

II, 30 *Letter from Maḍmūn b. Ḥasan to Abraham Ben Yijū: Mutual Assistance*
 {Aden, ca. 1136}

ENA 1822A, f. 43

Business letter of Maḍmūn, written in his hand, to Ben Yijū, concluding with the remark that it had been impossible to send 20 dinars to the latter's brother, Joseph, because no Jew had arrived from Egypt that year. Maḍmūn also asks the recipient to assist Maḥrūz, his cousin's husband, who was proceeding to India.¹

{The fragment is the end of a letter from Maḍmūn to Ben Yijū in India. The latter's identity is verified by mention of the money that he had asked be sent to his brother Joseph and by the raw materials of copper and lead, which were sent him for use in his bronze factory in India. It is typical of the India Book papers that this letter mentions the mutual requests of partners to come to the aid of relatives, here to send money to one's brother and to assist the other's cousin's husband.

The contents of the fragment can be summarized:

- [A] Shipments to Ben Yijū to India, including two bags of lead, bars of copper weighing 25 pounds,² 40 Egyptian *mithqāl* coins and 70 Malikī dinars in old coins (lines 1–5).
- [B] Receipt of white and red betel nuts (*faḥḥal*) and the spice cardamom; delivery of goods to Joseph b. Abraham and Khalaf b. Isaac (lines 5–9).
- [C] Goods sent to Ben Yijū: dates, 2 *fūṭa* robes, paper, raisins and sugar and a leather table cover (lines 9–12).
- [D] No *drky* available on the market. Maḍmūn sent some of his own stock from the previous year (lines 13–18).
- [E] "You mentioned in your letter sending twenty dinars to your brother Joseph. Not one Jew arrived this year from Egypt. So I did not send him anything" (lines 18–21).³

¹ {Based on Goitein's Summaries, which other than the draft of the text transcription is all that remains in his papers on this document. Maḥrūz was apparently Maḍmūn's cousin, not his cousin's husband. See page 48.

² Arabic *sufr*. For the meaning of this term, see 555, n. 11.

³ Joseph Ben Yijū had settled in Sicily (see page 72). Cf. II, 29, lines 2 ff., where Maḍmūn wrote that he was unable to send forty Malikī dinars to Ben Yijū's brother Mevassēr, in Egypt, because of the epidemics and political instability there for two years.

[F] Closing account and final note: "By God, by God, act for the sake of esprit de corps⁴ with Sheikh Maḥrūz in all his affairs" (lines 21–24).

No. II, 30 was written after Ben Yijū had already been in India for at least a year, if not more. The request to assist Maḥrūz b. Jacob (for whom, see Introduction IIB1) suggests that this was his first trip to India. He is not called here *nākhudā*, and it is likely that he was not yet a shipowner. His ship, which sailed the Aden-India route, is mentioned already in III, 2, sent to Ben Yijū ca. 1134–37. In any event, III, 3, written ca. 1135–38, mentions Maḥrūz's trip to India, during which he delivered items to Ben Yijū. Maḥrūz traveled back and forth between Aden and Egypt in 1133 and 1134 (V, 1 and V, 2), and in 1135 he was in Fustat. Accordingly, it is likely that II, 30 was written ca. 1136.}

⁴ Arabic *ʿasabiyya*. For the use of this term (which also means a relationship on the father's side) in Geniza papers, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:64.}