

LITERARY ASPECTS OF THE POEM *EDIRNE* BY MA'RŪF AR-RUṢĀFĪ IN THE CONTI ROSSINI ARCHIVE AT THE ACCADEMIA NAZIONALE DEI LINCEI IN ROME*

ALI FARAJ

University of Milan-Bicocca

Abstract: This paper aims to present a version of the poem *Edirne* by Ma'rūf ar-Ruṣāfī preserved in the Conti Rossini Archive at the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei and to compare it with the copies in the collections of Muṣṭafā aṣ-Ṣaqqā, Muṣṭafā 'Alī and Muṣṭafā al-Ġalāyīnī. The poem was composed on the occasion of the siege and capture of Edirne (formerly known as Adrianople) by the Bulgarian Army (1912-1913) and its themes are war, occupation and *ḥamāsah* (lit. "valour"). The *qaṣīdah* in the Conti Rossini Archive, found inside an envelope with other material from Tripolitania, bears in Italian the title "Per la caduta di Adrianopoli" ("For the Fall of Adrianople") and was most likely copied by Conti Rossini himself. The poem is composed of thirty-seven lines, each of which is divided into two hemistichs; the first verse consists of two lines, while the following seven verses consist of five lines each. The present work will focus on the literary aspects of the poem, providing a translation of the text and a description of its salient features, function and meaning.

Keywords: *Ma'rūf ar-Ruṣāfī, Arabic poetry, Arabic literature, Arabic language, Carlo Conti Rossini, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, qaṣīdah, Political poetry.*

Ma'rūf ar-Ruṣāfī's life

Ma'rūf 'Abd al-Ġanī Maḥmūd, known later as ar-Ruṣāfī, was born in Baghdad in 1875 in the al-Qarāġūl quarter of ar-Ruṣāfah to a modest mixed Kurdish-Arab family. No one can say with certainty who Ma'rūf's father was because he rarely spoke about his family. The investigations by genealogists led them to the conclusion that his father belonged to the Kurdish tribe of al-Ġabbārah,¹ which was acknowledged by all the Kurds as being of 'Alid origin. If so, then it must have originally been an Arab tribe which migrated to non-Arab districts. His mother is said to have belonged to the tribe of al-Qarāġūl, a branch of Ṣammar which dwells on the plains of Iraq.²

He began his education when he was three years old, attending the elementary school in which he received a traditional *kuttāb* education and completed the study of the Qur'ān.

* I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr Nadia Bovino for her suggestions.

¹ A tribe that dwells near Kirkuk, a north-eastern Iraqi town.

² For further details, see Khulusi, S. 'Abdul-'Azīz (1950), 13: no. 3, 616-626.

Then he joined the ar-Ruṣdiyyah Military School³, but he failed to complete the course. Afterwards he continued his studies at religious schools where he was tutored by some of Baghdad's most famous religious scholars, in particular Maḥmūd Šukrī al-'Ālūsī with whom he stayed for twelve years. Because of his vast knowledge of religious studies, al-'Ālūsī called him "ar-Ruṣāfi" on the analogy of the poet Ma'rūf al-Karḥī⁴. After the completion of his studies in Arabic and Islamic sciences, ar-Ruṣāfi accepted a post as a teacher in a primary school in ar-Ruṣdiyyah suburb north of al-'A'ẓamiyyah city and then in 1902 he taught Arabic in a secondary school in Baghdad.

After the declaration of the Ottoman constitution in 1908, he left for Istanbul (Constantinople), where he was appointed as a teacher in the Higher Royal School. In 1909 ar-Ruṣāfi became the chief editor of the newspaper *Sabīl ar-Rašād* and in 1912 he was elected as a member in the al-Mab'utān Council in Constantinople, representing the al-Muntafiq district of Iraq.⁵ In 1919 he left Turkey for Iraq, but because of the political disarray and the closing of its borders, he was compelled to settle in Damascus, where he remained less than a year. In Damascus he was in a critical position due to his attacks against *al-'iṣlāḥiyyīn* (lit. "reformers") at the Arab Congress held in Paris in 1913; he believed that their demands were a contributing cause of national disunity in the Arab country. Moreover, his belligerence toward aš-Šarīf Ḥusayn⁶ when he revolted against Turkey in 1916 further exacerbated his precarious position. In 1920 he moved to Jerusalem, where he was appointed as a lecturer at the Teachers' Institute and returned to Baghdad in 1921. Ar-Ruṣāfi again found himself in critical position owing to his opposition to King Fayṣal and his government. He left Iraq in 1922, returning there the following year. In 1924 ar-Ruṣāfi was appointed inspector of Arabic language in the Directorate of Education in Baghdad and in 1927 lecturer of Arabic at the Higher Teachers' Training College in Baghdad. Between 1928 and 1937 he was a member of Parliament five times. In 1937 he abandoned his work and decided to live in isolation. He died in Baghdad on 16 March 1945.

Political poetry

Political poetry occupies a prominent place in the poetic production of Ma'rūf ar-Ruṣāfi, which focuses mainly on the themes of freedom, intended both as a term referring to the individual's freedom regarding civil rights and, more generally, as the freedom, sovereignty and independence of any country.

Ar-Ruṣāfi's demands for independence started with the beginning of the Balkan Wars and reached their acme during the First World War, when the Allies occupied the Arab World. During this critical historical period, the Ottoman Empire lost its remaining

³ Ar-Ruṣdiyyah Military School is a historical school located in the city of Baghdad which was founded in the 19th century A.D. during the Ottoman era.

⁴ For more details, see Al-Jibouri, Y. T. (2013), 29: 22-26.

⁵ Al-Muntafiq, called also il-Mintifiḡ, is a district in Southern Iraq.

⁶ For more details, see Longrigg, S.H., "Ḥusayn", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 04 November 2022 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2977> First published online: 2012.

vestiges of power and several of its provinces. Ar-Ruṣāfī strongly encouraged the people to oppose the Western occupation, in order to obtain their own independence. In this case it must be said that ar-Ruṣāfī was referring to the freedom of a country to govern itself. He believed that the Western authorities were imperialist; during Ottoman rule he stressed the freedom of individuals. Accordingly, from 1911, ar-Ruṣāfī conducted an attack on the Allies warning the people against believing their frequent promises to help the Arabs get rid of the Ottoman domination.

His *qaṣīdah Edirne* is framed in this context; it was written on the occasion of the Bulgarian siege and capture of Edirne (1912-1913), which saw Bulgaria (King Ferdinand I) opposing the Ottoman nationalists led by Enver Pasha. The siege of Edirne (formerly known as Adrianople) took place during the First Balkan War, which began on November 3rd, 1912 and ended on March 26th, 1913. The fall of the city of Edirne to the 2nd Bulgarian army and the 2nd Serbian army was the final decisive blow to the Ottoman army, thus bringing the First Balkan War to an end.⁷ A treaty was signed in London on May 30th, 1913. The Ottoman Empire succeeded in recapturing Edirne during the Second Balkan War⁸.

