

Thurayya's Wedding: A Glimpse of Ottoman Jerusalem from the Khalidi Library

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Several years ago, I started working in the Khalidi Library (al-Maktaba al-Khalidiyya) in Jerusalem, supervising efforts to make the library's collection accessible to researchers again. In addition to cataloguing books and scanning manuscripts, my job entailed opening boxes and files that had been stacked away. In the process, we were pleasantly surprised to find hundreds of letters and papers written by various members of the Khalidi family in different periods and covering a range of topics.¹ Among these letters, a rare one stood out. Written by Siddiqa al-Khalidi to her son Ruhi, it describes the events surrounding the marriage of Ruhi's brother, Thurayya, on 20 October 1905 in Jerusalem. Ruhi was then living in Bordeaux, France, where he served as consul-general of the Ottoman Empire, and was therefore unable to attend his brother's wedding. His mother entrusted Thurayya's bride, Nash'at bint Musa Shafiq bin Muhammad Tahir al-Khalidi, to write this letter detailing the marriage two months after the wedding.

The letter is four pages long and written in clearly legible Neskhi script (the letter and its annotated translation appear on pages 90 to 99). It is divided into several parts, each describing one of the various components of marriage: the engagement (*al-khitba*), that is, asking the father of the bride for his daughter's hand; the presentation of engagement gifts of jewelry and clothing (*al-milak*); the marriage contract (*al-kitab*); the wedding ceremony and celebration (*al-zifaf*); and, finally, the wedding gifts (*al-nuqut*) for the newlyweds, which included further jewelry and clothing as well as household items and furniture. Siddiqa's letter thus offers a window on marriage traditions in

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the final decades of the Ottoman era and in Jerusalem in particular, and is especially notable for having been written by a Palestinian woman. Although far less information exists on the women mentioned in this letter and in other documents in the Khalidi Library, it is clear that they played a significant role in the family, including in the establishment of the Khalidi Library itself: Hajj Raghīb endowed the shares in the Hamam al-‘Ayn bathhouse and six shops that his mother, Khadija bint Musa al-Khalidi, had inherited from her father, to cover the running expenses of the library.²

Weddings in late Ottoman Palestine were of great social, political, and economic significance. As Beshara Doumani writes: “Like other rituals, weddings served many purposes: enhancing or affirming status, redistributing wealth among poor family members and neighbors, making allies, reconciling enemies, and sealing kinship bonds.”³ Despite their significance, however, information on Palestinian weddings in this period has not always been readily available. This may be, in part, because of their “everyday” nature, making them unremarkable in the moment. Further, since World War I and particularly since the Nakba of 1948, Palestinian history has tended to prioritize political history and, especially, the conflict with Zionism and its British sponsors at the expense of social rituals.⁴ However, efforts to document the full spectrum of Palestinians’ presence on the land before 1948, and in some cases before Zionist immigration, has at times included accounts of wedding practices.⁵ These are supplemented, too, by foreigners’ accounts, though these can be fragmentary and inattentive to social context.⁶

Given the importance of the letter and its topic, seldom covered in sources from the period, I approached the family committee to approve its publication. The letter includes details that are unknown even to experts and sheds light on marriage practices of Jerusalemite families at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁷ Before offering an annotated translation of the full text of the letter, it is worth spending a bit more time contextualizing it and introducing the main personalities mentioned, including reference to relevant letters and documents from the Khalidi Library archive.

Engagement

In the early twentieth century couples often got married without knowing one another, and sometimes without ever having spoken to one another. Usually, the families reached a tentative agreement before discussing the matter with the individuals to be married. It seems that this was the practice among both Muslim and non-Muslim communities, and in Palestinian cities as well as villages and rural areas.⁸ Once a marriage was agreed upon by the families (*al-khitba*), the engagement was marked by the exchange of gifts (*al-milak*), representing a material affirmation of the discursive agreement.

The affianced couple were not to meet during the engagement period, although the groom-to-be might visit his fiancée’s family with his mother. Even in cases when the couple knew each other before their engagement, they were typically kept apart after the marriage was agreed upon. (Wasif Jawhariyyeh recalls an acquaintance who,

before marrying, lived in the house of another family for an extended period. As the family's daughter grew up, he wished to marry her, and agreed with the family on the terms of marriage. After their engagement, he was no longer allowed to see her until their marriage, three years later.)⁹

Women, especially the mother of the groom, played a significant role in the initial stages of arranging a marriage. The mother of the groom was typically responsible for choosing the bride, and neither her son (the groom-to-be) nor her husband had the same degree of influence in this decision. The role of the groom's father – or, if the father was deceased, his paternal uncle or other male elder – was to make the necessary social and religious arrangements to complete the wedding and make it a legal fact. Customarily, it was not acceptable for a son to ask his father to arrange his marriage; rather, the mother of the prospective groom would approach her husband (the father of the groom-to-be) or her eldest son to broach the subject. In this case, Siddiqa approached the family of the prospective bride to arrange the wedding, but asked them to refrain from making any announcement before she was able to approach Yusuf Diya' Pasha, Thurayya's paternal uncle, who served here in the patriarchal role, since Yasin al-Khalidi, Siddiqa's husband and Thurayya's father, had died in 1901.

Correspondence between Yusuf and Ruhi, found in the Khalidi Library archive, shows the central role that parents and other family members played in arranging their children's marriages. This was particularly so for marriages within an extended family, which were viewed from the perspective of preserving familial inheritance and the wealth of future generations. Marrying outside the family was seen as leading to the fragmentation of real estate, considered the main source of wealth, and the subsequent dissipation of property and status.¹⁰ (Intermarriage could also have a downside, leading in some cases to infertility; four of the seven children – two daughters and two sons – of Muhammad Sun'allah al-Kabir, who died in 1726, suffered from infertility.) Believing that younger generations did not comprehend the importance of this issue, elders took it upon themselves to arrange marriages to consolidate property within the family.

The bride or groom's agreement (and their opinions more generally) do not feature in the letter. However, it seems that Thurayya was not initially keen to marry a Jerusalemite. Instead, he had sought a bride whose father held an important government post and who might help Thurayya secure a good position himself. In April 1903, Thurayya asked Yusuf Diya' Pasha to intervene on his behalf with Fu'ad Effendi, a member of the municipal council of Beirut and previous member of the municipal council of Jerusalem – although it is unclear if he was interested in marrying Fu'ad's daughter or simply wanted help in securing a job. On another occasion, Thurayya asked Yusuf to write to the qadi of Beirut and ask for the qadi's daughter's hand in marriage. Yusuf promised to do so after consulting with Ruhi and, in asking Ruhi's opinion, noting that he had never “interfered in fixing marriages for relatives or non-relatives, because I myself was married off at a young age and never found success until this day.”¹¹ In the end, it took the family two years to convince Thurayya to marry Nash'at, Musa Shafiq's daughter. As Yusuf wrote: “We worked tirelessly to convince him to marry Uncle Musa's youngest daughter; he finally agreed and obeyed his mother.”¹² The wedding

took place shortly after the family officially asked for the bride's hand in marriage, an indication of the position of the families, as there was no need to wait in order to save for the dowry, as was commonly the case for less wealthy families.

Marriage Contract and Wedding Celebration

The marriage was registered via contract (*al-kitab*) at the shari'a court, and with it the young couple was officially married. According to custom, however, they could not consummate the marriage until after the wedding celebration (*al-zifaf*), which culminated the various stages or component steps of getting married. In a sense, the wedding contract marked the recognition of the marriage by God and state and the celebration marked its recognition by the community.

