





## Transcription (by Abdelrahman Mahmoud)

(1) Mefāhirü'l-kużāt ve'l-hükkām, ma'ādinü'l-fezā'il ve'l-keḷām, Rümeli ve Anaṭoli ve Baḥr-ı Sefid ü siyāh cāniblerinde vāḳi' ḳazālarıñ ḳāḏileri ve nā'ibleri—Zīde-i fazlıhüm—tevkī'-i refī'-i hümāyūn vāşıl olıcak ma'lūm ola ki Ṭūr-i Sinā Piskopos Kyrillos rāhib Divān-i Hümāyūn'uma 'arzuḫāl idüp. Ṭūr-i Sinā'da vāḳi' **Mar-llarat** maḥallerde taşadduḳāt ve nüzūrāt cem'ı için

(2) mürūr ve 'ubūr iden ruhbānlardan cizyedārlar taraflarından cizye muṭālebe ve yerlerinde kendülerine müte'alliḳ emti'a ve eşyālarından bacı ve bir nesne muṭālebe olunmuyp. Selāṭin-i māziye'den ve Ḥāzret-i Resūl-i Ekrem 'Abdullāh'ümden yedlerinde olan 'ahdnāme-i şerīfe mücebince Ṭūr-i Sinā'da vāḳi' manastırlarına ve kiliselerine

(3) ve bāḡ ve bāḡçelerine ve leb-i deryāda vāḳi' Sahl-i Kaṭerine de olan 'ibādetlerine ve vaḳıflarına kimesne māni' ve müzāḫim olmayup İskenderiye ve Reşīd ve sā'ir iskelelerde bacı ve sā'ir ile ṭaleb ve teklīf ile rencīde olunmuyp ve ḳāḏiler ve mīrimīrān ve sā'ir mütesellim ve ümenā ve 'ummāl

(4) daḫl ve te'arruz eylemeyüp ve Cebel-i Ṭūr-i Sinā'da kendüleriniñ mu'ayyen Piskopos re'īslerinden ḡayri bilād ve eyālet Paṭriḳleri ve Piskoposları daḫī ḳarışmayüp ve yedlerine olan 'ahdnāme-i şerīfe mücebince verilü gelmişken mesfūrden rāhiblerden ol maḳūle taşadduḳāt ve nüzūrāt

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(5) cem‘i için mürūr ve ‘ubūr eyledikleri maḥallarda ve iskelelerde ‘ahdnāme-i şerīfe’ye muḡāyir cizye talebiyle rencīde eylediklerinden mā‘adā re‘āyā-ı t̄ā’ife Mülkīyye üzere mutaşarrıf oldukları eşyālarına Tūr Sinā’ya vaḡf idüp zabt olunduḡda müzāḡim olunmuyüp ḡilāf-ı ‘ahdnāme-i şerīfe taşaddukāt ve nüzūrāt

(6) cem‘i için mürūr ve ‘ubūr eyledikleri maḥallarda cizyedārılar cizye talebi ve yerlerinde kendülerine müte‘allıḡ emti‘a ve eşyālarından bācı ve bir nesne talebiyle ve s̄ā’irleri taraflarından daḡı bācı ve s̄ā’ir bahāne ile olan ta‘addīleri men‘ ve def‘ olunmaḡ bābında emr-i şerīfım verilmesi ricā eyldiḡi ecelden

(7) *Ḥazīne-i ‘Āmirem*’de maḡfūz olan Piskopos muḡāta‘ası defterlerine nazār olunduḡda keşīşān-ı manastırān-ı Cebel-i Mūsā ve Tūr-i Sinā’da vāḡi‘ manāstirlerine ve kiliselerine ve baḡçelerine ve leb-i deryā’da vāḡi‘ kilise ve ḡurmā baḡçelerine ve vaḡıflarına ve Maḡrūse-i Mışır’da Bābü’l-Naşr’da Civānīyye maḡallesinde vāḡi‘

(8) manāstirlerine ve Sahl-i Kaḡerine’de olan ‘ibādetlerine ve (...)lerine ve maḡalle-i Ḳāhire’niñ saḡ ve şolunda vāḡi‘ iki vekāleleriniñ keşfine ve yine Maḡrūse-i Mışır dāḡilinde vāḡi‘ vaḡıf evlerine ve ḡānlarına min vech-i daḡl ve māni‘ ve müzāḡim olmuyüp Selātin-i māzīyeden ve ḡulefā-i ‘izāmndan ve Ḥazret-i Resūl-i

(9) Ekrem ‘Abdullāh’imden ellerinde olan ‘ahdnāme-i şerīfe mücebince kimesne māni‘ olmuyüp ve yine zıkr olunan ‘ahdnāme mazmūnı üzere İskenderiye ve Reşīd ve Dimyād ve

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sā'ir iskelelerde bâcî ü harâc ve sâ'ir nesne taleb ve teklîf olunmuyup ve kâdîlar ve mîrimîrân ve mîrlivâ ve mütesellim ve ümenâ

(10) Ve 'ummâl dahl eylemeyüp ve Cebel-i Kâhire'de kendülerine mu'ayyen Piskopos re'îslerinden ğayri bilâd ve eyâlet Patrikleri ve Piskoposları dahî karışmayüp ve yedlerine olan 'ahdnâme-i şerîfe'ye muğâyir bir ferd rencide ve remide eylemeyeler deyü evâmir-i şerîfem verilü geldiği

(11) der-kenâr olunmağla imdî şürûtı mücebince 'aml olunmağ bâbında fermân-ı 'âlîşânım şâdir olmuştur.

