

you will live, if God wills and God will compensate you many times.

Your servant thought that your honor my lord was in Tāna, and I had previously sent letters to the nākhodā Tinbū, advising him to pay to my lord 21 mithqāls (Egyptian dinars) or more. Afterwards, however, my lord the Sheikh Abu 'l-Qāsim Ibn Qaṭṭān ("Dealer in cotton") came to Mangalore. I inquired about you and he told me that your excellency was in Broach.⁷ In all circumstances please come quickly to Mangalore and do not tarry, for I am waiting here in Mangalore and—if God wills—we shall embark on our way home as soon as possible. It is better for you to travel from Mangalore with me than to travel in the ships of foreign people. Please remember that there is no difference between us, my money is yours, it is just the same. The boats⁸ start presently from your place, from Kanbayāt,⁹ and from Tāna; please set out immediately so that you reach Mangalore with the vessels which, God willing, will soon be arriving in Malibārāt,¹⁰ Kayākannūr,¹¹ and Mangalore. If, my lord, you need any gold, please take it on my account from the nākhodā Tinbū, for he is staying in Tāna, and between him and me there are bonds of inseparable friendship and brotherhood.¹²

You would certainly like to know, my lord, that a sum in favor of your excellency remained with me on account of the silk. With it I bought twelve [. . .] and sixteen large [bahārs]¹³ peppers for

⁷ About four days' travel north of Tāna. Maqbūl (see n. 4, above), p. 102.

⁸ Ar. maṭāyā, a general word for mounts, riding animals, means of locomotion. The word may mean also carts drawn by oxen. The Middle East, throughout the Islamic period, was practically unfamiliar with any form of carriages and therefore had no word for them, see *Et*², s.v. 'Adjalāh. Carts drawn by oxen were common in India and here possibly reference is made to convoys of them setting out at fixed periods. But see no. 10, n. 4, below.

⁹ Present day Cambay on the gulf with the same name, still north of Broach.

¹⁰ Malibār or Manibār is Malabar, but meaning both a region and a place on the southwestern coast of India.

¹¹ Kayākannūr, explained by Professor A. L. Basham as "Lesser Cannanore," *kay* meaning "lesser" in Tamil, the language spoken in those parts. Not found in any other Geniza paper.

¹² Tinbū, apparently a Hindu. Abu 'l-Qāsim, who was mentioned before in deferential terms, was a Muslim.

¹³ The terms "large" and "small" were applied to the *bahār*, usually 300 pounds in our papers. See no. 37, n. 35, below.

you, and I dispatch this for you under God's protection from Mangalore with the "Blessed" ship—may God ordain her safety.¹⁴

Attached to this letter, is another one in Arabic characters of the same content as this letter; please notice this. And again, my lord, do not take to heart what you have lost; you have, my lord, praise be to God, plenty to have recourse to and to be compensated with. When life is saved, nothing else matters. Nor do I need to urge you again to come to Mangalore.

Accept, my lord, copious regards for your noble self and convey copious regards to the elder Abu Sa'd. The writer of these lines,¹⁵ Abraham b. Yijū, conveys to your excellency copious regards, and those who attend the writing of this letter do the same. *May the well-being of my lord grow indefinitely and never become reduced.*

(Address:)

To be delivered to my noble lord, the light of my eyes, his honor, (our) M(aster) and T(eacher) Judah ha-Kohen, the wise and understanding, the son of his honor, greatness, and hol(iness), (our) M(aster) and T(eacher) Joseph ha-Kohen, may his soul be satiated with pleasures in the Gardens of Eden until he will be quickened at the end of the days.

From his servant Maḥrūz, the son of Jacob, (may he) r(est in) E(den).

Given in trust (i.e., no fees for delivery).

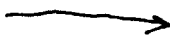
10 MEMO FROM THE INDIA ROUTE TO QŪṢ, UPPER EGYPT

This tersely written memo is instructive in many respects. Its time is fixed by the references in secs. 4 and 7 to the Jewish chief judge of Cairo Menaḥēm b. Isaac b. Sāsōn, who was active during the first third of the thirteenth century (see no. 8, n. 1, above). The

¹⁴ The "Blessed" (ship) belonged to Maḍmūn of Aden (see no. 37, below) and operated between Aden and Mangalore. *India Book* 28v, ll. 5-6.

¹⁵ The letter is a beautiful example of Abraham Yijū's calligraphy. The letter in Arabic characters probably was written by Maḥrūz himself and was destined to be shown, if necessary, to his non-Jewish business friends, especially Tinbū. The Hindu shipowner certainly knew Arabic.

with a hinder.



recipient of the shipment noted in sec. 6 is also known to have lived at that time. The fact that presents are sent to the Jewish chief judge in Cairo, but none to any dignitary in Fustat, suggests that the sender of the memo lived in Cairo rather than Fustat. This explains why the Geniza has preserved only this memo and the fragment of another (*India Book* 299) from the hand of this India trader despite the very considerable size of his business and the great number of his Muslim and Jewish business friends. He lived in Cairo and therefore had no opportunity to deposit his papers in the Geniza, a chamber in the ancient synagogue of the Palestinians in Fustat. Our memo, naturally, arrived there through its recipient.