The Edirne poem

The poem *Edirne* presented in this paper is the version in the Conti Rossini Archive at the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei in Rome. Carlo Conti Rossini began his career as an officer, after graduating in law from Sapienza University of Rome in 1894, which led him to hold positions of great responsibility. Among these positions was Director of civil affairs of the colonial government of Eritrea from 1900 to mid-1903 and General Secretary for political and civil affairs in Tripolitania from March 1914 until October 1915. In addition to law and finance, Conti Rossini showed a strong interest in oriental studies, in particular in the Ethiopian Language and Culture, becoming a pupil of prof. Ignazio Guidi, professor of History and Languages of Abyssinia at Sapienza University, whom he succeeded as a teacher in 1919. He remained in this position until 1949. His library was willed to the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei of which he had been a national member since 1921. The collection contains documents collected by Carlo Conti Rossini during the course of his institutional and scientific activity, including photographs, copies of manuscripts, parchments, and other archaeological finds⁹.

The *qaṣīdah* will be compared with the copies in the collections listed below, arranged in chronological order:

- 1- Muṣṭafā aṣ-Ṣaqqā (1953), *Dīwān ar-Ruṣāfī*, 4th ed., Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, Egypt, pp. 487-489 (hereafter called Ṣ).

⁷ Monroe, W.S. (1914), 114.

⁸ Harbottle, T. B. (1981), 11.

⁹ This collection has been catalogued in detail by Paola Cagiano De Azevedo. For more details, see: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2018, Fondo Carlo Conti Rossini, Inventario Paola Cagiano De Azevedo.

- 2- Muştafā 'Alī (1975), *Dīwān ar-Ruṣāfī, Dār al-ḥurriyyah*, Baghdad, vol. 3, pp. 291-296 (hereafter called A).
- 3- Muştafā al-Ġalāyīnī (2014), *Dīwān Ma'rūf ar-Ruṣāfī*, Hindawi Foundation for Education and Culture, Egypt, pp. 703-706 (hereafter called Ġ).

The *qaṣīdah* in the Conti Rossini Archive, found inside an envelope with other material from Tripolitania, bears in Italian the title “Per la caduta di Adrianopoli” (“For the Fall of Adrianople”) and was most likely copied by Conti Rossini himself.

The poem is composed of thirty-seven lines, each of which is divided into two hemistichs; the first verse consists of two lines, while the following seven verses consist of five lines each.

The meter of the *qaṣīdah* is *al-mutaqārib* “nearing”: *Fa'ūlun Fa'ūlun Fa'ūlun Fa'ūlun* (فَعُولُنْ فَعُولُنْ فَعُولُنْ فَعُولُنْ) because the five lines that compose the seven verses are close.

Translation and commentary

1 أَدِرْنَةَ مَهْلًا فَإِنَّ الطُّبَى *** سَتَرَعِي لَكَ الْعَهْدَ وَالْمَوْتَقَا

[O] Edirne go easy, the edge of the swords *** will keep the covenant and the trust for you

The two introductory lines are characterised by a *qāf* rhyme. The first line, that comprises a supplication in which the poet-suppliant submits to the city Edirne, starts with an implicit vocative particle *yā* (يَا), indicating the meaning of *aṭ-ṭalab* “the request”, which precedes the name of the city.

أَدِرْنَةَ: in Ṣ, A, Ġ: أَدِرْنَةُ in nominative case.

مَهْلًا: “go easy, take it easy!”, verbal noun of *أَمَهَلَ - يُمَهِّلُ* “to give more time to (someone)”, that follows the name of Edirne.

الطُّبَى: “the edge, end, or extremity of the swords” (singular *طَبَّة*), synonym of *حَدٌّ*. In Ṣ, A: الطُّبَى; Ġ: الطُّبَا.¹⁰

سَتَرَعِي: “it will keep”, in Ṣ, A, Ġ: سَتَرَعِي.

2 وَدَاعًا لَمَعْنَاكَ زَاهِي الرَّبِيِّ *** وَدَاعًا وَلَكِنْ إِلَى الْمُنْتَقَى

Farewell to your abode, sparkling of hills *** Farewell, but see you soon

The second line introduces the dominant motif of the poem, namely separation and exile, through the use of the verbal noun *وداعًا* “farewell” repeated at the beginning of both hemistichs to give greater emphasis.

¹⁰ See Lane, E.W. (1968), V: 1908ab.

وَدَاعًا: “farewell”, verbal noun of وَادَعُ – يُوَادِعُ “to farewell, to say goodbye”. In Ṣ, A, Ġ: مَغْنَاكَ: “your abode, dwelling, residence; place”.
 زَاهِي: “sparkling, bright flowering”.
 الرُّبَا: in Ṣ, A, Ġ: الرُّبَا: “the act of meeting, ability to encounter, reunion, meeting face to face”, verbal noun of اِلْتَقَى “to meet, encounter”.

3 عَزَاءٌ لِمَسْجِدِكَ الْجَامِعِ *** أَفَارِقُ مَحْرَابَهُ الْمُنْبَرَا

Consolation for your great mosque *** did its *miḥrāb* separate from the *minbar*?

The poet expresses his condolences for the great mosque of Edirne with an interrogative sentence starting with the verb أَفَارِقُ, using the *hamzatu l-`istifhām* (the `a- of interrogative). This line and the following two present a *rā`* rhyme.

عَزَاءٌ: “consolation, comfort, condolence, good patience”.
 المسجدَ الْجَامِعِ: “the great mosque”, the formula describes the great assembly mosques in which the *ḥuṭbah* is pronounced.
 محرابه: “its *miḥrāb*”, *miḥrāb* is the niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the *qibla*, the direction of the Ka`bah in Makkah, where the Imam stands at the time of prayer. In Ṣ, A, Ġ: محرابُهُ, with vocalization.
 المنبر: “the *minbar*”, *minbar* is the pulpit, which in origin denoted an elevated seat.

4 وَكَمْ فِي مُصَلَّاهُ مِنْ رَاكِعٍ *** يُجِيبُ الْمُؤَدِّنَ إِنْ كَبَّرَا

How many *rāki`*s on its *muṣallā`* *** respond to *al-mua`ddin* when he says *Allāhu `akbar*

The theme of condolences continues in this line, in which the poet cites some terms related to Islamic prayer.

