WOMEN’S WEDDING SONGS FROM ADANA: FORTY QUATRAINS IN CILICIAN ARABIC

CANCIONES DE BODA FEMENINAS DE ADANA: CUARENTA CUARTETAS EN ÁRABE DE CILICIA

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Abstract

This article deals with special four-line songs performed exclusively by women in the Arabic dialect of the city of Adana in Southern Turkey. Following an introduction including a formal and linguistic analysis forty songs are transcribed and translated into English.

Keywords: dialectal poetry; songs; oral literature; Cilician Arabic.

All members of the Arabic speaking minority in Turkey’s fourth largest city, Adana, belong to the ŠAlawī sect of Shiite Islam¹, which is also widespread in Western Syria. Although, or perhaps because, women have a somewhat inferior status in this religious community and are prohibited from initiation into its secret doctrines, in many respects they enjoy more social freedom than most of the Sunni women of the region². For one thing, at weddings ŠAlawī women are allowed to dance and sing with the men, and during the lengthy wedding celebrations, which often last several

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¹ Often also called Nuṣayrī or Nuṣayrī-ŠAlawī.

days, women in Adana and other Arabic speaking parts of Cilicia recite(d) short, four-line verses to both female and male participants.

Around the turn of the 20th century, when Western Arabists first became interested in spoken Arabic dialects, they often recorded traditional songs and poems, and several of the larger collections date back to that era. However, after World War I most dialectologists shifted to the research of daily speech because they had become aware that the language of oral poetry often does not reflect the pure local dialect but also contains supra-regional and Classical forms and vocabulary. In the Arab world, by contrast, until fairly recently orally transmitted poems, songs, and proverbs were the only fields in which local researchers showed any interest in the dialects. Since the 1990s, because of the rapid and lasting changes in many aspects of Arab societies, these products of local popular culture have again received more attention from Western scholars. In particular, the overwhelming impact of television and other media has resulted in an ongoing decline of traditional culture which is – at least in some parts of the Arab world – in danger of being lost within the next generation or two. As for wedding songs one should also mention the increasing tendency among Islamist circles to condemn wedding ceremonies in general as un-Islamic practice.

The situation in the region under research is special insofar as most aspects of Arab material and literary culture were actively suppressed by the Turkish authorities until only a few years ago. Arabic songs and Arab music were banned from public performance and thus it is not surprising that little of a once rich oral culture has survived today. Among these remnants are two very different types of songs performed exclusively by women: mourning songs and wedding songs. This paper deals exclusively with the second type. Following a short discussion of the general literary and linguistic characteristics of these songs are the original Arabic texts and English translations of forty typical examples.

The songs always consist of a series of four-line strophes, each of which is followed by the well-known zagārid-trills called zaĝūt in the local dialect. There is evidence of songs of similar structure and content also exclusively sung by women in adjacent regions, particularly Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. These too are sometimes labelled as zagārid songs because these cries are the only thing all these quite different kinds of songs have in common. In Adana the use of these quatrains has drastically decreased during the last twenty years, and today there are many weddings where they are not performed at all. They are regarded as a relic of former

3 Because usually men and women do not mix during most stages of the festivity, in many parts of the region there are also typically male songs (cf. Rosenhouse 2000-2001: 33). The rather sophisticated poetry duels of Palestine, for instance, are exclusively “performed by and for men” (Yaqub 2007: 8).

4 E.g. Hartmann 1897, Huxley 1902, Littmann 1902.


6 This is, above all, true for urban societies. In many rural areas folk traditions continue to be practiced, although often in the frame of folk festivals and similar occasions (cf. Yaqub 2007: 8).

times, and today only sung by elderly women – and usually only during the so-called henna-night one day before the actual wedding. Most modern wedding festivities are now accompanied by professional or semi-professional entertainers and bands.

A clear sign of the decline of this oral tradition is that one often hears quatrains with topics that do not fit the occasion, i.e. the henna-night. Formerly there were special strophes sung for each step on the long way from the formal request for the girl’s hand to the final wedding night:

- The visit of the groom’s family to the bride’s family to ask for the girl’s hand (b-yiṭḥib l-bitt).
- The ring ceremony (il-xātim).
- The engagement ceremony (l-ṣṭāb).
- The henna-night (laylit il-ḥinni).
- The departure of the bride from her parents’ home.
- The procession from the bride’s home to the groom’s home (iz-zaffi).
- The arrival of the bride at her new home.
- The ceremony at the groom’s home.

The address forms like yā bitti ‘my daughter’, ya-abni ‘my son’, xayyi ‘my brother’, yammi ‘my mother’, and bayyi ‘my father’ used in the first lines of the songs indicate that in former times the mothers and sisters of the couple as well as the bride herself were among the performers. As was mentioned above, today only older female relatives, in rare cases the mothers themselves, sing a few of these strophes.