Family members attended both events, and senior male relatives served as representatives (*wakil*, pl. *wukala'*) and witnesses of the wedding contract. After the wedding contract was registered with the authorities, participants enjoyed a feast. The wedding celebration itself took place in the evening, and there is no mention of food or drink being served. The groom took a seat of honor, alongside close relatives, as part of the "unveiling" (*al-jalwa*) of the bride. This "unveiling" takes place on the wedding night, and may also refer to the bride's celebration with her friends, during which she is dressed in her finest clothes and seated on a high seat or platform for everyone to see her. The *jalwa* usually takes place after returning from the bathhouse (*hammam*), where the bride is bathed and her body hair is removed, her hair is done, and makeup such as kohl applied. She then dons her best clothes and covers her face with a veil.¹³ At the wedding celebration, the bride joins the groom and he lifts her veil, "presenting" her to those gathered as his wife. As the letter details, this was followed by dancing and music, and the newlyweds would then retire to consummate the marriage.

The celebration took place outdoors, indicating that it was, to a certain degree, a "public" event to include relatives, friends, and well-wishers from among Jerusalem's notables. Weddings of elites were likely limited to members of the same social stratum. Attendance at Thurayya's wedding was particularly low, according to one of Yusuf Diya' Pasha's letters, because of the recent death of a family member: "The wedding was private, attended only by notables, given the death of our cousin Muhyi al-Din al-Khalidi (Abu Darwish)."¹⁴ The implication seems to be that, coming so close after Muhyi al-Din's death, a more lavish or ostentatious celebration would not have been appropriate.

Siddiqa's letter also gives a sense that there were conflicts within the family – as in all societies – mentioning maternal uncles and aunts of the bride who did not attend various parts of the wedding. A sentence in the letter indicated that Siddiqa and Nash'at intended to visit Ruhi, but there is no record as to whether or not the visit actually took place.

Wedding Gifts

According to tradition, the newlyweds receive gifts known as *al-nuqut*. This was observed in cities and villages, and continues today. Gifts include household items and furnishings (*al-farsh*) as well as jewelry, textiles, and money. These gifts were intended to help the young couple start their new life together – and provided the bride with a certain amount of material support as she left her family home.¹⁵ Gifts were often given in the form of money, particularly by those other than close relatives of the bride and groom, and the favor was usually returned at a suitable occasion, such as the weddings of the children of gift givers.¹⁶

The value of gifts was linked to the financial status of the families of the bride and groom, particularly that of the groom or his father. Gifts in villages were often quite small during the Ottoman period, more commonly measured in piasters than liras. The engagement and wedding presents (*al-milak* and *al-nuqut*) at the wedding described in this letter, however, included jewelry made of gold and diamonds – rings, earrings, broaches, pins, and watch chains. Clothing and textiles, too, were of significant value, “a form of savings, akin to precious metals and stones. This was especially true for women whose estates clothes represented a significant proportion of the total worth.”¹⁷ For families of means, these were often brought from afar and embroidered, brocaded, or otherwise embellished with threads or ribbons of silver and gold.¹⁸ The description of furniture from Beirut and Damascus also indicates the status of the bride and groom, as well as the broader regional economic networks within which Jerusalem was embedded – a factor illuminated, too, by the letter’s use of a number of Ottoman terms, especially when referring to materials.

Such gifts are a clear indication of the family’s wealth and high social status in Jerusalem. A sense of the value of jewelry in the period can be inferred from material found in the shari‘a court records of Jerusalem. In a shari‘a court document from 1333 h./1914 AD, almost a decade after Thurayya’s wedding, a watch and chain was valued at 13 lira and 8 piasters, a diamond ring at 4 lira and 36 piasters, diamond earrings at 6 lira and 54 piasters, and a pair of golden bracelets at 3 lira and 27 piasters.¹⁹ Comparing these figures to the prices of material and estates registered in the shari‘a courts can give us an indication of these sums’ value. In 1906, within a year of Thurayya’s wedding, three months’ rent for a shop was 1 lira and 84 piasters, a rotl of sugar cost 6.7 piasters, a rotl of soap cost 11 piasters; the expenditures of a wife and her two daughters were 5 piasters per day, while the expenditures of a young man of the Khalidi family were 1 lira and 42.5 piasters per month.²⁰

As these figures show, the wedding and its associated costs were far beyond the average standard of living in Jerusalem at the time. Still, the listing and description of engagement and wedding gifts shed light on the expectations and kinds of gifts exchanged during marriage, if not their quality or value, during this period, as well as continuities across time. Further, they also indicate the kinds of material objects that were valued by Jerusalemite elites in the late Ottoman period. And finally, they indicate certain economic pathways that linked Jerusalem to locations, some relatively local and others farther afield.

Key Personalities

The most prominent figures in the 1905 letter are: Siddiqa al-Khalidi, the letter's author; Muhammad Ruhi al-Khalidi (known as Ruhi), Siddiqa's eldest son and recipient of the letter; Mahmud Thurayya al-Khalidi (known as Thurayya), Siddiqa's son and the groom in the wedding described in the letter; and Yusuf Diya' Pasha al-Khalidi, Siddiqa's cousin and paternal uncle of Ruhi and Thurayya. Two of these four, Ruhi and Yusuf, were among the most significant contributors to the Khalidi Library, and it is therefore also possible to flesh out a number of the relationships mentioned in Siddiqa's letter based on documents and correspondence from the library's archive.²¹

Siddiqa

The letter's author was Siddiqa al-Khalidi, mother of Thurayya, the groom. Siddiqa's father, Muhammad Tahir bin 'Ali bin Khalil bin Muhammad Sun'allah al-Khalidi al-Kabir, was secretary of the Jerusalem shari'a court and died before 1908. Her father had three brothers; Muhammad 'Ali, Raghīb, and Muhammad Sulayman.²² As for Siddiqa, she had six brothers: Musa Shafiq; Ibrahim Adham; Hasan; Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab; 'Abd al-Muttalib; and 'Ali, who died as a youth. Siddiqa's brother Musa Shafiq (d. 1927) was the father of Thurayya's bride and the director of the Khalidi endowment from 1323 to 1334 h. (1905–1915 AD), when he was relieved of his duties, only to commence them again the following year.²³ Siddiqa also had four sisters: Nabiha, 'A'isha, Labiba, and Jamila. Their mother was Nafisa bint Musa bin Sun'allah al-Khalidi.

Siddiqa's late husband Yasin al-Khalidi is not mentioned in the letter, but his presence nonetheless suffuses it. Yasin – Ruhi and Thurayya's father and Yusuf's brother – was one of Jerusalem's notables and chief clerk of its shari'a court. He took over management of the family endowments in 1281 h. (1864 AD) at the request and with the approval of his father, Muhammad 'Ali al-Khalidi, who had managed them to that point.²⁴ Yasin was also a member in the general assembly in Beirut and a qadi in the city of Nablus. At the end of the nineteenth century, he was appointed mayor of Jerusalem, the second Khalidi to hold this position after his brother, Yusuf Diya'.²⁵ In his social and professional capacity, Yasin attended official receptions in the city, and was listed among those who received Wilhelm II, the Kaiser of Germany, on his famous visit to Jerusalem in 1898.²⁶ It appears that Yasin's death in 1901 was preceded by more than a month of jaundice.²⁷

The records of the family endowment, which Yasin managed for more than a quarter century, are fastidiously organized. Yasin left three ledgers listing the endowment's revenues and expenditures, each of which begins with a detailed table of contents. Although the handwriting is difficult to decipher, since the words are very small and close together, the ledgers contain information of social and political significance, of which two examples will have to suffice here. The first involves the spread of print culture and intellectual networks in the late nineteenth century. Yasin was responsible for the distribution of *Tarablus al-Sham* newspaper in Palestine during its third and

fourth years of publication (1313–14 h./1895–96 AD).²⁸ He listed sixty-eight subscribers to the newspaper in this period; in addition to the governor of Jerusalem, forty-five subscribers were from Jerusalem, twelve from Bethlehem, five from Hebron, and five from Gaza. Yasin's ledgers also suggest a sense of solidarity among family members, as it seems that the endowment covered all expenses associated with the death of a family member. In the case of Ibrahim Adham al-Khalidi, who died in April 1896, Yasin listed the expenses of the funeral (*kharja*), including the cost of washing the deceased, the burial shroud, digging the grave, alms and gifts to be given during mourning days, and other related necessities.²⁹

Ruhi

Muhammad Ruhi al-Khalidi, the eldest son of Siddiqa and Yasin and recipient of the letter, was born in Jerusalem in 1864.³⁰ As a youth, Ruhi studied at a number of educational institutions, including the Alliance School and the White Fathers' (al-Salahiyya) School in Jerusalem and the Sultaniyya School in Beirut. The Khalidi Library also includes several letters of merit recognizing his excellent performance in his first year at the Sultaniyya School in Beirut in 1883.³¹ From 1887 to 1893, Ruhi studied at the Royal College (al-Maktab al-Malaki) in Istanbul, and then spent time between Jerusalem, Paris, and Istanbul, where he attended the teaching circle of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. When Ottoman surveillance of Afghani extended to include Ruhi, he returned to Paris, where he studied at the École libre des sciences politiques and then the Sorbonne. After finishing his studies, Ruhi lectured at the École spéciale des Langues orientales and in 1898 was appointed consul-general of the Ottoman Empire in Bordeaux.³² He was serving in that capacity when Thurayya married.

