

17. A CHRISTIAN MERCANTILE LETTER FROM THE PRIZE PAPERS COLLECTIONS (1759)¹

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Transcription

Envelope

1. بعونه تعالى
2. يصل الي محروسة مصر يسلم ليد الأخ العزيز الخواجه ديمتري خير
3. بالخير
4. ب م

Recto

5. الي جناب الاخ العزيز الخواجه ديمتري المكرم دام الله بقاءه
6. بعد مزيد كترة الاشواق اليكم لا يخفاكم قبل تاريخه ارسلنا لكم مكتوب صحبة
مركب القبطان بانوفيسك
7. راكوزي جواب مكاتيبكم انشالله تكونوا اطلعتموا عليه بخير واخبرناكم بوصول اربعة
بالاة

¹ The letter is part of the box HCA 32/212 in the National Archives. In the analyses for the Prize Papers project, this letter was given the provisional NAL 45.6, as the letters had not yet been catalogued by the National Archives.

8. عصفر وبالتين شمع وستة فروق بن الذين ارسلتوهم من حسابنا علي طريق دمياط فمتي
9. عرفتونا التمن بالمصروف قيدناهم لكم واخبرناكم ايضاً ان انطون عمل لكم قايمه
10. الحساب بجميع الداخل والخارج كما هو مسطر في الدفاتر وارسلها لكم صحبة بانوفيك ثم
11. اخبرناكم من جهة باله العصفر الذي ناقصه وبالتين القماش كتبنا الي يوسف
12. فرنجي انه يفحص دفاترنا الذين في سكندريه وينظر ان كان فقدوا في مراكب الذين ضاعوا
13. ام حاصل غلط فهلبت تعرفونا عن ذلك حتي لا يسهي عليه وعند اتطلاعكم
14. علي القايمه المذكوره تخلصوا الحساب وتعرفونا صحته وترسلوا لنا قايمه نقيضه
15. حتي ننظر الغايه ونخلص من هذا الحساب لان حالته طالت وما في غير مراجعه
16. من طرفكم لطرفنا ومن طرفنا لطرفكم فالمراد هذه نهايت الحساب الذي ارسله لكم
17. انطون وخلافه ما في واخبرناكم ان من عبود شلبي لم حضر لنا مكاتيب ولا
18. عندنا خبر كيف مراده في هذه الحجاره الذين ارسلتوهم فالمرجوا

Signature Bottom Left

19. محب مخلص لكم
20. يوسف
21. بكتي
22. م

End Right Margin (Date)

23. سنه 1759 في
24. 16 شهر كانون
25. اخر غ

Right Margin

26. يا اخي في حال وصول هذا المكتوب لكم ترسلوا
27. له مكتوب وتعرفوه يرسل لنا جواب ويعرفنا
28. مراده لاننا اصرفنا نصين طيبه علي شغل
29. هذه الحجاره وتركيبهم وهي معطله علينا

30. واخبرناكم ايضاً ان ترسلوا لنا غلاق حساب
31. اخينا المرحوم الذي كان قبل اخيكم الخواجه
32. يوسف حتي ننظر قدره ونقطع حسابكم مع اخينا
33. المرحوم ثم بعده حضر لطرفنا مركب القبطان اندربولي
34. كورنيز من سكندريه وصحبته حضر لنا عزيز مكتوبكم
35. الكريم محرر في 15 شهر تشرين اول فقريناه وفهمنا
36. كامل ما شرحتم وحمدناه الله علي صحتكم صار معلومنا
37. وصول مكتوبنا لكم صحبة مركب السويد مقاوله انطون
38. والمذكور [...] يتوجه لدمياط يشحن ارز والحال لم
39. هو محقق لان مركب الارز الذي حضر من دمياط تخزن
40. جميعه في الحواصل ويبيع جملة ما في اما قفتين وتلاته

Top Margin

41. سعر 14 وسعر 14,25 صار معلومنا احوال واسعار طرفكم وحضور الحج قربنا يلطف
42. بالحال عرفونا ان باقي عندكم برميل قزدير والحال اتصرفوا فيه بزايد ام
43. بناقص كذلك باقي عندكم جانب حب هال عرفنا ابن خالتنا يتصرف فيه
44. ثم ان سالتهم عن احوال هذا الطرف علي ما هي واسعار البن سعر 23 والعصفر
45. تبهدل ونزل الي سعر 10,25 وموجود منه كتير وطلب من برا ما في والصمغ
46. سعر 8 وسعر 8,25 واصناف القمايش جميعها مايته وبعد تاريخه نعمل لكم
47. قايمه بصافي جميع البضاعه الذي وصلتنا من يدكم والحريير بعنا منه
48. خمسمائة ليبره والباقي قاعد مرادنا نعمل له حال ونخلص منه -
49. واسعار الحرير البيروتي سعر 16 والطرابلسي سعر 16 وسعر 17 والباياسي
50. سعر 14 والقبرصي سعر 12 وباقي الاسعار علي ماهي يكون ذلك معلومكم
51. هذا ما عندنا اخبرناكم فالمرجوا لا تمنعوا عنا اخبار صحتكم وما
52. لكم من الخدمه والمصالح عرفونا علي الراس والعين بلغوا مزيد اشواقنا
53. الي اخوتكم واولادهم العزاز والي اخوتنا وكامل المحبين حضر
54. من عندنا يسلموا عليكم واولاد اخينا يقبلوا يديكم وطال الله
55. بقاكم والسلام

