However, I did not find him to have gold, as he had invested it in business.⁸

(8) Again {lit., 'Take notice'}, if the power of attorney is not legally confirmed, you will get nothing, unless you come in person. For, he says expressly in [his letter (?)] "... (9) and send a document, in which your sister approves of the matter."⁹ {Add: I have conveyed this information to you.}

⁶ Arabic *yahtakku bil-majī'*. The definite article is used ('the going'). This is obviously a reference to the desire of old Joseph to follow his son Peraḥyā on his way to Egypt; cf. III, 48 and III, 49. {*Ihtakka fi* can mean 'argues,' 'touches on.' The def. art. is used also in III, 48*v*, lines 7, 9, 17, in similar context; also 740, n. 28; 749, n. 2. No reason is supplied for Abu 'l-Fakhr's challenging Abraham Ben Yijū's invitation to his brother to join him. Perhaps this is an allusion to a decline in Abraham's fortunes. On the other hand, this might refer to the collection of the funds, discussed in the continuation, viz. Abu 'l-Fakhr suggested procuring a power of attorney from Joseph, since otherwise, he would have to come in person. Cf. line 8.}

⁷ Arabic *al-madīna*. {See 741, n. 34.}

⁸ 'The *kunya* Abu 'l-Rabī' is invariably connected with the name Solomon' (Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:641, n. 300). It stands to reason that Sulaymān Ibn Siḡlūn was intended here, and this is made almost a certainty by V, 24*v*, line 2, where he is referred to as Abu 'l-Rabī' Ibn Siḡlūn. He had already promised to help Peraḥyā financially; see III, 43, lines 19–20 and 738–39, nn. 20–21. On the scarcity of cash, see page 20, n. 43.}

⁹ As the clearly discernible 'your sister,' line 9, indicates, Peraḥyā's aunt Berākhā was also involved in the transaction. One does not see, however, why the personal appearance of his father would remove that legal difficulty. Anyhow, owing to the bad state of the ms., the full import of the passage cannot be made out. {Line 9 may not be a quote from Abu 'l-Fakhr's letter, mentioned in line 3, but Peraḥyā's own afterthought.}

[C. Detailed greetings]

Do not be remiss in praying for me.¹⁰ Best (10) greetings to you, to my m[other], and to my brothers Moses and Samuel. Please greet (11) my lord, the master¹¹ and Mr. Jacob, his brother, and to Rabbi Zechariah, the best greetings, and to Mr. Solomon, greetings; (12) and to everybody who asks about me, and to my master, R. Ḥayyīm,¹² the father of the rabbi, the best regards. Perhaps {alt. tr.: I hope that} he will not forget me (13) in his prayers. *May your well-being increase more and more, Amen Selah! And Peace.*

[D. Forwarding of the letter mentioned above, sec. A]

Take w[hat] I [[for]warded, (14) namely the letter sent by Sheikh Abu 'l-Fakhr, together with this letter. *And Peace.*

[E. Address]

[Verso] (1) This letter is sent to my esteemed parent, (2) *his honor my father and master Joseph Melammed (Teacher)*¹³ b. Peraḥyā (3)—*may he rest in Eden!*—Yijū, may God be his protector and keeper!

(1) (From) His son, who is longing for him, Peraḥyā. (2) *May salvation be near!*

¹⁰ The prayer of parents or other relatives and, in general, of pious old people was regarded as a most efficacious protection on a dangerous journey; cf. below, lines 12–13. {See page 158.}

¹¹ Arabic *mu'allim*, see 741, n. 35. {Most (or all) of the individuals greeted in the continuation are also mentioned in III, 43*v*, lines 16–18; see the same note.

¹² News of R. Ḥayyim's death is found in III, 48*v*, line 36, margin.

¹³ See 741, n. 36.}

III, 46 *Letter from Moses b. Joseph Yijū to His Brother Perahyā, in Fustat*

April 14, 1155

TS 13J 20, f. 7

The letter certainly was written by Moses himself, as it was continued on the margin by another hand, that of a friend, adding greetings in person. When letters were copied by a scribe, he normally mentioned all the persons who convey greetings; cf., e.g., II, 55 {II, 67} or VII, 36. Moses' writing is not as elegant as that of his older brother, who was an accomplished scribe, but still is very regular and could be used in copying books. His Hebrew is also quite exceptional. {Moses also wrote the next letter, III, 47, which is in the same hand. His Arabic, especially in III, 47, is somewhat substandard. Both his handwriting and style are better in III, 47a, sent to the family's patron Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāī.}

As to the date, it is given as Wednesday, the 24th day of counting the Omer, i.e., the seven-week period starting on the second day of Passover. During the years 1152–56 {the only period during which the letter could have been written}, only in 1155 did the 24th of the Omer fall on a Wednesday, and this coincided with April 14. The letter obviously was written in Tyre {or rather, after the writer had been there, line 26; see page 725}, which then was in the hands of the Crusaders.

Concerning the background of this letter, see the introduction to III, 48 and III, 49. As many persons are greeted in Fustat, it seems that Moses had been there and was captured on his return journey from Egypt to Sicily. {He wrote III, 47 in Alexandria.}

Contents

- A. Long preamble in {rhymed, florid} Hebrew, expressing the hope to attend Perahyā's wedding (lines 1–23).
- B. Reference to the writer's forthcoming trip to Egypt and other matters (lines 23–margin, line 1).
- C. Greetings to persons in Egypt (margin, lines 2–20).¹
- D. Greetings and congratulations written by one David b. Isaac (lines 21–28).

¹ No greetings are extended to Abraham Ben Yijū, certainly, because the writer knew that he was away. {Cf. page 726.}

The letter is addressed to the Square of the Perfumers, *murabbaʿat al-ʿaṭṭārīn* to the shop of Abu ʿl-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāṭī the friend of the Yijū family.

Translation of sec. B

(23) This is to inform you, my brother, that (24) I intend, God willing, to come.² I have taken out a (passport) {alt. tr.: certificate} other than that of Binyam,³ (25) for he too is going up to Fustat {alt. tr.: traveling to Egypt}.⁴

I received {alt. tr.: collected} seventeen dinars.⁵ I inform you (26) also that I wrote in Tyre many letters and sent them⁶ (27) with Abraham Ibn al-Qarīṣ⁷ and to you as well. Furthermore, I sent with Abraham (28) of al-Mahdiyya⁸ your letter and letters from me, and told him how I was rescued.

² Arabic *al-mujīʿ* = *al-majīʿ*. {For writing the word with *u* rather than *a* (the same appears in I, 34a, line 14), see Blau, *Grammar*, 18. For the use of the def. art. here, see 746, n. 6.}

³ Arabic *barā* [= *barāʿa*], written here first *bry* {for this spelling, see Blau, *ibid.*, 43–44} and then *brʿ* in the construct state. Moses had intended, first, to use the passport of one Binyam. However, as the latter also wanted to go to Egypt, Moses had to get a new one. A passport was necessary, as the travelers had to pass from Christian to Muslim territory. As a matter of fact, a *barā* or *barāʿa* was needed for a non-Muslim even while traveling between Muslim countries, as he had always to prove that he had paid his poll tax. See Goitein, “Source for Muslim Civilization,” 86. {This was republished as Goitein, *Studies*, 289. In a later study, Goitein, “Unity of the Mediterranean World” (= Goitein, *Studies*, 297; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 2:384), presumably corrected this note, by remarking that a *barāʿa* “is not a passport, but a certificate to the effect that (one) had paid his taxes.” On Moses’ difficulties in paying the poll tax, cf. III, 47, lines 14–16. The words *barā ghayr*, ‘a certificate other than,’ are translated ‘well and in good cheer’ by Ghosh, *Antique*, 327, who obviously read *barī jayyid*. Binyām = Benjamin; see 267, n. 4.}

⁴ One goes up a river; therefore, traveling from the coast to Cairo is expressed in this way; cf. also III, 43, line 20. {Arabic *yatlaʿ ilā miṣr*. As in III, 43, line 20, this could mean here: travel to Egypt. An example of *ṭalāʿa* for travel from Alexandria to Fustat is found in II, 58, line 7.}

⁵ We don’t know the circumstances of Moses’ collecting this money. Perhaps it was related to the power of attorney mentioned in III, 45, line 8.}

⁶ Home to Sicily.

⁷ {So vocalized by Goitein. Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmāʿ*, 743, lists three names that correspond to the Hebrew consonants that appear here: al-Qurayḍ, al-Qurayḍ and al-Qarīḍ.}

⁸ See III, 29v, line 1. {There he is identified as Abraham b. Joseph Ibn al-Baqqāl, with whom also Abraham Ben Yijū sent his letters. But ‘Abraham of al-Mahdiyya’ could refer to Abraham b. Elijah of al-Mahdiyya, to whom III, 30 is addressed. Also see 732, n. 36.} Moses wrote home to Sicily via Tyre, but most probably sent letters also through other ports. {The letters spoken of in line 26 had been sent from Tyre; here letters sent from a different location were apparently intended.}

Thank God (29) I am well and healthy—may I never miss God’s favor (30) under your auspices {alt. tr.: thanks to your auspiciousness}⁹ However, on the day I disembarked, I was so ill (31) that I did not expect¹⁰ to stay alive, and I wrote those letters¹¹ (32) only out of duress. *But He acted for the sake of His name, and on the fifth day [Margin] I recovered.*¹²

⁹ Arabic *bisa‘adatika* = *bisa‘adatika*, cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:654. {Cf. 518, n. 30.

¹⁰ Arabic *mā ḥisābī*, an expression I have not seen elsewhere.}

¹¹ Most probably letters of despair asking for help.

¹² {Cf. Jer. 14:7, etc.; 2 Kings 20:5.}

III, 47 *Letter from Moses b. Joseph Yijū to His Brother Perahyā, Fustat*

Alexandria {probably June 29, 1155}

TS 10 J 14, f. 16

In a letter from Alexandria, Moses informs Perahyā that lac (certainly given to him by his uncle Abraham) did not sell there. He would travel to Fustat accompanied by two Spanish friends who had just disembarked from a ship arriving from Denia. Greetings are sent to many acquaintances in Fustat, most of them probably refugees from North Africa.¹

{Note that according to III, 42, the goods that Abraham Ben Yijū brought with him from India to Egypt included lac. Moses Yijū seems to have written in haste, and as in III, 46, his Arabic is somewhat substandard (as is his Hebrew). Due to its interest for the study of Judeo-Arabic, I call attention here to one phenomenon. In line 15, he writes עַטְאָרִין אֵל מַרְבֻּעָה אֵל אֵלֵי (ilā 'l-murabba'at/l al-'aṭṭārīn), 'to the Square of the Perfumers.' *Murabba'at al-'aṭṭārīn*, appears regularly in our papers (and is used by Moses in III, 46, there with *t* for *tā marbūta*). It is clearly in the construct. The added def. art. *al* before the first noun in the construct is a common feature in Judeo-Arabic.² *Al-murabba'at/l al-'aṭṭārīn* accordingly = *murabba'at al-'aṭṭārīn*. Vestiges of the *tanwīn an* (here marked //), irrespective of the case ending required in classical Arabic, are common in Judeo-Arabic and other Arabic dialects, as we know thanks to the researches of a number of scholars, especially Joshua Blau.³ The *tanwīn* has not been identified in the construct, however. It is difficult to assume that here it is merely the result of a slip of the pen, since the writer uses the same formation in lines 17–18, בַּעַד מִדָּה יָ אֵיִם (ba'da muddat/l 'asharat ayyām), lit., 'after a period of ten days.' It is not clear how this formation is to be explained, whether as a hypercorrection or whether the writer twice (!) inadvertently drew two lines (//), rather than one (/), which he uses once in the text to mark *h* as *tā marbūta* (here he spells *mrb'h/l*, *mdh/l*). Blau has noted the *tanwīn an* in the construct in Arabic dialects of Uzbekistan, but he attributed this to the influence of Persian in its Tāgik form.⁴ He also found the phrase *bekalill/ziti*, 'with a little oil,' in a Middle Arabic Egyptian text in Coptic characters, presumably from the thirteenth century but discounted the possibility that it

¹ {For this document, only this description is preserved among Goitein's papers.

² See Blau, *Grammar*, 40–41.

³ See Blau, *Emergence*, 167 ff.

⁴ See Blau, *ibid.*, 201.

expressed the construct.⁵ In light of the appearances of the *tanwīn* in the construct twice in our Judeo-Arabic text, the explanation of this formation elsewhere should perhaps be reconsidered.

This letter fits well, as placed by Goitein, after III, 46, dated April 14, 1155, and before III, 48, written in the summer or fall of 1156. Moses refers here to two days, Tammuz 24 and 26, the first the day Peraḥyā's letter arrived, the second the day Moses wrote his answer. In 1156, Tammuz 24 fell on the Sabbath, and it is unlikely that Moses received mail on that day. Accordingly, I tentatively suggest that Moses wrote this letter June 29 (= Tammuz 27), 1155.

Translation

[A. Opening; offense at remark on inadequate correspondence]

(1) To my dear brother—may God give you long life, protect you and guard you, (2) not deny you His superior gift of success, be for you a guardian and protector (3) in all your affairs, avert from you anything that troubles you and keep away whatever (4) distresses you! This is to inform you—may God give you life!—that your esteemed letter (5) arrived on the 24th of Tammuz.⁶ You blame me in it for (6) not having responded to your letters. My brother, did I not (7) send you, a pair of detailed letters concerning my circumstances and what I (8) endured? This was good for me,⁷ because the boats did not get through,⁸ (9) and the boat from which we disembarked is held up at al-Kanā'is.⁹ (10) Why, my brother, do you cause my heart pain and distress me more, by saying (11) to me, “You care little about me”? The moment I heard¹⁰ these words (12) I almost expired.

⁵ See Blau, “Autonomy,” 39–40.

⁶ Since the year was probably 1155, this would be equivalent to June 26.

⁷ I.e., I was fortunate to be able to do so, an attempt to translate the Arabic *wa-kāna dhālika li-kbayr bi*.

⁸ Arabic *al-marākib lam ta'di*. For a similar phrase, see 217, n. 4. The boats were apparently unable to continue the journey to Alexandria because travel was not safe, due to the raids by the Norman fleet; see page 725.

⁹ Rās al-Kanā'is, an oft mentioned port in West Egypt; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:331. I assume that Moses traveled from there to Alexandria (about 150 miles to the east) by land.

¹⁰ I am uncertain if this means that Moses read the letter aloud or if this is merely an idiom.

I swear by these lines¹¹ that what caused me (13) to delay (or: withhold)¹² my letters to you was only my compassion for you and because of what you said (14) about sending my letters with Sheikh Abū Naṣr.¹³

[B. Hiding from the tax authorities; discrimination in work and deprivation]

I am not (15) able to travel to the Square of the Perfumers,¹⁴ because I am afraid of (16) the (tax) office.¹⁵ The ‘ralliers’ took 13 dirhems.¹⁶ (17) I am staying with a Jewish man, whose acquaintance I made (18) ten days after my disembarking from the boat, because from the day I disembarked I worked (19) at the place of an *Ishmaelite*.¹⁷ As soon as he realized that I was a Jew, he would not let me work (20) at his place.¹⁸ So I started (working)¹⁹ at the place of that Jew in a house adjoining²⁰ the (21) synagogue. I work on the loom. This keeps me impoverished, every day (22) two and a half dirhems!²¹ But I realized the 13 dirhems.

¹¹ For this oath, see 684, n. 26.

¹² Arabic *wkrt* = *wakhhartu* = *akhhartu*. For *verba primae hamzatae* passing into *primae waw*, see Blau, *Grammar*, 82. Cf. II, 59, line 16, *wṣl*, verso, line 5, *'wṣl = aṣl*. There is a line over *w* in *wkrt* that seems to be *ḍamma* (*u*), but perhaps a diacritic or *shadda* over *k* was intended.

¹³ Moses wanted to spare his brother the painful details of his travails and also abided by Perahyā's request to send mail specifically with Abū Naṣr, who apparently did not travel much to Fustat. Abū Naṣr is also mentioned below, verso, line 3. The well-known Abū Naṣr b. Elisha of Alexandria, who did other favors for the Yijū family, is probably intended; see III, 15, line 32 and 624, n. 16.

¹⁴ Where Perahyā was residing in Fustat with Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāṭī; see the introduction to III, 46 and the address below.

¹⁵ Arabic *dīwān*.

¹⁶ The ‘ralliers,’ *hushshār*, were the executive arm of the poll tax office, which functioned like police. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:370. On Moses' difficulties in paying the poll tax, cf. III, 46, line 24.

¹⁷ *Yishmā'el*, a Muslim (or: Arab), also in III, 49*v*, line 18, IV, 76, margin, line 5.

¹⁸ On the surface, this passage seems to describe an anti-Semitic incident. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:286, 588, n. 47, adduces it as proof that Jews wore no distinguishing clothing and speculates that the Muslim realized that Moses was Jewish, when he failed to appear for work on the Sabbath.

¹⁹ For Arabic *raja'*, ‘start,’ see Blau, *Grammar*, 329.

²⁰ Arabic *bi-lisq* = *bi-liṣq*.

²¹ An unskilled laborer earned about 2½ dirhems a day. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:95; Ashtor, *Prix*, 223 ff.

[C. No market for lac; travel plans and conclusion]

As to [Verso] (1) the lac, no one is buying or selling (it) in the city.²² There has arrived a ship (2) from Dāniya,²³ which had in it all commodities, including silk, mercury and tin.²⁴ (3) I believe that maybe it²⁵ will sell to newcomers. I shall leave it with Sheikh Abū Naṣr²⁶ (4) and come,²⁷ God willing, with Ibn Bārūkh and Ibn Shabrūt.²⁸ If you (5) inform me of any request that fits your needs, I'll buy it for you. You (6) did not write me in detail about your situation, and you left me anxious²⁹ about it. (7) Please (send) a detailed letter.³⁰ *May your well-being increase forever! Amen neṣaḥ* (8) *selah. May they bestow on you well-being!*³¹ *This letter was written on the* (9) *27th of the month of Tammuz.*³² *May salvation be near!*

[D. Postscript on recto, further greetings]

[Margin] For your noble self best greetings, and for whoever is embraced by your care best greetings, *first and foremost the two esteemed brothers, they and their children.*³³ *May the God of Israel bless them, guard them and keep*

²² On the difficulty of selling the lac, see further Moses' letter to Abu 'l-Fakhr in III, 47a.

²³ The Arabic spelling of Denia, Spain.

²⁴ On ships arriving in Alexandria directly from Denia, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:212, 213, 318; Ashtor, *Muslim Spain*, 2:184, 386, n. 326, where this document is cited and shipments of Spanish silk from Denia are mentioned. Udovitch, "Time," 550, however, doubts whether there was a direct shipping line between Denia and Alexandria.

²⁵ The lac.

²⁶ See above, recto, line 14.

²⁷ To Fustat.

²⁸ As noted in the introduction to this text, according to Goitein, these men arrived on the ship from Denia, but this is not stated explicitly. This is likely to be the same Ibn Bārūkh that Peraḥyā and Moses Yijū met in Messina, Sicily, and who spoke of travel to Egypt: III, 43, line 19. Ibn Shaprut (here spelled as in Arabic Shabrūt) is a well-known Spanish Jewish name, thanks to the famous tenth century Ḥisdai Ibn Shaprut.

²⁹ Arabic *mu'allaq al-qalb*. See III, 30, line 10, where the same expression appears.

³⁰ Arabic *wa-'asā kitāb*, etc. For (*wa-*)*'asā* meaning 'please,' see 426, n. 68. Additional examples of the construction found here, (*wa-*)*'asā* followed, by a noun in accusative, with no connecting verb, appear in III, 48v, line 15; IV, 21, line 25 (both, as here: *wa-'asā kitāb*); IV, 23, margin, line 3 (*wa-'asā ḥarfayn*); IV, 37, line 2 (*wa-'asā waṣiya wa-raqba*). On omitting the word for sending, see 620, n. 38.

³¹ Prov. 3:2.

³² Apparently, June 29, 1155.

³³ In all likelihood this refers to Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāṭī and his brother (see III, 47a, line 2), who, of course, extended their protection to Peraḥyā Yijū and not vice versa, as written here. On Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāṭī, see pages 95–101.

