

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.<sup>2</sup> In addition, piracy was strife.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.}

<sup>2</sup> See Amari, *Musulmani di Sicilia*, 3:433 and 477, who suggests that the first raid was perhaps directed against Tanas on the Algerian coast.

<sup>3</sup> See III, 46 and III, 48.

<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> {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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

#### 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]<sup>4</sup> 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!<sup>5</sup>

You will be pleased to know<sup>6</sup> 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}.<sup>7</sup> (9) However, it

<sup>2</sup> Perahyā served as judge in al-Mahalla. However, it seems that he first served as a judge in Fustat and assumed the judgeship in al-Mahalla only after 1161, years after the death of his uncle Abraham Ben Yijū; see Friedman, "Maimonides and Zūtā," 507–10, 516. For Ben Yijū's disappointment with him, see III, 50.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Arabic *athir* 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.'

<sup>5</sup> Arabic *qadir*. See the note to another letter by Ben Yijū, III, 39, line 5 (720, n. 4).

<sup>6</sup> Arabic *alladhī tuhibbu ilmahu*. This phrase, which means 'this is to inform you,' is repeated in the letters of Ibn Yijū. See 478, n. 25.)

<sup>7</sup> Arabic [[*wujdt*]] *wujdy*. . . Obviously, Ben Yijū intended to write: *wawajadtunī*. {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}.<sup>8</sup>

[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*<sup>9</sup>—and I have already heard that [you have a grown son . . .] {alt. tr.: [you have three sons, the eldest]}<sup>10</sup> (12) who is *learned in Torah*,<sup>11</sup> 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}.<sup>12</sup> [. . . Out in India] (14) two children {alt. tr.: boys}<sup>13</sup> were born to me, (pleasant) as the twigs of sweet basil.<sup>14</sup> {Add: [The younger died in India.]}<sup>15</sup> (15) The firstborn {alt. tr.: the older}<sup>16</sup> died in Aden [. . .] (16) I have no words to describe him [. . .] (17) I have left a daughter, his {read: their}<sup>17</sup> 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'ihat<sup>an</sup>*, lit., 'one who began a disaster.' I suggest reading *wa-wajadani min athari jā'ihat<sup>an</sup>*. 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-wujdtu*, 'I was found.' The disaster, to which Abraham alludes, was, as explained below, margin, a huge financial loss.

<sup>8</sup> Arabic *wa-ḥadithi yaṭūl fībi al-sharḥ*.)

<sup>9</sup> The usual quotation from Ps. 107:8, etc., after a safe arrival; cf. III, 29, lines 4–5.

<sup>10</sup> 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.}

<sup>11</sup> 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.}

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> See line 17.)

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> For the restoration, see line 17. For the approximate year of his death, see III, 16, line 22 (630, n. 16).

<sup>16</sup> Arabic *kabīr*. See note 10.

<sup>17</sup> Read *ukhtuhum* for *ukhtuh*. 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 God<sup>18</sup> [when my letter arrives,] (19) send your [eldest] son [...] (20) so that we {alt. tr.: I} have joy from her and from him<sup>19</sup> and marry [them... While] (21) in Aden, Sheikh Khalaf b. Bundār<sup>20</sup> [had asked me for her hand] for his son, and she stayed (22) three years in their house.<sup>21</sup> However, I called the engagement off;<sup>22</sup> when I heard (23) about your son Surūr,<sup>23</sup> because I said: "My brother's son has more rights (to her) {alt. tr.: is more deserving} than (24) strangers."<sup>24</sup> When I brought her to Egypt {alt. tr.: Fustat}, many (25) asked me for her hand.<sup>25</sup> I am writing you this, so that you should know. (26) Saying less about this would have been enough.<sup>26</sup>

that died, the younger of whom died in India; thus the alternative translation of *waladayn*, 'boys,' in line 14. Cf. *ibid.* for the word *mithl* which follows here.}

<sup>18</sup> Arabic *allāh allāh*, which means quickly. {See Pianta, *Dictionary*, 11, and cf. III, 29, line 27.

<sup>19</sup> Arabic *naḥḥaḥ bibā wa-bihi*. For the *nḥl* form for 1st pers. sg. imperf., see 743, n. 5. *Farah bi-*, lit., 'rejoice in,' also means 'celebrate a child's wedding.' See Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:249a.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> 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.}

<sup>22</sup> Arabic *wnkt*, representing *wanakath*, assimilated to *wanakatt*. {See Blau, *Grammar*, 35.}

<sup>23</sup> 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 Perahyā, 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. {Perahyā's own son had been called Surūr; see II, 14, line 36; II, 24, line 11; II, 26v, line 8.}

<sup>24</sup> 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).

<sup>25</sup> Cited in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:441, n. 1.}

<sup>26</sup> 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. Siṭrūn<sup>27</sup> a bale {alt. tr.: bag} (*shikāra*), called *ṣurra*,<sup>28</sup> containing pepper (28) and ginger, in a mixture,<sup>29</sup> weighing exactly one *qinṭār*<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup>

Your letters to me should reach me (32) in Fustat, God willing.<sup>32</sup> Let your son Surūr (33) carry the letters.<sup>33</sup> Were it not now the time of the sailing (34) of the *Salībiyya* (winds),<sup>34</sup> I would have sent more for you

<sup>27</sup> 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'}.}

<sup>28</sup> 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.}

<sup>29</sup> For the mixture of pepper and ginger in one receptacle, see 569, n. 3.

