

Letter I

'Allān b. Hassūn, still a novice in the India trade, writes from Aden to his uncle and father-in-law 'Arūs b. Joseph in Fustat

TS 10 J 16, f. 1, "India Book," Old mark 143, Final VI, 11.

A. Introduction

I am writing to you, my father, who is dear to me and with me, may God prolong his life and make permanent his honored position, his support and help, his safety and well-being, may he never leave him without full success and may he be for him and with him in all his undertakings.

B. Prices in Aden

What you wish to know: I arrived safely in Aden, but found the markets to be dull. Half of what I had with me was not sold. The modish garments sold for 5 1/2 to 5 to 4 1/2 mithqāls [Egyptian dinars], the maqṭa's for 2 1/2 to 2 1/4, the saris [fūṭās] for 1 3/4 to 1 1/2. Please take notice. One hundred mithqāls and some singles were cashed for these.

C. Decision to travel to India

Having sought God's guidance, I decided to travel to Sindābūr with the corals and storax, for I did not find a market for it [meaning the corals]; all they offered me for it [in Aden] was 18 [dinars] per selling unit.

D. Arrangements with Joseph, another nephew of 'Arūs

Do not ask what Joseph did to me. He came to me during the night before my departure and said: My paternal uncle ['Arūs] and Sibā told me that you should not ~~go over-~~ <sup>travel on the</sup> seas. He took from me 65 dinars for silver, 25 dinars for 10 maqṭa's, and 30 maqṭa's, which he took with him.

Previous

E. Sales in ports on the west coast of the Red Sea

As to the balance of the 70 mithqāls<sup>34</sup>: for 10  
 mithqāls I sold cloaks<sup>35</sup> in Dahlak<sup>36</sup> to Sirāj on condition that  
 I would take the money at my return with the al-Kārim flotilla.<sup>37</sup>  
 I sold him [also] cloaks for 40 mithqāls; and also in Bāde<sup>38</sup> I  
 sold to 'Alī Ibn Nājī cloaks for 4 mithqāls, and in Suwākin<sup>39</sup> to  
 'Abd al-Rāziq cloaks for 20 mithqāls. The promissory notes  
 signed by them will be with me until I return safely and  
 receive these sums in full, if God will.

F. The sinful senior cousin Joseph

Joseph stays in Lakhba<sup>40</sup> with the whores (Heb.), "the  
 company," and a beardless youth, who ser[ves them drinks].<sup>41</sup>

Verso, Address

To my father and lord,  
 'Arūs, son of Joseph, (may he  
 rest in Eden).

(from) His scion  
 'Allāl,<sup>42</sup> son of  
 Ḥassūn

May God prolong his life and  
 make his honored position permanent.

1127  
 Ḥassūn