**Formal characteristics**

**Number of lines** – All wedding songs presented here have four lines, hence we have called them *quatrain*. In this respect they correspond to the same category of songs in other parts of the Near East. Some researchers, however, prefer to call them *couplet* instead of *quatrain*, maintaining that they consist of two lines containing two hemistichs each. It is true that in Arabic editions similar songs are often arranged in two lines instead of four; but particularly the songs beginning with a

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8 For a detail account of an ʕAlawī wedding cf. the text in Procházka 2002: 263-274.
9 For an overview of similar customs in Palestine and Syria see Rosenhouse 2000-2001: 31-33.
10 Traditionally this part of the ceremony took place at the home of the bride. Today both the henna-night and the actual wedding are celebrated at a ‘wedding saloon’ (diğün salonu in Turkish).
11 Cf. Rosenhouse 2000-2001: 39: “Among the singing women we may find the bride’s family (sisters, cousins, mother and aunts), non-family (adult) guests, and the bride’s non-family girl friends from the village, as well as members of the bridegroom’s family”.
12 Cf. Littmann 1902: 87; Rosenhouse 2000-2001: 35 and especially 41. On the latter page the author claims that only the wedding songs of the Jews of Damascus are arranged in quatrains. But as they are structurally exactly the same as the Druze or Muslim songs (cf. the examples p. 40), it is hard to guess why they should be regarded as formally different.
kind of interjection (see below) are usually written in four lines\textsuperscript{14}. We also think that their dominant rhyme pattern \textit{a a b a} suggests that they are quatrains rather than couplets\textsuperscript{15}.  

\textbf{Rhyme patterns} – Only six of the quatrains (= 15\%) in our collection are monorhymed with the structure \textit{a a a a}. The overwhelming majority of the songs (28 = 70\%) have the rhyme pattern \textit{a a b a}, which is frequently used in other Near Eastern quatrains, including the Turkish mani\textsuperscript{16}. The rhyme patterns \textit{a a a b} and \textit{a b c b} occur in two songs each; and \textit{a a b b} and \textit{a b b b} are each used in one song.

\textbf{Number of syllables} – In many genres of popular poetry the metrical structure is mainly quantitative and not accentual as in the Classical poetry\textsuperscript{17}. Thus in all hitherto published songs of the type under discussion the number of syllables is equal, or almost equal, in all four lines. Surprisingly this is not the case for many of the quatrains in our collection. The number of syllables is very inconsistent; the shortest verse has five syllables, the longest 25. Often lines 1-2 are of equal length; but lines 3-4 are in many cases much longer, and in some songs (e.g. no. 22) the fourth line is very long. The radical variation of syllabic patterns within one and the same song can also be seen as an indication of a certain decline. The reason for this might be that pairs of verses which originally belonged to different songs were newly combined – perhaps because the other pair of verses in each of the two songs had been forgotten.

\textbf{Linguistic features} – Phonologically, morphologically and syntactically the songs are pure Cilician Arabic\textsuperscript{18}, which means that they are either autochthonous products of the local culture or were adjusted to the local dialect long ago. Their vocabulary is rather simple and basic\textsuperscript{19}. There are practically no loans from Classical Arabic\textsuperscript{20}; but

\textsuperscript{14} For examples see Lübäni 2009: 43 and 201.
\textsuperscript{15} Cf. the examples in Eilers 1942. When speaking Turkish, the Arab women of Adana call these songs mani because they resemble to these popular Turkish four-line stanzas. See the following footnote.
\textsuperscript{16} The same rhyme pattern predominates in the quatrains published in Huxley 1902, Littmann 1902, and Jargy 1970. The Iraqi quatrains published by Eilers 1942 have the rhyme pattern \textit{a a b}. For the Turkish mani cf. EI\textsuperscript{2}, VI, s.v. māni: “The \textit{mani} is, most usually, a piece of poetry made up of heptasyllabic verses rhymed on the pattern \textit{a a b a}; each quatrain may be sufficient to fulfil a certain function or to transmit a certain message.”
\textsuperscript{17} Jargy 1970: 30 over-generalized when he wrote “la métrique de la poésie populaire…n’est \textit{pas basée} [my italics] sur l’accent rythmique, mais sur le nombre de syllabes”. Popular poetry based on accentual structures also exists, cf. the discussion in Palva 1992: 149-166.
\textsuperscript{18} Typical features are the so-called uumlaut-imāla (e.g. qēvīd ‘sitting’; nēs ‘people’), pausal phenomena like -a# > a” (Sadātna”, Malṭa”) and -i > ey (farfāre”, dāre”), the way attributes are constructed (e.g. farīhī iğ-gāy, bāhūr iz-zīrqa), and the analytical accusative (e.g. kīyyafīn la-msāfrūnak “you have amused your guests”). For an overview of Cilician Arabic see Procházka 2006.
one does find typical Syrian words not used in the everyday speech of Adana, for example:

- **filfil il-harr** ‘hot pepper’ instead of the local **flayfli bi-thibb**
- **šibbāk** ‘window’ instead of **fāqa**
- **dyūf** ‘guests’ instead of **msāfrīn**
- **gmāl** ‘beauty’ instead of **hisīn**
- **kana** ‘like’ instead of **mitil**.

Another feature is the use of the relative pronoun **illīzi**, which is otherwise restricted to traditional narratives and fairy tales. Sometimes we come across poetic licenses such as **ǧhannabī** ‘hell’, altered from **ǧhannam** to rhyme with **ʕa-n-nabī** in no. 8. The lengthening of short vowels in last syllables also occurs, e.g. in no. 3 **b-tisrāh** and **nifrāh** in lines 2 and 4. There are strikingly fewer Turkish loanwords in the songs than in normal speech, which is certainly a sign of their relatively high age.