*them! May He fulfill in them the verse "Your sons will succeed your ancestors"!*³⁴ I greet them with the best, [Top] most excellent greetings. Also for my lord Sheikh Abū Sa'īd³⁵ and his children and mother best greetings. And for my lord Sheikh Abū Riḍā Isaac and his children (and) Sheikh Abu 'l-Makārim best greetings.³⁶ *And peace.*

[E. Double address]

[Verso] (1) This letter should be delivered to (2) Fustat—may God protect it!—to (3) the store of Sheikh Abu 'l-Fakhr³⁷—*may he live until the coming of the messiah!*—[Left side] (1) the perfumer *b. R. his honor*, (2) *my lord and master Abraham*—(3) *may he rest in Eden! May he have life and peace!*³⁸ *Amen.*

[In the opposite direction] (1) This letter should be delivered to my esteemed brother (2)—may God give him long life!—(3) *Perahyā son of his honor, my father* (4) *and master*—*may he live until the coming of the messiah!*—*b. R. Perahyā*—*may he rest in Eden!*

(1) (From) His brother, who longs (2) for him, Moses. *May salvation be near! Ame[n].*}

³⁴ Ps. 45:17.

³⁵ In III, 47a, margin, regards are sent to Abū Sa'īd al-Rāṣūy, his brother and their mother.

³⁶ The names of persons to whom greetings are sent are fairly common. Abu 'l-Makārim is also greeted in Perahyā's letter to a member of the Ibn al-Amshāṭī family (TS 8 J 27, f. 8) and seems to have been a member of that family as well; see pages 110–11.

³⁷ Ibn al-Amshāṭī, with whom Perahyā was staying. See recto, line 15.

³⁸ Cf. Prov. 3:2. The preceding blessing is for his deceased father.}

{III, 47a *Letter from Moses Yijū to Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al- Amshāṭī, Fustat*

Alexandria, ca. June 29, 1155

TS 13 J 18, f. 13

Cited in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:473, n. 7, 474, n. 13.¹

Moses Yijū (“Moses *son of his honor, our master and lord Joseph the teacher—may he live until the coming of the messiah!*”) writes a brief letter, almost complete, which is addressed to the family’s patron Abu 'l-Fakhr b. Abraham but opens with salutations to ‘the two esteemed brothers,’ namely the addressee and his brother, here named ‘Alī. Towards the end of the document greetings are sent to Abū ‘Alī, who is evidently the same individual. Abū ‘Alī Ibn Al-Amshāṭī is known from sources discussed in pages 103–4, and with the assistance of this letter he can be identified as Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya’s brother Ḥananel. Greetings are also extended here to an anonymous brother, apparently the third brother, Ḥayyīm. The letter thus not only testifies to the Yijū family’s dependence on the Ibn al-Amshāṭīs but also provides additional information on members of that illustrious family.

The letter is almost certainly connected to III, 47. Moses decided not to rely entirely on his brother Peraḥyā to ask Abu 'l-Fakhr’s advice on what to do with the lac that he wanted to sell in Alexandria, as implied in III, 47*v*, lines 1–3, and addressed that important merchant directly:

(14) I have attached² these few lines to you to inform you of my condition and what happened (15) to me on disembarking. Your eminent excellency is well aware of (16) travel to Alexandria.³ I don’t know what to do. (17) Should I sell that lac or leave it?⁴ I request (18) sound advice. Please do this act of complete kindness for (19) me, your servant, who is staying here.}

¹ {The citation in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:433, n. 69, is a typographical error, and should read TS 13 J 8, f. 13. There is a mistake in citing the incorrect page number in Reif, *Bibliography*, 157, 165, and subsequently Goitein, *ib.*, 6:179. Goitein did not prepare an edition of this document or relate it to the documents in this book.

² Arabic *'allaqtu*. Moses evidently attached this letter to the letter he had written his brother Peraḥyā, III, 47, which deals with the same matter. The same usage appears in Peraḥyā’s letter, III, 45, line 1.

³ The difficulties Moses suffered upon disembarking from the ship in which he traveled to Alexandria preoccupied him, and therefore he said he would begin his letter by describing them. Upon consideration, he decided that a hint would suffice. More details appear in his letters in III, 46, lines 30 ff., and III, 47, lines 17 ff.

⁴ Perhaps the lac should not be sold until it could fetch a better price. Cf. III, 47, lines 22 ff.}

III, 48 *Letter from Samuel b. Joseph Yijū to His Brothers Peraḥyā and Moses, Alexandria or Fustat*

Mazara, late fall {or, summer} 1156

Bodl. MS. Heb. b. 11 (Cat. 2874), fol. 15

Ed. Zeldes and Frenkel, "The Sicilian Trade," 109–17; English translation: Simonsohn, *Jews in Sicily*, 1:412–15.

Childish, oblong letters, about 4 mm. high. Like his father—see III, 49 {and brother Moses}—Samuel puts in many *w*'s and *y*'s to express short *u*'s and *i*'s, e.g. *tdkwr* for *tadhkur*, line 7, or *ʕlm* for *ʕlm*, line 16, of course, without consistency, compare *kwtkm* in line 6 with *ktbkm*, line 22, and *ktb*, line 24, and sometimes he omits the *matres lectionis* for long vowels, *hl* for *hʕl*, line 10.¹ Like some other Maghrebi writers, Samuel puts a horizontal stroke over *g* to indicate that it should be pronounced *j*, lines 26 and 39, and a dot in final *k* to indicate that it should be read *k* and not *kh*, lines 12–13, 30, 45 and—most significantly—once, verso margin, in *kathira* a dot in *r*. Cf. Goitein, "Autographs," 398, n. 19 (in reference to such a *dagesh* in a word in IV, 36, line 6).² The name of the coin *rubāʕ* is mostly abbreviated *rbʕ*, with only half of the *alif* written.³

As to the date of the letter, Samuel mentions letters of his brothers Peraḥyā and Moses, which had arrived in the first ten days of the month of Tammuz of (4)916 A.M., corresponding exactly to the last ten days of June, 1156. This reference {to the year} clearly indicates that the letter was written after the beginning of another year A.M.; on the other hand, the contents show that it is an answer to those letters, i.e., it was written in the same year C.E., in time to be sent with the ships going out to the African coast. The year (4)917 A.M. began on 17 September, 1156. Thus, our letter must have been written at the end of September or beginning of October that year.⁴

¹ {See, however, the note there.

² On the doubling of *r*, see the discussions by Liebes, "Double *Reish*"; Morag, "Response"; Liebes, "Response."

³ The same abbreviation appears elsewhere, e.g., III, 45, line 7.

⁴ Mention of the year 4916 suggests that the letter was written after the beginning of 4917, but this is not conclusive. When referring to a letter that arrived in the previous year, Peraḥyā Yijū specifically writes 'last year, the year (4)911' (III, 30, line 8). In III, 48, line 31, Samuel mentions receipt of a slip of paper in 4915. The year 4916 may have been noted here for the sake of clarity, though this letter was written in the same calendar year. Elsewhere in his notes, Goitein dated III, 48: July 1156. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:317 and 482, n. 36, comments that ships arrived in Egypt from Sicily in August, one after seventeen days at sea (cf. *ibid.*, 1:325–26), and that letters from Sicily dated in Tishre (September–October), the new calendar year, were probably sent to Tunisia and from there forwarded to Egypt by land. On the duration of voyages from Sicily to Alexandria, see also Udovitch,

As in spring 1156, Peraḥyā and Moses had sent separate letters to their parents; they certainly did not stay together. Moses most probably was still in Tyre or another place on the Syrian or Palestinian coast, as in III, 46 {or in Alexandria},⁵ Peraḥyā was in Fustat.

The events after III, 43 can be reconstructed as follows: The two brothers did not move immediately to Egypt, as Moses had been discouraged from doing so {III, 43, lines 21–22}; on the other hand, he refused to come home empty handed (see *ib.*). Thus, the brothers did business, perhaps in Greece, which then contained many flourishing Jewish communities, but perhaps also in Egypt, and, in the fall of 1154, sent home a considerable consignment, which, as we see here, sec. D, was sufficient to keep the family for at least two years. The capital for their undertakings most probably came from the assets of their father referred to in III, 45. A second consignment was carried home to Sicily by Moses himself. The ship in which he traveled was, however, attacked by pirates, described here as ‘those in the galleys’ {‘the men of the *shīnīs*’}, line 18, and Moses, together with other Jews, was captured (for the sake of securing ransom—one hundred dinars for three persons captured.⁶ Why Jews only? Maybe the pirates were of the same nationality as the ship captured, but more probably our writer mentions only Jews because this was proof that his brother was among the captured. {Elsewhere in his notes, Goitein writes: “It was a Christian boat, therefore the Christian pirates took only the Jews.”} When the Normans took Corinth in Greece in 1147/8, they captured the Jews and the well-to-do,⁷ because it was well known that even poor Jews would be ransomed by their coreligionists.

The pirates themselves obviously were harassed, for they had to leave the ship, which safely arrived in Messina. There the commander of the port laid his hand on the cargo of the persons captured. As we clearly see, the Yijū family in Mazara earnestly hoped to get back the bales destined for them (see line 24 and in particular line 44).

“Time,” 510, 550; on 550–51, he suggests that there was no direct shipping line between Sicily and Alexandria, and the ships sailed via North Africa. Goitein, *Letters*, 256, n. 3, mentions a case where there was no boat sailing from Alexandria to Tripoli, and one had to take a boat to Palermo and from there continue to Libya.

⁵ See my note to III, 46, introduction, III, 46, lines 26–28 and note to line 28. Moses is likely to have been in Alexandria, as in III, 47, and accordingly the letter is addressed to Alexandria or Fustat. Also see the introduction to III, 49, end.

⁶ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:329.

⁷ See Amari, *Musulmani di Sicilia*, 3:441.

As no mention is made of Moses' being ransomed with money (the sum would have been 133 { $\frac{1}{3}$ } *rubāʿīs*), Norman ships on their way to Tyre most probably attacked the pirates, and freed their captives. Thus, we find Moses in that town, where he arrived half dead.⁸

No. III, 48 contains a number of points of general interest; see pages 725–26, 764–66 {several of the issues touched on here are clarified there}, and the notes below.

Contents

- A. Preamble (lines 1–5).
- B–D. See the translation below.
- E. The despair of the parents (line 45–verso, line 13).
- F. Request to ask the Head of the Jewish community in Egypt, the court physician Samuel b. Ḥananyā, to act on behalf of the passage of the Yijū family from Sicily to Egypt {see III, 49, sec. I} (verso, lines 14–20).
- G. Greetings, etc., and local news (verso, lines 20–36 margin and 37).
- H. Detailed address.

Translation of B–D

[B. Request for information on Moses' capture by pirates and other matters referred to in Peraḥyā's letters]

(5) In your letters (6), which arrived during the first ten days of Tammuz of the year (4)916, (7) you mentioned that Moses had been captured. The moment we read (8) the letter, we grieved and wept (9) very much. Father and mother *could not speak*⁹ from (10) sorrow about my brother Moses and about you {alt. tr.: because of what befell my brother Moses and your sorrow}.¹⁰ However, when we saw (11) the letter of Moses, *my*

⁸ See III, 46, lines 30–31. {Moses wrote there that he disembarked gravely ill and did not expect to live, but he did not specifically say that this was when he had arrived in Tyre. He may have been referring to his disembarkment at another port on the coast after having left that city.

⁹ Cf. Gen. 37:4.} Strong feelings are expressed in Hebrew (cf. line 12); see the introduction to III, 49.

¹⁰ {I assume Goitein read the Arabic *li-mā ʿazza ʿalā ḥal ʿalā akhī Moshe wa-ʿalā qalbika*, taking *ḥal* as a defective spelling for *ḥāl*; see the technical comments at the beginning of the introductory remarks. With some latitude this could be translated approximately: 'because

brother and head,¹¹ which contained *biblical verses* that indicated that (12) he had been released, *we became consoled*.¹²

He did not explain how everything (13) occurred, neither how he had been captured, nor how he had been released, nor did (14) my brother Abu 'l-Surūr¹³ explain what (15) he was doing and what caused him not to mention his cousin {lit., 'the daughter of his paternal uncle'},¹⁴ (16) nor how much {lit., 'how much merchandise'} had been lost.

We had had no knowledge that (17) my brother Moses had been captured. Only some people¹⁵ reported that (18) Jews had been captured and that the pirates¹⁶ had taken the Jews (19) and their light baggage,¹⁷ while

of his sorrow over the condition, that is of my brother Moses and of your heart.' Obviously there is something out of order in the text. Zeldes and Frenkel, "The Sicilian Trade," 109, supply the word *mā* and evidently vocalize *li-mā 'azza 'alayya <mā> ḥalla 'alā akhī Moshe wa-'alā qalbika*, translating (p. 114, in Hebrew) 'because what befell my brother Moses and your heart was hard on me.' But Samuel's parents' inability to speak was hardly because of his reaction to the bad news but rather because of their reaction to it. I suggest that Samuel had intended to write *li-mā ḥalla 'alā akhī Moshe wa-'azza 'alā qalbika*, but in his haste he wrote the phrases out of place. Alternatively, the wording reflects an afterthought in phraseology: *li-mā 'azza 'alā—ḥalla 'alā—akhī Moshe wa-'alā qalbika*, 'because of the sorrow at—of what befell—Moses,' etc. From verso, lines 23 ff. it is evident that his father Joseph dictated the letter to Samuel, and this may have contributed to the irregularities in wording. The clause discussed here parallels III, 49, lines 26–27: *'alā mā jarā 'alā [...]* *Moshe wa-qalbihi wa-'alā mā laqā qalbika*, 'because of what happened to [...] Moses and his heart and what befell your heart.'

¹¹ This strange expression, which is found also in III, 49v, line 29, has its origin in Gen. 46:21, where these words designate names, explained, in the sense translated here, in Ber. R., 3:1179. {The Hebrew reads *ēhī* (the *aleph* is pointed *ē*) *wā-rōsh*, lit., 'Ehi and Rosh,' the names listed in Gen. 46:21. Zeldes and Frenkel, "The Sicilian Trade," 109, 110, n. 11, did not notice the vocalization of the *aleph*, read *ahī* and rendered: 'the brother of Warāsh' (similarly, Simonsohn, 413), which they took to be the name of Perahyā's cousin and intended bride, Abraham Ben Yijū's daughter (see line 15), none of which makes sense.}

¹² Instead of describing the events, Moses had expressed his gratitude to God for his rescue by many quotations from the Bible. {Cf. III, 46, line 3, where Moses quotes Ps. 68:7. While that letter was addressed to his brother Perahyā in Fustat, Moses must have included similar verses in the letter he wrote to his family in Sicily.

¹³ I.e., Perahyā.}

¹⁴ I.e., the bride. See pages 81–82, 726.

¹⁵ {'Some people' translates *al-nās*, which in these letters often means 'merchants' or 'traveling merchants.' See 239, n. 4.

¹⁶ Arabic *aṣḥāb al-shawānī*, lit., 'the men of the *shīnis*.' See Goitein, "Glimpses," 395, where this document is cited; similarly, id., *Med. Soc.*, 1:477, n. 13, where *shīnī* (pl. *shawānī*) is defined as a war galley and *aṣḥāb al-shawānī* as pirates or raiders. Cf. Christides, "Shīnī"; Bosworth, "Safīna," 810a. Zeldes and Frenkel, "The Sicilian Trade," 110, suggest the historical background intended here. Also see Maimonides, *Responsa*, 1:153, no. 93 (cited by Zeldes and Frenkel), concerning a merchant who sailed to Sicily and was taken captive when *al-shawānī*, 'pirates,' attacked his ship. See also *shīnī* in line 27. For *aṣḥāb al-markab*, 'sailors,' cf. page 142.

¹⁷ Arabic *khiff*. See 260, n. 6.}

the heavy cargo had remained in the ship. (20) When the ship arrived in Messina, part of the cargo {alt tr.: 'the merchandise'} was sequestered¹⁸ by the (21) commander Mubashshir.¹⁹ However, we had no details about Moses {alt. tr.: we were unable to verify Moses' situation}, until (22) your letters arrived. This is what they said concerning the heavy items, (23) that they had been sequestered. No one came and said: I was there or I saw. (24) We sent a number of letters to Messina with the request that someone send us back (25) an answer, but no one replied.

[C. Warning not to travel that year, owing to the threat of war]

We sent you, in (26) the ship of Janūnayn,²⁰ two letters and another letter to Tripoli²¹ (27) this year, for we had heard that forty galleys²² (28) of the adversary²³ had arrived at Bijāya²⁴ and some arrived (29) at other places, which might be dangerous {lit., 'are to be feared'}. Please, brother, (30) neither of you should travel. *The Lord will guard your (pl.) going and coming!*²⁵

¹⁸ Arabic *'uqila*, an expression very frequent in papers from the Mediterranean, referring to seizure by a ruler or his representative. {The word appears twice here, the second time in the active, *'aqalabu*, 'he sequestered it'; see also line 23. For its use in a letter from Alexandria in reference to the Jewish representative of the merchants in Aden, see 292, n. 6. 'Merchandise' here translates *shay*, so defined by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:452, n. 1.

¹⁹ On Mubashshir and the Muslims in service of the Norman kingdom in Sicily, see III, 49 introduction and verso, line 17 (pages 766, 768).

²⁰ For the name Janūnī-Guenoun, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:491, n. 58. Here the dual is used, the two Janūnīs-Guenouns. For this family of traders and ship owners, see Zeldes and Frenkel, "The Sicilian Trade," 111, n. 26, where reference is also made to Ben-Sasson, *Sicily*, 695; cf. Gil, *Ishmael*, 4:847.}

²¹ Tripoli, as most of Eastern Tunisia, was at that time in Norman hands, and Perahyā certainly had expressed in a previous letter his intention to travel there. It is not difficult to imagine why he did so. His uncle and prospective father-in-law, Abraham Ben Yijū, certainly visited his homeland, Tunisia, after having come back from India, and we may assume that he had asked his nephew to join him there. {Goitein seems to have discarded this suggestion in later writings; see 731, n. 32. There is no evidence that Ben Yijū made that trip, and had he done so, in light of his disenchantment with his nephew Perahyā (see III, 50), it is unlikely that he would have invited him to join him. See above, n. 4, concerning forwarding letters sent from Sicily to Egypt via Tunisia. Perhaps here the writer alluded to an extra copy of a letter to Egypt sent by that route, as a precautionary measure.

²² Arabic *shinī*. See note 16.}

²³ Obviously, the Almohads {adversaries of the Almoravids} are referred to, see pages 725–26. {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 1:308, 478, n. 22, where this passage is cited; Zeldes and Frenkel, "The Sicilian Trade," 111, n. 28. The possessive is expressed here by Arabic *matā*; see 662, n. 13.}

²⁴ Bougie, Algeria.

²⁵ {Cf. Ps. 121:8.

[D. Report about the shipments entrusted to Ḥajjāj]

(31) In Marḥeshwān 915,²⁶ we received a slip (32) of paper²⁷ //from Ḥajjāj—may he be remembered [[for his deeds]]²⁸—// saying “Your sons have sent you (33) something {alt. tr.: some merchandise} with me; as soon as I unpack {it},²⁹ I shall send it to you.” He sent one hundred *rubāʿīs* (34) less eleven *rubāʿīs*.³⁰ We consumed them that year, for there was (35) great dearth {lit., ‘hunger’}, one *mudd* of wheat costing eight *rubāʿīs*,³¹ (36) and finally³² ten *rubāʿīs*. When the year was over, there did not remain of that sum (37) even the smallest balance {lit., ‘there remained only the smallest thing’}. Wanting to secure our livelihood, we sent (38) him a number of letters. After we had appealed for assistance from {alt. tr.: humbly appealed to}³³ Sheikh Abu (39) ʿl-Faraj,³⁴ who did not disappoint us—please send him a letter (40) of thanks—he³⁵ sent us another one hundred *rubāʿīs*, less ten *rubāʿīs*. (41) However, he did not forward to us letters,³⁶—although we had sent to him, (42) imploring him to do so—nor did he send us anything {alt. tr.: any merchandise}, so

²⁶ 4915 A.M. = October 9–November 7, 1154.}

²⁷ The slip of paper referred to here is our III, 44.

²⁸ {In III, 49, line 38, Joseph writes ‘Ḥajjāj, may he be remembered,’ *yizzākḥēr*, omitting the usual continuation, *be-ṭōv(ā)*, ‘for good, favorably’ (for which see 682, n. 15). In his transcription of that text, Goitein noted that the missing word should be supplied. While III, 48 and III, 49, contain many errors, I am not convinced that this omission in both with reference to Ḥajjāj was accidental. The word *be-ṭōvā* appears in other blessings in III, 48*v*, line 34 and III, 49, line 10. Here the writer may have intended that Ḥajjāj be remembered for his misconduct but then decided to delete the word meaning ‘for his deeds.’ Mention of malefactors was followed by a vilification such as *yizzākḥēr be-maʿasāw hā-rāʿim*, ‘may he be remembered for his bad deeds,’ so TS 10 J 12, f. 1, line 10; *yizzākḥērū be-shamattā*, ‘may they remembered with a ban’, so, in VI, 31, line 4.

