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61

Two Fragments of One Letter by Madmun to b. YijuFrom Aden to India, approximately 1134

30 Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, Adler Collection, No. 3616,  
fol. 19.

61 University Library Cambridge, Ms. Or. 1081, J 3.

It is almost beyond doubt that these two fragments are parts of one letter. As we shall discern from the first fragment, by a direct <sup>e</sup>statement, and from the second, from its content, ( cf. below in the ~~intro-~~ <sup>opening</sup> ~~introduction~~ <sup>XXXXXX</sup> and notes ), they were both sent by Madmun to b. Yiju, from Aden to India, both were written by the same clerk, whom we have already met above, cf. <sup>t</sup>introduction to no.23, p. , the paper is similar, even though this evidence is distorted because no. 61 is more water-damaged than no. 30, and apparently a piece of the page was also cut or torn along most of its length. The paper is about 9 cm. wide, almost white, quite thin, and with the fibres still clearly visible.

The convincing proof that these two fragments belong together is that on the length of both is written a single line of addition ; the beginning of this addition in no. 30 is the direct continuation of the last line on the recto of no. 61. On the other hand, at least five ~~IXNA~~ words of this addition have been lost, and perhaps even more ( cf. below in the <sup>opening</sup> ~~introduction~~ ). Five words in the addition,

written in the margin, run along about 9 lines in the main body of the letter. In view of such a great, irreparable loss of a part of a letter, there can be no absolute certainty that the two fragments constitute one letter. It could very well be that, by chance, <sup>another</sup> ~~the~~ letter was written in the exact same style ( although, the like of it has not been found <sup>among</sup> ~~in~~ the various letters of Madmun which have come down to us ), and, <sup>that</sup> by chance, the beginning of the addition ~~XXXXXXXX~~ fits the end of the page of one fragment. However, by all the rules of clear thinking we must assume that nos. 30 and 61 are portions of one letter.

No. 30 is the beginning of the letter, and what is unusual, but similar to no. 23 above, is that it contains within the body of the letter the names of both the <sup>correspondent</sup> ~~writer~~ and addressee, in addition to the address which has been preserved on the reverse of the page, opposite to the beginning of the letter. The letter was sent from Aden, the permanent residence of Madmun, to India, as is seen from the fact that the writer acknowledges the receipt of pepper shipments, one of <sup>them</sup> ~~which~~ by the agency of &Ali b. Mansur al-FawIali ( cf. no. 54, verso, l. 1, where he is discussed in detail ).

No. 61 was sent to b. Yiju, as is evident from the blessings which are invoked for his son Surur and his slave Bama, cf. verso, ll. 25-26, and the writer is Madmun, as we can see from the hand of his <sup>scribe</sup> clerk (cf. above), from the style, and from many other details.

The amount b. Yiju owes is 881 dinars (Maliki, no. 61, verso, l. 1). This includes 300 dinars <sup>Satisfaction</sup> ~~compromise~~ money for Sheikh Makhluf, who is mentioned in no. 61, margin, after the <sup>detailed</sup> /list of what b. Yiju owes. The total of these items was, then, 581 dinars. However, all the items listed in no. 61, and in no. 30, margin, and in no. 61 margin, only add up to about 231 dinars and <sup>one</sup> ~~x~~ nisafi - i.e. ~~XXXXXXXX~~ 'one half (dinar)' - whose value apparently was one-half of a dinar (Maliki). The difference between these two sums, about 350 (Maliki) dinars, seem to offset the 100 Egyptian /mithqals(dinars) which were sent to b. Ykju according to no. 30 margin, if we assume that the rate of exchange at the time of the writing of this letter was the same as that of the previous letter, no. 29, l. 29, cf. notes ad loc., that is, 1:3.5 . There are grounds for assuming that letter no. 29-199 was sent a short <sup>time</sup> ~~time~~ after 30-61, because in no. 61, margin, we have the statement that the compromise money had been paid to Sheikh Makhluf ; no. 199, ll. 12-19, however, explains at length that all the claims of Sheikh Makhluf had been satisfied. See further in the notes to no. 61, verso, ll. 4-7.

Thus, the lacuna between the end of the margin in no. 30 and the beginning of the margin in no. 61 is to be filled with some such statement as:

" 100 Egyptian mithqals worth [350 dinars. Total owing, 581] dinars and one-half ".

calculations

It should be kept in mind that the ~~xxx~~ ~~xx~~ ~~xx~~ of the sum to b. Ykju's credit which end with the two first words in no. 61, recto, l. 1

also end with the words "x dinar(s) and one-half", and we must, then, assume that <sup>in</sup> no. 61, verso, l. 1, should also have <sup>been</sup> added "and one-half", but that it was deleted, as might happen at the end of a line. It is understandable that the writer was not <sup>precise</sup> ~~exact~~, since the <sup>exact</sup> ~~precise~~ sum had just been mentioned in the previous line.

In connection with ~~the~~ filling in the original, it must be remembered that the writer may ~~sometimes~~ use numerals or words, or alternate between the two.

