

Ben Yijū, who of course had contacts with them in his native country and in Egypt.⁴

Ben Yijū describes his sadness when he had previously been separated from Maḏmūn, obviously referring to the time the writer spent in India (vs. 21). When his adversaries attacked Ben Yijū, Maḏmūn protected him and 'dressed him in his royal garb' (vs. 31, 54).⁵ Maḏmūn's fame was comparable to that of the great rabbi Joseph Ibn Migash (vs. 34).⁶ (Unlike the latter, Maḏmūn was hardly a great scholar, however, as shown by the questions, which he addressed to the Gaon Maṣlīaḥ in no. II, 34.)

Maḏmūn is further praised as a defender of the faith from *mishtaggēa'* (literally, 'one who acts like a madman')⁷ and 'he who lies in ambush' (vs. 37).⁸

{This poem was presumably written after II, 40 (dated ca. 1140), which celebrates the recognition of Maḏmūn as Nagid. Furthermore, the third 'son,' whose birth was anticipated there (vs. 19), is likely to have been the same 'delightful child Japheth' named here (vs. 52) along with his two brothers Ḥalfon and Bundār. Japheth is not mentioned in later documents and may have died in his youth. It is logical to assume that those two were relatively young children as well, and while the way they are described further suggests this (Ḥalfon 'the Prince [*sar*], a pleasant flower' [vs. 49; but *perah* can be used poetically for older children]), this is not definite proof. Goitein's assumption that Ibn Migash (d. 1141) was still alive undoubtedly was based on the way Ben Yijū praised Maḏmūn as 'famous as Ibn Migash' (vs. 34), without any indication that the Spanish rabbi was dead. But in II, 40, Ben Yijū compared Maḏmūn's piety to that of R. Nissim [b. Jacob], who died in 1062, also without any hint that he was not alive. While there is thus no proof, it is nevertheless likely that II, 37 was written ca. 1141; see further II, 40 and II, 70.}

⁴ Ben Yijū reviles his assailants as heretics and fornicators. Goitein notes in his Hebrew comments to the text that their identification as Karaites is largely based on vs. 30: "They reviled me with Mar Zuta, Rav Zuti and Zuti." These names of Talmudic sages all denote 'Mr. Small.' As seen elsewhere, such appellations served the Karaites to denigrate the Rabbanites. In pages 75-76, I suggest a purely personal background for Ben Yijū's vilification by his assailants, not associated with the Karaite schism.

⁵ For the bestowal of robes of honor by officials, see page 428, n. 80. Valuable pieces of clothing that Maḏmūn sent to Ben Yijū as a gift are mentioned in II, 14, lines 15-18.

⁶ The great Spanish rabbi died in 1141, and this verse seems to have been written while he was alive.

⁷ {A circumlocution for an apostate; see Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 99, n. 71.}

⁸ These remarks are based on Goitein's introduction to the text and some of the comments in the Hebrew edition.

II, 38-39 *Encomium Betraying Strong Opposition Met by Maḏmūn*

{Apparently Aden, ca. 1140-44}

II, 38. TS 8J 16, f. 23

II, 39. AIU IV, C, 486

These manuscripts preserve two copies of a poem by Abraham b. Yijū praising Maḏmūn and cursing his enemies. No. II, 38, is clearly written by Ben Yijū, while II, 39, is written in the calligraphic square hand of a scribe. As in II, 37, here too the poet signs his name in an acrostic: ABRHM ḤZQ YJW.

It is noteworthy that the Geniza has preserved two copies of a poem in honor of Maḏmūn. This poem is devoted entirely to one subject: Maḏmūn's enemies, who requited his kindness with treachery (line 8). The opposition is described in general terms, and it is impossible to ascertain whether its background was personal (as in II, 35-36 {III, 11, III, 32}), communal or religious.¹ Nevertheless, the poet emphasizes that Maḏmūn's opponents were compelled to acknowledge his titles *Sar* and Nagid (vs. 14).² {See the introduction to II, 40, for the probable date of composition of this poem.}

¹ {The key to understanding the nature of the opposition may be held in the enigmatic line 6: "All they have is magic (*kishshuf*) and bewilderment," etc.

² These remarks are based on Goitein's introduction to the text in the Hebrew edition.