²⁹ Arabic *nanḥall*. Cf. 744, n. 9.}

³⁰ It is not clear why Samuel writes here and in line 40, one hundred less eleven or ten respectively, while his father, referring to the same consignment, speaks of 90 (III, 49, line 42). The ten or eleven *rubāʿīs* may include both transport costs and broker’s fees (but could include a commission which Ḥajjāj took for himself).

³¹ The same statement appears in III, 49, line 6. The *mudd* had many different values; see Hinz, *Islamische Masse*, 45–47 {cf. Gil, “Masse,” 168}. In the Maghreb, it corresponded in the late Middle Ages to 4.32 liters.

³² Arabic *yaqūm bi-*. The translation is not certain. {In III, 49, line 6, Joseph writes that wheat cost eight *rubāʿīs*, without adding this remark.

³³ Arabic *taḍarruʿ*, lit., ‘humbling ourselves.’ Cf. line 42, *nataradḍaʿu* (translated there ‘imploring’). For the use of the verb *ḍrʿ* in petitions, see Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 312.}

³⁴ Ibn Masnūt, mentioned here verso, line 16 and III, 49*v*, line 26.

³⁵ Ḥajjāj.

³⁶ Your letters. {Clarified in III, 49, line 39.

that we do not know (43) the quantity {add: of the merchandise}.³⁷ Please inform us how much you had sent (44) with Ḥajjāj and what was lost,³⁸ how many bales {alt. tr.: items},³⁹ <<what sign was on them, how they looked, and whether your name was written on them>>. Maybe, God willing, some of them will be salvaged.

³⁷ Such a letter of appeal by Joseph Yijū, requesting information on the lost goods is found in III, 57.}

³⁸ When Moses was taken off the ship in which the bales were carried.

³⁹ {Arabic *kam min qiṭ'a*. For *qiṭ'a*, see 168, n. 1.}

III, 49 *Letter from Joseph Yijū to His Sons Perahyā and Moses*

Mazara, Fall {or summer} 1156

TS 16.288

Ed. Simonsohn and Gil, "Sicily," 44–50; English translation in Simonsohn, *Jews in Sicily*, 1:408–12.

Joseph had asked the 'master' (or 'teacher', *mu'allim*, line 17),¹ who certainly was also a scribe, to write this letter. However, despite the excellent relations between them, the *mu'allim* refused. We can easily understand his refusal, considering how diffuse and verbose Joseph was with reference to his love and concern for his distant sons. Thus, Joseph had to write a letter himself. His hand, although making reading often difficult, is not unpleasant, and the slips and omissions are not more than one would expect from an old, sick man, writing in a state of great excitement. After line 7, the lines are curved and decline somewhat to the left, obviously because the writer then held the paper on his knee.² On the second side of the page, which is also completely covered with writing, Joseph tried, although not always successfully, to keep his lines more straight.

About one third of the text is occupied by Hebrew phrases and quotations, which also indicates that the writer had to convey more feelings than facts. His Arabic spelling is exceedingly 'plene,' i.e., uses many *w*'s and *y*'s for expressing short *u*'s and *i*'s or *e*'s; he writes even *byyt* for *bayt*, line 8 and *drhym* for *dirhem*, verso, line 12.

No. III, 49 certainly was written shortly after III, 48 and, most probably, was sent with the same mail {possibly on another ship in the same convoy}, for, as far as facts are concerned, it is almost identical with the latter, written by Joseph's youngest son, Samuel. Obviously, the old man was not satisfied that the boy's letter {which contains a number of errors in writing} would be effective; therefore, he added a letter by himself. See the introduction to III, 48 for the date.

¹ For this term, see 741, n. 35.

² Cf. III, 15, where the lines slant in the opposite direction. [In the Middle Ages, one did not write on a table but on a board held on the knees; see Sadan, "Clerks," 41–42, n. 55. Cf. the description of a vision in a medieval mystical work, possibly depicting events in Sicily: "On the third night, after midnight, when my pen was in my hand and the paper on my knees [...]" (Idel, *Mystical Experience*, 62–63).

Our letter is a most moving document of fatherly love and would deserve a full translation in a book on medieval family life.³ Section I, translated below, throws interesting sidelights on public life and institutions in the Mediterranean area of those days.

The *Rayyis*, or Head of the Egyptian Jewish community, referred to {in verso, line 16}, is called in III, 48*v*, line 15, Samuel, i.e., Samuel b. Ḥananyā, who, as far as we know, occupied that position from 1140–59.⁴ He was physician at the Fatimid court and ‘a great benefactor of the poor and the scholars.’⁵ However, the way in which Joseph speaks here of the *Rayyis* suggests that he was an old acquaintance of his; for, he supposes that his sons had free access to him—which was by no way usual;⁶ he gives him best regards and asks him to guide his sons with his advice and help (III, 49*v*, lines 31–33). Presumably this acquaintance went back to the times when Joseph was a merchant in al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia; he must have visited Fustat on business trips and sent presents to the Nagid’s court, as was usual.⁷

Likewise, we see here three Sicilian Jewish notables personally associated with the Egyptian *Rayyis* or Nagid, as he was called with his Hebrew title. Two of them were merchants: Sheikh Dā’ūd b. Šāliḥ (III, 48*v*, line 18), and Sheikh Abu ’l-Faraj, known as Masnūt or *Ibn Masnūt* (just as sometimes the family name Yijū or Ben Yijū is used), most probably, like Yijū, the name of the Berber tribe, with which the family had been attached.⁸ The third was a physician, called (in III, 48*v*, line 18), by the rare name Rabīb and possibly, the father of R. Jacob *al-rayyis al-jalīl* {= illustrious headman} b. al-Rabīb,⁹ mentioned in the *dūwān* or collection of poems of Anatoli.¹⁰

³ Goitein prepared a complete Hebrew translation, which is published in the Hebrew edition of this book.

⁴ See Mann, *Jews*, 1:229, and idem, *Texts*, 1:395 and 450. {Cf. Friedman, “Maimonides and Zūṭā,” 474 ff.}

⁵ Cf. the memorial list, published in Mann, *Texts*, 1:469, 2:15–17.

⁶ See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:37.

⁷ {On Goitein’s assumption that Joseph had been a businessman in al-Mahdiyya, see page 745.

⁸ See page 53, n. 11. Our (*Ibn*) Masnūt adds substantial weight to those manuscripts, which place the origin of the thirteenth century Talmudist and Jewish Aleppo community leader Samuel b. Nissim Masnūt’s family in Sicily rather than Toledo. On this question, see Ta-Shma, “Masnut.”

⁹ For *rabīb*, compare the Hebrew *al-ḥānīkh*, which has the same meaning of ‘foster son,’ e.g., Abu ’l-Faḍl b. al-Ḥānīkh in Mann, *Texts*, 1:468, line 4 and n. 46. {Rabīb also means ‘foster father,’ the first definition for the name according to Ibn al-Zubayr, *Asmā’*, 1637.}

¹⁰ Cf. Stern, “Hebrew Poets,” 78, n. 57.

Even more interesting is Joseph's request that the Egyptian Nagid should contact for him the Muslim commander of Mazara—not even mentioned by name—and 'the commander' Mubashshir, who, according to III, 48, line 21, was in charge of Messina.

It is well known that the Norman kings of Sicily employed Muslims for both military and administrative posts. The word *qā'id*, translated here as 'commander,' designed at that time not only an officer, but also a secretary or a courtier.¹¹ However, from the context in III, 48 and III, 49, it is evident that the persons concerned were in charge of the relevant towns or, at least, of their ports.¹² Why Muslim officials in the service of the Christian king of Sicily should be interested in doing a favor to the Head of the Jewish community of Egypt, and in particular in 1156, a year after the Norman raid on the Egyptian coastal towns, seems strange to us, but was taken for granted by the writer. Perhaps the Jewish Nagid, who, as mentioned above, was court physician, had had something to do with concluding the peace treaty {in about 1143} between King Roger II (died 1154) and the Fatimid court,¹³ just as a hundred years earlier, we find a Jew in the company of the ambassador of a Muslim ruler of Sicily to the Fatimid court.¹⁴

Contents

- A. Complaint that the longing for the addressees was 'killing' their parents, who, in addition, suffered from all kinds of privations and illnesses (lines 1–9).
- B. The writer had hoped that Perahyā would soon come back as a married man, for he wanted to participate in the education of his niece and future daughter-in-law (lines 9–17).¹⁵
- C. The 'master' had refused to pen this letter (lines 17–26).
- D. The writer thanked God that his son Moses was rescued from the pirates and did not care about the loss of the goods (lines 26–37).

¹¹ See Amari, *Musulmani di Sicilia*, 3:267–74, 455. {Cf. Takayama, *Norman Administration*, 100.

¹² For the office of *qā'id al-madīna*, military governor of a large city, see Colin, "Qā'id."}

¹³ See Amari, *Musulmani di Sicilia*, 3:433.

¹⁴ See Mann, *Jews*, 1:202–3. {The reference is to TS 13 J 11, f. 2, ed. ib., 2:239–40; Ben-Sasson, *Sicily*, 20–21, no. 4; Gil, *Ishamael*, 4:241–42, no. 674. On the conjunction of ambassadorial missions and trade ventures in the Middle Ages, see Jacoby, "Byzantine Trade," 34, 43, 71 (who actually speaks of travel on the same vessels).

¹⁵ For this passage, see page 80; Friedman, "Marital Age," 170, n. 39, and the literature cited there.

- E. The boys should have informed their father what merchandise and of what value they had sent with Ḥajjāj; cf. III, 44. The man had sent ninety *rubāʿīs* only a year after his arrival and another ninety some time later (lines 37–49).
- F. Admonition to bear the losses with submission to God’s will (line 50 and margin).
- G. The religious importance of marrying one’s cousin (verso, lines 1–10).¹⁶
- H. Hope to see his sons again, despite present hardship (verso, lines 10–15).
- I. Request that the Head of the Jews in Egypt write letters to the Muslim commanders of Mazara and Messina and to Jewish notables in Sicily to arrange for the travel of the Yijū family to Egypt (verso, lines 15–27).
- J. Greetings (verso, lines 28–36).
- K. Address of sixteen lines.

As in all the letters of the Sicilian Yijū family, no greetings are extended {here in section J} to Abraham, of whom it had been probably known that he had taken up residence in a locality other than the Egyptian capital. See III, 51.

{When Peraḥyā arrived in Egypt he stayed with Abu ʿl-Fakhr al-ʿAṭṭār in Fustat (III, 46; III, 47), to whom and to whose family greetings are extended here (verso, lines 33–35). For some time, Moses stayed in Alexandria (III, 47). While in this letter Joseph writes primarily to Peraḥyā, he addressed it to Alexandria, perhaps because the ship, which carried it from Sicily, would dock there. No. III, 48, on the other hand, is addressed ‘to Alexandria or Fustat.’

Note that III, 57 should be read after III, 49.}

Translation of section I¹⁷

[Verso] (15) Please explain our situation (16) to our lord, the *Rayyis*¹⁸—may God preserve him! Perhaps he will write for us a letter to (17) the

¹⁶ For this passage, see page 81.}

¹⁷ This section is complemented by a similar passage in III, 48*v*, lines 14–20.

¹⁸ {I.e., the Nagid Samuel b. Ḥananyā. See the introductory remarks above.}

Commander Mubashshir, the *fatā*,¹⁹ to Sheikh Ben Sālīḥ—may God preserve him!—to the Doctor (18), and to the *Muslim*²⁰ commander of Mazara. Perhaps our trip will come about this way, (19) so that we may board a ship.²¹ He will supply us with provisions as well as our costs for (20) the boat fare, which he will collect from us in Alexandria.²² Either²³ I shall hold on to (21) hope {lit., ‘I shall calm my heart’}²⁴ or I shall go mad. God give me power of endurance {alt. tr.: comfort me} through you three being alive,²⁵ (22) and may He fulfill, with regard to you, the verse: “*A threefold cord is not readily broken,*”²⁶ and may he increase (23) your well-being! Amen.

And a letter²⁷ to the congregation²⁸ against (24) Ibn Mubashshir,²⁹ concerning the gold we gave him, for he did (25) not return anything to us, claiming that it was lost {alt. tr.: that he was destitute},³⁰ nor did he rent {lit., ‘give us lodging in’}³¹ a house for us, (26) nor did he give us

¹⁹ Of the many meanings of the word *fatā*, the most appropriate here is ‘eunuch,’ a usage common in the Maghreb, see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:241a. Higher officials in Muslim states, as well as in Arabized Sicily, sometimes came from the class of castrated slaves or freedman; see, e.g., below. {Cf. Zeldes and Frenkel, “The Sicilian Trade,” 110, n. 21; Ahmad, *Islamic Sicily*, 58–64.}

²⁰ *Yishmā’el*, a Hebrew word, is written here according to the Arabic spelling. {Cf. III, 47, line 19.}

²¹ Lit., ‘go up on a ship,’ a common expression. Travel from Sicily to Egypt is called ‘going up’ in III, 43, line 20.}

²² The general meaning of the sentence seems to be that the governor of Mazara should provide for the cost of the passage, while, in Alexandria, Joseph would pay back with the help of his friends or his sons or perhaps by his own work. However, the language and details are obscure {I have extensively revised here the translation in Goitein’s rough draft. For *yajī’ alaynā*, lit., ‘cost us,’ in line 19, see Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:237b.}

²³ Arabic *‘im*, which I assume is as a contraction of *immā an*.

²⁴ {Arabic *nuṭammin qalbī*.}

²⁵ Arabic *yusabbirunī bi-ḥayātikum al-thalātha*. Cf. Peraḥyā Yijū’s letter to his brother Samuel, III, 55, line 5, *yu’izzunī bi-ḥayātika*, ‘strengthen me in your life.’}

²⁶ Eccles. 4:12.

²⁷ I.e., and request the *Rayyis* to write another letter.

²⁸ The intervention of the congregation was invoked only in cases of utmost duress. This was normally done by interrupting public prayer, until the person against whom accusations had been brought gave sufficient securities for fulfilling his obligations. Here, Joseph wants the Egyptian Nagid to give instructions to a similar effect to the local congregation of Mazara, which is very remarkable. {On the practice of interrupting the prayer, see 194, n. 3. It is not clear that this was the intention here.}

²⁹ The name Mubashshir or Hebrew Mevassēr was very common in the western Mediterranean. Cf. also the name of the eunuch and freedman Mubashshir b. Sulaymān, who was in command of Majorca in 1114 (Amari, *Musulmani di Sicilia*, 3:383). {See ‘the Commander Mubashshir, the *fatā*,’ in line 17.}

³⁰ Arabic *bil-faqd*. The word can also be read with Simonsohn and Gil *bil-faqr*, which means the same.

³¹ Arabic *sakkananā*.}

anything. <<And a letter to Sheikh Abu 'l-Faraj Ibn Masnūt—*may he see the days of the Messiah!*—for had it not been for him, Ḥajjāj would not have paid us a thing.>>³² Be not remiss, perhaps we shall succeed. Why should we (27) stretch out our hands (for alms)? {Alt. tr.: Be not remiss. Perhaps we will be able to put our hands on something.}³³

³² The meaning of the sentence is this: after Ibn Masnūt had once showed himself so helpful to the family, a letter by the Nagid might perhaps induce him to facilitate its travel to Egypt. A parallel to this passage is found in III, 48*v*, line 16.

³³ {I.e., find something for support. The latter clause in Arabic: *la'alla najid li-aysh namudd yadaynā*. Cf. III, 48*v*, lines 18–19: *wa-mā baqiya ma'anā... illā bi-aysh nasbtariyū qūtanā*, “nothing remains with us... except something (= some merchandise) with which we can buy our food.”}

III, 50 *Letter from Peraḥyā Yijū to the Nagid, Complaining about Abraham Ben Yijū*

Egypt {probably early 1156}

ENA NS 4, f. 13

In a fragmentary letter Peraḥyā copies a complaint that he wrote to the Nagid about his uncle Abraham Ben Yijū, who treated him with contempt for being lackluster and inept. Peraḥyā had left his position (as a teacher in Sicily),¹ and, following his uncle's invitation to join him and marry his daughter, faced the dangers of a sea voyage. Khalaf b. Bundār of Aden had offered to provide for the same girl a marriage gift of 500 dinars—an absolutely exceptional sum—plus household equipment, etc., offers with which Peraḥyā, of course, could not compete. See III, 54, the marriage agreement between Peraḥyā and his bride.

{In his letter III, 49*v*, lines 15–20, Joseph Yijū had written to his sons Peraḥyā and Moses, and urged them to appeal to the Nagid Samuel b. Ḥananyā to help Joseph travel to Egypt. At the end of the copy of an earlier mostly illegible letter (see below), Peraḥyā copies—or writes a draft—of the body of another letter to *sayyidnā*, 'our lord,' undoubtedly the same Nagid. Here he appeals to the Nagid for assistance against his uncle Abraham Ben Yijū. In doing so, he quotes Abraham's letter to his father Joseph, where the 500 dinars and other wealth were, in my opinion, likely to have been the reward promised Peraḥyā for coming to marry Abraham's daughter, rather than the marriage gift offered by Khalaf b. Bundār for his son. The qualities, his lack of which caused his uncle to hold him in disdain, were, according to Peraḥyā, 'hollow pomp and pushiness.' Abraham, contrariwise, must have defined them as dignified bearing and assertiveness.

The old India trader probably had hoped that his nephew and intended son-in-law would continue his business activities. To his disappointment, he saw in Peraḥyā nothing more than a naive, mediocre scholar. Abraham repeatedly delayed the wedding, which was not celebrated until after his death; see III, 54.

Goitein prepared a draft copy of the text of III, 50 and in his Summaries, provided the description, which is largely reproduced above. But he did not translate the letter or otherwise comment on it.

¹ {This is not stated explicitly here in line 11, which is fragmentary; but cf. III, 43, margin; III, 57, line 18.

A further note is in order concerning the primary document, on the blank space of which III, 50 is written. Recto of the manuscript contains the lower right-hand corner of a letter in Peraḥyā's hand. Verso contains the right side of the letter's last few lines, in which greetings were extended. Below this, Peraḥyā later wrote the draft or copy of his letter to the Nagid. The primary document is a family letter. While several words can be deciphered with a reasonable degree of certainty, the whole is too fragmentary and effaced to attempt an edition. As a working hypothesis, I suggest that it may be a copy of a letter from Joseph Yijū (penned by his son Peraḥyā) to his sister (line 3, *yā ukhṭī* [?]) and her family (the masculine is used in addressing the recipient). Marwān is mentioned (line 5), and this could be Marwān b. Zikrī, the brother-in-law to whom Abraham Ben Yijū sent greetings (III, 29, line 25; III, 41*v*, line 5). On verso, line 3, the writer sends regards from 'my wife (*ahlī*) the mother of Abu 'l-Surūr (?).' If the reading of the last word is correct, this would be Joseph's wife called by the honorary by-name Umm Abu 'l-Surūr, after Joseph's firstborn son, Peraḥyā (= Abu 'l-Surūr). The first word in verso, line 2, is *bil-intiqāl*, 'for moving,' which hypothetically could refer to Joseph's request that his sister and her family move to join him, perhaps from Tunisia to Sicily (he mentions Messina in the margin on recto). But of course, all of this is speculative.

Translation

(1) I inform our lord—may God protect you!—[... that I have] (2) an uncle [who had been] in India, named Abraham b. [Peraḥyā Ben Yijū, ... who came] (3) to Fustat. He² received letters from [Yemen ...] (4) in which he³ told him:

I have arrived at⁴ [...] (5) 500 dinars, household equipment and gold⁵ and [...I agreed to marry] the son of Sheikh Khalaf b. Bundār to [my daugh-

² My father. Peraḥyā must have mentioned his father Joseph in the missing part of line 2. The syntax in the fragmentary lines 3–4 is elusive. On the basis of this document alone, one might assume that Peraḥyā wrote that his uncle Mevassēr arrived in Fustat and there received letters from Abraham, who was in Yemen, inviting Joseph to send Peraḥyā to marry Abraham's daughter Sitt al-Dār.

³ My uncle Abraham.

⁴ Cf. III, 29, line 3; III, 41, line 10. Abraham announced his arrival from India to Yemen and Egypt.