كَمْ: “how many”, exclamatory particle, it has the same quantitative and qualitative value as the interrogative particle كَمْ *al-`istifhāmiyyah*.
 مُصَلَّاهُ: “its *muṣallā`*”, مُصَلَّى *muṣallan* “a place of prayer, prayer hall”. In Ṣ, A, Ġ the sentence presents a different construction: وَهَلْ فِي مُصَلَّاهُ “is there on his *muṣallā`*?”.
 رَاكِعٍ: “person who kneels, bows”, active participle masculine singular.
 الْمُؤَدِّنَ: “the muezzin”, person who calls to prayer, announcer of the hour of prayer or who utters the formula *Allāhu `akbar*.
 كَبَّرَا: “to enlarge, to make something bigger, to say اللهُ أَكْبَرُ ‘God is the greatest’”.

5 فَيَا نَسْفُوطِكَ مِنْ فَاجِعٍ *** بِهِ فَجَعَ الدَّهْرُ أُمَّ الْقُرَى

By what calamity you have fallen! *** Time afflicted `ummu l-qurā

The verse is characterised by the *taqdīr* structure, namely the suppletive insertion of elided elements, in this case **لَسْفُوطِكَ** “o God what a fall is yours!”, a vocative and exclamatory sentence that emphasizes regret for *‘ummu l-qurā*, lit. “the mother of villages / cities”, a name given to Makkah.

فَاجِع: “calamitous, heartrending, painful”.

6 وَقَبْرَ النَّبُوَّةِ فِي يَثْرِبَ يَثْرِبًا *** وَمَثْوَى ضَجِيعِيهِ مَثْوَى التَّقَى

The grave of the prophecy in Yaṭrib *** and the shrine of its two bedfellows is the shrine of devoutness

The poet quotes Yaṭrib, the pre-Islamic name of an oasis settlement in the Arabian Peninsula in which the Prophet Muḥammad sought refuge in 622 A.D., whereupon renamed *al-Madīnah* (Medinah) in his honour, and expresses his *madīḥ* (“praise”) for the Prophet Muḥammad and for his two successors Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq and ‘Umar bin al-Ḥaṭṭāb, who are buried next to his tomb.

يَثْرِب: “Yaṭrib”, note the involuntary mistake written by the scribe, who deleted the name **يَثْرِب** by scratching it out (*ḍarb*) with two lines and re-wrote it correctly as **يَثْرِبًا** .

مَثْوَى: “home, place, adobe, shrine”.

ضَجِيعِيهِ: “his two bedfellows”, the two successors of the Prophet Muḥammad, Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq and ‘Umar bin al-Ḥaṭṭāb.

التَّقَى: “the devoutness, Godliness, God-fearing, righteous” (singular **تَقَاة**).

7 وَمَنْ فِي الْبَقِيعِ وَمَنْ فِي قُبَا *** وَمَنْ شَهِدُوا الْفَتْحَ وَالْحَنْدَقَا

Those who are in *al-Baqī* and those who in *Qubā* *** and those who attended / witnessed the [day] of opening and *al-Ḥandaqā*

In this line the poet mentions two sacred places and two significant events in the early history of Islam.

الْبَقِيع: “al-Baqī”, the principal cemetery of Medinah, the oldest and historically most important Islamic graveyard.

قُبَا: “Qubā” standing for **مَسْجِدُ قُبَا**: it is a mosque located in a village two miles from Medinah named **قُبَا**.

مَنْ شَهِدُوا standing for **مَنْ شَهِدُوا**: “those who attended / witnessed the conquest of Makkah and the Battle of the Ditch in Medinah”.

الْفَتْح standing for **يَوْمُ الْفَتْح**: “the day of opening”, which goes back to the Qur’ānic **الْفَتْح** *al-fatḥ* which originally meant “[a divine] decision [to bring success to the faithful]” and appears to have taken on the sense of “conquest” only after the capture of Makkah at the beginning of 630 A.D.

الْخَنْدَق: lit. “the Ditch”, known as معركة الخندق the “Battle of the Ditch”, (627 A.D.), mentioned in Qur’ān 33:10. It is an early Muslim victory that ultimately forced the Meccans to recognize the political and religious strength of the Muslim community in Medinah.

8 رُوَيْدًا أَدْرِنَةَ لَا تَجْرَعِي *** وَإِنْ قَدْ أَمَضَّكَ هَذَا الْأَذَى

Take it easy Edirne, don’t worry *** even if this offence already pains you

The theme of supplication returns in this line, characterised, as in the next two lines, by a *dāl* rhyme, in which the poet tries to console and comfort the beloved Edirne for its sad and tragic fate.

أَمَضَّكَ: “it hurts you, causes pain to you”.

9 إِذَا أَنْتِ بِالسَّيْفِ لَمْ تَرْجِعِي *** فَلَا حَيَاةَ الْعَيْشِ لَا حَيَاةَ

If you by the sword do not return *** loveless is life, loveless (it is not desirable to live/ it is not commendable)

The idea of not being able to win back Edirne is too painful for the poet, who does not want to live without it. In the second hemistich the construction لَا حَيَاةَ is used in the sense of *al-damm*, that is “to dispraise, to disesteem, to denigrate; to decry; to degrade something”, thus to dispraise the life without Edirne.

In Ṣ, A, Ġ: لَمْ تَرْجِعِي “you are not returned, brought back, re-conquered”, in passive form.

10 فَإِنَّكَ أَلْزَأْسُنَا فَاسْمِعِي *** وَنَحْنُ أَلْفَرَنْسِيَّيْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَا

You are our Alsace, so listen *** we are the French after this

The line contains a parallelism with Alsace, a region long disputed between Germany and France, and definitively returned to France after the Second World War. The poet turns to Edirne saying: “You are our Alsace”, that is “you are like Alsace to the French, we will not forget you as they did not forget Alsace”.

In Ṣ, A, Ġ: أَلَا أَنْتِ أَلْزَأْسُنَا فَاسْمِعِي, the construction is slightly different, starting with أَنْتِ “are not you”.

11 سَلَامٌ عَلَى قُطْرِكَ الْمُجْتَبَى *** سَلَامٌ عَلَى أَفْئِئِكَ الْأَمْتَقَى

May peace be upon your chosen land *** may peace be upon your desired horizon/region

The poet greets the chosen land of Edirne, now lost, and wishes peace for it.

أَفْئِئِكَ: “area or position in space, part of a surface, side; direction”.

12 أَيْمَسِي لِشِرْكَ الْعِدَا مَلْعَبًا *** وَكَانَ لِتَوْحِيدِنَا مَعْبَقًا

Will it [your land] turn into a playground for the enemy's polytheism *** when it was a fragrant place for our monotheism?

In this line, characterised by an interrogative sentence, the poet recalls what Edirne was and contrasts it with what it is now.

