

Some Indian Names and Words occurring in Geniza Documents
of the 11th and 12th centuries A.D.

Note: The documents are written in Hebrew characters expressing Arabic sounds;

' (i.e. Aleph) stands both for a glottal stop and for long ā.

G corresponds to Arabic J or ġ (as in Bagdād)

K corresponds to Arabic K or Ħ (Scotch kh)

Y expresses either i or ī or long ē

W expresses either v or long ū or ō

As Arabic has no P, an P or F may stand for an Indian P.

Any vowels suggested by us are mere guesswork.

Ĥ or 'at end of a work

may express merely the sound a.

Hebrew script
does not discern
between P and F.

ʾ stands for sh

Names of Persons.

1-6 are ship's owners

1. BBN son of SLSYTY (the second word is perhaps a mistake for SLSYTY, as the word SYTY (sathi, merchant) occurs several times, see below)

2. FNY'R - Fadlyar? This seems to be a title, for the word is sometimes preceded by the Arabic article.

3. FNY SNT - Fatan Sani?

4. HNDY - This word could be also Hndar (Hndar - meaning war)

5. TNDY - Tada, Tappat?

6. HNDY - Hndar (proper name derived from that of a class of Brahmins in South India)

7. BBN son of FNY - BBN, a slave and business agent. Could be read also Barma.

8. FL'ND SNT S'P - Certainly Indian, as the al and indicates. An iron-singer.

9. SNT SNT - Dealer in pepper and iron.

10. KFY'NDY - Dealer in pepper and iron

11. LNDY - a coopersmith. Also LNDY

12. BBN SNT - a dealer in copper and brass

13. S'D FLI - Shad - pala??

14. 'RY' FLI - Arya-pala?? Two merchants mentioned together.

14a. Ptn - Ptnh. Name of a slave, sold in Cairo in 1194 A.D.

Some Names of Places in India Mentioned in the Geniza

no doubt all of them on the Western Coast of India. I used M. Husain Nainar, Geographical Knowledge of India possessed by the Arabs, and Dr. Maqbul, Ahmad, Idrisi.

15. BROVIN - could be read as Barjvin and be regarded as an Ar. word derived from bari, tower. The word designates pirates on the Indian coast, against whom the Sultan (which is not said) was fighting. Perhaps a V is lacking and the reference is to BANG - Bhang, the well-known port.
16. BATHAN - Bathatan, identical with Bannatan, Nainar pp. 25 and 29-30??
17. BATHAN - Bathatan? Is it better to write bathan, with two t and a long a?
18. BATHAN - Bannatan, Nainar, p. 32.
19. BATHAN - often mentioned. Identical with Dib?
20. BATHAN - Dib, Din: Why t = o y?
21. BATHAN - Bannatan
- 21a. BATHAN - A place where books are made.
22. BATHAN - Kavalnor???
23. BATHAN - seems to be identical with Kulam (Qullon), which is written KULM. Why Kalambo?
24. BATHAN - mentioned together with Ceylon as a place infested by Pirates.
25. BATHAN is spelled in 4 different ways: Minabar, Manibar, Manbar, Malibar (all the Ar. plural form). Which of the four is the nearest to the original?
26. BATHAN is spelled Manabar and Manjarar. I suppose the first form is original.
27. BATHAN - Kanbar or Kanbarat. Normally, q is never used for the rendering of an Indian sound. The ms. is clear: no q is lacking, and Kanbar is written in these documents Kanbarat.

Some Names of Indian Things Mentioned in the Geniza

28. STMY or STMY - List of goods (and passengers) kept by the captain of a ship and a small payment made to him after arrival.
29. KRBH (Akarta?) and HW'KH (Hawshak or Hawshakh) - products from Dyrb, mentioned between cocoa nuts and coir (cocoa nut fibre)
30. B'RBZ-~~at~~ - (Bharbuz), packages for iron bars and iron bars themselves.
31. HMY or HMY - a kind of copper or brass (Faylan Bar-~~an~~, Beautiful like a Buzbat hardly).
32. Bata - Buzbat covered with a comic basketwork. Used in Yemen up till now.
33. FLM - something to be bought in Nahrvara (Anahvara in the Gujerat)
34. MMS - Maja. I took it for the Japanese moxa, for it is called sud "a wood" or odoriferous wood. It cannot be moxa, because small.
35. FLM - Faylan "a/t., the opening of which is one span and a half," a bronze vessel.
- 35.a. L'NS or L'NS, explained in the Arabic dictionaries as a red Indian silk (cf. lal).

Indian Coins, Weights and Units Mentioned in the Geniza

36. The common coin of the Malabar coast was called Pili or Piliya or Piliya. It appears both as dirham, silver coin, and as gold coin. Against the assumption that the word is Arabic and derived from Pili, elephant, which would mean that the figure of an elephant appeared on these coins, stands the fact, that in one place repeatedly the coin is called Pili. The Pili is subdivided into Fann, a coin known from later times.
37. Fann - a gold coin. The emphatic sound F is characteristic of Arabic and usually not used for the rendering of Indian words.
38. Other subdivisions of the Pili are a) pabai, a word registered in the Ar. dictionaries, but not defined, and b) pabai (cf. pl. fann).
39. Another coin is Fai, subdivided into halves and thirds.
40. A puzzle is the Arabic word Naci, shoe, which must be a translation of an Indian word designating both a weight or quantity and a coin.
41. Karaja is a unit of twenty. Certainly Indian.
42. The Bahar, a weight of 300 pounds and its twentieth or 1/20 part, the Farasila, certainly are not Arabic. However, as these words have often been treated, there is no need to waste time on them. I would only like to know, whether they have been treated anywhere recently in the scientific literature.