

(64) III, 18

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Five Accounts written by Ben Yijū in India

Between 1136 and 1149

ULC T.-S. 20.137 verso

46, 5 x 12, 5 cm

The accounts are written on the back of No. 29, a letter sent by Maḍmūn from Aden to India in 1135. See the description of the ms. there. As B.Y. returned from India in 1149, see No. 68, the accounts must have been written between these two dates. The accounts are separated from each other by intervals of 2-4 lines left blank. Section C is very much damaged and effaced. The beginning and the end of the page were cut away, see No. 29.

End of Account A

This is the end of a draft of a yearly account for a merchant, most probably residing in Aden, for whom Ben Yijū did business in India. A good example of a fair copy of such an account is No. 81.

Deals in Cardamom and Iron

The name of the merchant for whom the account was made (see 1.2) is not preserved. A deal in cardamom with B.Y. through the Kārdār (1.2) is referred to in ^{Kh}Halaf b. Isaac's letter to B.Y. No. 58, 11.27-34. From this, however, it does not follow necessarily that he is meant here.

thMitqāl (abridged here as m.) certainly denotes the Egyptian gold coin, see 1.11.

Cardamom and iron appear together frequently, e.g. below E, ^{ll.}11. 6-7; No. 60, 1.11; No. 66, 1.6; No. 67, 1.29, perhaps because they were exported from the same ports.

The upshot of the cardamom business is the following: The Kārdār had not bought the two bahārs ordered, and Ben Yijū had to procure them from elsewhere on his own account; in any case, the merchant for whom the account was made is not charged, as Halaf in No. 58, ll.27-34, had indeed demanded, cf. ib. Ben Yijū had to pay 17 m., while the Kārdār was expected to procure them for 14 m., which indicates perhaps that the K. specialized in that commodity, see below section E.

As to the iron deal, ll.6-11, it seems strange that a bahār of muḥdat, "refurbished" iron, which was regarded as inferior, see No. 60, l.36, was sold in Mangalore for 3 1/2 m. while the same quantity of amlas, "smooth" cost 2 m. in Fandarīna. On the other hand, one gets the impression that B.Y. acted here in compliance with No. 60, ll. 36-40, exchanging the "smooth" for the "refurbished" iron.

Here the "smooth" is packed in jūnīyas, bags, and not in bārbaza, as in No. 60, l.38.

In addition to cardamom and iron, the account had contained many other entries, for the total given at the end, l.12, is 75 m., while the sums mentioned here do not sum up to more than 35 m. As stated above, the upper part of the page was cut away.

Translation

of the loss

(1) The balance of the account from the bs'rh (biṣāra?) 3 m.

(2) The Kārdār (!) - may God curse him - ~~owed~~ him 14 m. (3) for (an order of) two bahār cardamom, which he did not deliver. I bought him (4) instead two b. from Fandarīna for 17 m. (5) Thus I paid for him 3 m. more and the freight of the cardamom, which was one m. and a half.

(6) In his favor 14 m., the proceeds of 4 b. "refurbished" iron (sold) in Manjarūr. (7) For this, I bought him from Fandarīna 6 b. (8) "smooth" iron in two jūnīyas, (bags) price 12 m., freight (9) two m., which makes the account even.

The bags and the expenses are included (10) in the price, they were one eighth of a m.

To his debit; (11) damage of two Fīliyā m., a raubaj // and hfsw't // making one sixth (((corrected from: one eighth))) of a m.

(12) Total 75 m. less one third. (13) Balance in his favor one m. and one quarter, with which the whole account is closed.

Commentary

1 This is the end of the previous item; biṣārā means "insight", "intimate knowledge", but one expects here the name of a merchandise or a ship. The reading is above doubt.

2 Kādār - For Kārdār, see No. 51, 1.13. This Persian word was misspelled by the Arabic writing merchants in different ways, see below E, 1. 1. God's curse is invoked upon this agent of doubtful reputation also in No. 58, 1.27.

9 expenses - Ar. mūna, which means here most probably the cost of the transport overland from Fandarīna to Mangalore, while with "freight" of course the payment for the transport overseas is intended. As the cost, together with that for the bags, was less than 1/100 of the price, it was included in the latter, with other words the merchant in Fandarīna undertook to deliver the iron in Mangalore, packed ready for overseas transport.

