

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.¹ 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, 11–15.² 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.}³ (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.

¹ {But see the alternative translation below.

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

³ 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.¹ 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.²

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

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

{Etiquette often required expressing in the beginning of such a letter longing for the recipient and wishes for reuniting with him, and Maḍmūn's letter to Ben Yijū (with hopes for reuniting) is no exception. The expression of longing to other business associates to whom the recipient was requested to send regards or instructions for transactions was not commonplace, however. The longing for his Hindu business associates, which Maḍmūn includes in his postscript (II, 14*v*, lines 1–3) is especially noteworthy and reflects the close relationship of mutual trust and friendship with them.}

Translation

[A. Acknowledgment of Ben Yijū's letter and shipment]

[II, 13] (1) *Your hands shall prevail over your foes, and all your enemies shall be cut down.*³ (2) *To our esteemed master and lord Abraham—may God remember him favorably!* {alt. tr.: *may he be remembered for a blessing*}⁴—*the son of his honor, great and holy master and lord* (3) *Yijū—may he rest in Eden!*—(from) *your friend*⁵ *Maḍmūn, the son of Ḥasan*⁶—*may he rest in Eden!*

(4) The letter of my lord, the most illustrious elder, arrived; I read [II, 14 (1)] and understood it, and I was happy to learn that you were well [II, 13 (5)] and your affairs [II, 14 (2)] in order, for which I thanked God very much (3) and asked Him to give you more of every good thing. May God unite (4) us under the most joyful circumstances, and in the best of (5) spirits, for he controls this and is able to accomplish it, (6) God willing!

³ Mic. 5:8; where the Massoretic text reads 'your hand' in the singular. This biblical verse and similar ones, are found at the beginning of other letters from that period. This replaces Arabic *wa-kabata a'dāhu*, 'may He crush your enemies!,' usually said at the beginning of letters.

⁴ The abbreviation *z'l* is generally known as a blessing for the dead. In Yemenite usage, however, these letters stand for *zākhūr leṭōwā* and are {also} used as a blessing for the living. {Where the blessing appears without the abbreviation in this book, its form is *zākhūr li-vrākḥā*, literally, 'may he be remembered/mentioned for a blessing!'} So in II, 63, line 19; II, 71*v*, line 31. For *z'l* as a blessing for the living in Yemenite usage and elsewhere, see Friedman, "Dispute," 168–69, n. 139, and the literature cited there. For the blessing *yizzākhēr be-tōwā*, see below, 682, n. 15.

⁵ *hbk* spelled, both here and in the Hebrew address, without *w* {similarly in other documents, e.g., in II, 25}, as often in the Bible, for example, 1 Kings 5:15, Isa. 41:8, Prov. 18:24, Esther 5:10, 14.

⁶ In the Arabic address with the article (al-Ḥasan), but *without* the article again in the address in Hebrew script, II, 14*v*.

From what you mentioned, (7) my lord, I learned that you had sent the two locks⁷ and the two thousand (8) white and red betel nuts.⁸ I have already (9) received this, and I thank you for attending (10) to it.

[B. List of gifts sent to Ben Yijū with 'Abd al-Masīḥ, the deacon]

I have sent you (11) with 'Abd al-Masīḥ, the deacon,⁹ a bundle of (12) Berbera mats,¹⁰ six in number. (13) We wrapped them in canvas and your name is written (14) on it in Arabic and Hebrew.¹¹ (15) With him, I have also sent you (a gift) from (16) me: a new, first-rate, raw Dabīqī

