

{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*).<sup>1</sup> Samuel, on the other hand, remained a teacher his whole life and was not a judge.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> {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 Minyat 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> For the custom of naming a boy after his deceased uncle, see page 98, n. 44.

<sup>4</sup> 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 fi shidda shadid min al-qalaq*, I read *wa-innā fi shidda shadida 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!*<sup>5</sup>  
 (4) *and his three sons. At their head, the distinguished, esteemed crown of glory,*  
 (5) *our master and lord Peraḥyā 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!*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Isa. 63:14.

<sup>6</sup> In the continuation, which is fragmentary, a memorial list for another family is written.]