In Ş: لِشِرْكَ الْعِدَا مَلْعَبًا, the word “polytheism” is replaced by سِرْكَ “circus”; in A: أَيْمَسِي لِشِرْكَ الْعِدَا مَلْعَبًا; in Ğ: لِشِرْكَ الْعِدَا مَلْعَبًا
مَعْبَقًا: “fragrant place”, that is a place full of perfume and goodness.

13 لَقَدْ حَلَّ فِيهَا حَلَالٌ لِيَوْمِ الصَّلِيبِ *** خُلُوفَ الْحَقَارَةِ بَيْنَ الْجَلَالِ

The flag of the crucifix has already settled on it *** [as] the onset of despicability in the midst of solemnity

The parallelism between “before” and “after” continues in this line, in which the poet uses the opposite terms حَقَارَةٌ “despicability” and جَلَالٌ “solemnity”.

The word حَلَالٌ “permitted, allowed, legal” in the first hemistich, was evidently copied by mistake, and the scribe scratched it out.

In Ş, A, Ğ the first hemistich recites: حَلَّ فِيهَا لِيَوْمِ الصَّلِيبِ, where the word صَّلِيبٌ “crucifix” is replaced by مُرِيبٌ “disquieting, annoying”, derived from the active participle of the verb أَرَابَ “to disturb someone, to raise doubts”.

الْجَلَالُ standing for الْجَلَالُ: “solemnity, loftiness, sublimity, splendour”.

14 وَظَلَّتْ بِأَدْمُعِهَا وَالنَّحِيبِ *** تَتَّوَحُّ عَلَى نَجْمِهَا وَالْهَيْلِ

And it remained [day and night] wailing in tears *** mourning its star and crescent

In this line the poet expresses the pain, the anguish and the heartbreaking lament of Edirne for the loss of its flag. Note the *lām* rhyme, as in lines 13 and 15.

وَظَلَّتْ: in Ş, A, Ğ فَظَلَّتْ with *fā' al-ta' qīb* “the consequence *fā'*”.

النَّحِيبِ: “the weeping or wailing voice; wept, or wailed loudly”.

نَجْمِهَا وَالْهَيْلِ: “its star and crescent”, meaning the flag of the Ottoman Empire, which includes a star and a crescent. Since 1793 the Ottoman Empire had used a red and white flag with a star and a moon. In 1844 this flag was slightly modified into a five-pointed star and a crescent and was adopted as the official national flag of the empire. It later formed the basis of the flag of modern Turkey, which succeeded the empire that disappeared in 1923.

15 أَنْتَسَى أَدِرْنَةَ عَمَّا قَرِيبٍ *** إِذَا لَبَغْنَا الْعَلَا وَالْكَمَالَ

Shall we soon forget Edirne *** and then will we have reached the apex of perfection?

This line contains a rhetorical question starting with the interrogative particle *a* in أَنْتَسَى that is characterised by sarcasm, called in Arabic *as-suhriyah* or *at-tahakkum wa-l-`istihzā`*. The second hemistich begins with the consequential linking particle إِذَا instead of إِذًا (in Ş, A, Ġ: إِذُنْ), called in Arabic particle of جَزَاءٍ *ğazā`* / جَوَابٍ *ğawāb*, meaning “in that case; then; for that reason; thus”. It is used in conditional clauses usually at the beginning of a sentence. It begins a clause or question that comes as a result or conclusion of a previous statement. It should be noted that the verb لَبَغْنَا with لَ *la-*, as a kind of invocation, is used to oppose the validity of a fact. Indeed, the poet uses the particle إِذَا / إِذُنْ to call attention to, to emphasize and to express a warning; verily by forgetting Edirne we will not be able to achieve perfection.

In Ş, A, Ġ: لَا بَلَغْنَا; لَا is a variety of negation, emphatic as well. الْعَلَا instead of الْعَلَا: “the apex, the nobility, the honour”. In A, Ġ: الْعَلَا, in Ş: الْعَلَى: “perfection, excellence”, verbal noun of كَمَلَ “to be entire, to be whole, to be perfect”.

16 فَسَوْفَ عَلَى الرَّعْمِ مِنْ أَوْرَبَا *** نَقُودُ لَهَا فَيْلَقًا فَيْلَقًا

So, in spite of Europe *** we will lead legion upon legion towards it

The poet resorts to the expedient of the *at-takrār li-t-tawkīd*, namely the “repetition for the sake of emphasis” of the word “legion”.

عَلَى الرَّعْمِ: “in spite of, unwillingly”.
نَقُودُ “we lead”. In Ş, A, Ġ: نَقُومُ “we do, we rise, we get up”, both verbs with future intent.
فَيْلَقًا فَيْلَقًا: “legion upon legion, the great army”.

17 فَتُنْبِكِي هَرَاهِرُنَا الْمَغْرِبَا *** وَتُضْحِكُ أَسْيَافُنَا الْمَشْرِقَا

So our battles make the West weep *** and our swords make the East laugh

In this line the poet hopes for battles that will bring victory to the East against the West.

فَتُنْبِكِي standing for تُنْبِكِيه: “they make it [the West] weep, cry”.
هَرَاهِرُ: “battles, wars” (singular هَرَاهِرَةٌ).

The following verses, from line 18 to line 22, do not appear in Ş and Ġ. Perhaps they were added later.

18 أَيَقْتَدِرُ الشَّعْرُ أَنْ يُشْكِرَ *** كَمَا يَجِبُ الشُّكْرُ ذَاكَ الْبَطْلُ

Is poetry able to give thanks *** as thanks are due to that hero?

Ar-Ruṣāfī wonders if poetry is really able to pay tribute to the hero and equal his courage.

أَيَقْتَدِرُ: interrogative construction starting with the particle أ 'a' followed by the verb يُقْتَدِرُ “it is capable, it can”.

يُشْكِرَ: in A: يُشْكِرَا .

الْبَطْلُ: “the hero, the protagonist”. It means a man of courage and valour, a brave man, as well as one who does not fear being wounded and whose wounds do not prevent him from being courageous.

19 فَتَى كَانَ فِي الْحَرْبِ مُسْتَشْعِرًا *** شِعَارًا أَجَلَّتُهُ كُلُّ أَلْدُونِ

A youth was in the war wearing the garment of war *** he was honoured by all nations

The purpose of the line is to praise the young warriors who fought for Edirne.

فَتَى: “youth, young, youthful; adolescent, brave, generous, chivalrous, helper”.

مُسْتَشْعِرًا شِعَارًا: in the past form اسْتَشْعَرَ شِعَارًا “he put on or clad himself with a شِعَار”, that is “an innermost garment”. Hence, ! اسْتَشْعِرْ حَشِيَّةَ اللَّهِ “make the fear of God be!” شِعَارَ قَلْبِكَ , namely “the thing closest to thy heart”.