**Stylistic features**

**Introductory interjection** – At the beginning of all the songs we find an interjection which by some women is pronounced **ḥāw**. The majority of the performers, however, prefer the word **ḥāy** hence these songs are called **mhāyhay** (or **mhāha**) in Cilician Arabic. Such opening vocative syllables are common in **zāgārid**-type songs in other regions too. Interjections used are:

- **ayha/ēha/īha** in Lebanon (Huxley 1902: 190)
- **a ħā in Syria** (Jargy 1970: 122)
- **hay wiyyā, ē wiyyāh; őwiha; ēh, ēh, ēh, yā, ēh** in Palestine (Lūbānī 2009: 43, 149, 201; Rosenhouse 2000-2001: 36)
- **ēh w-yā among the Druzes** (Rosenhouse 2000-2001: 36).

We find that in 80 % of the forty Adana songs published here the interjection occurs at the beginning of lines 1-3; only 10 % of the songs exhibit the **ḥāy** in all four lines (in the remaining 10 % the interjection is found in only one line or two). In the songs from Lebanon edited by Huxley 1902, as well as in the Palestinian examples presented by Lūbānī, the interjection always occurs in all four lines. In most of the Syrian examples found in Jargy 1970: 116-117 the interjection begins all four lines.

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20. Except for learned **ʕAlawī** sheikhs, Classical Arabic is unknown to the people of Adana. However a few lines of these songs show Classical forms: e.g. no. 22 **mawgī ḫābre**, which in pure dialect is **mawgī Ḭābre**. In some lines we find the Classical article **al-** instead of dialectal **il-**.

21. Actually a re-loan from Turkish where **misafir** means ‘guest’ and not ‘traveler’.

22. In a couple of instances replaced by the Turkish word **kiši** ‘person’.

23. In the songs we find, for example, the word **ʕadāw** ‘enemy’, which in normal speech has been replaced by **dišān** < Turkish **dişman**.


25. “**ʔA hā.: cris de joie lancés surtout par les femmes aux fêtes de noces.**”
Metaphors

As in other songs of this kind, rhetorical figures, particularly metaphors, are frequently used. These include comparisons of the bride and/or groom with various kinds of flowers. For example:

Hey, our bride Fāṭma is (like) a pink/and our groom is (like) the flower of the pomegranate tree. (no. 35).

The groom is once called “hot pepper” (no. 20) and once “a cup of best porcelain” (no. 23). In no. 29 the children of a family are described as “the candle of the house… who should not extinguish” (…wlādin šam‘īt id-dār/yā rabbi lā tīfīya”)

Similes like ḥāy ‛xdāš kama taffāh “Hey, your cheeks are like apples” (from a song not included in the collection below) are very rare and it can be taken for granted that this verse, which is also found in a collection from Palestine, is not a local product. This is also shown by its unusual preposition kama.

Textual features

Structural characteristics

All quatrains are semantically a self-contained unity. During my fieldwork I never came across a performance which combined two or more quatrains into a longer entity, but it cannot be ruled out that this had been sometimes done in former times. Often in line 1 or 2 the bride, the groom, or other prominent figures in the wedding ceremonies are addressed.

The first two lines of several quatrains (no.s 34-40) are more or less nonsense. One of them is the most widely known of all the songs, no. 34, which begins, “Hey, we have leek/Hey, you have leek”. These nonsense-verses may be another hint of the decay of the orally transmitted songs because they suggest that the performers knew only two lines of a certain quatrain and thus invented two others, the present first and second lines, with the appropriate rhyme. Es-pecially in such songs, but also in many of the others, the main message is formulated in the final two lines.

A frequently used stylistic device is a conditional clause: If the protasis (often line 3) includes something positive, the apodosis (in the same line and/or line 4) is a wish or a blessing. If – as is much more frequent – the protasis is something negative, the apodosis is a curse or something similar. By far the most common verb used in the negative messages is yibğid ‘to dislike, to hate’; but mā yḥibb ‘he does not like’ also occurs a few times. Typical examples are:

Hey, the one who dislikes you, may he drop down into pieces! (no. 15)
Hey, the person who dislikes us, may God send him a bullet! (no. 22)
Hey, a person who dislikes us/May his trousers get tattered! (no. 39)

The name of the bride’s or groom’s family is sometimes mentioned in the protasis:

Hey, who dislikes the members of the Ṣābūn family/may God send him a bloody jail! (no. 6).

26 Cf. a similar metaphor in Littmann 1902: 15/12 wi-l-šarā Remarks: “and the groom, oh our candle – who extinguishes it should not live!”
27 wi-xdāš kama taffāh (Littmann 1902: 20/54).
28 I have noticed nonsense verses in no other collection of songs of this kind.
Women Wedding’s Songs in Cilician Arabic

In quatrains which were originally sung during the visit of the groom’s male family members to ask for the girl’s hand, the hope of a positive answer is introduced by inšalla. For example:

Hey, if God wills, with your permission, oh ŠAlī/We shall marry the old and the young. (no. 2)

Frequent motifs

As is often the case with songs performed by women, Cilician quatrains never have religious themes. In comparison to the men’s poetry, the songs presented here are not very warlike, either, although there are many maledictions against assorted enemies. In two songs, no.s 12 and 17, we find a “local touch” (besides the Cilician dialect) in that the city of Adana is explicitly mentioned.