That Siddiqa closes the letter with her wishes that God reward Ruhi, too, with a bride indicates that Ruhi was not yet married by the beginning of February 1906. He married Hermance Painsol, a French woman, later in 1906 or 1907 and by January 1908 she had given birth to their son Yahya (also known as Jean).³³ In July 1908, Khalidi returned to Jerusalem, after which he was elected to Ottoman parliament. He was reelected in 1912 and served as deputy speaker of parliament. Ruhi died on 5 Ramadan 1331 h. (6 August 1913 AD) in Beşiktaş, a neighborhood in the European side of Istanbul.³⁴

Ruhi's collection is perhaps the most important in the Khalidi Library, and one document indicates that he endowed the entirety of his personal library, including books and manuscripts, to the family's library. Ruhi's donations include several unpublished manuscripts, including the full text of his work *al-Siunism aw al-mas'ala al-sihyuniyya* (Zionism, or the Zionist Question), only part of which had previously been discovered, and the manuscript of the second part of his book *al-Mas'ala al-sharqiyya* (The Eastern Question).³⁵ Ruhi wrote a number of accounts based on his travels, including notes on his 1907 trip to Spain titled *Rihlat al-maqdisi ila jazirat al-Andalus* (A Jerusalemite's Journey to the Andalusian Peninsula); a description of Istanbul; and an account of the history, neighborhoods, and libraries of Paris. He also left a sixty-eight-page manuscript titled *Tarajim al-'a'ila al-Khalidiyya* (Biography of the Khalidi Family), which includes excerpts from various biographical dictionaries. The collection also includes a seventy-

page memoir written in French and two notebooks in French belonging to Ruhi's son Yahya,³⁶ as well as dozens of papers on various topics, such as Middle Sudan, to which he had traveled, and the Jubilee of the Chemical Society.

A second part of the collection consists of correspondence to and from Ruhi, written in French,³⁷ Ottoman Turkish, and Arabic. The latter were addressed mostly to his uncle, Yusuf Diya' al-Khalidi, and his brother Thurayya, as well as other relatives or non-relatives, and were often complaints or requests for assistance. Ruhi also maintained correspondence with owners of newspapers published in Syria and Egypt, such as a 1902 letter from Ahmad al-Jisr, owner of *Tarabulus al-Sham* newspaper, in which he informed Ruhi of his intention to publish a magazine called *al-Lubab* and asked Ruhi to contribute to it.³⁸

Thurayya

Mahmud Thurayya al-Khalidi was Siddiqa's son and Ruhi's brother and, of course, the groom in the wedding described in the letter. Much of what we know about Thurayya al-Khalidi is what can be gleaned from the correspondence between relatives of the Khalidi family, including Ruhi and Yusuf Diya' Pasha. In his letters, Thurayya showed great esteem for Ruhi as his elder brother and a kind of father figure after Yasin's death. Thurayya always addressed his brother as "my lord, the great father, after kissing hands and feet" (*al-sayyid al-walid al-mu'azzam ba'da taqbil al-aydi wa al-aqdam*). The respect with which Thurayya addressed Ruhi might also be attributed to Ruhi's professional position. In a December 1901 letter to Yusuf, Thurayya indicated that he was trying to improve himself academically by writing articles and sending them to Ruhi to review and edit.³⁹ He wrote about archaeology, based on his work in British-supervised excavations at Abu Shusha to which he was appointed after the dismissal of Shawkat al-Khalidi.⁴⁰ In a November 1902 letter, Thurayya informed Ruhi of a cholera outbreak in several Palestinian cities, including Hebron, Jaffa, and Gaza, mentioning that all these cities were under quarantine and people were prevented from entering or leaving them until the end of 1903; despite these efforts, the outbreak was not contained, and spread further.⁴¹ Thurayya al-Khalidi died in 1934.

Yusuf Diya' Pasha

The last personality that figures prominently and repeatedly in the letter is Yusuf Diya' Pasha al-Khalidi.⁴² Yusuf, born in 1842, was – with Yasin, 'Abd al-Rahman, and Khalil – one of four sons of Muhammad 'Ali al-Khalidi (d. 1864), a progressive Palestinian intellectual and proponent of social and cultural change in the late nineteenth century, and Asma' bint Musa al-Khalidi. Yusuf began his education in the *kuttab* of al-Aqsa mosque, but, desirous of a European education, later studied at the Protestant College in Malta. After two years in Malta, Yusuf's brother Yasin arranged his transfer to Istanbul, where Yusuf attended the Military Medical School for one year and then Robert College, an American school established in 1863. After eighteen months at the latter, he returned to Jerusalem following his father's death. Influenced by the various schools he had attended, Yusuf sought to set up similar institutions in Jerusalem. In

1867, he succeeded, with the help of Rashid Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Syria with whom he would retain close ties, to raise funds for the first *rushdiyye* school (state middle school) in Jerusalem.

Hoping that he would be appointed to a position in the school, Yusuf was instead made president of the Jerusalem municipality – the first member of the Khalidi to hold this position. In 1874, Yusuf joined the Ottoman translation bureau for six months, and was then sent to serve as the Ottoman consul (*shahbandar*) to Poti, a Russian city on the coast of the Black Sea. After six months, he was removed from this position and travelled in Russia, eventually arriving in Vienna, where he took a position teaching Arabic and Ottoman language at the Oriental Academy. In 1877–78, after having returned to Jerusalem, he was named representative of the district in the short-lived chamber of deputies. After the chamber was dissolved in 1878, Yusuf was expelled from Istanbul and returned to his position as president of the Jerusalem municipality. He continued to serve the Ottoman state in various positions, including as *qa'immaqam* of Jaffa and governor of the Mutki district in the predominantly Kurdish Bitlis province. There he studied Kurdish and compiled a Kurdish-Arabic dictionary entitled *al-Hadiya al-Hamidiyya fi al-lugha al-Kurdiyya* (Hamidian Gift for the Kurdish Language). Yusuf was also presciently aware of Zionist ambitions in Palestine and in 1899 he wrote to the chief rabbi of France, Zadok Kahn, imploring the Zionist movement to “let Palestine be left in peace.”⁴³

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Yusuf had returned to Jerusalem, where he remained active in civic life, including sponsoring the installation of iron pipes to deliver water to Jerusalem in 1901.⁴⁴ Later that year, after Yasin’s death, Yusuf was again offered the presidency of the municipality, but he turned it down, citing ill health, and nominated Sa‘id al-Husayni, who consequently received the position.⁴⁵ In June 1901, according to the shari‘a court records, Ruhi – visiting Jerusalem around the time of his father’s death – and Thurayya authorized Yusuf to manage their estates within and outside Jerusalem.⁴⁶ By 1903, it seems that Yusuf felt that his end was near, writing in a letter to Ruhi: “I ask of you upon your arrival to Marseille to head to the marble vendors and order a beautiful headstone befitting a notable, regardless of the price. Our dear Armenian chief Serapion, may God preserve him for us, has convinced me to be buried in the German Quarter.”⁴⁷ In a letter dated March 1905, Yusuf consulted Ruhi about donating his books to the library, expressing his reluctance to do so: “I noticed that people are not so keen on reading.”⁴⁸ Ultimately, however, he decided to donate his books to the Khalidi Library, where they are held, along with Yusuf’s last will and testament, recorded by ‘Uthman al-Khalidi. Yusuf Diya’ Pasha died in 1906 in Istanbul.