## English Translation

By Abdelrahman Mahmoud

When this imperially signed decree reaches you, the judges and the substitute judges located in the provinces of Rumeli and Anatolia as well as the Mediterranean and the Black Sea regions, who are the pride of judges and rulers, the embodiment of gemstone-like virtues and speech—may their grace be increased—let it be known that

The bishop-monk Kyrillos of Tur Sinai Mountain has submitted a petitioned to my Imperial Council. Because he requested the issuance of my noble decree with regards to the issues

1) that the monks in the region of (...) in Mount Sinai passing by and through in order to collect charity and votives must not be obligated by the tax collectors to pay the *Jizya* tax nor requested to pay the customary taxes no anything from the commodities that belong to them where they are based;

2) that no one must obstruct nor be a hinderance to their monasteries and churches, which are located in Mount Sinai, to their vegetable gardens and vineyards, or to their Waqfs and places of worship located by the seaside in the province of the Catherine Valley as required by the noble covenant in their possession given to them by His Excellence the munificent Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and ratified by the former Sultans;

3) that they must not be subjected to torment as a result of imposing octroi taxes and customs or being burdened with tax obligation under any other pretext at Alexandria, Rosetta, and all the other ports;

4) that the judges, Governor-in-chief, the other local tax collectors, superintendents, and state officials must not interfere in their affairs nor molest them;

5) that apart from the archbishops that they designated for themselves, the Patriarchs and bishops of the province must not meddle into their affairs;

6) that while my Imperially sublime decree had been issued in accordance with the Prophetic Covenant which they possess, and apart from the fact that the aforementioned bishops had suffered because they were asked to pay the *Jizye* tax at the ports and regions they pass by and through in order to collect this type of charity and votive—which contravenes the Prophetic Covenant—they must not be harassed when they take custody of my belongings which I endowed upon the subjects of the Melkite community to administer in Tur Sinai;

7) that the transgressions made under the pretext of the octroi tax and others by the *Jizye* tax collectors demanding from the monks the payment of the *Jizye* tax in the regions they pass by and through in order to collect charity and votive—in contrary to the noble Prophetic Covenant—and the other officials who demand as well the payment of the octroi tax and other things on their commodities and goods that belong to them where they are, must be prevented and repelled,

and upon examining the registers of the tax district of the bishop which are kept in the *Imperial Treasury*, and since my noble commands, stipulating

(1) “that the priests of the monasteries of Mount Moses; the monasteries, churches and vineyards located in Tur Sinai; the church, the date palm gardens, and the waqf properties located by the seaside; the monasteries located on the Jiwaniya street in the quarter of Bab al-Nasr in Cairo; their places of worship and (...) located at Catherine Valley; the (...) of the two Caravansaries located on the right and left sides of Fatimid Cairo; and the “*waqf*” houses and the caravansaries located inside the province of Egypt, must not in any manner nor form be intruded into, obstructed, nor hindered;

(2) that no one must obstruct them in accordance with the noble covenant they possess, which was given to them by the former Sultans, the great Caliphs and His Highness, my Munificent Prophet ‘Abdullah;

(3) that they must not be burdened with nor required to pay any octroi taxes, customs or anything at the ports of Alexandria, Rosetta, Damietta nor the other ports as per the conditions of the covenant;

(4) that the judges, governors-in-chief, province governor, tax collector, government officers, and revenue collectors must not interfere;

(5) that apart from the archbishops that they designated for themselves, the Patriarch of and bishops of the province must not meddle into their affairs;

(6) that no individual must be injured nor scared contrary to the noble covenant they possess,”

have been immediately noted in the margin in accordance with the *Noble Covenant*, my illustrious decree has been now issued with respect to putting these commands into effect in accordance with the above conditions.

## Critical Reflection

By Abdelrahman Mahmoud

The significance of this Ottoman *firamn* lies in its explication of the privileges and rights conferred upon the Greek Melkite monks and priests affiliated with the Saint Catherin's Monastery in Mount Sinai. Not only does the *firman* upholds the legislative authority of the purported covenant of rights given by the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), but also demonstrates how the monks and priests secured their rights of passage and tax exemptions through the Ottoman legal institutions.

Given the stylistic conventions underlying the syntactical forms of Ottoman imperial decrees, especially the string of converb clauses that hinge upon subordinate clauses which function as discourse connectives, I tried to the best of my ability to provide an English translation that approximates the discursive structure of the original Ottoman syntax. As is known, the key to understanding the syntactical structure of Ottoman imperial decrees is to first and foremost organize your translation around the discourse connectives which unlock the gist of the document.

Syntactical structure aside, identifying unfamiliar place names was another major challenge. There is one place in the Mount Sinai region that I could not located despite consulting many maps of the region. Ottoman-unique orthographic rendition of city names was similarly quite confusing, i.e., Dimyād دمياد as opposed to Diymāt, the standard orthographic form.