20 فَيَا سَيْفَ سُكْرِي وَكُلُّ الْوَرَى *** عَدَّتْ تَضْرِبُ أَلْيَوْمَ فِيكَ الْمَثَلُ

O sword of Šukrī, all the people *** have taken you as an example this day

Using the vocative particle *yā* (يا), the poet addresses Šukrī's sword directly, to praise it. Šukrī was the military leader who freed Edirne.

سُكْرِي: “Šukrī”, the military leader who won back Edirne.¹¹

الْوَرَى: “people, humans, mankind”.

عَدَّتْ standing for صَارَتْ: “it became, turned into, came to be (something)”.

فِيكَ: note the omission of the diacritic point of the *fā*’.

21 سَيَجْرِي لَكَ الشُّكْرُ لَنْ يُنْضَبَى *** وَيَجْرِي الزَّمَانُ بِهِ مَعْرِفًا

Thanks for you will flow, inexhaustibly *** and time will flow immersed in it

¹¹ For more detail, see ‘Alī, Muṣṭafā (1975), 3: 294.

The poet describes and compares the gratitude for Šukrī and his sword to the inexhaustible flow of the water, that does not run out and rush down.

يُنْضَبِي: the original form is يَنْضَبَا “it is absorbed into the ground”, cf. نَضِبَ الْمَاءُ “the water drained”.

مُعْرَقًا: “drown in something”, active particle.

22 وَإِمَّا ذُكِرْتَ حَلَلْنَا الْحَبِي *** وَفَمْنَا كَقَوْمِنَا فِي اللَّقَا

And if you are mentioned, we open al-*hubā* *** and we stand up the way we stand in a meeting

The praise for the hero Šukrī also continues in this line, where the poet uses a metaphor quoting and referring to a custom typical of the Arabs.

حَلَلْنَا: “we opened”. It is a metaphor to show respect for and glorify Šukrī and his sword.
الْحَبِي: “the turban, or piece of cloth, or some other thing with which a man performs what is called الإِخْتِبَاءُ” (singular حُبُوءَةٌ). الإِخْتِبَاءُ means “to wrap oneself in a garment”, for instance اِحْتَبَى بِالنُّوْبِ: “he drew together and wrapped his back and his shanks in a turban or the like”¹². Since the Arabs did not have walls in their deserts to lean against when assembling, they used to set up their knees in a sitting position, lean a sword against them, or wrapped their knees and back in a piece of cloth, or joined their hands, or arms, together around their knees, and rested in that position. الْحَبِي also means حِيطَانُ الْعَرَبِ “the Arabs’ walls”. Note the *ʿalif maqṣūrah* in الْحَبِي instead of the long *ā* due to metrical exigency.

23 أَرَى الدَّهْرَ أَنهَضَ كُلَّ الْعِدَا *** عَلَى حِينٍ قَدْ قَعَدَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ

I see time has made all the enemies rise *** whereas the Muslims had sat out [the war]

The poet turns directly to the Muslims who have neglected their duties, reproaching them for not fighting for Edirne. Note the *nūn* rhyme in this line and in the following two.

الْعِدَا: “the enemies”, in Ṣ, Ġ: الْعِدَا; A: الْعِدَى

أَنهَضَ: “it made rise, it made someone stand up; it roused, it stirred up; it stimulated”.

عَلَى حِينٍ standing for فِي حِينٍ: “whereas, while”.

قَعَدَ: “he abstained from, omitted, neglected, left, relinquished, forsook the thing or affair; hung back, sat out, or held back, from it”.

¹² Lane, E.W. (1968), II: 507bc.

24 فَمِ أَلُوسٍ جَرَّعُونَا الرَّدَى *** وَنَحْنُ عَلَى كَيْدِهِمْ صَابِرُونَ

How many Elos¹³ made us swallow death *** while we were patient at their plot!

كم: “how many”. It is the “assertive *kam*”, called in Arabic *kam al-ḥabariyyah*, with predicative and informing function. In this case, Wright translates the term *ḥabariyyah* as “assertory, predicative, exclamatory”. The word كم “a lot” has also another use, which denotes *at-takīr*, an augment or enlargement¹⁴.

جَرَّعُونَا: “they made us swallow, gulp”, for instance جَرَّعَ “he swallowed in consecutive portions, one time after another, like him who acts against his own will”¹⁵; synonym سَقَوْنَا “they made us drink”.

In Ş, Ğ: فَمِ جَرَّعُونَا كُنُوسَ الرَّدَى “how many cups of death they made us swallow!”; with the noun “cups” instead of “Elos”. In A: فَمِ جَرَّعُونَا كُؤُوسَ الرَّدَى, the verb precedes the noun.

كَيْدِهِمْ: “their plot, deception, cunning”.

25 أَيَحْسِنُ يَأْفُومُ أَنْ تَقْعُدُوا *** وَقَدْ أَنْ أَنْ يَنْهَضَ الْقَاعِدُونَ

O people, is it right for you to sit out [the war] *** when the time has come for those who sat out to get up?

In this line, composed in an interrogative form, the poet urges Muslims not to stay at home and to join those who are fighting to free Edirne.

يَأْفُومُ: “O people”, here we find again the interrogative particle أ 'a (*at-tahakkum wa-l-`istihzā`*).

تَقْعُدُوا: “you hold back, remain behind, sit out”, in Ş, A, Ğ: تَقْعَدُوا.

أَنْ: “to come, to approach”, a synonym of حَانَ, an indication of temporal proximity.

الْقَاعِدُونَ: “those who hold back, sit out, at home”.

26 فَسَيْلٌ الْمَصَانِبِ عَطَى الرَّبَى *** وَعَيْمُ النُّوَابِ قَدْ طَبَّقَا

So the torrent of misfortunes covered the hills *** and clouds of calamities have already covered [the sky]

The poet uses terms related to natural phenomena to express that the situation is now unbearable, has reached its limit and that something must be done to deal with it.

سَيْلٌ: “a torrent, or a flow of water, much water, or a pool of rainwater, flowing, or running”.

¹³ Elos is a village and a former municipality in Laconia, Peloponnese, Greece.

¹⁴ For a discussion on the two uses of the word *kam* in assertive sentences and in questions, see Wright, W. (1896-1898), II: 125-127.

¹⁵ Lane, E.W. (1968), II: 410c.

الرُّبَى: “the hills or elevated ground, which the water does not cover”, it is an idiomatic expression. In Ş, A: الرُّبَى (singular الرُّبْيَةُ); Ġ: الرُّبَا. An Arabic proverb says بَلَغَ السَّيْلُ الرُّبَى “the torrent reached the tops of the hills”¹⁶, to refer to a thing, or an affair, or a case, exceeding the ordinary bounds or limit. That is to say, “enough is enough” or “the matter has come to a head”.