The descriptions of the bride and the groom mainly mention their expensive clothes, for example:

Hey, our bride, your dress is embroidered with gold. (no. 10)
Hey, my brother, your suit is striped. (no. 17)

Another important thing is, of course, honour:

Hey, my son, oh you possessor of clear thought and honour. (no. 21)

The groom is, or is expected to become, a hero who will vanquish the enemies of the family:

Hey, every time the enemy comes to cut you down
If God wills, may you become stronger and greener. (no. 19a)

He is the “sultan of the east and the west” (no. 22) and he even “may become a ruler and a leader” that all people should be under his hand (no. 19b).

In some other songs we find common blessings for the bridal couple. For example:

Hey, may God protect our bride
Hey, the one who is your pride (no. 31)

May my Lord protect him (the groom) from the evil eye! (no. 14)

Much rarer than curses are wishes. A good example is:

Hey, my brother, I wish you a bath outside in the fields/Hey, I wish you to have four servants serving you while four (other) servants are sleeping. (no. 16).

In several songs joy (farha) in general is expressed, e.g. “We like the joy, the joy of coming together.” (no. 5). There are also expressions of the wish that the joy of a wedding may be passed on to the next generation: “Hey, this joy is for my nephew/And the next joy is for my son.” (no. 27). The same wish is also found in the wedding songs of other regions. Compare the above with this verse from Jerusalem: il-yūm il-farah Ŧinnā – Ŧubāh wīlādkum “Today the joy is with us, it may be with your children (in the future)!” (Littmann 1902: 14/6).

32 To become green also means to flourish, to get strong.
Two quatrains are songs of welcome for the guests. Song no. 1 welcomes the representatives of the suppliant groom who come to ask for the hand of a girl on his behalf:

$hāy$ $ahla$ $w-sahla$ $fīkin$ $yā$ $dīyūf$
$hāy$ $mqaalihin$ $bi-syūf$
$hāy$ $m-našrifkin$ $il$ $gāyīn$
$tā$ $dabahnā-likin$ $il-xārāf$

Hey, welcome to you, oh guests!
Hey, you who come with swords to ask for her hand in marriage
Hey, if we had known that you would come
We would have slaughtered a lamb for you.

This quatrain has striking parallels in Syria and Palestine. A wedding song of the Damascene Jews is almost identical:

$āh$ $ya$ $ʔahla$ $w-sahla$ $ya$ $dīyūf$
$āh$ $ya$ $mṣaqqālin$ $bis-syūf$
$āh$ $ya$ $ulaw$ $ʔrifkin$ $ẓāyīn$

$w-āh$ $ya$ $kUNNA$ $dabahnā-likum$ $xārāf$ 33.

Oh, welcome you guests
Oh, decorated with swords
Oh, and if we had known you were coming
We’d slaughtered for you sheep.

This last example illustrates the fact that the quatrains of our collection share not only motifs, but also many phrases and idioms with the $zāǧārūd$-songs of other regions. Some of these similarities may be incidental since it is natural to compare a bride with a beautiful flower; but others are certainly proof of a common origin. The fact that identical, or at least very similar, verses are found in the relatively large area from Cilicia in the north to Palestine in the south, and among such different religious communities as $ʕ$Alawīs, Jews, Christians, Sunnis, and Druzes, suggests that some of these songs are part of an old supra-regional folk tradition. Compare, for instance:

- $hāy$ $fi$ $smayki$ $b-tišbah$ $bi-ʔṣīr$ “Hey, a fish is swimming in it” (no. 2)
  with Lebanon: $ēha$ $yā$ $semekī$ $fi-ʔl-ḥaḥar$ $tiʔaḥab$ “oh fish playing in the sea” (Huxley 1902:197).
- $hāy$ $il-ʔkarīm$ $karmak$ $w-lōlō$ $ʔanāqīdak$ “This vineyard is yours and its pearls are your grapes.” (no. 19b)
  with Palestine: $ya$ $lūlu$ $ʔanāqideh$ “whose grapes are pearls” (Spoer & Haddad 1926: 204).
- $tā-ṣṣīr$ $ḥākim$ $w-mikīm$ $w-ʔill$ $in-nās$ $tahṭ $ $ʔdak$ “Hey, may you become a ruler and leader that all people should be under your hand.” (no. 19b)
  with Palestine: $wiṣīr$ $ḥākim$ $w-ʔīl$-$i-l-balad$ $tahṭ$ $ʔideh$ “he will become a ruler and the whole country will be under his hand.” (Spoer & Haddad 1926: 204).