⁵ As in his introductory remarks here, Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:137, 456, n. 97, cites the 500 dinars mentioned here as the marriage gift promised by the son of Khalaf b. Bundār,

ter... But when I heard about] (7) your son, I disengaged her from him⁶ in deference [to your son⁷...] (8) This money⁸ [for] which [I] have toiled will be [his...] (9) Do not let him tarry o[ne] moment [...]⁹

[...I set out] (10) traveling by boat on the open sea¹⁰ in the Mediterranean, and [I] wrote¹¹ [...] (11) of this. And I abandoned the station which [I had...] (12) And people have much regard for me [...] [Margin] And he looked down on me in view of my having little hollow pomp and little pushiness,¹² in which I have no aptitude. And he puts [me] off [...]

whose name appears in the next line, for the hand of Ben Yijū's daughter. In 4:413, n. 279, Goitein adds a correction concerning the sum: which, no doubt, was in Adenese dinars, each worth approximately one-third of the Egyptian dinar. In any event, I suggest that the wealth spoken of in this line refers to Abraham b. Yijū's fortune which he promised to share with his family and give to his future son-in-law in his letter, III, 41, lines 13, 18 ff. (cf. III, 29, lines 5, 14–16, 21–22, 27–28), only after which, in lines 21 ff., did he mention the engagement to Khalaf b. Bundār's son that he had broken off.

⁶ From Khalaf's son.

⁷ Cf. III, 41, lines 22–24.

⁸ Arabic *dirhām* (dirhem). Abraham Ben Yijū uses the same expression in his letter to his brother, III, 29, line 27; see 684, n. 33.

⁹ Cf. III, 41, lines 32–33.

¹⁰ Arabic *mawṣaṭa* = *mawsaṭa*. For this meaning, see Maimonides, *Responsa*, 2:410, no. 213, n. 4. This might imply that the ship sailed directly across the Mediterranean from Sicily to Egypt, rather than along the coast, as was usually done. If so, Peraḥyā intended to emphasize the dangers he endured to make the trip.

¹¹ Or: he wrote it (*wa saṭara[hu]*). Line 10 is a later insertion.

¹² Arabic *bahrja*... *ṣitt/ṣatt*. *Lisān al-'Arab*, 2:52, defines *ṣatta* 'push with force, strike with a hand'; Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 277: 'to yell, to make a fuss.' *Sātta* also means 'pick a quarrel.'

III, 51 *Calendar for the Years September 1153–September 1156 for Abraham Ben Yijū's Private Synagogue*

Egypt, 1153–56

TS 10 K 20, f. 1

Published in Mann, *Jews*, 2:291–92.

Calendar in Abraham Ben Yijū's hand for the years September 1153–September 1156, in which he assigned for each year in advance the monthly expenses for the illumination of a synagogue to a number of persons, including Abraham himself and his brother-in-law Abū 'Alī. Thus, September 1155 is the last date on which Abraham Yijū is known to have been alive. He was probably staying in a place other than Fustat (where private synagogues were not tolerated).

{The above statement concerning the opposition to private synagogues and the conclusion that Ben Yijū was not staying in Fustat, is to be compared with Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:166 (555, n. 45), with reference to this document:}

While the formation of secessionist congregations was vehemently opposed, small, private places of worship must have been common and were tolerated because of their transitory character. . . . A scholarly India trader who had been away in the East for over two decades and had brought back from there his native in-laws perhaps felt more comfortable keeping a little private synagogue for a certain period of transition. (He kept the place for at least three years. Later on we find him in another town.) . . . An in-law from India contributed to a public appeal, proving that small temporary places of prayer did not interfere with the regular activities of the community.

{Our document is discussed in detail by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:480–81, no. 28, as one of many lists of contributors. Because of the relevance of those comments to Ben Yijū's biography, I quote a large portion:}

A booklet with a calendar for three years (Sept. 21, 1153–Sept. 6, 1159 {this is a misprint; read: Sept. 16, 1156}) indicating for each year the persons who donated the olive oil for the uninterrupted illumination of a synagogue of one month, a few individuals for two months. . . .¹

The list is in the unmistakable hand of the Maghrebi India traveler Abraham (Ibn) Yijū, who returned from India to Aden in 1149 and from there to Old Cairo in 1151 or 1152. 'Abū 'Alī, the brother-in-law of Ibn

¹ {On the use of oil for illumination in synagogues, cf. Gil, "Supplies of Oil," with reference to this document on 64 (n. 8), 68 (n. 41), 71.

Yijū,² who donates in C29v {read: C30 = TS K 6, f. 149}, col. I, line 1, is referred to here twice as ‘Abū ‘Alī, *my* brother-in-law.’ This man was probably a Yemenite or an Indian Jew, who had accompanied Abraham Yijū to the Egyptian capital and had become known there as the relative of the scholarly and influential Maghrebi merchant.

The synagogue referred to probably was a private place of prayer for merchants and refugees from the Maghreb. As of the late 1140’s, an incessant stream of refugees moved eastward in the wake of the terrible Almo-had persecutions, as abundantly proved by the Geniza documents.

{Some textual notes to Mann’s edition follow there. The discrepancy between the two accounts, the one in the India Book and the other in *A Mediterranean Society*, concerning the location of Ben Yijū’s private synagogue and the related issues of intolerance of secessionist congregations and tolerance of small private places of worship of a transitory character touch upon issues beyond the scope of the present study, and will undoubtedly be addressed by future Geniza research.³ For other calendars written by Ben Yijū, see II, 16v; III, 26.

Chronologically III, 51 is followed by III, 54, which should be read in that sequence.}

² Besides brother-in-law, *šibr* also means father-in-law and son-in-law; see 348, n. 76.

³ The comment that Ben Yijū was ‘later on’ found in a town other than Fustat finds an echo in the introduction to III, 49. This might stem from Goitein’s assumption at an early stage of research that the India trader became a judge in an Egyptian provincial town (al-Maḥalla); see 84, n. 92 and 792, n. 3. On the intolerance of private synagogues, see the sources cited by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:555, n. 44. TS 16.187 (ed. Goitein, “*Rāshūt*”), cited there, speaks of a ban on all those who establish any private place of worship or pray there (with the exception of Abraham Maimuni’s private prayer meeting), for a period of thirty years beginning 1205, but does not attest the situation prior to that date. Also see Friedman, “Notes by a Disciple,” 527, n. 21. The other document cited in Goitein’s note, TS 13 J 16, f. 21, deals specifically with the provincial town of Malīj, in which there was communal dissension and in connection with which the Nagīd Mevōrākh prohibited opening a private synagogue, *majlis*; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:168, 555, n. 51; Cohen, *Self-Government*, 251. To the best of my knowledge, Goitein did not discuss elsewhere the possibility that Abū ‘Alī, the brother-in-law of Ibn Yijū, was a Yemenite Jew. On the likelihood that he was identical with Ben Yijū’s Indian brother-in-law Nair, see III, 18, sec. b, line 6 and 639, n. 17.}

III, 52 *Letter from Peraḥyā Yījū to Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāṭī*

Alexandria {al-Maḥalla, ca. 1161–72}

ENA 4020, f. 1

Ed. Simonsohn and Gil, "Sicily," 50–52; English translation in Simonsohn, *Jews in Sicily*, 1:416–17. Reference is not made here to most differences in decipherment and translating the text.

Peraḥyā writes from Alexandria {or rather: al-Maḥalla} to Abu 'l-Fakhr (Saadya b. Abraham Ibn al-Amshāṭī), the trusted friend of the Yījū family in Fustat that he would prefer to travel to Sicily or Damascus {al-Shām} but since 'the little one' (his cousin) was grown up and 'had no one in the world except God' (that is, her father was dead), he could not do this. He refers to great misfortunes, which had befallen him.

{Peraḥyā, in the capacity of a judge, signed a court record in Fustat in February 1160 and in March 1161, signed a bill of divorce there. Subsequently he served as judge in the provincial town of al-Maḥalla.¹ Goitein, in his published studies, had identified our letter as having been written there.² But it might have been written in some other locality, to which Peraḥyā traveled to supervise the production of kosher cheeses (see margin). Here Goitein identified the place of writing as Alexandria probably because of Peraḥyā's statement, in line 10, about sending a letter to his brother with an Alexandrian merchant (but see the note there).³ Since III, 54, was written when Peraḥyā married his cousin Sitt al-Dār in August 1156, the present document, III, 52, was obviously written sometime later but probably after 1161. Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāṭī, who lived in Fustat, extended his protection to the writer's brother Samuel, with whose financial difficulties the body of the letter is concerned. Abu 'l-Fakhr died around 1172; see page 97.

¹ {Fustat: TS 18 J 1, f. 9; ULC Add. 3350. Al-Maḥalla: see III, 55 and III, 56. See 728, n. 2.

² Goitein, *Education*, 79; *Med. Soc.*, 2:187, 559, n. 12.

³ Simonsohn and Gil, "Sicily," 50, also state that the letter was probably written in Alexandria.

Translation

[A. Preamble; thanks to God for the addressee's recovery]

(1) *The Lord will ward off from you all sickness, etc.*⁴

(2) *The servant of his excellency, your honor, great and holy master and lord Saadya the respected elder—may God protect you, grant you success, straighten*

(3) *your paths, give life to all your children and grant you the merit to enjoy their Torah and their marriage!*⁵—kisses your hands. I have learned (4) that there had been sickness in your home,⁶ and God granted recovery.⁷ *Let them praise the Lord for His steadfast love.*⁸

[B. Payment of debt of Samuel, Perahyā's brother]

I, your servant, heard of your kindness (5) to R. Samuel. May God receive from him the best of prayers [for you] and make this a light (6) in front of you in this world and the next world!⁹ I have already sent for him the forty

⁴ Deut. 7:15. As usual, the verses cited at the top of the letter allude to its contents. Here Perahyā refers to Saadya's recent illness and prays that God protect him from any future sickness. See next note.

⁵ Such wishes are found in a number of Geniza letters, e.g., III, 48*v*, lines 34–35, III, 55, lines 1–2 (neither of which is reproduced in this book). These wishes can be traced back to the congratulations offered the father of a boy after his circumcision, according to Tosefta Berakhot 6, 12 (ed. Lieberman, 37, following Codex Erfurt and parallels): "Just as you brought him into the covenant, so may you bring him into Torah and the wedding chamber." Besides religious learning in general, 'his Torah' could be understood as referring to a boy's reading the Torah in the synagogue. Poems written in 1163 to celebrate a Karaite boy's first reading of the Torah (and Prophets) in the synagogue, include the blessing, "he merited Torah, may he merit the wedding chamber!" and, for the boy's parents: "Just as they merited his reading the Torah, may they merit enjoying his wedding!" On the significance of these poems, see Ben-Shammai, "Celebration." Letters found in the Geniza that were written to a father whose son evidently already passed the Torah reading stage include wishes that the recipient live to enjoy his son's wedding. On the supposed rite of passage of Torah reading referred to here, see also pages 415–16.

⁶ Lit., 'there had been weakness there.' This could refer to the illness of Saadya and his children, as well as other family members.

⁷ There may be an allusion to Saadya's illness in Joseph Yijū's remark that he was praying for his well-being in III, 49*v*, line 34. As we learn from a memorial list, Saadya died a young man; see pages 92, 101. His sons might have died before him.

⁸ Ps. 107:8.

⁹ A variation of an oft repeated wish that the benefactor's assistance ('this') increase his merit before God. On this theme, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:354.

dirhems. Please collect your debt from them, and let him use for expenses¹⁰ (7) the balance. God knows,¹¹ I had to take them out of my mouth.¹²

[C. Teaching job offered Samuel by the community]

I already sent him¹³ letters (8) and informed him that the congregation would like him to be a schoolteacher. They promised 20 dirhems a week plus gratuities at (9) all times. But I did not receive an answer from him.¹⁴ I even sent one letter with Sheikh (10) Abū ‘Alī the prominent merchant,¹⁵ the Alexandrian.¹⁶ He met with him and told him: Send me the answer.¹⁷ He¹⁸ stayed there (11) afterwards for some time, but he¹⁹ did not give him anything.

¹⁰ Arabic *yatanaffaq*. While I have not found this use of *nfq* V in the dictionaries, it appears to be the meaning intended in context.

¹¹ Arabic *wa-llāh al-‘ālim*. Peraḥyā often uses this expression; cf. III, 55, line 4; III, 56, lines 3–4.

¹² In a discussion of relatives assuming the debts of family members, Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:43, quotes this sentence (in translation) and explains: “I had to starve to be able to make this payment.”

¹³ To Samuel.

¹⁴ These three sentences are translated in Goitein, *Education*, 79, where he commented that 20 (black) dirhems per week was a decent salary for a teacher. As correctly explained by Goitein, the offer of a teaching position was for Samuel, Peraḥyā’s indigent brother, and not for the wealthy addressee (‘Splendor of the Traders,’ III, 53), as explained by Simonsohn and Gil. Samuel was in fact known as a schoolteacher (see III, 58, lines 6–7 and page 83), but he apparently refused Peraḥyā’s offer and stayed in Fustat; see top margin, lines 2–3, and III, 55 and III, 55a.

¹⁵ For *tājir*, ‘prominent merchant,’ see page 27, n. 4.

¹⁶ I assume he is the same as Abū ‘Alī *al-tājir* b. Nathan the scholar who sold the Indian slave girl, Gazelle, to Abu ‘l-Faḍl *al-tājir* in 1155 (ENA 4011, f. 62; on this document see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:138, 433, n. 48; there it is suggested that Abu ‘l-Faḍl ‘the dignified, wise and sagacious,’ was called *ha-bābūr*, ‘the youth,’ not as an indication of his being unmarried but rather his lower status; but see Friedman, *JMP*, 1:109, n. 8). Since Abū ‘Alī is called here ‘the Alexandrian,’ the letter itself was presumably not written in Alexandria; see the introduction to the document.

¹⁷ The verb ‘send’ is in the imperative form. As often appears in these letters, the writer combines a direct and indirect quote. Abū ‘Alī obviously said: “Send him (Peraḥyā) an answer.”

¹⁸ Abū ‘Alī.

¹⁹ Samuel.

[D. Peraḥyā's orphaned wife, miscellaneous matters and greetings]

As to other matters, when I disembarked, I arrived on Friday (12) [...] with Sheikh Abu 'l-Baqā b. Ḥubaysh²⁰ the Levite and Sālim²¹ (13) [...] and I received 24 dirhems (?)²² [Margin] I owe Ibn [...]. I don't know what obliged him to give me the supervision²³ and why he reversed the situation. I had (or: have) already perished from the cheese and was (or: have become) perplexed as to what I should do.²⁴ Were it not for the 'little one'²⁵ //being an orphan//,²⁶ who already has matured and has no one in the world except God, [Top] (1) I would go to Sicily²⁷ or to Eretz Israel.²⁸ I would appreciate your kindly meeting with my lord *al-Mēvīn*.²⁹ Please inform him (2) what happened to me and (ask) how he accepts everything said about me. Let him (or: you should) ask him, what the reason is for this.³⁰ And if you should see³¹ my brother, he should inform me, (3) or

²⁰ The name Hubaysh ('Little Abyssinian') appears in a number of Geniza documents; see Friedman, *JMP*, 2:20.

²¹ He is probably the same Sālim mentioned in Peraḥyā's letter III, 55, margin, line 11.

²² The text is fragmentary and its decipherment uncertain.

²³ Arabic *ishrāf* can refer to various offices of supervision. The context suggests that here it refers to supervision of kosher food.

²⁴ On the supervision of kosher cheese production (and the import of cheeses from Sicily), see 562, n. 58; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:251–52, 443–44, and the sources and literature cited there; cf. Zeldes and Frenkel, "The Sicilian Trade," 92–93, 100. Cf. IV, 57v, margin, lines 1–2: "I have suffered trouble with the Sicilian cheese, and have not received a return of one penny (*ḥabba*)."

²⁵ Arabic *ṣaghīra* (fem.), a common designation for one's wife. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:162.

²⁶ The word *yatīma* was not deciphered by Goitein (or by Simonsohn and Gil), and he concluded that Abraham Ben Yijū had already died from the following "has no one in the world except God."

²⁷ For the story of a Jew who, a few years after this letter, emigrated to Egypt from Sicily then returned there, see Kraemer, "Messina."

²⁸ Arabic *al-shām* can mean Eretz Israel, Syria or specifically Damascus (the latter preferred by Goitein in his remarks above); see 285, n. 7. In III, 56v, line 7, Peraḥyā threatens his wife to leave the country. Note that in an enactment passed by the Jewish community of Maḥalla, they pledged their loyalty to their judge Peraḥyā [b. Joseph], the writer of our letter, to retain his position as long as he remained in the country and did not want to emigrate to Eretz Israel (TS 16.135, Maimonides, *Responsa*, 2:517; see Friedman, "Maimonides and Zūṭā," 501).

²⁹ 'The Understanding' (or 'Perceptive') was the Hebrew epithet of a contemporary *parnās* (welfare official); see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:427 (no. 137), 503 (no. 116); Gil, *Foundations*, 570 (index).

³⁰ The matter is obscure. Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya is apparently requested to ask *al-Mēvīn* not to give credence to rumors about Peraḥyā but to ask the informant why he says such things. As mentioned above, Peraḥyā's office as judge in al-Maḥalla was a matter of some dispute, and the rumors might have been associated with that affair. See the discussion in Friedman, "Maimonides and Zūṭā," 503.

³¹ Arabic *yunja'u lahu*. For *naja'a*, see *Lisān al-'Arab*, 1:165.

someone who will teach will come to the city, because they are not to be satisfied.³² *May your well-being and the well-being of your children increase!* And to my lord Sheikh Abu 'l-...³³ and his brothers peace. *And peace.*

[E. Address]

[Verso] (1) (To) *His excellency, your honor, great and holy lord and master Saadya the respected elder—may God protect him!—son of his honor, our great and holy master* (2) *and lord Abraham, the respected elder, the pious during his lifetime*³⁴—*may the spirit of God grant him rest!*³⁵

(1) (From) His servant Perahyā (2) b. Joseph—*may he be remembered for life in the world to come!*³⁶

³² While the translation is not entirely certain it seems that Perahyā repeats his urgent request that Samuel respond to the offer to take up a position as a schoolmaster in Perahyā's town. Otherwise another teacher would come, since the people who live there demand a solution to their children's educational needs. (Simonsohn, *Jews in Sicily*, 1:417, translates: "If my brother manages he should let me know, or have the man, you know who, come," etc.)

³³ The name appears to have been omitted.

³⁴ See page 94.

³⁵ Isa. 63:14.

³⁶ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:182, 557, n. 306, translates this blessing: "may his record be [accepted] for life in the World to Come."

III, 53 *Fragmentary Letter from Peraḥyā Yījū to Abu 'l-Fakhr Ibn al-Amshāṭī*
 {Al-Maḥalla, ca. 1161–72}

TS 8J 20, f. 25

Fragment of another letter to Abu 'l-Fakhr, important for verification of various data.

{The fragment contains only the first few lines of the letter. The addressee, Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya b. Abraham Ibn al-Amshāṭī, here bears the honorary Hebrew title *pe'ēr ha-sōḥarīm*, Pride of the Traders, presumably bestowed on him for his munificence to the Yeshiva.¹ Peraḥyā extends to him wishes that he celebrate the coming Passover together with his son and brother's son (the boy was presumably orphaned from his father),² and so for many years to come. Presumably, Abu 'l-Fakhr's other children, whom Peraḥyā had blessed with life in III, 52, line 3 and margin top, did not survive. Alternatively, III, 53, was written before the birth of the other children. The son and nephew are designated *pirḥē ha-ḥasīdīm*, 'budding pietists,' which confirms the association of the family with the circle of pietists. The letter is addressed to Abu 'l-Fakhr's shop in the Square of the Perfumers of Fustat. A similar letter from Peraḥyā (so it seems) to the same Abu 'l-Fakhr Saadya Pride of the Traders, is found in ENA NS 1, f. 8 (L44), and wishes are extended there that the recipient celebrate in years to come Passover and the Feast of Weeks with his son and brother's sons. On the presumed place and time for writing this letter, see the introduction to III, 52.}

¹ {This title was also granted to a well-known India trader, Abu 'l-Barakāt b. Ḥārith. See Friedman, *Polygyny*, 88; Gil and Fleischer, *Yehuda ha-Levi*, 621, 637, and sources and studies referred to there.

² See page 98.}

III, 54 *Marriage Agreement between the Ben Yijū Cousins Peraḥyā and Sitt al-Dār*

Fustat, August 1156

RNL Yevr.-Arab. I (Firkovitch II) 1700, f. 28

The folio is numbered '27' in pen (and is accordingly cited by Goitein as Firkovitch II 1700, f. 27) and '28,' which is the correct number, in pencil. Partial translation in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:203–4.