<sup>30</sup> 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.'

<sup>31</sup> {On pepper sent by Ben Yijū to his brother Joseph that was lost, see III, 57, line 13.}

<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> Sending the letters with the prospective groom would expedite the anticipated marriage.}

<sup>34</sup> *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. Sulaymān<sup>35</sup> and Abraham<sup>36</sup> will explain to you my situation and the troubles I [Margin] have {lit., 'my heart's troubles'}.<sup>37</sup>

[D. Losses incurred by Mevassēr and Abraham's travel to Egypt]

As to Mevassēr, he is not a man,<sup>38</sup> he is indolent, possessed of a hard<sup>39</sup> heart. I gave him all he needed, although I got into trouble (through him) {alt. tr.: I had just suffered a disaster}.<sup>40</sup> By these lines {alt. tr.: because, by these lines},<sup>41</sup> I {add: had} lost one thousand and forty dinars<sup>42</sup> and suffered also losses<sup>43</sup> 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,<sup>44</sup> their mother, is greeted by me (3) with the best greetings.

<sup>35</sup> Certainly Sulaymān b. Šiṭrūn, mentioned above, lines 26–27.

<sup>36</sup> 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.}

<sup>37</sup> Arabic *ta'b al-qalb*, cf. Spiro, *Dictionary*, 89. {Cf. Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 51, according to which translate: my anxiety.}

<sup>38</sup> 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.'

<sup>39</sup> Arabic *qāsī* [= *qāsī*], 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.}

<sup>40</sup> 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*.

<sup>41</sup> For this oath, see 684, n. 26. {'Because,' Arabic *alladhī*.}

<sup>42</sup> The dinars referred to here may be Maliki 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.}

<sup>43</sup> Arabic *khašāra* [= *khašāra*]. The same spelling in VII, 23, line 14. {Cf. 636, n. 1.}

<sup>44</sup> Arabic *man 'indak*. 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 sent<sup>45</sup> 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 Marwān<sup>46</sup> (6) and to my sister's children profuse greetings.

Should Sheikh Barhūn b. (7) Ḥassūn b. 'Aṭiyya 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.<sup>47</sup> Likewise, greet *R. Moses, the great cantor*.<sup>48</sup>

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!*<sup>49</sup>

(12) *Greetings to you and to your household, etc!*<sup>50</sup>

[F. Address]

(1) *To the brother, who suffered scorn, who went through fire (2) and cold* {alt. tr.: *snare/heat*},<sup>51</sup> *but is still fresh*,<sup>52</sup> Joseph b. Peraḥyā—*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 'indana* clearly means 'all members of our household.'

<sup>45</sup> Lit., 'I wrote with.' The word for sending is inferred from the context. See II, 32, line 51 and 620, n. 38.

<sup>46</sup> Marwān b. Zikrī, mentioned in III, 29, line 25; also see the introduction to III, 50.

<sup>47</sup> The sister evidently did not know how to write.}

<sup>48</sup> 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.

<sup>49</sup> For Hebrew 'house' as a polite word for 'wife,' see 235, n. 10.

<sup>50</sup> I Samuel 25: 6.

<sup>51</sup> 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 *paḥim*, 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 *šinnim paḥim* 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 *paḥim* in the maxim to mean 'heat' or 'snare,' which I consider preferable in the context here. Cf. Ben-Yehuda, *Dictionary*, 4870.

<sup>52</sup> Or: vigorous; cf. Deut. 34:7.}

known as Ibn (?) Surūr<sup>53</sup> Ben Yijū of al-Mahdiyya, (4) living in Mazara—may Go[d protect it]! *This is a deposit entrusted.* {Alt. tr.: *Steadfast faithfulness.*}<sup>54</sup>

{From) *His brother, the son of his mother,*<sup>55</sup> (2) *who longs to see him,* (3) Abraham b. Perahyā—*may he rest in Eden.* (4) Ben Yijū. (5) *May salvation be near!*<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> 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.

<sup>54</sup> About this Hebrew formula, see 257, n. 13.

<sup>55</sup> {An expression of closeness between brothers, especially cogent in a polygamous society.}

<sup>56</sup> 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-Amshāfī) and other friends in the Egyptian capital. Daily expenditures, especially for bread,<sup>1</sup> oil and household goods, are also listed. His Indian factotum Bama is mentioned three times.<sup>2</sup>

{Besides jewelry and gold ("weighing 20 Indian *mithqāls*"), which Ben Yijū deposited with Abu 'l-Fakhr, a sum of 197<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> 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.}

<sup>1</sup> {Ben Yijū uses three different Arabic words for bread, one, *qurs*, 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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-Amshāfī and his support of the Ibn Yijū family, see pages 95–101.}