⁷ Arabic *quṣṭayn*. Similarly, in II, 16*v*, line 28, Maḍmūn thanks Ben Yijū for four locks that he sent from India. These were either made of bronze, as is still the case in southwest India (see *Census of India* [28], 446) or of iron and most probably of the same particular type still in use in Yemen (see the picture in *Haḍramout*, opposite page 85; Rathjens, *Architecture*, 26 and plate x, photo. 17; and Brauer, *Ethnologie*, 68). From many letters in this book, we learn that iron was imported from India. Here, we have a product of the Indian iron industry going westward. {Locks (*quṣṭ*, pl. *aqṣāl*) in Egypt and in Yemen used to be made of wood—they still are in Yemen. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:109, 421, n. 61, 4:61 (for wooden locks from Yemen in a museum collection, see Tobi, "Ṣubayrī Collection," 269). For tying doors shut in Yemen, see III, 33, line 18. The locks from India, presumably made of iron (or bronze), were obviously considered a specialty item in Yemen at that time. Additional examples for importing them there are given in the next note. According to III, 24, line 11, when Ben Yijū left India for Yemen his baggage included a basket of locks.}

⁸ Arabic *fawṣal*, a common Indian export commodity. See II, 16*v*, lines 23–27, and the note to II, 24, line 29. {For *fawṣal*, one can also spell *fūṣal*, *fūṣul*. For the export of Indian areca nuts, see Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, 157–59. For a description of the benefits of the *fawṣal* leaf, which also served as an aphrodisiac, see Major, *India* ("Narrative of the Journey of Abd-er-Razzak"), 32: "Thus they take as many as four leaves of betel at a time, and chew them. Sometimes they add camphor... This substance gives a colour to and brightens the countenance, causes an intoxication similar to that produced by wine, appeases hunger, and excites appetite in those who are satiated; it removes the disagreeable smell from the mouth, and strengthens the teeth. It is impossible to express how strengthening it is, and how much it excites pleasure..." Cf. Linschoten, *Voyage*, 2:62–68; Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 100. In III, 18C, lines 9, 11, Ben Yijū credits a supplier for the purchase of locks and two thousand betel nuts, the same two items, which appear here; perhaps they were purchased for shipment to Maḍmūn. But Ben Yijū also sent two locks and betel nuts to Khalaf b. Isaac; see III, 16, line 15.}

⁹ Arabic *shammās*. Just as Jewish rabbis and Muslim qadis dabbled in trade, so did ecclesiastical officers of the Christian Church—here probably the Syrian Church of India. While traveling from Aden to India, he acted as an agent for two Jews. {He could have been from Egypt or elsewhere in the Mediterranean, like most of the Jewish traders.}

¹⁰ Mats that were brought to Aden from the African port of Berbera. The same gift was also sent in II, 21, line 46 [cf. II, 16*v*, line 6].

¹¹ As the two addresses in this letter demonstrate, the terms 'Arabic' and 'Hebrew' refer not only to the script, but to the language as well.

scarf, (17) which has a pretty band¹² on each side (18) and is fit to be worn by prominent men. Also (sent) with him (19) are two *dasts* of fine, large paper¹³ (20) government paper, the like of which (21) no one has. In addition, (I sent) with him two *rubā'yyas*¹⁴ of (22) sugar and raisins. See that you receive from him (23) all this.

[C. Acknowledgment of receipt of a shipment sent by Ben Yijū to the merchant Abu 'l-Khayr and business dealings of the latter]

Everything you had sent (24) to Abu 'l-Khayr¹⁵ has arrived, and he has taken delivery of all of it. (25) He bought Egyptian linen and went up into the (26) highlands.¹⁶ He requested me to ask you to look after his interests (27) by sending his remaining (28) iron and cardamom and the entire balance to his credit. (29) Send him all this on the first boat (30) which sails from India.

¹² Arabic *silsila*. This word, which usually means 'chain,' also has the sense of 'collar'; see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:673 b, and it seems that it refers here to some kind of decorated fringes.

¹³ A *dast* was a certain quantity that made a set of a particular item; cf. page 304, n. 9. The sending of paper as gifts or merchandise to India is mentioned very frequently in our documents [since it was not to be found there; see page 61].