The addressee lived, or more likely, only sojourned, in Qūṣ, Upper Egypt sec. 5). One traveled on the Nile upstream from Cairo to Qūṣ, and from there through the desert to 'Aydhāb, the Sudanese port on the Red Sea, which once was a great emporium, but has disappeared from the map since (see sec. 14). The memo was most likely written in Aden, South Arabia, since the spices, perfumes, and textiles listed came from different parts of India and other countries of the Far East and were assembled in that South Arabian port before being forwarded to the West. Despite the great variety of goods listed, entire categories of merchandise are absent from this thirteenth century memo, as for example, metals, especially bronze vessels and iron, which so frequently appear in the India papers of the twelfth century.

Ten different carriers transport the goods destined for a single recipient. This practice is indicative of the lack of security on the trade route. In the memo (*India Book* 299) the writer indeed alludes to dangers, i.e., political troubles, that will be reported by the travelers orally.

Two of the shipments were addressed not to the recipient of this memo but to his son, who, as was customary, bore the name of his grandfather. Throughout the centuries it was a common practice among the merchants to let their sons do business on their own account at an early age in order to groom them for the profession of independent, self-reliant traders (see nos. 22, sec. F, and 57, and *Med. Soc.*, II, 191-192).

University Library, Cambridge, Taylor-Schechter Collection,
TS Arabic Box 30, f. 145. *India Book* 156

(To) M. Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī Sa'd ("Excellent, son of Fortunate").¹
God is sufficient for me.²

These items have been sent by your servant to my lord—may God make permanent his honored position.

I

With the sheikh Yaḥyā b. Abi 'l-Qāsim al-Sakhāwī³ in the "mount"⁴ of Ibn al-Naffakh ("Hornist," "Blower of the Horn"):

3 bales with lac, each weighing 400 pounds

2 bales, "mixed,"⁵ one half pepper and the other ginger, each weighing 1 *bahār*⁶

1 bale cleaned clove,⁷ weighing 40 gross mann⁸

1 bale clove stalks, weighing 50 mann

Everything is marked: Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī Sa'd.

¹ Hastily added in vertical lines on the upper left-hand corner of the sheet. He is the recipient of the memo. See secs. 1, 2, 9, 13, 15.

² Ar. *Allāhu ḥasbī*; this is an abbreviated and inverted form of a Koranic phrase which is often found at the end of letters, e.g., nos. 29 and 33, below.

³ Of course a Muslim, since Abu 'l-Qāsim was the byname of the prophet Muhammad. Sakhāwī was a common Egyptian family name.

⁴ Ar. *maṭiyya* must denote here a type of boat or its name. No. 9, n. 8, above, refers to inland India, but there, too, boats of a local type could be intended.

⁵ Ar. *ḫulṭa*, which means "partnership" in the Mediterranean trade, but denotes in the India papers "a mixture of pepper and ginger." The addition "one half pepper, the other ginger" denotes the quantities of the mixture, not the fact, which is already indicated by the Ar. term. See *India Book* 55, l. 2; 73, ll. 27-28; 208, l. 36. This mixture, which appears even in price lists (see *India Book* 85, ll. 20-21), must have been known also to European merchants, but I do not find it in Heyd, *Commerce du Levant*, II, 619-623.

⁶ Usually, 300 pounds; see no. 37, n. 25, below.

⁷ The dried flower bud of the clove (*clou de girofle*) had to be separated carefully from the stalk and all other parts of the plant. The stalks themselves were also sold, but for a much lower price, of course; see what immediately follows and Heyd, *Commerce du Levant*, II, 607.

⁸ The *mann* mentioned in the Geniza papers generally is equivalent to something less than 2 Egyptian pounds (see also Hinz, *Masse*, p. 16). The term translated here as "gross" is a mere guess. Ar. *muṭarraḥa*, the only suitable meaning of which is "extended, increased (said of the height of a building)." Wahrmond, *Handwörterbuch*, II, 129, 829.

2

For the elder Abū Naṣr, the twin brother⁹ of my lord, as an equivalent of what was due him, with Futūḥ¹⁰ a bale of pepper weighing 140 pounds. Marked. . . .¹¹

3

With the same a bale containing three bags of cleaned clove, marked: Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī Sa'd.

4

A bag¹² for *our lord* Menahēm weighing 2 1/2 mann. His name is written on it.

5

A bag for the Jew from Majorca¹³ who is with you in Qūṣ, weighing 1 mann. *Mayurqī* is written on it.

6

A bag for the elder Makārim ("Nobility") b. Mufaḍḍal b. Nānū¹⁴ from the elder Ibn Walīd, weighing 2 and 5 mann. (Written on it in another hand:) "Ṣayrafī."¹⁵

7

A bag containing a precious turban made of *lālas* (fine red silk), a *bukḥnuq* (shawl), and a white *burda* (robe) without a border

⁹ Ar. *ṣinw* used thus today, but meaning in classical Ar. "brother, brother from both father and mother, son, cousin." Not common in the Geniza.