طَبَّقَا: “covered” referring to the clouded and blinded atmosphere. In the poem the meaning is that the matter has developed to the point of no return. Cf.: طَبَّقَ السَّحَابُ الْجَوَّ “the clouds covered the mid-air between the heaven and the earth” and الغَيْمُ أَطْبَقَ السَّمَاءَ “the clouds covered the sky”.¹⁷

نَوَائِب: “calamities”, synonyms: حَوَائِث ، كَوَارِث ، مَصَائِب .

27 وَأَوْشَكَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَنْ تُفْلَقَا *** وَصَبِحَ الْقِيَامَةُ أَنْ يُفْلَقَا

And the earth was about to be overturned *** and the morning of the Resurrection would soon break

The situation is so painful and tragically overwhelming that the poet comes to evoke the *Yawm al-Qiyāmah*, lit. “The Day of Resurrection”.

يُفْلَقَ: “it is split, cleft, or split”. In Ş, Ġ: يُفْلَقَا; in A: يُفْلَقَا, in passive form. Cf. فَلَقَ اللَّهُ الصُّبْحَ “God made the morning break, or appear”.

28 دَعِ الْعَرَبَ يَنْعَمَ فِي حَالِهِ *** وَإِنْ لَقِيَ الشَّرْقُ مِنْهُ الْكُرُوبَ

Let the West live peacefully in its condition *** even though the East is afflicted by its calamities

The figure of speech of sarcasm or antiphrasis characterises the first hemistich of this line, ending in a *bā*’ rhyme as the following two lines. It is used intentionally by the poet as a form of verbal aggression towards the audience, namely the Muslim community.

يَنْعَمَ: “it enjoys”.

حَالِهِ: “its condition, state, situation”. In Ş, A, Ġ: بِالِهِ “its condition, state, mind”; thus literally يَنْعَمُ فِي حَالِهِ signifies “it enjoys amplex and easiness of its life”. Cf. also وَيُصْلِحُ بِأَلْهَمِهِ “And He will amend their condition” (Qur’ān 47:5). Hence, the two words حَال and بَال are synonyms.

الْكُرُوبَ: “calamities, agonies, worries, griefs, anguishes” (singular كَرْب).

29 وَلَا تَسْأَلَنَّ بِأَفْعَالِهِ *** فَعَهْدُ التَّمَدُّنِ عَهْدٌ كَذُوبٌ

And do not ask about its deeds *** for its civilization is a false era

¹⁶ Lane, E.W. (1968), III: 1215a.

¹⁷ Lane, E.W. (1968), V: 1824c.

The political outburst becomes more intense; the poet criticizes the civilization proposed by the West and affirms that it is actually a false civilization.

تَسْأَلُنَّ: “you ask”, in Ş, A, Ğ: تَسْأَلُنَّهُ, with the light *nūn* of emphasis (*nūn at-tawkīd al-ḥafīfah*).

30 وَنَحْنُ أَغْتَرَرْنَا بِأَقْوَالِهِ *** وَلَكِنَّا بَعْدَ هَذَا نَتُوبُ

We were deceived by its words *** but after that we repent

Again, in this line the poet criticizes the West, its imperialism and its deception.

فَنَحْنُ: in Ş, A, Ğ: فَنَحْنُ.

اغْتَرَرْنَا: “we were deceived”.

The second hemistich in Ş, A, Ğ reads: “but after these wars we”, with the word “wars” instead of the verbal construct “we repent”.

31 وَنَأْبَى عَلَيْهِ أَشَدَّ إِبَاءًا *** فِيمَا آلَفْنَا وَإِمَّا أَلْبَقَا

We strongly oppose it [the West] *** and we shall either perish or survive

Resistance against the oppressor and struggle for freedom are the only way to deal with this situation. Independence and freedom are indeed two fundamental values for every people, to the point that it is better to die than to live as oppressed.

نَأْبَى: in Ş, A, Ğ: نَأْبَى, with the *sin* of the future.

الإبَاءَا standing for الإِبَاءُ: “refusal to, denial of, rejection of, abhorrence for, disobedience against, disgust for, unwillingness to”; in the present copy الإِبَاءَا is shortened, without *hamza*, for poetic licence, in particular for the exigency of rhyme.

32 وَنُرْكَبُ مِنْ عَزْمِنَا مَرْكَبًا *** وَنَرْقَى وَإِنْ صَعِبَ الْمُرْتَقَى

We shall embark on the ship of our determination *** and we shall rise even though ascension is difficult

The poet uses the construction “to embark on the ship” to exalt the purpose of his message figuratively and expressively: if the East engages with determination and energy, it will be able to achieve scientific and civil progress.

عَزْمِنَا: “our will and intention, aim, determination of mind and heart, without hesitation”.

نَرْقَى: “we rise, we elevate ourselves, we promote ourselves, to a higher position in a higher ranking of scientific and civil progress”.

صَعِبَ الْمُرْتَقَى: “a level or step of an arduous ascent or hard to get to, or inaccessible”; الْمُرْتَقَى synonym of الارتفاع: “promotion, being promoted, ascension, upgrade”.

33 لَقَدْ أَنْ يَا قَوْمَ تَرَكْ أَلْوَنِي *** وَتَرَكْ أَلشِّقَاقِ وَتَرَكْ أَلدِّدِ

O people! The time has come to abandon weakness *** to leave schism and to leave diversion

The poet turns directly to the Muslims to incite them, inviting them to abandon fun and play; calling for unity against the oppressor.

أَلْوَنِي: “weakness, faintness, tiredness, apathy, tepidness”.

أَلشِّقَاقِ: “schism, dissension, discord, dispute, hostility, antagonism, enmity”.

أَلدِّدِ: “diversion; fun or play”. Cf. the saying of prophet Muhammad *مَا أَنَا مِنْ دَدٍ وَلَا الدِّدُ مِنِّي* “I have no concern with diversion”, “nor has diversion any concern with me”.¹⁸

34 إِلَى كَمْ نُكَابِدُ هَذَا أَلْعَنَاءِ *** وَنُخْبِطُ فِي جَهْلِنَا أَلْأَسْوَدِ

For how long do we suffer this submission *** and crash around in our black ignorance?

In this line too, composed in the interrogative, the poet urges the Muslim community to resist and fight for freedom.

نُكَابِدُ: “we endure, or contend with this difficulty, trouble, distress”.

أَلْعَنَاءِ instead of أَلْعَنَاءِ: “severity, fatigue, hardship, submission”, shortened with poetic licence.

نُخْبِطُ: “we walk adrift”, such as one moving randomly.

