

Two elegies on the patriarch Ignatius Şarrūf

by

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Introduction

The Melchite Patriarch Ignatius IV Şarrūf was a Bishop of Beirut who was involved in a number of disputes with his own church; in 1778 he founded a double house for monks and nuns in the monastery of St. Simeon near Baskonta in Lebanon¹. This was later dissolved by a Church Synod². On the 9th February, 1812 he was appointed Melchite Patriarch of Antioch, but only nine months later, on the 6th November, he was murdered by Ilyās 'Imād and his sons³.

Several collections of the letters of Ignatius Şarrūf have been preserved⁴, including one in Aleppo and another in the archives of the Melchite bishops in Beirut⁵, but these are so far unpublished.

At least three Arabic elegies are known to have been composed in memory of the dead Patriarch, one by Ḥanāniyyā al-Munayyar al-Zūqī, another by Buṭrus ibn Ibrāhīm Karāmāh, and a third by an anonymous author. The first of these appears to have survived only fragmentarily in several verses cited by Cheikho⁶, the second was published (not without errors) in the scarce work *Diwān Saj' al-Ḥamāmāh*⁷ of Buṭrus Karāmāh, and the text of the third was recently discovered by the present writers in Leeds Arab. MS 65.

¹ For the career of Ignatius Şarrūf, see G. Graf, *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur*, vol. III [Studi e Testi, 146 (Vatican, 1949)], p. 236; *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclesiastique*, s.v. Antioche, p. 651; *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*, s.v. Antioche, col. 1417.

² G. Graf, *op. cit.*, pp. 33 and 236, and literature there cited.

³ See L. Cheikho, "Al-Ādāb al-'Arabiyyah fī al-Qarn al-Tāsi' 'Ashar" in *Al-Machriq*, vol. X (1907), p. 609; *idem*, *Catalogue des Manuscrits des Auteurs Arabes Chrétiens depuis l'Islam* (Beirut, 1924), No. 493, pp. 133-4.

⁴ See 'Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥālah, *Mu'jam al-Mu'allifin*, vol. II (Damascus, 1957), p. 306.

⁵ Graf, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

⁶ See Cheikho, "Al-Ādāb al-'Arabiyyah", p. 609, where he cites six verses of Ḥanāniyyā's poem.

⁷ Beirut, 1898, pp. 102-103.

The latter manuscript is an octavo volume of Christian poetry and rhymed prose of 71 folios which was copied about the middle of the nineteenth century. It contains many short pieces of verse, a number of longer poems and a *maqāmah* of Buṭrus Karāmah. At one time this MS formed part of the library of Yūsuf Ṣayfī⁸.

Fol. 40 contains the text of an anonymous elegy on the Patriarch Ignatius, written soon after 1812⁹, a poem which has apparently only survived in the Leeds manuscript. It consists of thirteen verses in praise of Ignatius and his successor.

We here present the text of these verses, together with that of the poem of Buṭrus Karāmah which is now difficult of access to the reader, and append to each translations into English.

Text

I

ترثى البطريك اغناطيوس صروف

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (١) كفى البكا ياكل مقلة باك | وكفاك ما لا يفيد كفاك |
| (٢) ودعى النحيب وغادري الاسف الذى | تبديه نايحة على مولاك |
| (٣) ذاك المطوب ذا المحامد والتقا | والفضل والبر النفس الزاك |
| (٤) وثقى فان الله متع نفسه | بنعيم مجد فايق الادراك |
| (٥) واستبشرى يا سدة نلت المنا | بخليفة من بعده وافاك |
| (٦) وتسربلى حلل المسرة واخلعى | ثوب الحداد فربك هناك |
| (٧) والكوكب الشرقى اقبل طالعا | وتلالات انواره بسماك |
| (٨) وعروسك يا بيعة الله انجلى | فيك وزين خدرك وحماك |
| (٩) والعسجدى فى عنبرك استضى | من نوره كرسيك الانطاك |
| (١٠) ولك الهنا يا لبلبل الشادى الذى | شده الورى بنداى فى مغناك |
| (١١) فصداه مغناطيس انفسنا الذى | كم ضم فيه جامعا ابناك |

⁸ For Yūsuf Ṣayfī, see J. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts*, vol. II (Leeds, N.D.), p. 8.

⁹ The poet's allusion (verse 5) to the election of Ignatius's successor suggests the elegy was written between August and November of 1813 (the latter month being that of Athanasius's death). See Note 4 to translation.