A quatrain from Lebanon goes (Littmann 1902: 62/14):

$yā$ $ʔarīs$ $yā$ $fiʔzaʔ$ $fārfaʔīrī$

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33 Rosenhouse 2000-2001: 40. On the same page there are also similar songs of the Druzes and from $ʕ$En $Māḥel.
yā ūx aḥmar ū-l-šābbāk manšārī
limmā tirkab ū-l-khayālī wi-tāl-il-ha dārī
is-sarārī muqārī wa-r-rākārillārī.

Oh bridegroom, oh cup of porcelain
Oh red shawl spread out on the window
When you are riding on your thoroughbred and tell her: Turn!
The saddle is embroidered and the stirrups are of crystal.
The first three lines of this song show a striking parallel to our song no. 23:
ḥāy yā-ḥabni yā fiŋgān farfārī1
ḥāy allo ḫaqqdār ūla sībībāk miṇḥārī2
ḥāy lammt-il tirkab ū-l-xādra w-tibšaq-la hā dārī3

Hey, my son, oh cup of best porcelain
Hey, who has the right (to possess) a carved window.
Hey, when you mount the brown (mare) shouting to her: hey turn!

Another very interesting parallel is found among the wedding songs of the peasants of Ḥama:
wa-l-ṣiṣat il-xeyl wurrīdha ūla l-ṣāṣī – w-ahāsī qalāb el-ṣāṣī b-bārūd w-rṣāṣī4

In our song no. 24 we find:
ḥāy lammt tirkab ūla-l-xādra b-titbarram ḥaḍd al-Sāṣī5
ḥāy inšalla bi-tallu yā-ḥabni qalāb al-xāda killa bārūd w-rṣāṣa5

Hey, when you mount the brown (mare) and turn to the River Orontes
Hey, if God wills, my son, you (and your friends) will fill the heart of the enemies
with gun powder and a bullet.

These two verses must have been brought from Syria to Cilicia as the River Orontes is not known to the average Ūlāwī of the region, and none of the women of whom I inquired the meaning of il-Ṣāṣī could explain it to me.

Edition of forty quatrains

All recordings were made in the Akkapı quarter (in Arabic Ūbkīr) of Adana between 2001 and 2010. The majority of these songs came from Luṭfiye (born 1941), Minnāz (born 1922), and Šāmīye (born 1939), who tragically died in a car accident in 2008. I am especially grateful to the Bayraktar and Uzun families for their enthusiastic support of my research. Many of the songs I heard during weddings, or on videos of weddings. To get a better sound quality, I also recorded all of the songs at the homes of well-known performers. I heard many of the songs twice or thrice and often recorded variants, which are also presented in the following edition.

The songs are presented in transcription and English translation. They have been roughly arranged according to the following categories: Songs sung when the groom’s family comes to ask for the girl’s hand. A song for the betrothal. Songs of

34 Special thanks go to Nurhan, Eylem, Gülşen, Semra, and Neslihan as well as to the head of the family, my friend Ali Bayraktar.

35 I would like to thank my friend Craig Crossen who edited the whole text and to whom I owe many of the good stylistic translations.
joy and welcome at the wedding. Songs for the bride. Songs for the groom. A song for the groom’s mother. A song for the father. Songs of blessing or mockery: Songs in which the first two lines are nonsense.

1
hāy ahlal w-sahla fīkin yā dyūf
hāy m-qallbīn 36 bi-syūf
hāy m-nafrīkīn il gāyīn
tā dbahnā-lkin il-xārūf
Hey, welcome to you, oh guests!
Hey, you who come with swords to ask for her hand in marriage
Hey, if we had known that you would come
We would have slaughtered a lamb for you.

2
hāy bāhirna" ḡbīr ḡbīr
hāy fi smayki b-tisbah bi-tṣīr
hāy inšalla b-ṣīzak yā ‘Ali
mi-ngawwiz izz-zghīr wi-l-ḡbīr
Hey, our sea is wide and big
Hey, a fish is swimming in it
Hey, if God wills, with your permission, oh ‘Ali 37
We shall marry the old and the young.

Variant line 3:

hāy inšalla b-ṣīz Alla ʿizz bayykin yā wlaydāti
Hey, if God wills, with God’s and your father’s permission, oh my dears!

3
hāy bāhirna" ʿmrāḥ ʿmrāḥ
hāy fi smayki b-tisrāḥ
hāy inšalla la-ḡāḥkin yā wlađe 3
mi-ndiq q il-ṭhūl w-nifrāḥ
Hey, our sea has overtopped the banks
Hey, a fish is swimming around in it
Hey, if God wills, for your sake, oh my dears
We shall beat the drums and enjoy ourselves.

Variant lines 3-4:

hāy inšalla b-ṣīz Alla ʿizzkin yā wlaydāti
inšalla mi-ndiq q w-m-nifrāḥ

37 The lady used this name because when I recorded her I was with her nephew ‘Ali. Usually the name of the bride’s father (or elder brother) is put in this place.
Hey, if God wills, with God’s and your permission, oh my dears!
We shall beat (the drums) and enjoy ourselves.

4a
hāy rihna min balad la-balad
hāy ta-kinna nixīth bitt pāšīt Ḥalab
hāy mā ṭridna ṣa-l-hisin wi-ḡ-ḡmāl
*Ṭridna la-bayt il-ḥasab wi-n-nasab.