11 It is not stated here, on what the damage was incurred. This was certainly done in one of the previous items.

Filiyā or fili is an Indian coinage of both gold and silver and is called in No. 239, l.2 and verso, l.4 fili Kullam, i.e. the coinage of the port of Kullam (Quilon). The filiyā mitqāl seems to have been more or less equivalent with the Egyptian, ^(like the latter) as once it corresponds to 2,5 ~~Adenese Maliki dinars~~. For a more detailed discussion see vol. I, ch. "Coins and Money".

For raubaj see below D. 1. 3, and in particular No. 65, ll. 5-6. hsw't appears only here.

Account B(1)

Expenditure for Ben Yijū's ^{own} Brass factory

In order to understand this section, we have to bear in mind that the metals (copper and tin or zinc) were normally provided by the customers, as we learned from many letters to B.Y., cf. No. 51 ff. Likewise they paid the individual coppersmith for his work, cf. No. 51 verso, l.5; No. 219 (55 x), l.21. The proprietor provided the place, the tools and, as we see here, also the fuel (for which the artisan had to pay)—and, of course, it was he who procured customers. Conditions similar to those found in our papers seem to have remained up to the end of the 19th century, see Census of India, 1931, vol. 28, section Travancore, Trivandrum 1932, p. 450.

Expenditure, as is evident from l.4, means cost of fuel, as which rice husks served. For this is the meaning of ruzz here. Rice husks are still used as fuel in the bronze industry, see the above mentioned volume on the Census of India, p. 449.

In addition to LNGY (on the pronunciation of this name see the Commentary), who worked on his own account and provided in one case also a small quantity of

copper, B.Y. worked himself with the assistance of slaves and a man called Abram, most probably a local or Yemenite Jew.

The subsection B(1) is divided into two parts, the total in 1.5 referring to part two only.

Translation

- (1) Due from LNGY for expenditure ten fīliyā dirhams and one Egyptian (?) mitqāl.
- (2) The period of the expenditure begins on the New Moon of Nīsān and it is 30 na^c1, 5 for every month.
- (3) Due to LNGY 4 dirhams and also for 33 fills of BTRW (copper) the price of
- (4) six dirhams and a half and half a fāj. Furthermore, due to him the cost of the rice husks for my expenditure and that (5) of the slaves and of Abram at the price of two dirhams and a half. Altogether 13 dirhams and half a fāj.

Commentary

- 1 LNGY - Could be pronounced as Lanji, Linji, Langi, Lingi with variations. It is perhaps not an Indian name, cf. the name Ben LNGW in No. 158, 1.5, where certainly a North African ^{Jew} is intended (dated 1037). *also Boll 63, f. 22*
- 2 The Jewish month of Nīsān corresponds to March-April. The fuel was thus provided for the six months of spring and summer.
- 3 na^c1 - Cf. ll. 9, 10 and 11. Obviously a certain measure.
fill - 1/100 of a farāsila, see No. 51 margin, 1.1.
BTRW - A type of copper, see No. 13b, 1.19.
- 4 fāj - A small Indian coin, as we see here less than 1/2 dirham. See here and Nos. 65 and 200(67x), passim.

Account B(2) Sundry Entries

Translation

(6) Due from me to ^mby brother-in-law Nā'ir one dinār. (7) To Sulaiman one fāj and a third, the price of the dādī. (8) To Joseph, the maternal uncle of *[or: boys (work men)]* my children, 3 dirhams and a half and half a fāj. (9) To Joseph LNBY in Darmattan a na^cl of melted butter (((for half a dirham))). (10) To him also due the price of 5 na^cls rice husks. Due from him 3 fāliyāt and another 3 fāliyāt. (11) Also two na^cls.

Commentary

6 ~~Three brother-in-laws of B.Y. appear in our papers. Nā'ir and Joseph,~~ *or Nāyar*
~~is probably identical with CA~~
 mentioned here, 11.6 ~~and B.~~ and ^{CA}Abū C^alī, who came with him ~~out~~ to Cairo, see the list of the donators for B.Y.'s synagogue in J. Mann, The Jews in Egypt etc., II, 292, 11.12, 21 and 25, and in particular ms. ~~SIC T.~~ - S. 6 K 149, a list, which is headed by "Abū ^{CA}lī, the brother-in-law of Ben Yijū", which shows, that the man was known in Cairo under this designation. From all this it is evident that B.Y., while out in the East, married there a local Jewish woman, Indian or Yemenite.