The Khalidi Library includes dozens of letters between Yusuf and Ruhi. Perhaps unsurprisingly, they reveal Yusuf to be an avid reader, often telling Ruhi that he had read the latter’s articles in *Tarabulus al-Sham* and *al-Hilal* newspapers, and asking him to “keep sending newspapers [from France] that publish content about our country.”⁴⁹ Yusuf was also active in building the library’s collection and asked Ruhi to bring a copy of the French *Encyclopédie* to add to it. The Khalidi Library also includes two unpublished manuscripts by Yusuf – a four-page autobiography and a work of exegesis

entitled *Mumahakat al-ta'wil fi munaqadat al-injil* (Disputes of Interpretation regarding Contradictions in the Gospels) – as well as correspondence between him and the German Orientalist Adolf Warhmund, who had also taught Arabic at the Oriental Academy of Vienna.⁵⁰ In these letters to Warhmund, Yusuf discussed the Ottoman-Russian wars and what he saw as Britain's betrayal and manipulation of the Ottomans, with disastrous human costs.⁵¹ He expressed a desire for reform and modernization in the Ottoman world – to be achieved through implementation of “Muhammadan-Bismarckian ideas” (*al-afkar al-Muhammadiyah al-Bismarkiyah*) – and lamented the educational, economic, and legal deficiencies of “the East.”⁵²

Siddiq's letter and its annotated translation appear on pages 90 to 99.

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Endnotes

- Most of the letters are written on medium-sized pages, and they all have a serial number on the top corner in addition to the date in Hijri and sometimes the date in the Gregorian calendar, as well as the Ottoman Rumi or fiscal year. The fiscal year was innovated by the Ottomans to organize financial records, and it began on 1 March 1840. This calendar was used until the proclamation of the Turkish Republic when the Gregorian calendar was adopted instead on 1 January 1926. See Muhammad Siddiq al-Jalili, *al-Taqwim al-shamsi al-‘Uthmani al-musamma bi-l-sanin al-maliya al-Rumaniyya* [The Ottoman Solar Calendar Meaning the Rumi Fiscal Year] (Baghdad: al-Majma‘ al-‘ilmi al-‘Iraqi, 1973).
- This is according to a deed dated 8 Rabi‘ al-Thani 1322 (21 June 1904). *Sijill* no. 397, 245.
- Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
- See Salim Tamari, “Ma bayna al-a‘yan wa al-awbash: al-ru‘ya al-Jawhariyya fi tarikh al-Quds al-intidabiyya” [Among the Notables and the Riffraff: The Jawhariyyeh View of Mandate Jerusalem's History], in *Dirasat fi al-tarikh al-ijtima‘iyya li-bilad al-Sham: qira‘at fi al-siyar wa al-siyar al-dhatiyya* [Studies in the Social History of Greater Syria: Readings in Biography and Autobiography], ed. Issam Nassar and Salim Tamari (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2007), 201–30.
- See, for example, Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 58–59, 81–85; Khader Salameh, *Qaryat Zakariya* [Zakariya Village] (Hebron: Matba‘at rabitat al-jami‘iyyin, 2013), 187–89; Um Jabr Wishah, “Palestinian Voices: Scenes of Everyday Life in Bayt ‘Affa,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 35, no. 2 (Winter 2006): 82–84. Many efforts to document local practice are based on memory – whether recorded in written memoirs or through oral histories – which can present certain difficulties, especially in the case of events like weddings which continue to occur with little interruption.
- For a detailed study of marriage traditions in Artas village in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village* (Helsinki: Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 1931). See also: Mary Eliza Rogers,

- Domestic Life In Palestine* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1862); Frederick Augustus Klein, "Report about the Life, Customs, and Practices of the Fellahin in Palestine," in *Palestine Life, Customs, and Practices: German Articles from the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries*, trans. Robert Schick (Amman: University of Jordan, 2010), 47–63; G. Robinson Lees, *Village Life in Palestine: A Description of the Religion, Home Life, Manners, Customs, Characteristics, and Superstitions of the Peasants of the Holy Land, with Reference to the Bible* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1911), 117–28. Several articles in the *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* also include Western researchers' descriptions of village weddings, observed during excavations in Palestine.
- 7 On the general sociopolitical context of late Ottoman Palestine, see, for example: Johann Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine: Politics and Society in the District of Jerusalem* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Wasif Jawhariyyeh, *al-Quds al-'uthmani fi al-mudhakkirat al-Jawhariyya: al-kitab al-awwal min mudhakkirat al-musiqi Wasif Jawhariyya, 1904–1917* [Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawhariyyeh Memoirs: The First Book of the Memoirs of the Musician Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904–1917], ed. Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar (Jerusalem: Institute for Jerusalem Studies, 2003); Adel Manna, *Tarikh Filastin fi awakhir al-'ahd al-'uthmani, 1700–1918: qira'a jadida* [Palestinian History in the Late Ottoman Era, 1700–1918: A New Reading] (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1999); and Alexander Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856–1882: Studies in Social, Economic, and Political Development* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993).
 - 8 On the details of Christian marriages in the mentioned period (we assume that traditions of all religions that inhabited Jerusalem in that period were similar), see Jawhariyyeh, *al-Quds al-'uthmani*, 111–26. According to 'Asim al-Khalidi, both the groom-to-be and bride-to-be would be presented with the matter, but they had no say in the decision to accept or refuse an arrangement.
 - 9 Jawhariyyeh, *al-Quds al-'Uthmani*, 115.
 - 10 Another method of keeping property within a family was through the establishment of family endowments (*awqaf*). See Beshara Doumani, *Family Life in the Ottoman Mediterranean: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). It should also be noted that intrafamily marriages (particularly cousin marriage) was common across socioeconomic classes, not only among elites, in Ottoman Palestine.
 - 11 Khalidi Library Archives (KLA), Yusuf Diya' al-Khalidi File, letters no. 3, 7, and 9.
 - 12 KLA, Ruhi al-Khalidi File, letter no. 46.
 - 13 See Anis Furayha, *al-Qarya al-Lubnaniyya: hadara fi tariq al-zawal* [The Lebanese Village: A Culture on the Path to Extinction] (Tripoli, Lebanon: Jarrous Press, 1989 [1957]), 171.
 - 14 KLA, Yusuf Diya' File, letter no. 15.
 - 15 On the role of marriage in women's material wealth in Palestine, see Annelies Moors, *Women, Property, and Islam: Palestinian Experiences, 1920–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), especially section 5.3 (Household goods and gold), 113–19.
 - 16 See Moors, *Women, Property, and Islam*, 81.
 - 17 Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 57.
 - 18 In the 1930s, an exhibition was held in Jerusalem to showcase Palestinian and Arab artisanship and artistry. The exhibition included a piece contributed by Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, a leading Palestinian educator during the Mandate period: his grandmother's dress. The dress, made in Istanbul, was embroidered with gold; clothing decorated with gold or silver thread or ribbons was known during the Ottoman era as *sirma*. (Since 2018, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem has been showcasing a similar dress dating from 1910 in Iraq.) See Jawhariyyeh, *al-Quds al-'uthmani*, 546; James W. Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon* (Istanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 2015 [1890]), 1198.
 - 19 *Sijill* no. 412, 156.
 - 20 *Sijill* no. 400, 9–10, 38. A *rotl* is a measurement of weight used throughout the Arab Mediterranean and varying quite widely. In the early 1920s in Palestine, one *rotl* was slightly less than six and a half pounds. See the report of the U.S. consul in Jerusalem, Addison E. Southard, "Soap Industry of Palestine," in U.S. Department

of Commerce, *Commerce Reports Volume 4, Nos. 1–17, Twenty Fourth Year: September, October, November, December 1921* (Washington: Government Printing Press, 1922), 557.

