

A Handbook and Reader of Ottoman Arabic

EDITED BY ESTHER-MIRIAM WAGNER





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Esther-Miriam Wagner (ed.), *A Handbook and Reader of Ottoman Arabic*. Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures 9. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0208>

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Semitic Languages and Cultures 9.

ISSN (print): 2632-6906

ISSN (digital): 2632-6914

ISBN Paperback: 9781783749416

ISBN Hardback: 9781783749423

ISBN Digital (PDF): 9781783749430

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0208

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30. ARABIA: A LETTER FROM ABDALLAH ḤIṢĀNĪ TO ʿABDALLAH BĀŠĀ (1855)

Jérôme Lentin

A letter from the *šayḥ* ʿAbdallah Ḥiṣānī to ʿAbdallah Bāšā, dated 18 Rabīʿ al-ʿawwal 1272 h (28 November 1855); from the facsimile in ʿAḡlū (2002, 170), since the edition (81–82) is faulty.

Transcription

تعالى

الحمد لله وحده

1. الى حضرت¹ قدوة الاكابر وعين الاعيان المحروس بعين الملك الديان افندينا عبد الله باشه حضه الله امين
2. السلام عليكم ورحمت الله وبركاته وبعد جانا² جوابك العزيز وفهمنا مضمونه ويو³ جانا جوابك واردنا⁴ جواب
3. سابق من امير مكة الشريف عبد المطلب ومن عند اهل مكة العما⁵ والمفاتي ويذكرون ان النصار طبو⁶
4. مكة بيت الله الحرام وهذا العلم لا يرضاه لا الله ولا رسوله ولا السلطان⁷ ولا من يقول لا اله الا الله محمد رسو
5. ل الله وبعد بلغنا الامر هذا صابة⁸ المسلمين غيره دون دين محمد صلى الله عليه وعلى اله وسلم ودون دينهم
6. وبغة⁹ تقوم القبائل وطلبنا منهم لين¹⁰ نبلغكم ونبلغ الباشه ونشوف¹¹ تحقيق الامور فان كان وكد¹¹ عند
7. نا على ما ذكر الشريف وهل¹² مكة على ان النصارا هتكو حرمة بيت الله فحنا¹³ ما عندنا طاعه¹⁴ لنصار ولا لمن

8. يعينها وقايمين¹⁵ عليها غيرت فدين¹⁶ ومستعينين بلا لله وبرسوله وبكلمه التوحيد كما قال الله تعالى سبحانه وتعالى
9. يا ايها الذين امنوا انا ما المشركون نجس فلا يقربو المسجد الحرام¹⁷ وانا سار¹⁸ بيني وبينك عهده على ما يرضي¹⁹ الله ورسوله
10. وعلى ما يصلح في ارض الحرمين ومن وقت العهده اليها²⁰ تاريخه ما حصل تقصير في خدمتكم وخدمت الدوله العليه
11. وحننا خدامه بلا مصلحه معك ومع الدوله العليه كله في شان²¹ محبة افندينا ومحبتك السبب انك
12. راع صدق²² معي وحننا عرفنا سعادت افندينا بجواب ونزرب²³ جوابه ونزرب جواب منك وحننا مجتهدين
13. في كف القبائل قبايلنا لين يجينا جواب افندينا وجوابك هذ²⁴ ما لزم عرفناك²⁵ به والسلام²⁶ حرر وجرا يوم الوفا²⁷
14. من ربيع اول سنة ١٢٧٢ من خادمك الشيخ عبد الله حصاني [ختم]

Translation

Praise be to God alone, exalted be He

(1) To his Lordship, model of the grandees and prominent among the leaders, protected by the eye of the Retributing Sovereign, our Sir (*'Afandīnā*) 'Abdallah Bāšā—may God prompt him [to godly works]. Amen. (2) Greetings to you and the mercy of God and His blessings be upon you. — I have received your esteemed letter and I have perfectly understood *the contents*. The [very] day it arrived, we had [just] received a letter (3) from the *'amīr* of Mecca the *Sharīf* 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and from the people of Mecca, *'ulamā'*, and muftis. They were reporting that the Christians entered (4) Mecca, the Sacred House of God. Such news satisfies neither God, nor His Prophet, nor the Sultan, nor those who say that there is no deity *except God* and that Muhammad is His (5) messenger. When we heard that, the Muslims felt full of ardour [to fight] for the religion of Muḥammad (God bless him and