Indian or Yemenite.

or Nāyar
 Nā'ir - This ~~Arabic~~ name is extremely rare; however, it occurs again in No. 200(67x) verso, margin, where it is borne by the brother of the Kārdār.

Evidently it was in use in those parts. ~~Most probably it is a translation of Hebrew נָאִיר.~~

is not but probably local.
 7 This Sulaiman ~~may be~~ identical with S. b. Šitrūn, who, in No. 73, 11.27 and 35, brings merchandise and greetings from Abraham Yijū to his brother Joseph.

dādī - This product also No. 223 (72x-b), 1.52, No. 179, 11, 2, 15, 19.

See Meyerhof-Maimonide, Matière médicale, Cairo 1940, p. 46, No. 86, and in

particular O. Loefgren, Aden im Mittelalter, p. 51, l.8, from which it appears clearly, that dādī was used for fermenting processes in the production of wine. About the countries of origin of the dādī see the literature given by Meyerhof and Loefgren. According to Idrīsī's ms. book on plants, quoted by Meyerhof, the best quality of this edible lichen (*Lecanora esculenta* Ev.) grew in Khorasan in North Eastern Iran, although an inferior quantity was found also in Spain. Thus it was obviously imported into India. On the other hand, dadhi is a common word in India for curdled milk, see George Watt, The Commercial Products of India, London 1908, p. 470 and 474, and thus perhaps the very word came from there. From our No. 179 it appears, however, that the dādī occurring in these documents was imported into India.

~~8 the maternal uncle - Of course, B.Y. could have written instead: "my brother-in-law". However, as he had used the word two lines before, he prefers to introduce another expression, in accordance with a principle of Arabic stylistics, which acted certainly quite subconsciously.~~

9 LNBV - As another LNBV appears in No. 65, ll.2, 13, 15, this one is differentiated from the other by the name of his domicile. Darmattan or Darmadam (Dharmapattanam "city of the law" - or "of pepper", Monier-Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Oxford 1899) is according to Husain Nainar, The Arab Geographers knowledge of Southern India, Madras 1942, p. 32, note, identical with Dahfattan, see above No. 56, l.17.

10 fāliyāt - Most probably identical with fīliyā, above A, l.11.

11 two na^cls - Certainly of rice husks, see l.10.

Account C

Advances to important merchants

This section is very poorly preserved and, in addition, crossed out, which means that the accounts registered had been settled. It is interesting to learn from it that these merchants, one of whom is called a ship's-owner, took comparatively small advances. This seems to indicate that money always was in rotation and even bigger merchants did not keep with them much cash. For orders, sometimes money was paid in advance. In other cases, payment was not made even immediately after delivery, see 1.10.

Translation

((((1) Due to the brother, my master, the Nāḥoda Sa^cd 5 fīliyā mitqāl, as advance.

(2) Of these, he took 3 fīliyā m. Balance in his favor: (3) two f.m.

(3a) To my master...Sa^cd one dinār advance. (4) Another d. advance. (5) Due to him two Maliki dinārs. He took for one dinar wax~~(?)~~ and two niṣ̄ afīs.

(6) (7) (8) Due to my master, the most illustrious Sheikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan b. Ja^cfar (9) two dinārs for the locks from Kajandra(?). (10) ... One fīlī mitqāl advance. (11) betel-nut(?) and he took eight niṣ̄afīs.)

Commentary

1 the brother - this merely indicates that Ben Yijā^u was an intimate friend of this ship's-owner, who seems not to be mentioned in other papers published here. B.Y. had promised him an advance on the purchase of some merchandise to the amount of 5 fīliyā mitqāls, of which Sa^cd, so far, had cashed in

only 3. LL. 3a and 4 show that the rest was paid in another two instalments (under the assumption that B.Y. uses here dinār loosely for mitqāl. For in 1.5, Maliki dinārs are mentioned expressly, which makes it improbable that Maliki dinārs were intended here as well).