- 21 At the library's inauguration in 1900, its collection – the core of which were books and manuscripts endowed by members of the Khalidi family – comprised: 115 manuscripts and 642 books belonging to Yusuf Diya' al-Khalidi; 102 manuscripts and 615 books belonging to Ruhi al-Khalidi; and 100 books belonging to Nadhif al-Khalidi. The collection also includes 91 journals. A note dating to 1886, fourteen years before the actual establishment of the library, records that 1,266 books were donated to the library without identifying their source – a figure remarkably close to the combined collections of Ruhi and Yusuf. KLA records no. 37, 38.
- 22 See *Sijill* no. 400, 113–16, 143–46.
- 23 *Sijill* no. 414, 100–2, 124.
- 24 KLA record 3, file KHD_Doc_15.
- 25 Adel Manna, *A'lam Filastin fi awakhir al-'ahd al-'Uthmani, 1800–1918* [Palestinian Notables in the Late Ottoman Period, 1800–1918] (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), 144.
- 26 Wasif al-Jawhariyya, *al-Quds al-'Uthmaniyya fi al-mudhakkirat al-Jawhariyyeh* [Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawhariyya Memoirs], ed. Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar (Jerusalem: Institute for Jerusalem Studies, 2003), vol. 1, 260; Hassan 'Ali Hallaq, *Mawqif al-dawla al-'Uthmani min al-haraka al-Sihyuniyya, 1897–1909* [The Ottoman State's Position on the Zionist Movement, 1897–1909] (Cairo: Dar al-huda, 1990), 152.
- 27 KLA, Yusuf Diya' al-Khalidi File, letter no. 11.
- 28 *Tarabulus al-Sham* newspaper was issued twice a week; the first issue was published on 13 March 1893. It was the first newspaper published in the city of Tripoli, Lebanon, and continued – despite being suspended a number of times due to its opposition to the state – until the death of its owner, Muhammad Kamil al-Buhayri, in 1920. Under its editor-in-chief Husayn al-Jisr, it published progressive opinions, calling for the opening of libraries and academic and industrial schools for men and women. Husayn al-Jisr and Ruhi al-Khalidi were in correspondence, and the newspaper published at least one article by Ruhi, “Hikmat al-tarikh” (The Wisdom of History), in which he pointed to the country's regrettable conditions, which had brought it to the brink of an uprising, leading to the newspaper's suspension by authorities. See Philippe de Tarazi, *Tarikh al-sihafa al-'Arabiyya* [A History of Arab Media] (Beirut: Dar Sadr, 1914), vol. 2, pt. 3, 24; Adib Muruwa, *al-Sihafa al-'Arabiyya: nash'atuha wa tatawwuruha* [Arab Media: Its Origins and Development] (Beirut: Dar al-maktabat al-hayat, 1961), 181.
- 29 KLA, ledger no. 5, 96.
- 30 “Muhammad Ruhi al-Khalidi,” *palestinian journeys*, online at www.paljourneys.org/en/biography/9839/muhammad-ruhi-al-khalidi (accessed 13 May 2019).
- 31 All of the merit letters have the same text except for the name of the subject, for example: “First prize in religious sciences from the Sultaniyya School for Ruhi al-Khalidi, First Grade Student from Jerusalem.”
- 32 In 1897, one Muhammad Rahim wrote to congratulate Ruhi for publishing his research on astronomy and for being appointed a civil officer (*ma'mur*) in the embassy in Paris. KLA, Ruhi al-Khalidi File, letter no. 36.
- 33 KLA, Thurayya al-Khalidi File, letter no. 10, 25 January 1908. See also “Muhammad Ruhi al-Khalidi,” *palestinian journeys*, online at www.paljourneys.org/en/biography/9839/muhammad-ruhi-al-khalidi (accessed 13 May 2019).
- 34 This is based on a document recently discovered in the shari'a court records. After his death, an official meeting was held in the presence of Siddiq and Thurayya, to register the inheritance and identify beneficiaries. In the document, his mother says: “At this date Ramadan 5, 1331, my son, Muhammad Ruhi bin Yasin passed away in . . . Beşiktaş.” *Sijill* no. 411, 24.
- 35 See Walid Khalidi, *al-Maktaba al-Khalidiyya fi al-Quds, 1720 m.–2001 m.* [The Khalidi Library, 1720 AD–2001 AD] (Jerusalem: al-Maktaba al-Khalidiyya, 2002), 22; and Walid Khalidi, “Kitab al-Sionism aw al-mas'ala al-Sihyuniyya [The Book ‘Zionism, or the Zionist Question’ by Muhammed Ruhi al-Khalidi, deceased 1913], in *Studia Palaestina: Studies in Honor of Constantine*

- K. Zurayk, ed. Hisham Nashabeh (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1988), 37–81.
- 36 One is ten pages written in pencil and the other comprises drafts of letters.
- 37 The letters are currently being translated from French to English with the help of the French Cultural Center.
- 38 Jisr refers in his letter to a Marrakesh-related article (*al-maqala al-Murrakushiyya*) that Ruhi had written. KLA, Ruhi al-Khalidi File, letter no. 47.
- 39 KLA, Thurayya al-Khalidi File, letter no. 12.
- 40 KLA, Yusuf Diya' al-Khalidi File, letter no. 9.
- 41 KLA, Yusuf Diya' al-Khalidi File, letters no. 1 and no. 22, dated 11 November 1902.
- 42 Biographical information on Yusuf Diya' Pasha is drawn from Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation*, 241–52; and Manna, *A'lam Filastin*, 146–51.
- 43 Kahn did not respond personally, but shared the letter with Theodor Herzl, who responded in March 1899. See Neville Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 47–48; Walid Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876–1948* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1991), 41; Manna, *A'lam Filastin*, 149–50; Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation*, 249–50; and Hallaq, *Mawqif al-dawla al-'uthmani*, 134, 229, 241–42.
- 44 On the back of a letter from Thurayya, dated 23 December 1901, Yusuf wrote a note telling Ruhi about sponsoring the installing of iron water pipes in Jerusalem, for which he paid 6,500 Ottoman liras. With the installation of the pipes, water was delivered to al-Haram al-Sharif on the sultan's birthday, and Yusuf Diya' Pasha appears in a photograph of the ceremony at al-Haram al-Sharif. He attended on behalf of the mayor, his brother Yasin, who was ill with jaundice. See KLA, Thurayya al-Khalidi File, letter no. 12; *Sijill* 393, 173, image 932; Vincent Lemire, *Jerusalem 1900: The Holy City in the Age of Possibilities*, trans. Catherine Tihanyi and Lys Ann Weis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 148.
- 45 KLA, Yusuf Diya' al-Khalidi File, letter no. 1. Yusuf wrote: "I nominate Sa'id al-Husayni to be president . . . the governor asked me to accept the presidency, but I am physically weak and ill most of the days, and I cannot endure the burden of this commission." On Sa'id al-Husayni, see Manna, *A'lam Filastin*, 129.
- 46 *Sijill* 393, 173, image 932.
- 47 KLA, Yusuf Diya' al-Khalidi File, letter no. 16.
- 48 KLA, Yusuf Diya' al-Khalidi File, letter no. 4.
- 49 KLA, Thurayya al-Khalidi File, letter no. 23.
- 50 KLA, Yusuf Diya' al-Khalidi File, document no. 33. See also Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation*, 246.
- 51 Yusuf describes the war as resulting in the deaths of more than one hundred thousand soldiers, more than half of them Arabs, including ten thousand Palestinians.
- 52 Yusuf described al-Tafila, Karak, al-Salt, and Jericho as lands "that are destined for ruin"; recounted discussions with Bedouin about progress; decried the state of chaos and rebellion on the island of Crete; and ended one letter by pointing to imbalance between East and West: "the foreigners have a law that they refer to in all matters, whether good or bad. We are the ignorant ones, and if we continue to close our eyes, we will undoubtedly become their servants . . . If any of us look at what we are wearing we will find that it is all made by foreigners starting with the boots and ending with the head dress, but if we look at the foreigners we know, we will find that they wear nothing made in Eastern countries." However, a renewed focus on the study of science and implementation of "Muhammadan-Bismarckian ideas" would, according to Yusuf, put the Ottoman lands "on the right path."