Entry in the record book of the rabbinical court of Fustat from August 1156: Marriage of Peraḥyā b. Joseph Yijū to Sitt al-Dār ('Mistress of the House'), daughter of his paternal uncle,¹ Abraham (the name was added).

His marriage gift: 20 dinars, to be given to the bride immediately and 50 to be paid in the case the marriage is terminated. This was fair for a schoolmaster (cf. III, 50).² Of the girl's trousseau list only that of the jewelry amounting to the very considerable sum of 150 dinars (exactly 149)³ has been preserved completely. Unlike other trousseau lists, the value of each piece is indicated not in whole dinars, namely round sums agreed upon by the two parties, but mostly with an exact price, such as 8¹/₁₂ dinars for a silver-encased mirror.⁴ Clearly Abraham Ben Yijū himself had drawn up the list in preparation for the marriage contract, and the court wished to honor the dead man's disposition.

{The record book was written by the judge Mevōrākh b. Nathan; see its description in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:343. For the date, see the note to line 2. As noted in III, 50, Abraham Ben Yijū was disappointed with Peraḥyā and tried to postpone or discourage the marriage. Our document shows that the wedding took place only after Abraham's death.}

¹ {Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:29, cites this as an example for marrying the daughter of a paternal uncle. On 55–56, the story of the marriage is told as an example of predetermining the mate for an endogamous marriage.

² I assume that III, 50, line 11 is intended. It refers to Peraḥyā's position in Sicily but does not explicitly state that he had worked as a schoolteacher. See, however, III, 43, margin; in III, 57, line 18, Joseph Yijū in Sicily wrote that this oldest son, that is Peraḥyā, assisted him as a schoolteacher.

³ See the note to line 19.

⁴ That figure is for the value of several items of jewelry, the last being the mirror; see lines 15–17. The reader will find in the list a number of items assigned an exact value in fractions of a dinar.

Translation

{(1) Dowry list for Sheikh Bu 'l-Surūr //Peraḥyā// b. Joseph, known as Ben Yijū.

(2) Sitt al-Dār, the daughter of his paternal uncle—*may his memory be for a blessing!*—Abraham.⁵

(3) The early installment—twenty. The later installment—fifty.⁶

(4) And the well-known conditions for daughters of Israel.⁷

(5) A golden <i>ḥadīda</i> , ⁸ without adornment	20
<<A golden <i>ḥadīda</i>	8 dinars>>
(6) A pair of golden <i>ḥalqas</i> , ⁹ worth	6¼
(7) Another pair of <i>ḥalqas</i> , without adornment	4
(8) A <i>mihbas</i> , ¹⁰ without adornment	15 dinars
(9) [[Two pairs]] A pair of peacock pins, ¹¹ without adornment	7 dinars
(10) A <i>lāzam</i> , ¹² without adornment	7¼

⁵ The word [*li-sh*]ṭārōt, 'era of the documents,' is visible at the end of the line. Below it, some words from five additional lines of another document also appear. Evidently two small pieces of paper are stuck here to the page, one on top of the other. The piece referred to belongs to fol. 3 of the record book (= India Book V, 44). Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:420, n. 379: "The date is effaced, but since all the preceding documents, as well as the next—the last one preserved (when I copied them in Leningrad in 1965)—were written in spring and summer 1156, there can be little doubt that this *taqwīm*, or estimate of the dowry was made in that year." As I have noted, the examination (in St. Petersburg in 2003) of the original manuscript shows that the 'effaced date' belongs to a different page, and no date on this page can be discerned. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:29, gives the date: July 1156. But on his copy of our trousseau list, Goitein noted that the latest date preceding it, in f. 23v, was "the last ten days of the month of Av" (which would correspond with August 9–18), 1156. Attention should also be called to Samuel Yijū's remark in III, 48, line 15, that in his letter that arrived in Sicily at the end of June 1156, probably after less than three weeks at sea, Joseph had made no mention of his bride-to-be.

⁶ For this marriage gift, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:138 (456, n. 101), 365, 404.

⁷ For a definition of the 'well-known conditions,' see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:105–6 (448, n. 37, where this document is cited as an example for not defining what the conditions were).

⁸ For the *ḥadīda* bracelet, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:219, 428, n. 508: "When the India trader Ben Yijū, a Tunisian, gave his daughter as first and by far most precious item of her dowry a golden 'ḥadīda' and again another one in gold [...], he might have been following the usage of his native country."

⁹ Earrings {or: other rings; see Shy, "Terms," 241, 247}.

¹⁰ The *mihbas* is a collar necklace. {See 207, n. 12.

¹¹ For 'peacock pins,' see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:210 (423, n. 429, where this document is cited).

¹² The *lāzam* is a necklace with pendants. {For this piece of jewelry, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:458, n. 142. As noted there, 'not adorned with pearls,' in the continuation, "shows

(11) Pearls for ‘adorning’ all the previously mentioned ornaments. Their weight	
(12) 53¼ dirhems, ¹³ their price	40 dinars
(13) A pair of bulging <i>siwārs</i> ¹⁴	13½
(14) A pair of granulated <i>siwārs</i> ¹⁵	16 ² / ₃ ¹⁶
(15) Two pairs of silver pins with arrows, one pair gold-plated; ¹⁷ one pair of	
(16) spoon(-pins); ¹⁸ one pair of open-worked sun disks; ¹⁹ a kohl stick;	
(17) an encased mirror ²⁰	8 ¹ / ₁₂
(18) A silver <i>dabla</i> ²¹	1 ¹ / ₈ [. . .]
Total (122 and one <i>habba</i>) ²²	
(19)	150 ²³
{[Verso] (1) [X] gold [ri]ngs	6
(2) Two [r]ings, silver and budding ²⁴ coral	2
(3) [X] crystal kohl tubes ²⁵	3

that in Egypt (unlike Yemen, as far as I know) it normally had that additional ornament.” See Shy, “Terms,” 244. The groom’s grandson (Perahyā, *Commentary on Shabbat*, 125) translates *qatlā* (‘chocker’): *lāzam*.)

¹³ Ca. 165 grams.

¹⁴ {The *siwār* is a type of bracelet. According to Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:211, 424, n. 446, *manfūkh* (here translated ‘bulging’), means “literally, puffed up, probably meaning hollow and protuberant.”

¹⁵ ‘Granulated’ here translates *mukharrāz*. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:212 (425, n. 451): “I noted ‘beaded,’ which I take to mean granulated, *siwār* bracelets (no other ornaments) only three times, all from brides marrying in summer 1156.”

¹⁶ Misprinted in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:204: 16 1/3.

¹⁷ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:211 (424, n. 447): “Another important specification concerning the body of a piece of jewelry was whether it was solid precious metal or only plated. If it was plated, the main material seems to be mentioned only when it was silver.”

¹⁸ For pins shaped as arrows, *nashāshīb*, and spoons, *malā‘iq*, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:211, 424, n. 440.

¹⁹ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:210 (423, n. 436), with reference to this list, “probably to be used as pendants.” See 711, n. 3.

²⁰ Mirrors were inlaid with silver. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:222, 429, n. 531.

²¹ A *dabla* is a finger ring.

²² {= 1/72 dinar. The sums in this line may have been erased or perhaps belong elsewhere.

²³ A fragment of a dinar seems to be missing in line 18. According to my addition, the jewelry on this side of the page totaled 146²¹/₂₄ dinars. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:420, n. 379: “My addition is somewhat different but their arithmetic was better. Or perhaps the sum was rounded out.”

²⁴ Arabic *muqamma*’. Cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:406b.

²⁵ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:224, 430, n. 539, notes that this item is likely to be the pieces of jewelry listed by Ben Yijū in the inventory of goods he deposited with Abu ‘l-Fakhr Ibn

(4) [...] leuco-sapphire and semiprecious stones	$\frac{1}{2}$ $11\frac{1}{2}$ ²⁶
(5) Two [...]	$4\frac{2}{3} + \frac{1}{8}$
(6) A [<i>ni</i>]qāb ²⁷ and a pair of scarves ²⁸	$1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{12}$
(7) A full taqnī ^c a ²⁹ and full maqṭa ^c ³⁰	$1\frac{3}{8}$
(8) A green dabīqī linen kerchief	$3\frac{3}{8}$
(9) An Iskandarānī malḥafa ³¹	$1\frac{5}{12}$
(10) A silk ḥulla ³²	$3\frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{4}$
(11) A doubled (?) half mantle ³³	$3\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{24}$
(12) A locally-made maqṭa ^c	$\frac{5}{8}$
(13) A white wasaṭ ³⁴	2
(14) Two Iskandarānī maqṭa ^c 's	$1\frac{2}{3} + \frac{1}{4}$
(15) Three maqṭa ^c 's [...]	$\frac{3}{4}$
(16) A taqnī ^c a	$\frac{2}{3} + \frac{1}{4}$
(17) A quilt cover ³⁵	$\frac{3}{4}$ }

al-Amshātī, on his arrival in Egypt, III, 42, line 3. For the meaning of *billawr*, see also Shy, "Terms," 237–38.

²⁶ This is a subtotal of jewelry added on verso, lines 1–4. I do not know why it was not included in the total on recto.

²⁷ A *niqāb* is a face cover with two holes for the eyes. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:320, 454, n. 75. For veiling women's faces in the Geniza society, see Friedman, "Sexual Mores," 91–99; Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 138 ff.

²⁸ Arabic *raddāt*.

²⁹ I have not found the *taqnī^ca* in dictionaries. Other forms of *qn^c* mean veil, and I assume that this too is a type of veil.

³⁰ Robe or cloth. See II, 16*v*, line 8 and 325, n. 26.

³¹ For this item, a blanket, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:167, 401, n. 124. According to Diem, *Dictionary*, 195, vocalize *milḥafa*. Iskandarānī = Alexandrian textile.

³² Gala costume. See 178, n. 24.

³³ Arabic *niṣṣridā^c*. See 169, n. 11. 'Doubled' translates *mushaffā^c*; similarly IV, 61*v*, line 1: *maqṭa^c mushaffā^c*. But the exact meaning of the term is unknown.

³⁴ Broad belt.

³⁵ Arabic *wajh liḥāf*. Perhaps translate: a blanket cover. The translation of *wajh* follows Diem, *Dictionary*, 222, in reference to *wajh maṭraḥa*, a mattress case.}

III, 55 *Letter from Peraḥyā Yijū to his Brother Samuel, Including Questions of Religious Law*

Probably Maḥalla, seventies or eighties of twelfth century

ULC Or. 1080 J 38¹

On the verso, the address is given both in Hebrew and Arabic characters. In addition, it contains a postscript in one line by the sender and the draft of an answer by the recipient, Peraḥyā's brother Samuel. However, the script cannot be the same as that of the writer of III, 48. Although III, 48 was written by Samuel in Sicily while he was a boy, whereas in III, 55 he was a member of the rabbinical court of Fustat {or rather: was a schoolteacher there} and father of a son, still the two scripts are far too different to admit the possibility that they belong to one and the same person. However, an examination of those two lines written in the left upper corner of III, 55v shows that the handwriting is in the style of the scribes of the Fustat court, which we know from very many documents, especially those emanating from the pens of Hillel b. Eli at the end of the 11th century and even more of Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Manasseh in the first part of the 12th. Accordingly, it seems certain that Samuel dictated these lines to a scribe of the court. {See the added comments below for another interpretation.}

No. III, 55 is interesting, because it shows us how the Yijū family, who had been traders in the Mediterranean (Joseph² and Mevassēr) and the Indian Ocean (Abraham), ended up as religious dignitaries. The informal way, in which Peraḥyā addresses here four {three} questions on religious law to his brother with the request to secure an authoritative answer, clearly indicates (a) that the two brothers were *dayyānīm*, or judges, and (b) that while Samuel was in Fustat (as the address shows), the central seat of Jewish religious learning in Egypt, Peraḥyā must have been in some smaller town in Egypt (for the letter indicates that it was not being sent overseas), and not even in Alexandria, where also a respectable Jewish court with important scholars was in existence at that time.

¹ {In Reif, *Bibliography*, 236, 404, TS 12.322 and ULC Or. 1080 J 38 are confused. Goitein's citations concerning both documents are correct.

² Joseph was a schoolteacher. For the suggestion that he had earlier been involved in Mediterranean trade, see the page 745.}

The evidence of our letter is corroborated by other testimonies. An enactment (*taqqānā*), which the famous Maimonides promulgated in Fustat in May/June 1176, was cosigned by nine other scholars, one of whom is called Samuel b. Joseph. Although these are common names, there is no reason to doubt that he was Peraḥyā's brother.³

In the same volume, a responsum, or answer on a question of religious law, by a scholar named Peraḥyā b. Joseph is printed (Maimonides himself had written his opinion on the same question). Peraḥyā modestly writes that he was not a scholar important enough to give a legal opinion and was doing so only at the request of the Nāsī (communal leader tracing his descent back to King David) Judah {b. Josiah}. Incidentally, he came to the same result as Maimonides, although obviously he had not read his opinion.⁴

Again, these are common names. We find, e.g., a Peraḥyā b. Joseph as a member of the rabbinical court of Fustat at the end of the 11th and beginning of the 12th centuries.⁵ However, as the chronological and other circumstances match, we have every reason to assume that the man who wrote the responsum for the Nāsī Judah was none other than our Peraḥyā of the Yijū family.

There is even more to it. In 1187, Maimonides' court published a list of *dayyānīm* in certain provincial towns of Egypt, who alone were entitled to enact marriages or divorces. The *dayyān* of Maḥalla is called Peraḥyā.⁶ As the content of II, 55 clearly shows that Peraḥyā Yijū was at that time a religious judge in a provincial town in Egypt, it is highly probable that he was the man referred to in the decree of Maimonides court of 1187.⁷

Of the Geniza documents other than those published here, which contain the name Peraḥyā b. Joseph, as far as I can see only TS 12.487 belongs to our Peraḥyā. This is the end of a long deed of lease written in the middle third of the month of Tevet, 1493 E.D., which corresponds

³ See Maimonides, *Responsa* 2:444 (no. 242). {Samuel was a teacher, and we have no information to suggest that he was a judge; see III, 52, line 8 and III, 58, introduction and lines 6–7. The signatories to Maimonides' enactment include judges, teachers and other learned men. As Goitein noted above, Samuel was asked in III, 55 to procure a ruling, not to give one himself; see III, 55a.

⁴ Maimonides, *Responsa*, 2:655 (no. 373).}

⁵ See TS 20.31 (date 1092); TS 8.142 (1096); TS 13 J 2, f. 3 (1106).

⁶ See Maimonides, *Responsa*, 2:624–25 (no. 348). {Cf. Sambari (Shtober), 219–20.

⁷ Cf. Goitein, "Autograph," 191–94 and n. 32; Maimonides, *Responsa*, 2:516–19; 4:8–9; below III, 56.

to December 19–28, 1181. The text says that the document is signed by members of the rabbinical court of Fustat and others. As a court consisted of a minimum of three members, and as our Peraḥyā signs as the third or fourth, it cannot be discerned with certainty, whether he had been transferred to Fustat by this time or happened to be there by chance, perhaps in connection with the lawsuit dealt with in the deed.⁸ In the signature, his handwriting appears to be slightly more stylized than in the letters published here, but it is unmistakably the same.⁹

{Other documents reveal that no member of the Yijū family was engaged any more in intercontinental trade. A letter by Joseph b. Peraḥyā, Peraḥyā b. Joseph's son, is in TS 12.322.}¹⁰

About 60 years later there lived in Egypt another scholar called Peraḥyā b. Joseph. We find him too in connection with a Nāsī (a descendent of King David), Solomon b. Jesse (Yīshay), this time endorsing an opinion given by the latter. He was perhaps a grandson of our Peraḥyā.¹¹

{On III, 55, see further Goitein, "Responsa by Maimonides," 190–91; Goitein, "Chief Justice," 191–92. In both articles, Goitein quoted and discussed the postscript on verso, concerning the inability to write a responsum because of the *Rayyis*, whom Goitein identified as Maimonides. It is questionable, however, that this was a draft of Samuel's reply, which he dictated to a court scribe, as it is not clear why this should have been done. As noted above, Samuel had not been requested to write a responsum but rather to procure one. Presumably he brought Peraḥyā's letter to some authority and requested that the latter write a responsum to the questions found in it. Instead of doing so, this scholar jotted down on III, 55, that, neither he nor R. Jacob¹² could write a ruling, due to the insistence of the

⁸ For a visit Peraḥyā paid to Fustat, see III, 56.

⁹ Goitein subsequently identified additional letters written by Peraḥyā, e.g., TS 8 J 20, f. 4 (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:562, n. 51) and TS 8 J 17, f. 20 (= III, 55a). Peraḥyā's handwriting is identifiable in several additional fragmentary letters. Several of these are cited in pages 83–87.

¹⁰ See III, 58 and pages 83–88.}

¹¹ See Mann, *Jews*, 2:209, sec. 5 (TS 10 J 22, f. 8). {Peraḥyā wrote the Nāsī Solomon a letter, in which he sent regards from his sons Moses and Samuel and mentioned R. Joseph (TS 13 J 19, f. 28; Westminster Misc. 102). As his handwriting shows, this is the same grandson Peraḥyā b. Joseph (rather than Peraḥyā b. Nissīm, as suggested by Goitein, "Negidim," 238) and Joseph may have been his cousin, Joseph b. Moses. This is probably the same Peraḥyā b. Joseph, who wrote the interesting letter TS 13 J 27, f. 10 concerning, *inter alia*, Rashi's (?) Commentary to Qiddushin.

¹² Probably Jacob ha-Kohen b. Joseph, a judge active between 1161–74 (see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:513, no. 21, where the second date (1164) is to be corrected according to 2:458, n. 69; 3:443, n. 44). Concerning him, see Goitein, "Additions." A responsum written by him is found in TS G 1, f. 29.

Rayyis that he alone write responsa. This reconstruction is confirmed by III, 55a; see below.

The information on Peraḥyā's judgeship in al-Maḥalla cited above from Maimonides' 1187 enactment is to be complemented by III, 56, and especially by TS 13 J 25, f. 1,¹³ which is the beginning of the text preserved in TS 16.135, earlier edited by S. Assaf.¹⁴ The combined manuscript contains an enactment by the Jewish community of al-Maḥalla, confirmed by Maimonides, which rejects the demand of the Head of Egyptian Jewry Abū Zikrī to collect payments from the local community and affirms loyalty to the judge Peraḥyā, who, as suggested by Goitein,¹⁵ is to be identified as Peraḥyā b. Joseph Yijū. Among the Egyptian Jewish scholars during Maimonides' lifetime, Sambari indeed lists: R. Peraḥyā b. R. Yose [= Joseph], the judge of 'al-Muḥulla' [= al-Maḥalla]¹⁶ The al-Maḥalla affair requires additional study, and I limit myself here to a few very brief remarks. The action taken by Maimonides in connection with the administration of marriage and divorce, as well as that concerning a ban on mentioning the *rāshūt*, the authority of the Head of the Jews,¹⁷ were probably related to the events associated with the al-Maḥalla community's enactment. If as convincingly argued by Goitein elsewhere,¹⁸ Maimonides' recognition as a communal leader in Egypt is partially due to his bold stance against Abū Zikrī's highhanded tactics, we can conclude that the master's protection of the judgeship of Peraḥyā Yijū of al-Maḥalla played a role in his ascendancy.¹⁹

Contents

- A. Preamble with reference to a previous letter (lines 1–4).²⁰
- B. Reference to the arrival of a scholar, full of praise for Samuel, and disapproval that for a certain occasion, guests others than one Abu 'l-Faraj had been invited (lines 4–6).

¹³ Ed. Goitein, "Maimonides' Autograph," 191–94.

¹⁴ Published in Maimonides, *Responsa*, 2:516–19 (no. 270; cf. 4:8–9).

¹⁵ Goitein, "Maimonides' Autograph," 193, n. 32.

¹⁶ Sambari (Shtober), 219.

¹⁷ Sambari (Shtober), 219–20; Maimonides, *Responsa*, 2:624–25 (no. 348) and 2:596–99 (no. 329), respectively.

¹⁸ Goitein, "Maimonides' Life," 32.

¹⁹ These matters are now discussed in Friedman, "Maimonides and Zūṭā."