*restoration*  
The completion may then read:

<p style="margin-left: 40px;">You owe a</p> <p>[350 dinars./total of 581]</p>	<p>ca. 5 normal words.</p>
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or:

<p>[three hundred and fifty dinars. You owe a total of five hundred and eighty-one]</p>	<p>ca. 10 normal words.</p>
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or:

<p>[350 dinars. You owe a total of five hundred and eighty-one]</p>	<p>ca. 8 normal words.</p>
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In accordance with this, it will be necessary to interpolate between 9-18 lines. It may be that the missing middle portion will be discovered among the thousands of Geniza fragments which have not yet been examined.

The following is the content of the letter, as far as it is possible to determine it from the material at hand:

- A        Acknowledgment of receipt of a letter and shipment from  
b. Yiju. ( no. 30, ll. 1-14).
- B        Calculation of the sum to b. Yiju's credit, and perhaps  
other details ( completely lost, <sup>x</sup> except for the first two words ~~x~~ in

no. 61, l. 1 ).

C Calculation of what he owes. ( no. 61, ll. 1-16, no. 30, margin, no. 61, margin - verso, l. 1 ).

D Details concerning some freight sent to b. Yiju ( no. 61, verso, ll. 2-3 ).

E Allusion to severe troubles suffered by Madmun that year ( ll. 4-7 ) .

F Greetings and gifts ( ll. 7-12 ).

# TRANSLATION

A (no. 30, l. 1) Well-being without end and blessings without  
 (2) number, to my precious lord, our m(aster) and t(eacher) Abraham  
 (3) the son of our h(onored), g(reat) and h(oly) m(aster) and t(eacher)  
Yiju, m(ay he rest) in ~~E(eden)~~ the G(arden) of E(den), (from ?) your  
friend Madmun (4), son of Hasan, m(ay he rest) in the G(arden) of E(den).

Your letter arrived, my lord; (5) I read and understood it, and I was  
 happy to learn that you were well (6) and your affairs successful, and  
 I thanked ~~to~~ God for this (7) very much.

about of the  
 Your servant ~~XXXXXXXX~~ took note from what (8) you mentioned ~~XXXX~~ *the illustrious Nahoda*  
~~XXXXXXXX~~ shipment of pepper (9) with *Ali* (10) b. Mansur al-Fawfali -  
 one  
 may God preserve his honor - (11) and of the ~~XXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ in BDH's ship.  
 Everything has {already} arrived. (12) [.....] my lord [.....] a happy  
 eye (13) [.....] in his demand (14) [.....] a

document [...] ..

B ( no. 61, remnants of a line before the first) [Total to your credit: eight hundred (1) [and eighty-on]e dinars and one-half. the cost of

C You owe: ~~what was paid for~~ the "nougat," (2) [the product of] the highlands (sc. of Yemen), 3 dinars less one-fourth ; and on account of (3) the Nahoda Abu Sa'id, the cost of wheat (sent) from Mangalor, (4) 3 dinars ; the cost of durra, a dinar and one-sixth ; the cost of (5) two Egyptian 'futas', 4 dinars ; the cost of a 'sharrabiya', (6) two dinars and one-half ; the cost of a 'maqta', ~~tax~~ <sup>two</sup> dinars and one-half;; the cost of Lakhabi glass, one-half dinar and one-quarter ; the cost of a set of Egyptian glasses, 6 qirts ; the cost of (9) 4 bottles, firmly set in coasters, which are in the possession of b. Qutus, (10) one nisafi.

You also owe ( for what ) is in the ship of Ramisht, (11) being brought by <sup>red</sup> ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Umar al-Bandari: a bag of/brass, (12) the number: 15 pieces, the weight: a bahar (13) and one-half ; the price, including <sup>tax</sup> the export ~~tax~~ from the customs house of Aden: (14) nine dinars.

You also owe ( for what ) is being brought by Sidan b. (15) Abu 'l-Fatah: two 'stanes' of silver, the weight: six hundred (16) and five dirhams ; the price, 124 dinars.

#### NO. 30, MARGIN

and one-third, and a purse in which there are 100 Egyptian mithqals ; the price: [350 dinars. You owe a total of 581 dinars]

(10) A gift has been dispatched to you from your servant  
to your son - (11) six quarters of su[gar] and raisins, and one  
piece of (12) rose water.

NO. 61 Margin

a dinar and one-half, and settlement money for Sheikh Makhluf, three hundred dinars, totalling..

NO. 61 VERSO

(1)

You owe: eight hundred and eighty-one dinars.

D (2) The gold and the silver and the clothes ( were sent to you ) with Sidan (3) b. Abu 'l-Fatah, and the glass with b. Qutus.

E (4) Dear God ! This year I have had (5) such burdens that I cannot recount (them), (6) and I only write this letter of mine in a state (7) that God, may he be exalted, surely knows.

F Please accept, my lord (8) (wishes for) the most consummate well-being for yourself, and ~~(from)~~ your son Surur (9) and Bama are especially greeted.

NOTES

1. "well-being without end" - this phrase is based on Isaiah ~~27~~ 9:1, and the second phrase is added to parallel the first. These phrases are not found at the beginning of the letters <sup>which we are dealing with</sup> at hand.