35 وَبِأَلْعِلْمِ مِنْ قَبْلُ نَلْنَا أَلْمُنَى *** وَفَزْنَا مِنْ أَلْعَيْشِ بِأَلْأَرْعَدِ

And through knowledge, we reached our goals in the past *** and we won all the best from life

The poet makes a reference to the past of the East, remembering that through knowledge it has obtained the best riches.

أَلْمُنَى: “desires, wishes, hopes, goals” (singular أَلْمُنَى).

فَزْنَا: “we triumphed over, we won, gained”.

أَلْأَرْعَدِ: “the richest, the most fertile, the best, most comfortable life”, superlative. Cf. أَرَعَدَ

فِي أَلْعَيْشِ: “he became affluent or fecund and earned a well-endowed life and livelihood”, that is: his life is ample in its means or circumstances, unrestrained, plentiful, easy, and pleasant.

¹⁸ Lane, E.W. (1968), III: 862b.

36 وَلَكِنَّمَا أَلْعَلُّمُ قَدْ عَرَبَ *** فَلَا خَيْرَ إِلَّا إِذَا شَرَقَا

But since knowledge has gone to the West *** there is nothing good until it goes to the East

Knowledge is considered as a way to freedom and the only element for the growth and development of the East. Consequently, there is no way for Eastern people to live without it.

عَرَبًا: "it went to the West", in Ş, A, Ġ: شَرَقَا: "it goes to the East, heading to the East".

37 فَهَبُّوْا إِلَيْهِ هُبُوبَ الصَّبَا *** عَسَى أَنْ يُسِيحَ وَيَعْدُوْا وَدَقًا (!)

So rise quickly towards it like a blowing wind *** hoping that it flows down and becomes rain!

The poem, characterised by an assortative and motivational style, closes with a request expressed through metaphorical images related to natural phenomena.

هَبُّوْا instead of هَبُّوا: "hurry up and energize, arise, move, rise!".

الصَّبَا standing for الصَّبَا: "the wind that blows from the East when nighttime and daytime are equal (Equinox)".

يُسِيحَ وَيَعْدُوْا وَدَقًا: in Ş, A, Ġ: "the (rain) flows down and becomes copious or very abundant".

Conclusion

The theme of separation constitutes the dominant note and is the guiding thread of the whole poem. Ma'ruf ar-RuşafĪ expresses the loss of the city of Edirne, with feelings of pain and bitterness. He addresses the city directly, almost personifying it, as if it were an interlocutor dear to him (for instance, "Edirne go easy" in line 1; "Take it easy Edirne, don't worry" in line 8; "May peace be upon your chosen land" in line 11). After a series of references to historical events, rites and sacred places of Islam, the disheartened poet dwells on what Edirne was and what it is now through an interweaving of elements (for instance, the reference to the flags, the use of antonyms such as حَقَارَةٌ "despicability" and جَلَالٌ "solemnity" in lines 13 and 14, مَلْعَبًا "playground" and مَعْبَقًا "fragrant place" in line 12). The feelings of estrangement then give way to praise and exaltation of the hero, the man who virtuously goes to the battle (the reference is to Šukrī and his sword in lines 20 and 21) and to the condemnation of the Muslims who have neglected their duties, whom he addresses

with words of indignation. The following verses are characterised by the political outburst of the poet against the West and its false promises. After a final reflection on the fate of Edirne and the bitter tragedy of the East, the poet exhorts the Muslim community, whom he addresses directly (“O people! The time has come to abandon weakness” in line 33), to join in the resistance and the struggle for freedom, encouraging them to move towards knowledge, the only way to redeem the East from the Western oppressor.

With regards to the literary aspect, the poet resorts to different linguistic expedients to enhance the expressive message that he wants to convey through his poem, in particular the use of interrogative sentences, for instance starting with the interrogative particle *أ* *a*; the repetition of words, for instance *وداعًا* “farewell” in line 2, and *فَيْلَقًا* “legion” in line 16; the use of the vocative particle *يا* *yā*. The use of figures of speech is also frequent, such as the simile, in Arabic *التَّشْبِيه* *at-tašbīh*, comparing two elements called *المُشَبَّه* *al-mušabbah* (lit. “resembling”) and *المُشَبَّهُ بِهِ* *al-mušabbah bi-hi* (lit. “resembling by means of”), for instance *فَاتِكَ الرَّاسَنَا* “You are our Alsace” in line 10, and *فَكَمَ أَلْوَسِ* “How many Elos” in line 24. There is also sarcasm or antiphrasis, called in Arabic *as-suḥriyah* or *at-tahakkum wa-l-’istihzā*, for instance “Let the West live peacefully in its condition” in line 28. The poet uses metaphors too, in Arabic *استِعَارَة* *isti’ārah*, for instance *حَلَلْنَا الْحَبِي* “we opened *al-ḥubā*” in line 22, and *هُبُوبَ الصَّبَا* “a blowing wind” in line 37.

The rhythm of the poem is marked by the rhyme, in Arabic *قَافِيَة* *qāfiyah*, at the end of the second hemistich. In particular, the *qāf* rhyme, that characterises the first two lines, is repeated - always in rhyming couplets - every three lines in which the rhyme is, on the contrary, formed using other consonants (*rā*’ in lines 3, 4, 5; *dāl* in lines 8, 9, 10; *lām* in lines 13, 14, 15; *lām* in lines 18, 19, 20; *nūn* in lines 23, 24, 25; *bā*’ in lines 28, 29, 30; *dāl* in lines 33, 34, 35).

Compared to the copies in the collections of Muṣṭafā aṣ-Ṣaqqā, Muṣṭafā ‘Alī and Muṣṭafā al-Ġalāyīnī, the version preserved in the Conti Rossini Archive presents slight differences in the syntax of some lines (for instance the first hemistich of line 4 and the first hemistich of line 10) and sometimes a word is replaced by another (for instance in the three copies compared the word *صَلِيب* “crucifix” is replaced by *مُرِيب* “disquieting, annoying” in line 13, in Muṣṭafā aṣ-Ṣaqqā the word *لِشْرِك* “polytheism” is replaced by *سِرْك* “circus” in line 12). In addition, it presents several non-vocalized voices and some grammatical inaccuracies, probably due to an imperfect knowledge of the Arabic language on the part of the copyist.

