

The Earthquake of 1872 in Antioch A Documentary Record of the Church of Saints Peter and Paul by Zeina Matar

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the centuries, the town of Antioch (Antakya) and the surrounding region, witnessed a long series of earthquakes which succeeded one another in the years 79, 94, 115, 220, 340, 712, 860, 1150, 1170, 1822 and 1872 to cite a few (*Antioche*: 312). On the morning of 9 April 1872, one of the most violent and most devastating earthquakes Antioch had ever known shook the town, destroying over two-thirds of it and killing about one thousand people (*Antioche*: 312).

In the *firmān*, which is reproduced and translated here, and which is dated 1873 and was obviously drawn as a direct consequence of the earthquake, permission is granted to rebuild a church which had been damaged. This church, which the 1970 *Guide Bleu* to Turkey (p. 663) calls 'the Church of Haghios Petros Paulos, a charming 19th century Syrian orthodox chapel' was originally built by Justinian. T.S.K. Boase says about it: 'The basilica of St. Peter and Paul, dating from the time of Justinian was the Latin cathedral. This Byzantine building adapted to another rite was characteristic of the confused nature of Antiochene ecclesiastical policy.' (*Castles and Churches*: 99).

The church is also mentioned as the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in *Antioche* (see pp. 242 and 326) where it appears on the city-plan and in the listing of monuments dating from the Crusader period; here it is referred to as the Basilica of the Apostles Peter and Paul.

G. Le Strange's *Palestine under the Muslims* (see pp. 367-377) offers a detailed description of the church under study. The author translated excerpts from the travel account of an 11th-century Christian physician, Ibn Buṭlān (see J. Schacht, art. 'Ibn Buṭlān' in *EI*².) Excerpts of Ibn Buṭlān's works are preserved in Ibn al-Qiftī's *Ta'rīkh al-Ḥukamā'* (pp. 294-314) among other sources. 'In the centre of the city [Antioch] is the Church of al-Kusiyān. It was originally the place of Kusiyān, the King, whose son Futrus (St. Peter), chief of the disciples, raised to life. (...) It consists of a chapel (*haikal*), the length of which is 100 paces and

the breadth of it 80, and over it is a church (*kanīṣah*) supported on columns, in which the judges take their seat to give judgement, also those sit here who teach grammar and logic. At one of the gates of this church is a clepsydra (*finjān*) showing the hours. It works day and night continuously, twelve hours at a round and it is one of the wonders of the world.' Le Strange believes the building to be the Church of Saints Peter and Paul; he cites the church tradition according to which St. Peter was Bishop of Antioch prior to his departure for Rome. It is also reported that St. Paul started his missionary travels from Antioch (*Baedeker* 1894: 413-414).

In the light of Antioch's importance in early church history, this *firmān* is a significant document which has allowed us to gather some interesting information. The building of the Church of Saints Peter and Paul underwent many alterations and was rebuilt several times on the same site. As time went by, it also diminished in importance; from a basilica, it became a small local church.

The present document is important from the viewpoint of form as well as content. Most of the *firmāns* which have so far been collected are from the 16th and 17th centuries, with a fair number from the 18th but not sufficiently from the 19th century; thus, the present work on the document has increased the corpus of material available to scholars and students.

The Ottoman *firmān*, which is reproduced and translated here, is written on paper, measuring 79 × 58 cm. The reproduction is, therefore, considerably reduced. The gold pounce on the *tuḡra* is now almost completely gone. The text is written on the recto side only. On the verso side are what looks like marks of ownership, and also three later additions, briefly describing the subject matter of the document. It was purchased in a souvenir shop in Damascus, about ten years ago and is now kept in a private collection.

TRANSLATION

[To] His Excellency the Glorious Pāshā, Regulator of the World, Director of the Affairs of the People

books of all peoples, both Arabs and non-Arabs, that are available in the Arabic language and script, concerning the categories of the sciences, with information on the authors, the generations of compilers, together with their genealogies, their birthdates, their ages, the dates of their demise, the places of their countries, their virtues and their shortcomings, ever since each science was devised and up till our time, which is the year 377 of the Hiġra' (vol. I, p. 2).

³ See for a short survey on the author and his work my article 'Ibn al-Akfānī', in: *Encyclopedia of Islam. Supplement* (Leiden 1982), p. 381. A full survey, with all bio-bibliographical details, will be published in my study (in Dutch) on Ibn al-Akfānī, entitled *De Egyptische arts Ibn al-Akfānī (gest. 749/1348) en zijn Indeling van de Wetenschappen. Editie van het Kitāb Iršād al-Qāšid ilā Asnā al-Maqāšid, met een inleiding over leven en werk van de auteur* (in the press, Leiden).