5 wax(?) - See No. 65, 1.10.

niṣāfi - This half-dīnār of Yemen - see No. 28, 1.34, No. 56, 11.40-4 - was in use in India just as the Maliki dīnār of Aden, see here 1.11 and No. 223 (72x-b)c, 1.1.

8 Abu 'l-Ḥasan - In No. 56, 1.25, he is carrying goods for B.Y. from India to Aden.

9 For Indian locks, see No. 57, 1. 15.

Account D

(1) Due to my master Sheikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan Ibn al-Marīḍa of Qair^awan (2) two filiyā mitqāls advance. Furthermore a dirham to the boy of

(3) He received six Egyptian mitqāls less one raubaj (4) for which he will deliver two farāsila of copper (ṣufr).

Commentary

1 Ibn al-Marīḍa - An important businessman, as appears from No. 60, 1.19. He, or his family, came from Q. in Tunisia.

2 boy - Son or servant.

3 Leaving Aden, a bahār of copper cost from 60 to 68 Maliki dīnārs, see No. 61(30x-a), 11.11-2, and No. 28, 1.26. As a farāsila normally was 1/20 of a bahār, 2 farāsilas would have cost 6 to 6, 8 M.d. If the reading msry' is correct, then here the price would be about 2 1/2 times higher, as one

Egyptian m. was worth about 2 1/2 Maliki d. Naturally, for a commodity coming from the West, prices would be higher in India than in Aden. Still, the differences seems to be too great. Perhaps mlky' is to be read for msry'; on the other hand, here again we would be forced to assume that B.Y. uses the word loosely, as in all our papers Maliki dīnārs, but not mitqāls, are mentioned.

Account E(1) and (2)

Other dealings (1) in cardamom with the Kārdār and (2) in cardamom and iron with an Indian supplier.

The Kārdār had not delivered a consignment of cardamom for a merchant called Şemaḥ b. Nissī. Instead, we have to assume, B.Y. had done it. B.Y. is now being compensated with another consignment, which he reserves for a relative of his, for whom he also placed orders with an Indian business friend.

Translation

- (1) Due to me from the Kādār (!) //for// the cardamom of Şemaḥ b. Nissī
 (2) twenty eight farāsila cardamom in bales(?), of which I shall take delivery
 (3) on the first day of Kislew, if God will, for Abu 'l-Ḥai(r?) (4) Ibn al-Minna..., the son of my maternal aunt. He paid me two dīnārs in advance.
 (5) Due to me from FL'DR Š'NK Dās in Fandarīna: (6) two bahārs "smooth" iron and 3 farāsila and 55 fill (7) cardamom in bales(?) for Abu 'l-Ḥai(r?) Ibn al-Minna, may (God) make permanent his(8) of which he will take delivery from him in QNY'T, if God will.

Commentary

- 1 Kādār - The same misspelling as above A, 1.1.
 2 For 28 farāsila one would have expected: 1 bahār and 8 far. It seems,

however, that reckoning according to farāsilas was common in Mangalore, where B.Y. had his seat.

bales(?) - Ar. FYS^V, perhaps to be read fais^V and to be translated by "bales", cf. Dozy, Supplément II, 293 faiṣa "bande", with the derivation fayyas^V "bander, lier avec une bande". The word is derived from Spanish, but appears as a loan-word in Arabic already in the XIIIth century Vocabulary, edited by Schiaparelli. Thus it would not be excluded that it was used by merchants coming from the West to India in the XIIth century. However, the word might mean something quite different; thus fais^V in modern Yemenite speech is a common word in the meaning of "open field"; accordingly, the phrase could indicate here, that the cardamom was still not plucked, but on the fields; in this case, however, one would rather expect bil-fais^V. In any case, the reading of the letters, both in 11.2 and 7, is sure.

3 Kislew - November/December.

4 Ben Yijū extends greetings to his maternal aunt in his letter No. 68 margin, 1.20. The two letters after the name may contain a eulogy. This is the only indication of a person from the Yijū family being out in India together with Abraham Y.

Before the word dinārs, one expects "Maliki", which is, however, not sufficiently legible.

5 As the familiar component of an Indian name "Dās" (servant) indicates, the person must have been a Hindu.

8 QNY'T - Obviously the name of a place. The form of the letter N is slightly unusual, but hardly another letter could be read in its place.