2. "precious" - 'honored', cf. above, no. 23, l. 2.

3. "(from) your friend" - Heb. " 'Ohavkha ", following the style in many Biblical verses, cf. above, no. 23, l. 1. It is not necessary to write 'from' in the address, since the very position of the name on the left designates the correspondent. However, since in this letter,



no. 30, verso, Madmun writes "from your friend", even in the address,

we must conclude that the 'mem' was omitted here in error.

11. "BDH" - apparently an Indian name. <sup>It is difficult to decide whether</sup> ~~this~~ this is the same person as

BDH the Indian with whom copper vessels belonging to Madmun were stored,

cf. above, no. 199, verso, l. 15.

13-14. Since Madmun mentions a "document" here, cf. "documents" above in no. 199, l. 16, and since below we find reference to the settlement with Sheikh Makhluf, as in the same line in no. 199, it becomes clear that Madmun is referring to the affairs of b. Ykju in this matter.

#### NO. 61

1. "nougat" - Ar. "jawziyya", a confection made from nuts, abbreviated from "halawa jawziyya", cf. Dozy, I, 234 A. s.v. 'jawziyy'.

2. "[the product of] the highlands" - Ar. "&amlu] 'l-jabal", cf. above, no. 24, l. 26. The <sup>restoration</sup> completion is, of course, unsure.

3. <sup>b</sup>  
"Au Sa'id" - most probably Abu Sa'id b. Mahfud, mentioned  
<sup>A</sup> above, no. 28, ll. 15, 23, 30, 39, etc. See the introduction ad. loc.,

P.

Wheat was not <sup>was</sup> grown in Mangalor but ~~what~~ brought there from Aden, and thence sent to Abu Sa'id who loved, perhaps, in Pandarayna, <sup>place of</sup> the/residence of b. Yiju, cf. above no. 28, l. 25 ; for wheat, cf. no. 56, l. 46.

5. "sharabiyya" - a garment made of a special type of linen,

cf. Sergeant, Islamic Textiles, X, 86; made in Fasā, south-east of Shiraz in Persia. XI-XII, 102 in Tabaristan, northern Iran. However, the same type was apparently made in Egypt also, cf. Sergeant, in the first place, introduction.

6. "maqtā" - for this common type of linen, or garment, see Index to Introduction.
7. "Lakhabī" - Lakhaba was a place "two farsah (parasangs), less one-quarter, ( about 10 km. ) from Aden ", from which bricks and ~~xxix~~ glass were brought to Aden, cf. O. Löfgren, Texte...Aden im Mittelalter, p. 22, l. 2.
9. "in coasters" - cf. above, no. 29, l. 44.  
       "b. Qutus" - cf. verso, l. 3. This strange name may be Christian, and it a dialectical variant of 'Qudus'.
10. "nisafi" - for this coin cf. above, no. 28, l. 2 & 34.
11. "&Umar al-Bandari" - a man from the family of Bandar, perhaps Muslim since there was a mosque in Aden bearing the name 'b. Bandar', cf. O. Löfgren, op. cit., p. 257, l. 3. I do not think that the writer, whose grandfather was called 'Bandar', would call a member of his family in this way.
12. "brass" - regarding this price, cf. above, no. 28, l. 26.
14. "Sidan" - cf. above, no. 199, l. 22.
15. (cf. marginal note in text)

NO. 30 MARGIN, NO. 61 MARGIN

"mithqal" - Ar. "mithqala'", which is irregular. However, above, no. 26, l. 31 (another hand) 'mithqal'. The scribe who wrote this ~~XXX~~ letter used many embellishments in his script, and it may be that he thought that this form was in accord with the laws of Arabic grammar.

For the <sup>restoration</sup> completion and concerning Sheikh Makhluf cf. introduction above.

4-7. The troubles which are hinted at here cannot be the same as described those ~~mentioned~~ above, no. 28, margin and verso, since the latter was the first letter from Aden to India after b. ~~Yij~~ Yiju reached there ( see ad. loc., ll. 5-6 ). If so, our letter is later, and ~~since their~~ ~~there~~ it would have been pointless to mention advers<sup>i</sup>ties as bluntly as here after Madmun had given a detailed description of his gigantic losses, as he did in no. 28.

6-7. "in a state that God, may he be exalted, surely knows" - i.e., in bad shape.

8. "Surur" - matches the Hebrew name P<sup>e</sup>rachyah, cf. above, no. 24, l. 36, no. 199, l. 11.

"Bama" - the agent-slave of b. Yiju, cf. no. 199, ll. 4, 8.

11. "six quarters" - the same quantity as above, no. 199, ll. 8-9. It is astonishing that we have here "sitta ruba&iyya" (in the singular) rather than "6 ruba&iyyat" ~~(sittasix)~~, as in no. 199, although the two pieces are written by the same hand.

11-12. "a piece of rose water" - rose water was marketed in <sup>special</sup> bottles, called qamqam, cf. no. 50, ll. 20-21, no. 187, l. 4. The use of the word 'piece' belongs to business slang.