

II, 12 *Letter from Bundār II b. Ḥasan to 'Allān b. Ḥassūn*

Aden, ca. 1100

AIU VII E 35

This unusually short letter shows that Bundār was as slow in making payments as his father or, for that matter, his contemporaries in general.<sup>1</sup> To be reminded of a debt was almost an insult; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:204–5, 258–59, and *passim*. For the recipient, 'Allān b. Ḥassūn, see VI, 11–15.<sup>2</sup> At the time of the writing of this letter Bundār II's father was still alive.

After eight lines of extremely polite verbiage, the writer continues:

## Translation

(9) Take notice that I have paid the 90 dinars (10), which I had owed, to their owner, and witnesses have signed the (11) receipt. Take notice of this. There was no (12) need to alert me to expedite (13) making this payment. {Alt. tr.: Inform me of any need you have, so that I can take care of it expeditiously.}<sup>3</sup> (13–14) Regards.

## [Address]

(1) (To) his excellency, my lord, the illustrious Sheikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan (2) 'Allān b. Ḥassūn—*may he rest in Eden!*—(3) may God make his honored position permanent!

(1) (From) His servant, (2) Bundār b. al-Ḥasan b. (3) Bundār, *may he rest in Eden!*

The blank space on both sides of this and countless other letters of the Geniza is covered with carelessly written notes and accounts, which have no relation to the content of the letter.

<sup>1</sup> {But see the alternative translation below.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. VII, 70; Goitein, "Portrait." See on this document, above, 126–28.

<sup>3</sup> Arabic *wa-mā kāna lahu min ḥāja yu'limunī bihā li-usāri' ilā qaḍā'ihā*. For the translation that I have suggested, see, e.g., II, 16v, lines 33–34.}

II, B. *Business Letters Sent by Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan to India*II, 13–15 *Letter from Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan to Abraham Ben Yijū:  
Three Fragments of Two Copies*

Aden, ca. 1130's

13. TS 6 J 4, f. 14

14. TS 18 J 2, f. 7

15. TS 12.416

Ed. Goitein, "From Aden," 43–56; Goitein, *Yemenites*, 93–99.

Together, II, 13 and 14 form one complete letter. Line 5 of II, 13 is identical with the first line of II, 14, but the paper was torn in such a way that the first five words of line 5 are in II, 14, while the last word in the line is on the lower left hand corner of II, 13. The length of the page is 7.8 + 36 cm. = 43.8 cm., its width 10.3 cm. The paper is light gray and of medium thickness. It is well preserved, except that the ink on the opposite side can be seen through the paper in places.

No. II, 15 is written on paper of exactly the same type and dimensions. Only the lower half of this copy has been preserved, approximately 22 cm., corresponding to II, 14, lines 18–37, and verso, lines 1–18 (to the word *kt'by*, 'my letter,' i.e. only two words are missing here).

Nos. II, 13–14 recto were written by the clerk who also wrote II, 15, i.e., he made at least two copies of this letter.<sup>1</sup> This same scribe also wrote II, 16, 24, 25, and 26, and the postscripts in the margins of II, 32. However, the postscript on the verso of II, 14 was written by another hand, the same hand that wrote the postscript to II, 24 in a very cursive style. It stands to reason, therefore, that this was the hand of the sender, Maḍmūn, himself. The same handwriting is found in II, 17, 23, 32, 33–34.

The recto of II, 13–14 is written in a very ornate style in such a way that the sheet is filled exactly. It is thus clear that it was copied from an original which Maḍmūn himself had written. The question then arises, why Maḍmūn added the postscript on the verso of his scribe's copy, and not on the original itself. The answer is that the calligraphic copy served as the official text of the letter, while the draft was sent in another boat as a replacement in the case that the official text was lost.

The recipient of the letter, Abraham Ben Yijū, was residing on the Malabar Coast of India. It is surprising that he kept two copies of it during all the years he lived in India and did not dispose of them until he came to Cairo.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> {For sending multiple copies of letters or accounts, see page 9, n. 23.

<sup>2</sup> For Goitein's remarks on this question, see further page 61.}