

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 be 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* = *mawṣaṭa*. For this meaning, see Maimonides, *Responsa*, 2:410, n. 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, Perahyā 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*... *ṣitlṣatt*. *Lisān al-'Arab*, 2:52, defines *ṣatta* 'push with force, strike with a hand'; Piamenta, *Dictionary*, 277: 'to yell, to make a fuss.' *Satta* 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, "Rāshūr"), 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 Malij, in which there was communal dissension and in connection with which the Nagid 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 Yijū 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 Yijū 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.