Hey, we were going from country to country
Hey, we betrothed the girl of the Pasha of Aleppo
Hey, we did not run after attractiveness and beauty
We were looking for a family with a noble pedigree.

4b
hāy ṭridna min balad la-balad
hāy ḡībna bitt pāšīt Ḥalab
hāy mā ṭridna la-l-hisin wi-ḡ-ḡmāl
*Ṭridna la-bitt il-ḥasab wi-n-nasab.

Hey, we were running from country to country
Hey, we have brought the girl of the Pasha of Aleppo
Hey, we did not run after attractiveness and beauty
We were looking for a girl with a noble pedigree.

5
hāy wardna" b-yinšamm
niḥna mi-nḥībb il-faraḥ, il-faraḥ m-nilṭamm
b-yibğidna yibšat-lu bi-ḥabs id-damm
lā yfıkk-illu l-ṭūr lā yṣfrīk-lo hamm
Hey, our roses have a pleasant fragrance
We like the joy, the joy of coming together
(Who) dislikes us, may (God) send him a bloody jail!
And may He not loose his chains and not relieve his pain

6
hāy "lamment ta-nilṭamm
hāy killaytna ixwe l-wād il-ṣamm
hāy kil ši 38 b-yibğidna la-sulaylayt bayt Šābūn
Alla yibṣat-lu ḡabs id-damm
Hey, come together, let’s come together
Hey, we are all brothers and cousins
Hey, who dislikes the members of the Šābūn family
May God send him a bloody jail!

38 Instead of kišī ‘person’.

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Hey, you are welcome
Hey, the angels may protect you
Hey, your ship has not sunk
So that nobody could be happy out of spitefulness.

Hey, the Prophet's blessing upon you!
Hey, for the others Gehenna!
Hey, every person who dislikes you
May God not give him one like you, neither a girl nor a boy!

Hey, the person who dislikes you
May (God) squeeze him through the eye of a needle that he will cry 'Oh, how narrow is your door!'

Hey, our bride, your dress is embroidered with gold
Hey, each piece of (its embroidery) is worth a hundred pounds
Hey, your family and your neighbours asked for you
They said: 'She is gone with clear thought and honour.'
Women Wedding’s Songs in Cilician Arabic

11

hāy dārna wṣīṣa
hāy sībḥāna sāli
hāy šarīṣna kayysi
hāy šarīṣna gāli

Hey, our house is spacious
Hey, our windows are high
Hey, our bride is beautiful
Hey, our groom is dear.

12

hāy yammī qəʿīnata taḥt is-yēgāt
hāy yammī sarrxī sīlaynā yqīnšu sīlaynā ǧ-ġēgāt
hāy dānāyī fārīštī fīkī
bi-ṣawwāl ʿĀdīnī killa sābī baladāt

Hey, mum,42 we were sitting under the hedges
Hey, mum, the hens called us and were talking about us
Hey, my dear, you are (the reason of) my joy
You make all of Adana seven times nicer.

13

hāy yammī qəʿānīnata taḥt šaḡrīt iǧḏān
hāy yammī sīrībīnī b-ʔadāhīt ʃiḏānī
hāy kīšī bi-ʃīfūt baynānīnī w-bayn bāfūnīn
Allā yibṣ̄aṭ-lu il-ʃāmā w-fɔq il-ʃāmā marda

Hey, my mum, we were sitting under the oleaster tree
Hey, my mum, we were drinking from silver cups
Hey, the person who will interfere between us
May God send him illness like blindness and more than blindness!

14

hāy xayyi qəʾīd bi-taxt il-ɔlwān
kaffak ʾmḥannā waqṭ-il mī-ṇnām
fātū ʃaʿṯīt ʾzbāyā qālo ha-š-šābāb minnayn
hāda xayynā z-ẓqayyir raḥbi ʾtāḥīżo mīn ʃayn

Hey, my brother, sitting on the coloured throne
Your hands have been painted with henna while we were sleeping
Some girls came in and said: ‘From where is this guy?’
This is our younger brother: May my Lord protect him from the evil eye!43

42 Although lines 1-2 are addressed to yammī ‘my mum’, it is very likely that the person actually meant is the daughter. In many Near Eastern societies reverse addressing (although only from the elder to the younger) is very common: Mothers address their sons and daughters as ‘my mum’, uncles their nieces and nephews as ‘my uncle’, etc.

43 Probably this song comes from the Syrian region of the ʿAlawīs, because in those dialects the syllable -əyn# becomes -ən#, implying that all four verses had the rhyme -ən. This is the only quatrain in the whole collection which uses the rhyme pattern a a b b.
Hey, my brother with the yellow belt
Hey, the one who dislikes you, may he drop down into pieces!
Hey, may he fall next to an elder tree
So that a yellow scorpion will sting him.

Hey, my brother, I wish you a bath outside in the fields
Hey, I wish you to have four servants serving you while four (other) servants are sleeping
Hey, I’ll buy you a fine towel with a pearl
So that you can wipe the sweat off your cheeks when you come out of the bath.

Hey, my brother, your suit is striped
Hey, we don’t recognize you, neither being awake nor sleeping
Your standing at this place
Makes Adana like Arabia.