grant him salvation) and for their religion. (6) The tribes wanted to rise up. We asked them [to wait] until we inform you and the Pasha and until things are confirmed. If it proves true (7) that the Christians disgraced the sanctity of the House of God, as the *Sharīf* and the people of Mecca said, we will yield neither to the Christians nor to those who (8) support them and we will rise against them in zeal for the religion and we will seek the help of God, of His Prophet, and of the proclamation of His unicity. As God—praised and exalted be He—said: (9) “O you who believe! The Associationists are nothing but impure, so let them not approach the Inviolable Mosque.” You and I have concluded a pact [making a commitment] to do what satisfies God and His Prophet (10) and what is right in the land of the two sanctuaries. From the day we made this pact until today, I have never failed to serve you and the Sublime Porte. (11) We serve without taking any advantage from you or from the Sublime Porte, doing all this [only] for the sake of my love for our Sire and for you. This is because you are (12) truthful with me. I have informed His Grace, our Sir, in a letter and I am waiting for his answer. I am waiting as well for an answer from you. I am doing my best (13) to hold back the tribes until I receive the answer of our Sir and yours. This is what I needed to tell you. Greetings. This was written the day of *al-wafā’*(?) (14) of Rabī‘ al-ʿawwal 1272 by your servant the *šayḥ* ‘Abdallah Ḥiṣānī [seal]

Commentary

¹ حضرت. *Tāʾ ṭawīla* for *tāʾ marbūṭa* (and vice versa, see note to ln. 7) is common in MA texts. Cf. ln. 2 رحمت, ln. 8 غيرت, ln. 10 سعادت, ln. 12 خدمت.

² جا *žā* ‘to come’ is common in MA (see text ‘Syria 1’, note to ln. 19). Cf. the imperfect يجينا in ln. 13.

³ يو is most probably an apocopated form of يوم ‘when’.

⁴ واردنا. Notice the perfective aspectual value of the active participle.

⁵ العما is probably to be read العلماء. المفاتي is either an unusual plural of *muftī*ⁿ (Classical *muftūn*), or—less likely—the plural of مفتى ‘counsel’ (see Piamenta 1990–1991, II:366).

⁶ طبو *ṭabb* ‘to enter’ (colloquial). The spelling without *ʾalif al-wiqāya* is consistent in this text (as in others) for the perfect هتكو (ln. 7) and امنو (ln. 9) and the imperfect يقربو (ln. 9).

⁷ السلطان *al-ṣultān* (< *al-sultān*).

⁸ صابة = صابت (cf. Classical أصابت). On the writing ة for ت, see note to ln. 1.

⁹ بعة تقوم القبائل. The (colloquial) modal auxiliary (3fs) *baḡat* (on the writing ة for ت, see note to ln. 1) is constructed asyndetically, as is generally the case in MA texts.

¹⁰ لين. Colloquial *lēn* ‘until’ (for a further example see note to ln. 13).

¹¹ نشوف. This colloquial verb (*šāf* ‘to see’) appears frequently in MA texts, even in the less colloquialising ones.

¹² أهل مكة = هل مكة.

¹³ حنا *hinna*. Colloquial personal pronoun (for further examples see notes to lns 11 and 12 [2x]).

¹⁴ ما عندنا طاعه. Colloquial negative construction (= Classical لا طاعة لنا).

¹⁵ قايمين. For the frozen sound masculine plural form in *-in* see text II.9, n. 13 and text ‘Syria 2’, n. 10. Further examples of the same in this ln. 8 مستعينين and ln. 12 مجتهدين.

¹⁶ في الدين = فدين.

¹⁷ Qur’ān 9 (*Al-Tawba*), 28. The canonical text reads: يا ايها الذين امنوا إنما المشركون نجس فلا يقربوا المسجد الحرام [بعد عامهم هذا] ‘O you who believe! The Associationists are nothing but impure, so let them not approach the Inviolable Mosque [after this year of theirs]’.

¹⁸ صار = سار.

¹⁹ يرضي = يرظي.

²⁰ الى. Colloquial *ilya*, cf. Classical الى.

²¹ في شان. Colloquial prepositional phrase *fī šān* ‘for, for the sake of’.

²² راع ‘owner’, hence ‘provided with’ (colloquial = Classical ذو, صاحب); cf. de Landberg (1920–1942, II:1321).

²³ رغب *ragab* ‘to wait for’ (colloquial).

²⁴ هذ. Short form of the colloquial demonstrative *hāḍa*.

²⁵ ما لزم عرفناك. Notice the asyndetic construction of لزم, and the perfect form of the auxiliary verb.

²⁶ من is crossed out in the manuscript.

²⁷ يوم الوفا. 77th (or 78th) day of the lunar year, 18 Rabī‘ al-²awwal.