²⁰ Samuel's only and still unmarried son is called here Sheikh Abū 'Imrān, which is the *kunya* or honorific of a person called Moses. This does not mean that his uncle Moses (see III, 46) was already dead, when he was born. {He probably was dead; see III, 58 and page 98, n. 44.}

- C. Four {three} questions on religious law (lines 6–16).²¹
- D. Request to honor the bearer of the letter and to convey to him the answers to the questions mentioned, as far as they were ready (line 16-margin, line 8).
- E. Request to help a dyer, called Sālim, who had fled from Cairo because of the poll tax (*jāliya*, margin, line 9–top, line 7).²²
- F. Admonition to look after the writer's aged mother; greetings to her, to Samuel and his only son and to his wife, from the writer's wife, called Umm Yūsuf, 'Mother of Joseph,' after her son, greetings from that son Joseph and his sister Yumn,²³ and, of course, the writer (top, lines 8–16).²⁴

Postscript on verso: No payment for the transport of the letter was required.²⁵ Draft of answer by the writer's brother Samuel {rather, by the scholar whom Samuel approached for a ruling}:

I beg to inform you—*may your Rock preserve you!*—that I have thought about your letter, but am not able to write a responsum (*fatwa*), nor can Rabbi Jacob do so, because of the *Rayyis*. However, I shall inform the *Rayyis*, and he will write you the responsum.²⁶

²¹ It is highly interesting that Perahyā writes in reference to a conditional fine in a betrothal deed, that he followed the procedure of 'our master' {*mu'allimunā*, 'our teacher'} Zechariah, certainly the Tunisian-Sicilian scholar mentioned in III, 43*v*, lines 7, 17; III, 45, line 11 {and in III, 48*v*, line 35}.

²² Evading the payment of the poll tax by fleeing from one's hometown is a very frequent subject in the Geniza papers from Egypt. {Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:382. This is likely to be the same Sālim mentioned in III, 52, line 12.}

²³ Yumn means 'Luck'; a woman with this name appeared already in the Yijū family in III, 29, line 24.

²⁴ The letter is addressed to *murabba'at al-'aṭṭārīn* {the Square of the Perfumers} to Abu 'l-Fakhr al-Amshāfī, as III, 46. The address contains the two formulas found also at the end of III, 41. The Arabic formula is even more detailed here: 'Deliver it—and you will be rewarded—to Samuel.'

²⁵ {As expressed in the address here by the Hebrew *emūnā ōmen* and the Arabic *balligh tūjar* (or *tu'jar*); see I, 32*v* and III, 29*v*, address, lines 3–4, and accompanying notes (257, n. 13; 687, n. 48). However, the postscript here on verso states: "Grant the *elder*, who bears this letter, an honorarium (*akrimbu*); you will (or: may you) lack nothing." Also on recto, lines 16–17, the writer requests that something be given to the letter carrier. For the bearer of another of his letters (TS 8 J 27, f. 8) Perahyā requests enlisting assistance from Maimonides and *al-maskīl* (title of a judge; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:321; Joseph the judge, *ha-maskīl* b. Nadiv the munificent, Banner of the Yeshiva [*degel ha-yeshivā*] is mentioned among the genealogies listed in ULC Or. 1080 J 149, in which Maimonides and his family also appear; see pages 91–92.)}

²⁶ The *Rayyis* referred to here certainly is none other than Maimonides. It is very characteristic of Maimonides' endeavors at religious reforms in Egypt that he insisted in personally answering questions addressed to members of his court. This certainly contributed much towards the unification of religious and legal practice. {See also Friedman, "Responsum on *Reshut*," 347, n. 79.}

{III, 55a *Letter from Peraḥyā Yijū to his Brother Samuel, Complaining of his Failure to Procure a Responsum*

Probably Maḥalla, seventies or eighties of twelfth century

TS 8 J 17, f. 20

This is an almost complete letter, missing only the top upper corner of recto and most of the address on verso. The writer is named Peraḥyā, and the addressee is his brother. From the handwriting and contents it is evident that this is a letter by Peraḥyā b. Joseph Yijū to his brother Samuel, in Fustat. It consists of four sections: (1) Opening remarks, dealing with personal matters, including their mother's illness and Peraḥyā's apology for being unable to come for a visit (lines 1–11). (2) The affair of the responsum; see below (lines 12–16). (3) A request for assistance in collecting a debt and in paying the poll tax (line 17-margin, line 15). (4) Personal regards and closing remarks (margin, line 16, continued at top, most missing). Verso contains a one-line addition, in which Peraḥyā inquires whether Samuel has made a bible amulet or an anklet for his son, to protect him.¹

Sec. 2 concerning the responsum is of interest to us here, as it clarifies the ambiguity concerning this matter in III, 55. We can now reconstruct the events as follows: During the week in which the Torah portion *We-ēle ha-Mishpāṭīm* (Exod. 21–24) was read in the synagogue (usually February or March), Peraḥyā had written Samuel and requested that he procure a responsum to three queries (this letter is mentioned in III, 55, line 2). When no answer arrived, Peraḥyā repeated the request in III, 55. Samuel took that letter to an anonymous scholar and requested that he write a responsum. From III, 55a, line 12, it appears that this scholar was named R. Menaḥēm, but his identity is unknown.² In any event, this juriconsult jotted down on III, 55v, that neither he nor R. Jacob was able to write a responsum, because of the *Rayyis'* objection. During the week in which the Torah portion *Wa-yaqhel* (Exod. 35–38) was read in the synagogue, i.e., four weeks after Peraḥyā's first letter, Samuel wrote him of his failure to

¹ {The postscript on verso is discussed by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:222, 429, n. 528, where he comments that it seems that Peraḥyā was a member of the Ben Yijū family. Our identification of the writer as the distinguished judge of al-Maḥalla adds an interesting dimension to his advocacy of the amulet or anklet. Goitein did not include this document in the *India Book*, and as far as I know he did not prepare an edition of it.

² Perhaps Menaḥēm b. Isaac b. Sāsōn, judge in New Cairo, from whom documents from the early 13th century have been preserved. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:514, no. 26. If so, II, 55 and II, 55a, may have been written some years later than previously assumed.

procure the requested responsum (this letter is mentioned in III, 55a, line 2). In III, 55a, Peraḥyā responds to that letter and criticizes Samuel's handling of the affair. Peraḥyā had not requested a written responsum at all, as he must have known that because of Maimonides' objection, no other jurisconsult would agree to write one. We can only guess whether Peraḥyā preferred not asking Maimonides because the master was busy and might delay his response or he did not want to commit himself to following his ruling.³

(12) Another matter: You have disappointed (me)⁴ by having gone to Menahēm or spoken (13) to him or requesting from someone to write a responsum. What I had requested (14) of you is that you ask a query orally, hear the essence of the answer and write it to me. (15) Even though I have already relied on (or, achieved) a proper (decision) in this matter,⁵ I nevertheless want to consider (16) someone else's opinion.}

³ In the letter by Peraḥyā b. Joseph (the grandson, TS 13 J 19, f. 28; see 787, n. 11) to the Nāsī Solomon, he mentions that he informed R. Joseph of the enactment not to write responsa:

He said: "If people ask me a question, how can I not reply to them?!" I said to him: 'A man refrains from greater things for the sake of *peace*.' He said: 'The matter has already passed; I wrote a responsum and sent it...'

⁴ Arabic *afṣalia*. *Afṣala* can mean 'adulterate (money)': Hava, *Dictionary*, 562. But here 'disappoint' (Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 374, for the fifth form, *tafassala*) seems to fit the context better. According to Lane, *Dictionary*, 2398, *fasula* means 'was ignoble,' etc.

⁵ Arabic *inḥaztu fihā ilā 'l-wājib*.}

III, 56 *Letter from Peraḥyā Yijū to His Wife in al-Maḥalla*

Fustat, late twelfth century

ULC Or. 1080 J 23

Translated by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:218–20.

A letter in the hand of Peraḥyā b. Joseph, written while he was visiting the capital, to his wife Umm Thanā' ('Worthy of Praise'), is addressed to the judge's house in al-Maḥalla, a provincial capital in the Nile Delta. A man with this name was judge in al-Maḥalla in 1187.¹ His wife might have received this honorific title because of some generous gift to the community. An inventory of the Synagogue of the Iraqi Jews in Fustat from the year 1181/2 lists a Torah scroll written on order of a woman called Umm Thanā' and donated by her to that house of worship.² The interpretation in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:218–20, has to be changed in light of III, 52.

{The change in interpretation obviously refers to the suggestion in *Med. Soc.*, 3:219, that Peraḥyā's wife was the daughter of al-Maḥalla's judge, which had been deduced undoubtedly from the fact the letter is addressed to the house of the judge there.³ On the basis of India Book III, 52 and especially III, 54, Peraḥyā's wife is rather to be identified as his cousin Sitt al-Dār, Abraham Ben Yijū's daughter. In III, 52 (margin top, line 1), Peraḥyā wrote that he would leave the country, were it not for his wife. The desire to leave Egypt is echoed in our letter (III, 56*v*, line 7), where he writes her that he would leave the country, unless she joined him in the capital.

The name Umm Thanā' and the explanation that it was bestowed on Peraḥyā's wife because of some generous gift, which she had made, raise certain questions, however. It is exceptional that her honorific name would have been changed from Umm Yūsuf ('Mother of Joseph,' III, 55,

¹ See the introduction to III, 55 for references.

² Bodl. MS. Heb. f. 56 (Cat. 2821), fol. 50*v*, line 14. {According to Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:472, n. 250 (misprinted '240'), Umm Thanā, who in TS 13 J 20, f. 9 made an order for copying a Pentateuch, "might, or might not, be identical with the woman" to whom Peraḥyā wrote. Goitein, "The Synagogue," 96, identified it as the same Torah scroll, or rather *maṣḥaf*, mentioned in the document from 1181/2.

³ The same appears in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:238; id., *Education*, 79 (according to which Peraḥyā married the judge's daughter rather than his cousin). At yet an earlier stage of research Goitein assumed that Abraham Ben Yijū became a judge in an Egyptian provincial town, presumably al-Maḥalla; see above, page 84, n. 92.

top). More peculiar is her supposed reputation for beneficence, in light of Peraḥyā's repeated protestations of poverty: he had to deprive himself of food to pay a debt (III, 52, line 7); he was unable to contribute to his mother's upkeep (III, 55, lines 3–4); and he had difficulties paying the poll tax (III, 55a, margin). While we do not know what happened to Sitt al-Dār's ample dowry (III, 54), her supposed generous gifts to the community are completely incongruous with her husband's financial difficulties.⁴ The relevant passage in the inventory from 1181/2—'Added to this is a new Torah codex, which Umm Thanā ordered copied and which she dedicated to the aforementioned synagogue'—has a parallel in an adjoining inventory, from Marheshvan, 1186, from the Synagogue of the Palestinians in Fustat: 'Added to this is a new Torah codex, which Umm Thanā the embroiderer ordered copied and which she dedicated to the Synagogue of the Palestinians.'⁵ The vocation of the benefactress and the synagogue to which she dedicated her gift add to the unlikelihood of identifying her with Sitt al-Dār the wife of Peraḥyā, judge of al-Maḥalla.⁶

A closer examination of the manuscript shows that in verso, line 6, a stain obscures what Goitein had read as אַמַּתְנָא, 'yā (Oh) Umm Thanā.' In any event, it would be preferable to read אַמַּתְנָא, *yā sittunā*, 'Oh, my (lit., "our") lady,' the identical phrase with which the writer addresses his

⁴ The incongruity of Ben Yijū's wealth, inherited by his daughter Sitt al-Dār, and Peraḥyā's poverty is a puzzle, even if we assume that his wife was not the benefactress. Several reconstructions can be imagined, e.g., Peraḥyā remarried after having divorced Sitt al-Dār or after her death; her inheritance was lost due to a poor investment or she retained exclusive rights over her possessions and did not make them available to her husband. Furthermore, besides our Peraḥyā b. Joseph and his grandson, other individuals bore this name during the Geniza period. I am uncertain which of them is intended in TS 12.599, according to which Saadya b. Yeshū'ā the father of the late Sitt al-Ḥusn released his son-in-law Peraḥyā b. Joseph from any claim concerning the property of his daughter. At the present time, the issue remains somewhat of an enigma.

⁵ The 1181/2 inventory, as already noted: Bodl. MS. Heb. f. 56 (Cat. 2821), fol. 50v, ed. Allony, *Library*, 299–302, with references to earlier publications. For אַמַּתְנָא אַמַּתְנָא ('Umm Thanā ordered it copied'), the first editor, Gottheil, "Tit-bits," 165, read אַמַּתְנָא אַמַּתְנָא ('Istunā [?] ordered it copied'). The 1186 inventory: Bodl. MS. Heb. f. 56 (Cat. 2821), fol. 49v; ed. Allony, *ib.*, 303–5, with references to earlier publications. For אַמַּתְנָא אַמַּתְנָא, the first editor, Gottheil, *ibid.*, 161, read אַמַּתְנָא אַמַּתְנָא ('Sittunā ordered it copied'), which in later editions was 'corrected' to אַמַּתְנָא אַמַּתְנָא.

⁶ Goitein, "The Synagogue," 96, noted that Umm Thanā is a rare name. In Mann, *Jews*, 2:XXXV, Goitein remarked that it is a 'common' name, but the intention is: a known name. Umm Thanā the benefactress is probably the same as her namesake mentioned in other documents as living in the vicinity of the Synagogue of the Palestinians in Fustat; see Gil, *Foundations*, 594 (there spelled 'Umm Thinā'). See Allony, *ibid.*, 302, where TS 13 J 20.19 is a misprint for TS 13 J 20.9.

wife in the opening of his letter. These phrases are often virtually indistinguishable, especially when the writer does not leave regular spaces between words.⁷

The letter has two main sections: the writer's longing for his wife and his urgent request that she join him;⁸ a report on his sermon before the combined membership of the two synagogues in Fustat, that of the Palestinian Jews and that of the Iraqi Jews. While there are some indications that he would have liked to stay there for an extended period, the immediate purpose of his trip must have been to supplement his meager income as judge by the honorariums he received as a guest rabbi.⁹ The sermon was a great success, he writes. But his satisfaction at its reception was dampened by his wife's absence and especially by the failure of someone named Abu 'l-Ḥakam¹⁰ to attend. Peraḥyā was embarrassed when the congregants asked him about Abu 'l-Ḥakam's absence. A contemporary query to Maimonides describes the ruckus caused when a congregant in a synagogue in Cairo ridiculed the sermon, which the local leader delivered there, and Judge Abu 'l-Ḥakam is singled out as having been present.¹¹ Evidently, he was well known not only to Maimonides but also to Peraḥyā's wife, and accordingly it was sufficient to refer to him by use of his honorific only. We learn his full name from a legal opinion, which he wrote, also preserved in Maimonides' responsa, concerning a leviratic marriage, a case about which questions were addressed among others also to Maimonides and to our Peraḥyā b. Joseph. The ruling had obviously been written in Arabic but is preserved in Hebrew translation only. Its caption is 'the responsum of the judge Avī he-Ḥākhām' (Father of the Savant), clearly a rendering of the Arabic by-name Abu 'l-Ḥakam. At the end he signs his full name, Solomon b. Zakkay.¹² He is also known from documents he signed in Cairo

⁷ Converse errors occurred in earlier publications, where the name Umm Thanā' was misread as if it contained *Sittunā*; see the preceding notes. *Sittunā*, 'our lady,' for addressing a wife should be added to those terms discussed in Goitein, 3:164.

⁸ As noted by Kraemer, "Women Speak," 188, 197, 201, the personal and confidential nature of this part of the letter proves that Peraḥyā's wife was literate, and it was intended for her eyes only. As we recall, Sitt al-Dār was born in India and lived three years in Yemen during her youth; it is interesting that her father Ben Yijū had her learn to read.

⁹ For such guest sermons, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:158, 217.

¹⁰ Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:219, translates "the brother of *the divine*." He obviously read in the original *akhu 'l-ḥākhām*, which except for the indistinguishable *b-k* interchange, has the same consonants.

¹¹ Maimonides, *Responsa*, 1:189, no. 110. The by-name Abu 'l-Ḥakam is uncommon. In 1225 Abu 'l-Ḥakam b. Hilāl sells his share in a house in Cairo, ULC Or. 1081 J 31.

¹² Maimonides, *Responsa*, 2:654–55, no. 373.

in the late eighties of the twelfth century.¹³ In his Chronicle, Sambari lists Solomon's namesake among the savants of Alexandria contemporary with Maimonides;¹⁴ evidently Solomon moved from Cairo to Alexandria (or vice versa).¹⁵ Our letter thus supplies a small but interesting addendum to our knowledge concerning this group of Egyptian scholars in Maimonides' circle, which included Perahyā, and the dynamics of their relations one to another.}

¹³ TS 18 J 1, f. 28, August 25, 1187. TS Misc. 25.63 (referred to by Mann, *Jews*, 2:294, without shelf mark), December 23, 1188. Thanks to Amir Ashur for supplying me with the pertinent data. On Solomon b. Zakkay, see further Friedman, "Maimonides and Zūṭā," 484.

¹⁴ Sambari (Shtober), 219; cf. Mann, *Texts*, 1:396, n. 9.

¹⁵ We cannot exclude the possibility that our letter was written not in Fustat but rather Alexandria, whose Jewish community also had Palestinian and Iraqi congregations.}

III, 57 *Letter from Joseph b. Peraḥyā Yijū to an Important Merchant, also in Sicily*

{Mazara, ca. 1154}

TS 13J 6, f. 15

Long but damaged letter by Joseph b. Peraḥyā Yijū, introducing himself as a brother of Mevassēr, with whom the addressee was evidently acquainted. Joseph describes the disasters, which had befallen him and asks the addressee to pay him the balance of a deal in pepper still due him. This may refer to III, 41. His son Peraḥyā apparently wrote the letter for Joseph. Since verso is blank, with no address, this letter was evidently not sent.¹

{In III, 41, lines 26–31, Abraham Ben Yijū wrote his brother Joseph that he should be careful with the shipment of pepper and ginger that he was sending him and not lose it due to negligence, as he had done with a previous shipment of pepper. Our letter, III, 57, line 13, also speaks of a shipment of pepper sent to Joseph by his brother that had been lost. Joseph introduces himself here as ‘Joseph b. Peraḥyā, known as Yijū, Mevassēr’s brother.’ Similarly, he is addressed as ‘Mevassēr’s brother, known as Ibn Yijū,’ in III, 44 (written October–November, 1154), a note sent by the merchant Ḥajjāj, presumably from Messina, where Mevassēr had lived, to Joseph, who lived in Mazara, both in Sicily. There Ḥajjāj informed Joseph that his two older sons, Peraḥyā and Moses, had requested that Ḥajjāj forward a shipment to their father, obviously received from their uncle Abraham. Ḥajjāj delayed the shipment and claimed that part of it had been lost. In the meantime, Joseph was reduced to poverty, and he did not know exactly how much of the shipment had been lost and how much Ḥajjāj owed him. He wrote desperate letters of humble supplication to Ḥajjāj and to the notable Abu ’l-Faraj (Ibn) Masnūt, also of Messina. The latter finally persuaded Ḥajjāj to send Joseph some of the funds he owed him.² While the sums mentioned in our letter do not exactly match those in the other documents, III, 57 is an example par excellence of a letter of humble supplication written by Joseph, asking for information and assistance for recovering his lost shipment. It might have been intended to be sent to Ḥajjāj or Abu ’l-Faraj.

¹ {Only the above description taken from the Summaries and odd notes, together with a rough draft copy of the Judeo-Arabic text are preserved for this document in Goitein’s papers.

² For all of this, see III, 48, lines 37–45; III, 49, lines 37–46, verso, line 26.

(3) (I) Joseph b. Perahyā—*may he rest in Eden!*—known as Yijū, Mevassēr's brother, humbly beg (4) my lord's generosity to allow me to devote myself to you and to be included in the assembly of your clients³ [...] (6) What I request of your benevolence and hope from your graciousness, is that you kindly write (7) in detail to your servant [...] the amount of the goods sent [...] (11) He wrote that part of it had been lost. I remain anxious⁴ and troubled (12) by every aspect. For my brother had written that he determined that the capital, which remained in Fustat after (13) most had been lost was 22 Egyptian dinars, from which was purchased pepper for us, (14) together.⁵ Then he said (= wrote) //to me//: "The total of your half is 64 pounds of pepper and 22 (15) Ducan *rubā'is*."⁶ But my agent says: "Only 65 *rubā'is* were given me."⁷ The verse "*What the cutter has left, (16) the locust has devoured*"⁸ has been fulfilled in me, as they say, "*Poverty follows the poor*."⁹ For Time has shot its arrows at me.¹⁰ (17) I have become impoverished and fate has struck me down.}¹¹

³ Arabic *ṣanā'i'*; For the use of this term (sg. *ṣanī'a*) in letters of appeal for assistance, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:81; Diem, *Geschäftsbriefe*, 61.

⁴ Arabic *mu'allaq al-khātir*. Cf. 694, n. 6.

⁵ Or 'both of us.' I assume Abraham intended that his gift be divided between his brothers Mevassēr and Joseph. See the continuation.