فى خير راع عادل يركاك
فيه وفى اشراقه بشراك
سنة ١٨١٢

*Fol. 40v (١٢) * فلك البشارة يا محافل شعبنا
(١٣) وتهلى يا سدة قد شرفت
سنة ١٨١٢

II

واشتق منا اعينا وكبودا
اخذ الرقاد وخلف التسهيدا
يخرقن منا اعظا وجلودا
لو ان فى هذا المقام خلودا
فدع التثبت واطلب التجريدا
تنفى السرور وتجلب التاكيدا
يلحظن عمرا للفنا مرصودا
يتواردان مصابنا توريدا
امر تراه يقظة ورقودا
هل ان ترى بالما لظى موقودا
ام يا منية تحفظين عهدا
قد كان للراى القويم مشيدا
قد كان نورا للهدى ورشيدا
صرف الضلال بوعظه منقودا
من كان فى هذا الزمان فريدا
اضحى جديلا يصدع الجلمودا
امس صريعا فى الثرى ممدودا
متواريا فى تربة ملحدودا
لا زال حزنك بالفؤاد جديدا
وهب الملائكة السرور مزيدا
فى روضة الشهداء لاح سعيدا
شرا على اعناقهم مردودا
بل قلدوه حواهرها وعقودا

(١) غدر الزمان واظهر التفنيدا
(٢) تبّا لدهر فى حوادث مكره
(٣) ويريش من نبل الحمام اسنة
(٤) قد كنت ارغب فى الحيوّة وعيشها
(٥) يا صاح ما هذا الزمان مصافيا
(٦) واحذر من الايام ان طباعها
(٧) ان المنون عيونهن رواصد
(٨) والدهر سيف والمنايا خارق
(٩) ان المنية والسلامة للورى
(١٠) انى تود من الحتوف سلامة
(١١) يا دهر هلك ان تحافظ ذمة
(١٢) كيف استطعت ايا منية غدر من
(١٣) كيف استطعت ايا منية غدر من
(١٤) يبكى الانام على غناطيوس الذى
(١٥) البطريرك ابو الفضائل والحجى
(١٦) وتشق لبات الصدور عليه اذ
(١٧) كيف الذى صرع الاسود بوعظه
(١٨) ام كيف مصباح الهداية والهدى
(١٩) ابكيه ثم اقول عند اقوله
(٢٠) ان كان اورثنا البكاء فانه
(٢١) او ان يكن امس قتيلا انه
(٢٢) غدر البغاة به فاصبح غدرهم
(٢٣) لم يحسبنهم قلدوه صوارما

- (٢٤) لم يحسبنهم خضبوه دماءه
 بل وشحوه الارجوان برودا
 (٢٥) مكروا بانفسهم فاصبح مكرهم
 لم يجدهم الا اسى ووعيدا
 (٢٦) يا ويحهم هل يشفقون بغدرهم
 صدرنا وقد كفروا ابا وجدودا
 (٢٧) ام هل يحط بذاك شان علائه
 كلا ولكن زاده تايدا
 (٢٨) ان المسيح اراق طوع رضائه
 دمه البغاة ووسدوه العودا
 (٢٩) والهامة الفضال بطرس قد قضى
 من فوق عود ناكسا مشدودا
 (٣٠) وكذا المعظم بولس المصداح قد
 جز الحسام وريده والجيدا
 (٣١) والرسل والشهداء طرا هكذا
 حازوا بسفك دماهم التمجيدا
 (٣٢) وكذا غناطيوس الشهيد قد اقتدى
 بهم وصار بصفهم معدودا
 (٣٣) بلغ الشهادة ارحوه مبررا
 بدماه اضحى للمسيح شهيدا

Translation

I

An Elegy on the Patriarch Ignatius Ṣarrūf

- (1) There has been enough of weeping — it consumes the eye of the one who weeps — enough of what brings thee¹ no benefit, enough!
- (2) Have done with lamentation and forego the sorrow which thou displayest in mourning for thy lord—²
- (3) His Beatitude, a man of praiseworthy qualities and piety, a man of erudition and precious, intelligent godliness.
- (4) And do thou have trust, for God has bestowed upon his soul the grace of a Glory which is beyond perception,
- (5) And rejoice, O Patriarchate³: thou hast obtained what thou desirest in his successor⁴, who has now come to thee.
- (6) Put on garments of joy, and doff the cloak of mourning, for thy Lord⁵ has gladdened thee.

¹ The poet is addressing variously the Patriarchal See (*al-Suddah*) and the Church (*al-Bay'ah*).

² Ar. *maulāki* i.e. the murdered Patriarch.

³ Lit. 'O Seat' sc. of the Patriarchate.

