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TWO DOCUMENTS ON THE SURRENDER OF JERUSALEM¹

T. CANAAN

(JERUSALEM)

It is not intended to give the historical details of the surrender of Jerusalem in December 1917. The sole purpose of this paper is to place two original documents on record which are of special importance to the student of history.

The first document is a Turkish letter written by the *mutaşarrif* (governor) of Jerusalem and addressed to the British Commander. It was written on a non-official paper, which bears the water-mark "Prospero." The governor must have written the same very hastily, for, 1. in two places words were changed by striking out the uncorrect ones, and 2. the ink was not allowed to dry nor was it blotted properly. Thus in folding the letter few small blotches arose.

The second document is an Arabic letter written by *Ḥusèn Effendî Salîm el-Ḥuseinî*, the acting Mayor of Jerusalem, and addressed to the Mufti of the Holy City (later the Grand Mufti) *Kâmel Effendî el-Ḥuseinî*. It seems that the writer tore the second half of the double sheet on which the *Mutaşarrif* had written the above mentioned Turkish letter and used it for his letter. For the Arabic document bears the same watermark "Prospero." The mayor wrote his letter in *Ismâ'il Bey's* house. One single letter is effaced (the first letter of the fourth line). *Ismâ'il Bey* inserted one line at the bottom of the document, and signed the same.²

¹ I have to express my thanks to Mr. O. Lind for allowing me to use the photograph.

² The authenticity of both documents was certified officially, in presence of the President of the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Shelly, by *Ismâ'il Bey* who is still

A few words have still to be said in explanation of these documents. The letter of the Turkish Governor addressed to the British Commander and handed over to the Acting Mayor of Jerusalem at 3 o'clock in the morning of the 9th December, 1917, was never remitted to the addressee. For at the meeting held at Ismá'il Bey's house the three present notables of Jerusalem (the Mufti, the Acting Mayor and Ismá'il Bey) decided to keep this original document and to hand Jerusalem over to the British verbally. This resolution had its cause in the fact that they were afraid in case the Turkish army should recapture Jerusalem, in a counter-attack, they might be accused by the entering Turkish Commander as traitors. The two documents were therefore kept in the safe of the Mufti.

The two documents with their translation follow (see plate 3):

انکایز قوماندانلی

- 1 هر ملتجه مقدس اولان قدس شریفده ایکی کوندن بری بعض
اما کن او بوسلر
- 2 دو شمشکده در حکومت عثمانیه جه صرف اما کن دینه یی تخریدن

living. His son Jauád signed as a witness. This certificate is typewritten and runs as follows:

(Signature of Ismá'il Bey in Arabic)
Please note that this signature in Arabic is the same as that upon the above-mentioned photograph;

It is Ismail Bey Huseini's as per other side in English;

Witness to same^a
(signed)
Jawad Huseini

I hereby certify to the above as a photograph of the original held by Mr. Lind. (signed in English)
Ismail Huseini.

We hereby certify to the above signatures as being that of Ismail Bey's in English and in Arabic.^b
(Seal) Chamber of Commerce
Jerusalem.

(within the seal there is the signature of the President)
E. Shelly.^c

a. In the handwriting of Jauád Huseini.

b. The three lines are typed in capital letters.

c. No date is inserted.

- وقایہ عسکرینی
- 3 قصبہ دن چاکش وقامہ ومسجد اقصی کی اماکن دینہ نک
- محافظہ سنہ مامور لر
- 4 اقامہ ایتمشدر
- 5 طرفکزدن ده بویولده معامله ایدیلہ جکی امیدیلہ اشبو ورقہ بی
- بلدیہ رئیس
- 6 وکیلی حسینی زاده حسین بک ایله کوندریورم افندم
- قدس مستقل متصرفی

عزت

۲۳/۱۲/۹-۸ ل

To the English Command,

1. Since two days howitzer-shells are falling on some places in Jerusalem which (city) is sacred to all nations.¹
 2. (Therefore) the Ottoman Government, for the sole purpose of protecting the religious places, has withdrawn her soldiers from
 - 3-4. the city.² And she installed officials to protect the holy places such as the Holy Sepulchre and the Aqsa Mosque
 5. with the hope that the same treatment (of the places) will also continue from your side. I am sending this letter to you by the Acting Mayor
 6. Hüsên Bey el-Hüseini
- Sir
Mutaşarrif of the independent Jerusalem
(district)
(Signed) 'Izzat
- 8-9, 12, 33

¹ مِلَّة means also religion.

² قسمة stands also for the "seat of the Government."

4.

جناب ابن العم مفتي افندي المحترم

- 1 في الساعة الثالثة (افرنجية) صباحاً طلبني المتصرف بك
فذهبت لعنده
- 2 ووجدته على اهبة السفر فعرفني ان القبول اوردو انسحب
3 لجهة العيزرية واعطاني تحرير لقائد الجيش الانكليزي
4 ما له انه حرمة اللاماكن المقدسة الجيش العثماني
5 كف القتال عن القدس وعرفني ان اذهب صباحاً
6 مستصحباً براية بيضاء لتسليم التحرير المذكور فبناء عليه
7 ارجوكم ان تشرفوا لبيت العم اسماعيل بك بعد ساعة
8 كي نتحدث قبل مواجعتي القوماندان الانكليزي مولاي
9 ١٠ صباح ٩ كانون اول سنة ١٣٣٠
10 الساعة ٥ غربي حسين سليم الحسيني
11 تتأمل سرعة الحضور نحن بالانتظار
12 اسماعيل حسيني

(His) Excellency¹ (our) cousin (the) Mufti Effendi, the Respected,

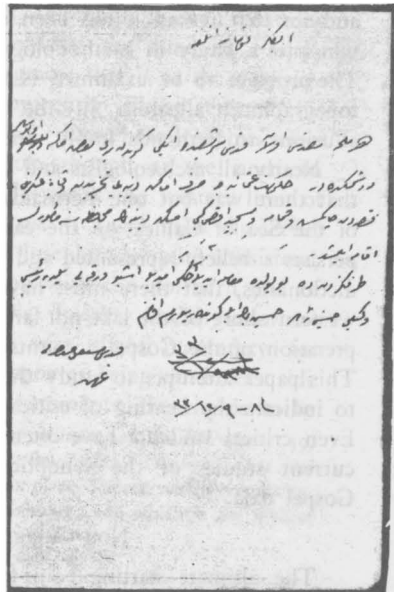
1. At 3 o'clock (occidental) in the morning the Mutaṣarrif Bey sent for me. I went to him
2. and found him ready to depart and he informed me that the army corp had retreated
3. in the direction of Bethany. He gave me a letter to the Commander of the British army,

¹ Hava, Arabic-English Dictionary, p. 96.

4. the contents of which are that, due to the sacredness¹ of the Holy Places, the Ottoman army
 5. has stopped the fight for Jerusalem. He instructed me to go in the morning
 6. accompanied by a white flag to deliver the mentioned letter. For this reason
 7. I beg you to honour (with your presence)² after an hour the house of (our) cousin Ismá'il Bey
 8. to consult before I interview the English Commander. My Lord
- (Signed) Ḥusèn Salim el-Ḥuseinî

In the morning of Dec. 9, (13) 33.
at 5 o'clock occidental.

We hope for a quick arrival. We are waiting.
(Signed) Ismá'il el-Ḥuseinî.



¹ حرمه also : untouchable condition.
² The words in parenthesis in the Turkish and Arabic translations are not found in the original.