A Handbook and Reader of Ottoman Arabic

Edited by Esther-Miriam Wagner
9. LEBANON: CHRONICLE OF AL-ṢAFADĪ
(EARLY 17TH CENTURY [?])

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In the first annex to their edition of al-Ṣafadī’s chronicle (about the period 1612–1624) Bustānī and Rustum (1969, 208–41) published a section dealing specifically with the years (1613–1618) Faḥr al-Dīn spent in Italy. For them, al-Ṣafadī (a scholar born in Ṣafad, who studied in Al-ʾAzhar in Cairo, and the author of learned works as well as of travelogues) is not the author of this text, an opinion which seems reasonable, but is not shared by all scholars.


Transcription

وفي مدينة فرنسيا وغيرها بيوارتان لاجل الضعفاء وحي من ضعفٍ وكان له خاطرٍ يروح الى البیمارستانات بلا خلق الحكم موجودٌ مجیمٌ ما يحتاج الضعیف ولا كان اقل الناس وراد له ادویه بالف غرش یداوهُ با ما غير منیة أکلله وشرب وکف عوض وکف وکف وکف وکف ولحم ولحم ولحم ولحم ولحم ولم يطرعه من غير لكنه وما يحت مال الضعیف درهم الفردٌ ويومي الصرف من اوقاف البیمارستانات وكذلك لهم

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ديورة فيها خدامين، ومواضع كلهما خلق ولد للنسوان من الذي تحت القسط أو من النسوان الذي يخلق لهم ولد وما مرادهم يشهروه حتى إذا أحد من الفقراء ولد له ولد وكان له ولد. كثيرة يرمي في هذا الموضع كرامته وهذا الدير له طاقة من رخام على قدر ما يسع الولد حين يخلق تحبب الحمرة ًملفوفًا وترميه في الليل من هذه الطاقة ولها ناس ينتظروها من جواً وإذا نزل الولد يستلقه ويعطوه إلى المراضع يديروه وإذا كبرت الأولاد يحطوهم في القراءة والصناعة ويجحوها الذكور وحدهم وإذا بلغوا الأولاد الآنان يدورونهم في المدينة وكل من قبل على جواز يحجز الوالد التأثر من أن كان من أولاد المتربيين في الدير أو من الناس الذي يحجزوا الفتاة الذي علمها وكلفة تربيتهم وجوائزهم من أوقاف الدير ومن كيس السلطان لان السير عندهم المرأة تعطي الرجال النقد كل من هو على قدر حاله على قدر مراتهم وكذلك لهم ديره للبنات الأكابر وديوره إلى بنات العامة الذي يرهبوا فيهم البنات وعلى هذا النمو دوره إلى الأولاد والرجال وجميع من يدخل إلى هذه الدوره كلفته من أوقاف الدير وأولاد الأكابر يأتيهم من اهلهم.

Translation

In the town of Florence, as in others, there are hospitals for ill people. Whoever falls ill and wants to go to the hospital will find there doctors and everything needed by an ill person. Even those with the most limited means, if medicines costing one thousand piasters are necessary, they treat them without any return obligation. They also get food, drink, bed, and blankets. People are there ready to provide all the care patients need. When the doctor sees that the ill person has recovered, they let him out without paying anything: he doesn’t pay a single dirham. All these expenses are funded from the endowment income [waqf-s] of the hospitals. They also have monasteries with attendants and wet nurses. Every time a woman of disrepute gives birth to a child, or a woman wants to keep the birth of her child a secret, or even when a poor man with many children has a [new] child, [in all
these cases] they can leave the child at this place, to have it brought up. This monastery has a marble window the size of a new-born child. The woman brings the baby in swaddling clothes and drops it at night through this window. People are there inside waiting for her and when the baby comes down, they catch it and give it to the wet nurses who take charge of it. When the children grow up, they pay for them to learn to read [and write] and to learn a handicraft— but only the boys. As for the girls, when they reach puberty, they go around the city with them and marry any one of these girls to whoever agrees to do so. Whether it is to one of the children raised in the monastery or to one of the people outside, they give to him as a wife the girl he has singled out. The costs of their upbringing and marriage are covered by the endowment income of the monastery and at the expense of the sultan, because this is their way of doing things: the woman gives to the man the dowry—each according to his situation and to their [respective] rank. They also have monasteries for the daughters of the notables and monasteries for the daughters of the common people, where they turn them into nuns. And the same goes for the monasteries for boys and men. All those who enter the monasteries [in the case of the children of the common people] have their costs paid from the endowment income [waqf-s] of the monastery. As for the children of the notables, they are funded by their families.