⁴ I.e. Athanasius Maṭar, who became Patriarch in August, 1813, but died in November of the same year of the plague. Neither his election, nor that of Ignatius, was confirmed by the Pope. See Graf, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁵ I.e. God.

- (7) The Star in the East has risen and its light has sparkled in thy sky.
- (8) Thy bridegroom, O Church of God, has been unveiled to thee, and has adorned thy chamber, and afforded thee protection⁶.
- (9) Thy See of Antioch has been illumined by the light of the pearl in thy amber.
- (10) Felicitations to thee upon the singing nightingale which men, by summoning him, have confined within their habitation.
- (11) For its echo is the magnet⁷ of our souls : how much does it enfold within itself, gathering thy children together !
- (12) *Therefore receive, O congregations of our people, the good news of *Fol. 40v the best of just pastors who shall shepherd thee.
- (13) And rejoice, O Patriarchate : in him thou hast been honoured, and in his sunrise is thy glad tidings.

A.D. 1812

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II

[Elegy on the Patriarch Ignatius by Buṭrus Karāmāh]

- (1) Time has been a betrayer and has shown itself antagonistic, and has deprived us of our eyes and hearts⁸.
- (2) Woe to a hateful Fate in events which has taken away slumber and left in its place sleeplessness.
- (3) From noble doves it has feathered arrows which pierce our bones and skin.
- (4) I would have wished for life and existence, if there had been any permanence in this world.
- (5) O vigilant one ! Time does not deal honestly ; so cast aside circumspection and seek to divest thyself of it.
- (6) Treat the days [of this earthly life] with caution, for their nature is to banish joy and bring misery.
- (7) The eyes of the fates watch balefully observing a life destined for extinction.
- (8) Fate is a sword and Destiny is a violator, both of which in turn bring upon us misfortune after misfortune.

⁶ Or 'adorned thy chamber and thy sanctum' if *ḥimāki* is read instead of *ḥamāki*.

⁷ N.B. the pun on *Ighnāṭiyyūs* suggested by *maghnāṭīs* (magnet), implies that the new Patriarch would enjoy the affection of the Church, i.e. he would be the 'Ignatius of our souls'.

⁸ Lit. 'livers'.

- (9) The death, or the security, of men are things which they may experience whether awake or asleep.
- (10) How canst thou expect to have immunity from Death?
Dost thou ever see a lighted flame in water?
- (11) O Fate, art thou one to observe a covenant?
O Death, wilt thou keep a treaty?
- (12) O Death, how couldst thou betray one who was an upholder of sound thought?
- (13) O Death, how couldst thou betray one who was a light on the path of righteousness, and upright?
- (14) The people weep for Ignatius, who through his preaching utterly dispersed error,
- (15) For the Patriarch, Father of Merits, and Discernment; a man who was unique in this age.
- (16) [Men's] breasts have been smitten asunder because of him, since he became a butt which splits the boulder.
- (17) How can he who laid low lions through his preaching, have been laid low, and stretched in the dust?
- (18) How can the Lamp of Guidance and Direction have disappeared, buried beneath the soil?
- (19) I weep for him; I say at the setting of his star 'Sorrow for thee is still fresh in the heart'.
- (20) If he has bequeathed us tears, he has given the angels abundant joy;
- (21) And if he has fallen victim [here], he has risen with gladness into the Garden of the Martyrs.
- (22) The oppressors have betrayed him, but their betrayal has become an evil that has rebounded upon their own necks.
- (23) He in no wise thought that they had put a sword to his neck; nay, they garlanded him with jewels and necklaces.
- (24) He in no wise thought that they had dyed him with his blood; nay, they had adorned him with a garment of purple.
- (25) They have deceived themselves, but their deception has resulted in nothing but sorrow and menace for them.
- (26) Woe to them! Shall they be comforted in their treachery?
They are miscreants and their fathers and forefathers before them.
- (27) Has that thereby diminished his eminence?
By no means! It has but reinforced it.
- (28) The tyrants shed the blood of Christ with his consent and gave him as a pillow the wood of the Cross.
- (29) The Most Excellent Head [of the Church], Peter, expired bound to a cross, head downwards.

- (30) Likewise with the great Paul, the Preacher :
his vein and neck were cut by the sword.
- (31) The apostles and martyrs one and all thus obtained
Glory through the spilling of their blood.
- (32) Likewise the Martyr Ignatius has imitated them and is numbered in
their ranks.
- (33) He has attained martyrdom : they have accounted him among the
justified. By his blood he has become a martyr of Christ.