

Addendum 2

Letter of Congratulations on Mikhā'il's Birth

Even though this is intended as an example of how to write a congratulatory message for a newborn, it contains very specific information. The newborn's name is Mikhā'il. The father chose this name for his son after the Archangel because the baby was born on this special day [November 8]. However, the father worries that the author's brother might be unhappy to share the same name. Knowing that both Mūsā's brother and Yūsuf's son are called Mikhā'il, we believe this is Mūsā's congratulation letter and a response to Yūsuf's concern.

We present the text of this letter from MS Greek Orthodox Diocese of Homs MS 37, f. 24r-24v, along with an English translation.

تهنئة أخرى بمولود //24v//

الذي نخبر به خوتكم لا أخبرتم بمكروه، وهو أنه سابق تاريخه في أبرك وقت ميمون، وأبهج زمن بالسعد مقرون، وصلني مكتوبكم، وسررت بعلم صحة سلامتكم، التي هي غاية القصد والمرام، وبغية المستهام، لا سيما قد حصل عندي غاية السرور، والفرح الموفور، بالغلام الذي رزقتموه، وذكرتم بأنكم دعيت اسم ميثائيل، لكونه وُلد نهار عيد رئيس الملكة الجليل، وخطر في ضميركم خاطر لنلا يتغير أو يندقر خاطر الأخ المكرم المقدسي ميثائيل، لسبب تسمية المولود بهذا الاسم الشريف الذي تلوح منه امارات السعد، فلا يخطر ببالكم شيء من هذه الظنون، لأن الاخ المشار إليه لما بلغه ذلك انسَ جدًا بغاية ما يكون، ومن واجب الضرورة أن تدعوا مولودكم باسم القديس الذي وُلد يوم عيده النفيس، ربنا بشفاعته زعيم الملكة يحرسه ويثبته، ولا يسبذكم فيه، ويجعله نسلًا صالحًا، وغلًا ناجحًا، ويقر عينكم به ويفرحكم بعرضه.

هُنَّيتُ بَابِنِ قَدْ أَتَاكَ مَبَارَكَا

وَنَهْن فِيهِ بِالْعَا فِي رَشْدِه

فَالسَّيْفُ يَزْهَرُ رَوْنَقًا بِصْقَالِه

إِنْ جَالَ مَاءُ فَرْنَدِه فِي حَدِه

Another [Letter of] Congratulation on the Newborn

We inform you, brother – hoping you never receive distressing news – that before this date, at the most blessed and auspicious time, the happiest moment filled with fortune, I received your letter and was delighted to learn of your well-being, which is the goal and cherished desire. My joy was further heightened, and my happiness multiplied, upon hearing about the son you have been blessed with. You mentioned naming him Mikhā'il, as he was born on the feast day of the great Archangel. A thought crossed your mind, worrying that our esteemed brother, Mikhā'il al-Maqdisi, might be affected by this choice of name. Let no such thoughts

trouble you, for when the aforementioned brother heard the news, he was greatly pleased, beyond measure.

It is only necessary that you name your newborn after the saint whose feast day he was born on. May our Lord, through the intercession of the Chief of the Angels, protect him, raise him well, and not cause you grief concerning him. May He make him a righteous child, a successful young man, bringing you joy and granting you the delight of his marriage.

You have been blessed with a son, congratulations to you!

Rejoice in him as he matures and thrives.

The sword shines with a bright polish

When the water at its edge flows along its blade.¹

¹ This poem was composed by Jarmānūs Farḥāt, *Dīwān*, ed. Saʿīd al-Khūrī al-Shartūnī, Beirut : al-Maṭbaʿa al-kāthūlikīya lil-abāʾ al-yāsūʿiyyīn, 1894, p. 181.