

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,<sup>4</sup> bought for the remainder musk and ambergris,<sup>5</sup> and sent this with the messengers<sup>6</sup> bent (for Fustat). At its arrival you will forward it to me.

Should Abraham b. Jacob<sup>7</sup> be in Fustat, he would take care of the forwarding of the expected shipment to Alexandria. Otherwise Nethanel is requested to inform Khiyār<sup>8</sup> whether its sale in Fustat was preferable.

Reiterated praise of Mevōrākh and regards to everyone.

{See the introduction to II, 3, for the dating.}

<sup>4</sup> Arabic *bā' ba'dah yarāh wājib washtarā bil-baqiyya 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.}

<sup>6</sup> Not with Jewish or Muslim acquaintances, but with a (Muslim) transport service similar to the *fiyūj* in the Mediterranean area. {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:283–84.}

<sup>7</sup> No doubt, Abraham b. Jacob al-Der'ī of Alexandria, whom we found in Fustat (see 215, n. 13), is meant.

<sup>8</sup> 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}

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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 {'Allāl},<sup>1</sup> which the latter will give to the *Segullat*<sup>2</sup> to help him after he had suffered grave losses. Such a shipment was worth about 25 dinars.<sup>3</sup>

This shows that camphor could be easily sold in Alexandria;<sup>4</sup> it was almost like cash. When Abu 'l-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.}

<sup>1</sup> 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 'Allāl, that is Nahray's cousin Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Allāl b. Nahray.}

<sup>2</sup> Mūsā (Moses) b. Abu 'l-Ḥayy, see II, 5, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See 288, n. 4.

<sup>4</sup> {The *Segullat* must have been in Fustat at this time.}