Translation

Envelope

1. With the help of God
2. To be sent to Cairo, to the hands of the dear brother Ḳawāja Dimitri Ḳayr
3. in well-being
4. b m

Recto

(5) To the Excellency, my dear brother Ḳawāja Dimitri the honourable, may God prolong his life. (6) After (expressing) our intense longing for you, it will not have escaped your notice that previously we sent you a letter with the ship of captain Panofisk (7) Raguzī in answer to your letters. God willing, (the letter) found you well. We informed you about the arrival of the four bales (8) of safflower and two bales of yellow wax and six packets of coffee that you sent on our account via Damietta. When (9) you inform us about the price including expenses, we will register it for you. Also, we told you that Antwān made (10) a list of the income and expenditures as set down in the records, and he sent it to you with Panofisk. Then (11) we informed you about the missing bale of safflower and two bales of cloth. We wrote to Yūsuf (12) Faranjī to check our records in Alexandria and to see if they were lost in the ships which were lost (13) or whether there was a mistake. You should urgently inform us about this so that he does not forget about it. When you have inspected the (14) aforementioned list, you should close the account. You should inform us of its correctness and send us an annulled list

(15) so that we can see the extent of it, and close the account, because it has taken so much time. There is nothing left but a revision (16) from your side to our side and vice versa. Now, we hope that this will be the end of the account that Antwān sent to (17) you and there is no disparity. We informed you that we did not receive letters from ‘Abūd Šalabī, we do not (18) know what his desire for these stones that you sent is. So please

Signature Bottom Left

- 19. Your sincere friend
- 20. Yūsuf
- 21. Baktī
- 22. m

End Right Margin (Date)

- 23. Year 1759 (written) on
- 24. 16th of the Second
- 25. Kānūn

Right Margin

(26) My brother, when this letter reaches you, you should send (27) a letter to him and inform him to send us a reply and to tell us (28) what he wants, because we spent two good half-dinars on the preparation (29) of these stones and on setting them, which has been delaying us. (30) Also we informed you to send us the final account calculation (31) of our deceased brother, which was (for the period) before your brother Kawāja (32) Yūsuf’s (account) so that we would know how much is it, and to cut off your account from the one of our deceased (33) brother. Then, the ship

of captain Andropoly Korniz arrived in our area (34) from Alexandria, with it came to us your dear honourable (35) letter dated to 15th Tishreen Awwal. We have read it and understood (36) all of what you had explained. We thanked God for your well-being. We knew about (37) the arrival of our letter at yours with the Swedish ship hired by Antwān (38) and the mentioned [...] who had the intention of heading to Damietta to load rice. Well, this is not (39) confirmed, because the rice ship that came from Damietta was stored entirely (40) at the (government) corn stores, and there is no outright sale option, only two or three baskets are available

Top Margin

(41) at a price 14 and 14,25. We learned about the prices and the conditions (of merchandises) in your area during the time of *Hajj*, may God (42) give his mercy. You informed us that there is one barrel of tin plating left with you. Now, you should get rid of it (literally: sell it out with profit or loss). (43) Also, there is some cardamom left with you. We informed our cousin to sell it. (44) If you are asking about the news in our area, it is as usual. The coffee price is 23 and the safflower (45) is depreciated, and its price went down to 10,25. There is enough available, and there is no demand for it from abroad. The gum arabic is (46) priced at 8 and 8.25. All types of clothes sales are dead. Afterwards, we will prepare for you (47) a list of the net of all merchandises that arrived from your side. Concerning the silk, we sold (48) five hundred libra from it; the rest is sitting (on the shelves). We wish that we could manage to sell it. (49) The prices of the Beiruti silk

is 16, and the Tripolitan is 16 and 17, and the Bāyāsī (50) is at 14, and the Cypriot is at 12. The rest of the prices are unchanged; you should know this (51) for now, this is all the news we have. We wish that you do not cut us off from news about your health. Whatever (52) you need and desire, please let us know (we will do it) with pleasure. Send our many greetings (53) to your brothers and their dear children, and to our brothers and all the beloved. People (54) from here are sending you greetings. The children of our brother are kissing your hands. May God prolong your (55) life. Peace.

Commentary

Line 7

اربعة بالاة ‘four bales’. Final *tāʾ* is frequently spelled as *tāʾ marbūṭa*.

Line 8

الذين ارسلتوهم ‘which you sent’ (see also twice in line 12 and in line 18). The use of the plural relative pronoun for inanimate objects is slightly unusual here. The writer, Yūsuf Baktī, appears to favour this hypercorrect form, perhaps seen as more elevated style, as it also appears in another letter of his to a different addressee, interestingly, a Muslim correspondent.

Line 13

اطلاعكم ‘your inspection’. The colloquial *itfaʿala* stem appears frequently in the mercantile letters of the Prize Papers.

Line 16

نهايت الحساب ‘the end of your account’. Just as final *tāʾ* may be spelled with *tāʾ marbūṭa*, so *tāʾ marbūṭa* is spelled with *tāʾ*.

Line 17

لم حضر لنا مكاتيب 'the end of your account'. In the mercantile letters, *lam* is not as frequent as in clerical letters, but it does occur, here with the perfect to negate the past.