¹⁴ According to Grohmann, *Südarabien*, 2:98, who relies on E. Glaser and other 19th-century travelers in South Arabia, the *rubā'ī* has four *tumānī* of 2.387 kg., which would make 9.448 kg. In San'a, the capital of Yemen, I was informed that the *rubā'ī* is one-eighth of a *qadah*. The Yemenite *qadah*. (cf. al-Wāsi'ī, *Ta'rikh*, 200, 1. 4) is the equivalent of two modern oil tins. [Cf. Pimenta, *Dictionary*, I, 173 (a dry measure).] This too would give the *rubā'ī* a weight of about 10 kg. [In the India Book papers it is clear that the form *rubā'īyya* is used exclusively as a measure of weight or a dry measure, as here for sugar and raisins (similarly in II, 24, lines 8–9; II, 26v, line 11; III, 1, line 10; III, 2, margin, line 2), almonds (III, 2, margin, line 2; III, 9, line 25) and soap (II, 20v, line 13; III, 2, margin, line 2; III, 9, line 25 [in III, 1, 2, 9, spelled *rubā'īyya*, with short *a*]) and *rubā'ī* for the Sicilian quarter dinar (III, 30a, lines 5, 7, 11, 12; III, 43, line 7; III, 49, line 42; III, 57, line 15). Elsewhere, *rubā'īyya* is used also for the Sicilian quarter dinar; see, e.g., Gil, *Ishmael*, 3:865, lines 12–14.]

¹⁵ This name occurs frequently in our documents. Perhaps he is to be identified with Abu 'l-Khayr al-Barqī, II, 24, line 6; II, 32, margin, lines 7–8. [In II, 24, lines 6–8, also written by Maḍmūn to Ben Yijū, Abu 'l-Khayr is mentioned without 'al-Barqī.' Maḍmūn wrote II, 32, to Abū Zikrī Kohen in Fustat; and Abu 'l-Khayr al-Barqī mentioned there is likely to have been another individual. The only other Abu 'l-Khayr mentioned in Ben Yijū's India papers is his cousin, Abu 'l-Khayr Ibn al-Minqār (III, 18, sec. E, lines 3–4, 7, not fully deciphered by Goitein), and he may have been intended here in II, 14 and in II, 24. Abu 'l-Khayr Ṣedāqā was a member of Ben Yijū's synagogue in Egypt in 1156, after his return from the East: III, 51, line 6. See further page 69.]

¹⁶ To the highlands of central Yemen.

[D. The market for iron in Aden]

As for iron, this (31) year it sold (well) in Aden—all (32) kinds of iron¹⁷—and in the coming year (33) there will also be a good market, because (34) there is none at all left in the city. (35) Please take notice of this.

[E. Greetings]

Please accept for yourself best (36) wishes, and for your son Surūr and for Bama,¹⁸ (37) the most profuse greetings. *And peace.*

[F. Postscript: (1) Request to ask three Indian acquaintances, two Hindus and one Muslim or Jew, to send pepper and iron from Mangalore, and coconuts, etc., from Diū (Maldives)]

[Verso (in Maḍmūn's hand)] (1) Please give Sūs Sītī and Kinbātī {read: Kinābtī}¹⁹ [[and Ishā...]] (2) and Ishāq the Bānyān²⁰ my best regards,

¹⁷ Five different types of iron are mentioned in these documents. [In a later note in his files, Goitein listed six types of iron mentioned in the corpus, given here with a reference to the first appearance: *bayḍ*, 'eggs' (ingots: II, 16v, line 20), *muhḍath*, 'refurbished' (II, 14v, line 5), *rasmī*, 'regular,' 'standard' (II, 31, line 7), *raqs*, 'shiny' (II, 14v, line 7), *Kūfī* (III, 9, line 12), *amlas*, 'smooth' (III, 10, line 27).]

¹⁸ The Arabic name Surūr corresponds to the Hebrew name Peraḥyā [see 267, n. 1]. Peraḥyā was the name of this Surūr's grandfather. Bama was the slave and house-steward of Ben Yijū. [On the slave's name, see 604, n. 59.]