Hey, my brother, what kind of dress would you like to put on?
Hey, I shall buy you (a dress of) satin
And when you will be among the young people
The roses will open for you and the daffodils will smile at you.

44 The word marţān usually means ‘coral’; in Classical Arabic it can also mean ‘pearl’, which better suits this context.
45 mģazzq < Turkish çizgi ‘stripe’.
47 ringas < Turkish nergis.
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19a

\[\text{hāy yā-} \text{abni barrim xātim bi-} \text{idak} \]
\[\text{hāy il-karim karmak w-} \text{lōlo} \text{ṣanāqiddak} \]
\[\text{hāy kīll-ma ʿ} \text{yīit il-} \text{ṣādīw ta-} \text{ṭīshāk} \]
\[\text{inšalla b-tīzbil wi-b-tīza} \text{darr} \]

Hey, my son, put\(^{48}\) a ring on your hand!

This vineyard is yours and its pearls are your grapes.

Hey, every time the enemy comes to cut you down

If God wills, may you become stronger and greener.

19b

\[\text{hāy yā-} \text{abni barrim xāmak b-} \text{idak} \]
\[\text{hāy il-karm karmak w-} \text{lōlo} \text{ṣanāqiddak} \]
\[\text{hāy b-} \text{iṭlīb min rabbī ta-} \text{yaṣṭīk w-} \text{zdak} \]
\[\text{ta-ṣṣir ḥākim w-} \text{mīḥkīm w-kīll in-} \text{nās tāhī tīdak} \]

Hey, my son, put\(^{49}\) a ring on your hand!

This vineyard is yours and its pearls are your grapes.

Hey, I pray to my Lord that He may give you more

Hey, may you become a ruler and leader that all people should be under your hand.

Variant line 3:

\[\text{hāy b-iṭlīb mi-} \text{iłāh is-} \text{sama rabbī bīs-} \text{sama ta-} \text{yaṣṭīk w-} \text{zdak} \]

Hey, I ask the God of the heaven, my Lord in the sky, to give you more.

Variant line 4:

\[\text{hāy ʿ} \text{īr ḥākim il-} \text{ḥikkām kīll in-} \text{nās tāhī tīdak} \]

Hey, may you become the ruler of the rulers that all people should be under your hand.

20

\[\text{hāy yā-} \text{abni ya fiṭfil il-} \text{harr} \]
\[\text{hāy allī mirṣāš bi-} \text{i-rādi l-harr} \]
\[\text{hāy kīll-ma ʿ} \text{yīit il-} \text{ṣāda ta-} \text{ṭīshāna} \]
\[\text{inšalla m-nıżbil w-m-nıṣdarr} \]

Hey, my son, oh hot pepper

Which has been sown in the uncultivated fields

Every time the enemy comes to cut us down

If God wills, may we become stronger and greener.

21

\[\text{ṭālī} \text{ṣīn la-} \text{ḥābil ʿ} \text{arafātī w-} \text{nādā-lna b-} \text{qāf} \text{ṣ ar-rās} \]
\[\text{hāy il-xanā} \text{ṣīr wi-t-tāṣlab w-qalab ḡāmūs} \]

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\(^{48}\) Literally: turn a ring.

\(^{49}\) Literally: turn a ring.
Stephan Procházka

*hāy ya-ʻabni ya ṣāhib il-Šaql ya ṣāhib in-nāmūs*
hāy inšalla m-niqtaš ūqāda* la-qalb il-Šada nāya

We went up to Jabal Arafat and they ordered us to cut the heads
Hey, the pig⁵⁰ and the fox, they beat a buffalo
Hey, my son, oh you possessor of clear thought and honour
Hey, if God wills, we shall slaughter our enemies and step on the enemies’ hearts.

**22**
hāy ya-ʻabni ya šīlān ḡarb w-ṣarq
hāy klāmak Šlaye walla ana aṣfaš min il-lamiš wi-l-barq
hāy ik-kiši b-yibgiđna* Alla yibṣat-lu ṣāxa tarq
Alla yibṣat-lu mawge kabīre ta-tqatš-su māltə* gāwāt māltə* la-sabš ṣūr ir-zirq.
Hey, my son, oh sultan of the east and the west
What are you saying about me? Really I am lighter than the spark and the lightning.
Hey, the person who dislikes us, may God send him a bullet!
May God send him a huge wave that will make him cross Malta and the inside of Malta and the seven blue seas.

**23**
hāy ya-ʻabni ya fiŋğan farfūre*⁷
hāy ello haqqdar Šala šibbāk minšūre*⁷
hāy lammt-il tirkab Ša-l-xadera w-ṭibṣaq-la hā dāre*⁷
hāy inšalla bi-tqim-lak is-slāţin wi-l-wizra wi-rbābi id-dawle⁷.
Hey, my son, oh cup of best porcelain
Hey, who has the right (to possess) a carved window.
Hey, when you mount the brown (mare) shouting to her: hey turn!
Hey, if God wills, the sultans, the viziers and the masters of the state will stand up for you.