- 1.1 My son, joy of my heart, may the Lord keep you happy here and in the afterlife.
- 1.2 I send you my exalted greetings. I received your letter, and I am glad that you are well and healthy. In it you informed me that nobody had written anything to you and that you did not know
- 1.3 about anything since your brother is too shy to tell you the details. Thank God, the new daughter-in-law can read and write and she is sitting
- 1.4 beside me writing this letter.¹
- 1.5 The engagement [*al-khitba*] . . . I sent after Jamil Effendi² and informed him that I wanted my son Thurayya to marry Nash³ at Khanum,³ provided that he not inform anybody, as his uncle, the Pasha,⁴
- 1.6 was in Jaffa and was not aware. So consult your father and mother and get back to me with an answer. On the fourth day, [Abu] Jamil Effendi⁵ visited me and notified me: my daughter is your daughter and my son is your son.⁶
- 1.7 Then we sent a telegraph to your uncle, the Pasha, asking him to come quickly. He arrived the same evening and asked me why I sent for him, so I gave him
- 1.8 an account of it. Then I sent word to Abu Jamil that we would come for the *milak* on Thursday.
- 1.9 The engagement present [*al-milak*] . . . The diamond earrings that you know, and a silk suit⁷ worth five francs,⁸ a small box, a brocaded parcel,⁹ five
- 1.10 silk handkerchiefs, and a lavender box,¹⁰ the value of all being two hundred lira. I placed them all within the small box and took a carriage with Nabih Khanum;¹¹ Zaynab Khanum;¹²
- 1.11 Umm Musa; Dhahra Khanum;¹³ Amina Khanum;¹⁴ the late ‘Abd al-Salam Effendi’s mother; ‘A’isha al-Sa‘udiyya; Fatima, the wife of Shawkat Effendi;¹⁵ the neighbors;¹⁶ your uncle
- 1.12 the Pasha; and ‘Uthman Nuri Effendi.¹⁷ We went to Abu Jamil’s house and had lunch there. Lunch was stuffed chicken, stuffed zucchini, stuffed cucumbers, *musaqqa’a*,¹⁸ meat and rice,
- 1.13 and yellow and green watermelon. We laughed and had fun and Sitt Amina played the oud,¹⁹ then we returned home.

الكُتُب... ذهبنا والاذى ذهب من في اللوك الإدرايميل. وكان حاضر المصروف والمأض وبقيّة الأذن الحربية. وكانه
 دليل العريس عن الأباستيل ومخالفت محمد اذى وجيل اذى وكانه دليل الروس مفتي اذى بسطوه خالط المردف الحاج زغب
 اذى وجيل اذى وكانه عازة النكاح الحاج خدر سيد اذى السطري وبعد عقد النكاح اذى بربرت كوشى الدنيا وهرمه شرب
 اذى فقال سنن الامير كانه وبه ذهب الرجال بقينا اذى اذى من العلوية ومنه جهنم الأباذنى اذى ومنه الختم حريم نائب
 اذى وتقدنا هناك وكانه الله. خروف محتر وبطبا به محتر وخيار محتر وسقطه ولحم داره وكانه ديندور ودوروه
 وجيب الفذركه ولكنه باحرف حضر خالط الخدم ما حضر اللوك كانه حضره عمده محمد اذى المظلم ما حضر الفذركه الكساب
 ذلك التأسف جدا منه هذه المائدة.

الزفاف في ليلة السبت الرابع عشر من شعبان المظلم جرى الزفاف في دارنا المعروفة في دار ابراهيم اذى ابان وقد
 وضنا شادكيا اذى بعرضه ربالا لوسم فجا العريس ومد عمر ابا وقد بالصد رديعانه جلس طابا استبره
 من الزمان قد جهل الى دار شركت اذى فذه هاجت انا اذى العروس ام جيل اذى وجلت عن عيني وجلت عن شمارة بيبه
 اذى نزهة فاتم مع العروس ودهن تجلس. وكان السار في اخر الارصه المعروفة وقت استا العروس من اول الدار الفخرا دار
 فذها قام العريسه ورسه على راسه الاثنا ليلت المعبر عظم بالفتارى وبعد ذلك رجع عند راسه رالبر محمد وجلت
 بجانبه الايمه وعندها حضرت الست عاتة العريه ونقضت العريس بالفتك والساعة تبطل وعاتم من الالاس

Figure 2. Siddiq'a's Letter, page 2. Khalidi Library, Jerusalem.

- 2.1 The marriage contract [*al-kitab*] . . . I went to Abu Jamil's house with the same people who accompanied me to the *milak*. The district administrator,²⁰ the qadi,²¹ and the rest of the notables were in attendance.
- 2.2 The groom's representative was your uncle, the Pasha, while your uncle Muhammad Effendi²² and Jamil Effendi served as witnesses. The bride's representative was the mufti effendi,²³ and her well-known uncle Hajj Raghbi
- 2.3 Effendi²⁴ and Jamil Effendi served as witnesses. The marriage was officiated by Hajj Khurshid Effendi al-Shihabi.²⁵ After the ceremony, glasses were passed around for toasts with
- 2.4 American orange juice.²⁶ After the men's departure, I remained with those whom I mentioned earlier, including the Pasha and Nuri Effendi and also the female relatives of the deputy²⁷
- 2.5 and we had lunch there. Lunch was a stuffed lamb, stuffed eggplants,²⁸ stuffed cucumbers, *musaqqa'a*, meat and rice, *kunafa*, baklava, peaches,
- 2.6 and an assortment of fruit. But to my dismay, her esteemed uncle²⁹ did not attend the *milak*, while her well-respected uncle Muhammad Effendi³⁰ did not attend the ceremony.
- 2.7 I found this behavior very regrettable.
- 2.8 The wedding celebration [*al-zifaf*] On the evening of Saturday, 20 Sha'ban,³¹ the wedding celebration was held in our house, that is, in the house of Ibrahim Effendi Labban.³²
- 2.9 We set up a great tent³³ that we called the salon, and the groom came with his uncle, the Pasha, and sat in the place of honor. After the Pasha sat there for a brief
- 2.10 time, he headed to Shawkat Effendi's house. Then I came with the mother of the bride, Umm Jamil Effendi, who sat to the groom's right, while I sat to his left.
- 2.11 Sitt Nabihah Khanum stayed with the bride while she was unveiled.³⁴ The tent was erected at the far end of the property. The bride walked from the house toward the tent
- 2.12 and the groom stood up and scattered ten-piaster *metalliques*³⁵ over her head. Then he lifted the veil³⁶ from her head and she sat
- 2.13 beside him on the right. Sitt 'A'ishah al-Sa'udiyyah came and gifted the groom a watch and a matching chain,³⁷ and a diamond ring.

وبعد هارفت تم بد ذلك حضره الست ام موسى ورفقت ايضا ولما انت ابيته قد علم العود وبعد نحو نصف ساعة قام الربيعي
ما سبجه بايديهم وقد جردوا الابن الذي كان سلامه وقتما كنت عند ابيته كما ان السرير مرضه عاهانا وبعد له ذهبه الذي به
الست عات السدود دخلت السقوط من العربية وصار الصلح هالك .

اما الفرسه... فيه عبارة عن كبة وقلعة وايضا قلوبه حسب زينة شغل وقتها ولم شغل وقتها ايضا وخزانة ويورو
وبنايه والذات والذات الفهم وسبعة ذنوب وسبعة اذن وسبعة يمانه وضم السرير اما السرير فاني انت به مبهودت
فهره السدود به الاصل المال ومخنة فخره عزير افنساوي واننا سرية فخره احد عزير افنساوي .