¹⁹ Sūs Sītī and Kinābtī are Indian names. [According to a suggestion cited by Ghosh, *Antique*, 384, note to page 278, Sūs Sītī might represent 'Sesu Shetty.' *Seṭṭī*, means 'merchant' (Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, viii). Two *Seṭṭīs* are mentioned in Maḍmūn's letters to Ben Yijū, Sws *Seṭṭī*, here in II, 14v, line 1, and Bnk *Seṭṭī*, II, 24v, line 19; see 350, n. 88.]

²⁰ Ishāq can be the name of a Jew or a Muslim. Bānyān is the usual designation for an Indian merchant; also mentioned in II, 24v, lines 2, 12. [In page 349, n. 79, Goitein commented that the Bānyāns were 'Hindu merchants.' Banyan is the name of an Indian merchant caste. It is remarkable that a Jew or Muslim, as indicated by his name, was considered a Bānyān. Maḍmūn began writing the name 'Ishā' at the end of II, 114v, line 1, and deleted it. But that was evidently because there was insufficient room there, and he wrote the name again in line 2. Crooke, "Baniā," 345: "a generic name for the great merchant caste of Northern and Western India." Sweetman, *Banian Religion*, xxii–xxiii: "The word 'Banian' refers to the Vāṇiā mercantile caste, the Gujarati *vāṇiyoā* being derived from the Sanskrit *vāṇijā*, meaning merchant. . . . The Banians were brokers, shopkeepers, money-changers and bankers, and members of this caste were active in ports all around the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. The caste had both Hindu and Jain members. . . . For cooperation between the Banyans and Muslim merchants in Malabar, see Wink, *Al-Hind*, 2:279. According to Serjeant, *Portuguese*, 32, in *fatwā* literature (legal rulings) the Indian residents in the larger ports of South Arabia "are always known as Bāniyān." Cf. Serjeant, *Society*, 1:71–74 ("The Bāniyāns and the Trade with India"). A painting of a Banyan at al-Mukhā', Yemen, from the late eighteenth century, is reproduced in Baldry, *Textiles*, pl. 4.

and tell them (3) of my longing for them. Inform them in my name that as for pepper, in (4) this coming year its value, (that is) the price per *bahār*, will be (5) 30 dinars, and more, and as for refurbished^{21a} iron, (6) a *bahār* will be (worth) not less than 20 dinars, (7) and that the (supply of) *raqs* (shining, glittering iron), which was in the city, is completely exhausted. (8) And if they can they should dispatch²¹ a ship from Mangalore, (9) and send in it any available pepper, iron, (10) cubeb, and ginger;²² it should set out at the first opportunity {alt. tr.: at the beginning of the season}²³ for (11) *al-Dyyb* (Diū) {alt. tr.: Maldives}²⁴ taking {alt. tr.:

²¹ Arabic *yujahhizū*. See below, line 13.

^{21a} Arabic *muhdath*. Al-Kindī (fl. 850), describes *muhdath* iron as being of inferior quality. See the passage quoted by al-Hassan, "Iron," 33, who translates 'modern.'

²² Cubeb and ginger served various medicinal purposes (see Lev, *Medicinal Substances*, 217, 139, respectively), and the latter was a frequent import item from the East. Maimonides mentions ginger's use to increase sexual potency in his autograph manuscript TS Ar. 44, f. 79. Also see *Otzar ha-Geonim*, 2:63, no. 201 (according to which ginger is imported from China); Perahyā, *Commentary on Shabbat*, 174.

