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Extract of a Letter from Constantinople to Baghdad

Holding Institution	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
Reference	IOR/L/PS/9/76/47
Date(s)	20 Nov 1798 (CE, Gregorian)
Written in	English in Latin
Extent and Format	1 item (2 folios)
Copyright for document	<u>Unknown</u>



About this record

A translated extract of a letter from Coja Reuben ibn Saleh [Khāwja Rūbīn bin Ṣāliḥ] to Coja Abdullah ibn Eussof [Khāwja 'Abdullāh bin Yūsuf] in Bagdad [Baghdad], sent from Constantinople [Istanbul] and dated 20 November 1798.

The letter forwards news from Cairo received in Constantinople. It reports that, following unrest after the imposition of a poll tax, General Napoleon Bonaparte was attacked by a man from Barbary [North Africa], that a large number of French occupation forces were killed by the inhabitants of Cairo while the rest have retreated from the city, and that the Kia [deputy] of Beikir Pashaw [Abū Bakr Pāshā or Ebubekir Paşa, Ottoman Governor of Egypt] has taken control of a fortress in Cairo.

Extract of a Letter from Soja Rubens Ibn
Saleh dated Constantinople the 20.
November to Soja Abdullah Ibn Eusuf
at Bagdad, received the 15. December
1798.

Three days ago news arrived, from Cairo, that Buonaparte,
had imparted to the Kia of Behir Pashaw, whom on his first
taking Possession of Cairo he had appointed to command in the
South, his Wishes that the Mohammedans would shave their beards,
to which the Kia replied, that such a proceeding could only be
adopted by the authority of the Mufti & Sazi,

Sometime afterwards Buonaparte, through the Kia of Behir
Pashaw made a Requisition, in form of a Poll-tax, of 10 Reals from
each Inhabitant: on which an Assembly was held, at the Mekamah,
when Complaints were made, that instead of fulfilling the promises
which he made of Justice, and Protection, Buonaparte, was every day
inventing some new Mode of Innovation, and oppression, Buona-
parte hearing of this Assembly of the People, sent one of his
Generals to appease them. The General, on his first arriving at the
Mekamah, began, to threaten, and upbraid the People, when a
Man of Barbary drew his Sanjar, or Dagger, and stabbed him in
the Breast, on which the People at the Mekamah, shut the Gates
of it and massacred, all the Sixty Persons, who attended the
General.

General - which being concluded they opened the doors and sallied forth with drawn Swords, falling on every Frenchman that came in this Way.

Behir Pashaw's Aid, in consequence of his Employment by Buonaparte, found means in this Moment under the Appearance of Friendship to gain admittance, to a small Fort, in which were 500 Frenchmen, whom he put to the Sword.

Buonaparte, seeing this collected his Soldiers, and marched out of Cairo - he first made an attempt to retreat to Meandria, but for want of Boats this ^{was} found impossible - he then made an attempt to join L/M. Men who he had sent into the Sid against Morad Beg; but was prevented in this by the Arabs: having therefore no choice left he retreated to Bolaak, on which the Inhabitants of Cairo, besieged Bolaak, and sent away Intelligence of what had happened to Constantinople, by Way of Damascus, and the Pashaw of Damascus sent five Sultans with the Intelligence, to Constantinople, and on the arrival here of this News, the Grand Signior, commanded a continued Salute of Musquetry & Cannon from Morning to Night.

(Faithfully extracted & translated)

J. W. Jones.

Extract of a Letter from Constantinople to Baghdad [2r] (3/4)