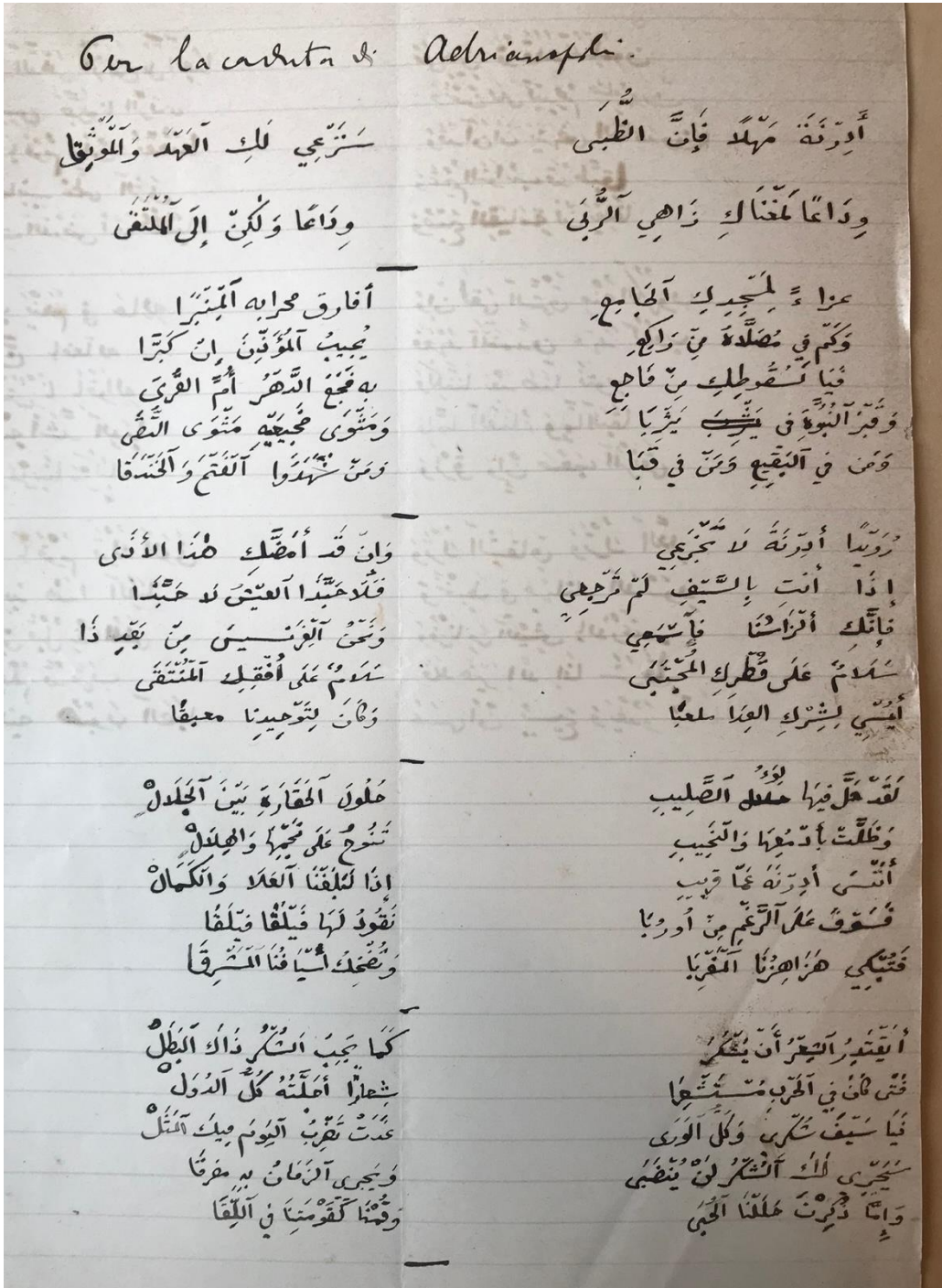


Photo 1

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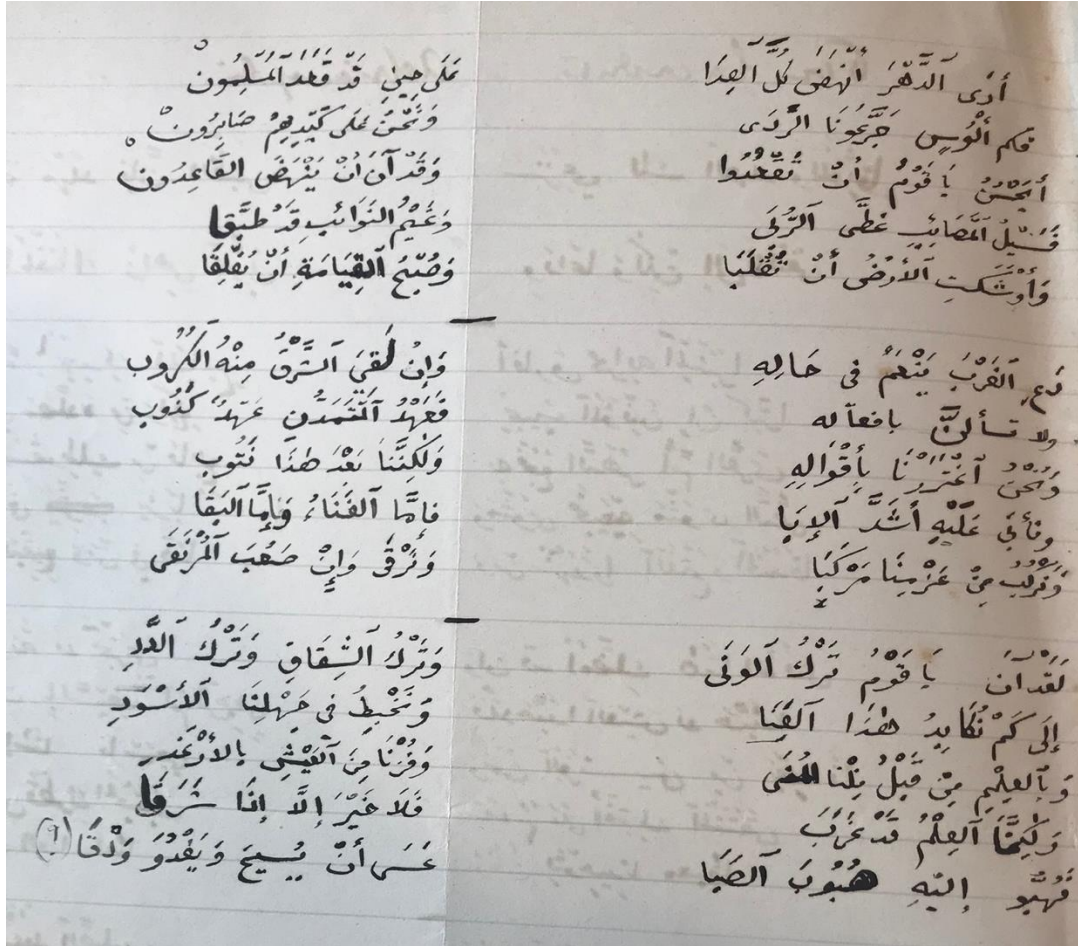


Photo 2

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