²³ Arabic *awwal al-zamān*. The same expression appears in context of sailing or departure in II, 55, lines 29, 33, 36; III, 12, line 26. The equivalent *awwal al-waqt* appears in II, 23, line 9. There it clearly means the beginning of the sailing season and was translated so ('at the beginning of seafaring time') by Goitein. A fuller expression is *waqt infitāḥ al-baḥr*, 'the time of the opening of the sea'; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:316, 481, n. 24. Cf. II, 23, line 17: *awwal jihāz*, 'the beginning of the fleet'; III, 8, line 30, *matā yakhruj awwal al-jihāz*, 'when the first of the fleet sets out.' TS 8 J 22, f. 10, top, *awwal al-zamān yusāfirū*, is correctly translated by Gil, *Ishmael*, 2:760: "the beginning of the time of their departure"; correct Diem, *Dictionary*, 6, accordingly. Cf. *ākhīr al-zamān*, in TS 12.124, line 24, translated by Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:482, n. 32: 'end of business season'; a more literal translation would be, 'the end of the season' (so translated by Gil, ib., 2:523), i.e., the end of the sailing season (I translate there, lines 23–24: 'I waited for him until the month of Elul, but he did not come. I did not see a letter from him until the end of the season, in which he wrote,' etc.). No. IV, 2, line 9, explicitly states: *hādha 'l-waqt alladhī huwa awāl al-safr*, 'this time (season), which is the season of travel (by sea).'

²⁴ The name has the article because it means 'island' (*dīpa*), a meaning certainly known to the Arabic-speaking Middle Easterners. It refers to hundreds of islets southwest of the southern tip of India, which today make up the independent state of Maldives. The name is a compound of *dive* 'island' and *Male*, the name of the capital. The fact that it is written *Dyyb* in Hebrew (with double *y*) indicates, perhaps, that Arabic-speaking traders pronounced the name *Diyab*, as an Arabic plural form. Coir yarn and coconuts are still an important source of income in these islands. The suggestion in Goitein, "From Aden," 56 is hereby rejected in light of Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, 460–61 (on the modern Maldives, see, e.g., *The 1979 Hammond Almanac*, 618). [This note is based on Goitein, *Yemenites*, 98–99, n. 26. For *qinbār*, 'coir (coconut fiber),' see Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:408. On the coir yarn and coconuts of Maldives, cf. Linschoten, *Voyage*, 1:75 (in Old English): "There is no merchandize to be had in them, but only coquen, which are Indian nuttes, and cayro... that is the Indian hemp... they serve the whole country of India, and al the orientall coast," etc. For current information on the Maldives, see <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mv.html>.

to take} some coir (coconut fiber),²⁵ fine aloes wood,²⁶ (12) mango (?),²⁷ and coconuts,²⁸ because all these are selling well.

[G. (2) Maḍmūn prepared to fit out a ship to sail from Aden in partnership with the aforementioned]

(13) If they are equipping²⁹ a ship in Aden, and they want me (14) to take part, I will share (in it) with them. If there were (15) a ship sailing for Mangalore this year, I would send them {alt. tr.: Had there been a ship... I would have sent them} (16) gold, sugar, raisins and (other) goods.³⁰ Be sure to inform them (17) of all this, and do not be remiss, for you take the place of (18) a letter of mine to them. *And peace*.

²⁵ In connection with this order, Margariti, "Aden," 259, notes that this twine was used for boat building, one of the industries of Aden. Cf. Chakravarti, "Seafarings," 47.)

²⁶ Arabic *ḥrbh*, clearly spelled thus in both copies, has not been found by me elsewhere. I take it as Persian *agar bih*, see Steingass-Johnson, *Dictionary*, 90, as derived from Sanskrit *aguru* (modern *agar*, suggested by Professor A. L. Basham). {Persian *bih* means 'fine,' but one would not expect it to be joined with *agar* to make one word or even as a fixed expression; thanks to Prof. Shaul Shaked for this clarification. On the Indian export commodity *agar* aloes wood, see Abraham, *Merchants Guilds*, 157; note there the sources concerning the quality of the aloes wood from the Indonesian islands and northern Malaysia.}

²⁷ The item *nu'shk* has not been traced thus far. Professor Basham suggested *navām-suka* pronounced something like *nūāshuk*, a compound of *nava*, new, and *amśuka*, fine cloth, muslin. I doubt, however, whether textiles would be mentioned between coir and coconuts and wonder whether *nu'shk* could not stand for *nagzak* {*nagzak*, *naghzak*} mango; see Spies, *Ibn Faḍlallah*, 33. Mango would be traded pickled or as a preserve. {For 'anbā, 'mango,' in our papers, see 569, n. 7.}

