

TS NS J 270<sup>5</sup>.

In (your) name, oh Merci(ful).

My lord, dear and noble brother, may God prolong your life, keep and preserve you and never deprive me of you.

I had been living here in Ascalon in six thousand<sup>6</sup> states of wellbeing, thanks to the beneficence of God, the exalted, when Musallam<sup>7</sup> b. Abī Sahl approached me. I went with him up to Nablus and bought for him his sister. A debt of 60 dinars remained on me<sup>8</sup>, and he entreated<sup>9</sup> me saying: "I ask you by God, let me bring her up<sup>10</sup> to Fustat. She might be able to obtain part of her ransom."<sup>11</sup>

Now he is gone and has disappeared, leaving me with a debt of 60 dinars. The Frank came to me, and I was looking for someone granting me a loan<sup>12</sup>, but was not successful with anyone.

Then I presented my boy as a collateral against a loan on interest, but no one was prepared to take him as a collateral. It seems, there has not remained here anyone who believes that one is permitted to do a good work.

I ask you now to be so kind and to talk to Musallam and to tell him not to keep me any longer in abeyance; he should send me either the money or the girl. Approach him from any possible avenue and bring him to the (Jewish) courts. [ ... ]<sup>13</sup> you know that I do not possess either [ ... ]<sup>13</sup> Kindest regards to you and to your sons [ also. Please ] take urgent action in this matter for [ . ]<sup>14</sup> I wish to be on good terms with the creditor. And your wellbeing may increase

Address:

To Bilbays<sup>15</sup>, to his honor, my dear brother, the elder Abu 'l-Bahā

Ibn Ghanā'im.

From his brother, who kisses his hands,<sup>16</sup> Abū Sa'd Ibn Ghanā'im.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Besides the case noted in Med. Soc., II, p. 159, there is the /referring to a captive from Acre, 1291, extremely interesting document TS 8 K 13, f. 11, studied in detail by Mordechai Friedman in his (Heb.) article פוליגמיא בן גניזת הדאקומנטים, "Annual of College of Jewish Studies, Chicago, 1971.

<sup>2</sup>Mishna, Eduyot 8:2.

<sup>3</sup>ULC Or 1081 J 9, see Med. Soc., I, p. 50, n. 54.

<sup>4</sup>See Med. Soc., I, p. 259. The letter from Tunisia, however, mentioned there, is to be interpreted otherwise. It is translated and commented on in vol. II of Med. People.

<sup>5</sup>Ed. S.D. Goitein, Tarbiz 31 (1962), 287-290.

<sup>6</sup>The same strange phrase in the letter TS Box G 1, f. 1v, l. 3.

<sup>7</sup>Corresponds to Heb. Meshullām, "Perfect", a name which was popular because it was regarded as a by-name of "the servant of God", the Messiah, see Isaiah 42:9.

<sup>8</sup>Forms like 'alayya, ilayya are spelled throughout this letter 'lyh, 'lyh. Such spellings are found occasionally elsewhere, but nowhere have I found them applied consistently like here.

<sup>9</sup>Ar. taṭarraḥ, for Maghrebi taṭāraḥ, Dozy, Supplement, II, p. 31b.

<sup>10</sup>"Up", because one traveled upstream on the Nile when coming from the Mediterranean.

<sup>11</sup>Ar. qaṭī'at-hā, Dozy, Supplement, II, p. 373b.

<sup>12</sup>Ar. salaf, a loan without interest.

<sup>13</sup>The right lower corner of the letter is torn away. About three words are missing in each of the last three lines. In Tarbiz 31, p. 290, l. 1. f'nh is a misprint for f'nt.

<sup>14</sup>The words following: ta'līf ṣāhib al-dayn are written on the ~~max~~ margin. While passing from the last line of the page to the marginal note beginning at the top the writer skipped over a word such as urīd.

<sup>15</sup>Bilbays, an Egyptian frontier town, situated on the caravan route from Palestine, provided refuge for emigrants from Ascalon, as is known from several Geniza letters.

<sup>16</sup>This phrase implies that the addressee was <sup>an</sup> ~~the~~ elder brother of the writer.