⁶ For these Sicilian quarter dinars, cf. III, 30a, line 5.

⁷ Perhaps the agent was Ḥajjāj.

⁸ Joel 1:4.

⁹ BT Bava Qama 92a and parallels.

¹⁰ This and the preceding phrase are quoted from this document by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 5:91, 531, n. 231. For Time as a personification of fate, see 268, n. 5.

¹¹ On blaming misfortune on fate, see 467, n. 26. Here, in the continuation, lines 17–18, Joseph states that his sins were the source of his misfortunes. These included (lines 18–19) an inflammation of the finger of his oldest son, namely Perahyā, who assisted him as schoolteacher.}

{III, 58 *Memorial List for the Family of Joseph b. Peraḥyā Yijū*

Egypt, early thirteenth century

ENA 2592, f. 28

I close this chapter with an additional document, not part of Goitein's original India Book: a memorial list for the family of Abraham Ben Yijū's brother, Joseph b. Peraḥyā Yijū. The writer of the list did not mention and may have been unfamiliar with Joseph's father's name, Peraḥyā, and the family name Yijū, which appears only rarely in the documents that refer to Joseph's grandchildren. The list is of interest because of the data concerning the family that it provides or confirms. The family's claim to nobility had become its scholarship, not its connection with great traders (Abraham Ben Yijū). The list proves conclusively that Peraḥyā (b. Joseph) the judge of al-Maḥalla, known from Maimonides' responsa (see the introduction to III, 55), was the same Peraḥyā b. Joseph the judge of the Yijū family (and he was designated: the Excellent Judge, *ha-dayyān ha-me'ulle*).¹ Samuel, on the other hand, remained a teacher his whole life and was not a judge.² Of their brother Moses, we hear nothing after the family correspondence from the 1150s: III, 43, 45–49. The reason is now clear; he died a young man. Both Peraḥyā and Samuel named one of their sons after their brother Moses.³ For some reason, Peraḥyā's and Samuel's sons known from other manuscripts (see Introduction IIC, sec. 6) are not mentioned in the list. On the other hand, we learn of an otherwise unknown son (I'm not sure of which brother), Zakkay, a teacher, who is wished a son of his own.⁴ The

¹ {Also note the letter TS 12.322, written by Peraḥyā's son 'Joseph b. Peraḥyā the judge,' to his uncle Samuel the teacher. In a letter to Abraham Maimuni from the community of Mīnyat Ziftā (ULC Add. 3341), concerning another son Moses b. Peraḥyā, his father is referred to as 'the discerning (*maskil*) judge.' For *maskil*, see 789, n. 25.

² Goitein, *Letters*, 328, in connection with III, 43 (see there), writes: "the youngest brother [= Samuel], referred to in this letter, became a judge of the rabbinical court in Old Cairo." As we have seen (see my note to the introduction of III, 55; III, 55a), actually there is no proof of such an appointment. Had Samuel achieved a judgeship, he would have certainly been mentioned as such in this memorial list, III, 58, and not as a teacher. Similarly, Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 15 (discussed in page 85, n. 94) mentions our Samuel, the late 'teacher.' Also see the letter cited in the preceding note.

³ For the custom of naming a boy after his deceased uncle, see page 98, n. 44.

⁴ Perhaps he is R. Zakkay, mentioned in a letter by Abraham Maimuni, in connection with a young lady staying in Zakkay's house, ENA NS 18, f. 36v, line 22, ed. Fenton, "Commentary," 51. The letter is poorly preserved and the script difficult to decipher. For the words after Zakkay's name printed in the edition, *wa-sayyidnā fī shidda shadīd min al-qalaq*, I read *wa-inmahā fī shidda shadīda min al-qilla*, 'she is in great stress because of destitution.'

list, written in Hebrew (and Aramaic), was probably prepared for reading in the synagogue. It is typical of such lists that the female members of the family were not mentioned.

Translation

(1) *For a good memory and rest for the souls.*
 (2) *In memory of the noble family, the family of scholars.* (3) *Our master and lord Joseph, the wise and discerning—may the spirit of the Lord give him rest!*⁵—
 (4) *and his three sons. At their head, the distinguished, esteemed crown of glory,*
 (5) *our master and lord Perahyā the Excellent Judge—(6) may the memory of the pious be for a blessing! His brother, his honored, our great and holy master and lord Samuel* (7) *the teacher, the wise and discerning—may the spirit of the Lord give him rest!* (8) *And his brother Moses, snatched away after short years—may the spirit of the Lord give him rest!* (9) *And may there be life and peace for his honor our m[aster and lord] Zakkay,* (10) *the wise and discerning teacher! May God grant him male progeny,* (11) *for life and continued existence!*⁶

⁵ Isa. 63:14.

⁶ In the continuation, which is fragmentary, a memorial list for another family is written.}

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4. *Geniza (and other) Manuscripts*

AIU = Alliance israélite universelle, Paris
 IV C 486 = II, 39
 V A 70 64n43
 VII D 7 = I, 23
 VII E 35 = II, 12

Antonin, RNL
 1105 = IV, 33

BL = British Library, London
 Or. 5535, f. 2 = VI, 30
 5542, f. 4 = VII, 2
 5542, f. 17 = II, 57
 5542, f. 20 483n28
 5542, f. 23 95n27,
 99n46
 5542, f. 34 95n27,
 101n51
 5549, III, f. 5 = V, 4
 5566 D, f. 6 = VI, 39
 5566 D, f. 24 = IV, 6

Bodl. = Bodleian Library, Oxford
 MS. Heb. a. 2 (Cat. 2805), fol. 16 =
 II, 53
 a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 5 300n3
 a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 9 322n6
 a. 3, fol. 15 85n94,
 798n2
 a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 16 = I, 41
 a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 19 = II, 32
 a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 20 = VII, 4a
 a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 23 305n13
 a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 26 646n17
 a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 28 228n12
 a. 3 (Cat. 2873), fol. 43 422n29
 b. 3 (Cat. 2806), fol. 9 601n40
 b. 3 (Cat. 2806, no. 19),
 fol. 21 285n15
 b. 3 (Cat. 2806, no. 20),
 fol. 22 638n11
 b. 3 (Cat. 2806, no. 24),
 fol. 26 = VII, 36
 b. 11 (Cat. 2874), fol. 2 = V, 25
 b. 11 (Cat. 2874), fol. 15 = III, 48
 b. 11 (Cat. 2874), fol. 19 = VI, 37
 b. 11 (Cat. 2874, no. 20),
 fol. 21 = I, 33
 b. 11 (Cat. 2874, no. 21),
 fol. 22 = II, 55
 b. 11 (Cat. 2874), fol. 25 = IV, 11

b. 12 (Cat. 2875), fol. 17 = VII, 11
 c. 13 (Cat. 2807, no. 17),
 fol. 21 202n25
 c. 13 (Cat. 2807, no. 19),
 fol. 24 = VI, 55
 c. 28 (Cat. 2876), fol. 12 = IV, 65
 c. 28 (Cat. 2876), fol. 22 = V, 2
 c. 28 (Cat. 2876), fol. 31 = IV, 17
 c. 28 (Cat. 2876) fol. 34 292n5
 c. 28 (Cat. 2876), fol. 37 = I, 17
 c. 28 (Cat. 2876), fol. 47 = I, 42
 c. 28 (Cat. 2876), fol. 51 = IV, 42
 c. 28 (Cat. 2876), fol. 56 257n13
 c. 28 (Cat. 2876), fol. 60 = V, 13
 d. 46 (Cat. 2643, no. 23),
 fol. 133 637n8
 d. 36 (Cat. 2776, no. 3),
 fol. 9 = I, 43a
 d. 65 (Cat. 2877), fol. 34 116n125
 d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 21 = VII, 58
 d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 43 287n23
 d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 47 = I, 36
 d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 48 = I, 36
 d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 61 = III, 32
 d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 64 = I, 5-6
 d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 65 = I, 7
 d. 66 (Cat. 2878) fol. 66 = I, 12; I, 13
 d. 66 (Cat. 2878) fol. 67 = I, 13
 d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 79 255n2
 d. 66 (2878), fol. 104 114n118
 d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 108 = V, 8
 d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 137 = VI, 21
 d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fol. 139 = III, 30
 d. 75, fol. 19 = II, 3
 d. 76, fol. 41 = IV, 22
 e. 94, fol. 21 222n2
 e. 94, fol. 28 355n14
 e. 94, fol. 30 = IV, 55
 e. 98, fol. 63 269n7
 e. 98, fol. 67 = II, 52
 e. 98, fol. 71 = VI, 8
 e. 108, fol. 68 251n1
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 fol. 49 793n5
 f. 56 (Cat. 2821),
 fol. 50 792n2,
 793n5
 f. 103, fol. 39 = VII, 63
 577, MS. Huntington
 (80) (not Geniza) 112, 118

- CAJS = University of Pennsylvania,
Center for Advanced Judaic Studies,
Cairo Geniza Collection, Halper
(formerly Dropsie)
- 160 738n16
332 95n25
344 = IV, 67
379 507n4
384 = VII, 46
389 648n1, 737n6
394 = II, 5
400 272n2
405 = VI, 34
472 = III, 42
- DK = David Kaufmann Collection,
Hungarian Academy of Sciences,
Budapest
- 1 458n5
3 288n2
22 285n15
165 411n17
192 430n3
230/3 h-j = II, 6
231 g-k 286n16
- Dropsie. *See* CAJS
- ENA = E. N. Adler Collection, Jewish
Theological Seminary of America
- 1810, f. 1 = II, 69
1810, f. 6 = II, 69
1822, f. 8 = VII, 66
1822, f. 72 = V, 30b
1822A, f. 43 = II, 30
1822A, f. 66 = III, 20
1822 A, f. 75 = III, 31
2557, f. 151 = III, 43
2558, f. 2 = VII, 52
2558, f. 14 = I, 39
2558a, f. 30a = VI, 50
2560 f. 193 = VI, 3
2592, f. 3 116n126
2592, f. 14 118n134
2592, f. 28 = III, 58
2594, f. 8 = I, 21
2639, fs. 1-2 739n25
2727, f. 4 98n44, 100n49
2727, f. 7b = III, 10a
2727, f. 11c = V, 34c
2727, f. 15c = VII, 17
2728, f. 2 = II, 11b
2730, f. 7 = I, 25
2738, f. 20 = V, 21
- 2739, f. 16 = VII, 60
2741, f. 4 = VI, 53
2805, f. 14 179n28
2805, f. 18A 292n5
2805, f. 18B 292n5
2805, f. 22 = II, 4
2806.9 = IV, 80
2855, f. 15 = I, 27a
2855, f. 16 = I, 27a
3030, f. 7 427n73
3030, f. 8 = V, 30a
3130, f. 5 430n3
3363, f. 1 = II, 54
3363, f. 2 = II, 54
3616, f. 19 = II, 25
3725, f. 9 178n21
3755, f. 6 268n5
3738, f. 11 185n12
3788, f. 6 = V, 11
3793, f. 2 = IV, 15
3971, f. 5 = V, 42c
4010, f. 2 = VII, 1
4010, f. 3 = I, 43b
4010, f. 17 31n14, 234n3
4011, f. 1 = V, 34a
4011, f. 16 = V, 34d
4011, f. 32 97n38
4011, f. 3b = V, 34g
4011, f. 52 = V, 10
4011, f. 57 372n6
4011, f. 62 777n16
4020, f. 1 = III, 52
4020, f. 2 = VII, 4b-c
4020, f. 8 = VI, 38a
4020, f. 14 = VII, 12
4020, f. 25 = VI, 31
4020, f. 26 = VII, 25
4020, f. 41 = VII, 33
4020, f. 46 = IV, 80
4045, f. 9 = II, 45a
4194, f. 3 = II, 59
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NS 1, f. 5 = IV, 39
NS 1, f. 8 96n31, 99n45,
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NS 1, f. 13 607
NS 1, f. 48 95n27
NS 1, f. 83 115n123
NS 1, f. 93b 85n94
NS 2, f. 25 540n54, 607
NS 2, f. 29 = VI, 14
NS 4, f. 13 = III, 50
NS 7, f. 1 = IV, 53c
NS 16, f. 19 292n5

- NS 16, f. 27 = III, 30a
 NS 17, f. 1 = V, 42f
 NS 18, f. 30 = IV, 34
 NS 18, f. 33 = IV, 68a
 NS 18, f. 36 115n120,
 547n12,
 798n4
 NS 19, f. 25 142n88
 NS 21, f. 4 = I, 30
 NS 21, f. 7 = II, 47
 NS 21, f. 14 = IV, 72
 NS 22, f. 14 = VII, 37
 NS 48, f. 2 = II, 27; III, 28
 NS 48, f. 3 = V, 20
 NS 48, f. 4 = VI, 36
 NS 48, f. 8 = II, 51
 NS 48, f. 9 = II, 31
 NS 48, f. 12 = V, 42a
 NS 48, f. 13 48n1, 50n29
 NS 48, f. 22 = VII, 48
- Frankfurt a/M
 MS 114n119
- GW = Gottheil-Worrell (Freer
 Collection, Washington)
 I = VI, 12
 II 609n11
 IX = VI, 41
 XXI = IV, 40
- Heidelberger Papyrus-sammlung;
 Papyrus-sammlung Schott-Reinhardt,
 Universität Heidelberg
 912 = II, 50
 917 175n4, 177n17
 1444 682n15
- JNUL = Jewish National and University
 Library, Jerusalem
 4^o 577.2/15 = II, 36
 4^o 577.3/3 215n13
 4^o 577.3/6 = III, 16
- JRL = John Rylands Library,
 Manchester
 B 4265 109n95
 B 6028 = I, 13a
 Gaster A 284 = VI, 40
 Gaster A 635 = IV, 16
 Gaster Add. 23-6 355n14
 Gaster Coll. A 866 = V, 42b
- JTS = Jewish Theological Seminary of
 America, New York
- Geniza Misc. 2 357n1, 672n1
 Geniza Misc. 8 462n1
 Geniza Misc. 10 368n1
 Geniza Misc. 13 48n1
 Mic.5412
 (not Geniza) 105n77
- Mosseri (ULC)
 Ia, 18 (L 288) = VI, 28
 Ia, 26.2 (L 296/2) = II, 35
 II, 125.2 (L 127/2) = V, 40a
 II, 158.3 (L 159/3) = V, 40b
 II, 160 (L 161) = II, 9
 II, 188 63n37
 II, 190 (L 192) = V, 41c
 IV, 7 (L 12) = II, 66
 IV, 61.4 (L 67) = V, 43
 IV, 69.1 (L 76/1) = V, 39f
 IV, 69.2 (L 76/2) = V, 39e
 IV, 73 (L 80) = V, 18
 V, 374.1 (A 3) = I, 20
 VII, 9.1 (A 9) = V, 36b
 VII, 55 (A 55) = VII, 22
 VII, 77 (A 77) = VII, 16
 VII, 148.2 (L 216) = V, 41d
 VII, 178.2 (L 246/2) = V, 17
 VII, 189.1 (L 257) = V, 34b
 VII, 192.1 (L 260) = V, 19
 VII, 200 451n2
 VIII, 119.2 (P 474) = II, 41
- PER = Papyrussammlung
 Erherzog Rainer, Österreichische
 Nationalbibliothek, Vienna
 H 21 = VII, 18
 H 86 521n8
 H 161 = II, 71
- PSR. *See* Heidelberger Papyrus-
 sammlung
- RNL = Russian National Library,
 St. Petersburg
 Yevr.-Arab. I (Firkovitch II)
 1700, f. 3 = V, 44
 1700, f. 5 = V, 45
 1700, f. 6 = I, 37
 1700, f. 19 = V, 46
 1700, f. 23 = V, 47a
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 1700, f. 27 781
 1700, f. 28 = III, 54
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 II A 1119 202n25

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PLATES



1. Abū Zayd about to Board an Indian Ocean Ship. 13th Century al-Ḥarīrī MS. St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences MS S23. With permission of the Institute.



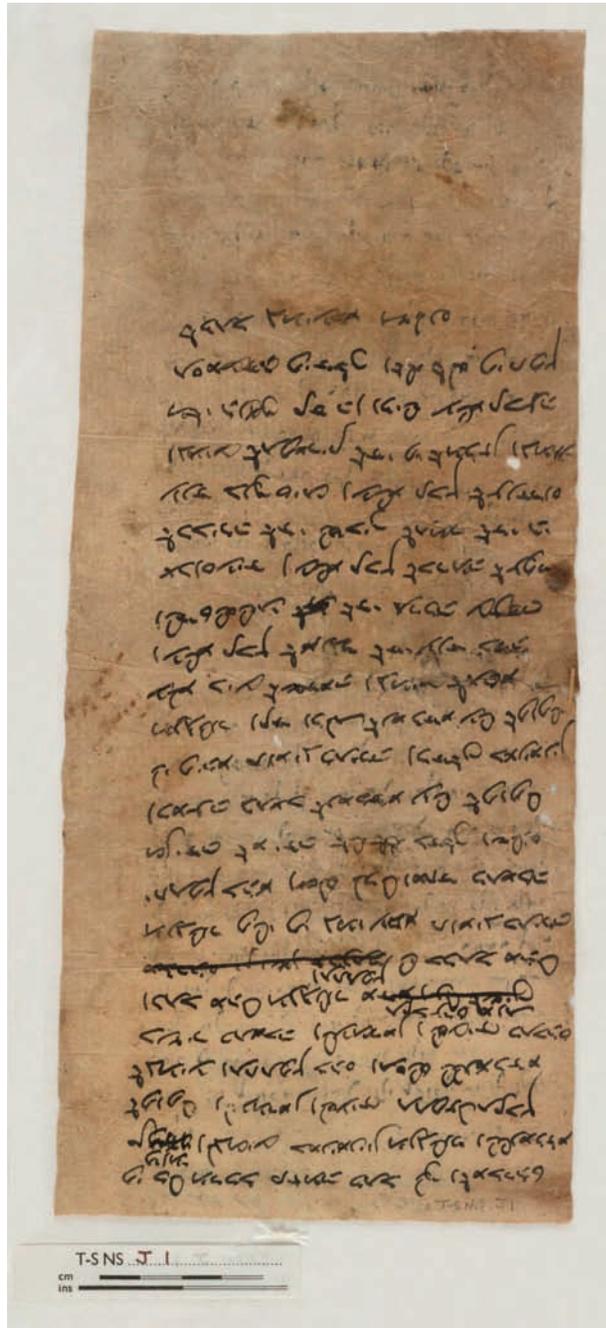
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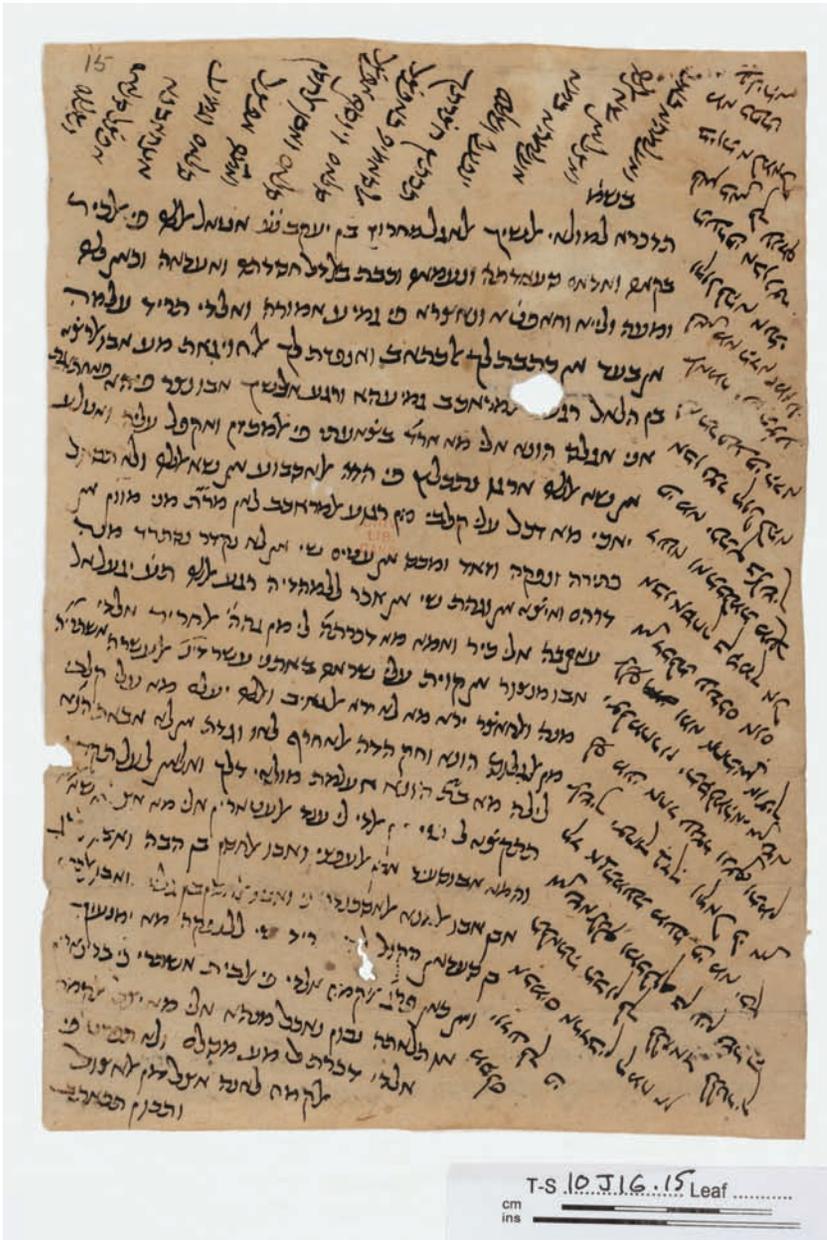
5. I, 14. TS 28.22. Letter from Joseph Lebdi to Ḥasan b. Bundār.



