

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 Heidelberg 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 *ṣihrī*, i.e., 'my brother-in-law.'³

¹ {The marginal notation reads: *al-nuskha* ('*nsk*, not '*nsk*, as copied by Dietrich) *li-'abdihi Khalaf ibn Yishāq 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 *basmla* 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.}