¹⁰ "Openings" or "Conquests, Victories," a very common Jewish name at this time.

¹¹ Squeezed in, written in Ar. letters; but finally the writer forgot to note which was the mark.

¹² Namely, of clove, the standard present, brought or sent home by India traders.

¹³ The well-known Spanish island. People and goods originating from there are repeatedly mentioned in the Geniza. This shipment was a charity.

¹⁴ Mufaḍḍal b. Nānū (here with Imāla Nānū), the father of this man, contributed to the public appeals described in *Med. Soc.*, II, App. C, secs. 30, 31, 139. Nānū is a children's word, like British *nanny*. See *ibid.*, 508.

¹⁵ "Banker," "Money Changer," the family name of the recipient.

for *our lord* Menahēm. Marked (in Arabic characters:) Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī Sa'd.

8

A bag with (Chinese) rhubarb, canvassed. Abu 'l-Ḥasan b. 'Aṭiyya ("Handsome, son of Gift") sent this to Ṭāhir¹⁶ b. Ibrahīm ("Pure, son of Abraham").

I instructed him¹⁷ to deliver everything to my lord.

9

With Maḥāsin ("Favors"), son of the man with the parted beard: a flask with musk, weighing 12 1/2 mithqāls. Marked: Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī Sa'd. Also with him a bag of odoriferous wood, weighing 1 mann; in the middle of this is a piece of cloth containing a unit¹⁸ of ambergris.

10

A bag with three *lālas* turbans, a *lālas 'ardī* (broad shawl), and a fine cotton robe, all marked: Abu 'l-Qāsim, the son of the Physician.¹⁹ If Abu 'l-Qāsim is in town, he should accept delivery. Otherwise, my lord should receive it.

11

With him also: a bale with *lālas* textiles packed in leather, marked: Abū Sa'd b. Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abū (!) Sa'd, namely:

3 Volga²⁰ robes

11 small *lālas* turbans

2 large turbans

5 broad shawls with black borders

Total 21 pieces

¹⁶ All very common Jewish names.

¹⁷ Futūḥ, mentioned in sec. 2.

¹⁸ Ar. *bay'a*, lit., a sale.

¹⁹ A Muslim business friend. See n. 3, above.

²⁰ Ar. *arthī*, from *arthā*, the name of the Volga river, from the shores of which the Muslim peoples received the black sable and other furs. See Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles*, 15-16, p. 74. These Indian robes of fine red silks had borders of fur. Cf. sec. 7, above, where it is stated that a robe sent to the judge had no border.

Cleaned lālas: 4 untailed pieces²¹

3 large turbans

3 small turbans

3 broad shawls

Total of cleaned lālas: 13 pieces

(In the margin:) 2 harnesses²² of wood for the elder Abu 'l-Surūr b. Maṣlī'ah.²³

Grand total: 39 pieces²⁴

I instructed him to deliver everything to my lord.²⁵

12

With 'Aṭā' Allāh b. 'Abd al-Khāliq²⁶ a bale with cleaned clove, weighing 52 1/2 mann. Marked: Abū Sa'd b. Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abū Sa'd.

13

With Aḥmad b. Ḥasnūn a bale with cleaned clove, weighing 40 gross mann, and a bale with clove stalks, weighing 50 mann. Marked: Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī Sa'd.

14

In the "nailformed" (boat)²⁷ of Ibn Hiba²⁸ what had been sent via 'Aydhāb, when the ship sank and the cargo was partially saved: 2 remainders from the pepper and ginger, weighing 814 pounds
a remainder of lac, weighing 450 pounds
a bale of lac, weighing 130 pounds. Marked: Abū Sa'd b. Munajjā.²⁹

²¹ Ar. *maqṣūr ajlām*, which I take as derived from Aram.-Heb. *glm*, "un-tailored piece." See n. 30, below.

²² Ar. *m'shrtyn*. The tentative translation is taken from Dozy, *Supplément*, II, 131 a-b.

²³ "Successful" (Heb.), a name with messianic undertones. See Isaiah 48:15.

²⁴ Even with the wooden pieces the total seems to be not more than 36. Such mistakes are extremely rare.

²⁵ Although the shipment was addressed to his son.

²⁶ "Gift of God, son of the Servant of the Creator," a Jew, as is evident from *India Book* 299.

²⁷ Ar. *mismārī*.

²⁸ "Gift," a name common to Muslims and Jews.

²⁹ "Saved," Ar. equivalent of Joseph, who was saved from the pit. See no. 55, below.

15

For my lord, out of the total load carried by Afḍal and Abu 'l-Surūr: a remainder of pepper weighing 357 pounds, marked Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī Sa'd. All this is sent to you with Rashīd, the servant of Ibn Hiba and Qāsim Ibn al-Qathīf.

16

Also with Qāsim Ibn al-Qathīf a bale packed in leather and canvas, marked Abū Sa'd b. Munajjā, containing ten lālas robes, un-tailored³⁰ and of utmost fineness.

And peace.

³⁰ Ar. *thiyāb ajlām*. See n. 21, above.