التمط... في صوب العرس تقصيرا العربية بلحمة الماس ومنه طرفت بقله الماس اخرى الذي اتى بها خالك المرحوم من
وتقصير الذهبا بلحمة الماس وجعل اذن بنجام الماس وحده الدية اذن بكسك وساعة وماذا اذن باه من الذهب الذي
يلعب عن سرفينج وخالها الختم الى ج رغب اذن فخره ليرة افنساوية والست ظهره خانم فخره ليرة ايضا لاسفالك
فدري اذن يوم العرس فوجه الابن كانه حبيب من العرسه واما خالك التي ليه خانم فخره لم تحضر العرسه بل قد حضره عرسه
طاه اهره عليها ذلك العرسه... وقد انت العرسه بخبريه شاميه ومحمد مرر مطوفه بينه من المال فخرت وقتها الاخذ ابنا
والا فخره اذن وشركت اذن امه العربية فخره كانت به له لفهم كما مده ليراب الى المرحوم .

Figure 3. Siddiq'a's Letter, page 3. Khalidi Library, Jerusalem.

- 3.1 Afterward I danced and after that Umm Musa came and danced as well, while Sitt Amina played the oud. After nearly half an hour the bride and groom got up,
- 3.2 holding hands, and headed toward the house that was the *selamlık*³⁸ when you were here, and where the bed had been placed. After the bride and groom left,
- 3.3 Sitt ‘A’isha al-Sa‘udiyya came and snatched the presents from the groom and there ensued great laughter.
- 3.4 As for the furnishings [*al-farsh*] . . . it consisted of one sofa; two armchairs,³⁹ as well as two olivewood armchairs made in Damascus; a table also made in Damascus; a closet and a chest of drawers;⁴⁰
- 3.5 and crystal glasses, a tea set and a coffee set; seven mattresses, nine blankets, six pillows, and a bed set. As for the bed, I brought it from Beirut,
- 3.6 and it is made from expensive yellow sandarac wood,⁴¹ and cost fifteen francs, and a mosquito net worth eleven francs.
- 3.7 The wedding presents [*al-nuqut*] . . . The next morning, the groom gave the bride a diamond broach, and another diamond broach, which your late uncle brought from Istanbul, on your behalf.
- 3.8 Her father gave her diamond earrings, Jamil Effendi gave her a diamond ring, Sadr al-Din Effendi gave her a watch and chain, Mu‘az Effendi gave her a gold pin
- 3.9 called a “souvenir.” Her esteemed uncle Raghıb Effendi gave her five francs and Sitt Dhahra Khanum gave her five francs also, because your uncle
- 3.10 Nuri Effendi went to Jaffa on the day of the wedding, as if fleeing the wedding. As for your Aunt Labiba Khanum, she did not come to the wedding, and I think she would rather be flogged twenty times
- 3.11 than deign herself to be at this wedding. . . . The bride brought a Syrian quilt and a silk handkerchief wrapped in a parcel made of expensive fabric for you and a similar one for your uncle, the Pasha,
- 3.12 and for Nuri Effendi and Shawkat Effendi. As for the groom’s outfit, it was a complete sleepwear set, from socks to handkerchief.

هذا ما به الفقيه ومنه هذا التاكيد فيه فانتم تهديك اسرافا وتبارك لك بقولنا صلوات الله عليك وعلى آهلك واصيبت
ورزقتك اية عودا مباركا دارنا اية شريفين وهدوك ودفنن بنا هنتك قريبا علم احسن حال ويا ولدي ارجوك
عدم تأخير كتابك عن الاثنى لا استعجالا بظنك وقربا انا اية احضر طرفك انا والعروس الجديدة .

ما ٦ ذى القعدة ١٢٢٤ هـ
والدائم
محمد

نسي انه افرد لك بانه عهد ابنا نطق بجلده الماس

ووالا انتم تعلمت له ما يعرفون به من رتبة المروءات كنتم في حيزه سليلين من خيرة المروءات والاولاد

Figure 4. Siddiq's Letter, page 4. Khalidi Library, Jerusalem.

- 4.1 I think this is enough, and your Aunt Nabihah Khanum sends her love and good wishes to you, saying may God bless you and your mother and your brother
- 4.2 and may God reward you with a blessed bride. May God perpetuate your noble existence and grant me sight of you soon in good health. My son, I hope you
- 4.3 do not delay writing to me, as nothing pleases me as much as reading your words, and God willing I will come to visit you soon with the new bride.
- 4.4 6 Dhu al-Qida 1323⁴² Your mother,
- 4.5 Siddiqa
- 4.6 I forgot to tell you that your uncle, the Pasha, gave [as a wedding gift] diamond earrings.
- 4.7 [added in a different handwriting] Your Uncle Yusuf Diya' wishes you the very best, and says: given the very cold weather I couldn't write you a long letter, so forgive me this time, and may God's peace and kindness be upon you.

Endnotes

- 1 The bride's ability to read and write indicates that some Jerusalemite families enrolled their daughters in schools. It is worth noting that most schools, and girls' schools in particular, in Jerusalem at the end of the Ottoman era were missionary schools. In 1903, there were four French schools and three German schools for girls in Jerusalem, and (mostly elite) families sent their daughters to these schools, as well as *katatib* (Qur'anic schools), to educate them. Although the Ottoman Empire passed a public education law in 1869, its impact was limited until the era of Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876–1909), when parents were obliged to contribute to the costs of school construction and teacher salaries. See Ela Greenberg, *Preparing the Mothers of Tomorrow: Education and Islam in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 17, 29, 33; Yucel Gelişli, "Education of Women from the Ottoman Empire to Modern Turkey," *SEER: Journal for Labor and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe* 7, no. 4 (2004): 121–35.
- 2 Jamil was the bride's brother, Jamil bin Musa Shafiq bin Muhammad Tahir al-Khalidi.
- 3 Daughter of Musa Shafiq al-Khalidi and Amina bint Muhammad, and the granddaughter of Muhammad Tahir bin 'Ali al-Khalidi. *Sijill* no. 400, 113–16.
- 4 Yusuf Diya' al-Khalidi.
- 5 Musa Shafiq bin Muhammad Tahir al-Khalidi (d. 1346 h./1927 AD).
- 6 *Al-bint bintik wa al-walad waladik*, meaning that the two families will be united in marriage.
- 7 The suit material is described as *janfas*, a fine silk cloth; the origins of the word are from the Ottoman Turkish *janvis*, a loan word from the Italian *canevaccio*, meaning "canvas." See Husayn Lubani, *Mu'jam al-'ammi wa al-dakhil fi Filastin* [Dictionary of Colloquial and Loan Words in Palestine] (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnan, 2006), 105.
- 8 *Lira faransawi*.
- 9 *Buqja*, from an Ottoman Turkish word meaning a bundle of clothes, is an embroidered cloth wrapping within which clothing is kept. In this context, not only the embroidered container, but its contents – which we do not know – were a gift to the

groom and his relatives. See Nimr Sirhan, *Mawsu'at al-fulkkur al-Filastini* [Encyclopedia of Palestinian Folklore] (Amman: PLO Department of Culture, 1989), vol. 3, 580; Lubani, *Mu'jam al-'ammi*, 50.