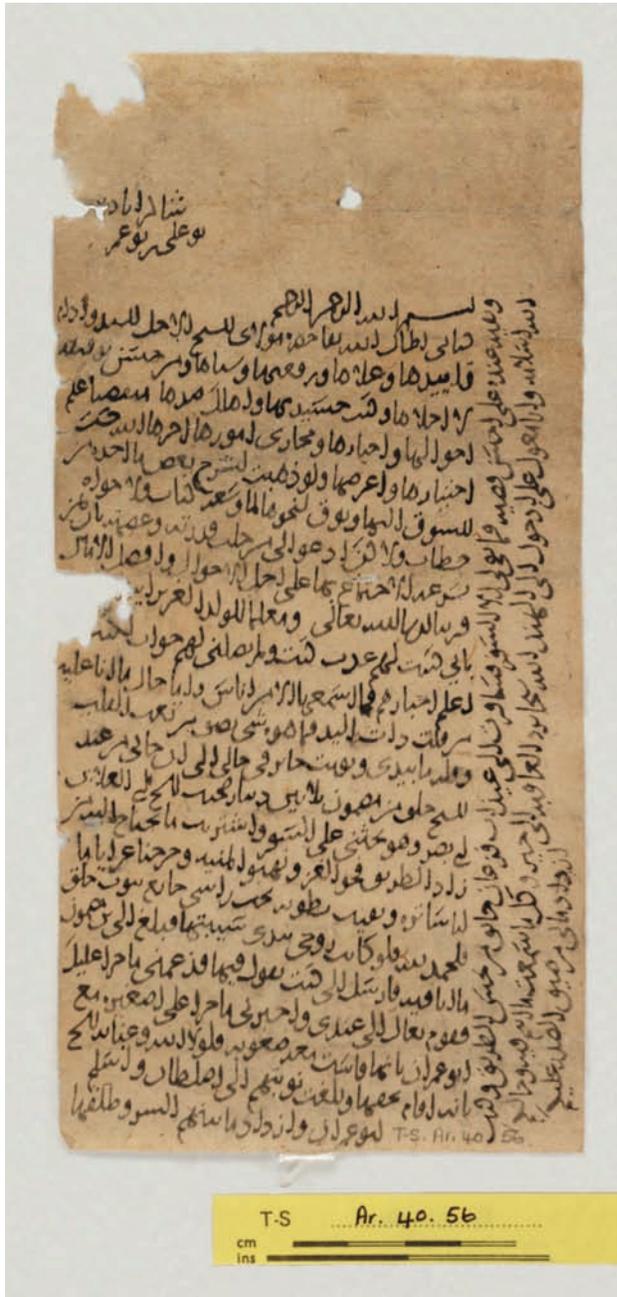
6. II, 24. TS NS J 1. Letter from Maḏmūn b. Ḥasan to Abraham Ben Yijū.



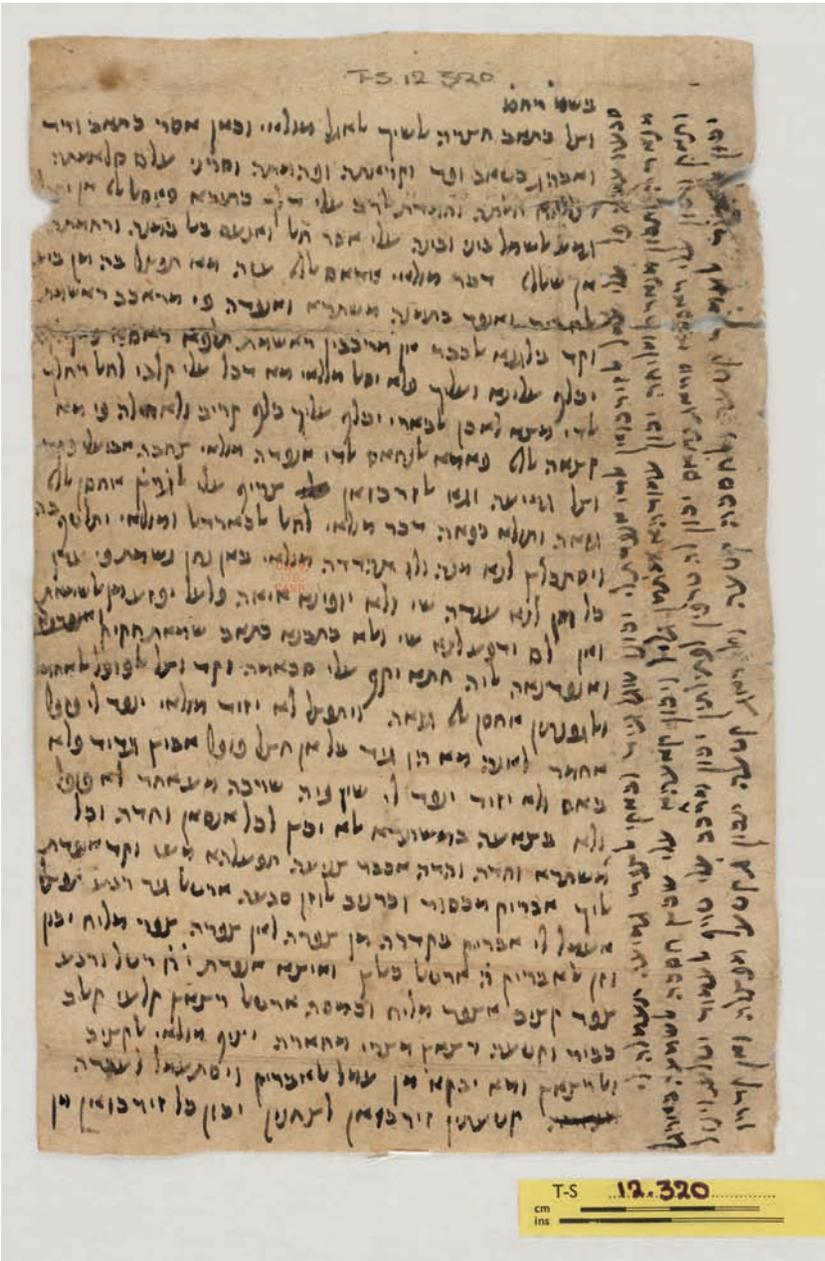
7. II, 56. TS 16.345. Letter from Maḥrūz b. Jacob to Sulaymān b. Abū Zikrī Kohen before Sailing Back to India.



8. II, 58. TS 10 J 16, f. 15. Memorandum from Abū Zikrī Kohen to Maḥrūz.



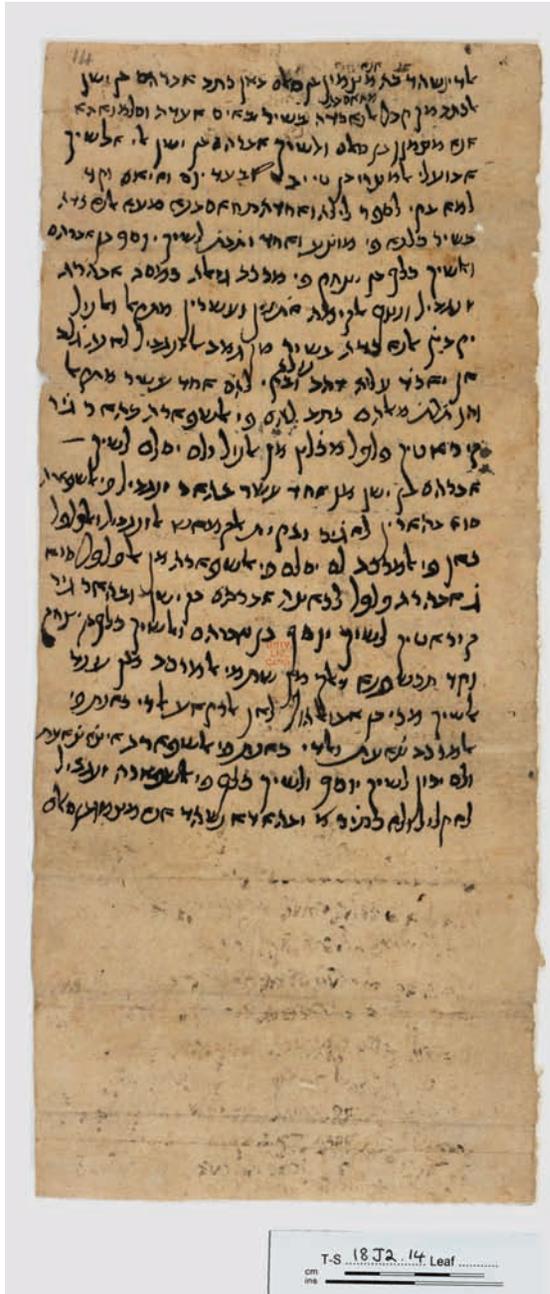
10. II, 64. TS Arabic 40, f. 56. Letter from Abū ‘Alī b. Bū ‘Umar to his Family before Travel to India.



11. III, 1, TS 12.320. Letter from Joseph b. Abraham to Ben Yijū.



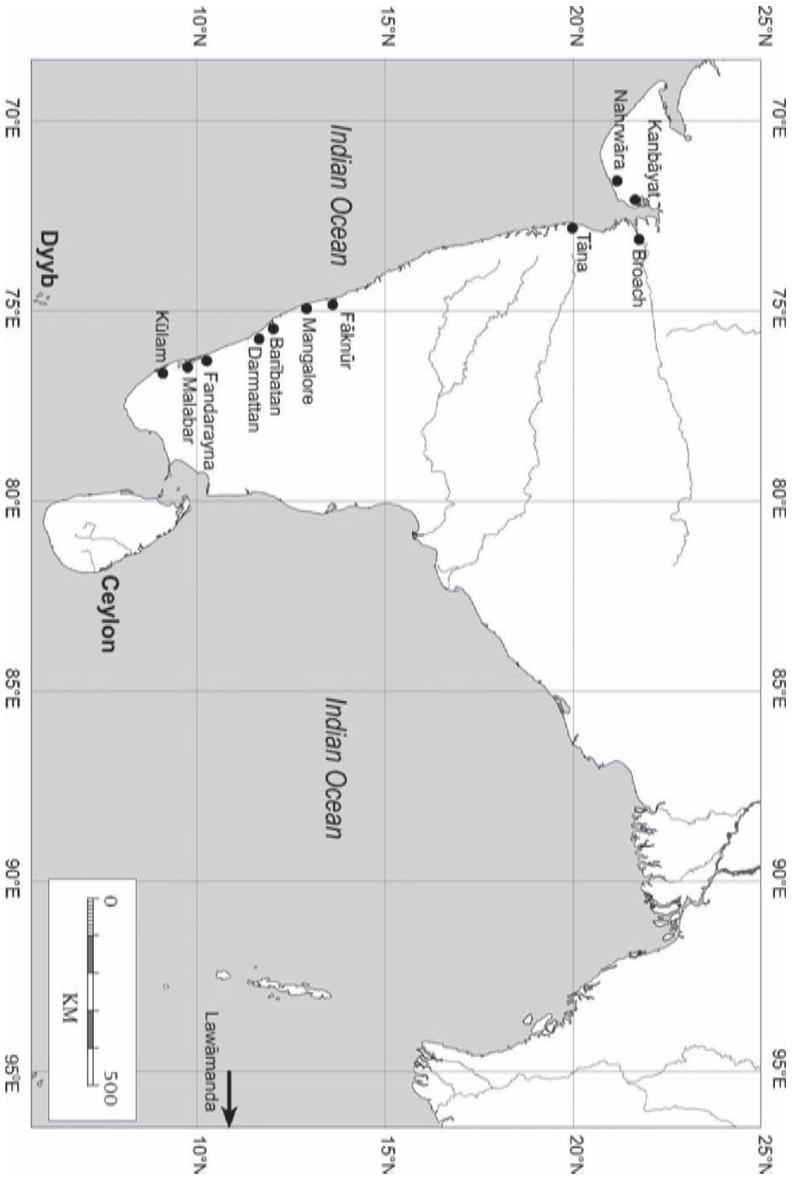
13. III, 12. TS 18J 4, f. 18. Letter from Khalaf b. Isaac to Ben Yiju: Shipwrecked Goods.



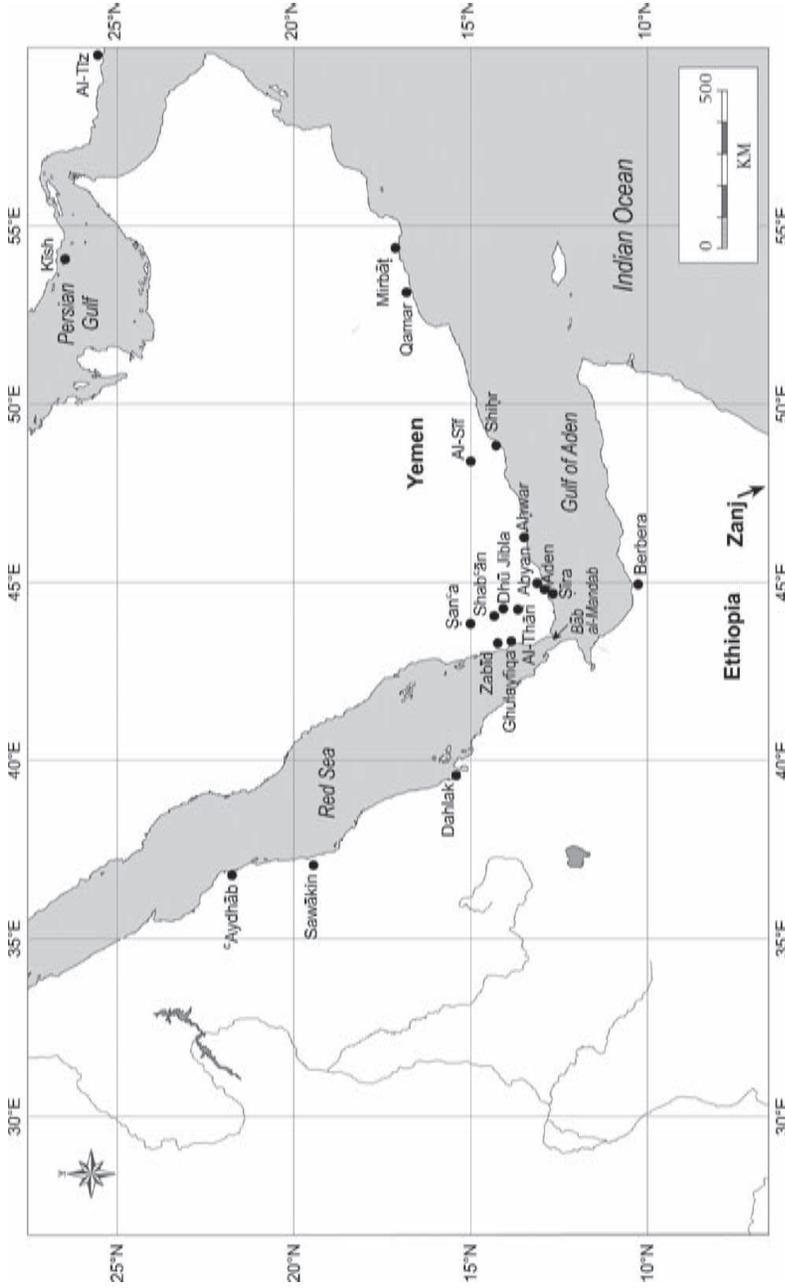
14. III, 22. TS 18 J 2, f. 14. Statement by Yemenite Merchant: Ben Yijū's Lost Consignments.



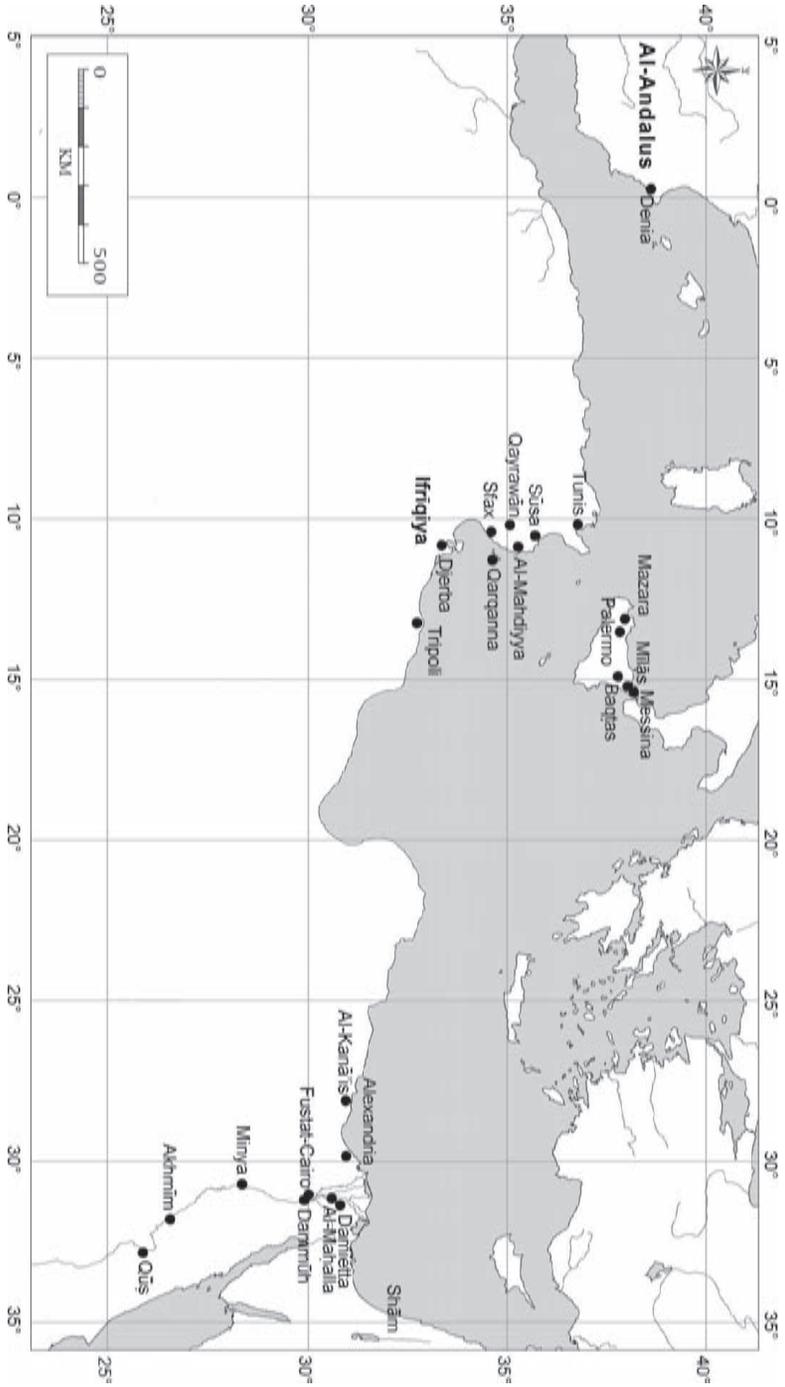
15. III, 38. TS 10J 13, f. 6. Letter to Ben Yijū: the Death of Maḏmūn.



1. India. Localities Mentioned in the Documents.



2. Yemen and Environs. Localities Mentioned in the Documents.



3. Egypt and the Mediterranean. Localities Mentioned in the Documents.