²⁸ Arabic *nārjil* (with long *ā*), served also for medicinal purposes; see Lev and Amar, *Medicinal Substances*, 200.}

²⁹ Arabic *jahāz*; cf. line 8, i.e., buying or building a ship and fitting it out. {See Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:228a, who defines *jahbaz markab* equip or arm a boat, but not build or buy a boat. From the reference he cites, I believe that Chakravarti, "Coastal Trade," 116, intended this passage when he erroneously wrote that a large ship carrying passengers and cargo is designated in Arabic in a Geniza letter *jahaj*!}

³⁰ Arabic *al-dhahab* seems to refer to gold coins. Sugar and raisins generally appear in small quantities sent as gifts for children, as in II, 26v, lines 10–11, but here they are export commodities. (Other) goods, *al-ḥawā'ij*, refer to goods ordered by Indian merchants.

[H. Address]

(Arabic script, written in the same direction as postscript) (1) (To) The most illustrious elder, Ibrāhīm b. (2) ʾIshū,³¹ the Israelite—may God preserve his high position!

(1) (From) His servant (2) Maḍmūn b. al-Ḥa[san].

(II, 13v, Hebrew, opposite the beginning of the letter) (1) *To our esteemed master and lord Abraham!*—(2) *may God remember him favorably!*—*the son of our master and lord Yijū—may he rest in Eden!*

(2) (From) *Your friend Maḍmūn the son of Hasan—may he rest in Eden!*

³¹ The address is the same as that of II, 17, with slight variations. The name Yijū was also pronounced and written as Yishū; see II, 17, in the Hebrew address, and III, 22, line 1, or as Ish'ū, as here. {Cf. page 53.}

II, 16–19 *Letter from Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan to Abraham Ben Yijū:*
Four Fragments of Two Copies

{Aden, 1133–40}

II, 16. TS 24.66

II, 17. TS NS J 5

II, 18. TS 13 J 7, f. 13

II, 19. TS K 25, f. 252

Ed. Goitein, "From Aden," 47–50 (text transcribed in Arabic characters), 57–66 (translation and notes).

No. II, 16 is a copy, written by the same clerk who wrote II, 13–14, of the original, II, 17–19, which was written by Maḍmūn.¹ The fifth line of II, 17 matches the first line of II, 16. No. II, 18 begins with the last word in line 5 of II, 16. It concludes with the second word of line 35 of II, 16. The address has been preserved only in II, 17, since the custom was to write the address on the reverse side of the sheet, opposite the beginning; and the beginning, usually containing only polite phrases, was often torn away as not needed, while paper always was in demand for all kinds of purposes; see introduction to II, 13–15.

The clerk worked with great exactitude. There is no deviation from the original. He did, however, use many more diacritical marks than his master, though without any consistency.

The original was carefully written by Maḍmūn in a more pleasant hand than was usual for him. Deletions, involving the beginning of words, are found in two places only. The writer undoubtedly had accounts before him, from which he copied. We may assume that these were entered in Maḍmūn's account book, which is mentioned several times in these documents.

No. II, 16 is written on the same kind of grayish paper as II, 13–15, but differs in width (11.3 cm.). This would seem to imply that they cut their paper to different sizes, and that it was not bought already cut in sheets suitable for writing purposes. Of the length of the sheet, 52.4 cm. are preserved.

The paper is different in II, 17–19. It appears more brownish, lighter, and smoother than the paper of the other fragments originating from Maḍmūn's office, which have been identified. Its width is 10 cm. at the top and 9.5 cm. at the bottom. Its length is 11 cm. plus 25.5 cm. plus 29.5 cm., a total of 66 cm. A space of 12 cm. was left blank on the verso of II, 19. Thus Maḍmūn was not forced to cut short, as he sometimes did for lack of space.

¹ {For sending multiple copies of letters or accounts, see page 9, n. 23.}