- 10 *Sandūq lawanda*, from the Italian word *lavanda*, the name of the lavender flower. Such a box would have been used to keep the possessions and clothes of the bride. See James W. Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon* (Istanbul: Cagri Yayınları, 2015 [1890]), 1622.
- 11 Nabihā Khanum was the daughter of Tahir bin Muhammad 'Ali al-Khalidi and the aunt of Nash'at bint Musa Shafiq. *Sijill* no. 416, pp. 126–27.
- 12 Zaynab Khanum was the daughter of Muhammad 'Ali al-Khalidi and half-sister of Yusuf Diya' Pasha on his mother's side; her mother, Hafiza, was Thurayya's aunt. *Sijill* no. 416, p. 3.
- 13 It is unclear if the Dhahra named here is the daughter of Dawud bin Muhammad Amin al-Khalidi (d. 1316 h./1898 AD) (see *Sijill* no. 397, p. 24) or the daughter of Musa 'Imran al-Khalidi and Ruqayya al-'Alami (see *Sijill* no. 398, p. 41–42).
- 14 Amina Badr al-Khalidi – daughter of Badr bin Mustafa al-Khalidi and Salma al-Ja'uni, and sister of Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi – was a great philanthropist, who endowed all her properties to build a university in Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the project did not come to fruition, although there are detailed blueprints for the university in the Islamic Waqf Department in Jerusalem.
- 15 Fatima bint Imran was married to Mahmud Shawkat bin Ibrahim Adham bin Muhammad 'Ali al-Khalidi, the half-brother of Musa Shafiq and son of Tahir bin 'Ali al-Khalidi and Khalidiyya, the daughter of Badr and Salma. See *Sijill* no. 390, pp. 65–66; *Sijill* no. 418, p. 46.
- 16 *Al-jīwar*.
- 17 Son of 'Ali Ratib bin Muhammad Tahir Effendi and Amina bint Muhammad, and brother of Sun'allah and Ruqayya. See *Sijill* no. 400, p. 115.
- 18 A room-temperature dish whose main ingredient is eggplant, often in a tomato sauce.
- 19 Though one might expect that playing the oud (and dancing), especially by women, would have contravened social norms among more conservative elements of Palestinian society in the late Ottoman period, this letter offers evidence that it was not unusual among urban elites. Further, Wasif Jawhariyyeh lists a number of musicians, dancers, and oud manufacturers in late Ottoman Jerusalem, and even mentions a woman oudist, Frusu Zahran, who was famous for her evening performances in Jerusalem, “especially at wedding celebrations of the wealthy peasants in Jerusalem district, in Abu Dis, al-'Ayzariya, and al-Tur, and likewise in Bethlehem.” Jawhariyya, *al-Quds al-'uthmani*, 148–53, quote at 149. On music in Jerusalem in the late Ottoman period, see Rachel Beckles Willson, “Hearing Palestine,” foreword to *The Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904–1948*, ed. Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2014), ix–xvi.
- 20 The district administrator (*mutassarif*) of Jerusalem in that period was Ahmad Rashid Bey, who served in this position in 1905–6. See *Salname* 1323 h./1905 AD, 904; *Salname* 1324 h./1906 AD, 968.
- 21 The qadi of the Jerusalem shari'a court, appointed by a letter signed by an Anatolian military judge on 15 Ramadan 1313 h. (1895 AD), was 'Abd al-Hamid bin Sa'id bin Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Qadir al-Rafi'i al-Trabulsi. He was born in Tripoli in 1855 and studied there and at al-Azhar in Egypt. In addition to Jerusalem, Trabulsi served as qadi in Hama, Latakia, Basra, Medina, Aleppo, and finally Izmir, where he died. See *Sijill mahkamat al-Quds al-shar'iyya, raqm 388: fahrassa tahliliyya, 22 Muharram 1314 h. (4/7/1896 m.)–8 Dhu al-Qa'da 1325 h. (14/12/1907 m.)* [Register of the Jerusalem Shari'a Court, No. 388: Analytical Index, 22 Muharram 1314 hijri (4/7/1896 AD)–8 Dhu al-Qa'da 1325 hijri (14/12/1907 AD)], ed. 'Abla al-Muhtadi, supervised by Muhammad 'Adnan al-Bakhit (Amman: University of Jordan, 2006), 1, 15–16.
- 22 Likely Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab, Siddiq'a's brother.
- 23 The mufti of Jerusalem at that time was Muhammad Tahir al-Husayni (*Sijill* no. 388, 37).
- 24 By all indications, this is Hajj Raghīb bin Nu'man al-Khalidi, the bride's maternal uncle,

- not the brother of Siddiqa. Hajj Raghīb bin Nu‘man al-Khalidī was the son of Nu‘man al-Khalidī (d. 1382 h./1865 AD) and Siddiqa al-Husaynī; he had two brothers, Ahmad and Yahya, and two sisters, Manzuma and Hasiba, and was married to Hajja Khadija, daughter of Hajj Musa bin Sun‘allah. *Sijill* no. 395, 368; *Sijill* no. 397, p. 70.
- 25 Muhammad Khurshid bin Abd al-Rahman bin Yusuf al-Shihabi worked at the shari‘a court as a second clerk in that period. Two members of the Khalidī family served as clerks in the court at that time, and the head clerk was ‘Uthman Zaki bin ‘Abd al-Rahman Nafidh bin Muhammad ‘Ali al-Khalidī. *Sijill* no. 388, 18, 29.
- 26 *Shurub al-burtuqal shughl al-Amrikan*. According to Salim Tamari, this likely referred to orange juice from the American Colony Hotel.
- 27 *Harim na’ib effendi*.
- 28 Rendered in Arabic here as *bataljan*. See Lubani, *Mu‘jam al-‘ammi*, 67; Redhouse, *Turkish and English Lexicon*, 318.
- 29 The bride had three uncles on her mother’s side, and the letter does not specify which one Siddiqa means here.
- 30 Siddiqa may be referring here to Muhammad bin Salman bin ‘Ali bin Muhammad bin Khalil Sun‘allah, the cousin of the bride’s father.
- 31 1323 hijri coinciding with 20 November 1905 AD.
- 32 The house can still be found on Chain Gate Road (Tariq Bab al-Silsila), house number 140, and it is part of the Khalidī family endowment. The children of Haydar Kamil al-Khalidī live there at present.
- 33 *Shadīran kabīran*, a large tent or canopy; the word *shadīr* has Persian origins. Lubani, *Mu‘jam al-‘ammi*, 291.
- 34 *Wa hiya tanjala*.
- 35 *Rash ‘ala ra’siha (al-matalik) al-mu‘abbar ‘anha bi-l-‘ushari*. The *metallique* or *metallik* was the “name given to a variety of low grade silver Turkish coins, which constituted a large part of the ordinary circulation, chiefly in Asia Minor.” Although the value of *metalliques* varied, these, called ‘*ushari*’ or “tenners,” seem to have been worth ten piastres each. Albert R. Frey, “A Dictionary of Numismatic Names: Their Official and Popular Designations,” *American Journal of Numismatics* 50 (1916): 148.
- 36 *Burunjuq*, from the Turkish, meaning a small cover worn on the head, most likely in this context referring to a head and face veil. Lubani, *Mu‘jam al-‘ammi*, 396.
- 37 *Kustik*, from the Turkish *köstek*, meaning the metal chain attached to a pocket watch; *kustik* is still used in Arabic to refer to the band of a wristwatch.
- 38 *Salamlīq*, from *selamlık*, “the Ottoman Turkish term for the outer, more public rooms of a traditionally arranged house, used, for example, for the reception of guests and non-family members; it thus contrasted with the inner rooms which constituted the *haram* or harem for the womenfolk.” “Selāmlik,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs (Leiden: Brill, 2012), online at dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6699 (accessed 9 May 2019). See also Redhouse, *Turkish and English Lexicon*, 1071.
- 39 *Qultuq*, from the Turkish *qoltuq*. Redhouse, *Turkish and English Lexicon*, 1494.
- 40 *Biru*, probably from the French word “bureau”: a chest of long horizontal drawers, in which underwear and baby clothes are usually stored, often topped with a mirror in a decorated frame. Lubani, *Mu‘jam al-‘ammi*, 64.
- 41 *Sandarīn*, from the Ottoman *senderus*: the sandarac or *Tetraclinis articulata* is a large evergreen conifer in the cypress family that is native to North Africa. Redhouse, *Turkish and English Lexicon*, 1082.
- 42 1 February 1906 AD.