⁴ al-Šafadī, *al-Ġayt al-Musaġġam fī Šarḥ Lāmiyyat al-ʿAġam* (2 vols. Cairo 1305/1888) I, p. 87, 4-7.

⁵ Cf. Brockelmann, *GAL* G I, 322.

⁶ *Iršād al-Qāšid* 96. All references are to the paragraphs in my, as yet unpublished, critical edition (see above, note 3).

⁷ *Al-Wāfī bi-al-Wafayāt*, vol. II (edited by S. Dederling, Istanbul 1949 (Bibliotheca Islamica 6 b)), pp. 25-7: *A'yān al-ʿAšr wa-A'wān al-Našr*. MS. Berlin We. 298 (catalogue Ahlwardt, No. 9864), ff. 117b-118b: *Alḥān al-Sawāġi' hayn al-Bādī' wa-al-Murāġi'*. MS Berlin We. 150-151 (catalogue Ahlwardt, No. 8631), vol. I, ff. 33a-b (al-Šafadī's autograph).

⁸ Šalāḥ al-Dīn al-Šafadī, *Al-Ġayt al-Musaġġam fī Šarḥ Lāmiyyat al-ʿAġam*. 2 vols. (Cairo 1305/1888).

⁹ Id., vol. I, p. 10, 3-10.

¹⁰ Id., vol. I, p. 30, 22-25.

¹¹ Id., vol. I, p. 85, 18-27.

¹² Id., vol. I, p. 109, 1-25.

¹³ Id., vol. II, p. 53, 11-26.

¹⁴ *Iršād al-Qāšid* 813-816.

¹⁵ J. Hirschberg, *Die arabischen Lehrbücher der Augenheilkunde. Ein Capitel zur arabischen Litteraturgeschichte (...)*, in: *Abhandlungen der kön. Preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften* 1905, pp. 1-117, especially pp. 88-90 and 93; also J. Hirschberg, *Geschichte der Augenheilkunde, 2. Buch, Abt. 1. Geschichte der Augenheilkunde bei den Arabern* (Leipzig 1905), pp. 82-4.

¹⁶ Al-Fārābī, *Catálogo de las Ciencias*. Edición y traducción Castellana por Ángel Gonzalez Palencia. 2nd edition (Madrid 1953).

¹⁷ Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Naġāt fī al-Ḥikma al-Manṭiqiyya wa-al-Ṭabīʿiyya wa-al-Ilāhiyya*. Ed. Māġid Faḡrī. Beyrouth 1985.

¹⁸ Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Hudūd*. Edited by A.-M. Goichon, Cairo 1963.

¹⁹ Al-Šahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal wa-al-Niḥal*. Edited by W. Cureton (2 vols, London 1842-6), pp. 348-429.

²⁰ Faḡr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Ġāmi' al-'Ulūm*. Ed. M. Ḥusayn Tasbīḥī. Teheran 1346/1967.

²¹ *Iršād al-Qāšid* 886.

²² *Iršād al-Qāšid* 489.

²³ *Iršād al-Qāšid* 180-184.

²⁴ *Iršād al-Qāšid* 176: ʿIzz al-Dīn Ibn al-Aṭīr al-Ġazarī (d. 630/1233, cf. *GAL* I, 345), and *Iršād al-Qāšid* 283: Diyā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Aṭīr al-Ġazarī (d. 637/1239, cf. *GAL* I, 297).

²⁵ *Iršād al-Qāšid* 352, 354, 576: al-Samarqandī (lived 690/1291, cf. *GAL* I, 468); *Iršād al-Qāšid* 624: al-Samarqandī (d. 619/1222, cf. *GAL* I, 491); *Iršād al-Qāšid* 585: *al-Nāfi'* [by al-Samarqandī (d. 656/1258, cf. *GAL* I, 381)].

²⁶ *Iršād al-Qāšid* 807; cf. F. Sezgin, *GAS* V, 277-281.

²⁷ *Iršād al-Qāšid* 615: al-Maġūsī (d. 384/994, cf. *GAL* I, 237).

