

Sundry Accounts Written by Ben Yijū on the Verso of No. 54

University Library Cambridge T. - S. 12.235 verso

Description of the ms., see under No. 54.

The accounts were written in three different places on the space left free between the end of the letter, No. 54, and its address:

A) Beneath the address and in the same direction as this, there are written twelve lines, about 11 cm long, on the left side of the paper. They are in ^{large} ~~big~~ bold letters; however, the beginnings of the lines are almost completely illegible, owing to damage by water or ~~big~~ holes in the paper. Between l. 10 and 11, another line, written in smaller letters, is inserted.

B) At an angle of ninety ^{degrees} ~~degrees~~ to the first 4-6 lines described under (A), thirteen lines of 2-4 cm are scribbled in small letters on the right side of the page. They are effaced to such a degree that even a photograph taken under ultra-violet rays could bring out only single, incoherent words.

C) Beneath (B), there are other accounts written in the same direction as (A), of which, owing to their bad state of preservation, even the number of lines could not be made out. The ends of three lines of (C) are visible beneath (A).

Whether these accounts were written in India or in Yemen will be made out after one or more of the smaller coins mentioned will be identified. As pointed out in the Commentary to (A), the Indian coins, usually listed by Ben Yijū, are not occurring here. Therefore, I am inclined to assume that these accounts were written in Yemen.

Despite its poor state of preservation, the document is not without interest.

We learn about the daily life of the Westerners in Yemen (or India), as well as about smaller coins used there at that time.

T r a n s l a t i o n

(A)

- 1 Seven dirhams due from Sheikh Abū Sa^cd, the rest of the dinār.
- 2 Due from ...(.) two Mangūrī dirhams and two others, one Husainī,
- 3 and the second Aḥmadī. Total: three dirhams and two fals. He handed over to *me*
one
- 4 Husainī dirham in five fals. Total: four dirhams less one fals.
- 5 dirhams and one fals. Due to him, one dirham for dādī.
- 6 two dir]hams and one fals. He owns to the wax merchant.
- 7 Total: three dirhams and six fals.
- 8 and four fals. Balance: two dirhams and two fals.
- 9?..... dir]hams. He received five dirhams and the worth of
- 10 one fals and] a quarter of a raṭl of cummin; price six fals;
//due from him an Aḥmadī dirham; balance in his favor, one fals.//
another
- 11 Due to him, one fals for radish; another fals for radish; for the tailor.
- 12 Due to him also three fals forn. Total: seven fals. I handed over to
him one dirham.

(C)

- 1 and in the *h*ands of Sheikh ^cAlī (or Eli) al-Baṣṣāṭ one dirham pay-
ment in advance for the niṣāfi.
- 2 five dirhams and a half. Due to me from the Kōhēn, one dinār and

in the hands of his son Joseph.

3

4 three dirhams and a raṭl of candy-sugar.

C o m m e n t a r y

(A)

Lines one to eight are deleted by two strokes crossing each other - a sign that the accounts mentioned in them had been settled.

Four types of dirhams are mentioned in these accounts.

1) One not specified. This was perhaps the Indian standard coin, cf. No. 20a, ll. 1-5 (above 75); No. 2, l. 5; No. 6, ll. 8-9, where about fifteen (Nahrava^{-A}fa) dirhams correspond to one Egyptian Dīnār. See also No. 64B, ll. 3-5.

2-4) Local dirhams, called Mansūrī, Ḥusainī, and Aḥmadī, respectively, which were of a lower value than the standard dirham, see ll. 2-3.

The dirham seems to be divided into eight copper coins called fals (see Encycl. of Islam); for in ll. 3-4

3 <u>dirh.</u>	2 <u>fals</u>	and
	5 "	

3 dirh. 7 fals add up to four dirh. less one fals. Likewise, in 9-10 mentioning is made of one plus six fals assets, with one fals remaining as a liability, totalling ~~to~~ one Aḥmadī dirham. When it is said in ll. 11-12 that the writer for covering a debt totalling seven dirhams gave one dirham, it seems to be also implied that the dirham contained approximately that number of copper coins.

As the local coins here seem to be different from those mentioned above No. 64, Yijū lived, when making his notes on No. 223, in another place than in No. 64.

1 A Sheikh Abu Sa'd belonged to Yijū's acquaintances in India, No. 133, v. 9, and perhaps was also identical with a man of the same name, contributing oil to Yijū's synagogue, University Library Cambridge T.- S. 10 K 20, fol. 3 v., l. 1. However, the name was rather common among Jews, cf. The Index of this book.

The rest of the dīnār - Yijū had given Abū Sa'd a dīnār; he had paid back probably 8 dirhams (See above), while he still owned seven.

3 Three dirhams - the local dirhams were of a lower ratio of exchange than the standard dirham.

5 ~~Dādī - obviously used as an ingredient in the bronze factories of Southern~~
India, see No. 64B, l. 7.

6 Wax - See above No. 64C, l. 5; No. 65, l. 10.

11 ^{Probably} ~~Obviously~~ a factotum, who did various errands for Yijū.

(C)

1 ^o lī may be pronounced either in the Arabic way ^o Alī or in the Hebrew Eli.

Bagṣaṭ - the reading is clear; ṣ stands for s (regressive phonetic assimilation). The word may mean a carpet maker (from bisāṭ, carpet) - a form which, however, is not to be found in the dictionaries - or perhaps peddler, as bisāṭī, cf. Johnson, Persian-English Dict. Wahrmond, Arabisch-Deutsches W. s.v.). Ben Yijū had asked Eli to ~~secure~~ for him a niṣāfī, which is half a Malikī dīnār and was the currency of ^{Dh} Duā Gibla, then the capital of Yemen.

2 the Kōhēn - ~~the word was not regarded as a family name, but as designating the religious status of the person.~~

4 candy-sugar - This (Ar. fānīd) type was common in India, while sugar proper was imported, cf. the Vol. I, Index s.v. sugar.