

24 THE JUNIOR PARTNER RETORTS

This letter was written seven months after Khallūf's letter (translated in no. 23), but clearly refers to many details mentioned there. Yeshū'ā had sent other messages in between, but, because of the insecurity of communications, it was customary to recapitulate important details again and again.

University Library, Cambridge, Taylor-Schechter
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I am writing to you . . . from Fustat on the 8th of Iyyar . . . In my previous letters I wrote you about the serious illness which befell me during this blessed winter. Let's praise God for his favors, since the end was good and ask him to complete his gracious gifts in his generosity. *Amen*.

I had informed you about the safe arrival of your shipments, namely 111 broad *farḳhas* (in your account you charge me with 112), four unbleached garments, two chests with saffron (you do not indicate their weight), three hundredweights of wax, fourteen pounds of silk, and, in partnership with Abū Joseph Jacob b. Azhar, six hundredweights less nine pounds of wax, twenty cloaks, and six coats.

When he (Jacob) arrived in Fustat, I was in a very serious condition, and he tried to take advantage of me. Our friends extricated the wax from him with difficulty. (Two damaged lines.) When he arrived in Alexandria, I met him, and he said "Yes," but put me off from day to day, until he was about to leave. Our friends informed me about his intention, and I went to see him with R. Nahray, but he said: "No, I do not yet pack." I believed that he spoke the truth, but people saw that he was packing, and away he went. I returned to his place, where his brother stood security for him to the amount of 2 dinars.¹

¹ As far as can be made out from the damaged lines, Jacob delivered indeed everything, including the cloaks and coats (*ḳisā*, *'abī*). The dispute was about the payment of expenses (freight and customs), a sum of 113/24 dinars being mentioned. Persons who take a light view of the property of others are inclined to get extremely excited at the slightest damage menacing them.

This is what happened to me with him. Please when he [arrives at your place], take from him what he still owes me. And when he says: "I have paid the expenses for the wax," our friends here are witness that he did not pay a penny for it. Only you can save me from him. You have entrusted him with the shipment, so you must save me from him.

I have notified you before that I have paid to M. Abū 'Imrān Mū[sā], your brother-in-law, 170 dinars, of which 100 are for you and 70 for him. God is my witness, that from this partnership (with you and your brother-in-law) people still owe me about 150 dinars. They try to take advantage of me and I could not collect the money from them. Therefore I had to pay these 170 dinars from my own resources, in order not to detain what is yours. Now, please check what you owe me. Perhaps you can buy me tin, either in "tongues" or in "shells"² and *lāsīn* silk from Isma'īl Ibn al-Andalusī,³ or fine Spanish "pickups"⁴ or fine *ḳhazāsh* silk⁵ or "carobs" . . .⁶ Please do not detain what is mine, but act as I did, when I paid you from my own resources.

If God gives me health, I must leave the city (for the Rif) in order to collect the outstanding debts. May God, in his mercy, unite us. Kindest regards to you and your boys, may God keep them.

Pay to Baruch 15 dirhems and to Ibrahīm 5 quarters. *And Peace*.

(Address:)

To my master and lord Khallūf b. Mūsā . . . "Goldsmith."

From his friend Yeshū'ā, son of Isma'īl, (may he) r(est in E(den).

To the City of Sicily (Palermo), if God wills.

² See no. 20, above, n. 10.

³ See no. 20, above.

⁴ Ar. *iltiqāt*, "a silk yarn produced by combing and spinning waste silk." See *Med. Soc.*, I, 454-455, n. 53.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Nine letters partly effaced. "Carobs" do not denote here the well-known fruit, which is food for the poor, but something else. See Dozy, *Supplément*, s.v.