²⁸ MS Bologna, University Library, Collection Marsigli, No. 3406 (1) (catalogue by V. Rosen, Bologna 1885, pp. 106-7, No. 457) contains a copy of an *iġāza* by the author to al-Šafadī, which is dated as early as 12 Ramaḍān 729 (10 July 1329). It is the earliest mention of the *Iršād al-Qāšid*, but the exemplar of the Bologna MS was copied by al-Šafadī much later: in Ġumādā I 737/1336. MS Escorial No. 949 (catalogue by M. Casiri (Madrid 1760-70), vol. I, pp. 379-80, No. 944; catalogue by H. Derenbourg and H.P.J. Renaud, vol. II, fasc. 3 (Paris 1941), pp. 81-2) contains a copy of the author's *iġāza*, dated Rabī II 741/1340. We may assume that the *Iršād al-Qāšid* was taught by its author till the year of his death, 749/1348. Apart from the usual variant readings which one encounters in manuscripts, there are no significantly variant versions of the bibliographical sections in the seven manuscripts which I used for the edition, nor in any other MS that I have seen, for that matter.

²⁹ These printed editions are:

— Calcutta 1849 (edited by A. Sprenger);

— Cairo 1318/1900 (edited by Maḥmūd Abū al-Našr);

— Beyrouth 1322/1904 (edited by M. Salīm al-ʿAmidī al-Buḡārī, with a preface by Tāḥir al-Ġazā'irī);

— Cairo 1398/1978 (edited by ʿAbd al-Laṭīf M. al-ʿAbd). This last edition is solely based on two earlier printed editions: Calcutta 1849 and Beyrouth 1904.

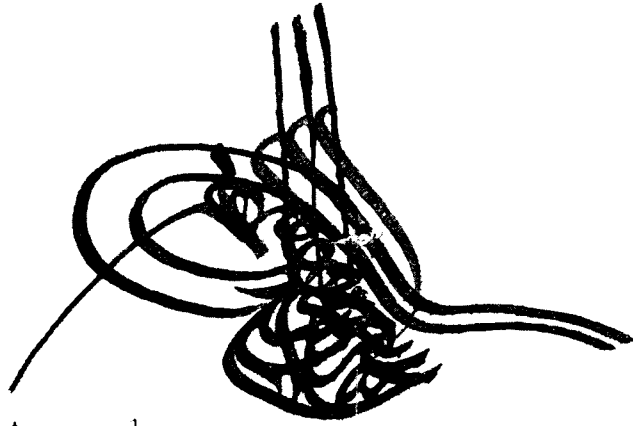
³⁰ Al-Qalqašandī, *Kitāb Šubḥ al-A'sā*. 14 vols. (Cairo 1913-9). Here quoted from vol. I, pp. 467-481. See also on al-Qalqašandī's booklists: G. Wiet, *Les classiques du scribe égyptien au XVe siècle*, in: *Studia Islamica* 18 (1963), pp. 41-80.

³¹ Ṭāšköprüzāda, *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda wa-Miṣbāḥ al-Siyāda fī Mawḍū'āt al-'Ulūm*. Edited by Kāmil Kāmil Bakrī and ʿAbd al-Waḥḥāb Abū al-Nūr. 4 vols. (Cairo 1968).

³² Ḥāġġī Kalīfa, *Kašf al-Zunūn 'an Asāmī al-Kutub wa-al-Funūn. Lexicon bibliographicum et encyclopaedicum (...)*. Edited by G. Flügel. 8 vols. (London 1835-58).

³³ Ṭāšköprüzāda, *Mevzuat-i Uhum*. Edited by Ahmet Cevdet. 2 vols. (Istanbul 1313/1895).

³⁴ E.g. Manfred Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam* (Leiden 1972), pp. 361-2, where Ibn al-Akfānī's words are quoted — by way of Ṭāšköprüzāda — without having been recognized.



علمنا ان الحريق قد اصاب جميع القرى والمدن والبلدات والقرى المحيطة بها...
 ودمر جميع البساتين والحدائق وجميع الثمرات...
 وحرق جميع البيوت والدارات والكنائس والمدارس...
 ودمر جميع الجوامع والمساجد والبيوت المقدسة...
 وحرق جميع الخزائن والاركان والبقايا...
 ودمر جميع البساتين والحدائق وجميع الثمرات...
 وحرق جميع البيوت والدارات والكنائس والمدارس...
 ودمر جميع الجوامع والمساجد والبيوت المقدسة...
 وحرق جميع الخزائن والاركان والبقايا...