**24**
hāy ya-ʻabni ya tāğ rāse*⁷
hāy zinnārak šīklo killo ḡadaḍar min ṣārīr sāfe*⁷
hāy lammt tirkab Ša-l-xadera w-ṭibṣurre ḡadd al-Sāše⁷
hāy inšalla bi-tallu ya-ʻabni qalb al-Šada killa bārūd w-rṣāše⁷.
Hey, my son, oh crown of my head
Hey, your belt is made of pure silk
Hey, when you mount the brown (mare) and turn to the River Orontes
Hey, if God wills, my son, you (and your friends) will fill the heart of the enemies with gun powder and a bullet.

**25**
hāy ana⁰ ana⁰
hāy imm il-Šarīs ana⁰

⁵⁰ Among the ŠAlawī the pig is a symbol for the devil.

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hāy, ydiqq il-ʕadāw
w-yā farhi ana"w
Hey, it’s me, me
Hey, I am the groom’s mother
Hey, may He smash the enemy!
This will be joy for me!

Variant line 2:

hāy, ʿxt il-ʕarīs ana"w – Hey, I am the groom’s sister.

26
hāy yāsmīn’ qbālo
hāy wardo *zrāro
hāy kīš bi-yrīdū la-farīhna
raytu l-farah bi-dyāro
Hey, jasmine is opposite to him
Hey, his roses and his buds
Hey, the one who wants our joy
May there be joy in his home (too)!

27
hāy ʿlāyī ʿlāyyī
w-hāy axadt qalbī ʿlāyyī
w-hāy il-farḥa la-ibīn ʿlāyyī
fariḥt iḡ ġāy la-bnayī
Hey, on me, on me
Hey, you have made my heart beating
Hey, this joy is for my nephew
And the next joy is for my son.

28
hāy *raṣi Alla yhamniƙe
hāy šā-ma qilnā ʿā bi-ʾyāsīf ǧike
hāy hal-farḥa la-ibniƙ
fariḥt iḡ ġāy mā kēfike.
Hey, dance, may God make you happy!
Hey, whatever we say you will not forget51
Hey, this joy is for your son
The next joy will not be enough for you52.

29
hāy bayyi ʾammār xaymi
hāy "xorāt qašdā fīya"w

51 Literally: it will not be lost in you.
52 Since you like dancing so much.
Hey, my father built a hut
Hey, my brothers lived in it
Hey, their children are the candle of the house
Oh my Lord, do not extinguish them!

Hey, the bird’s singing begins (?)
Hey, between the branches and the leaves of the vine
Hey, may God bless you, oh my father
For that you have amused your guests with the drinking of arak.

Hey, may God protect your ancestors
Hey, may God protect your descendants
Hey, may God protect our bride
Hey, the one who is your pride.

Hey, this one, what is his skill?
Hey, this one, what’s that to him?
Hey, if God wills, if he let me live until you wedding, my dear
I shall do much more than he.

Variant lines 3-4:

Hey, if God wills, until the wedding / until the big joy
We shall do much more than he.

53 The word is not completely clear.
54 Cf. Barthélemy 1935-1954, 8: sm-alla ʕalēk “que Dieu te protège !”

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33
hāy bayt il-Qādi yā fuš
hāy ‘grayayātkin yā ‘grayayāt ‘rfūš
hāy mā kānit timbaq-ilkin ha-l-Sharūs
timbaq la-bayt “Slāmīy hal sabhu l-‘qrūš
Hey, Qadi family, you are…
Hey, your feet, oh your feet are (big like) shovels
Hey, this bride has not suited you
She suits the Slāmī family who has distributed money.

34
hāy šīna’ prāṣā
hāy šīndkin prāṣā
hāy illīzi b-yibṣida la-Sharūs
Ala yibṣat-lu bi-rṣāṣa
Hey, we have leek
Hey, you have leek
Hey, who dislikes our bride
May God send him a bullet!

35
hāy šīna’ minšāra
hāy šīndkin minšāra
hāy Sharūsna Fāṭma qaranfili
w-Sharūsa qinnāra
Hey, we have a saw
Hey, you have a saw
Hey, our bride Fāṭma is (like) a pink
And our groom is (like) the flower of the pomegranate tree.

36
hāy šīnna’ patiķe
hāy šīndkin patiķe
hāy illīzi b-yibqiqdkin
Ala yibṣat-lu bi-hīķe
Hey, we have a bootee
Hey, you have a bootee
Hey, who dislikes you
May God send him shame!

55 My informants could not explain the word fuš – not even the woman who sang the song. Perhaps it is a nonsense word just used for the rhyme. Anyway it is associated with something negative – perhaps through the words ḥūš ‘wild beasts’ and ḥiš ‘bad, dirty’.
56 Literally: poured out.
57 From Turkish patik ‘shoes for babies’.
Hey, we have a mat
Hey, you have a mat
Hey, the person who does not like us
He will\textsuperscript{58} (be tucked) in our short slippers.

Hey, we have minced meat
Hey, you have minced meat
Hey, this joy is for our children
May God satisfy everybody who has not yet got (children)!

Hey, we have a mouse
Hey, you have a mouse
Hey, a person who dislikes us
May his trousers get tattered!

Hey, we have a carpet
Hey, you have a carpet
Hey, a person who does not like us
May an illness be sent to him!

\textsuperscript{58} Literally: his intention is.
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