Commentary

1 `ayman ‘whoever’ (colloquial).

2 ضعف ‘to get sick, to fall ill’ (colloquial); compare no. 6.
(subjunctive) imperfect ‘to want, wish, desire to, to feel like doing sth’ (colloquial).

4 *روح* (*raḥ*) (and less frequently *rawwaḥ*) is the usual verb in MA for ‘to go’ and ‘to go to’. For this last meaning, the more stylistically elevated *توَجَّهُ* is also widely.

5 *جميع* + noun / pron. is the most common quantifier in (Levantine) MA for ‘all’; ‘whole, entire’, even before a singular (pro)noun.

6 ‘ill, sick’ (compare no. 2).

7 The (colloquial) -ū form (and not -ūn) is used most of the time in MA for the second and third person plural of the imperfect; the -ūn form is used either in classicising passages or as a marked form, for instance after final conjunctions (contrary to Classical usage). Compare the many other examples of -ū forms in this text: *يحطوه, يديروه, يستلقؤه ويعطوه, ينتظروها, يطالعوها, يحتاجوا* (2x) *يروحوا*, *يجوزوه*.

8 Colloquial, see Barthélemy (1935–1969, 804); see also Dozy (1881, vol. II, p. 616).

9 *طالع* is used with its colloquial meaning ‘to throw out, pull out, remove, dismiss, expel’, etc.

10 حط ‘to put, place’, here figuratively ‘to pay (an amount of money)’ (colloquial).

11 *فرَدُنَ* = ‘one and only, one and the same’; this construction, Ø + N sing. + art. + فرد, is mainly used after a negation, as is the case here; it can be as a whole modified by the article (الفرَدُنَ), i.e., (*الفرَدُنَ*, i.e., the singular of the article). See Lentin (1997, 312).
١٢ (ديوره) is the most frequently used (colloquial) plural of دير ‘convent, monastery’ in Ottoman MA texts (see Lentin 1997 184–186, §4.3.7.5).

١٣ خدامين. The formerly mpl oblique case sound form -ין is pre-dominantly used in MA regardless of the syntactic function of the noun (the الت quit being generally retained in construct state). The Classical nominative -ין form is reserved for stylistically marked use.

١٤ خلق ولد لـ lit. ‘a child is created (born) to…’ (colloquial ١٤خيليق); compare the following ولد له ولد (speaking of a man).

١٥ الین من الذي. Invariable الذي is extremely common in MA. Compare الناس الذي يرا.

١٦ ما مادههم يشهروه. Most probably a transposition of colloquial ما ب١٦بيت شهوه.

١٧ تربياته. Colloquial verbal noun of ١٧ربه (تربيه, تربئه, etc.).

١٨ تجيبه ١٨ضيبيه, ١٨ضيبه ‘to bring’ is probably the most frequently used colloquial verb in MA, and can be considered a typical ‘plain MA’ verb.

١٩ ‘the woman’ (colloquial).

٢٠ من جوا lit. ‘from inside’. Colloquial جو (adverb and preposition, construct state جو ‘inside’ and جو (جو ‘outside’ are widely used in MA.

٢١ إلى (ديوره الى الأولاد والرجال). The use of إلى, where either Classical or colloquial Arabic would have ل, is typical of a frequent MA procedure whereby a partial correspond-
ence between a colloquial and a Standard preposition is general-
ised into total interchangeability (often bringing about a pair of
stylistically contrasting variants).

22 ‘to get old’ (colloquial kibir).

23 جواز and يجوزوه. Colloquial forms (compare Classical Arabic
zawāj and zawwaja).

24ボールモン is morphologically colloquial (mitrabbyin).

25برا. See no. 20.

26 الولد الرجال is the colloquial singular form (rəžāl), whereas in الولد والرجال it is the plural (Classical rijāl, colloquial ržāl).