(*mudabbir umūr al-jumhūr*) — who has, with penetrating insight, executed the important affairs of mankind and who has, with correct vision, supported the structure of the state and its prosperity — and Architect, who sustained the Pillars of the Sultanate (*arkān al-sa'āda*)¹ and its requisite glory for the benefit of those favoured (by His Imperial Majesty). He is one of the Notables, the Governor of the Province of Aleppo², presented with and Bearer of the First Order (*birinci rütbe*) of Merit of Sulṭān 'Abd al-Majīd³, my vizier Ḥājji 'Alī Pāshā⁴; [and] to the Courier of God, — may His Glory be exalted — Foremost of the Learned Ulemas (*qudwat al-'ulamā' al-muḥaqqiqīn*), the Deputy of the Antioch District Court and its Muftī — may God increase their knowledge —, Eminent among the Glorious and Illustrious Members of the Council (*a'zā-i majlis*), may God increase their splendor.

May it be known that when the Exalted Rescript (*tawqī' raḥīmī*) reached the Sovereign (*Humāyūn*), because of the destruction wrought upon the Greek-Orthodox Church of Saints Peter and Paul by an earthquake (*ḥarake arz-da*) in the town of Antioch⁵, and realizing its worthiness because of the humble entreaties and supplications of the people, I gave my Exalted Permission for the repair and reconstruction (*ta'mīr ve inshāsine*) [of the Church] in its original form, and I have communicated this decision to the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch.

At the time of supplication by petition, in keeping with the norms of Imperial Honour and for the sake of the repair and reconstruction of the aforementioned church, I have seen fit to give my Imperial Permission in accordance with the suitable procedures after having obtained the oversight view of my Imperial Dīwān.

O ye, the aforementioned Wālī and Deputy Qāḍī and Muftī, and other aforementioned (dignitaries) and the Exalted Head of the Church which belongs of Old to a registered *millet* (*mille-yi marqūme-yi mansūb olup*) and is not one of those communities attached to, part of or participating in the Muslim Quarter and is not included in a *waqf*.

The district and the region were feared (by the people) and no one had appeared at the actual place of destruction since that day. The expenses (*maṣārīf*) were in accordance with the laws and practices of the will of His Imperial Majesty and had been applied. Since the roads and crossroads (*ṭuruq ve ma'ābir*) had not been disturbed, the engineer of that district had verified (this fact) on his own account as aforesaid, in accordance with the findings of a former committee (*hay'a*), although it did not have the authority for building or construction. Moreover, it had collected money by force (*jabran*) from the above-cited *millet*, and/or harassed them at every occasion, for example by causing incidents without any reason when coming upon members of the *millet* on the road of a district, when no one was present and in a place where there was no church.

Later on, in order to put into effect the proper measures together with the receiving and returning of the Exalted Order, a portion of the necessary plans was sent along with the details of the official report, registered again in my Sublime Porte, completed and announced according to the purpose of dispelling fear and for mutual agreement [short lacuna].

The redaction was completed on the 29th (day) of Dhu 'l-Qa'da al-Sharīfa, 1289⁶ in Constantinople the Protected.

NOTES

On the form of this document, see U. Heyd's contribution to the *EI*² article 'Farman' by P. Hardy.

* I wish to thank Dr. A. Vincent for kindly lending me this *firmān* which he had purchased in Damascus. I am also indebted to Profs. R. Sellheim, B. Kellner-Heinkele (University of Frankfurt) and K.M. Kortepeter (New York University) for making valuable suggestions in both the commentary and the translation.]

¹ See J. Hell, art. 'Bāb' in: *Islām Ansiklopedisi*.

² In his article on Aleppo, J. Sauvaget states that the Ottoman Province of Aleppo reached a 'culminating point in its history' during the first half of the Ottoman period, that is during the 10-12th 16-18th centuries. See art. 'Halab' in: *EI*².

³ Sulṭān 'Abd al-Majīd I is credited with the proclamation during his reign of the famous Khaṭṭ-i Sherif of Gülhane (1839) and the Khaṭṭ-i Humāyūn of 1856. He also initiated the well known Tanzīmāt period, or period of important administrative reforms in the wilayets or provinces. See J. Deny, art. "'Abd al-Majīd' in: *EI*².

⁴ The vizier known as Ḥājji 'Alī Pāshā (1815-1871) was the second grand-vizier of the above-cited sultan. He was an intelligent man and an excellent diplomat, but unpopular among his compatriots. For bibliography see H. Bowen, art. 'Āli Pasha Muḥammad Amīn' in: *EI*².

⁵ See M. Streck-H.A.R. Gibb, art. 'Antākya' in: *EI*².

⁶ This date corresponds to 28 January 1873.

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(To be used in addition to references cited in the text and notes)

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