

caused me anguish and took sleep away from my eyes. Had I ready money which I could collect and send him, I would not care. The trouble is, my brother, that I have none at present, for something strange happened this year: not a single grain I earned remained with me, but everything went back to the merchants completely and in full. Now you wrote that you earned 100 dinars unexpectedly, through a tip I gave you. Will you, then, pay those hundred dinars for me as recompense, which will spare me trouble, for I explained the situation to you and you understand the hint.

For my part, I shall send you merchandise in these new ships, and I hope that it will sell well and bring us relief. During the whole of last summer I was in Qayrawān to arrange for the dispatch of the consignments belonging to M. Abu 'l-Faraj (Ibn 'Allān) and found that no one wanted to undertake an overseas journey this year. These new Spanish ships, however, were bought by the merchants and loaded, and I and everyone else hope for God's blessing—may he grant relief to me and to them. Now, brother, mind our friendship and the education given to you by me, and the bread and salt we have eaten together, for it was for a time like this that I took you on. Therefore, be my proxy everywhere and reply to every detail in this letter. Deal discreetly with this affair of Ibn 'Allān, both in person and through your friends, so that he may not encroach upon me, and I hope my lord, the Nagid, will do the rest and provide me with his protection.

G. CONCLUSION

Please convey my best greetings to M. Abū Ghālib, your brother-in-law, for I know him and his paternal uncles and know what pious people they are. May God strengthen you through each other; you have indeed attained a fine status.

Kindest regards to you personally, and regards to those under your care, as well as to everyone asking about me.

(Address:)

To my brother and master Abu 'l-Khayr—may God prolong his life—the dear Zakariyyā, son of Tammām—(may he) *r(est in E(den)*

May God be his protector.

From Yahyā, son of Mūsā—(may his) *s(oul rest in) p(eace)*—
Majjānī

His . . .

19 AN ENCLOSURE ON BUSINESS IN JERUSALEM

About Middle of the Eleventh Century

The form of the paper—a long strip (7 x 2 inches), folded twice lengthwise—as well as the arrangement of the writing, indicate that the text does not represent part of a sheet, but was an enclosure attached to a letter—most probably one dealing with public affairs. Only a few of such small-sized enclosures have been preserved.

Jewish Theological Seminary of America, JTS Geniza Misc. 15.

You inquired about *silḳ*. Here, black and sky blue are mostly in demand, and, indeed, all colors. Crimson, however, does not sell in Jerusalem, but it might be sold in Ramle or in Ascalon. Corals are weak in Jerusalem, for it is a poor town. In any case, bring them or a part of them, for success is in the hand of God. If Persians happen to arrive, they may buy them. And Peace upon you.

(It is characteristic of the medieval predilection for variety [*Med. Soc.*, II, 237] that in this small note Jerusalem is first called by its more ancient name *Bayt al-maqdis* ["The Temple"] and later by the one still in use *Al-Quds* ["Sanctuary"]. Many Persians, Jewish as well as Muslim, visited in Jerusalem or even settled there.)

20 WEAVING, EMBROIDERING, AND BLEACHING OF A THOUSAND GARMENTS

Tyre-Jerusalem, Eleventh Century

Yarn sent from Jerusalem was worked by Jewish craftsmen in Tyre, Lebanon, into clothes. A report about such work is contained

in the letter translated below, which is reproduced here in its entirety with the exception of the usual introductory and concluding phrases. The yarn probably was of cotton grown in Palestine.

Mosseri Collection L 39b, as from line 5.

In my previous letter I have informed you about the arrival of the yarn. I was not remiss with regard to it, but, immediately after its arrival, I delivered it to a trustworthy Jewish craftsman. Earlier, I showed it to various craftsmen, who told me that it would make a thousand robes of the bazaar type and slightly more of the home-made kind. Among the rolls of yarn, there were four spoiled ones which were coarse and deformed. I also gave him (to the weaver) two robes of the bazaar type, in accordance with your instructions.¹

After each roll² is finished, the craftsman is to receive 3 quarter dinars. The embroidering will require 1/6 dinar and 1/2 qirāt, and the bleaching and pounding, 5 qirāts, the total (for a roll) being 1 1/8 Nizāriyya dinars. The material is with the craftsman up to the present time. He will present it this week. I shall inform you how much of the yarn went into the weaving and how much remained.

The bleaching will not be completed until after Passover. For it is now winter, and God does not make bleaching possible in winter time, when it would not be as brilliant as during the summer. Had you sent the yarn a month before the (autumn) holidays, the whole work would have been easily completed in a short time.

21 PALESTINE'S IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

Middle of Eleventh Century

As in the previous letter we read here about yarn sent from Jerusalem, but this time processed in the city itself. In addition, mention is made of two other main products of the country in

¹ The clothes were given either as a model or as a present.

² Text: *maslak*, found in this sense also in other Geniza texts, e.g., TS 13 J 22, f. 30, l. 20-22; 10 J 7, f. 1, l. 21.

those days: oil and apples (see *Med. Soc.*, I, 121). Money in the form of donations and the main fabrics of the period: silk (see no. 19, above), flax, and Ṭabaristan brocade, reexported to Egypt (see below) were the main imports. A Christian moneylender is mentioned. In other Geniza letters from Jerusalem the Jews borrow from Muslims.

The sender, being in the Holy City and occupying himself with the pious work of support for its main religious institution, here uses the Hebrew form of his name. Details about him are given in the next selection. The clerk who copied the letter had a clear handwriting, but made many mistakes. The introductory phrases are omitted in our translation.

University Library, Cambridge, Taylor-Schechter Collection,
TS Misc. Box 28, f. 199.

I am writing to you . . . from Jerusalem on the 5th of Adar II (mostly February) . . . You instructed me to pay 1 dinar to our lord, the Head (of the yeshiva), one-half to our lord, the president of the court, and one-quarter to the Third.¹ I have done as you advised me, paying a total of 1 3/4 dinars. I also took a receipt for 15 dinars of full value from the Fourth, and also one for a dinar from the cantor Mūsā (Moses).² The receipts are enclosed, please pass them on to the donors.

I have already informed you that I bought you olive oil in two containers and sent them with Ibn al-Tuffāḥī³ to Jaffa. I also bought the yarn and had it processed according to your instructions.

I have also written to you that, at the time of my travel from Ramle to Jerusalem, only four bags of the flax held in partnership⁴

¹ The yeshiva, or Jewish high council, of Jerusalem, was composed of seven members, the Gaon, or president, the chief judge of the high court, and five others, styled the Third, the Fourth, etc. Here the Fourth acted as cashier for the yeshiva. The reference is probably to Abraham, the son of the Gaon Solomon b. Judah (d. 1051), who was "Fourth" and in charge of the financial affairs of the yeshiva.

² The donor certainly had asked that prayers for the soul of a deceased relative should be said in Jerusalem. This explains why a cantor received the same special gift as did the head of the yeshiva.

³ Wholesale trader in apples. From Jaffa the oil would be transported to Egypt by boat.

⁴ Ar. *al-bāba*, "of that sort," as opposed to *al-ḥaṣṣa*.